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THE

CABINET PORTRAIT GALLERY

OF

BRITISH WORTHIES.



VOLUME V.

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CABINET PORTRAIT GALLERY

OF

BRITISH WORTHIES.



Elizabeth, Queen of England, was the daughter of Henry VIII. by his second wife, Anne Boleyn, and was born at Greenwich on the 7th of September, 1533. She was not three years old therefore when her mother was brought to the block, in May, 1536. Very soon after her birth it was declared, by the Act 25 Henry VIII., c. 22, that if Queen Anne should decease without issue male, to be begotten of the body of the king, and if the king himself should die without other issue male, then the crown should go "to the Lady Elizabeth, now princess, and to the heirs of her body lawfully begotten." By the 28 Henry VIII., c. 7, however, passed after his marriage with Jane Seymour, his two former marriages were declared to be unlawful and void, and both Elizabeth and her elder sister Mary were bastardized. But finally, by the 35 Henry VIII., c. 1, passed soon after his marriage with his last wife, Catharine Parr, it was declared that if Prince Edward should die without heirs, then the crown should remain first to the Lady Mary, and, failing her, to the Lady Elizabeth. This was the last legal settlement of the crown, by which her position was affected, made previous to Elizabeth's accession; unless indeed she might be considered to be excluded by implication by the Act I Mary, st. 2, c. 1, which legitimized her sister Mary, declared the validity of Henry's first marriage, and pronounced his divorce from Catherine of Aragon to be void.

In 1535 a negotiation was entered into for the marriage of Elizabeth to the Duke of Angoulême, the third son of Francis I. of France; but it was broken off before any agreement was come to. In 1546 also Henry proposed to the Emperor Charles V., with a view of breaking off a match then contemplated between the emperor's son, the prince of Spain, afterwards Philip II., with a daughter of the French king, that Philip should marry the Princess Elizabeth; but neither alliance took place. Elizabeth's next suitor, though he does not seem to have formally declared his pretensions, was the protector Somerset's unfortunate brother, the Lord Seymour of Sudley. He is said to have made some advances to her even before his marriage with Queen Catharine Parr, although Elizabeth was then only in her fourteenth year. Catharine, who died a few months after her marriage (poisoned, as many supposed, by her husband), appears to have been made somewhat uncomfortable while she lived by the freedoms the princess continued to allow Sudley to take with her, which went beyond ordinary flirtation; the scandal of the day indeed was, that "the Lady Elizabeth did bear some affection to the admiral." After his wife's death he was accused of having renewed his designs upon her hand; and it was

part of the charge on which he was attainted that he had plotted to seize the king's person and to force the princess to marry him; but his execution in the course of a few months stopped this and all his other ambitious schemes.

In 1550, in the reign of Edward VI., it was proposed that Elizabeth should be married to the eldest son of Christian III. of Denmark; but the negotiation seems to have been stopped by her refusal to consent to the match. She was a favourite with her brother, who used to call her his "sweet sister Temperance;" but he was nevertheless prevailed upon by the artful and interested representations of Dudley to pass over her, as well as Mary, in the settlement of the crown which he made by will a short time before his death. This transaction has been related in the life of Lady Jane Grey.

Camden gives the following account of the situation and employments of Elizabeth at this period of her life, in the introduction to his history of her reign. She was both, he says, "in great grace and favour with King Edward, her brother, as likewise in singular esteem with the nobility and people; for she was of admirable beauty, and well deserving a crown, of a modest gravity, excellent wit, royal soul, happy memory, and indefatigably given to the study of learning; insomuch, as before she was seventeen years of age she understood well the Latin, French, and Italian tongues, and had an indifferent knowledge of the Greek. Neither did she neglect music, so far as it became a princess, being able to sing sweetly, and play handsomely on the lute. With Roger Ascham, who was her tutor, she read over Melanchthon's Common-Places, all Tully, a great part of the histories of Titus Livius, certain select orations of Isocrates (whereof two she turned into Latin), Sophocles's Tragedies, and the New Testament in Greek, by which means she both framed her tongue to a pure and elegant way of speaking, and informed her mind with apt documents and instructions; duly applying herself to the study of good letters, not for pomp and ostentation, but in order to use in her life and the practice of virtue; insomuch as she was a kind of miracle and admiration for her learning among the princes of her time."^[1]

It appears from what Ascham himself tells us in his "Schoolmaster," that Elizabeth continued her Greek studies after she ascended the throne: "after dinner" (at Windsor Castle, 10th December, 1563) he says, "I went up to read with the Queen's Majesty: we read there together in the Greek tongue, as I well remember, that noble oration of Demosthenes against AEschines for his false dealing in his embassy to King Philip of Macedonia."

On the death of Edward, Camden says that an attempt was made by Dudley to induce Elizabeth to resign her title to the crown for a sum of money, and certain lands to be settled on her: her reply was, "that her elder sister, the Lady Mary, was first to be agreed withal; for as long as the said Lady Mary lived she, for her part, could challenge no right at all." Burnet says that both she and Mary, having been allured by messages from Dudley, who no doubt wished to get them into his hands, were on their way to town, when the news of Edward's approaching end induced them to turn back. When Mary came to London after being proclaimed queen, the Lady Elizabeth went to meet her with 500 horse, according to Camden, others say with 2000. Fox, the martyrologist, relates that "Queen Mary, when she was first queen, before she was crowned, would go no whither but would have her by the hand, and send for her to dinner and supper. At Mary's coronation, in October, 1553, according to Holinshed, as the queen rode through the city towards Westminster, the chariot in which she sat was followed by another "having a covering of cloth of silver, all white, and six horses trapped with the like, wherein sate the Lady Elizabeth and the Lady Anne of Cleve." Another account says that Elizabeth carried the crown on this occasion.

From this time Elizabeth, who had been brought up in their religion, became the hope of the Protestant party. Her position however was one of great difficulty. At first she refused to attend her sister to mass, endeavouring to soothe Mary by appealing to her compassion: after some time however she yielded an outward compliance. The act passed by the parliament, which, although it did not mention her by name, bastardized her by implication by annulling her father's divorce from his first wife, could not fail to give her deep offence. Availing herself of an order of Mary, assigning her a rank below what her birth entitled her to, as an excuse for wishing to retire from court, she obtained leave to go to her house at Ashridge, in Buckinghamshire, in the beginning of December. About the same time Mary is supposed to have been irritated against her sister by the preference shown for Elizabeth by her kinsman Edward Courtenay, whom, after releasing from the Tower, the queen had restored to his father's title of Earl of Devon, and is said to have had some thoughts of marrying. It appears to have been part of the design of the rash and unfortunate attempt of Wyatt, in the beginning of the following year, to bring about a marriage between Elizabeth and Courtenay, who was one of those engaged in the revolt. This affair involved Elizabeth in the greatest danger. On the 8th of February, the day after the suppression of the insurrection, certain members of the council were sent with a party of 250 (other accounts say 600) horse to Ashridge, with orders to bring her to London "quick or dead." They arrived during the night, and although they found her sick in bed, they immediately forced their way into her chamber, and informed her that she must "prepare against the morning, at nine of the clock, to go with them, declaring that they had brought with them the queen's litter for

her." She was so ill however, that it was not till the fourth night that she reached Highgate. Here, says Fox, "she being very sick, tarried that night and the next day; during which time of her abode there came many pursuivants and messengers from the court, but for what purpose I cannot tell." When she entered London great multitudes of people came flocking about her litter, which she ordered to be opened to show herself. The city was at this time covered with gibbets; fifteen had been erected in different places, on which fifty-two persons were hanged; and it appears to have been the general belief that Elizabeth would suffer, as Lady Jane Grey had done a few days before. From the time of her arrival in town she was kept in close confinement in Whitehall. It appears that her case was twice debated in council; and, although no evidence had been obtained by all the exertions of the crown lawyers which went farther than to make it probable that Wyatt and Courtenay had solicited her to give her assent to their projects of revolt, her immediate destruction was strongly advised by some of the members. Elizabeth long afterwards used to declare that she fully expected death, and that she knew her sister thirsted for her blood. It was at last determined however that for the present she should only be committed to the Tower, although she seems herself still to have been left in doubt as to her fate. She was conveyed to her prison by water on the morning of the 11th of March, being Palm Sunday, orders being issued that, in the mean time, "every one should keep the church and carry their palms." In attempting to shoot the bridge the boat was nearly swamped. She at first refused to land at the stairs leading to the Traitors' Gate; but one of the lords with her told her she should have no choice; "and because it did then rain," continues Fox, "he offered to her his cloak, which she (putting it back with her hand with a good dash) refused. So she coming out, having one foot upon the stair, said, 'Here landeth as true a subject as ever landed at these stairs; and before thee, O God, I speak it, having none other friends but thee alone.'" She remained in close custody for about a month, after which she was allowed to walk in a small garden within the walls of the fortress. On the 19th of May she was removed, in charge of Sir Henry Bedingfield, to Woodstock. Here she was guarded with great strictness and severity by her new jailor. Camden says that at this time she received private letters both from Henry II. of France, inviting her to that country, and from Christian III. of Denmark (who had lately embraced the Protestant religion), soliciting her hand for his son Frederick. When these things came to the ears of her enemies, her life was again threatened. "The Lady Elizabeth," adds the historian, "now guiding herself as a ship in blustering weather, both heard divine service after the Romish manner, and was frequently confessed; and at the pressing instances and menaces of Cardinal Pole, professed herself, for fear of death, a Roman Catholic. Yet did not Queen Mary believe her." She remained at Woodstock till April, 1555, when she was, on the interposition, as it was made to appear, of King Philip, allowed to take up her residence at the royal palace of Hatfield, under the superintendence of a Catholic gentleman, Sir Thomas Pope, by whom she was treated with respect and kindness. Philip was anxious to have the credit of advising mild measures in regard to the princess, and perhaps he was really more disposed to treat her with indulgence than his wife. According to Camden, some of the Roman Catholic party wished to remove her to a distance from England, and to marry her to Emanuel Philibert, Duke of Savoy; but Philip opposed this scheme, designing her for his eldest son Charles (the unfortunate Don Carlos). Elizabeth also was herself averse to a marriage with the Savoyard.

She continued to reside at Hatfield till the death of Mary, which took place on the 17th of November, 1558. The news was communicated the same day, but not till after the lapse of some hours, to the House of Lords, which was sitting at the time. "They were seized at first," says Camden (or rather his translator), "with a mighty grief and surprise, but soon wore off those impressions, and, with an handsome mixture of joy and sorrow, upon the loss of a deceased and the prospect of a succeeding princess, they betook themselves to public business, and, with one consent, agreed that the Lady Elizabeth should be declared the true and lawful heir of the kingdom according to the act of succession made 35 Henry VIII." It is probable that Elizabeth's outward compliance in the matter of religion had considerable effect in producing this unanimity, for the majority of the lords were Catholics, and certainly both the bishops and many of the lay peers would have been strongly inclined to oppose her accession if they had expected that she would venture to disturb the established order of things. The members of the lower house were now called up, and informed of what had been done by Archbishop Heath, the chancellor. He concluded by saying that, since no doubt could or ought to be made of the Lady Elizabeth's right of succession, the House of Peers only wanted their consent to proclaim her queen. A vote to that effect immediately passed by acclamation; and, as soon as the houses rose, the proclamation took place. Elizabeth came to London on Wednesday, the 23rd: she was met by all the bishops in a body at Highgate, and escorted by an immense multitude of people of all ranks to the metropolis, where she took up her lodgings at the residence of Lord North, in the Charter House. On the afternoon of Monday the 28th she made a progress through the city in a chariot to the royal palace of the Tower: here she continued till Monday the 5th of December, on the morning of which day she removed by water to Somerset House.

One of Elizabeth's earliest acts of royalty, by which, as Camden remarks, she gave proof of a prudence above her years, was what we should now call the appointment of her ministers. She retained of her privy council thirteen

Catholics, who had been of that of her sister, including Heath, Archbishop of York, the lord chancellor; William Paulett, Marquis of Winchester, the lord high treasurer; Edward, Lord Clinton, the lord high admiral; and William, Lord Howard of Effingham, the lord chamberlain. But with these she associated seven others of her own religion, the most eminent of whom was the celebrated William Cecil, afterwards Lord Burghley, whom she appointed to the office of secretary of state, which he had already held under Edward VI. The beginning of Burghley's connexion with Elizabeth has been related in our memoir of that statesman. Soon after, Nicholas Bacon (the father of the great chancellor) was added to the number of the privy councillors, and made at first lord privy seal, and next year lord keeper of the great seal, on the resignation of Archbishop Heath. Cecil became lord high treasurer on the death of the Marquis of Winchester in 1572, and continued to be Elizabeth's principal adviser till his death in 1598, when he was succeeded by Thomas Sackville, Lord Buckhurst (afterwards made Earl of Dorset by James I.). Of the other persons who served as ministers during Elizabeth's long reign, the most worthy of note were Sir Francis Walsingham (who was principal secretary of state from 1573 till his death in 1590, and was all the time they were in office together the confidential friend and chief assistant of Cecil the premier, under whose patronage he had entered public life), and Burghley's son, Robert Cecil (afterwards Earl of Salisbury), who succeeded Walsingham as secretary of state, and held that office till the end of the reign. Among the other persons of ability that were employed in the course of the reign, in different capacities, may be mentioned Sir Nicholas Throckmorton; "a man," says Camden, "of a large experience, piercing judgment, and singular prudence, who discharged several embassies with a great deal of diligence and much to his praise, yet could he not be master of much wealth, nor rise higher than to those small dignities (though glorious in title) of chief cupbearer of England and chamberlain of the Exchequer; and this because he acted in favour of Leicester against Cecil, whose greatness he envied; Sir Thomas Smith, the learned friend of Cheke, who had been one of the secretaries of state along with him under Edward VI., and held the same office again under Elizabeth for some years before his death in 1577; and Sir Christopher Hatton, who was lord chancellor from 1587 till his death in 1591, and whom Camden, after having related his singular rise from being one of the band of gentlemen pensioners, to which he was appointed by the queen, who was taken with his handsome shape and elegant dancing at a court masque, characterizes as "a great patron of learning and good sense, and one that managed that weighty part of lord chancellor with that equity and clearness of principle as to be able to satisfy his conscience and the world too."

The affair to which Elizabeth first applied her attention on coming to the throne, and that in connexion with which all the transactions of her reign must be viewed, was the settlement of the national religion. The opinions of Cecil strongly concurred with her own in favour of the reformed doctrines, to which also undoubtedly the great mass of the people was attached. For a short time however she kept her intentions a secret from the majority of the council, taking her measures in concert only with Cecil and the few others who might be said to form the cabinet. She began by giving permission, by proclamation, to read part of the church service in English, but at the same time strictly prohibited the addition of any comments, and all preaching on controversial points. This however was enough to show the Catholic party what was coming; accordingly, at her coronation, on the 15th of January, 1559, the bishops in general refused to assist, and it was with difficulty that one of them, Oglethorp of Carlisle, was prevailed upon to set the crown on her head. The principal alterations were reserved to be made by the parliament, which met on the 25th of this month. Of the acts which were passed, one restored to the crown the jurisdiction established in the reign of Henry VIII. over the estate ecclesiastical and spiritual, and abolished all foreign powers repugnant to the same; and another restored the use of King Edward's Book of Common Prayer, with certain alterations, that had been suggested by a royal commission over which Parker (afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury) presided. In accordance with this last statute public worship began to be performed in English throughout the kingdom on Whit-Sunday, which fell on the 8th of May. By a third act the first-fruits and tenths of benefices were restored to the crown; and by a fourth, her majesty was authorized, upon the avoidance of any archbishopric or bishopric, to take certain of the revenues into her own hands; and conveyances of the temporalities by the holder for a longer term than twenty-one years or three lives were made void. The effect of these laws was generally to restore the church to the state in which it was in the reign of Edward VI., the royal supremacy sufficing for such further necessary alterations as were not expressly provided for by statute. A strong opposition was made to the bills in the House of Lords by the bishops; and fourteen of them, being the whole number, with the exception of Anthony, Bishop of Llandaff, who, Camden says, "was the scourge of his diocese," were now deprived for refusing to take the oath of supremacy. About a hundred prebendaries, deans, archdeacons, and heads of colleges, were also ejected. The number of the inferior clergy however that held out was very small, amounting to no more than eighty rectors and other parochial ministers, out of between nine and ten thousand. On this subject it is only necessary further to state that the frame of ecclesiastical polity now set up, being in all essential particulars the same that still subsists, was zealously and steadily maintained by Elizabeth and her ministers to the end of her reign. The Church of England has good reason to

look upon her and Cecil as the true planters and rearers of its authority. They had soon to defend it against the Puritans on the one hand, as well as against the Catholics on the other; and they yielded to the former as little as the latter. The Puritans had been growing in the country ever since the dawn of the Reformation; but they first made their appearance in any considerable force in the parliament which met in 1570. At first their attempts were met on the part of the crown by evasive measures and slight checks; but, in 1587, on four members of the House of Commons presenting to the house a bill for establishing a new Directory of public worship, Elizabeth at once gave orders that they should be seized and sent to the Tower, where they were kept some time. The High Commission Court also, which was established by a clause in one of the acts for the settlement of religion passed in the first year of her reign, was, occasionally at least, prompted or permitted to exercise its authority in the punishment of what was called heresy, and in enforcing uniformity of worship with great strictness. The determination upon which the queen acted in these matters, as she expressed it in a letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury, was, "that no man should be suffered to decline either to the left or to the right hand, from the drawn line limited by authority, and by her laws and injunctions." Besides the deprivation of their livings, which many of the clergy underwent for their refusal to comply with certain particulars of the established ritual, many other persons suffered imprisonment for violations of the statute of uniformity. It was against the Catholics however that the most severe measures were taken. By an act passed in 1585 (the 27 Eliz. c. 2) every Jesuit or other popish priest was commanded to depart from the realm within forty days, on pain of death as a traitor, and every person receiving or relieving any such priest was declared guilty of felony. Many priests were afterwards executed under this act.

It was the struggle with popery that moved and directed nearly the whole policy of the reign, foreign as well as domestic. When Elizabeth came to the throne, she found the country at peace with Spain, the head of which kingdom had been her predecessor's husband, but at war with France, the great continental opponent of Spain and the Empire. Philip, with the view of preserving his English alliance, almost immediately after her accession offered himself to Elizabeth in marriage; but, after deliberating on the proposal, she determined upon declining it, swayed by various considerations, and especially, as it would appear, by the feeling that, by consenting to marry her sister's husband on a dispensation from the pope, she would in a manner be affirming the lawfulness of her father's marriage with Catherine of Aragon, the widow of his brother Arthur, and condemning his subsequent marriage with her own mother, the sole validity of which rested on the alleged illegality of that previous connexion. A general peace, however, comprehending all the three powers, and also Scotland, was established in April, 1559, by the treaty of Cateau Cambresis. By this treaty it was agreed that Calais, which had been taken by France in the time of Queen Mary, and had formed the only difficult subject of negotiation, should be restored to England in eight years, if no hostile act should be committed by Elizabeth within that period. Scarcely however had this compact been signed when the war was suddenly rekindled, in consequence of the assumption by the new French king, Francis II., of the arms and royal titles of England, in right, as was pretended, of his wife, the young Mary, queen of Scots. Elizabeth instantly resented this act of hostility by sending a body of 5000 troops to Scotland, to act there with the Duke of Chatelherault and the lords of the congregation, as the leaders of the Protestant party called themselves, against the government of the queen and her mother the Regent, Mary of Guise. The town of Leith soon yielded to this force; and the French king was speedily compelled both to renounce his wife's pretensions to the English throne and to withdraw his own troops from Scotland, by the treaty of Edinburgh, executed 7th July, 1560. The treaty however never was ratified either by Francis or his queen; and in consequence the relations between the three countries continued in an unsatisfactory state. Charles IX. succeeded his brother on the throne of France before the end of this year; and in a few months afterwards Mary of Scotland returned to her own country. Meanwhile, although the two countries continued at peace, Elizabeth's proceedings in regard to the church had wholly alienated Philip of Spain. The whole course of events and the position which she occupied had already in fact caused the English queen to be looked upon as the head of the Protestant interest throughout Europe as much as she was at home. When the dispute therefore between the Catholics and the Huguenots or reformed party in France came to a contest of arms, in 1562, the latter immediately applied for assistance to Elizabeth, who concluded a treaty with them, and sent them succour both in men and money. The war that followed produced no events of importance in so far as England was concerned, and was terminated by a treaty signed at Troyes, 11th April, 1564. A long period followed, during which England preserved in appearance the ordinary relations of peace both with France and Spain, though interferences repeatedly took place on each side that all but amounted to actual hostilities. The Protestants alike in Scotland, in France, and in the Netherlands (then subject to the dominion of Philip), regarded Elizabeth as firmly bound to their cause by her own interests; and she on her part kept a watchful eye on the religious and political contentions of all these countries, with a view to the maintenance and support of the Protestant party, by every species of countenance and aid short of actually making war in their behalf. With the Protestant government in Scotland, which had deposed and imprisoned the queen, she was in open and intimate alliance; in favour of the French Huguenots she at one time

negotiated or threatened, at another even went the length, scarcely with any concealment, of affording them pecuniary assistance; and when the people of the Netherlands at length rose in revolt against the oppressive government of Philip, although she refused the sovereignty of their country, which they offered to her, she lent them money, and in various other ways openly expressed her sympathy and good will. On the other hand, Philip—although he refrained from any declaration of war, and the usual intercourse, both commercial and political, long went on between the two countries without interruption—was incessant in his endeavours to undermine the throne of the English queen and the order of things at the head of which she stood, by instigating plots and commotions against her authority within her own dominions. He attempted to turn to account in this way the Catholic interest, which was still so powerful both in England and Ireland—the intrigues of the Scottish queen and her partisans materially contributing to the same end. Mary was not merely the head of the Catholic party in Scotland, but, as the descendant of the eldest daughter of Henry VII., had pretensions to the English crown which were of a very formidable kind. Although she was kept in confinement by the English government after her flight from the hands of her own subjects in 1568, the imprisonment of her person did not extinguish the hopes or put an end to the efforts of her adherents. Repeated rebellions in Ireland, in some instances openly aided by supplies from Spain—the attempt made by the Duke of Alva in 1569, through the agency of Vitelli, to concert with the Catholic party the scheme of an invasion of England—the rising of the Catholics of the northern counties under the Earls of Northumberland and Westmoreland the same year—the plot of the Duke of Norfolk with Ridolfi in 1571, for which that unfortunate nobleman lost his head—the plots of Throgmorton and Creighton in 1584, and of Babington in 1586—to omit several minor attempts of the same kind—all testified the restless zeal with which the various enemies of the established order of things pursued their common end. Meanwhile, however, events were tending to a crisis which was to put an end to the outward show of friendship that had been so long kept up between parties that were not only fiercely hostile in their hearts, but had even been constantly working for each other's overthrow behind the thin screen of their professions and courtesies. The Queen of Scots was put to death in 1587, by an act of which it is easier to defend the state policy than either the justice or the legality. By this time also, although no actual declaration of war had yet proceeded either from England or Spain, the cause of the people of the Netherlands had been openly espoused by Elizabeth, whose general, the Earl of Leicester, was now at the head of the troops of the United Provinces, as the revolted states called themselves. An English fleet at the same time attacked and ravaged the Spanish settlements in the West Indies. At last, in the summer of 1588, the great Spanish fleet, arrogantly styled the Invincible Armada, sailed for the invasion of England, and was in the greater part dashed to pieces on the coasts which it came to assail. From this time hostilities proceeded with more or less activity between the two countries during the remainder of the reign of Elizabeth. Meanwhile Henry III., and, after his assassination in 1589, the young King of Navarre, assuming the title of Henry IV., at the head of the Huguenots, had been maintaining a desperate contest in France with the Duke of Guise and the League. For some years Elizabeth and Philip remained only spectators of the struggle; but at length they were both drawn to take a principal part in it. The French war, however, so far as Elizabeth was concerned, must be considered as only another appendage to the war with Spain; it was Philip chiefly, and not the League, that she opposed in France; just as in the Netherlands, and formerly in Scotland, it was not the cause of liberty against despotism, or of revolted subjects against their legitimate sovereign, that she supported, or even the cause of Protestantism against Catholicism, but her own cause against Philip, her own right to the English throne against his, or that of the competitor with whom he took part. Since the death of Mary of Scotland, Philip professed to consider himself as the rightful king of England, partly on the ground of his descent from John of Gaunt, partly in consequence of Mary having by her will bequeathed her pretensions to him should her son persist in remaining a heretic. Henry IV., having previously embraced Catholicism, made peace with Philip by the treaty of Vervins, concluded in May, 1598; and the death of Philip followed in September of the same year. But the war between England and Spain was nevertheless still kept up. In 1601 Philip III. sent a force to Ireland, which landed in that country and took the town of Kinsale; and the following year Elizabeth retaliated by fitting out a naval expedition against her adversary, which captured some rich prizes, and otherwise annoyed the Spaniard. Her forces also continued to act in conjunction with those of the Seven United Provinces both by sea and land.

Elizabeth died on the 24th of March, 1603, in the 70th year of her age and the 45th of her reign. In the very general account to which we have necessarily confined ourselves of the course of public transactions during the long period of the English annals with which her name is associated, we have omitted all reference to many subordinate particulars, which yet strongly illustrate both her personal conduct and character and the history of her government. One of the first requests addressed to her by the parliament after she came to the throne was that she would marry; but for reasons which were probably various, though with regard to their precise nature we are rather left to speculation and conjecture than possessed of any satisfactory information, she persisted in remaining single to the end of her days. Yet she coqueted with many suitors almost to the last. In the beginning of her reign, among those who aspired to her hand, after she had rejected

the offer of Philip of Spain, were Charles, Archduke of Austria (a younger son of the Emperor Ferdinand I.); James Hamilton, Earl of Arran, the head of the Protestant party in Scotland; Erick XIV., King of Sweden (whom she had refused in the reign of her sister Mary); and Adolphus, Duke of Holstein (uncle to Ferdinand II. of Denmark). "Nor were there wanting at home," adds Camden, "some persons who fed themselves (as lovers used to do) with golden dreams of marrying their sovereign;" and he mentions particularly Sir William Pickering, "a gentleman well born, of a narrow estate, but much esteemed for his learning, his handsome way of living, and the management of some embassies into France and Germany;" Henry, Earl of Arundel; and Robert Dudley (afterwards the famous Earl of Leicester), a younger son of the Duke of Northumberland, "restored by Queen Mary to his honour and estate; a person of youth and vigour, and of a fine shape and proportion, whose father and grandfather were not so much hated by the people, but he was as high in the favour of Queen Elizabeth, who out of her royal and princely clemency heaped honours upon him, and saved *his* life whose father would have destroyed *hers*." Leicester continued the royal favourite till his death in 1588; certainly, whatever may be thought of the worst imputations that have been thrown upon him, showing himself little deserving of the honours and grants that were lavished upon him by his partial sovereign, who, having appointed him commander-in-chief of the forces which she sent to the assistance of the Dutch, insisted upon maintaining him in that situation, notwithstanding the mischiefs produced by his incapacity and misconduct, and, at the perilous crisis of the Spanish invasion, was on the point of constituting him lieutenant-governor of England and Ireland. Camden says that the letters patent were already drawn, when Burghley and Hatton interfered, and put a stop to the matter. Of the foreign princes that have been mentioned, the Archduke Charles persisted longest in his suit: a serious negotiation took place on the subject of the match in 1567, but it came to nothing. In 1571 proposals were made by Catherine de Medicis for a marriage between Elizabeth and her son Charles IX., and afterwards in succession with her two younger sons, Henry, Duke of Anjou (afterwards Henry III.), and Francis, Duke of Alençon (afterwards Duke of Anjou). The last match was again strongly pressed some years after; and in 1581 the arrangement for it had been all but brought to a conclusion, when, at the last moment, Elizabeth drew back, declining to sign the marriage articles after she had taken up the pen for the purpose. Very soon after the death of Leicester the young Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex, whose mother Leicester had married, was taken into the same favour that had been so long enjoyed by the deceased nobleman; and his tenure of the royal partiality lasted, with some intermissions, till he destroyed himself by his own hot-headedness and violence. He was executed for a frantic attempt to excite an insurrection against the government in 1601. Elizabeth, however, never recovered from this shock; and she may be said to have sealed her own sentence of death in signing the death-warrant of Essex.

Both the personal character of Elizabeth and the character of her government have been estimated very differently by writers of opposite parties. That she had great qualities will hardly be disputed by any one who duly reflects on the difficulties of the position she occupied, the consummate policy and success with which she directed her course through the dangers that beset her on all sides, the courage and strength of heart that never failed her, the imposing attitude she maintained in the eyes of foreign nations, and the admiration and pride of which she was the object at home. She was undeniably endowed with great good sense, and with a true feeling of what became her place. The weaknesses, and also the more forbidding features of her character, on the other hand, are so obvious as scarcely to require to be specified. Many of the least respectable mental peculiarities of her own sex were mixed in her with some of the least attractive among those of the other. Her selfishness and her vanity were both intense—and of the sympathetic affections and finer sensibilities of every kind she was nearly destitute.

Her literary knowledge was certainly very considerable; but of her compositions (a few of which are in verse) none are of much value, nor evidence any very superior ability, with the exception perhaps of some of her speeches to the parliament. A list of the pieces attributed to her may be found in Walpole's 'Royal and Noble Authors.'

There has been a good deal of controversy as to the proportion in which the elements of liberty and despotism were combined in the English constitution, or in the practice of the government, in the reign of Elizabeth; the object of one party being to convict the Stuarts of deviating into a new course in those exertions of the prerogative and that resistance to the popular demands which led to the civil wars of the seventeenth century,—of the other, to vindicate them from that charge, by showing that the previous government of Elizabeth had been as arbitrary as theirs. Upon this question the reader may consult the elaborate exposition with which Hume closes his account of this reign, along with the remarks upon it in the Introduction to Mr. Brodie's 'History of the British Empire, from the Accession of Charles I. to the Restoration.' There can be no doubt that the first James and the first Charles pursued their object with much less art, and much less knowledge and skill in managing the national character, as well as in less advantageous circumstances, than Elizabeth and her ministers; they did not know nearly so well when to resist and when to yield as she did; but it may

notwithstanding be reasonably questioned if her notion of the rightful supremacy of the crown was very different from theirs. However constitutional also (in the modern sense of the term) may have been the general course of her government, her occasional practice was certainly despotic enough. She never threw aside the sword of the prerogative, although she may have usually kept it in its scabbard.

Her reign, however, take it all in all, was a happy as well as a glorious one for England. The kingdom, under her government, acquired and maintained a higher and more influential place among the states of Europe, principally by policy, than it had ever been raised to by the most successful military exertions of former ages. Commerce flourished and made great advances, and wealth was much more extensively and more rapidly diffused among the body of the people than at any former period. It is the feeling of progress, rather than any degree of actual attainment, that keeps a nation in spirits; and this feeling every thing conspired to keep alive in the hearts of the English in the age of Elizabeth; even the remembrance of the stormy times of their fathers, from which they had escaped, lending its aid to heighten the enjoyment of the present calm. To these happy circumstances of the national condition was owing, above all, and destined to survive all their other products, the rich native literature, more especially in poetry and the drama, which now rushed up, as if from the tillage of a virgin soil, covering the land with its perennial fruit and flowers. Spenser and Shakspeare, Beaumont and Fletcher, Raleigh and Bacon, and many other distinguished names gained their earliest celebrity in the Elizabethan age.



On the 22nd of August, 1485, there was a battle fought for the crown of England, a short battle ending in a decisive victory. The battle-field was Bosworth. Was there in that victorious army of the Earl of Richmond an Englishman bearing the name of Chacksper, or Shakespeyre, or Schakspere, or Schakespeire, or Schakspere, or Shakespere, or Shakespere,^[2]—a martial name, however spelt? Of the warlike achievements of this Shakspeare there is no record: his name or his deeds would have no interest for us unless there had been born, eighty years after this battle-day, a direct descendant from him—

"Whose muse, full of high thought's invention,
Doth like himself *heroically sound*;"^[3]

a Shakspeare of whom it was also said—

"He seems *to shake a lance*
As brandish'd at the eyes of ignorance."^[4]

A public document bearing the date of 1596 affirms of John Shakspeare of Stratford-upon-Avon, the father of William Shakspeare, that his "parent and late antecessors were, for their *valiant* and faithful services, advanced and rewarded of the most prudent prince King Henry VII. of famous memory;" and it adds, "sithence which time they have continued at those parts [Warwickshire] in good reputation and credit." Another document of a similar character, bearing the date of 1599, also affirms upon "credible report," of "John Shakspeare, now of Stratford-upon-Avon in the county of Warwick, gentleman," that his "parent and great-grandfather, late antecessor, for his faithful and approved service to the late most prudent prince King Henry VII. of famous memory, was advanced and rewarded with lands and tenements, given to him in those parts of Warwickshire, where they have continued by some descents in good reputation and credit." Such are the recitals of two several grants of arms to John Shakspeare, confirming a previous grant made to him in 1569.

The great-grandson of the faithful and approved servant of Henry VII., John Shakspeare, was a burgess of the corporation of Stratford, and was in all probability born about 1530. The family had continued in those parts, "by some descents;" but how they were occupied in the business of life, what was their station in society, how they branched out into other lines of Shaksperes, we have no record.

In 1599 John Shakspeare a second time went to the College of Arms, and producing his own "ancient coat of arms," said that he had "married the daughter and one of the heirs of Robert Arden, of Wellingcote:" and then the heralds say—"We have likewise upon one other escutcheon impaled the same with the ancient arms of the said Arden of Wellingcote." They add that John Shakspeare, and his children, issue, and posterity, may bear and use the same shield of arms, single or impaled.

The family of Arden was one of the highest antiquity in Warwickshire. Dugdale traces its pedigree uninterruptedly up to the time of Edward the Confessor. The pedigree which Dugdale gives of the Arden family brings us no nearer in the direct line to the mother of Shakspeare than to Robert Arden, her great-grandfather: he was the third son of Walter Arden, who married Eleanor the daughter of John Hampden, of Buckinghamshire; and he was brother of Sir John Arden, squire for the body to Henry VII. Robert's son, also called Robert, was groom of the chamber to Henry VII. He married, and he had a son, also Robert, who married Agnes Webbe. Their youngest daughter was Mary, the mother of William Shakspeare.

High as was her descent, wealthy and powerful as were the numerous branches of her family, Mary Arden, we doubt not, led a life of usefulness as well as innocence, within her native forest hamlet. She had three sisters, and they all, with their mother Agnes, survived their father, who died in December, 1556. His will is dated the 24th of November in the same year, and the testator styles himself "Robert Arden, of Wylmcote, in the paryche of Aston Cauntlow." Mary, his youngest daughter, from superiority of mind, or some other cause of her father's confidence, occupies the most prominent position in the will. She has an undivided estate and a sum of money; and, from the crop being also bequeathed to her, it is evident that she was considered able to continue the tillage. The estate thus bequeathed to her consisted of about sixty acres of arable and pasture, and a house; and was called Asbies.

In the winter of 1556 was Mary Arden left without the guidance of a father, under this somewhat naked roof-tree, now become her own. Her sister Alice was to occupy another property in Wilmecote with her mother, provided the widow would so consent; and she did consent. And so she lived a somewhat lonely life, till a young yeoman of Stratford, who had probably some acquaintance with her father, came to sit oftener and oftener upon the wooden benches in the old hall—a substantial yeoman, a burgess of the corporation in 1557 or 1558; and then in due season Mary Arden and John Shakspeare were standing before the altar of the parish church of Aston Cantlow, and the house and lands of Asbies became administered by one who took possession "by the right of the said Mary," who thenceforward abided for half a century in the good town of Stratford.

There have been endless theories, old and new, affirmations, contradictions, as to the worldly calling of John Shakspeare. There are ancient registers in Stratford, minutes of the Common Hall, proceedings of the Court-leet, pleas of the Court of Record, writs which have been hunted over with unwearied diligence, and yet they tell us nothing, or next to nothing, of John Shakspeare. When he was elected an alderman in 1565, we can trace out the occupations of his brother aldermen, and readily come to the conclusion that the municipal authority of Stratford was vested, as we may naturally suppose it to have been, in the hands of substantial tradesmen, brewers, bakers, butchers, grocers, victuallers, mercers, woollen-drapers. Prying into the secrets of time, we are enabled to form some notion of the literary acquirements of this worshipful body. On rare, very rare occasions, the aldermen and burgesses constituting the town council affixed their signatures, for greater solemnity, to some order of the court; and on the 29th of September, in the seventh of Elizabeth,

upon an order that John Wheler should take the office of bailiff, we have nineteen names subscribed, aldermen and burgesses. There is something in this document which suggests a motive higher than mere curiosity for calling up these dignitaries from their happy oblivion, saying to each, "Dost thou use to write thy name? or hast thou a mark to thyself like an honest plain-dealing man?" Alas! out of the nineteen, seven only can answer, "I thank God I have been so well brought up that I can write my name." It is a matter of controversy whether John Shakspeare was one of the more clerkly corporators. In 1556, the year that Robert, the father of Mary Arden, died, John Shakspeare was admitted at the court-leet to two copyhold estates in Stratford. The jurors of the leet present that George Turner had alienated to John Shakspeare and his heirs one tenement, with a garden and croft, and other premises, in Grenehyll-street, held of the lord at an annual quit-rent; and John Shakspeare, who is present in court and does fealty, is admitted to the same. The same jurors present that Edward West has alienated to John Shakspeare one tenement and a garden adjacent in Henley Street, who is in the same way admitted upon fealty done to the lord. Here then is John Shakspeare, before his marriage, the purchaser of two copyholds in Stratford, both with gardens, and one with a croft, or small enclosed field. In 1570 John Shakspeare is holding, as tenant under William Clopton, a meadow of fourteen acres, with its appurtenances, called Ingon, at the annual rent of eight pounds. This rent, equivalent to at least forty pounds of our present money, would indicate that the appurtenance included a house,—and a very good house. This meadow of Ingon forms part of a large property known by that name near Clopton House. When John Shakspeare married, the estate of Asbies, within a short ride of Stratford, came also into his possession. With these facts before us, scanty as they are, can we reasonably doubt that John Shakspeare was living upon his own land, renting the land of others, actively engaged in the business of cultivation, in an age when tillage was becoming rapidly profitable,—so much so that men of wealth very often thought it better to take the profits direct than to share them with the tenant?

And is all this, it may be said, of any importance in looking at the life of William Shakspeare—a man who stands above all other individual men, above all ranks of men; in comparison with whom, in his permanent influence upon mankind, generations of nobles, fighting men, statesmen, princes, are but as dust? It is something, we think. It offers a better, because a more natural, explanation of the circumstances connected with the early life of the great poet than those stories which would make him of obscure birth and servile employments. Take old Aubrey's story, the shrewd learned gossip and antiquary, who survived Shakspeare some eighty years:—"Mr. William Shakspeare was born at Stratford-upon-Avon, in the county of Warwick. His father was a butcher, and I have been told heretofore by some of the neighbours that when he was a boy he exercised his father's trade; but when he killed a calf he would do it in a high style, and make a speech. There was at that time another butcher's son in this town that was held not at all inferior to him for a natural wit, his acquaintance and coetanean, but died young." The story, however, has a variation. There was at Stratford, in the year 1693, a clerk of the parish church, eighty years old,—that is, he was three years old when William Shakspeare died,—and he, pointing to the monument of the poet, with the pithy remark that he was the "best of his family," proclaimed to a member of one of the Inns of Court that "this Shakspeare was formerly in this town bound apprentice to a butcher, but that he ran from his master to London." His father was a butcher, says Aubrey; he was apprenticed to a butcher, says the parish clerk.

Akin to the butcher's trade is that of the dealer in wool. It is upon the authority of Betterton, the actor, who, in the beginning of the last century, made a journey into Warwickshire to collect anecdotes relating to Shakspeare, that Rowe tells us that John Shakspeare was a dealer in wool:—"His family, as appears by the register and public writings relating to that town, were of good figure and fashion there, and are mentioned as gentlemen. His father, who was a considerable dealer in wool, had so large a family, ten children in all, that, though he was his eldest son, he could give him no better education than his own employment." Tradition is here, we think, becoming a little more assimilated with the truth. The considerable dealer in wool might very well have been the landed proprietor, the cultivator, that we believe John Shakspeare to have been. Nor indeed was the incidental business even of a butcher, a slayer and seller of carcasses, incompatible with that occupation of a landholder. Harrison (1590), who mingles laments at the increasing luxury of the farmer with somewhat contradictory denouncements of the oppression of the tenant by the landlord, holds that the landlord is monopolising the tenant's profits:—"Most sorrowful of all to understand, that, men of great port and countenance are so far from suffering their farmers to have any gain at all, that *they themselves become graziers, BUTCHERS, tanners, SHEEPMASERS, woodmen, and denique quid non*, thereby to enrich themselves, and bring all the wealth of the country into their own hands, leaving the commonalty weak, or as an idol with broken or feeble arms, which may in time of peace have a plausible show, but, when necessity shall enforce, have an heavy and bitter sequel." Has not Harrison solved the mystery of the butcher, and explained the tradition of the woodman?

There is an entry in the Bailiff's Court of Stratford, in 1555, which shows us one John Shakspeare, a glover. It does not

follow that if this record be of the father of William Shakspeare, a young man in 1555, that he was always a glover. If he were a glover in 1555, he was subsequently a holder of land—a land proprietor.

The Register of Baptisms of the parish of Stratford-upon-Avon shows that William, the son of John Shakspeare, was baptized on the 26th April, 1564. And when born? The want of such information is a defect in all parish-registers. Baptism so immediately followed birth in those times, when infancy was surrounded with greater dangers than in our own days of improved medical science, that we may believe that William Shakspeare first saw the light only a day or two previous to this legal record of his existence. There is no direct evidence that he was born on the 23rd of April, according to the common belief. But there was probably a tradition to that effect; for some years ago the Rev. Joseph Greene, a master of the grammar-school at Stratford, in an extract which he made from the Register of Shakspeare's baptism, wrote in the margin, "Born on the 23rd." We turn back to the first year of the registry, 1558, and we find the baptism of Joan, daughter to John Shakspeare, on the 15th of September. Again, in 1562, on the 2nd of December, Margaret, daughter to John Shakspeare, is baptized. In the entry of burials in 1563 we find, under date of April 30, that Margaret closed a short life in five months. We look forward, and in 1566 find the birth of another son registered:—Gilbert, son of John Shakspeare, was baptized on the 13th of October of that year. In 1569 there is the registry of the baptism of a daughter, Joan, daughter of John Shakspeare, on the 15th of April. Thus, the registry of a second Joan leaves no reasonable doubt that the first died, and that a favourite name was preserved in the family. In 1571 another daughter was born,—Anne, daughter of Master John Shakspeare, baptized on the 28th of September. In 1574 another son was baptized,—Richard, son of Master John Shakspeare, on the 11th of March. The register of sorrow and blighted hope shows that Anne was buried on the 4th of April, 1579. The last entry, which determines the extent of John Shakspeare's family, is that of Edmund, son of Master John Shakspeare, baptized on the 3rd of May, 1580. Here, then, we find that two sisters of William were removed by death, probably before his birth. In two years and a half another son, Gilbert, came to be his playmate; and when he was five years old that most precious gift to a loving boy was granted, a sister, who grew up with him. Then came another sister, who faded untimely. When he was ten years old he had another brother to lead by the hand into the green meadows. When he was grown into youthful strength, a boy of sixteen, his youngest brother was born. William, Gilbert, Joan, Richard, Edmund, constituted the whole of the family amongst whom John Shakspeare was to share his means of existence. Howe, we have already seen, mentions the large family of John Shakspeare, "ten children in all." Malone has established very satisfactorily the origin of this error into which Howe has fallen. In later years there was another John Shakspeare in Stratford. In the books of the corporation the name of John Shakspeare, shoemaker, can be traced in 1586; in the register in 1584 we find him married to Margery Roberts, who dies in 1587; he is without doubt married a second time, for in 1589, 1590, and 1591, Ursula, Humphrey, and Philip are born. It is unquestionable that these are not the children of the father of William Shakspeare, for they are entered in the register as the daughter, or sons, of John Shakspeare, without the style which our John Shakspeare always bore after 1569—"Magister." There can be no doubt that the mother of all the children of *Master* John Shakspeare was Mary Arden; for in proceedings in Chancery in 1597 it is set forth that John Shakspeare and his wife Mary, in the 20th Elizabeth, 1577, mortgaged her inheritance of Asbies. Nor can there be a doubt that the children born before 1569, when he is styled John Shakspeare without the honourable addition of *Master*, were also *her* children; for in 1599, when *William* Shakspeare is an opulent man, application is made to the College of Arms, that John Shakspeare, and his issue and posterity, might use a "shield of arms" impaled with the arms of Shakspeare and Arden. This application would in all probability have been at the instance of John Shakspeare's eldest son and heir. The history of the family up to the period of William Shakspeare's manhood is as clear as can reasonably be expected.

The year of William Shakspeare's birth was a fearful year for Stratford. The plague raged with terrific violence in the little town. It was the same epidemic which ravaged Europe in that year; which in the previous year had desolated London, and still continued there. The red cross was probably not on the door of John Shakspeare's dwelling. "Fortunately for mankind," says Malone, "it did not reach the house where the infant Shakspeare lay; for not one of that name appears on the dead list."

The parish of Stratford, then, was unquestionably the birth-place of William Shakspeare. But in what part of Stratford dwelt his parents in the year 1564? It was ten years after this that his father became the purchaser of two freehold houses in Henley Street—houses which still exist. Nine years before William Shakspeare was born, his father had also purchased two copyhold tenements in Stratford—one in Greenhill Street, one in Henley Street. The copyhold house in Henley Street, purchased in 1555, was unquestionably not one of the freehold houses in the same street purchased in 1574; yet, from Malone's loose way of stating that in 1555 the *lease* of a house in Henley Street was assigned to John Shakspeare, it has been conjectured that he purchased in 1574 the house he had occupied for many years. As he purchased

two houses in 1555 in different parts of the town, it is not likely that he occupied both; he might not have occupied either. Before he purchased the two houses in Henley Street, in 1574, he occupied fourteen acres of meadow-land, with appurtenances, at a very high rent; the property is called Ingon meadow in "the Close Rolls." Dugdale calls the place where it was situated "Inge," saying that it was a member of the manor of Old Stratford, "and signifyeth in our old English a meadow or low ground, the name well agreeing with its situation." It is about, a mile and a quarter from the town of Stratford, on the road to Warwick. William Shakspeare, then, might have been born at either of his father's copyhold houses, in Greenhill Street, or in Henley Street; he might have been born at Ingon; or his father might have occupied one of the two freehold houses in Henley Street at the time of the birth of his eldest son. Tradition says that William Shakspeare *was* born in one of these houses; tradition points out the very room in which he was born. Let us not disturb the belief. To look upon that ancient house—perhaps now one of the oldest in Stratford—pilgrims have come from every region where the name of Shakspeare is known. The property passed into a younger branch of the poet's family; the descendants of that branch grew poorer and poorer; they sold off its orchards and gardens; they divided and subdivided it into smaller tenements; it became partly a butcher's shop, partly a little inn. The external appearance was greatly altered, and its humble front rendered still humbler. The windows in the roof were removed; and the half which had become the inn received a new brick casing. The central portion is that which is now shown as the birth-place of the illustrious man—"the myriad-minded."

There is a passage in one of Shakspeare's Sonnets, the 89th, which has induced a belief that he had the misfortune of a physical defect, which would render him peculiarly the object of maternal solicitude:—

"Say that thou didst forsake me for some fault,
And I will comment upon that offence:
Speak of my *lameness*, and I straight will halt;
Against thy reasons making no defence."

Again, in the 37th Sonnet:—

"As a decrepit father takes delight
To see his active child do deeds of youth,
So I, made *lame* by fortune's dearest spite,
Take all my comfort of thy worth and truth."

These lines have been interpreted to mean that William Shakspeare was literally lame, and that his lameness was such as to limit him, when he became an actor, to the representation of the parts of old men. We should, on the contrary, have no doubt whatever that the verses we have quoted may be most fitly received in a metaphorical sense, were there not some subsequent lines in the 37th Sonnet which really appear to have a literal meaning; and thus to render the previous *lame* and *lameness* expressive of something more than the general self-abasement which they would otherwise appear to imply. In the following lines *lame* means something distinct from *poor* and *despised*:—

"For whether beauty, birth, or wealth, or wit,
Or any of these all, or all, or more,
Entitled in thy parts do crowned sit,
I make my love engrafted to this store:
So then I am not *lame*, poor, nor despis'd,
Whilst that this shadow doth such substance give."

Of one thing, however, we may be quite sure—that, if Shakspeare were lame, his infirmity was not such as to disqualify him for active bodily exertion. The same series of verses that have suggested this belief that he was lame also show that he was a horseman. His entire works exhibit that familiarity with external nature, with rural occupations, with athletic sports, which is incompatible with an inactive boyhood. It is not impossible that some natural defect, or some accidental injury, may have modified the energy of such a child, and have cherished in him that love of books, and traditionary lore, and silent contemplation, without which his intellect could not have been nourished into its wondrous strength. But we cannot imagine William Shakspeare a petted child, chained to home, not breathing the free air upon his native hills, denied the boy's privilege to explore every nook of his own river. We would imagine him communing from the first with Nature, as Gray has painted him—

"The *dauntless* child

Stretch'd forth his little arms and smil'd."

The only qualifications necessary for the admission of a boy into the Free Grammar School of Stratford were, that he should be a resident in the town, of seven years of age, and able to read. The Grammar School was essentially connected with the Corporation of Stratford; and it is impossible to imagine that, when the son of John Shakspeare became qualified by age for admission to a school where the best education of the time was given, literally for nothing, his father, in that year, being chief alderman, should not have sent him to that school. We assume, without any hesitation, that William Shakspeare did receive in every just sense of the word the education of a scholar; and as such education was to be had at his own door, we also assume that, he was brought up at the Free Grammar School of his own town. His earlier instruction would therefore be a preparation for this school, and the probability is that such instruction was given him at home.

A question arises, did William Shakspeare receive his elementary instruction in Christianity from the books sanctioned by the Reformed Church? It has been maintained that his father belonged to the Roman Catholic persuasion. This belief rests upon the following foundation:—In the year 1770, Thomas Hart, who then inhabited one of the tenements in Henley Street which had been bequeathed to his family by William Shakspeare's granddaughter, employed a bricklayer to new tile the house; and this bricklayer, by name Mosley, found hidden between the rafters and the tiling a manuscript consisting of six leaves stitched together, which he gave to Mr. Peyton, an Alderman of Stratford, who sent it to Mr. Malone, through the Rev. Mr. Devonport, vicar of Stratford. This paper, which was first published by Malone in 1790, is printed also in Reed's Shakspeare and in Drake's 'Shakspeare and his Times.' It consists of fourteen articles, purporting to be a confession of faith of "John Shakspeare, an unworthy member of the holy Catholic religion." We have no hesitation whatever in believing this document to be altogether a fabrication. Malone, when he first published the paper in his edition of Shakspeare, said—"I have taken some pains to ascertain the authenticity of this manuscript, and, after a very careful inquiry, am perfectly satisfied that it is genuine." In 1796, however, in his work on the Ireland forgeries, he asserts—"I have since obtained documents that clearly prove it could not have been the composition of any one of our poet's family." We not only do not believe that it was "the composition of any one of our poet's family," but we do not believe that it is the work of a Roman Catholic at all. That John Shakspeare was what we popularly call a Protestant in the year 1568, when his son William was four years old, may be shown by the clearest proofs. He was in that year the chief magistrate of Stratford; he could not have become so without taking the Oath of Supremacy, according to the statute of the 1st of Elizabeth, 1558-9. To refuse this oath was made punishable with forfeiture and imprisonment, with the pains of praemunire and high treason. "The conjecture," says Chalmers (speaking in support of the authenticity of this confession of faith), "that Shakspeare's family were Roman Catholics is strengthened by the fact that his father declined to attend the corporation meetings, and was at last removed from the corporate body." He was removed from the corporate body in 1585, with a distinct statement of the reason for this removal—his non-attendance when summoned to the halls. According to this reasoning of Chalmers, John Shakspeare did not hesitate to take the Oath of Supremacy when he was chief magistrate in 1564, but retired from the corporation in 1585, where he might have remained without offence to his own conscience or to others, being, in the language of that day, a Popish recusant, to be stigmatized as such, persecuted, and subject to the most odious restrictions. If he left or was expelled the corporation for his religious opinions, he would, of course, not attend the service of the church, for which offence he would be liable, in 1585, to a fine of 20*l.* per month; and then, to crown the whole, in this his last confession, spiritual will, and testament, he calls upon all his kinsfolks to assist and succour him after his death "with the holy sacrifice of the mass," with a promise that he "will not be ungrateful unto them for so great a benefit," well knowing that by the Act of 1581 the saying of mass was punishable by a year's imprisonment and a fine of 200 marks, and the hearing of it by a similar imprisonment and a fine of 100 marks. The fabrication appears to us as gross as can well be imagined.

To the grammar-school, then, with some preparation, we hold that William Shakspeare goes, about the year 1571. His father is at this time, as we have said, chief alderman of his town; he is a gentleman, now, of repute and authority: he is Master John Shakspeare; and assuredly the worthy curate of the neighbouring village of Luddington, Thomas Hunt, who was also the schoolmaster, would have received his new scholar with some kindness. As his "shining morning face" first passed out of the main street into that old court through which the upper room of learning was to be reached, a new life would be opening upon him. The humble minister of religion who was his first instructor has left no memorials of his talents or his acquirements; and in a few years another master came after him, Thomas Jenkins, also unknown to fame. All praise and honour be to them; for it is impossible to imagine that the teachers of William Shakspeare were evil instructors—giving the boy husks instead of wholesome aliment. They could not have been harsh and perverse instructors, for such spoil the gentlest natures, and his was always gentle:—"My gentle Shakspeare" is he called by a

rough but noble spirit—one in whom was all honesty and genial friendship under a rude exterior. His wondrous abilities could not be spoiled even by ignorant instructors.

There are local associations connected with Stratford which could not be without their influence in the formation of Shakspeare's mind. Within the range of such a boy's curiosity were the fine old historic towns of Warwick and Coventry, the sumptuous palace of Kenilworth, the grand monastic remains of Evesham. His own Avon abounded with spots of singular beauty, quiet hamlets, solitary woods. Nor was Stratford shut out from the general world, as many country towns are. It was a great highway; and dealers with every variety of merchandise resorted to its fairs. The eyes of Shakspeare must always have been open for observation. When he was eleven years old Elizabeth made her celebrated progress to Lord Leicester's castle of Kenilworth; and there he might even have been a witness to some of the "princely pleasures" of masques and mummeries which were the imperfect utterance of the early drama. At Coventry, too, the ancient mysteries and pageants were still exhibited in the streets, the last sounds of those popular exhibitions which, dramatic in their form, were amongst the most tasteless and revolting appeals to the senses. More than all, the players sometimes even came to Stratford. What they played, and with what degree of excellence, we shall presently have occasion to mention.

A belief has obtained that William Shakspeare's family, about his fourteenth year, became embarrassed in their circumstances, and subsequently fell into great poverty. The question is not uninteresting, looking at the probable influence of such a state of his father's circumstances upon the future destiny of the great poet. A passage in the poet's 'Life' by Rowe has led to the painstaking by which this theory has been sought to be established:—"His father, who was a considerable dealer in wool, had so large a family, ten children in all, that, though he was his eldest son, he could give him no better education than his own employment. He had bred him, it is true, for some time at a free-school, where, it is probable, he acquired what Latin he was master of; but the narrowness of his circumstances, and the want of his assistance at home, forced his father to withdraw him from thence, and unhappily prevented his further proficiency in that language. It is without controversy that in his works we scarce find any traces of anything that looks like an imitation of the ancients." Rowe then goes on to assume that because he did not copy from the ancients he had never read them; he has given us no facts to prove the narrowness of his father's circumstances. Malone however says there is "abundant proof" that when our author was about fourteen years old his father was "by no means in affluent or even easy circumstances." This may be. He supplies however certain extracts from the Corporation and parochial books to show that John Shakspeare was "in distressed circumstances." These are, we think, all capable of another interpretation. But there is one entry which would be decisive if it could be proved to apply to the poet's father. In 1586 a return is made into the Bailiff's Court, upon an action for debt, upon which distraint was ordered against John Shakspeare; and the return sets forth that he has nothing upon which distress can be levied. This would indeed imply a breaking up of the family, a scattering of all their worldly goods. But Malone, who has taken very laudable pains to show that there was *another* John Shakspeare in Stratford, a shoemaker, who married in 1584, and actually received a *loan out of a charity-fund* about that time, does not suggest the possibility that *this* might be the John Shakspeare who had no goods to be taken in execution. The return in the Bailiff's Court does not designate the debtor by the alderman's received title of *master*, or *magister*. The rise however of our poet's father must have been as rapid as his fall—if he had fallen; for there is a memorandum affixed to the grant of arms in 1596—"he hath lands and tenements, of good wealth and substance, 500*l*." Malone assumes that this is a fiction of the Heralds' Office. Why cannot we, who read the past thus darkly—who even know so little of the present—be content with what is obvious in private or public history?

Inquiries such as these would be worse than useless, unless they had some distinct bearing on the probable career of William Shakspeare. Of the earlier part of that career nothing can, probably, ever be known with certainty. His father added to his independent means, we have no doubt, by combining several occupations in the principal one of looking after a little land; exactly in the way which Harrison has described. Shakspeare's youth was, in all probability, one of very desultory employment, which afforded him leisure to make those extraordinary acquisitions of general knowledge which could scarcely have been made, or rather, the foundations of which could not have been established, during the active life which we believe he led from about his twentieth year. It is in this manner, we are inclined to think, that we must reconcile the contradictory traditions of his early employment. As his father, carrying on various occupations connected with his little property, might, after the lapse of years, have been a woolman in the imperfect recollection of some, and a butcher in that of others, so his illustrious son, having no very settled employment, may have been either reputed an assistant to his father, a lawyer's clerk, a schoolmaster, or a wild scapegrace, according to the imperfect chroniclers of a country-town, who, after he returned amongst them a rich man, would rejoice in gossiping over the wondrous doings of the boy. It is thus, we believe, that old Aubrey, having been amongst the parish-clerks and barbers of

Stratford some fifty years after Shakspeare was dead, tells us, "from Mr. Beeston"—"though, as Ben Jonson says of him, that he had but little Latin and less Greek, he understood Latin pretty well, for he had been *in his younger years* a schoolmaster in the country." His precocious gravity as a schoolmaster must have been as wonderful as his poetical power; for Aubrey also tells us, "this William, being inclined naturally to poetry and acting, came to London, I guess about *eighteen*, and did act exceedingly well. . . . He began *early* to make essays at dramatic poetry, which at that time was very low, and his plays took well." Here, we think, is a statement not very far from the truth,—a statement derived from Aubrey's London information. The stories of the butcher and the schoolmaster were Stratford traditions, perhaps also with some shadow of reality about them.

The earliest connected narrative of Shakspeare's life, that of Rowe, thus briefly continues the history of the boy:—"Upon his leaving school he seems to have given entirely into that way of living which his father proposed to him; and in order to settle in the world after a family manner, he thought fit to marry while he was yet very young. His wife was the daughter of one Hathaway, said to have been a substantial yeoman in the neighbourhood of Stratford." The information which Betterton thus collected as to Shakspeare's early marriage was perfectly accurate. He did marry "the daughter of one Hathaway," and he was no doubt "a substantial yeoman in the neighbourhood of Stratford." At Shuttery, a pretty village within a mile of the town, there is yet a farm-house, now divided into two tenements, where it is affirmed that Hathaway dwelt. By a copy of Court Roll, of the date of 1543, it appears that John Hathaway then held a copyhold estate at Shuttery. The identical farm-house or cottage, with its little garden and orchard, remained in the possession of the descendants of the Hathaways till 1838: it was then sold. William Shakspeare was married to Anne Hathaway before the close of the year 1582. He was then eighteen years and a half old. This was indeed an early marriage. His wife was considerably older than himself. Her tombstone states that she died "on the 6th day of August, 1623, being of the age of sixty-seven years." In 1623 Shakspeare would have been fifty-nine years old. The marriage bond and licence were discovered amongst the papers of the Consistorial Court at Worcester, in 1836; and were published, by Mr. Wheler of Stratford, in the 'Gentleman's Magazine.' The bondsmen are, Fulk Sandells, of Stratford, farmer, and John Richardson, of the same place, farmer, and they are held and bound in the sum of 40*l.*, &c. This bond is dated the 28th of November, in the 25th year of Elizabeth—that is, in 1582. The bondsmen subscribe their marks. The licence is affixed to the bond, and the remarkable part of this document is, that they were to be married "with *once* asking of the bans;" they were not to be married "without the consent" of Anne's friends. There is no record where they were married. In 1583 an entry of the baptism of "Susanna, daughter to William Shakspeare" is found in the Stratford register. The entry is the fourth of the month, the word *May* being attached to the first entry of the month. A comparison of the dates of the marriage licence and the baptism of Shakspeare's first child leads to the obvious conclusion that the same fault into which the courtly Raleigh and the high-born Elizabeth Throgmorton had fallen had disturbed the peace of the humble family of the Hathaways, and had no doubt made the mother of the imprudent boy-poet weep bitter tears. But there was instant reparation—a reparation, too, that must have been the voluntary act of him who had committed the error. The troth-plight had no doubt preceded the legal marriage. There was however no public shame. William Shakspeare was an inhabitant of Stratford, and his wife is denoted as such in the licence;—and there they dwelt when they were married;—and there their children were born;—and there they lived in their later years in opulence;—and there they died. We can see no useful purpose to be served in drawing inferences unfavourable to the general character of Shakspeare's wife from the document which has been discovered, and especially in assuming that domestic unhappiness banished him from Stratford. Early in 1585 twin children were born to him,—and they were baptized on the 2nd of February as "Hamnet and Judeth."

The cause which *drove* Shakspeare from Stratford is thus stated by Rowe:—"He had, by a misfortune common enough to young fellows, fallen into ill company, and, amongst them, some that made a frequent practice of deer-stealing engaged him more than once in robbing a park that belonged to Sir Thomas Lucy, of Charlecote, near Stratford. For this he was prosecuted by that gentleman, as he thought, somewhat too severely; and in order to revenge that ill usage he 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 for some time, and shelter himself in London." All this, amongst a great deal of falsehood, probably contained some tissue of the truth—such as the truth appeared to the good old folks of Stratford in Betterton's time, who had heard stories from their grandfathers of what a wild young fellow the rich man was who bought the largest house in Stratford. Malone undertakes to get rid of the deer-stealing tradition, by telling us that there was no *park*, properly so called, at Charlecote. It is more material that the statute of the 5th of Elizabeth, which Malone also recites, shows clearly enough that the hunting, killing, or driving out deer from any park was a trespass punished at the most with three months' imprisonment and treble damages. Sir Thomas Lucy, who was on terms of intimacy with the respectable inhabitants of Stratford, acting as arbitrator in their disputes, was not very likely to have punished the son of an alderman

of that town with any extraordinary severity, even if his deer had been taken away. To kill a buck was then an offence not quite so formidable as the shooting of a partridge in our own times. But we may judge of the value of the tradition from some papers, originally the manuscripts of Mr. Fulman, an antiquary of the seventeenth century, which, with additions of his own, were given to Corpus Christi College, Oxford, on the decease of the Rev. Richard Davies, rector of Sandford, Oxfordshire, in 1707. The gossip of Stratford had no doubt travelled to the worthy rector's locality, and rare gossip it is:—"He (Shakspeare) was much given to all unluckiness, in stealing venison *and rabbits*, particularly from Sir Lucy, *who had him OFT whipt*, and *SOMETIMES imprisoned*, and at last made him fly his native country, to his great advancement. But his revenge was so great that he is his Justice *Clodpate*; and calls him a great man, and that, in allusion to his name, bore three *lowses* rampant for his arms." Is it necessary to do more than recite such legends to furnish the best answer to them?

Although John Shakspeare, at the time of his son's early marriage, was not, as we think, "in distressed circumstances," his means were not such probably, at any time, as to have allowed him to have borne the charge of his son's family. That William Shakspeare maintained them by some honourable course of industry we cannot doubt. Scrivener or schoolmaster, he was employed. It is on every account to be believed that the altered circumstances in which he had placed himself, in connection with the natural ambition which a young man, a husband and a father, would entertain, led him to London not very long after his marriage. There, it is said, the author of 'Venus and Adonis' obtained a subsistence after the following ingenious fashion:—"Many came on horseback to the play, and when Shakspeare fled to London from the terror of a criminal prosecution, his first expedient was to wait at the door of the playhouse, and hold the horses of those who had no servants, that they might be ready again after the performance. In this office he became so conspicuous for his care and readiness, that in a short time every man as he alighted called for Will Shakspeare, and scarcely any other waiter was trusted with a horse while Will Shakspeare could be had." Steevens objects to this surpassing anecdote of the horse-holding, that the practice of *riding* to the playhouse never began, and was never continued, and that Shakspeare could not have held horses at the playhouse-door because people went thither by water. We believe there is a stronger objection still: until *Will Shakspeare* converted the English drama from a rude, tasteless, semi-barbarous entertainment, into a high intellectual feast for men of education and refinement, those who kept horses did not go to the public theatres at all. There were representations in the private houses of the great, which men of some wit and scholarship wrote, with a most tiresome profusion of unmeaning words, pointless incidents, and vague characterization,—and these were called plays; and there were "storial shows" in the public theatres, to which the coarsest melo-drama that is now exhibited at Bartholomew Fair would be as superior as Shakspeare is superior to the highest among his contemporaries. But from 1580 to 1585, when Shakspeare and Shakspeare's boys are described as holding horses at the playhouse-door, it may be affirmed that the English *drama*, such as we now understand by the term, had to be created. We believe that Shakspeare was in the most eminent degree its creator. He had, as we think, written his 'Venus and Adonis,' perhaps in a fragmentary shape, before he left Stratford. It was first printed in 1593, and is dedicated to Lord Southampton. The dedication is one of the few examples of Shakspeare mentioning a word of himself or his works:—"I know not how I shall offend in dedicating my unpolished lines to your lordship, nor how the world will censure me for choosing so strong a prop to support so weak a burden; only if your honour seem but pleased, I account myself highly praised, and vow to take advantage of all idle hours till I have honoured you with some graver labour. But if the first heir of my invention prove deformed, I shall be sorry it had so noble a godfather, and never after ear so barren a land, for fear it yield me still so bad a harvest. I leave it to your honourable survey, and your honour to your heart's content, which I wish may always answer your own wish and the world's hopeful expectation." The dedication is simple and manly. In 1593 then Shakspeare had an employment—a recognised one—for he speaks of "idle hours" to be devoted to poetry. He calls this poem too "the first heir of my invention." If it "prove deformed," he will never after ear (plough) so barren a land." Will he give up writing for the stage then? It is a remarkable proof of the low reputation of the drama that even the dramatic works which Shakspeare had unquestionably produced in 1593 were not here alluded to. The drama scarcely then aspired to the character of poetry. The "some graver labour" which he contemplated was another *poem*; and he did produce another the next year, which he also dedicated to the same friend. This was the 'Rape of Lucrece.' Perhaps these poems were published to vindicate his reputation as a writer against the jealousies of some of the contemporary dramatists. But we still think that he used the term "first heir of my invention" in its literal sense; and that 'Venus and Adonis'—or at least a sketch of it—was the first production of his imagination, his invention. It bears every mark of a youthful composition; it would have been more easily produced by the Shakspeare of eighteen or twenty than any of his earliest dramas. He had models of such writing as the 'Venus and Adonis' before him. Chaucer he must have diligently studied; Spenser had published his 'Shepherd's Calendar,' his Hymns to Love and Beauty, and other poems, when Shakspeare's genius was budding amidst his native fields. But when he wrote 'Henry VI.' or the first 'Hamlet,' where could he seek for

models of dramatic blank verse, of natural dialogue, of strong and consistent character? He had to work without models; and this was the real "graver labour" of his early manhood. It has been discovered by Mr. Collier that in 1589, when Shakspeare was only twenty-five, he was a joint proprietor in the Blackfriars theatre, with a fourth of the other proprietors below him in the list. He had, at twenty-five, a standing in society; he had the means, without doubt, of maintaining his family; as he advanced in the proprietorship of the same theatre, he realized a fortune. How had he been principally occupied from the time he left Stratford, to have become somewhat rapidly a person of importance amongst his "friends and fellows?" We think, by making himself useful to them, beyond all comparison with others, by his writings. It appears to us not improbable that even before Shakspeare left Stratford, he had attempted some play or plays which had become known to the London players. Thomas Greene, who in 1586 was the fourth on the list of the Blackfriars shareholders, was said to be Shakspeare's fellow townsman. But the young poet might have found another and more important friend in the Blackfriars company:—Richard Burbage, the great actor, who in his own day was called "the English Roscius," was also of Shakspeare's county. In a letter of Lord Southampton to the Lord Chancellor Ellesmere (written about 1608), introducing Burbage and Shakspeare to the chancellor, it is said:—"They are both of one county, and indeed almost of one town." It is perfectly clear therefore that Shakspeare, from the easy access that he might have procured to these men, would have received inviting offers to join them in London, provided he had manifested any ability which would be useful to them. That ability, we have no doubt, was manifested by the production of original plays (as well as by acting) some time before he had attained the rank and profit of a shareholder in the Blackfriars company.

The theory that Shakspeare had not produced any of his dramas till several years after he was a shareholder in the Blackfriars theatre, is generally upheld by the assertion that he is not noticed by any contemporary writer till after the period usually assigned to the commencement of his career as a dramatic author; that is, about 1592. There is an allusion to 'Hamlet' by Nashe, in 1589; and the most reasonable belief is, that this was Shakspeare's Hamlet—an earlier sketch than the early one which exists. We believe, with Dryden and Rowe, that a remarkable passage in Spenser's 'Thalia' applies to Shakspeare, and that poem was published in 1591. The application of these passages to Shakspeare is strongly disputed by those who assign the first of his plays to 1593. In an age when there were no newspapers and no reviews, it must be extremely difficult to trace the course of any man, however eminent, by the notices of the writers of his times. An author's fame then was not borne through every quarter of the land in the very hour in which it was won. More than all, the reputation of a dramatic writer could scarcely be known, except to a resident in London, until his works were committed to the press. The first play of Shakspeare's which was printed was 'The First Part of the Contention' ('Henry VI.,' Part II.), and that did not appear till 1594. Now Malone says, "In Webbe's 'Discourse of English Poetry,' published in 1586, we meet with the name of most of the celebrated poets of that time; particularly those of George Whetstone and Anthony Munday, who were dramatic writers; but we find no trace of our author, or any of his works." But Malone does not tell us that in Webbe's 'Discourse of Poetry' we meet with the following passage:—"I am humbly to desire pardon of the learned company of gentlemen, scholars, and students of the universities and inns of court, if I omit their several commendations in this place, which I know a great number of them have worthily deserved, in many rare devices and singular inventions of poetry; for neither hath it been my good hap to have seen all which I have heard of, neither is my abiding in such place where I can with facility get knowledge of their works." "Three years afterwards," continues Malone, "Puttenham printed his 'Art of English Poesy,' and in that work also we look in vain for the name of Shakspeare." The book speaks of the one-and-thirty years' space of Elizabeth's reign; and thus puts the date of the writing a year earlier than the printing. But we here look in vain for some other illustrious names besides those of Shakspeare. Malone has not told us that not one of Shakspeare's early dramatic contemporaries is mentioned—neither Marlowe, nor Greene, nor Peele, nor Kyd, nor Lyly. The author evidently derives his knowledge of "poets and poesy" from a much earlier period than that in which he publishes. He does not mention Spenser by *name*, but he does "that other gentleman who wrote the late 'Shepherd's Calender.'" The 'Shepherd's Calendar' of Spenser was published in the year 1579. Malone goes on to argue that the omission of Shakspeare's name, or any other notice of his works, in Sir John Harrington's 'Apology of Poetry,' printed in 1591, in which he takes occasion to speak of the theatre, and mentions some of the celebrated dramas of that time, is a proof that none of Shakspeare's dramatic compositions had then appeared. Does he mention 'Tamburlaine,' or 'Faustus,' or 'The Massacre of Paris,' or 'The Jew of Malta'? As he does not, it may be assumed with equal justice that none of Marlowe's compositions had appeared in 1591; and yet we know that he died in 1593. So of Lyly's 'Galathea,' 'Alexander and Campaspe,' 'Endymion,' &c. So of Greene's 'Orlando Furioso,' 'Friar Bacon,' 'James IV.' So of the 'Spanish Tragedy' of Kyd. The truth is, that Harrington, in his notice of celebrated dramas, was even more antiquated than Puttenham; and his evidence therefore in this matter is utterly worthless. But Malone has given his crowning proof that Shakspeare had not written before 1591, in the following words:—"Sir Philip Sidney, in

his 'Defence of Poesie,' speaks at some length of the low state of dramatic literature at the time he composed his treatise, but has not the slightest allusion to Shakspeare, whose plays, had they then appeared, would doubtless have rescued the English stage from the contempt which is thrown upon it by the accomplished writer: and to which it was justly exposed by the wretched compositions of those who preceded our poet. 'The Defence of Poesie' was not published till 1595, but must have been written some years before." There is one slight objection to this argument: Sir Philip Sidney was killed at the battle of Zutphen, in the year 1586; and it would really have been somewhat surprising if the illustrious author of the 'Defence of Poesy' could have included Shakspeare in his account "of the low state of dramatic literature" at the time he composed this treatise."

If the instances of the mention of Shakspeare by his contemporaries during his lifetime be not numerous, we are compensated by the fulness and explicitness of one notice—that of Francis Meres, in 1598. Short as his notice is, it is by far the most valuable contribution which we possess towards the 'Life' of Shakspeare. Meres was a master of arts of Cambridge, and subsequently entered the church. In 1558 he published a book called '*Palladis Tamia*, Wit's Treasury.' It is a collection of moral sentences from ancient writers, and it is described by Anthony Wood as "a noted schoolbook." Prefixed to it is 'A Comparative Discourse of our English Poets.' Nothing can be more decisive than this 'Comparative Discourse' as to the rank which, in 1598, Shakspeare had taken amongst the most eminent of his contemporaries.

"As the Greek tongue is made famous and eloquent by Homer, Hesiod, Euripides, AEschylus, Sophocles Pindarus, Phocylides, and Aristophanes; and the Latin tongue by Virgil, Ovid, Horace, Silius Italicus, Lucanus, Lucretius, Ausonius, and Claudianus; so the English tongue is mightily enriched, and gorgeously invested in rare ornaments and resplendent habiliments, by Sir Philip Sidney, Spenser, Daniel, Drayton, Warner, Shakspeare, Marlow, and Chapman.

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

"As Plautus and Seneca are accounted the best for comedy and tragedy among the Latins, so Shakspeare, among the English, is the most excellent in both kinds for the stage; for comedy, witness his 'Gentlemen of Verona,' his 'Errors,' his 'Love Labours Lost,' his 'Love Labours Won,' his 'Midsummer Night's Dream,' and his 'Merchant of Venice;' for tragedy, his 'Richard II.,' 'Richard III.,' 'Henry IV.,' 'King John,' 'Titus Andronicus,' and his 'Romeo and Juliet.'

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

The list of Shakspeare's plays which Meres gives in 1598 can scarcely be supposed to be a complete one. Previous to 1598 there had been only *printed* the two Parts of the 'Contention' (now know as the 'Second and Third Parts of Henry VI.),' 'Richard III.,' 'Richard II.,' and 'Romeo and Juliet.' Of the six comedies mentioned by Meres, not one had been published; neither had 'Henry IV.,' 'King John,' nor 'Titus Andronicus;' but in 1597 'Love's Labour's Lost,' and the 'First Part of Henry IV.,' had been entered in Stationers' Hall. Without the list of Meres therefore we could not have absolutely shown that the 'Two Gentlemen of Verona,' the 'Comedy of Errors,' the 'All's Well that Ends Well' (which we have every reason to think was designated as 'Love Labours Won'), the 'Midsummer Night's Dream,' the 'Merchant of Venice,' the 'King John,' and the 'Titus Andronicus,' were written and produced before 1598. The list of Meres omits the original 'Hamlet,' and the 'Taming of the Shrew,' which we may believe were produced before 1598; but, looking at Meres' list alone, how gloriously had Shakspeare earned that reputation which he had thus acquired in 1598! He was then thirty-four years of age, but he had produced all his great historical plays, with the exception of 'Henry V.' and 'Henry VIII.' He had given us 'Romeo and Juliet,' and had even "corrected and augmented" it; the stage was in possession, and the fame acknowledged, of six of his most delicious comedies. Before the close of that century we have little doubt that he had also produced 'Henry V.,' the 'Merry Wives of Windsor,' and 'Much Ado about Nothing.'

Of the plays thus produced before the close of the sixteenth century, we would assign several (not fewer than nine, including the doubtful plays) to the period from Shakspeare's early manhood to 1591. Some of those dramas may possibly then have been created in an imperfect state, very different from that in which we have received them. If the 'Titus Andronicus' and 'Pericles' are Shakspeare's, they belong to his epoch in their first state, whatever it might have been. We have no doubt that the three plays, in their original form, which we now call the three Parts of 'Henry VI.,' were his; and they also belong to this epoch. That 'Hamlet' in a very imperfect state, probably more imperfect even than the sketch in the possession of the Duke of Devonshire, is the play alluded to by Nashe in 1589, we have little doubt. In the Duke of Devonshire's copy, dated 1602, there are passages, afterwards omitted, which decidedly refer to an early state of the

stage. Amongst the comedies, 'The Two Gentlemen of Verona,' 'Love's Labour's Lost,' 'The Comedy of Errors,' and 'The Taming of the Shrew,' contain very strong external evidence, especially in the structure of their versification, that they belong to the poet's earliest period. When the time arrived that he had fully dedicated himself to the great work of his life, he had rarely ventured upon cultivating the offshoots of his early versification. The doggerel was entirely rejected—the alternate rhymes no longer tempted him by their music to introduce a measure which is scarcely akin with the dramatic spirit—the couplet was adopted more and more sparingly—and he finally adheres to the blank verse which he may almost be said to have created—in his hands certainly the grandest as well as the sweetest form in which the highest thoughts were ever unfolded to listening humanity. We have only one drama to add to this cycle, and that we believe, was 'Romeo and Juliet' in its original form.

The 'Midsummer Night's Dream' may be taken, we apprehend, as a connecting link between the dramas which belong to the first cycle and those which may be assigned to the remaining years of the sixteenth century.

We have little difficulty in determining the plays which belong to Shakspeare's *middle* period. The list of Meres, and the dates of the original editions of those plays, are our best guides. The exact years in which they first appeared can only be determined in one or two cases; and it is of little consequence if they could be determined. The earliest of the historical plays of this cycle were those which completed the great story of the wars of the Roses. 'Richard III.' naturally terminated the eventful history of the House of York; 'Richard II.' commenced the more magnificent exhibition of the fortunes of the House of Lancaster. Both these plays were printed in 1597. The two great historical plays of 'Henry IV.' which succeeded them were, no doubt, produced before 1596. 'Henry V.' undoubtedly belongs to that year; and this great song of national triumph grew out of the earlier history of the "mad-cap Prince of Wales." The three latter histories are most remarkable for the exhibition of the greatest comic power that the world has ever seen. When the genius of Shakspeare produced Falstaff, its most distinguishing characteristics, his wit and humour, had attained their extremest perfection. There is much of the same high comedy in 'King John.' This was the period which also produced those comic dramas which are most distinguished for their brilliancy of dialogue—the "fine filed phrase" which Meres describes—'The Merry Wives of Windsor,' 'Much Ado about Nothing,' and 'Twelfth Night,' 'The Merchant of Venice,' and 'All's Well that Ends Well,' belong to the more romantic class. The 'Twelfth Night' was originally thought to have been one of Shakspeare's latest plays; but it is now proved beyond a doubt that it was acted in the Middle Temple Hall in the Christmas of 1601.

The close of the sixteenth century brings us to Shakspeare's thirty-fifth year. He had then been about fifteen years in London. We are not willing to believe that his whole time was passed in the capital. It is not necessary to believe it; for the evidence, such as it is, partly gossip and partly documentary, makes for the contrary opinion. Aubrey tells us "the humour of the constable in 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' he happened to take at Grendon in Bucks, which is the road from London to Stratford, and there was living that constable about 1642, when I first came to Oxon." The honest antiquary makes a slight mistake here. There is no constable in 'A Midsummer Night's Dream;' but he probably refers to the ever-famous Dogberry or Verges. In the same paper Aubrey says, "he was wont to go to his native country once a year."

But we have more trustworthy evidence than that of John Aubrey for believing that Shakspeare, however indispensable a protracted residence in London might be to his interests and those of his family, never cast aside the link which bound him to his native town. In 1596 his only son died, and in Stratford he was buried. The parochial register gives us the melancholy record of this loss. This event, afflicting as it must have been, did not render the great poet's native town less dear to him. There his father and mother, there his wife and daughters, there his sister still lived. In 1597 he purchased the principal house in Stratford. It was built by Sir Hugh Clopton, in the reign of Henry VII., and was devised by him under the name of *the great house*. Dugdale describes it as "a fair house built of brick and timber." It appears to have been sold out of the Clopton family before it was purchased by Shakspeare. In the poet's will it is described as "all that capital messuage or tenement, with the appurtenances, in Stratford aforesaid, called the New Place." It is now incontestably proved that in the year previous to 1596 Shakspeare held a much more important rank as a sharer in the Blackfriars Theatre than in 1589; and that the Globe Theatre also belonged to the body of proprietors of which he was one. A petition to the privy council, presented in 1596, was found in the State Paper Office a few years ago, in which the names of the Petitioners stand as follows:

—"The humble petition of Thomas Pope, Richard Burbage, John Hemmings, Augustine Phillips, William Shakspeare, William Kempe, William Sly, Nicholas Tooley, and others, servants to the Right Honourable the Lord Chamberlain to her Majesty."

There is a tradition that the valuable estate of New Place was purchased by Shakspeare through the munificent assistance of Lord Southampton. It is pleasant to believe such a tradition; but it is not necessary to account for Shakspeare's property in the theatres, or even for his purchase of New Place at Stratford, that we should imagine that some extraordinary prodigality of bounty had been lavished on him. He obtained his property in the theatre by his honest labours, steadily exerted, though with unequalled facility, from his earliest manhood. The profits which he received not only enabled him to maintain his family, but to create an estate; and his was not a solitary case. Edward Alleyn, who was a contemporary of Shakspeare, a player and a theatrical proprietor, realized a fortune; and he founded Dulwich College.

It has been held, especially by the German critics, that the Sonnets of Shakspeare have not been sufficiently regarded as a store of materials for his biography; and it has been very ingeniously attempted by a recent writer, Mr. Brown, to show that the whole of these, with a few slight exceptions, are to be taken as a continuous poem or poems. He calls them Shakspeare's 'Autobiographical Poems.' But we would ask, can these one hundred and fifty-four Sonnets be received as a continuous poem upon any other principle than that the author had written them continuously? If there are some parts which are acknowledged interpolations, may there not be other parts that are open to the same belief? If there are parts entirely different in their tone from the bulk of these Sonnets, may we not consider that one portion was meant to be artificial and another real,—that the poet sometimes spoke in an assumed character, sometimes in a natural one? This theory we know could not hold if the poet had himself arranged the sequence of these verses; but as it is manifest that two stanzas have been introduced from a poem printed ten years earlier—that others are acknowledged to be out of order—and others positively dragged in without the slightest connexion—may we not carry the separation still further, and believing that the "begetter" (by which name some W. H. is honoured by the bookseller in a dedication)—"*the getter up*"—of these Sonnets had levied contributions upon all Shakspeare's private friends,"—assume that he was indifferent to any arrangement which might make each portion of the poem tell its own history? We do not therefore take up these poems to "seize a clue which innumerable passages give us, and suppose that they allude to a youth of high rank as well as personal beauty and accomplishment, in whose favour and intimacy, according to the base prejudices of the world, a player and a poet, though he were the author of 'Macbeth,' might be thought honoured;" and we do not feel "the strangeness of Shakspeare's humiliation in addressing him as a being before whose feet he crouched—whose frown he feared—whose injuries, and those of the most insulting kind, he felt and bewailed without resenting." (Hallam's *Literature of Europe*.)

The view which we take of the probable admixture of the artificial and the real in the Sonnets, arising from their supposed original fragmentary state, necessarily leads to the belief that some are accurate illustrations of the poet's situation and feelings. It is collected from these Sonnets, for example, that his profession as a player was disagreeable him; and this complaint, be it observed, might be addressed to any one of his family, or some honoured friend, such as Lord Southampton, as well as to the principal object of so many of those lyrics which contain a "leading idea, with variations:"—

"O, for my sake do you with Fortune chide,
The guilty goddess of my harmful deeds,
That did not better for my life provide
Than public means, which public manners breeds.
Thence comes it that my name receives a brand,
And almost thence my nature is subdued
To what it works in, like the dyer's hand."

But if from his professional occupation his nature was felt by him to be subdued to what it worked in,—if thence his name received a brand,—if vulgar scandal sometimes assailed him,—he had high thoughts to console him, such as were never before imparted to mortal. This was probably written in some period of dejection, when his heart was ill at ease, and he looked upon the world with a slight tinge of indifference, if not of dislike. Every man of high genius has felt something of this. It was reserved for the highest to throw it off, "like dew-drops from the lion's mane." After a very full consideration of Shakspeare's *dramatic* works, we are come to the conclusion that he possessed, above all other men, so complete a mastery over the tendency to colour general representations of life and character with personal views and circumstances, that he invariably went out of himself,—that he saw nothing through his own individual feelings,—and that thus none of his portraits are alike, because none are personifications of his own nature—his own life—his own self-consciousness. If there are some portions of his Sonnets which are conceived in an entirely different spirit, we think they are not very numerous, and must be received as evidences of personal character, habits, and feelings with great

scrupulousness.

Shakspeare during the last year or two of the sixteenth century, and the opening years of the seventeenth, was for the most part in London. In 1598 we find his townsman, Richard Quiney, writing him a letter, requesting the loan of thirty pounds. Mr. Alderman Sturley, with reference to some public business of that period, not only says in a letter that "our countryman, Mr. William Shakspeare, would procure us money," but speaks "of the friends *he* can make." Such notices are decisive as to the position Shakspeare then held in the estimation of the world. In 1601 his father died; and his burial is registered at Stratford. He appears then to have had three brothers living,—Gilbert, Richard, and Edmund.

In 1603 James I. ascended the throne of England. Lord Southampton, who had so imprudently participated in the conspiracy of Essex, was a favourite of the new king; and one almost of the first acts of the reign was a grant of a patent to the proprietors of the Blackfriars and Globe Theatres. In this patent the name of Shakspeare stands the second; the names mentioned being "Lawrence Fletcher, William Shakspeare, Richard Burbage, Augustine Phillips, John Hemmings, Henry Condell, William Sly, Robert Armin, Richard Cowley."

It would appear that at this period Shakspeare was desirous of retiring from the more laborious duties of his profession as an actor. He desired to be appointed, there is little doubt, to the office of Master of the Queen's Revels. Daniel, a brother poet, was appointed; and in a letter to the Lord Keeper, Sir Thomas Egerton, he thus speaks of one of the competitors for the office:—"It seemeth to my humble judgment that one who is the author of plays now daily presented on the public stages of London, and the possessor of no small gains, and moreover himself an actor in the King's company of comedians, could not with reason pretend to be master of the Queen's Majesty's revels, forasmuch as he would sometimes be asked to approve and allow of his own writings."

But Shakspeare continued to hold his property in the theatre. In 1608 the Corporation of London again attempted to interfere with the actors of the Blackfriars; and there being little chance of ejecting them despotically, a negotiation was set on foot for the purchase of their property. A document found by Mr. Collier amongst the Egerton papers at once determines Shakspeare's position in regard to his theatrical proprietorship. It is a valuation, containing the following item:

"Item. W. Shakespeare asketh for the wardrobe and properties of the same playhouse 500*l.*, and for his four shares, the same as his fellows Burbidge and Fletcher, viz. 933*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.* 1433 6 8"

With this document was found another—unquestionably the most interesting paper ever published relating to Shakspeare: it is a letter from Lord Southampton to Lord Ellesmere, the lord chancellor; and it contains the following passage:^[5] —

"These bearers are two of the chief of the company; one of them by name Richard Burbidge, who humbly sueth for your Lordship's kind help, for that he is a man famous as our English Roscius, one who fitteth the action to the word and the word to the action most admirably. By the exercise of his quality, industry, and good behaviour, he hath become possessed of the Black Friars playhouse, which hath been employed for plays since it was built by his father, now near fifty years ago. The other is a man no whit less deserving favour, and my especial friend, till of late an actor of good account in the company, now a sharer in the same, and writer of some of our best English plays, which, as your Lordship knoweth, were most singularly liked of Queen Elizabeth, when the company was called upon to perform before her Majesty at court, at Christmas and Shrovetide. His most gracious Majesty King James also, since his coming to the crown, hath extended his royal favour to the company in divers ways and at sundry times. This other hath to name William Shakespeare, and they are both of one county, and indeed almost of one town: both are right famous in their qualities, though it longeth not to your Lordship's gravity and wisdom to resort unto the places where they are wont to delight the public ear. Their trust and suit now is, not to be molested in their way of life whereby they maintain themselves and their wives and families (being both married and of good reputation), as well as the widows and orphans of some of their dead fellows."

We may now suppose that the great poet, thus honoured and esteemed, had retired to Stratford, retaining a property in the theatre—regularly writing for it. There is an opinion that he ceased to act after 1603. In that year his name is found amongst the performers of one of Ben Jonson's plays. But the years from 1605 to his death, in the April of 1616, were not idly spent. He was a practical farmer, we have little doubt. In 1604 he bought a moiety of the tithes of Stratford, which he would then probably collect in kind. He occupied the best house of the place; he had there his "curious knotted garden" to amuse him; and his orchard had many a pippin of his "own grafting." James I. recommended the cultivation of

mulberry-trees in England; and who has not heard of Shakspeare's mulberry-tree? Vulgar tradition at this time represents him as writing a bitter epitaph upon his friend and neighbour John Combe, as he had satirized Sir Thomas Lucy. He was doing, we think, something better. To the first half of the period between 1604 and his death may be assigned —'Macbeth,' 'Cymbeline,' 'The Winter's Tale,' and 'The Tempest.' The very recital of the names of these glorious works, associated as they are with that quiet country-town, its beautiful Avon, its meadows, and its woodlands, is enough to make Stratford a name dear and venerable in every age.

The register of marriages at Stratford-upon-Avon for the year 1607 contains the entry of the marriage of John Hall, gentleman, and Susanna Shakspeare, on the 5th June. Susanna, the eldest daughter of William Shakspeare, was now twenty-four years of age. John Hall, gentleman, a physician settled at Stratford, was in his thirty-second year. This appears in every respect to have been a propitious alliance. Shakspeare received into his family a man of learning and talent.

The season at which the marriage of Shakspeare's elder daughter took place would appear to give some corroboration to the belief that, at this period, he had wholly ceased to be an actor. It is not likely that an event to him so deeply interesting would have taken place during his absence from Stratford. It was the season of performances at the Globe. It is at this period that we can fix the date of 'Lear.' That wonderful tragedy was first published in 1608; and the title-page recites that "It was plaid before the King's Majesty at White-Hall, uppon S. Stephen's Night; in Christmas Hollidaies." This most extraordinary production might well have been the first fruits of a period of comparative leisure; when the creative faculty was wholly untrammelled by petty cares, and the judgment might be employed in working again and again upon the first conceptions, so as to produce such a masterpiece of consummate art without after-labour. The next season of repose gave birth to an effort of genius wholly different in character; but almost as wonderful in its profound sagacity and knowledge of the world as 'Lear' is unequalled for its depth of individual passion. 'Troilus and Cressida' was published in 1600.

The year 1608 brought its domestic joys and calamities to Shakspeare. In the same font where he had been baptized, forty-three years before, was baptized, on the 21st of February, his grand-daughter, "Elizabeth, daughter of John Hall." In the same grave where his father was laid in 1601, was buried his mother, "Mary Shakspeare, widow," on the 9th of September, 1608. She was the youngest daughter of Robert Arden, who died in 1556. She was probably, therefore, about seventy years of age when her sons followed her to the "house of all living."

There is a memorandum existing, by Thomas Greene, a contemporary of Shakspeare, residing at Stratford, which, under the date of November 17th, 1614, has this record:—"My cousin Shakspeare coming yesterday to town, I went to see him how he did." We cite this memorandum here, as an indication of Shakspeare's habit of occasionally visiting London; for Thomas Greene was then in the capital, with the intent of opposing the project of an inclosure at Stratford. The frequency of Shakspeare's visits to London would essentially depend upon the nature of his connexion with the theatres. He was a permanent shareholder, as we have seen, at the Blackfriars; and no doubt at the Globe also. His interests as a sharer might be diligently watched over by his fellows; and he might only have visited London when he had a new play to bring forward, the fruit of his leisure in the country. But until he disposed of his wardrobe and other properties, more frequent demands might be made upon his personal attendance than if he were totally free from the responsibilities belonging to the charge of such an embarrassing stock in trade.

There is distinct evidence that Shakspeare was not a resident in London in 1613; for in an indenture executed by him on the 10th of March, in that year, for the purchase of a dwelling-house in the precinct of the Blackfriars, he is described as "William Shakespeare of Stratforde Upon Avon in the countie of Warwick gentleman;" whilst his fellow John Hemyng, who is a party to the same deed, is described as "of London, gentleman." From the situation of the property it would appear to have been bought either as an appurtenance to the theatre, or for some protection of the interests of the sharers. In the deed of 1602 Shakspeare is also described as of Stratford-upon-Avon. It is natural that he should be so described, in a deed for the purchase of land at Stratford; but upon the same principle, had he been a resident in London in 1613, he would have been described as of London in a deed for the purchase of property in London. Yet we also look upon this conveyance as evidence that Shakspeare had in March, 1613, not wholly severed himself from his interest in the theatre.

Every one agrees that during the last three or four years of his life Shakspeare ceased to write. Yet we venture to think that every one is in error. The opinion is founded upon a belief that he only finally left London towards the close of 1613. It is evident, from his purchase of a large house at Stratford, his constant acquisition of landed property there, his active engagements in the business of agriculture, the interest which he took in matters connected with his property in

which his neighbours had a common interest, that he must have partially left London before this period. But his biographers, having fixed a period for the termination of his connexion with the active business of the theatre, assume that he became wholly unemployed; that he gave himself up, as Howe has described, to "ease, retirement, and the conversation of his friends." His income was enough, they say, to dispense with labour; and therefore he did not labour. But when the days of leisure arrived, is it reasonable to believe that the mere habit of his life would not assert its ordinary control; that the greatest of intellects would suddenly sink to the condition of an everyday man—cherishing no high plans for the future, looking back with no desire to equal and excel the work of the past? At the period of life when Chaucer began to write the 'Canterbury Tales,' Shakspeare, according to his biographers, was suddenly and utterly to cease to write. We cannot believe it. Is there a parallel case in the career of any great artist who had won for himself competence and fame? Is the mere applause of the world, and a sufficiency of the goods of life, "the end-all and the be-all" of the labours of a mighty mind? These attained, is the voice of his spiritual being to be heard no more? If those who reason thus could present a satisfactory record of the dates of all Shakspeare's works, and especially of his later works, we should still cling to the belief that some fruits of the last years of his literary industry had wholly perished. It is unnecessary, as it appears to us, to adopt any such theory. Without the means of fixing the precise date of many particular dramas, we have indisputable traces, up to this period, of the appearance of at least five-sixths of all Shakspeare's undoubted works. Are there any dramas whose individual appearance is not accounted for by those who have attempted to fix the exact chronology of other plays? There are such dramas, and they form a class. They are the three great Roman plays of 'Coriolanus,' 'Julius Caesar,' and 'Antony and Cleopatra.'

The happy quiet of Shakspeare's retreat was not wholly undisturbed by calamity, domestic and public. His brother Richard, who was ten years his junior, was buried at Stratford on the 4th of February, 1613. Of his father's family his sister Joan, who had married Mr. William Hart of Stratford, was probably the only other left. There is no record of the death of his brother Gilbert; but as he is not mentioned in the will of William, in all likelihood he died before him. Oldys, in his manuscript notes upon Langbaine, has a story of "One of Shakspeare's younger brothers, who lived to a good old age, even some years, as I compute, after the restoration of King Charles II." Gilbert was born in 1566; so that if he had lived some years after the restoration of Charles II. it is not surprising that "his memory was weakened," as Oldys reports, and that he could give "the most noted actors" but "little satisfaction in their endeavours to learn something from him of his brother." The story of Oldys is clearly apocryphal, as far as regards any brother of Shakspeare's. They were a short-lived race. His sister, indeed, survived him thirty years. The family at New Place, at this period, would be composed therefore of his wife only, and his unmarried daughter Judith; unless his elder daughter and his son-in-law formed a part of the same household, with their only child Elizabeth, who was born in 1608. The public calamity to which we have alluded was a great fire, which broke out at Stratford on the 9th of July, 1614. That Shakspeare assisted with all the energy of his character in alleviating the miseries of this calamity, and in the restoration of his town, we cannot doubt. In the same year we find him taking some interest in the project of an inclosure of the common-fields of Stratford. The inclosure would probably have improved his property, and especially have increased the value of the tithes, of the moiety of which he held a lease. The Corporation of Stratford were opposed to the inclosure. They held that it would be injurious to the poorer inhabitants, who were then deeply suffering from the desolation of the fire; and they appear to have been solicitous that Shakspeare should take the same view of the matter as themselves. His friend William Combe, then high sheriff of the county, was a principal person engaged in forwarding the inclosure. The Corporation sent their common clerk, Thomas Greene, to London, to oppose the project; and a memorandum in his hand-writing, which still remains, exhibits the business-like manner in which Shakspeare informed himself of the details of the plan. The first memorandum is dated the 17th of November, 1614, and is as follows:—"My Cosen Shakspeare comyng yesterday to town, I went to see how he did. He told me that they assured him they meant to inclose no further than to Gospel Bush, and so upp straight (leaving out pt. of the Dyngles to the field) to the gate in Clopton hedg, and take in Salisbury's peece; and that they mean in Aprill to svey. the land and then to gyve satisfaccion, and not before: and he and Mr. Hall say they think yr. will be nothyng done at all." Mr. Greene appears to have returned to Stratford in about a fortnight after the date of this memorandum, and Shakspeare seems to have remained in London; for according to a second memorandum, which is damaged and partly illegible, an official letter was written to Shakspeare by the Corporation, accompanied by a private letter from Mr. Greene, moving him to exert his influence against this plan of the inclosure:—"23 Dec. A. Hall, Lres. wrytten, one to Mr. Manyring—another to Mr. Shakspeare, with almost all the company's hands to eyther. I also wrytte myself to my Csn. Shakspear, the coppyes of all our . . . then also a note of the inconvenyances wold . . . by the enclosure." Arthur Mannering, to whom one of these letters was written by the Corporation, was officially connected with the Lord Chancellor, and then residing at his house; and from the letter to him, which has been preserved, "it appears that he was apprised of the injury to be expected from the intended inclosure; reminded of the damage that

Stratford, then 'lying in the ashes of desolation,' had sustained from recent fires; and entreated to forbear the inclosure." The letter to Shakspeare has not been discovered. The fact of its having been written leaves no doubt of the importance which was attached to his opinion by his neighbours. Truly in his later years he had

"Honour, love, obedience, troops of friends."

The younger daughter of Shakspeare was married on the 10th of February, 1616, to Thomas Quiney, as the register of Stratford shows. Thomas Quiney was the son of Richard Quiney of Stratford, whom we have seen in 1598 soliciting the kind offices of his loving countryman Shakspeare. Thomas, who was born in 1588, was probably a well-educated man. The last will of Shakspeare would appear to have been prepared in some degree with reference to this marriage. It is dated the 25th of March, 1616; but the word "Januarii" seems to have been first written and afterwards struck out, "Martii" having been written above it. It is not unlikely, and indeed it appears most probable, that the document was prepared before the marriage of Judith; for the elder daughter is mentioned as Susanna Hall,—the younger simply as Judith. To her, one hundred pounds is bequeathed, and fifty pounds conditionally. The life-interest of a further sum of one hundred and fifty pounds is also bequeathed to her, with remainder to her children; but if she died without issue within three years after the date of the will, the hundred and fifty pounds was to be otherwise appropriated. We pass over the various legacies to relations and friends to come to the bequest of the great bulk of the property. All the real estate is devised to his daughter Susanna Hall, for and during the term of her natural life. It is then entailed upon her first son and his heirs male; and in default of such issue, to her second son and his heirs male; and so on: in default of such issue, to his granddaughter Elizabeth Hall (called in the language of the time his "niece"): and in default of such issue, to his daughter Judith and her heirs male. By this strict entailment it was manifestly the object of Shakspeare to found a family. Like many other such purposes of short-sighted humanity, the object was not accomplished. His elder daughter had no issue but Elizabeth, and she died childless. The heirs male of Judith died before her. The estates were scattered after the second generation; and the descendants of his sister were the only transmitters to posterity of his blood and lineage.

"Item, I give unto my wife my second-best bed, with the furniture." This is the clause of the will upon which, for half a century, all men believed that Shakspeare recollected his wife only to mark how little he esteemed her,—to "cut her off, not indeed with a shilling, but an old bed."^[6] We had the satisfaction of first showing the utter groundlessness of this opinion; and we here briefly repeat the statement which we made in our Postscript to 'Twelfth Night,' that the wife of Shakspeare was unquestionably provided for by the natural operation of the law of England. His estates, with the exception of a copyhold tenement, expressly mentioned in his will, were *freehold*. *His wife was entitled to dower*. She was provided for amply, *by the clear and undeniable operation of the English law*. Of the houses and gardens which Shakspeare inherited from his father, she was assured of the life-interest of a third, should she survive her husband, the instant that old John Shakspeare died. Of the capital messuage called New Place, the best house in Stratford, which Shakspeare purchased in 1597, she was assured of the same life-interest, from the moment of the conveyance, provided it was a direct conveyance to her husband. That it was so conveyed we may infer from the terms of the conveyance of the lands in Old Stratford, and other places, which were purchased by Shakspeare in 1602, and were then conveyed "to the onley proper use and behoofe of the saide William Shakspeare, his heires and assignes for ever." Of a life-interest in a third of these lands also was she assured. The tenement in Blackfriars, purchased in 1614, was conveyed to Shakspeare and *three other persons*; and after his death was reconveyed by those persons to the uses of his will, "for and in performance of the confidence and trust in them reposed by William Shakspeare deceased." In this estate, certainly, the widow of our poet had not dower. It has been remarked to us that even the express mention of the second-best bed was anything but unkindness and insult; that the best bed was in all probability an heir-loom: it might have descended to Shakspeare himself from his father as an heir-loom, and, as such, was the property of his own heirs. The best bed was considered amongst the most important of those chattels which went to the heir by custom with the house.^[7]

The will of Shakspeare thus commences:—"I, William Shakspeare, of Stratford-upon-Avon, in the county of Warwick, gent., in perfect health and memory, (God be praised!) do make and ordain this my last will and testament." And yet within one month of this declaration Shakspeare is no more:

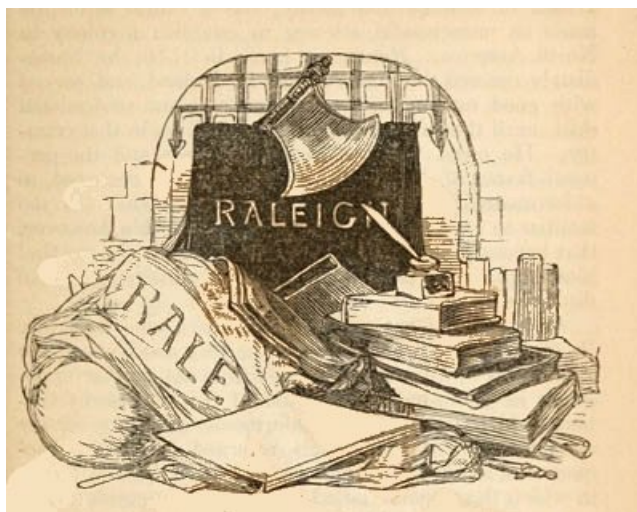
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1616. AETAT 53. DIE

23. AP.

Such is the inscription on his tomb. It is corroborated by the register of his burial:—"April 25. Will. Shakspeare, gent." Writing forty-six years after the event, the vicar of Stratford says, "Shakspeare, Drayton, and Ben Jonson had a

merry meeting, and, it seems, drank too hard, for Shakspeare died of a fever there contracted." A tradition of this nature, surviving its object nearly half a century, is not much to be relied on. But if it were absolutely true, our reverence for Shakspeare would not be diminished by the fact that he accelerated his end in the exercise of hospitality, according to the manner of his age, towards two of the most illustrious of his friends. The "merry meeting," the last of many social hours spent with the full-hearted Jonson and the elegant Drayton, may be contemplated without a painful feeling. Shakspeare possessed a mind eminently social—"he was of a free and generous nature." But, says the tradition, of half a century, "he drank too hard" at this "merry meeting." We believe that this is the vulgar colouring of a common incident. He "died of a fever there contracted." The fever that is too often the attendant upon a hot spring, when the low grounds upon a river bank have been recently inundated, is a fever that the good people of Stratford did not well understand at that day. The "merry meeting" rounded off a tradition much more effectively. Whatever was the immediate cause of his last illness, we may well believe that the closing scene was full of tranquillity and hope; and that he who had sought, perhaps more than any man, to look beyond the material and finite things of the world, should rest at the last in the "peace which passeth all understanding"—in that assured belief which the opening of his will has expressed with far more than formal solemnity:—"I commend my soul into the hands of God, my Creator, hoping, and assuredly believing, through the only merits of Jesus Christ, my Saviour, to be made partaker of life everlasting."



Very little is known concerning the youth of Sir Walter Raleigh. He was a younger son, descended of an ancient family, and was born at a farm called Hayes, near the mouth of the river Otter, in Devonshire, in the year 1552. He went to Oriel College, Oxford, at an early age, and gained high praise for the quickness and precocity of his talents. In 1569 he began his military career in the civil wars of France, as a volunteer in the Protestant cause. It is conjectured that he remained in France for more than six years, and returned to England in 1576. Soon after, he repaired to the Netherlands, and served as a volunteer against the Spaniards. In such schools, and under such leaders as Coligni and the Prince of Orange, Raleigh's natural aptitude for political and military science received the best nurture: but he was soon drawn from the war in Holland by a pursuit which had captivated his imagination from an early age—the prosecution of the discovery in New World. In conjunction with his half-brother, Sir Humphrey Gilbert, a man of courage and ability, and a skilful sailor, he made an unsuccessful attempt to establish a colony in North America. Returning home in 1579, he immediately entered the queen's army in Ireland, and served with good esteem for personal courage and professional skill, until the suppression of the rebellion in that country. He owed his introduction to court, and the personal favour of Elizabeth, as is traditionally reported, to a fortunate and well-improved accident, which is too familiar to need repetition here. It is probable, however, that his name and talents were not unknown, for we find him employed almost immediately in certain matters of diplomacy.

Among the cares and pleasures of a courtier's life, Raleigh preserved his zeal for American discovery. He applied

his own resources to the fitting out another expedition in 1583, under command of Sir Humphrey Gilbert, which proved more unfortunate than the former one: two out of the vessels returned home in consequence of sickness, and two were wrecked, including that in which the admiral sailed; and the only result of the enterprise was the taking possession of Newfoundland in the name of England. Still Raleigh's desire for American adventure was not damped. The Continent northward of the Gulf of Florida was at this time unknown. But Raleigh, upon careful study of the best authorities, had concluded that there was good reason for believing that a considerable tract of land did exist in that quarter; and with the assent of the queen in council, from whom he obtained letters patent, granting to himself and his heirs, under certain reservations, property in such countries as he should discover, with a right to provide for their protection and administration, he fitted out two ships, which sailed in April, 1584. The first land which they made was an island named Okakoke, running parallel to the coast of North Carolina. They were well received by the natives, and returned to England in the following autumn highly pleased. Nor was less satisfaction felt by Raleigh, or even by the queen, who conferred on him the honour of knighthood, a title which was then in high esteem, inasmuch as it was bestowed by that wise princess with a most frugal and just discrimination. She also gave him a very lucrative mark of favour, in the shape of a patent for licensing the selling of wine throughout the kingdom; and she directed that the new country, in allusion to herself, should be called Virginia. Raleigh did not think it politic, perhaps was not allowed, to quit the court to take charge in person of his undertaking; and those to whom he intrusted the difficult task of directing the infant colony appear to have been unequal to their office. It is not necessary to pursue the history of an enterprise which proved unsuccessful, and in which Sir Walter personally bore no share. He showed his earnestness by fitting out several expeditions, which must have been a heavy drain upon his fortune. But he is said to have derived immense wealth from prizes captured from the Spaniards; and we may here observe that the lavish magnificence in dress, especially in jewels, for which Raleigh was remarkable, even in the gorgeous court of Elizabeth (his state dress is said to have been enriched with jewels to the value of 60,000*l.*), may be considered less as an extravagance than as a safe and portable investment of treasure. A mind less active might have found employment more than enough in the variety of occupations which pressed upon him at home. He possessed a large estate, granted out of forfeited lands in Ireland; but this was always a source rather of expense than of profit, until, in 1601, he sold it to the Earl of Cork. He was Seneschal of the Duchies of Cornwall and Exeter, and held the wardenship of the Stannaries; and in 1586, as well as formerly in 1584, we find that he possessed a seat in parliament. In 1587 the formidable preparation of the Spanish Armada withdrew the mind of Raleigh, as of all Englishmen, from objects of minor importance, to the defence of their country. He was a member of the council of war directed to prepare a general scheme of defence, and held the office of Lieutenant-General of Cornwall, in addition to the charge of the Isle of Portland: but as on this occasion he possessed no naval command, he was not actively engaged in the destruction of that mighty armament. In 1589 he served as a volunteer in the expedition of Norris and Drake to Portugal, of which some account has been given in the life of the latter. Nor were his labours unrewarded even in that unfortunate enterprise; for he captured several prizes, and received the present of a gold chain from the queen, in testimony of her approbation of his conduct.

Soon after these events, Raleigh retired to his Irish property, being driven from court, according to some authorities, by the enmity of the Earl of Essex, then a young man just rising into favour. He there renewed a former intimacy with the poet Spenser, who, like himself, had been rewarded with a grant of land out of forfeited estates, and then resided at Kilcolman Castle. Spenser has celebrated the return of his friend in the beautiful pastoral 'Colin Clout's come home again;' and in that, and various passages of his works, he has made honourable mention of the highly poetic spirit which enabled the 'Shepherd of the Ocean,' as he is there denominated, to appreciate the merit of the 'Fairy Queen,' and led him to promote the publication of it by every means in his power. The loss of Raleigh's court favour, if such there was, could not have been of long duration on this occasion. But he incurred more serious displeasure in consequence of a private marriage contracted with Elizabeth Throgmorton, one of the queen's maids of honour, a lady of beauty and accomplishments, who proved her worth and fidelity in the long train of misfortunes which beset the latter years of Raleigh's life. In consequence of this intrigue, he was committed to the Tower. One or two amusing anecdotes are related of the devices which he employed to obtain forgiveness, by working on that vanity which was the queen's chief foible. He succeeded in appeasing his indignant mistress so far as to procure his release; and about the same time, in 1594, she granted to him the valuable manor of Sherborne, in Dorsetshire: but though she requited his services, she still forbade his appearance at court, where he now held the office of captain of the yeomen of the guard. Raleigh was peculiarly fitted to adorn a court by his imposing person, the graceful magnificence of his taste and habits, the elegance of his manners, and the interest of his conversation. These accomplishments were sure passports to the favour of Elizabeth; and he improved to the utmost the constant opportunities of intercourse with her which his post afforded, insomuch that, except the Earls of Leicester and Essex, no one ever seems to have stood higher in her graces. But Elizabeth's jealousy on the subject of

her favourites' marriages is well known, and her anger was lasting, in proportion to the value which she set on the incense of Raleigh's flattery. He retired, on his disgrace, to his new estate, in the improvement and embellishment of which he felt great interest. But though deeply alive to the beauties of nature, he had been too long trained to a life of ambition and adventure to rest contented in the tranquil routine of a country life; and during this period of seclusion, he again turned his thoughts to his favourite subject of American adventure, and laid the scheme of his first expedition to Guiana, in search of the celebrated El Dorado, the fabled seat of inexhaustible wealth. Having fitted out, with the assistance of other private persons, a considerable fleet, Raleigh sailed from Plymouth, February 6, 1595. He left his ships in the mouth of the river Orinoco, and sailed four hundred miles into the interior in boats. It is to be recorded to his honour that he treated the Indians with great kindness; which, contrasted with the savage conduct of the Spaniards, raised so friendly a feeling towards him, that for years his return was eagerly expected, and at length was hailed with delight. The hardships of the undertaking, and the natural advantages of the country which he explored, are eloquently described in his own account of the 'Discovery of Guiana.' But the setting in of the rainy season rendered it necessary to return, without having reached the promised land of wealth; and Raleigh reaped no other fruit of his adventure than a certain quantity of geographical knowledge, and a full conviction of the importance of colonising and taking possession of the newly-discovered region. This continued through life to be his favourite scheme; but neither Elizabeth nor her successor could be induced to view it in the same favourable light.

On reaching England, he found the queen still unappeased; nor was he suffered to appear at court, and he complains in pathetic terms of the cold return with which his perils and losses were requited. But he was invested with a high command in the expedition of 1596, by which the Spanish fleet was destroyed in the harbour of Cadiz; and to his judgment and temper in overruling the faulty schemes proposed by others the success of that enterprise was chiefly due. Indeed his services were perhaps too important, and too justly appreciated by the public, for his own interests; for the great and general praise bestowed on him on this occasion tended to confirm a jealousy of long standing on the part of the commander-in-chief, the Earl of Essex; and it was probably owing to that favourite's influence that Raleigh was still forbidden the queen's presence. Essex, and the secretary of state, Sir Robert Cecil, regarded each other with mutual distrust and dislike. Cecil and Raleigh were connected by ties of common interest, and, as the latter supposed, of friendship. Still Raleigh found the interest of the minister too weak to serve his purpose, while the interest of the favourite was employed against him; and, as the only method of effecting his own restoration to the queen's favour, he undertook to work a reconciliation between these two powerful rivals. In this he succeeded, to the great admiration of all spectators; and the fruit of his policy was seen in his readmission to the execution of his official duties at court, June 1, 1597. In the following August he was appointed Rear-Admiral in the expedition called the Island Voyage, of which Essex held the chief command. The slight successes which were obtained were again due to the military talents of Raleigh; the main objects of the voyage were lost through the earl's inexperience.

From this time to the death of the queen Raleigh enjoyed an uninterrupted course of favour. The ancient enmity between Essex and himself was indeed renewed, and that with increased rancour; but the indiscretions of the favourite had greatly weakened his influence. Raleigh and Cecil spared no pains to undermine him, and were in fact the chief workers of his ruin. This is perhaps the most unamiable passage in Raleigh's life; and the only excuse to be pleaded for him is, the determined enmity of that unfortunate nobleman. This fault, however, brought a slow but severe punishment with it; for the death of Essex dissolved the tie which held together Cecil and himself. Neither could be content to act second to the other; and Raleigh's high reputation, and versatile as well as profound abilities, might well alarm the secretary for his own supremacy. The latter took the surest way of establishing his power prospectively. Elizabeth was now old: Cecil took no steps to diminish the high esteem in which she held Sir Walter Raleigh, but he secretly laboured to prejudice her successor against him, and he succeeded to his wish. Very soon after the accession of James I., Raleigh's post of captain of the guard was taken from him; and his patent of wines was revoked, though not without a nominal compensation being made. To complete his ruin, it was contrived to involve him in a charge of treason. Most writers have concurred in speaking of this passage of history as inexplicable: it is the opinion of the last historian of Raleigh, Mr. Tytler, that he has found sufficient evidence for regarding the whole plot as a device of Cecil's, and he has supported this opinion by cogent arguments. Lord Cobham, a violent and ambitious but weak man, had engaged in private dealings with the Spanish ambassador, which brought him under the suspicion of the government. By a device of Cecil's (we here follow the account of Mr. Tytler) he was induced, in a fit of anger, and in the belief that Raleigh had given information against him, to accuse Sir Walter himself of being privy to a conspiracy against the government. This charge Cobham retracted, confirmed, and retracted again, behaving in so equivocal a manner, that no reliance whatever can be placed on any of his assertions. But as the king was afraid of Raleigh as much as the secretary hated him, this vague charge, unsupported by other evidence, was made sufficient to commit him to the Tower; and, after being plied with

private examinations, in which nothing criminal could be elicited, he was brought to trial, November 17, 1603. For an account of that memorable scene we shall refer to Mr. Jardine's 'Criminal Trials,' vol. i. It is reported to have been said by one of the judges who presided over it, on his death-bed, that "the justice of England had never been so degraded and injured as by the condemnation of Sir Walter Raleigh." The behaviour of the victim himself was the object of universal admiration, for the tempered mixture of patience and noble spirit with which he bore the oppressive measure dealt to him. He had before been unpopular; but it was recorded by an eye-witness that "he behaved himself so worthily, so wisely, and so temperately, that in half a day the mind of all the company was changed from the extremest hate to the extremest pity."

The sentence of death thus unfairly and disgracefully obtained was not immediately carried into execution. James was not satisfied with the evidence adduced on the trial; and believing at the same time that Raleigh had been plotting against him, he set his royal wit to dive into the mystery. Of the singular scene which our British Solomon devised it is not necessary to speak, since Raleigh was not an actor in it. But as no more evidence could be obtained against him even by the king's sagacity, he was reprieved, and remanded to the Tower, where the next twelve years of his life were spent in confinement. Fortunately, he had never ceased to cultivate literature with a zeal not often found in the soldier and politician, and he now beguiled the tedium of his lot by an entire devotion to those studies which before had only served to diversify his more active and engrossing pursuits. Of his poetical talents we have already made short mention: to the end of life he continued the practice of pouring out his mind in verse, and there are several well-known and beautiful pieces expressive of his feelings in prison, and in the anticipation of immediate death, especially 'The Lie,' and the beautiful little poem called 'The Pilgrimage.' He also possessed a strong turn for mathematics, and studied them with much success in the society and under the guidance of his friend Thomas Hariot, one of the most accomplished mathematicians of the age. Chemistry was another favourite pursuit, in which, according to the standard of his contemporaries, he made great progress. But the most important occupation of his imprisonment was the composition of his 'History of the World.' Notwithstanding the quaintness of the style and the discursive manner in which the subject is treated, it is impossible to read this volume without admiring the wonderful extent of the author's reading, not only in history, but in philosophy, theology, and even the ponderous and untempting stores of Rabbinical learning. Many of the chapters relate to subjects which few persons would expect to find in a history of the world; yet these will often be found among the most interesting and characteristic portions of the book; and its deep learning is relieved and set off by passages of genuine eloquence, which display to the best advantage the author's rich imagination and grasp of mind. The work extends from the Creation to the end of the second Macedonian war. Raleigh meant to bring it down to modern times; but the untimely death of Henry, Prince of Wales, for whose use it was composed, deprived him of the spirit to proceed with so laborious an undertaking. He enjoyed the confidence of that generous youth in a remarkable degree, and maintained a close correspondence with him on civil, military, and naval subjects. Several discourses on these topics, addressed to the prince, will be found in the editions of Raleigh's works. Henry repaid these services with sincere friendship and admiration; and we may presume that his adviser looked forward to that friendship, not only for a cessation of misfortune, but for a more brilliant period of favour and power than he had yet enjoyed. Fortunately, however, this calamity was preceded by the death of his arch-enemy, Cecil; and through the mediation of the Duke of Buckingham, employed in consideration of 1500*l.* paid to his uncles, Sir William, Sir John, and Sir Edward Villiers, Raleigh was released from the Tower, in March, 1615; and obtained permission to follow up his long-cherished scheme of establishing a colony in Guiana and working a goldmine, of which he had ascertained the existence and situation.

The terms on which this licence was granted are remarkable. He was not pardoned, but merely let loose on the engagement of his friends, the Earls of Arundel and Pembroke, that he should return to England. Neither did James contribute to the expense of the undertaking, though it was stipulated that he was to receive a fifth part of the bullion imported. The necessary funds were provided out of the wreck of Raleigh's fortune (his estate of Sherborne had been forfeited), and by those private adventurers who were willing to risk something in reliance on his experience and judgment. A fleet of fourteen sail was thus provided, and Raleigh, by letters under the privy seal, was appointed commander-in-chief and governor of the intended colony. He relied, it is said, on the full powers granted him by this commission as necessarily including a remission of all past offences, and therefore neglected to sue out a formal pardon, which at this period probably would hardly have been denied him. The results of this disastrous voyage must be shortly given. Raleigh sailed March 28, 1617, and reached the coast of Guiana in November following. Being himself disabled by sickness from proceeding farther, he dispatched a party to the mine under the command of Captain Keymis, an officer who had served in the former voyage to Guiana. But during the interval which had elapsed since Raleigh's first discovery of that country, the Spaniards had extended their settlements into it, and in particular had built a town called Santa Thome, in the immediate neighbourhood of the mine in question. James, with his usual duplicity, while he

authorised the expedition, revealed every particular connected with it to the Spanish ambassador. The English, therefore, were expected in the Orinoco, and preparation had been made for repelling them by force. Keymis and his men were unexpectedly attacked by the garrison of Santa Thome, and a sharp contest ensued, in which the English gained the advantage, and burnt the town. In this action Raleigh's eldest son was killed. The Spaniards still occupied the passes to the mine, and after an unsuccessful attempt to dislodge them, Keymis abandoned the enterprise, and returned to the ships. Raleigh's correspondence expresses in affecting terms his grief and indignation at this double misfortune; the loss of a brave and promising son, and the destruction of the hopes which he had founded on this long-cherished adventure. On his return to England, he found himself marked out for a victim to appease the resentment of the Spanish court, to which he had long been an object of fear and hatred. He quietly surrendered himself to Sir Lewis Stewkeley, who was sent to Plymouth to arrest him, and commenced the journey to London under his charge. But his mind fluctuated between the desire to confront his enemies, and a sense of the hopelessness of obtaining justice; and he was at last entrapped by the artifices of the emissaries of government who surrounded him into an attempt to escape, in which he was arrested and committed to close custody in the Tower. Here his conversation and correspondence were narrowly watched, in the hopes that a treasonable understanding with the French government, from which he had received the offer of an asylum in France, might be established against him. His conduct abroad had already been closely scrutinised, in the hope of finding some act of piracy, or unauthorised aggression against Spain, for which he might be brought to trial. Both these hopes failing, and his death, in compliment to Spain, being resolved on, it was determined to carry into effect the sentence passed fifteen years before, from which he had never been legally released; and a warrant was accordingly issued to the judges, requiring them to order execution. The case was a novel one, and threw that learned body into some perplexity. They determined, however, that after so long an interval execution could not be granted without allowing the prisoner the opportunity of pleading against it; and Raleigh was therefore brought to the bar of the Court of King's Bench, October 28, 1618. The record of his conviction having been read, he was asked whether he could urge anything why the sentence should not be carried into effect. He insisted on the nature of his late commission, and on that plea being overruled, submitted with his usual calmness and dignity. The execution, with indecent haste, was ordered to take place on the following morning. In this last stage of life, his greatness of mind shone with even more than its usual lustre. Calm, and fearless without bravado, his behaviour and speech expressed the piety and resignation of a Christian, with the habitual coolness of one who has braved death too often to shrink at its approach. The accounts of his deportment on the scaffold effectually refute the charges of irreligion and atheism, which some writers have brought against him, unless we make up our minds to believe him an accomplished hypocrite. He spoke at considerable length, and his dying words have been faithfully reported. They contain a denial of all the serious offences laid to his charge, and express his forgiveness of those even who had betrayed him under the mask of friendship. After delivering this address, and spending some time in prayer, he laid his head on the block, and breathing a short private prayer, gave the signal to the executioner. Not being immediately obeyed, he partially raised his head, and said, "What dost thou fear? Strike, man!" and underwent the fatal blow without shrinking or alteration of position. He died in his sixty-sixth year.

Raleigh sat in several parliaments, and took an active part in the business of the house. His speeches, preserved in the Journals, are said by Mr. Tytler to be remarkable for an originality and freedom of thought far in advance of the time. His expression was varied and animated, and his powers of conversation remarkable. His person was dignified and handsome, and he excelled in bodily accomplishments and martial exercises. He was very fond of paintings, and of music; and, in literature as in art, he possessed a cultivated and correct taste. He was one of those rare men who seem qualified to excel in all pursuits alike; and his talents were set off by an extraordinary laboriousness and capacity of application. As a navigator, soldier, statesman, and historian, his name is intimately and honourably linked with one of the most brilliant periods of British history.

The works of Oldys, Birch, Cayley, Mrs. Thompson, and Mr. Tytler, may be consulted concerning this remarkable person. The Life by the last-named gentleman, published in the 'Edinburgh Cabinet Library,' is the most recent; and the industry of the author has enabled him to gain a clue to some points which before had been imperfectly understood. A list of Raleigh's numerous works is given in the 'Biographia Britannica.' They will be found collected in eight volumes, in the Oxford edition of 1829. Several of his MSS. are preserved in the British Museum.



There is no life the chronological course of which is more distinctly known than that of Camden; but it is the life merely of a student and a man of letters, consisting mostly in the history of his publications, and affording scarcely any anecdotal matter. Nor did he take part in any of the public transactions of his time, except only as an observer and recorder. It thus happens that in a case in which the materials of biography are unusually ample and satisfactory, the biography itself must still be but dry and meagre. Everything can be told, but there is not much of general interest to tell.

William Camden was a Londoner born. His birth took place on the 2nd of May, 1551, in the Old Bailey, at the house of his father, Samson Camden, who was a member of the Company of Painter-Stainers. This company, according to Maitland, the historian of London, still use every Saint Luke's Day, at the election of the master, a silver cup and cover which was given to them by the great antiquary, as is recorded upon it in a Latin inscription, in which he styles himself "Gul. Camdenus, Clarenceux, filius Samsonis, Pictoris, Londinensis" (William Camden, Clarenceux, son of Samson, painter, of London); the old master drinks out of it to the new one. It appears from Camden's will that he bequeathed the company sixteen pounds to buy them a piece of plate, upon which he directed the above inscription to be engraved. Gibson says that he left them a gilt bowl of sixteen pounds; but this would be a somewhat inconvenient weight for a drinking-cup. Camden's father was a Staffordshire man, having been born in Lichfield, whence he was sent, when very young, to London. His mother's family he has himself commemorated in his *Britannia*, where, in noticing the town of Wirkinton, or Workington, in Cumberland, he says (in Bishop Gibson's English translation), "It is now the seat of the ancient knightly family of the Curwens, descended from Gospatric, Earl of Northumberland, who took that name, by covenant, from Culwen, a family of Galloway, the heir whereof they had married. Here they have a stately castle-like seat; and from this family (excuse the vanity) I myself am descended by the mother's side."

He is said, in more than one of the earlier accounts of him, to have been for some time one of the Blue-coat boys. The school of Christ's Hospital was established by King Edward VI. the year after Camden came into the world; but the records perished in the great fire of 1666; and it is now impossible to ascertain what truth there may be in the statement that he was a scholar there. He says nothing to that effect himself in a paper of brief memoranda of his boyhood which he left behind him. But he there notes that at twelve years of age he was attacked by the plague, upon which he was sent for country air to Islington; and that when he recovered, and returned home, he was put to St. Paul's School.

From St. Paul's he proceeded to the University of Oxford, where he was entered a servitor at Magdalen College, in 1566. Missing the place of what is called a demy in that college (a scholar or half-fellow), he removed to Broadgate Hall, now Pembroke College; and here he remained two years and a half. It is said that formerly, and perhaps still, the graces used at Pembroke College were composed by Camden when he was a member of that society. Thence, after a time, he transferred himself to Christ Church; and it appears to have been while he was here that he stood candidate for a fellowship in All Souls, which, in a letter written many years after to Archbishop Usher, he affirms that he lost by the opposition of the Popish faction, then predominant in the University, for his known attachment to the established religion. It was perhaps on the same account that, when in 1570 he petitioned the Congregation of Regents to be admitted Bachelor of Arts, his petition was refused. His teachers at Oxford to whom he is stated to have been most indebted were, first, the learned Dr. Thomas Cooper, author of the Latin Thesaurus, and afterwards Bishop of Lincoln, and then of

Winchester, who, when Camden came up to the university, was master of the grammar-school attached to Magdalen College; and afterwards Dr. Thomas Thornton, through whom it was that he was removed to Broadgate Hall, and who, when he was afterwards promoted to a canonry in Christ Church, carried Camden with him, and gave him accommodation in his own lodgings. Camden has made mention of his having been a student of Christ Church in his *Britannia*, where, describing the ruined castle of Wallingford, he writes:—"We much wondered at its greatness and magnificence when we were boys, and retired thither from Oxford (for it was a retiring-place for the students of Christ Church)."

Bishop Gibson's account is, that "after five years spent in the University, and two remarkable disappointments in his endeavours to settle himself there, his circumstances put him under a necessity of leaving that place." Upon this he came to London, in the year 1571. He has himself stated in one of his tracts that, after leaving the University, carried by his antiquarian zeal, which had already taken possession of him while at Oxford, he went about and surveyed a considerable part of England with his own eyes; and it is not known in what other way he was employed for the next four or five years. Ever from the time he began to turn his mind to any sort of study, the investigation of antiquities, he tells us, had been his chief delight; to this, he says, I was by I know not what natural inclination wholly given; thither nature drew me whether I would or no; so that when I was a boy at school whatever seemed to look in that direction caught my instant and eager attention; and, when a young man at the University, whenever the regular business of the place left me an unoccupied moment, to that pursuit I applied all my thoughts and every power of my mind.

This inclination, and the talents which he had shown, had already before he left Oxford procured him several friends well able to advance him in the world. Among his acquaintance at the University who were united to him by their common love of antiquities were the two brothers, Richard and George Carew, the former the author of the *Survey of Cornwall*, the latter afterwards Earl of Totness. Another of his patrons at this time was the all-accomplished Sir Philip Sidney. But the persons to whom he was most indebted appear to have been Dr. Gabriel Goodman, Dean of Westminster, and Godfrey Goodman, either the brother or the nephew of the Dean. He has mentioned the Dean in his *Britannia* as having been a particular patron both to himself and to his studies; and according to Anthony Wood, who professes to write on the authority of a manuscript in the Bodleian Library written by Dr. Godfrey Goodman, Bishop of Gloucester, the son of the Dean's nephew, the latter both supplied him with books and defrayed the expense of his journeys, which would seem to have been for some years nearly the whole expense of his living. It was probably by the advice or invitation of the Goodmans that he came to London.

In 1573 he again applied for his degree of Bachelor of Arts; and he seems now to have obtained it, although he never went through the form of what is called completing it by determinations. Nevertheless, we find him some years afterwards describing himself as in full possession of the degree. Meanwhile, the patronage of Dean Goodman procured him in 1575 the place of second master of Westminster School; and in this situation he remained for seventeen or eighteen years. He discharged his duties as a teacher with great diligence and ability; and he performed one important literary service in connexion with his office by the preparation of a compendium of Greek Grammar ('*Grammatices Graecae Institutio Compendiaria*'), which, however, was not published till 1597. This was long the common Grammar of the Greek language used in all the schools of England, as Lilly's was the Latin Grammar. It is said, however, to be in the main only an abridgment, although with many improvements, of a Grammar compiled by Dr. Edward Grant, who was head master of Westminster School while Camden was second master. Grant lived till September or October, 1601; but he resigned the school in February, 1593, and Camden then succeeded him as head master. In this new position he continued to be connected with Westminster School for five years longer.

All this while, however, his reputation as a master of British antiquities had been growing and spreading, not only in his own country, but over all Europe. He has himself told us, in the same Latin tract from which we have already translated some of his statements about his early addictedness to the study of antiquities, that, when he found himself engaged in the laborious duties of a teacher, he endeavoured to withdraw his mind from its favourite pursuit, but could not. His old inclination could not be subdued; whenever he had a holiday, it was given to his former inquiries, and his vacations were usually spent in visiting one distant part of the island or another in quest of antiquarian information. Thus, it appears from his own brief memoranda that in 1582 he made a journey into Yorkshire, going down by the east coast and returning through Lancashire; that in 1589 he was in Devonshire; and that the next year he went to Wales, in company with his friend the learned Dr. Francis Godwin, afterwards Bishop, first of Llandaff and then of Hereford, and the author of the *Catalogue of English Bishops*. In 1594, again, we find him making an excursion to Salisbury and Wells, and returning by Oxford; and in 1596 travelling northward as far as to Carlisle, accompanied by his friend Sir Robert Cotton.

Even before the publication of his great work his name had become so eminent that learned foreigners who visited England were wont to seek his acquaintance, and others entered into correspondence with him. Thus Abraham Ortelius, the great restorer of geography, as Camden terms him, is stated to have come over from the Low Countries to consult him as the chief oracle that he could apply to on the subject of British history; and, according to his own account, it was mainly by the persuasion of Ortelius that he was induced to think of digesting his antiquarian and topographical collections into a complete account of his native country. Another of his foreign friends was the learned President Brisson, of the Parlement of Paris, who made his acquaintance when he was here in 1581. His correspondence with the illustrious De Thou commenced at a later date.

His great work, the *Britannia*, appeared at last, in Latin, in a small square octavo, in 1586. The original title is, at full length, 'Britannia, sive florentissimorum Regnorum Angliae, Scotiae, Hiberniae, et Insularum adjacentium, ex intima antiquitate, Chorographical Descriptio' (that is, Britain, or a Chorographical Description of the most flourishing Kingdoms of England, Scotland, Ireland, and the adjacent Islands, from the remotest antiquity). From a pocket volume Camden's *Britannia* has grown in the latest English edition into four huge folios; but, while much has in this way been added to the fulness of its details, and also something to its accuracy, the original character of the work has been altogether changed or disguised. It is now a vast repository of every thing which its successive editors have been able to collect connected with its subject, and which they could contrive to fasten in any way upon the original text. As it came from the hands of its author, the *Britannia* was a work of art, prepared with all the attention to selection, economy, and finish which that character implies. It was apparently designed by Camden for foreign readers more than for his own countrymen; and therefore he only inserted in it what was likely to be universally interesting, or to be deemed worthy of attention by all scholars in every country whom the subject might attract. He certainly never intended it for a complete dictionary or cyclopaedia of British topography and antiquities, or for anything in the nature of such a compilation. What he aimed at was the production of a classic work, in which the manner should go for as much as the matter. The *Britannia* may for many purposes be a more useful book in its present form than it was as Camden left it; but it has no longer any pretensions to be what it was his ambition to make it. Persons, accordingly, who take their notions of Camden from either Gough's or Gibson's English '*Britannia*,' are apt to miss the very thing which principally distinguishes him among and sets him at the head of all our English antiquaries. In felicity of style, indeed, rising at times to eloquence and poetic fancy, his predecessor Leland surpasses him; but Leland, with all his learning and industry, has produced no work so carefully elaborated throughout as the *Britannia*; neither, perhaps, is his judgment equal to his taste and scholarship. In the combination of elegance, accuracy, and sagacity, Camden stands unrivalled. He is absolutely without any of the besetting sins or weaknesses of the common tribe of antiquaries; he is never either prosy, or frivolous, or crotchety, but always looks at his subject from the point which affords the largest view of it, as well as with a remarkably clear and searching eye. He is commonly designated the learned Camden; and he was eminently learned, not only among antiquaries, but among scholars; but the qualities in which he was pre-eminent were acuteness and good sense. We would style him the sagacious Camden. He is not only always up to the highest intelligence of his time, but frequently beyond it. His conclusions and conjectures have occasionally that something of the prophetic which more or less marks the speculations of every foremost thinker, and which it sometimes requires the lapse of centuries to verify.

Even under the eye and in the hands of the author, however, the *Britannia* in the course of successive editions considerably outgrew its original dimensions. The number of re-impressions of the work that were called for in Camden's lifetime strikingly attests the estimation in which it was held. A second edition of it appeared at London, in 1587; a third, in 1590; a fourth (the first in 4to.), in 1594; a fifth, in 1600; a sixth (in folio), in 1607; besides two Frankfort editions, both exact copies of the third London edition, in 1590 and in 1616; and an epitome of the 1607 edition at Amsterdam in 1617. The first edition of Philemon Holland's English translation of it was also brought out (in folio) in 1610, most probably under Camden's sanction. "When Mr. Camden published the last edition of his *Britannia*," says Bishop Gibson, "the book met with so much applause and commendation from the learned, that they knew no title great enough for the author. He was styled the Varro, the Strabo, and the Pausanias of Britain; and his work universally owned to be the most complete and accurate in its kind that had appeared in any nation."

In February 1589, Camden had been presented by his friend Dr. John Piers, then Bishop of Salisbury, to the prebend of Ilfarcomb, Ilfarcomb, or Ilfordcome (on the north coast of Devonshire), a preferment which could then be held by laymen; and in 1593, as we have mentioned, he had succeeded to the head mastership of Westminster school, on the resignation of Dr. Grant. In a letter written in his old age to Archbishop Usher, he takes credit to himself for the number of distinguished persons who had been there trained by him in the light of the true religion. "God," he says, "so blessed my labours, that the now Bishops of London [King], Durham [Neal], and St. Asaph [Parry], to say nothing of persons

employed now in eminent places abroad, and many of especial note at home, of all degrees, do acknowledge themselves to have been my scholars. Yea, I brought there to church divers gentlemen of Ireland, as Walshes, Nugents, O'Railey, Shees, the eldest son of the Archbishop of Casiles [Cashell], Peter Lombard, a merchant's son of Waterford, a youth of admirable docility, and others bred popishly and so affected."

His friends, however, naturally desired to see him placed in a situation of less labour, and where he would have more leisure for the studies by which he was most of all men qualified to benefit the world. It appears that he had been at one time offered, it is supposed by Burghley, the place of a master in the now abolished Court of Requests, but had refused it. In September, 1598, however, on the death of Richard Leigh, Clarenceux King of Arms, Sir Fulk Grevil, who was an intimate friend of Camden's, asked the office for him from the queen, and at once obtained it; he was made Richmond Herald on the 22nd of October, and Clarenceux King on the 23rd. "I know not," he says in his letter to Usher, "who may justly say that I was ambitious, who contented myself in Westminster School when I writ my Britannia and eleven years afterwards, who refused a Mastership of Requests offered, and then had the place of a King of Arms without any suit cast upon me. I did never set sail after present preferments, or desired to soar higher by others. I never made suit to any man—no, not to his majesty, but for a matter of course incident to my place; neither (God be praised) I needed, having gathered a contented sufficiency by my long labours in the school." As for his promotion to his office in the College of Heralds, Gibson states, that "till the whole business was over he did not so much as think of the thing, but the news of his success was a surprise to him. And when the Lord Burghley, who was his great patron, expressed his dissatisfaction that he had not applied to him upon that occasion, he returned this answer, that it was purely a thought of Sir Fulk Grevil, without so much as his knowledge."

There was one person, nevertheless, to whom Camden's promotion seemed the very reverse of a fit or proper appointment. This was Mr. Rafe Brookesmouth, who had changed the name he was born with to what he deemed the more modish form of Brooke; and who holding the office of York Herald in the College of Arms, together with a great conceit of his own superior knowledge in his art or profession, most probably thought that he ought to have himself succeeded to the place of Clarenceux King. It has been sufficiently shown, however, by the writer of the life of Camden in the Biographia Britannica, that it was not the appointment of Camden over his head, as has been commonly assumed, that first excited Brooke's hostility, although it may have been afterwards exasperated by that circumstance. It appears that his attention was first attracted to the heraldic and genealogical errors, as he conceived them to be, of the Britannia, after the publication of the fourth edition in 1594, in which the notices of the descents of families were greatly extended. According to his own account, he first got some persons of good credit and learning to advertise Camden in a friendly manner of the mistakes he had made: "to whom," says Brooke, "his answer was, that he could not correct any of them for discrediting his whole work, as though mending the sores would have maimed the body." Without taking this to be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, it may be received as proving (unless we are to set it aside as altogether a fabrication) that Brooke's quarrel with the Britannia had originally nothing to do with any disappointment he may have felt at its author's promotion. "Secondly," his account proceeds, "in private, when I heard his addressment to a fifth impression, I myself dealt with him for the amendment of some slips in his Britannia, of the same kind, promising him the use of my own observations and collections, which, as proffered wares, fastidiously he rejected, not accounting them worthy his thanks or acceptance, contrary to the advice of the sober learned, who are content to hear the conceit of a mean friend sometimes, and respect the offer although but a blind man should point out the way. The rat is not so contemptible but she may help the lion at a pinch out of those nets wherein his strength is hampered; and the words of an inferior may often carry matter in them to admonish his superior of some important consideration. And surely, of what account soever I might have seemed to this learned man, yet in regard of my profession and courteous offer (I being an ancient officer of arms, and he then but a schoolmaster), [he] might well have vouchsafed the perusal of my notes." It is evident enough that this Brooke was an illiterate low-minded fellow, with whom Camden wanted to have nothing to do. Whether he might have ever published his attack if Camden had not been raised to the office which he thought he himself ought to have had may be doubted. But at last in 1599 he came out with it in the shape of a book (without licence, Gibson says, or name of either printer or bookseller), bearing the title of 'A Discovery of certain Errors published in print in the much commended Britannia.' It was dedicated to the Earl of Essex, the head of the interest opposed to Burghley, who was Camden's patron. The fifth edition of the Britannia, which was published the next year, was probably already on its way through the press when Brooke's tract made its appearance. The answer Camden made to his assailant was contained in a short explanation, addressed *Ad Lectorem* (To the Reader), and in which Brooke's name was never mentioned, inserted at the end. It is in this paper that he gives the account of his early love of the study of antiquities, which we have extracted in a previous page, and states that he was moved to draw out the first scheme of his Britannia by the earnest exhortation of Abraham Ortelius. As for his vindication of himself from Brooke's charges, it must be

admitted to have been perfectly satisfactory. He showed that in regard to most of the matters in dispute he was right and his critic wrong; although he acknowledged that he had fallen into a few mistakes from trusting to one whom he might well have taken for a sufficient authority, a predecessor of his own in the office of Clarenceux King of Arms. Brooke, however, returned to the charge, in so far at least as to draw up a rejoinder to Camden's defence: but he never sent it to the press, and it remained in MS. till the year 1723, when it was published by Anstis, the learned Garter King of Arms. It is entitled 'A Second Discovery of Errors published in the much commended Britannia, 1594, very prejudicial to the descents and successions of the ancient nobility of this realm; with a reply to Mr. Camden's apology *Ad Lectorem*, in his fifth edition, 1600.'

In 1588 Camden had supplicated the Convocation of Regents at Oxford to be allowed to proceed Master of Arts without reading the usual three lectures; and his prayer was complied with, on condition that he stood in the following act; but this, it appears, circumstances did not allow him to do. Many years after, in 1613, when he attended the funeral of Sir Thomas Bodley, the degree was offered him by the University; but whether he accepted or declined it is not known.

In 1600 he published, in small quarto, a short account of the monuments and inscriptions in Westminster Abbey, which was reprinted, with corrections and enlargements, in 1603, and again in 1606. In 1603 appeared, in a folio volume, at Frankfort, his collection of English, Norman, Irish, and Welsh Latin chroniclers ('Anglica, Normannica, Hibernica, Cambrica, a Veteribus Scripta'), containing Asser, Walsingham, Gemiticensis, Giraldus Cambrensis, &c., mostly now published for the first time from manuscripts in his own library. It is still a volume of great value, and when it first appeared it made a vast addition to the previously accessible sources of information on our early history. This was followed in 1605 by the well-known little work commonly called his 'Remains,' but the full title of which in the original edition is, 'Remains of a greater work concerning Britain, the Inhabitants thereof, their Languages, Names, Surnames, Impresses, Wise Speeches, Poesies, and Epitaphs.' It consists in fact of the matter which remained unused of the collections he had made for the Britannia, after he had completed that work. It contains many curious things, and has always been popular. The first edition was in 4to.: a seventh, in 8vo., professing to be "much amended, with many rare antiquities never before imprinted, by the industry and care of John Philipot, Somerset Herald, and W. D. Gent." appeared in 1674.^[8]

The latter years of his life were principally dedicated to the composition of what is, after the Britannia, his greatest performance, his Latin Annals of the reign of Elizabeth (*Annales Rerum Anglicarum et Hibernicarum Regnante Elizabetha*), the first part of which, coming down to the year 1589, was published in folio at London, in 1615, and in 8vo. at Frankfort the following year. The second part, though completed by the year 1617, he withheld from the press during his lifetime; and it was first printed in 8vo. at London in 1625. An English translation of the entire work is inserted by Kennet in his Complete History. Camden began his Annals of the Reign of Elizabeth in 1597, at the instigation of Lord Burghley, whose view was, that the history should be a monument to the fame of his royal mistress, and probably little else than a panegyric from beginning to end; but the changed circumstances in which it was written and published prevented the finished performance from turning out exactly conformable to the original design or conception. It is in fact such a history of the reign of Elizabeth as might be expected to be produced by a court writer in the reign of her successor. The work was submitted, before being published, to the perusal of King James; and of course it could contain nothing that would give offence to his majesty. In particular, the story of his mother could be told only in one way. It was at one time supposed that the work had been in many parts altered and interpolated by the royal order or pen; but for that notion there seems to be no good ground. The standard edition, published by Hearne in 1717 from a manuscript corrected by Camden himself, exhibits no variations which favour any such conclusion. We are bound then to believe that, if the work was biased by the time and circumstances in which it was prepared, so were the actual opinions of the writer. In his Preface, while he speaks with little satisfaction of its execution, he asserts the integrity and good faith with which it had been compiled in solemn terms. "Whatever it be," are his concluding words, "I dedicate and consecrate it at the altar of truth to God, to my country, and to posterity." Selden has pronounced Bacon's History of Henry VII. and Camden's Annals to be the only two historical works relating to English affairs worthy of their subject; but Camden's performance cannot claim a place in that shortest of all literary catalogues, the catalogue of great historical works. Its chief merit is distinctness of statement. As a piece of writing, it is probably at least equal to the Britannia; but then something of higher art is looked for in a history than in a topographical description. Even its value as a record of facts is not very great. It does not contain very much that is not to be found elsewhere; and a large mass of information respecting the events of Elizabeth's reign is now before the public, which was inaccessible and unknown when Camden wrote.

The summers of the last years of his life Camden spent mostly at Chiselhurst in Kent; and it was here that he was attacked with his last illness, in the autumn of 1623. On the 18th of August, as he sat in his chair, absorbed in thought, he suddenly lost his muscular power, and fell from his seat on the floor; he did not, however, injure himself; and he soon so far recovered his strength as to get again upon his feet. He has himself noted the incident among the last of the entries in the Diary which he kept during the reign of James, and from which Kennet has abstracted and translated what he calls his Annals of that reign. A severe illness, however, followed, which carried him off on the 9th of November. He was buried in Westminster Abbey, in the south aisle, near to the place where his monument may still be seen. The attendance at his funeral was very splendid, comprising not only all the College of Heralds, but a great number of the nobility and other distinguished persons. The greater part of his savings he had set aside the year before his death to found a Professorship of History in the University of Oxford. The rest he left mostly in small legacies and remembrances to his relations and friends. Among the former his will, made on his last birthday, mentions his cousin John Wyat, painter, of London, and Mr. Camden, of London, silkman, of whom the former has a legacy of a hundred, the latter one of ten pounds. Besides the sixteen pounds to the painter-stainers, he also left twelve pounds to the company of cordwainers, or shoemakers, to purchase them a piece of plate, on which he directed the same inscription to be engraved as on that to be purchased by the painters. His printed books and manuscripts he bequeathed to Sir Robert Cotton, except such as related to arms and heraldry, which he directed that his successor in the office of Clarenceux should have upon certain conditions. "But," according to Bishop Gibson, "upon the erection of a new library in the church of Westminster, the printed part was removed thither by the procurement of Dr. John Williams, Lord Keeper of England, Bishop of Lincoln, and dean of that church; who laid hold of an expression in the will that was capable of a double meaning." A number of tracts and papers written by Camden, together with his Life and a collection of his letters, was published by Dr. Thomas Smith in 1691; and other letters from him and to him are to be found in various publications. His name, which has been sung by Spenser, and of which his works are an enduring monument, has lately been brought into additional celebrity by the novel and successful experiment of the Camden Society.



Francis Bacon was the youngest son of Sir Nicholas Bacon, and was born at York House in the Strand, on the 22nd of January, 1561. In boyhood he was sprightly and intelligent beyond his years. The queen, who was taken with the smartness of his answers, used to try him with questions on various subjects; and it is said, that once when she asked him how old he was, his reply was ingeniously complimentary:—"I am just two years younger than your Majesty's happy reign." Elizabeth expressed her approbation by calling the boy "her young lord keeper." Nothing is known of his early education. Having, however, parents of a superior order—a father distinguished as a lawyer and a statesman, and a mother gifted with uncommon abilities, and eminent for her learning and piety, Bacon was placed favourably, from the first, for the formation of a learned and virtuous character.

In his thirteenth year he was sent to Trinity College, Cambridge, and was placed under the tuition of Dr. Whitgift, at that time master of the college, and afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury. Here Bacon studied with diligence and success. The following fact, connected with his residence at college, has been thus stated and authenticated by Dr. Rawley, his chaplain and biographer:—"Whilst he was commorant at the University, about sixteen years of age (as his lordship hath been pleased to impart unto myself), he first fell into the dislike of the philosophy of Aristotle. Not for the worthlessness of the author, to whom he would ever ascribe all high attributes, but for the unfruitfulness of the way—being a philosophy (as his lordship used to say) only strong for disputations and contentions, but barren of the production of works for the life of man. In which mind he continued to his dying day.

On leaving Cambridge, he entered Gray's Inn as a student of law. It is likely that his admission was in Michaelmas term, since it appears, from the records of the Inn, that he was made an antient on the 21st of November, 1576—an honour usually conferred on barristers, but bestowed on the sons of judges in consequence of their birth. His attendance in London not being required for some years, by the regulations of his inn, Bacon was sent, in compliance with a custom at the time common among the nobility, to study the institutions and manners of other countries. He went accordingly in the suite of Sir Amias Paulet, the British ambassador to the court of France. His superior sagacity and discretion soon induced the ambassador to intrust him with a message of some delicacy and importance to the queen; a commission which Bacon executed so as to obtain the royal approbation. On his return to Paris, he made frequent excursions into the country, spent some time in Poitiers, and busied himself in collecting information on the characters and resources of the different princes of Europe. His work *Of the State of Europe*, in which he arranged and estimated the information thus collected, and which was written when he was nineteen years of age, displays conspicuously the industry, guided by deep penetration, which characterized his youthful mind. He places everything in the light which best shows its nature as a political element. He estimates the different weights, in the scale of national importance, with an inductive and philosophic soberness—a justness of discrimination, and a nicety of tact and acuteness, which give us not merely a knowledge of the subject, but also an insight into the state of his mind, prompted to make such observations by the early influence of that ambition which was the spring and life of his career.

His studies abroad were interrupted by the death of his father in 1579. Returning to London on this occasion, he found himself the only one of his family left unprovided for; his father having been prevented by the suddenness of his death from purchasing an estate with the money set aside for his youngest son. Instead of the whole, Francis received only a fifth share of the money. This caused him "straits and difficulties" in his youth. When a student in Gray's Inn, he divided his time between law and philosophy; and nothing can be more false than the fustian of his biographers about his genius being too lofty for the dry and thorny paths of legal investigation. He was early a proficient in law, and the knowledge which he attained could only have been acquired by a bent of mind suited to its investigations. Law was his principal study. Though when a student he sketched his great work the 'Organon,' in a piece which his youthful pride entitled 'Partus Tempore Maximus,' the Greatest Birth of Time, his studies were chiefly directed to legal subjects.

On the 27th of June, 1582, he was called to the bar. His practice soon became considerable. In 1586, four years after, he was made a bencher. In his 28th year he became council extraordinary to the queen. In 1588 he was appointed a reader to his Inn; and again, in 1600, the Lent double-reader; appointments which showed the opinion of his professional acquirements held by those who were best able to judge of them, since the duty of reader was generally discharged by men of eminence in the profession, and seldom by persons so young as Bacon in years and practice, when he first received the honour. His double-reading on the Statute of Uses has been republished several times, first in 1642; and in 1804 it was edited by William Henry Rowe, as a work of high authority on the difficult subject which it investigates.

Although connected with the most powerful family of Elizabeth's reign,—the nephew of Lord Burleigh, and the cousin of Sir Robert Cecil,—his advancement corresponded neither to the natural influence of his talents nor the apparently favourable position in which he was placed by his connexions. The practical and every-day minds of the Cecils were ill-fitted for appreciating the philosophic genius of Bacon; and his early and zealous friendship for their rival, the accomplished and unfortunate Earl of Essex, armed their prudence against him. They represented him to the queen as a speculative man; a dangerous individual, therefore, in the realities of business. All that the Cecils ever procured for him was the reversion of the office of Registrar of the Star Chamber; an appointment which, to use Bacon's comparison, "mended his prospect, but did not fill his barn." It was twenty years before he received the salary of 1600*l.* per annum, connected with this situation. The exertions of Essex in behalf of Bacon were more hearty, but less efficient. The office of solicitor-general becoming vacant, Essex endeavoured to procure the place for his friend, and when baffled by the superior influence of the Cecils, he generously made him a present of Twickenham Park, worth about 1800*l.*, and so

beautiful a spot, that Bacon called it "a Garden of Paradise." A coldness came over their friendship owing to difference of policy and opinion. Bacon in vain entreated Essex to desist from the proceedings which caused his ruin. They parted on bad terms in consequence. Bacon reckoned the last act of Essex no better than madness. When ruin closed round upon him, Bacon did much that ingenious remonstrance and affectionate entreaty could do with her majesty in behalf of the ill-advised Earl. Many have doubted his sincerity in this course; and perhaps with some reason. At the command of her majesty, Bacon appeared as one of her majesty's counsel against his former friend; and in mitigation of this apparent ingratitude, his admirers urge the compulsion laid upon him by the duties of his office, the risk of implication in the treasons of his patron, consequent upon refusal, and the opportunity which it gave him of mitigating the severity of the accusation. When commanded by the queen and her counsel to draw up a declaration of the treasons of Robert, Earl of Essex, it was found necessary to alter and embitter it considerably, the attachment of Bacon having softened down his statement so much that it was reckoned too mild for the nature of the case; and her majesty remarked on first reading it, "I see old love is not easily forgotten." The public judge only by appearances, and Bacon's conduct was accordingly much censured. In his own vindication he addressed to one of the deceased earl's most devoted friends, a letter stating his conduct, and claiming merit to himself on grounds which perhaps will not satisfy those who require in political friendships the disinterestedness and self-sacrificing feelings of private attachment.

In 1592 Bacon was returned to parliament for the county of Middlesex, and distinguished himself in the debates by taking the popular side. His first political production was published in 1594. It was *Observations upon a libel entitled 'A Declaration of the Causes of the great Troubles.'* In 1596 his most popular work, *'Essays or Counsels, Civil and Moral,'* was published, and about the same time his *'Maxims of Law.'* His circumstances at this time were very bad: he was disappointed in his attempts at forming a lucrative matrimonial connexion, and twice arrested for debt. Two years afterwards his *'History of the Alienation Office'* was written: the MS. is in the Inner Temple Library. His *'In felicem Memoriam Elizabethae Angliae Reginae'* was also written about this period. It was not published, however, until after his death, when it appeared, according to directions left in his will. This work, entitled in English *'Felicities of Queen Elizabeth,'* is a noble eulogium on the character of an illustrious princess, covering all the parts of her history with the eloquent praise of one whose admiration flowed fully, in spite of the fact that she had constantly obstructed and retarded his ambitious views and advancement. It was about the time this panegyric was written, that a second legal treatise appeared, called *'The Use of the Law for the Preservation of our Persons, Goods, and Good Name, according to the Laws and Customs of this Land.'*

Upon the accession of James I. the fortunes of Bacon brightened. He had employed every art in order to make sure of his interest with the new monarch, writing to all the Scottish gentlemen of whom he possessed any knowledge to engage their influence and services in his behalf. His vigilance had its reward. On the 23rd of July, 1603, he was one of 237 gentlemen who received the honour of knighthood. His eloquence and information gave him great weight in the House of Commons. Having been appointed by the lower house to make a representation of the oppressions of the royal purveyors committed in the name of the king, he executed his delicate task with a degree of address which combined prudence and boldness so well as to satisfy both the king and the parliament. The parliament gave him a vote of thanks, and the king made him one of his counsel. He received with this appointment, on the 25th of August, 1604, a pension of 40*l.* a-year, and 60*l.* additional for the joint services of himself and his brother Mr. Anthony Bacon: and he continued to rise in spite of the opposition of Cecil, now Earl of Salisbury, and the powerful rivalry of Sir Edward Coke, the attorney-general. *'The Advancement of Learning'* was published in 1605. Two years after he was made solicitor-general, and his professional diligence was crowned with distinguished success. His practice in Westminster Hall extended. Successful in his profession, and a favourite with the people, he added to his good fortune a rich wife, Alice, daughter of Benedict Barnham, Esq., a wealthy alderman of London. His address in stating the grievances of the nation to the king, an undertaking with which he was intrusted by the Commons, without lessening his influence at court, increased his popularity among the people. His speech on exchanging the ancient tenures of the crown for a competent revenue, advanced his reputation still higher by its clearness and eloquence. Though engrossed with the affairs of public life, his engagements did not turn him aside from his great design—formed in his early youth and cherished in his maturer years—the development of his improved plan for studying the sciences. He published the groundwork of his *'Novum Organon Scientiarum,'* his *'Cogitata et Visa,'* and sent copies of it to his learned friends for examination and criticism. The *'Filum Labyrinthi'* was the original draft of his *'Cogitata et Visa.'* The author of original and unpopular (because new) opinions in philosophy, Sir Francis Bacon exercised the utmost prudence in the publication of his views, adapting the light to the visual organs of others so as rather to enlighten than to dazzle, and letting in no more rays into the dark chamber of science, which it was his purpose to light up, than was necessary gradually and effectually to increase its brightness into sunshine. This was not all. He gained a literary and philosophical reputation by writing on less perilous subjects, with

the intention, as he frequently stated, of securing an amount of consideration and respect likely to protect and *bulwark* his peculiar and original opinions from the attacks to which they would necessarily be exposed on their first publication. This was the object of his next work, 'The Wisdom of the Antients,' which was published in 1610. It prepared persons of all varieties of opinion for receiving with respect anything that came from him: the admirers of the wisdom of our ancestors were conciliated by the discussion of a favourite theme, and the original thoughts clothed in beautiful and eloquent language, which he infused into a hackneyed discussion, pleased a higher class of readers.

In the year 1611 Bacon was a joint judge of the Knight Marshals' Court. In 1613 he was appointed attorney-general, and elected a member of the privy council. On this occasion the House of Commons showed their regard for him in a particular manner. It was objected that a seat in the lower was incompatible with the duties of the attorney-general in the upper house of parliament. The objection was thought valid, but overruled in his particular case, in consideration of their regard for his services. His income was now considerable. His professional practice was great: the attorney-generalship was worth 6000*l.* per annum; as registrar of the Star Chamber he received 1600*l.*; and he had a good estate in Hertfordshire, and his father's seat of Gorhambury, by the death of his brother. An income like this, added to his wife's large fortune, might be supposed sufficient to remove all temptations to increase it by doubtful or dishonourable means.

While he was attorney-general Bacon was engaged professionally in several important cases. He was the king's agent against Peachum, a clergyman who was prosecuted for treason contained in a sermon never preached; and he exerted himself in getting the opinion of the judges before the trial, notwithstanding the unwillingness of Chief Justice Coke, and the illegality and injustice of such procedure. On the trial of the Earl and Countess of Somerset for the murder of Sir Thomas Overbury in the Tower, he distinguished himself by the perspicuity and eloquence with which he conducted the prosecution.

It has been common to describe Bacon as a flatterer of persons in power. That he was a courtier is undeniable. It must be mentioned to his praise, however, that he never paid his court to Somerset; and his connexion with Villiers was by no means one of servility and flattery, for he often acted independently, and his letters to him are full of advice, freedom, and sometimes reproof.

On the 7th of March, 1617, he was made lord keeper of the great seal, and on the 7th of May following he took office. During the king's visit to Scotland the new lord keeper exercised considerable power; but he did not exercise it so as to please. His manoeuvring to prevent a marriage between Sir John Villiers, brother of Buckingham the royal favourite, and a daughter of Sir Edward Coke, an alliance which would have increased the power of his rival, involved him in perplexity, and brought on him the resentment of Villiers. He also offended James by thinking ill of the projected marriage between the Prince of Wales and the Infanta of Spain. In many instances he acted in his high office in a way beneficial to the state. He several times refused to put the seals to the improvident grants of Buckingham. His prudence, however, enabled him to regain the favour and friendship which he lost by these proceedings, and his advancement continued. On the 4th of January, 1618, he reached the summit of his ambition in being appointed lord high chancellor of England; and by letters patent dated Wanstead, 11th July, 1618, he was created Baron Verulam, and took his seat among the peers. Egerton, the old lord chancellor, had wished Bacon to be his successor, and Bacon himself wrote to the king soliciting the place on the grounds of his superior fitness for the office and the ready flexibility with which he would accommodate himself to the will and wishes of his sovereign. On putting the seals into his hands his Majesty gave him three advices: first, "never to seal anything without mature deliberation; secondly, to give righteous judgments between parties with dispatch; and thirdly, not to extend the royal prerogative too far." Bacon entered on his high office with great pomp, and delivered a long and eloquent speech on the advices of the king, in presence of many of the nobility. The influence of Buckingham had been exerted in his behalf, and his letter of thanks to that nobleman is truly eloquent and beautiful. Anxious to secure the "golden opinions" of the profession, the new lord chancellor invited the judges to a dinner, and requested that, since it was not his intention to extend the power of the court of chancery beyond its ordinary limits, they would inform him if ever they were dissatisfied with his proceedings, in order to a mutual and satisfactory adjustment of matters. He introduced some reforms into his court. He caused two reporters to be appointed, with a salary of 100*l.* each, and made some judicious arrangements in regard to hearing counsel and cases. On the 19th of November, 1619, he got the farming of the Alienation office. Next year he was made Viscount St. Alban's. In the beginning of 1620 he kept his birth-day with great state. Ben Jonson, the poet, celebrated his virtues, according to the fashion of the day, in some lines which are part of a masque performed on the occasion. Bacon chose this favourable moment for the publication of his 'Organon.' We have seen that it was the chief concern of his early thoughts and of his matured mind. In the midst of a rising career of professional, political, and literary effort, Bacon was moulding and shaping his great

work, listening with an anxious ear to the remarks of the learned of his times, and at the height and maturity of his genius, when possessing all the highest honours which talent and learning could give him in his native land, we find this "servant of posterity" committing to its slow but infallible tribunal a work which, in reference to science, has been universally pronounced—the judgment of reason and experience in this rare instance confirming the boastings of youth—the *greatest birth of time*. This work was the gradual formation of a creating spirit. It was wrought up and polished with the sedulous industry of an artist who labours for posterity. Like the 'Analogy' of Butler, and all the greater productions of thought, the 'Organon' of Bacon was the result of painstaking labour spread through many years. Besides the 'Partus Temporis Maximus,' the 'Cogitata et Visa,' and the 'Filum Labyrinthis,' works which were outlines and model-figures prepared at distant and different stages of this long-studied production, Bacon copied his work twelve times, revising, correcting, and altering it year by year before it was reduced to that form in which it was committed to the press.

The reception of the work was such as, in the nature of things, must always be given to a production of its class—mingled ridicule and admiration. The geniuses laughed at it, and men of talent and acquirement, whose studies had narrowed their minds into particular channels, incapable of understanding its reasonings and appreciating its originality, turned wits for the purpose of ridiculing the new publication of the philosophic lord chancellor. Dr. Andrews, a forgotten wit of those days, perpetrated a vile pun upon the town and title of St. Alban's by saying, in some doggerel verses, that it was on the high road to *Dunce table*, i.e., Dunstable, and therefore appropriate to the author of such a book. Mr. Secretary Cuffe said that it was a book which a fool could not have written, and a wise man would not. The pedantic king described it as like the peace of God,—it passeth all understanding. Bacon presented a copy to Sir Edward Coke.

Under a device, on the title-page, of a ship passing through the pillars of Hercules, Coke wrote in a clumsy attempt to wit—

It deserveth not to be read in schools,
But to be freighted in the ship of fools.

He was understood by some. Ben Jonson, after the author's death, described the book in terms of the highest praise. "Though by the most of superficial men who cannot get beyond the title of *nominals*, it is not penetrated nor understood, it really openeth all defects of learning whatsoever. My conceit of his person was never increased towards him by his place or honours. But I have and do reverence him for the greatness that was only proper in himself, and in that he seemed to me ever by his work one of the greatest men and most worthy of admiration that had been in many ages."

After this the name of Bacon becomes tarnished with infamy. The ordinary apologies for his conduct, the rapacity of his servants, and his connexion with Buckingham, fail entirely in washing out the foul blot fixed upon him by the facts of his conduct. He was the victim of improvidence, a vice which gave him a perpetual craving for money to supply the wants which it created. A desire of this kind, kept alive by the constant necessities which it caused to press upon him, undermined those honourable and honest principles in regard to pecuniary matters without which no man was ever either upright or respectable. Various writers have glozed over the disgraceful truths which belong to this period of an extraordinary life, and have thus deprived the world of the warning and instruction which they afford. The facts are almost too painful for minute statement; they increased in number and disgracefulness as the inquiry proceeded, and the two complaints and accusations which first occupied attention multiplied to upwards of twenty-four before the end of the proceedings. Shortly after his elevation to the woolsack, one Wrenham, against whom he had decided a case in chancery, complained to the king, and though, when inquired into, the circumstances turned out in Bacon's favour, the industry and pertinacity of this individual excited suspicions in several quarters of the integrity of the chancellor. The House of Commons appointed a committee to inquire into the proceedings of the courts of law. On the 15th of March, 1620, Sir Robert Phillips reported, in a manner full of delicacy and respect to the high station and illustrious talents of Bacon, that two charges of corruption had been brought against the lord chancellor. The cases were sifted immediately. Eager to ascertain the exact particulars, to elicit the just amount and kind of blame attached to a personage so elevated, the committee sat every day on the case, and made daily reports to the house on the evidence brought before them. In the discussions on these facts, though there were not wanting apologists and defenders of the conduct of this corrupt judge, the moral indignation of many of the members was expressed in terms of the strongest reprobation. The first case was of a poor gentleman of the name of Aubrey, who finding his suit in chancery going on with a ruinous slowness, was advised to quicken it by a gift to the lord chancellor. In his anxiety and distress he borrowed a hundred pounds from a usurer; Lord Bacon received the money. Sir George Hastings and Mr. Jenkins took the bribe in to the Lord Chancellor at his lodgings in Gray's Inn, and on coming out again assured the poor and anxious suitor in his lordship's name of

thankfulness and success. The case was decided against him. When the chancellor heard of the complaints of his victim, he sent for his friend Sir George Hastings, and entreated him, with many professions of affection and esteem, to stay the clamour of the poor man whom he had cheated. The evidence in the next case varied the form and deepened the colours of the lord chancellor's guilt. Mr. Egerton had several suits pending in chancery against Sir Rowland Egerton, and, under the name of an expression of gratitude for past services, he presented the chancellor with 300*l*. The case went in his favour, until the opposite and losing party expressed his gratitude also to the judge in the shape of 400*l*., when the superiority of four over three turned the scales of equity against him. On one of these occasions, when the decision was drawn out though not delivered, the influence of a well-bestowed bribe induced the chancellor to reverse his decree. The Lady Wharton, hearing that her suit was likely to go against her, was too clever and high-spirited a woman to be defeated without a struggle. She wrought a purse with her own hands, and having filled it with 100*l*., waited upon Bacon at his apartments, and begged his acceptance of a purse of her own making. The chancellor was of course too gallant a gentleman "to refuse anything from the hands of so fair a lady." She gained her cause.

The discussion in the Commons issued in referring the whole of the case to the Peers, the only authority competent to subject him to trial. The king told a deputation of the Commons to proceed fearlessly whatever might be the consequences, and whoever might be implicated; but he felt exceedingly for the chancellor, received him with undiminished affection, and caused a short recess of Parliament to give him time for his defence. The spirit of Bacon was crushed within him. His servants were undoubtedly the agents who sought out the victims of his corruption; and it is equally undoubted that their master was himself ruined by the rapacity and extravagance in which he permitted them to indulge. During the investigation of the charges, when Bacon one day entered his house, and his costly menials rose up and saluted him, he said bitterly, "Sit down, my masters, your rise has been my fall." He was great even in such circumstances, and the native dignity of his mind shone out even through the disgrace in which he had clothed himself. There is something inexpressibly touching in the contrition which he expressed in the general confession which he first sent to the lords appointed to try him. This, however, did not satisfy the indignation of his judges. They demanded a particular confession of each charge by itself, a specification of the minute details of his meanness and guilt. This Lord Bacon sent, and when a deputation of the lords waited upon him to inquire if this paper was his own voluntary act, he replied "It is my act—my hand—my heart. O, my lords, spare a broken reed." He was stripped of his offices, disqualified for public life, banished beyond the precincts of the court, subjected to a fine of 40,000*l*., and to imprisonment in the Tower during the king's pleasure.

He was confined for a short time in the Tower, and then discharged. In the course of a few months he obtained a licence to come for a time within the verge of the court. And though this sentence was afterwards commuted by the king, his ruined fortunes were never repaired, and we have seldom felt the degradation into which Bacon had sunk himself so painfully as when reading the words of his pardon for all the frauds, deceits, impostures, bribes, corruptions, and other mal-practices of which he had been found guilty. He was summoned to attend parliament before he died; but the remainder of his days were spent chiefly in scientific pursuits, and the society of the friends whom adversity had left him. His name being high abroad, when the Marquis d'Effrat brought into England the princess Henrietta Maria, the wife of Charles I., he paid a visit to Bacon, and was received by his lordship, who was lying sick in bed, with the curtains drawn. "You resemble the angels (said that minister to him); we hear those beings continually talked of, we believe them superior to mankind, and we never have the consolation to see them." His lordship replied, "that if the charity of others compared him to an angel, his own infirmities told him he was a man." Bacon's works on natural history, his *History of Henry VII.*, and some others, were published after his disgrace. Various accounts have been given of the immediate cause of his death. Some have attributed it to the bursting of a retort; others to an experiment on snow, which gave him a mortal chill. His last letter was written to the Earl of Arundel, in whose house at Highgate he expired on the 9th of April, 1626, in his sixty-sixth year. In this letter he calls himself the "martyr of science," and compares himself to Pliny the elder, whose death was caused by his over-zealous observation of Vesuvius. In his will, he says, "My name and memory I leave to foreign nations, and to my own countrymen, after some time be passed over." Lord Bacon left no children.

The accomplishments of Lord Bacon were unrivalled in his day, and his character displayed the phenomenon of great originality combined with a most extensive range of acquirements. He was a poet and an orator, a lawyer and a statesman. In the philosophy of experiment and of observation he was pre-eminent. The metaphysical and the physical were both congenial to his genius; and although the taint of his immorality has induced many to doubt the extent and to depreciate the excellence of his knowledge and ability in every department, except his method of studying nature, an impartial and searching examination will fill us with admiration as we successively trace his steps in almost every branch of intellectual exertion.

The observations and experiments of Bacon in physical science, viewed beside the results obtained by his immediate successors, do not appear to great advantage: nor can we compare them at all with the brilliant discoveries of his contemporary Galileo. It is only when viewed with reference to the *general* state of knowledge in his own times, that Bacon's recorded experiments and observations can be fairly estimated. His merits indeed would have been greater than those of any experimental philosopher, were his discoveries at all equal to the method of studying science which he taught.

In the first part of his great work on the 'Instauration of the Sciences,' Bacon proposed to make a survey of knowledge as it then existed, which was a necessary preliminary to the reform which he contemplated. In this work he has made a distribution of all knowledge under the three heads of Memory, Imagination, and Reason. This division has been occasionally adopted by subsequent writers, though it does not appear to have the recommendation either of exactness or utility. The 'Novum Organum,' which is divided into two books, is the second part of the 'Instauration.' In the first book of the 'Organum' Bacon attempted to point out the states of mind which caused the existence of a false and fruitless philosophy. He saw causes of error in our common nature—in the peculiarities which mark the individual—in the mental use of the symbols of thought, and in those sectarian and party habits which the processes of association interweave with all the elements of the character, and harden into the schools and creeds which exert a despotic sway over successive generations. The influence of these mental states upon the interpreters of nature, Bacon called the worship of an idol: and the states themselves, in his fanciful nomenclature, are idols of different kinds: those which proceed from principles common to the species are *idols of the tribe*; those produced by the peculiar character of the individual are *idols of the den*; the commerce or intercourse of society by the use of words causes the worship of the *idols of the forum*; and the *idols of the theatre* are the creatures of the imaginary and visionary systems of philosophy which have appeared. Some causes of error are universal; the undue love of simplicity, and the spirit of system, are illusions influencing every mind, and therefore perpetually opposing the advancement of real knowledge. Other causes of error are peculiar. Some are disposed to mark the differences and others the resemblances of things, and the peculiar studies of a single mind are apt to warp its views in other regions of thought. Words influence thoughts, and the subtlety of the processes of the mind in using them is a source of error affecting the operations of the intellect and the communication of its results. The perverse influence of systems is obvious; it is illustrated fully by the history of philosophy. The undue reverence for antiquity, the authority of names, the pursuit of unattainable objects, the examination only of the rare, the extraordinary, and the great, together with superstition, which Bacon does not forget to enumerate, had long opposed the progress of all true knowledge.

In the first part of the 'Organum,' the true object of science is clearly pointed out by Bacon: "It is impossible," he says, "to advance with any profit in the race, when the point to be attained is not distinctly determined. In science, the true end is to enrich human life with new discoveries and wealth." ('Organum,' lib. i. aphorism 81.) In the second book Bacon proceeds to explain the method of studying nature which he proposed for the advancement of science.

The first thing is to prepare a history of the phenomena to be explained, in all their modifications and varieties, written with the utmost caution and care in regard to the correctness of the language employed, and the evidence of the facts which we narrate. Having brought together the facts, we must begin by considering what things they exclude from the number of possible causes, or *forms*, as they are called in the language of Bacon. Negative instances in which the supposed *form* is wanting ought to be collected. "It may perhaps (says Bacon) be competent to angels or superior intelligences to determine the form or essence directly by affirmations from the first consideration of the subject. But it is certainly beyond the power of man, to whom it is only given at first to proceed by negatives, and in the last place, to end in an *affirmation* after the exclusion of everything else."

The observations and experiments of the natural philosopher—the facts which he is to record in his inductive history—are witnesses whose evidence, and the weight due to whose testimonies, vary in the same way as the evidences which form the grounds of moral investigations. The facts, or *instances*, as Bacon calls them, vary in clearness, in authenticity, applicability, &c. Bacon enumerates twenty-seven different kinds of *instances*, and estimates the weight due to each from the peculiar circumstances which constitute their value or worthlessness as means of discovery and aids to investigation; but it is impossible in this outline to enter into a description of their nature and importance. Of these twenty-seven instances fifteen are enumerated to assist the understanding in estimating the value, and forming a right judgment, of different facts; five correct the fallacies of the senses and instruct them in their observations; and the remaining seven direct the hands "in raising the super-structure of art on the foundation of science." This last division includes the use of instruments in aiding the senses, in subjecting objects to alteration for the purpose of observing them

better, and in the production of that alliance of knowledge and power which has, in our day, crowded every part of civilized life with the most useful inventions.

Such were the principles which Bacon shaped into rules for the conduct of experimental inquiries, when he was almost without an example of success to confirm his confidence and encourage his efforts. In the words of Professor Playfair, "the power and compass of the mind which could form such a plan beforehand, and trace not merely the outline, but many of the most minute ramifications of sciences which did not yet exist, must be an object of admiration to all succeeding ages."



This eminent dramatist was born at Westminster, in 1574. "His mother, after his father's death, married a bricklayer, and it is generally said that he wrought some time with his father-in-law, and particularly on the garden-wall of Lincoln's Inn, next to Chancery Lane." This is Aubrey's account; and there can be no doubt of the fact of Jonson's early occupation. But the young bricklayer had been building up something better than the garden wall of Lincoln's Inn. He had raised for himself an edifice of sound scholarship, as a boy of Westminster; and whilst his mother and step-father, according to Fuller, "lived in Hartshorn Lane near Charing Cross," he was studying under the great Camden, then a junior master of that celebrated school. The good old author of the 'Worthies' thus continues:—"He was statutably admitted into Saint John's College in Cambridge (as many years after incorporated a honorary member of Christ Church in Oxford), where he continued but few weeks for want of further maintenance, being fain to return to the trade of his father-in-law. And let not them blush that have, but those that have not, a lawful calling. He helped in the building of the new structure of Lincoln's Inn, when, having a trowel in his hand, he had a book in his pocket."

Aubrey tells the story of his going to college, with a little more romance. He had not only the book in his pocket, but he was heard to repeat "Greek verses out of Homer;" and a bencher, discoursing with him, gave him an exhibition at Trinity College. Jonson's name does not appear in any of the Cambridge registers; and he probably remained at the University a very short time. Aubrey continues, "Then he went into the Low Countries, and spent some time (not very long) in the army, not to the disgrace of it, as you may find in his epigrams." The little poem to which Aubrey alludes is an address 'To True Soldiers:'—

"I swear by your true friend, my muse, I love
Your great profession, which I once did prove;
And did not shame it with my actions then."

In Jonson's 'Conversation with Drummond of Hawthornden' he is made to tell that "In his service in the Low Countries he had, in the face of both the camps, killed one enemy and taken *opima spolia* from him." There is little doubt that his feats of arms were performed before he was twenty. In 1597 we find him in London, a player and a writer for the

stage. Philip Henslow, one of the theatrical managers in that prosperous time of theatres, records in his diary of July, 1597, a loan of four pounds to Benjamin Jonson, player; and on the 3rd of December of the same year he also advances him twenty shillings "upon a book which he was to write for us before Christmas next." At this time he had written 'Every Man in his Humour,' for Henslow's theatre; not, however, in its present state, but with its scene laid in Italy. In the 'Life of Alleyn,' recently published by Mr. Collier there is a letter from Henslow to Alleyn, for the first time printed, which contains the following very curious passage:—"Since you were with me I have lost one of my company, which hurteth me greatly—that is Gabrell, for he is slain in Hogsden Fields by the hands of Benjamin Jonson, bricklayer." This letter is dated in September, 1598. The use of the term "bricklayer," to designate Jonson's calling, is most remarkable. Either Henslow was ignorant (which appears very improbable) that the man who slew "Gabrell" was one of his own authors; or Jonson, with that manly independence which we cannot enough admire in his character, followed his step-father's laborious occupation even at the time when he was struggling to attain the honours of a poet. That he unhappily killed a man in a duel there can be no doubt; he himself told the story to Drummond. "Since his coming to England, being appealed to the fields, he had killed his adversary, which hurt him in the arm, and whose sword was ten inches longer than his; for the which he was imprisoned and almost at the gallows." Gifford supposes that this unfortunate event happened in 1595; but if there be no error as to the date of Henslow's letter, "Benjamin Jonson, bricklayer," was a poet of no mean reputation at the time of this event. His enemies never forgot that he had wielded the trowel. Dekker calls him the "lime-and-mortar poet." Jonson had precisely the mind to prefer the honest labour of his hands to the fearful shifts and hateful duplicities to which the unhappy man of genius was in those days too often degraded.

Thus, then, about four years before the death of Elizabeth, there was a dramatic writer in London who, though scarcely twenty-five years of age, had studied society under many aspects. He was a scholar, bred up by the most eminent teachers, amongst aristocratic companions; but his home was that of poverty and obscurity, and he had to labour with his hands for his daily bread. He delighted in walking not only amidst the open fields of ancient poetry and eloquence, but in all the by-places of antiquity, gathering flowers amongst the weeds with infinite toil: but he possessed no merely contemplative spirit: he had high courage and ardent passions, and whether with the sword or the pen he was a dangerous antagonist. This humbly-born man, with the badge of the "hod and trowel" fixed on him by his enemies—twitted with ambling "by a play-waggon in the highway"—with a face held up to ridicule as being "like a rotten russet apple when it is bruised," or "punched full of eylet-holes, like the cover of a warming-pan"—described by himself as remarkable for

"His mountain belly and his rocky face"—

with "one eye lower than t' other and bigger," as Aubrey has it—and, according to the same authority, "wont to wear a coat like a coachman's coat, with slits under the arm-pits;"—this uncouth being was for a quarter of a century the favourite poet of the court,—one that wrote masques not only for two kings to witness, but for one to perform in,—the founder and chief ornament of clubs where the greatest of his age for wit, and learning, and rank, gathered round him as a common centre; but, above all, he was the rigid moralist, who spared no vice, who was fearless in his denunciation of public or private profligacy, who crouched not to power or riches, but who stood up in the worst of days a real man. Aubrey, one of the shrewdest as well as the most credulous of biographers, has a very sensible remark upon the characteristics of Shakspeare's comedy, as compared with the writers after the Restoration. "His comedies will remain wit as long as the English tongue is understood, for that he handles *mores hominum*; now, our present writers reflect so much upon particular persons and coxcombeities, that twenty years hence they will not be understood." This is precisely the case with Jonson as compared with Shakspeare; but he is on this account a far more valuable authority for what essentially belong to periods and classes. Shakspeare has purposely left this field uncultivated; but it is Jonson's absolute domain. Studied with care, as he must be to be properly appreciated, he presents to us an almost inexhaustible series of *Daguerreotypes*,—forms copied from the life with absolute certainty of the manners of three reigns,—when there was freedom enough for men to abandon themselves without disguise to what they called their *humours*, and the conflicts of opinion had not yet become so violent as to preclude the public satirist from attacking sects and parties. There is a peculiar interest, too, about Jonson and his writings, if we regard him as the representative of the literary class of his own day. In his hands the stage was to teach what the Essayists of a century afterwards were to teach. The age was to be exhibited; its vices denounced; its follies laughed at.

The influence of men of letters even upon their own age is always great; it is sometimes all-powerful. In Jonson's time the pulpit and the stage were the teachers and inciters; and the stage, taken altogether, was an engine of great power, either for good or evil. In the hands of Shakspeare and Jonson it is impossible to over-estimate the good which it

produced. The one carried men into the highest region of lofty poetry (and the loftier because it was comprehensible by all), out of the narrow range of their own petty passions and low gratifications; the other boldly lashed the follies of individuals and classes, sometimes with imprudence, but always with honesty. If others ministered to the low tastes and the intolerant prejudices of the multitude, Jonson was ever ready to launch a bolt at them, fearless of the consequences. No man ever laboured harder to uphold the dignity of letters, and of that particular branch in which his labour was embarked. He was ardent in all he did; and of course he had many enemies. But his friendship was as warm as his enmity. No man had more friends or more illustrious. He was the father of many sons, to use the affectionate phrase which indicated the relation between the illustrious writer and his disciples. Jonson was always poor, often embarrassed; but his proper intellectual ascendancy over many minds was never doubted. Something of this ascendancy may be attributed to his social habits.

In the year 1599, when Henslow, according to his records, was lending Benjamin Jonson twenty shillings, and thirty shillings, and other small sums, in earnest of this play and that—sometimes advanced to himself alone, oftener for works in which he was joined with others—he was speaking in his own person to the audiences of the time with a pride which prosperity could not increase or adversity subdue. In 'Every Man out of his Humour,' first acted in 1599, he thus delivers himself in the character of "Asper, the Presenter:"—

"If any here chance to behold himself,
Let him not dare to challenge me of wrong;
For if he shame to have his follies known,
First he should shame to act 'em: my strict hand
Was made to seize on vice, and with a gripe
Squeeze out the humour of such spongy souls
As lick up every idle vanity."

The spirit which dictated these lines was not likely to remain free from literary quarrels. Jonson was attacked in turn, or fancied he was attacked. In 1601 he produced 'The Poetaster;' and in his 'Apologetical Dialogue which was only once spoken upon the stage,' he thus defends his motives for this supposed attack upon some of his dramatic brethren:—

"Sure I am, three years
They did provoke me with their petulant styles
On every stage: and I at last, unwilling,
But weary, I confess, of so much trouble,
Thought I would try if shame could win upon 'em;
And therefore chose Augustus Caesar's times,
When wit and arts were at their height in Rome,
To show that Virgil, Horace, and the rest
Of those great master-spirits, did not want
Detractors then, or practisers against them:
And by this line, although no parallel,
I hop'd at last they would sit down and blush;
But nothing I could find more contrary.
And though the impudence of flies be great,
Yet this hath so provok'd the angry wasps,
Or, as you said, of the next nest, the hornets,
That they fly buzzing, mad, about my nostrils,
And, like so many screaming grasshoppers
Held by the wings, fill every ear with noise."

Every one has heard of the wit-combats between Shakspeare and Ben Jonson, described by Fuller:—"Many were the wit-combats betwixt him and Ben Jonson; which two I behold like a *Spanish great galleon* and an *English man-of-war*: Master Jonson (like the former) was built far higher in learning; *solid*, but *slow* in his performances. Shakspeare, with the *English man-of-war*, lesser in *bulk* but lighter in *sailing*, could turn with all tides, tack about, and take advantage of all winds, by the quickness of his wit and invention." When Fuller says "I behold," he meant with his "mind's eye;" for he was only eight years of age when Shakspeare died—a circumstance which appears to have been forgotten by some who have written of these matters. But we have a noble record left of the wit-combats in the celebrated epistle of Beaumont

to Jonson:—

"Methinks the little wit I had is lost
Since I saw you; for wit is like a rest
Held up at tennis, which men do the best
With the best gamesters: what things have we seen
Done at the Mermaid! heard words that have been
So nimble, and so full of subtile flame,
As if that every one from whence they came
Had meant to put his whole wit in a jest,
And had resolv'd to live a fool the rest
Of his dull life: then when there hath been thrown
Wit able enough to justify the town
For three days past—wit that might warrant be
For the whole city to talk foolishly
'Till that were cancell'd: and when that was gone
We left an air behind us, which alone
Was able to make the two next companies
Right witty; though but downright fools, mere wise."

Gifford has thus described the club at the Mermaid: "About this time (1603) Jonson probably began to acquire that turn for conviviality for which he was afterwards noted. Sir Walter Raleigh, previously to his unfortunate engagement with the wretched Cobham and others, had instituted a meeting of *beaux esprits*, at the Mermaid, a celebrated tavern in Friday Street. Of this club, which combined more talent and genius than ever met together before or since, our author was a member; and here for many years he regularly repaired with Shakspeare, Beaumont, Fletcher, Selden, Cotton, Carew, Martin, Donne, and many others, whose names even at this distant period call up a mingled feeling of reverence and respect." Jonson has been accused of excess in wine; and certainly temperance was not the virtue of his age. Drummond, who puts down his conversations in a spirit of detraction, says, "Drink was the element in which he lived." Aubrey tells us "he would many times exceed in drink; Canary was his beloved liquor." And so he tells us himself in his graceful poem 'Inviting a Friend to Supper:':—

"But that which most doth take my muse and me
Is a pure cup of rich Canary wine,
Which is the Mermaid's now, but shall be mine."

But the rich Canary was to be used, and not abused:—

"Of this we will sup free, but moderately;
Nor shall our cups make any guilty men:
But at our parting we will be as when
We innocently met. No simple word
That shall be utter'd at our mirthful board
Shall make us sad next morning, or affright
The liberty that we'll enjoy to-night."

This is not the *principle* of intemperance, at any rate; nor were the associates of Jonson at the Mermaid such as mere sensual gratification would have allied in that band of friendship. Jonson and Shakspeare passed through the slough of the theatre without a stain. Their club meetings were not the feasts of the senses alone.

One of Jonson's contemporary dramatists, Marmion, describes him in his presidential chair:—

"The boon Delphic god
Drinks sack, and keeps his Bacchanalia,
And has his incense, and his altars smoking,
And speaks in sparkling prophecies."

Soon after the accession of James, Jonson went to prison for a supposed libel against the Scots, in 'Eastward Ho,' in

the composition of which comedy he assisted Chapman and Marston. They were soon pardoned: but it was previously reported that their ears and noses were to be slit. Jonson's mother, at an entertainment which he made on his liberation, "drank to him and showed him a paper which she designed, if the sentence had taken effect, to have mixed with his drink,—and it was strong and hasty poison." Jonson, who tells this story himself, says, "to show that she was no churl, she designed to have first drank of it herself." This is a terrible illustration of the ways of despotism. Jonson was pardoned, probably through some favouritism. Had it been otherwise, the future laureate of James would have died by poison in a wretched prison, and that poison given by his mother. Did the bricklayer's wife learn this terrible stoicism from her classical son? Fortunately there was in the world at that day, as there is now, a higher spirit to make calamity endurable than that of mere philosophy; and Jonson learnt this in sickness and old age. But he was to see days which the world called prosperous. From 1606 to 1633 Jonson lived in the sun of royal favour, and continued to produce masques at Court. The Court and the nobility went on masquing wherever the king abode. 'Pan's Anniversary' was the last entertainment which Jonson offered to his old master. James, in 1621, would have forced the honour of knighthood upon his poet; but Jonson's good sense contrived to avoid it.

The literary life of Ben Jonson extended over nearly forty years: upon the whole, it was a successful literary life. He did not, like Shakspeare, realize a competency by adding the business of a theatrical manager to the pleasanter labours of a poet. His plays, no doubt, produced him money; but his occasional productions for the court and the city made him wealthier than most of his brethren. Aubrey tells us of his habitations:—"Long since, in King James's time, I have heard my uncle Danvers say (who knew him) that he lived without Temple Bar, at a comb-maker's shop, about the Elephant and Castle. In his later time he lived in Westminster, in the house under which you pass as you go out of the churchyard into the old palace, where he died." He had a library so stored with rare and curious books that Selden could find there volumes which he vainly sought in other places. He appears at this time to have lived a life of learned ease, enjoying stipends from the crown and from the city. From 1616 to 1625 he wrote no plays. After the death of James want probably drove him again to the stage. His later dramas are not to be compared with 'The Alchymist' and 'The Fox.' Disease and penury had come upon him. In the epilogue to 'The New Inn,' produced in 1630, he says,—

"If you expect more than you had to-night,
The maker is sick and sad."

In the same epilogue he has a touching allusion to the king and queen; and Charles instantly sent him an hundred pounds. The play itself was hooted from the boards; and Jonson took his revenge upon the town in his well-known ode:

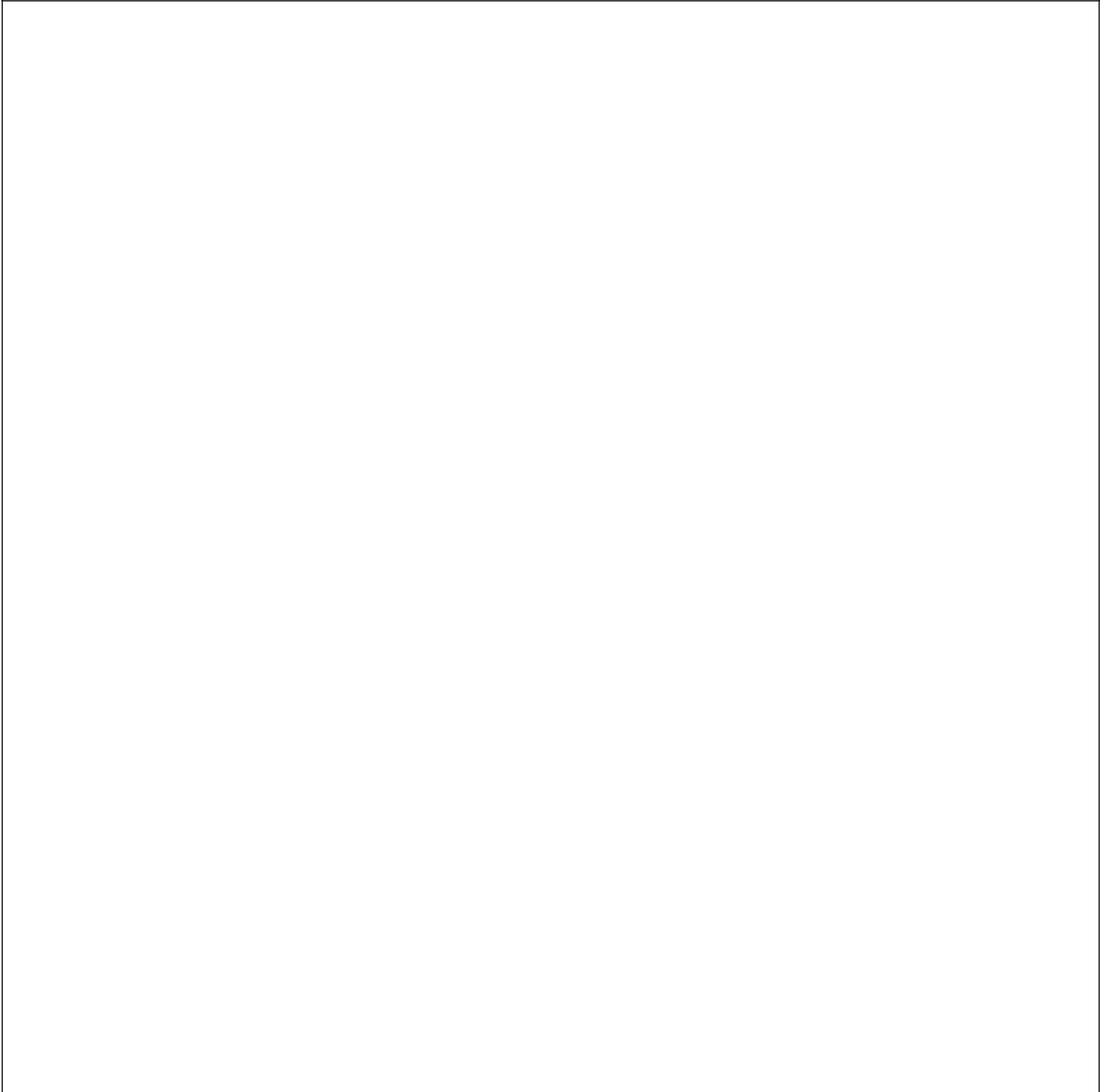
"Come, leave the loathed stage,
And the more loathsome age!
Where pride and impudence, in faction knit,
Usurp the chair of wit!
Indicting and arraigning every day
Something they call a play.
Let their fastidious, vain
Commission of the brain
Burn on and rage, sweat, censure, and condemn;
They were not made for thee, less thou for them.

* * * * *

Leave things so prostitute,
And take the Alcaic lute;
Or thine own Horace, or Anacreon's lyre;
Warm thee by Pindar's fire:
And though thy nerves be shrunk and blood be cold,
Ere years have made thee old,
Strike that disdainful heat
Throughout, to their defeat,
As curious fools, and envious of thy strain,

May, blushing, swear no palsy's in thy brain."

Supported by an increased pension, to which Charles added the "tierce of Canary," which the poets-laureate have ever since enjoyed, Jonson continued to write masques and other little poems for the court. His quarrel with Inigo Jones, from whatever cause proceeding, is a painful circumstance; and it is well that the satire which he wrote upon the illustrious architect is suppressed. He died in 1637, and was buried in Westminster Abbey. Aubrey says, "He lies buried in the north aisle, in the path of square stone (the rest is lozenge), opposite to the scutcheon of Robertus de Bos, with this inscription only on him, in a pavement square, blue marble, about 14 inches square—'O RARE BEN JONSON!'—which was done at the charge of Jack Young (afterwards knighted), who, walking there when the grave was covering, gave the fellow eighteen-pence to cut it."



FOOTNOTES:

English Translation in Kennet's Collection.

A list of the brethren and sisters of the Guild of Knowle, near Rowington, in Warwickshire, exhibits a great number of the name of Shakspere in that fraternity, from about 1460 to 1527; and the names are spelt with the diversity here given, *Shakspere* being the latest.

Spenser.

Ben Jonson.

Some doubts have been cast upon the authenticity of this paper; and it would be well if the Shakspere Society would endeavour to clear them up.

Malone.

"And note that in some places chattels as heir-looms (as the best bed, table, pot, pan, cart, and other dead chattels moveable) may go to the heir, and the heir in that case may have an action for them at the common law, and shall not sue for them in the ecclesiastical court; but the heir-loom is due by custom, and not by the common law."—*Coke upon Littleton*, 18 b.

There has been some difference of statement as to the year in which the Remains was first published. The Dedication, to Sir Robert Cotton, is dated the 12th of June, 1603, and Dr. Smith, Camden's earliest biographer, says the book was published in 1604. The date on the title-page, however, is 1605. But it probably appeared early in that year; as may be gathered from the mention of it as a book upon which he had "lighted of late," in a letter of Richard Carew, the historian of Cornwall, dated 8th April, 1605, which is inserted among the 'Original Letters of Eminent Literary Men of the Sixteenth, Seventeenth, and Eighteenth Centuries; with Notes and Illustrations by Sir Henry Ellis, K.H.,' 4to. Lond. Printed for the Camden Society, 1843, pp. 98-100. In the Index Carew's letter is erroneously entered as relating to a "book dedicated to" Camden. The Remains was an anonymous publication; and the Dedication was subscribed only with the final letters of Camden's Christian and surname.

ERRATA:

- Pg. 19. Typo corrected: yourg changed to young.
- Pg. 31. Typo corrected: woolman changed to woodman.
- Pg. 37. End quote inserted after our poet's family.
- Pg. 49. Typo corrected: continnes changed to continues.
- Pg. 51. Closed quote after the word literature.
- Pg. 55. Typo corrected: decribes changed to describes.
- Pg. 88. Moved single quote inside parenthesis: ('Grammatices Graecae Institutio Compendiaria').
- Pg. 96. Typo corrected: may changed to many.
- Pg. 97. Typo corrected: biassed changed to biased.

THE END OF VOL. V.

LONDON: WILLIAM CLOWES AND SONS, STAMFORD STREET

[The end of *The Cabinet Portrait Gallery of British Worthies Vol 5 of 12* by C. Cox]