WILLIAM SHAKSPEARE

☞ Profits arising from the Sale of this Book to be devoted to the Parsonage House Fund, Baden-Baden.

Lecture on Shakspeare.

WRITTEN AND ARRANGED BY

WILLIAM LIONEL MAN,

AND THE REV.

T. ARCHIBALD S. WHITE, M.A.

The Lecture delivered by the Rev. T. ARCHIBALD S. WHITE, English Chaplain, Baden Baden.

WITH NUMEROUS ILLUSTRATIONS.

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INTRODUCTION.

THIS little pamphlet owes its origin to the following circumstances. About a year and a-half ago I was invited to deliver a lecture in the German language at the Literary Society, Baden-Baden, of which I have the honour to be an original member. To this I agreed, and when asked what the subject would be, I replied, on the spur of the moment, "Shakspeare."

As soon as my resolution was thus formed, I wrote to my life-long friend, Mr. William Lionel Man, being perfectly assured that he knew as much about England's greatest genius as any one. Almost by return of post came a number of valuable notes, with permission to embody them in the forthcoming Lecture. This I did, and when the English version was completed, it was submitted to the inspection of Professor Dr. Sevin, the esteemed vice-president of our Literary Society, and Director of the College for Ladies, at Baden-Baden. With his kind help and additions, the German translation of the work was at length completed, and delivered as a Lecture before the members of the Society, in their hall of meeting at the Hôtel de Strasbourg, on Thursday evening, November 8th, 1886. A very interesting debate followed, the more

prominent points being a comparison of Shakspeare and Goethe, the position of the stage in Shakspeare's time from a social aspect, and the question as to whether Shakspeare was the real author of the works that bear his name.

Subsequently to this the idea occurred to Mr. Lionel Man and myself that this joint work of ours might be published, and this idea we have now been able to put into execution. We trust that it may assist, in however small a degree, in diffusing that appreciation and love of Shakspeare, which is so obviously desirable. Safely may we say his works contain a never to be exhausted mine of wealth, and as for himself may we not say with Horatio—

"Take him for all in all,
We shall not look upon his like again!"

T. ARCHIBALD S. WHITE.

11, *Maria Victoria Strasse,*
Baden-Baden,
December 12*th,* 1887.

BIRTH-PLACE OF SHAKSPEARE.

THE

Tercentenary Celebration of Shakspeare at Stratford, 1864.

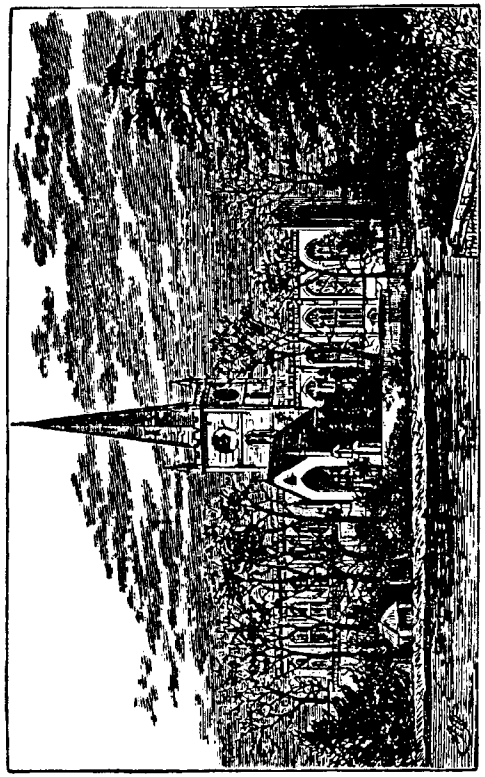
OWING to the kindness of an old college friend, the Rev. C. G. Gepp, formerly Head Master of Stratford-on-Avon School, and now of Bradfield College, Berks, my attention has been directed to a valuable book, entitled, "Shakspeare and Stratford: a Memorial of the Tercentenary Celebration, 1864, by Robert E. Hunter, Secretary to the Committee." This interesting work is rather a compilation than an original effusion, but it is exceedingly well put together and contains matter for careful reflection. First there is a memoir of Shakspeare, and then a description of Stratford. Then follows a brief notice of former jubilees, commencing with David Garrick's in 1769, the second in 1827, and there is an account of a third in 1830. The remainder of the book is occupied with the great Tercentenary, April, 1864.

Into the assiduous labours of the various Committees, especially of that at Stratford-on-Avon itself, their mistakes and failures, their successes and triumphs, we will not now enter. We will not fight over again the battle of pre-eminence between Messrs. Phelps and Fechter, the proposed principal actors, ending in the disappearance of both. Nor will we dally over the happy days of glorious April sunshine comprising the celebration itself, with their dark cloud of financial worries dispersed at length.

But it would indeed be pleasure to pass on to another generation the concluding words of that eloquent Sermon, preached in the old parish church on the occasion, by the late most respected and highly revered Archbishop Trench:

"I will only ask you, said his Grace, "as you prepare your offering, each to imagine for himself this England of ours without her Shakspeare; in which he had never lived or sung. What a crown would be striken from her brow! How would she come down from the pre-eminence of her place as nursing mother of the foremost poet whom the world has seen, whom, we are almost bold to prophesy, it ever will see! Think how much poorer intellectually, yea, and morally, every one of us would be; what would have to be withdrawn from circulation, of wisest saying, of profoundest maxims of life-wisdom, which have now been absorbed into the very tissue of our hearts and minds! What regions of our fancy, peopled now with marvellous shapes of strength, of grace, of beauty, of dignity, with beings which have far more reality for us than most of those whom we meet in our daily walk, would be empty and depopulated! And remember that this which we speak of would not be our loss alone, or the loss of those who have lived already, but the disappearance as well of all that delight, of all that instruction, which, so long as the world endures, he will diffuse in circles ever larger, as the recognition of him in his unparagoned and unapproachable greatness becomes every day more unquestioned, as he moves, in ages yet to come, 'through ever wider avenues of fame.'

"But of this enough. Cease we from man. Let no word be uttered by us here which shall even seem to imply that the praise and honour, the admiration and homage, which a man may receive from his fellows are, or can be, the best,



STRATFORD-ON-AVON CHURCH.

the crowning glory of life. Good they are, but they are not the best. Few, in the very nature of things, can be those illustrious sons of memory, dwelling apart from their fellows on the mountain peaks of their solitary grandeur, and dominating from these their own age, and the ages to come. To very few it can be granted, that their names shall resound through the centuries, that men shall make long pilgrimages to the place of their birth, gather up the smallest notices of them as infinitely precious, chide an incurious age which sufferod so much about them, that would have been priceless to us, to perish for ever, or celebrate with secular solemnities the returning period of their birth. All this must be the heritage of the fewest, but because such, it cannot be the best of all; for a righteous God would never have put His best and fairest beyond the reach of well nigh all among his children. This is not the best. That is the best which all may make their own, those with the smallest gifts as certainly as those with the greatest—faithfully to fulfil humble duties; to follow Christ, it may be, by lowliest paths, unseen of men, though seen of angels and approved of God; and so to have names written not on earth, but in heaven; not on the rolls of earthly fame, but in the Lamb's book of life. For, brethren beloved, I should be untrue to that solemn trust which I bear, untrue to those responsibilities from which I can never divest myself, if I did not remind you, above all if I did not remind you on such a day as this, that goodness is more than greatness, and grace than gifts; that men attain to heaven not soaring on the wings of genius, but patiently climbing by the stairs of faith, and love, and obedience; that the brightest crowns, if all their brightness is of earth and none from heaven, are doomed to wither; that there is but one amaranthine crown, even that which Christ gives

to them, be they high or low, wise or simple, emperors or clowns, who have loved, and served, and obeyed Him.

"This crown they have obtained, the serious and sage poets who have consecrated their divine faculty to the service of Him who lent it. For myself, I am strong to believe that from one so gentle, so tender, so just, so true, as was Shakspeare, the grace to make this highest consecration was not withholden—that we have a right to number him with Dante, with Spenser, with Milton, and that august company of poets

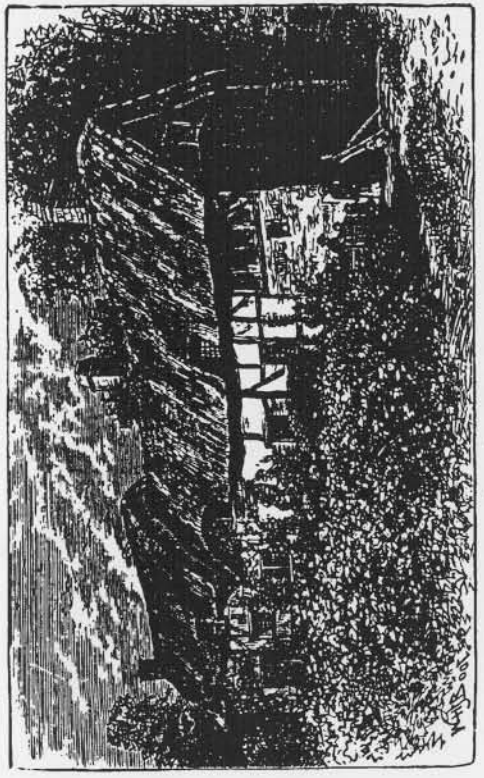
> "Who sing, and singing in their glory move."

"His intimate, in one sense his profound, acquaintance with Scripture, no one can deny, or the strong grasp which he had of its central truths. He knew the deep corruption of our fallen nature, the desperate wickedness of the heart of man; else he would never have put into the mouth of a prince of stainless life such a confession as this:—'I am myself indifferent honest, but yet I could accuse me of such things that it were better my mother had not borne me, ... with more offences at my beck than I have thoughts to put them in, imagination to give them shape, or time to act them in.' He has set forth the scheme of our redemption in words as lovely as have ever flowed from the lips of uninspired man:

> "Why all the souls that were, were forfeit once,
> And he that might the vantage best have took
> Found out the remedy."

"He has put home to the holiest here their need of an infinite forgiveness from Him who requires truth in the inward parts:

> "How would you be,
> If He, which is the top of judgment, should
> But judge you as you are!"



ANNE HATHAWAY'S COTTAGE.

He was one who was well aware what a stewardship was his own in those marvellous gifts which had been entrusted to him, for he has himself told us:

> "Heaven does with us as we with torches do—
> Not light them for themselves; for if our virtues
> Did not go forth of us, 't were all alike
> As if we had them not."

And again has told us that

> "Spirits are not finely touched
> But for fine issues,"

assuredly not ignorant how finely his own had been touched, and what would be demanded from him in return. He was one who certainly knew that there is none so wise that he can 'circumvent God'; that for a man, whether he be called early or late,

> "Ripeness is all."

"Who shall persuade us that he abode outside of that holy temple of our faith, whereof he has uttered such glorious things—admiring its beauty, but not himself entering to worship there? One so real, so truthful, as all which we learn about Shakspeare declares him to have been, assuredly fell in with no idle form of words, when in that last testament which he dictated so shortly before his death, he first of all, and before all, commended his soul to God, his Creator; and this (I quote his express words), 'hoping and assuredly believing, through the only merits of Jesus Christ my Saviour, to be made partaker of life everlasting.'

"Yes, brethren, he has shown us here the one gate of heaven, and there is no other gate by which any man may enter there."

T. A. S. W.

THE LECTURE.

THE principle of looking at life with an utter disregard of all party and sectarian feelings, of massing all his observations upon individual character, could have proceeded only from a profound knowledge of the past, and a more than common apprehension of the future. Shakspeare's unerring observation of the present prevented the past becoming to him an illusion.

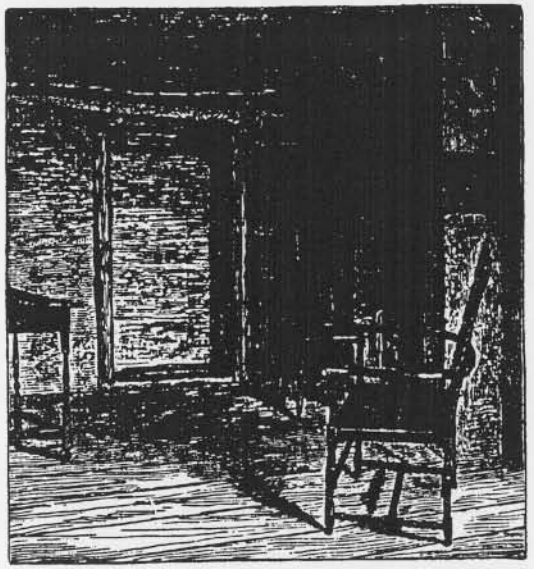
He had always an earnest patriotism; he had a strong sense of the blessings which had been conferred upon his own day through the security won out of the peril and suffering of the middle classes.

The destruction of the old institutions, after the first evil effects had been mitigated by the energy of the people, had diffused capital, and had caused it to be employed with more activity. But the historical student cannot forbear an indignant comment upon the sufferings of the very poorest, which, if not caused by, were at least coincident with the great spoliation of the property of the Church.

That Shakspeare had witnessed much of this misery is evident from his constant disposition to discover

"A soul of goodness in things evil,"

and yet with many social wrongs about him, the age of



THE ROOM IN WHICH SHAKSPEARE WAS BORN AT STRATFORD-ON-AVON.

Shakspeare's youth was one in which the people were making a great intellectual progress.

But the poor were ill provided for, because the Church was in an unsettled state, attacked by the natural restlessness of those who looked upon the Reformation with regret and hatred, and by the rigid enemies of the traditionary ceremonies and ancient observances which had sprung up in Her bosom.

The promises which had been made that education should be fostered by the State, had utterly failed; for even the preservation of the Universities, and the protection and establishment of a few Grammar Schools had been unwillingly conceded by the avarice of those daring statesmen who had swallowed up the riches of the ancient Establishment. The genial spirit of the English yeoman had received a check from the intolerance of the powerful sect who frowned upon all sports, who despised the arts, who held POETS and PIPERS to be the "caterpillars of a commonwealth." But yet the wonderful "stirring up" of the intellect of the nation had made it an age favourable for the cultivation of the highest literature; and most favourable to that class of persons who in those days looked upon society, as Shakspeare must have looked, in the spirit of cordial enjoyment and practical wisdom.

Of the personal history of Shakspeare, one of the greatest geniuses beyond doubt that ever the world produced, little now can with certainty be shown.

The registers of Stratford; his own sonnets; a few casual references to him in the writings or sayings of contemporary authors; and all the sources, from which materials for his life may be safely extracted, are reckoned up. The public of his time had no curiosity on the subject or the writers of his day had no anxiety to collect or yield

information regarding him; and he himself, beyond, even

"That last infirmity of noble minds"

the desire of fame, did not think it worth while to place materials of his own history on record; or, secure of such immortality as earth can bestow, was content that we should track him into the depths and recesses of his being by the light of his genius alone. What he did, or thought, or suffered, in his own individual person, is now mere matter for ingenious conjecture. We are sure that his mind was *vast, liberal, compassionate, generous;* that he saw human nature on every side, detecting it in its many masks and changes; that he penetrated into the innermost mysteries of man, that

"From this bank and shoal of time"

his intellect soared upwards, and held commerce with the stars; with our dim "hereafter"; and with worlds and agencies beyond our own, and knowing all this, our curiosity as to the possessor of faculties so varied and wonderful, and our consequent disappointment on being baffled at every point of enquiry, becomes proportionately great.

The following few particulars respecting the life of Shakspeare are almost all that we can with any certainty rely on.

William Shakspeare was born at Stratford-on-Avon, in the County of Warwick, in April, 1564. He was baptised on the 26th, but the day of his birth is unknown. His father, John Shakspeare, had elevated his social position by marriage with a rustic heiress, Mary Arden, possessed of an estate worth about £70 per annum. He rose to be high bailiff and chief alderman of Stratford; but in 1578, he is found mortgaging his wife's inheritance, and, from entries

in the town books, is supposed to have fallen into comparative poverty.

William, the eldest of six children, was educated at the Grammar School, assisted then at his father's business as a woolcomber or glover—perhaps also at a lawyer's office*—heard the London players acting at Stratford, and began to write himself. He married at eighteen Anne Hathaway, seven years older than himself, and had three children, two girls and a boy. His only son died young, his two daughters were married; one had three sons. But the Poet's lineal descendants died out in the next generation.

William Shakspeare removed to London in 1586 or 1587, possibly on account of a quarrel which he is said to have had with Sir Thomas Lucy, of Charlecote, with reference to some deer stealing; possibly also with a view of bettering his fortune.

In London he rose to distinction in the theatre. He was a shareholder of the Blackfriars' Company within two or three years after his arrival; of the fifteen shareholders of the theatre in November, 1589, Shakspeare's name is the eleventh on the list. In 1596, his name is the fifth in a list of only eight proprietors; and in 1603 he was second in the new patent granted by King James the First. The wardrobe and stage properties afterwards belonged to Shakspeare, and with the shares which he possessed, were estimated at £1400, equal to between £6,000 and £7,000 of our present money. He was also a proprietor of the Globe Theatre; and at the lowest computation his income must have been about £300 a year, or £1,500 at the present day.

Shakspeare visited Stratford once a year; and when wealth flowed in upon him, he purchased property in his

* This has been conjectured because Shakspeare displays in his works, especially in the "Merchant of Venice," such an accurate knowledge of law.

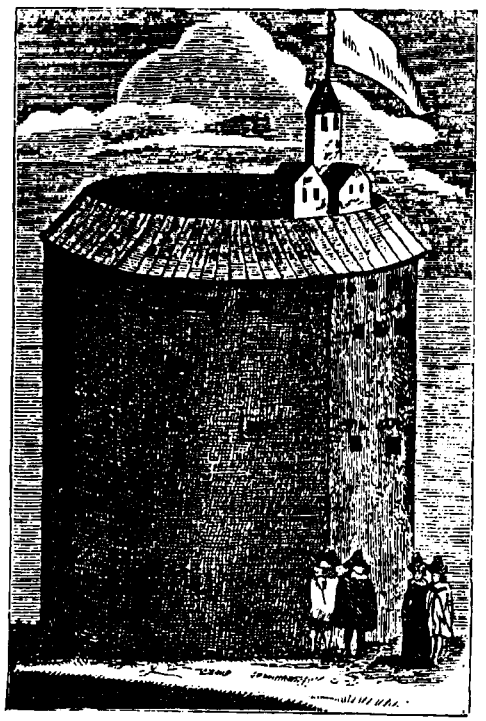
native town and its vicinity. He bought New Place, the principal house in Stratford; in 1602 he gave £320 for 107 acres of land adjoining to his purchase; and in 1605 he paid £440 for the lease of the tithes of Stratford. The latest entry of his name among the king's players is in 1604, but he was living in London in 1609. The year 1612 has been assigned as the date of his final retirement to the country. He died on the 23rd of April, 1616, having just completed his fifty-second year. His widow survived him seven years.

The cause of his death at so early an age is thus described by the Rev. John Ward, M.A., vicar of Stratford-on-Avon, in his diary extending from 1648 to 1679, but no great reliance is placed upon this testimony.

The Vicar says:—"I have heard that Mr. Shakspeare was a natural wit, without any art at all. He frequented the plays all his younger time, but in his elder days lived at Stratford, and supplied the stage with two plays every year, and for it had an allowance so large, that he spent at the rate of £1,000 a year, as I have heard. Shakspeare, Drayton, and Ben Jonson, had a merry meeting, and it seems drank too hard, for Shakspeare died of a fever there contracted." *

It is not the least singular of the causes which have cast obscurity upon the life of Shakspeare, that so much public apathy should have existed amongst his contemporaries. History, indeed, which has hitherto dealt in generals, or has laboured only to rescue from oblivion the lives of conquerors and kings, forbore, as was to be expected, from recording the birth or death of a poet humbly born, and distinguished by no other crown than a wealth of unfading

* For the above facts of Shakspeare's life, the account in "Chambers' English Literature" has been chiefly followed.



GLOBE THEATRE.

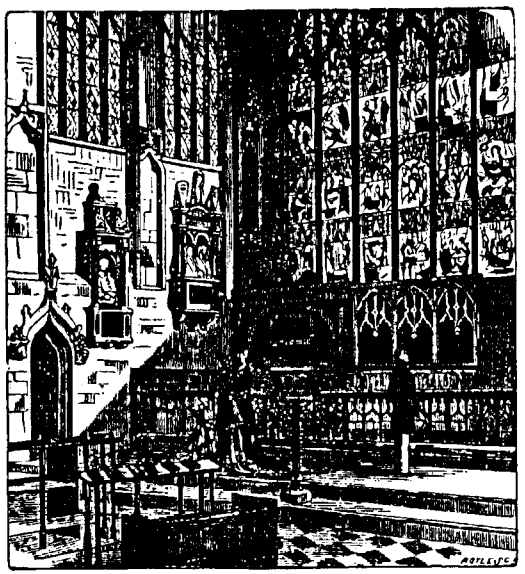
write down his or her admiration) attest the worth and influence of a great poet. It would have been creditable to his country if some fit memorial in bronze or marble, had been erected to his honour. For although, as Milton sings—

> "What needs my Shakspeare for his honoured bones
> The labour of an age in piléd stones?
> Or that his hallowed reliques should be hid
> Under a star-y pointing pyramid?"

yet that does not exonerate us of England from paying the tribute due to his memory; however it may account for the abundance of statues which we have erected, in the vain hope of immortalising people who have shed neither glory or light of any sort upon the nation at large.

To know what Shakspeare achieved, it is only necessary to look at the previous history of the stage. Before his time the drama was a narrow region; with the single exception of the Greek drama it bore no comparison, in any country, with the other departments of national literature. And even in Greece, as elsewhere, the drama was cramped and limited in its very nature. It did not extend beyond the nation's own history or superstitions; it dealt with a single event that was familiar to all, and in which the whole course of the story was visible from the outset to the end. It embodied the anger of love, the power of remorse, the pains and penalties of sinful or presumptuous men; or it reflected the distorted humours or singularities of the time after the fashion of a farce or satire. This was the case throughout all antiquity.

Such was the state of things when Shakspeare came; the great genius who brought health and truth, and light and life, into the English drama; who extended its limits to the extremity of the earth, nay into the air itself; and peopled the regions which he traversed with beings of



MEMORIAL WINDOW ERECTED BY AMERICAN VISITORS TO THE CHURCH AT STRATFORD-ON-AVON.

every shape, and hue and quality, that experience or the imagination of a great poet could suggest.

He stands midway between the pride of wealth and that "fierce democracy" which would overwhelm all things in its whirl; a true pilosopher; a magician more potent than his own Prospero, and never otherwise than beneficent and wise.

It may be well to remark here, by way of parenthesis, that the Spanish drama reached its highest point of perfection at about the same time as the English. Cervantes was born in the year 1547; Lope de Vega in 1562; Calderon in 1600.

In running over the many dramas of Shakspeare, a thousand things occur that appear to deserve remark.

These are his love of external nature, his graphic pictures, his humour, his sense of beauty, his appreciation of colours, of odours ("the air smells wooingly here"), of sweet sounds, and of everything valuable which the world affords.

Observe how admirably his plays commence. You always hear the true note of preparation—the keynote of the beginning. Observe the difference between his men and women; the men embodying the active principle; the women (with a few exceptions, such as Lady Macbeth and Beatrice) the passive virtues. The men are restless and ambitious, and cut their way to fortune; the women seem moulded to inhabit the circle in which they move. Notice the difference between his poetry and that of Fletcher and others. The latter are poetical in soliloquy or narration only; they cannot make their images bear upon active life. But look at Shakspeare! *His* passion springs out of the passion or humour of the time.

It may be well to note, in conclusion, an opinion that has been broached in modern times by some persons. It was

held very strongly, we believe, by the late Lord Palmerston. This opinion is that Shakspeare did not write himself the plays which were published under his name, but that they were written by Lord Bacon.

It is true that Lord Bacon was a man of commanding intellect, that he was strictly a contemporary of Shakspeare, and that if he had really been the author of the plays the circumstances of his public career might have induced him to publish them anonymously. Whatever the truth may be about this matter, we can only say that the opinion is not yet held very widely, and that no documentary evidence of which we are aware, dating from the time of Shakspeare and Bacon, is extant in support of this view.

Shakspeare has usually been called "the gentle Shakspeare." Possibly he is alluded to in the following stanza, composed by the poet Spenser:—

> "And then, though last not least, is Action,
> A *gentler* shepherd may nowhere be found,
> Whose muse, full of high thoughts' invention,
> Doth, *like himself heroically sound.*"

The house in which Shakspeare was born is still standing. There is a bust to his memory in the Parish Church, as well as that in Poet's Corner, Westminster Abbey. His tombstone also exists; it bears the following quaint inscription:—

> "Good Friend for JESUS sake
> Forbeare To dig the dvst enclosed HEARE
> Blest be ȣ Man that spares thes stones
> And curst be HE yᵗ moves my bones."

Shakspeare seems to have copied somewhat from plays written by his immediate predecessors less known to fame. From old plays it is computed that he borrowed no less than 1771 entire lines, and that nearly double that number

BUST OF SHAKSPEARE (OVER HIS REMAINS) IN CHURCH AT STRATFORD-ON-AVON.

POSTSCRIPT.

IF the question were put, What is Shakspeare to the world? the answer would be as complicated as the phases of his wonderful genius are many. But keeping in view the more obvious relationships which Shakspeare bears to the English speaking race, it may be said that, amid ten thousand authors and a thousand sources of knowledge, the study of his dramas, even when it is exclusive, gives the highest cultivation of æsthetic feeling and of imagination, and imbues the mind with lofty views of man. It elevates man by withdrawing his attention from the gross materialism of the present, and fixing his thoughts on the ideal, and in the truest sense of the word, on the real and the unchanging.

To read Shakspeare is also to cultivate the habit of studying character and human life. This is the book in which humanity finds its universal expression. Men do not know, amid the commonplace events of everyday life, what thoughts, feelings, and aspirations they are capable of until they see them expressed dramatically. A man who has spent his life in a tame and flat country knows not the feelings of sublimity that are latent in his nature, and as yet existing only in the possible, which may one day be awakened by the sight of mighty hills rising into cloudland, or by a view of the vast ocean in a calm. To a man who stands for the first time in an ancient cathedral, and looks at the tall and massive pillars, which appear more imposing from the subdued light that streams through the finely stained windows, the peculiar feelings of awe that fill his mind are altogether new. Analogies of this sort may serve to show how Shakspeare supplies to men the conditions requisite for knowing what is latent in themselves, as well as for studying human nature.

The Poet stands as it were midway between the ages of darkness and light; between an age when religion was a thing of gorgeous shows and pageants, a ritual rendered imposing by solemn fanes and Gothic piles, and that age when it returned to be an inward life, a moral power, which showed itself in spiritual worship and holiness of life, and Shakspeare has a phase in both. He combines the splendid pictorial imagination which is matured by the pomp and pageantry of the one with the just views of man and of truth which are the product of the other.

Remarks of an altogether similar character might be made regarding his standpoint between the fall of feudalism and the rise of freedom. Were as great a dramatist to live in our times, wherever he found characters for his dramas,

it could not now be either in proud baronial halls or in the courts of kings, for neither of these is to us romantic or poetical.

Already the Middle Ages had come to a close, and a new epoch had begun. England was not so far advanced as to prevent the former age from stamping its character on the youthful mind of this great genius. He had seen the moralities, the pastoral spectacles, pantomimes, and histories, as well as certain tragedies and comedies, which were characteristic of the previous period, and most of which were interdicted during his time and soon vanished. Out of these rude materials his creative mind constructed the modern drama in its perfect form. Nor had the stirring events which filled the latter portion of Queen Elizabeth's reign, and banished the recollection of the Wars of the Roses, happened too soon relatively to the youth of the Poet to prevent him from catching an enthusiasm from popular traditions. He has reproduced the events of those times and of bygone English history in his historical plays with a vividness and a power which no mere historian could do who had not caught the inspiration of living and lingering recollections.

Among the events which took place in Shakspeare's school-boy days, and which would doubtless awaken his youthful imagination, was Queen Elizabeth's visit to Kenilworth in the summer of 1575. On this occasion she was entertained with regal magnificence by Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester. Everything was present which might contribute to the pleasures of the court: splendid shows, dramatic entertainments, plays and spectacles succeeded one another, and were varied by the pastimes of bear fights and the chase. There was a great concourse from the surrounding country, and as Stratford is only fourteen

miles from Kenilworth, and the show lasted a number of days, there is every reason to think that young Shakspeare, then in his twelfth year, was present.

Among the shows was one, according to Gascoigne, in which "Tritton, in likeness of a mermaid, comes towards the Queen's Majesty." "Arion appeared sitting on a dolphin's back." The probability that the future dramatist was present on this occasion is increased by the occurrence of a passage in "Midsummer Night's Dream," which seems to allude to this scene by the lake of Kennilworth:—

> OBER. I . . . . heard a mermaid, on a dolphin's back
> Uttering such dulcet and harmonious breath.
> * * * *
> Cupid all armed; a certain aim he took
> At a fair vestal throned by the west;
> * * * *
> And the imperial votaress passed on,
> In maiden meditation, fancy free.
>
> ACT 2, *Scene* 2.

The allusion here to the maiden Queen is not obscure. Spectacles like these must have had a wonderful effect on the mind of a boy in whom that imagination must even then have begun to play which afterwards became so rich and gorgeous.

It seems to have been greatly due to accidental circumstances that the chief emanations of his mind were embodied in the form of Dramas. There has been much controversy on the subject of his pecuniary means at the commencement of his career; but on the whole it seems tolerably well ascertained that, though far from destitute, he was in a position of one whose only prospect of gaining an independence lay in his own exertions, by working his own way in the world. He accordingly chose the composition of plays, in conjunction with the career of an actor, at a particular emergency of his life as the most promising method

of securing a livelihood; and in those plays he poured forth the richest treasures of his mind and genius; for with the exception of his Sonnets and a few occasional pieces, we possess no other spoils of the great hero.

Now the composition of a play is not perhaps the best field for the free exhibition of a lofty intellect, as it necessarily involves much matter of a purely special and constructive order; much also of a merely personal kind connected with the characters introduced. In these parts the mind of the author has little or no scope for independent action, or flights of excursiveness; so that in fact, his own individual sentiments on abstract subjects can only be occasionally and incidentally introduced; and even then, must be put into the mouths of others. Nevertheless, it is in this comparatively limited field that the mind of Shakspeare has so wonderfully displayed itself. In spite of the constraint and imprisonment imposed by the machinery of the Drama, the great Samson has burst from the "green withs" that bound him, and uttered a host of sentiments, ideas, aphorisms, and doctrines, capable of being withdrawn from all special application, and made available for the edification of the world. On upwards of five hundred subjects connected with the mysteries of providence, the order of nature, human life and manners, the general course of the world, and philosophy at large, he has lavished thought and amplified instruction. His profounder meditations at the same time are constantly relieved and varied by such genuine touches of humour and playfulness, that the very antipodes of thought seem to have been brought in contact; and he, who is now soaring above the heavens, discoursing with the gods, and uttering celestial strains in almost more than mortal language, may soon be seen mingling with the humblest upon earth, condescending to their weakness,

levelling himself to their harmless follies, and distilling mirth from the most commonplace things and occurrences of life.

In order to form an estimate of the mind, the feelings, and opinions of Shakspeare, the most obvious course seems to be the following; to gather together every independent passage to be found in the whole of his works: every passage which could be disconnected from the machinery of the plot, or thread of the context and made to bear a general character and universal application; and then to classify them under their respective heads. By this means a comparative view might be obtained of his various comments on any one topic, and a comprehensive system formed of his philosophy and ethics, while at the same time such a portion of his poetry and humour would be included as satisfied the above conditions.

With respect then, to the great first cause of all things, the sentiments of the poet are not only of the sublimest order but also in strict accordance with what He has revealed to us in Himself. His watchful oversight and continued maintenance of all His creatures; His scheme of salvation, represented as the great crowning miracle of mercy; His gift of freewill to man; the inspiration of His spirit to those who are willing to work with it; His chastisement of those whom He loves for their ultimate benefit; His considerate goodness in concealing from man the future; His special providence, associated even with the fall of a sparrow; these and other collateral doctrines are alluded to, briefly indeed, but emphatically, and touched with a chastity of reverence worthy of hallowed lips.

On these fundamental truths, as a basis, must be reared a superstructure of moral duties, whereof the love of God is the stimulus and the love of our neighbour the witness and manifestation. Agreeably to this law, we find all the

chief christian graces of charity, mercy, compassion, forbearance, patience, almsgiving, referred to among the duties we owe to others, while self-denial, repentance, sincerity, pureness, resignation, humility, integrity, are commended as obligations which we owe to ourselves. By promoting such tempers of mind and feeling, the true loveliness of life is realised and man's high destiny fulfilled.

I cannot do better than close this postscript with the poet's own words—

> "To gild refined gold, to paint the lily,
> To throw a perfume on the violet,
> To smooth the ice, or add another hue
> Unto the rainbow, or with taper light
> To seek the beauteous eye of heaven to garnish,
> Is wasteful and ridiculous excess."

I am indebted for much valuable matter and ideas to the Rev. Aaron Morgan, M.A., of St. John's College, Cambridge, the well-known author of "Ecclesiastes Metrically Paraphrased," and to John Tallis, Esq., of New York.

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