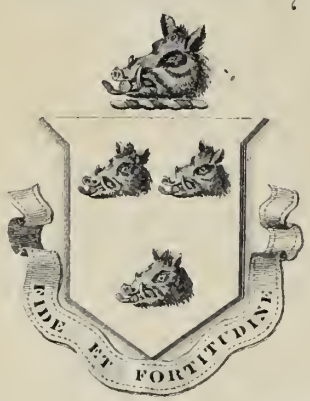

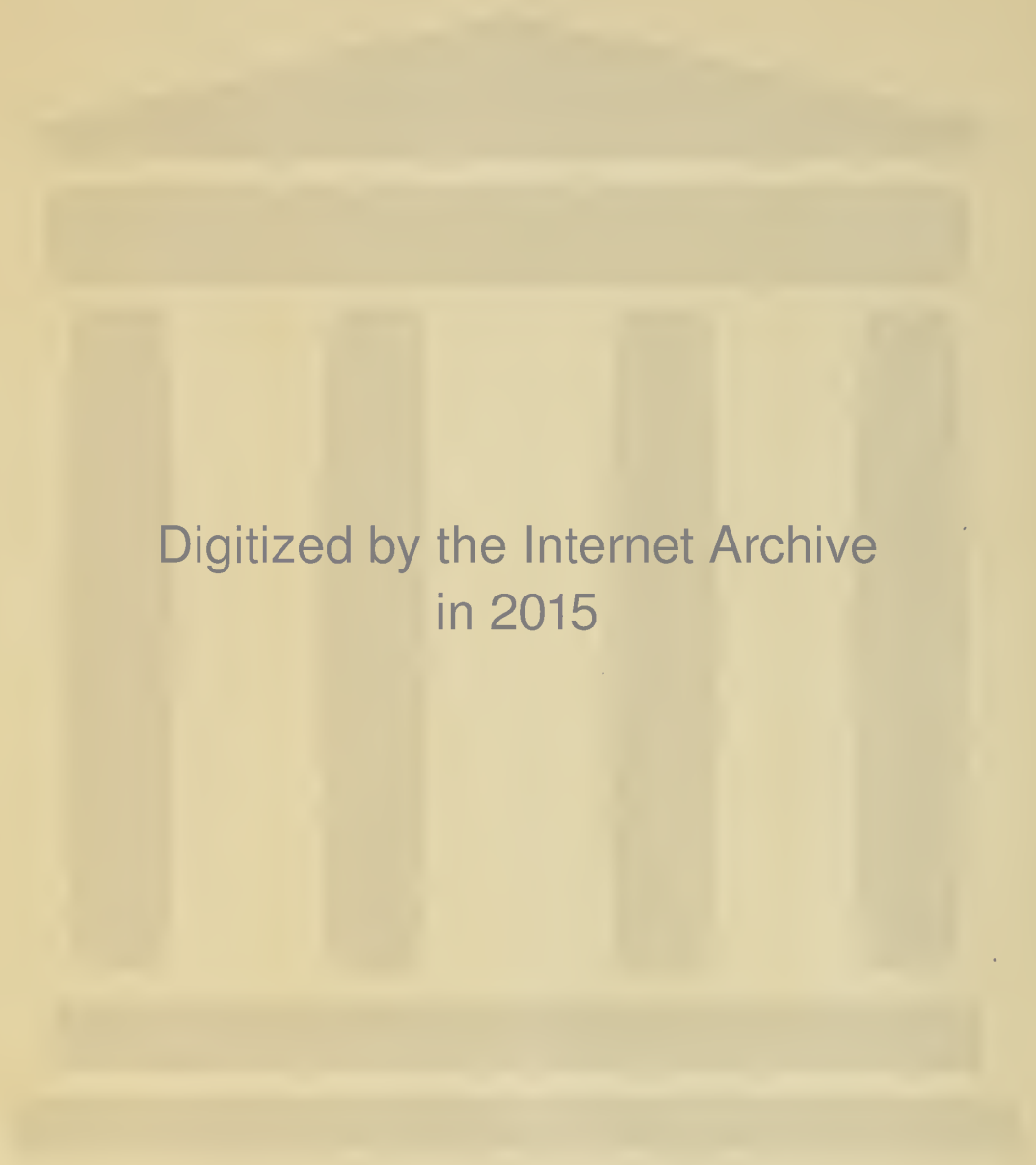

SHAKSPEARE, William, in *Biography*, an Engliſh dramatic poet, is juſtly eſteemed the moſt eminent and moſt intereſting author of the ancient or modern world. His writings have progreſſively riſen in popular eſtimation in proportion as they have been ſtudied and analyſed. Some of his dramas are continually acted on the London and provincial ſtages; many critics and commentators, both Engliſh and foreign, have employed their pens, and exerted their faculties, in diſſertations on the merits and defects of his productions. From the moſt trying and faſtidious ordeal of inveſtigation he has riſen in glory and greatneſs; and may, at the preſent time, be juſtly pronounced pre-eminent and unrivalled as a dramatic poet.

To Engliſhmen his writings are ſingularly eſtimable; for they have conferred on the country a literary immortality, which nothing leſs than the diſſolution of "the great globe itſelf" can annihilate. Nor is he excluſively endeared and valuable to the man of letters; but all claſſes of artiſts, and even many artizans, have derived both fame and emolument through the medium of his works. It has been often remarked, that the prophet is never honoured in his own country, or appreciated by his contemporaries. Although this maxim is now merely conſidered as figurative, and the age of, and confidence in, prophecy is paſt, yet it may be fully and ſtrictly applied to the meritorious author. After deceaſe, his whole merits are gradually unfolded; his talents and genius command admiration, and each reader and commentator ſeem eager to diſcover new beauties, and to point out hidden excellencies. Among the literary "worthies" of the world, from the days of Homer to Milton, no one has attained equal celebrity with Shakſpeare. He now ſhines as the ſun of the intellectual hemiſphere, and every other poet ſeems to derive a reflected light from him, or moves in a leſs circumſcribed orbit. Like divine nature, which was at once

his

his guide and goddeſs, his writings excite admiration and delight, the more intenſely they are ſtudied. Prompted by inſpiration, and impreſſed with profound knowledge, with the keen and acute "poet's eye," he commanded every region of the terreſtrial globe, penetrated the hidden thoughts of man, gave to "airy nothing a local habitation and a name," and aſſigned to every paſſion and ſentiment "its true form and feature."

> ——————— 'Tis wonderful,
> That an inviſible inſtinct ſhould frame him
> To poetry unlearned; honour untaught;
> Civility not ſeen in other; knowledge
> That wildly grew in him, yet yielded crops
> As though it had been ſown: for he could find
> "Tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
> "Sermons in ſtones, and good in every thing."—
> Do not ſmile at me that I boaſt him off,
> For ye ſhall find he will outſtrip all praiſe,
> And make it halt behind him. DOVASTON.

Heaven has him now: let our idolatrous fancy therefore ſanctify his reliques. Deſpairing to be his equals, let us profit by his precepts; ſeek to acquire his wiſdom; emulate his gentleneſs, talents, and honours. Conſcious of the comparative frigidneſs of our own faculties, let us warm our hearts at his celeſtial fire, and kindle our ſouls at his unextinguiſhable flame! If enthuſiaſm be juſtifiable on any ſubject, the writer of the preſent article hopes to ſtand excuſed in giving this latitude to his feelings and expreſſions. He has to regret, with thouſands of others, that the ſubject of this memoir is only known in his writings, and that his perſonal hiſtory is as obſcure as that of Homer or Archimedes. Indeed, before we proceed farther, it is neceſſary to premiſe, that a ſingular and unaccountable myſtery is attached to Shakſpeare's private life; and, by ſome ſtrange fatality, almoſt every document concerning him has either been deſtroyed, or ſtill remains in obſcurity. The firſt publiſhed memoir of him was drawn up by Nicholas Rowe, in 1709, nearly 100 years after the deceaſe of the poet; and the materials for this were furniſhed by Betterton, a player. It ſhould be remembered, that the age in which he lived was not the age of minute inquiry. From Rowe's account, and from other evidence, it is clear that our poet was not ambitious of poſthumous fame; that he difregarded the eſtimation of after ages; that he was unconſcious of the high merit of his own writings; and that, though he was much in the public world, and died in comparative affluence, his private life and character were ſcarcely noticed by the biographer or critic. To the man of taſte and refined ſenſibility, he has, however, bequeathed an exhauſtleſs treaſure in his dramatic productions; and as theſe conſtitute an eſſential part of the well-ſtored library, it is equally eſſential to record every fact, and inveſtigate every problematic ſtatement, relating to the ineſtimable author.

That he was born at Stratford-upon-Avon, in Warwickſhire, on the 23d of April 1564, is well aſcertained; and that he was baptized on the 26th of the ſame month, appears by the pariſh regiſter. He is there deſcribed as the ſon of John Shakſpeare, who, according to Rowe, and moſt ſubſequent biographers, was "a conſiderable dealer in wool," and whoſe "family were of good figure and faſhion." Oppoſed to this ſtatement is that of John Aubrey, who entered himſelf as a ſtudent in the univerſity of Oxford, 1642, only 26 years after our poet's death, who derived *his* information from "ſome of the neighbours" of Shakſpeare, and who appears to have made a practice of writing down every fact and tradition that he heard relating to public characters. His account is entitled not only to recital, but to cautious conſideration.

"Mr. William Shakeſpear was borne 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 kill'd a calfe, he would doe it in a high ſtyle, and make a ſpeech. There was at that time another butcher's ſon in this towne that was held not at all inferior to him for a naturall witt, his acquaintance and coetanean, but dyed young. This Wm. being inclined naturally to poetry and acting came to London, I gueſſe about 18, and was an actor at one of the play-houſes, and did act exceedingly well. Now B. Jonſon was never a good actor, but an excellent inſtructor. He began early to make eſſayes at dramatique poetry, which at that time was very lowe, and his playes tooke well. He was a handſome well-ſhap'd man, very good company, and of a very readie and pleaſant ſmooth witt. The humour of —— the conſtable in *A Midſummer Night's Dreame* he happened to take at Grendon in Bucks, which is the roade from London to Stratford, and there was living that conſtable about 1642, when I firſt came to Oxon. Mr. Jos. Howe is of that pariſh, and knew him." (See Warton's Life of Sir Thomas Pope.) "Ben Jonſon and he did gather humours of men dayly wherever they came. One time, as he was at the tavern at Stratford-upon-Avon, one Combes, an old rich uſurer, was to be buryed; he makes there this extemporary epitaph:

> 'Ten in the hundred the devill allowes
> But Combes will have twelve, he ſweares and vowes:
> If any one aſkes who lies in this tombe,
> 'Hoh!' quoth the devill, ''tis my John o'Combe.'

"He was wont to goe to his native country once a yeare. I thinke I have been told that he left 2 or 300 lib. per annum there and there-about to a ſiſter. I have heard ſir Wm. Davenant and Mr. Thomas Shadwell (who is counted the beſt comœdian we have now) ſay, that he had a moſt prodigious witt, and did admire his naturall parts beyond all other dramaticall writers. He was wont to ſay that he never blotted out a line in his life: ſayd Ben Jonſon 'I wiſh he had blotted out a thouſand.' His comedies will remain witt 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 yeares hence they will not be underſtood.

"Though, as Ben Jonſon ſayes of him, that he had but little Latine and leſſe Greek, he underſtood Latine pretty well, for he had been in his younger yeares a ſchoolmaſter in the country." The latter fact was communicated by Mr. Beeſton.

In another memorandum Aubrey ſtates, that

"Mr. William Shakeſpeare was wont to goe into Warwickſhire once a yeare and did comonly in his journey lye at this houſe in Oxon" (*i.e.* the Crown tavern, kept by the father of ſir William Davenant,) "where he was exceedingly reſpected. * * * * * Now ſir Wm. would ſometimes, when he was pleaſant over a glaſſe of wine with his moſt intimate friends,—e. g. Sam. Butler (author of Hudibras) &c. ſay, that it ſeemed to him that he writt with the very ſpirit that Shakeſpeare, and ſeemed contented enough to be thought his ſon * * * * *"—Theſe anecdotes are now publiſhed in "Letters written by eminent Perſons in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," three vols. 8vo. 1813.

This account is truly curious and intereſting; and in ſpite

ſpite of the ſcepticiſm of Dr. Farmer, in his "Eſſay on the Learning of Shakſpeare," and of ſome other writers, the impartial reader muſt admit that it aſſumes the air of probability, candour, and truth. Aubrey might have erred in ſome points; particularly in ſaying, Shakſpeare viſited London at the age of eighteen, when the regiſtry of his own baptiſm, and that of his twin-children, ſhew that he muſt have remained at home till the age of twenty. Again, it is very probable that he met with a conſtable at Grendon, or Long-Crendon, in Buckinghamſhire, whoſe character he dramatiſed, not in "A Midſummer Night's Dream," but in "Much ado about Nothing," or in "Love's Labour's Loſt." The extempore epitaph on John o'Combe is repreſented by Rowe, who gives it different to the above, as having been made during the life-time, and in the preſence of the perſon commemorated, who is alſo ſaid never to have forgiven the poet. In Aubrey's relation there is nothing improbable, nor unreaſonable, in a poet producing ſuch lines ſportively over his cups, and among convivial friends: it is a ſmart epigram on an uſurious character. Inſtead of leaving 300*l. per annum* to a ſiſter, he bequeathed as much to his daughter, as will be ſhewn in the ſequel. If there be any lurking prejudice againſt the profeſſion of a butcher, let it be remembered, that the proud and oſtentatious cardinal Wolſey was the ſon of a butcher; and that the parentage of a Homer, a Milton, and a Shakſpeare, cannot be honoured or degraded by their anceſtors.

"Honour and fame from no condition riſe;
Act well your part, there all the honour lies."

The houſe in which our poet was born has been occupied by a ſucceſſion of butchers from time immemorial. Beſides, it is not at all improbable that the butcher and the woolſtapler were united in one perſon. Admitting this, we ſhall find Rowe and Aubrey in harmony, and one great difficulty removed.

The early education of Shakſpeare, as well as his parentage, is not aſcertained: on this topic all the biographers and commentators have ſupplied us with conjectures and opinions. Chalmers, in his "Apology," is at once ingenious, intelligent, and learned on this ſubject. Rowe obſerves, and moſt of his followers repeat the ſame, that he "was bred for ſome time at a free ſchool, where it is probable he acquired what Latin he was maſter of." They proceed to remark, that "on leaving ſchool, he ſeems to have given entirely into that way of living which his father propoſed to him." About the age of eighteen he married Anne Hathaway, daughter of a ſubſtantial yeoman, then reſiding at Shottory, a hamlet to Stratford. In the pariſh regiſter we find that "Suſanna, daughter of William Shakſpeare, was baptiſed May 26, 1583." By the ſame record we learn that his wife produced him twins in 1584-5; as on the 2d of February in that year, the names of Judith and Hamnet are entered in the regiſter. It muſt have been ſoon after this event that our poet viſited the metropolis; but the cauſe of leaving his native place, as well as his object, connection, and proſpects in London, are alike unknown. Rowe relates, and others have adopted the opinion, with ſome variation as to ſentiment and inference, that, "falling into ill company," he was induced, "more than once," to aſſiſt his aſſociates in ſtealing deer from a park belonging "to ſir Thomas Lucy, of Charlcote, near Stratford. For this he was proſecuted by that gentleman ſo ſeverely," that he was firſt impelled to write a ſatirical ballad on him, and afterwards fly from his home to avoid arreſt and impriſonment. This ſtory, however, is not entitled to full credence; for though our young poet might have aſſociated with ſome idle youths, and have accompanied them to the neighbouring park, either for the ſake of catching deer, or for ſome leſs *difficult* and *leſs hazardous* enterpriſe, yet the circumſtance ſeems improbable, and comes in ſuch "a queſtionable ſhape," that before it be admitted as hiſtorical evidence againſt an amiable man and ſuper-eminent author, it ſhould be ſupported by "confirmations ſtrong as proofs of holy writ." Without reſting on this circumſtance, or crediting another abſurd ſtory, of his holding horſes at the door of a theatre for his livelihood, we ſhall find a rational motive for his viſiting London, and reſorting to the theatre, by knowing that he had a relative and townſman already eſtabliſhed there, and in ſome eſtimation. This was Thomas Green, "a celebrated comedian."

We now come to that era in the life of Shakſpeare, when he began to write his immortal dramas, and to develope thoſe powers which have rendered him the delight and wonder of ſucceſſive ages. At the time of his becoming, in ſome degree, a public character, we naturally expected to find many anecdotes recorded of his literary hiſtory: but, ſtrange to ſay, the ſame deſtitution of authentic incidents marks every ſtage of his life. Even the date at which his firſt play appeared is unknown; and the greateſt uncertainty prevails with reſpect to the chronological order in which the whole ſeries were written, exhibited, or publiſhed. As this ſubject was juſtly conſidered by Malone to be both curious and intereſting, he has appropriated to its examination a long and laborious eſſay. Chalmers, however, in his "Supplemental Apology," and in a recent pamphlet, 1815, endeavours to controvert ſome of Malone's dates, and aſſigns them to other eras; as ſpecified in the ſecond column, below. Malone ſays, the "Firſt Part of King Henry VI." publiſhed in 1589, and commonly attributed to Shakſpeare, was not written by him, though it might receive ſome corrections from his pen at a ſubſequent period, in order to fit it for repreſentation. The "Second Part of King Henry VI." this writer contends, ought therefore to be conſidered as Shakſpeare's firſt dramatic piece; and he thinks that it might have been compoſed about the year 1591, but certainly not earlier than 1590. The other dramas are placed in the following order of time by him and by Mr. George Chalmers.

	According to Malone.	According to Chalmers.
The Third Part of Henry VI. was written in - -	1591	1595
A Midſummer Night's Dream -	1592	1598
Comedy of Errors - - -	1593	1591
Taming of the Shrew - -	1594	1598
Love's Labour's Loſt - -	1594	1592
Two Gentlemen of Verona -	1595	1595
Romeo and Juliet - - -	1595	1592
Hamlet - - - - -	1596	1597
King John - - - -	1596	1598
King Richard II. - - -	1597	1596
King Richard III. - - -	1597	1595
Firſt Part of Henry IV. - -	1597	1596
Second Part of Henry IV. -	1598	1597
Merchant of Venice - - -	1598	1597
All's Well that ends Well - -	1598	1599
King Henry V. - - -	1599	1597
Much ado about Nothing - -	1600	1599
As you like it - - - -	1600	1599
Merry Wives of Windſor - -	1601	1596
King Henry VIII. - - -	1601	1613

Troilus

	According to Malone.	According to Chalmers.
Troilus and Creſſida - - -	1602	1600
Meaſure for Meaſure - - -	1603	1604
The Winter's Tale - - -	1604	1601
King Lear - - -	1605	1605
Cymbeline - - -	1605	1606
Macbeth - - - - -	1606	1606
Julius Cæſar - - - -	1607	1607
Antony and Cleopatra - -	1608	1608
Timon of Athens - - -	1609	1601
Coriolanus - - - -	1610	1609
Othello - - - - -	1611	1614
The Tempeſt - - - -	1612	1613
Twelfth Night - - - -	1614	1613

Beſides the above thirty-five plays, Shakſpeare wrote ſome poetical pieces, which were at firſt publiſhed ſeparately, *viz.* "Venus and Adonis," printed in 1593; "The Rape of Lucrece," 1594; "The Paſſionate Pilgrim," printed in 1599; "A Lover's Complaint," not dated; and a Collection of Sonnets, printed in 1609. The firſt and ſecond of theſe poems were dedicated, as "the firſt heir of my invention," to Henry Wriotheſley, earl of Southampton; who, according to ſir William d'Avenant's ſtatement, preſented the poet with the ſum of 1000*l.* to make ſome purchaſe. If this be a fact, it is honourable to the liberality and good taſte of the nobleman, and ſhews that the "poor Warwickſhire lad" met with a munificent patron in an early ſtage of his literary career. Other circumſtances tend to prove that his merits were known to, and admired by, ſome illuſtrious perſonages. Queen Elizabeth, whoſe ear was perpetually aſſailed by fulſome panegyric, and who encouraged all ſorts of ſilly ſhows, May-games, and buffooneries, was not inſenſible of Shakſpeare's talents; for ſhe commanded ſeveral of his plays to be acted before her: and having been much delighted with the character of Falſtaff, as delineated in the firſt and ſecond parts of "Henry the Fourth," recommended, or perhaps commanded, the bard to portray the fat knight in love. Hence originated "The Merry Wives of Windſor;" ſome incidents in which may have pleaſed the daughter of Henry VIII., although they are juſtly repulſive to modern taſte and delicacy. King James I. alſo attended the repreſentation of many of our author's plays. Sir William d'Avenant told Sheffield, duke of Buckingham, that the monarch wrote the poet "an amicable letter" with his own hand; probably to thank him for the compliment contained in the play of Macbeth.

Shakſpeare, as already hinted, was an actor, as well as author of plays, and performed ſome of the characters in his own dramas. As late as the year 1603, only 13 years before his death, his name appears among the players of Ben Jonſon's tragedy of Sejanus. Thus it is evident that he continued to perform many years; but of his hiſtrionic merits we have no ſatisfactory evidence. Hence on this point there is much diverſity of opinion; ſome contending that he was an excellent actor, and others that he was only equal to the perſonification of his own character of the ghoſt in Hamlet. Some paſſages in his own writings prove that he was well qualified to appreciate and to deſcribe the eſſentials of good acting. See Hamlet's admirable advice to the players; the ſcene between Hamlet and his mother; and alſo the deſcription of a tragedian in "King Richard III." Aubrey ſtates that Shakſpeare viſited his native town periodically; but we do not learn when he finally returned home. From a document in the poſſeſſion of Mr. R. B. Wheler, the hiſtorian of Stratford, it appears that he was in London in November, 1614. At that time Mr. Thomas Green, a profeſſional gentleman of that town, and a relative of Shakſpeare's, viſited the metropolis, to obtain an act of parliament, or to ſettle ſome buſineſs relating to the incloſure of an open field, in which our poet was a party concerned. His memorandums are;

"Rec. 16. No. 1614, at 4 o'clock afr. noon, a lre from Mr. Bayly & Mr. Alderman, [the bailiff and chief alderman of Stratford-upon-Avon] dated 12. No. 1614, touchyng the incloſure buſynes. Jovis 17. No. [1614] my coſen Shakſpeare comyng yeſterdy to town, I went to ſee him how he did. He told me that they" [the parties wiſhing to incloſe] "aſſured him they ment to incloſe no further than to Goſpel buſh, & ſo upp ſtraight (leavyng out pt. of the Dyngles to the field) to the gate in Clopton hedg & take in Saliſbury's peece; & that they mean in Aprill to ſvey. the land & then to gyve ſatisfaccion & not before: & he & Mr. Hall" [Shakſpeare's ſon-in-law, probably preſent] "ſay they think yr. [there] will be nothyng done at all." It appears that Mr. Green, after his return to Stratford, made the following entry, which is partly illegible. "23. Dec. [1614] 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. [couſin] Shakſpear, the coppyes of all our . . . . . then alſo a note of the inconvenyences wold . . . . . by the incloſure." Another part of the memorandum ſtates, that the town of Stratford was then "lying in the aſhes of deſolation."

We find that Shakſpeare had purchaſed a houſe, called "New-place," at Stratford, about three years before his death, where he reſided in the ſtyle and character of a private gentleman. Here he died on the anniverſary of his birth-day, April 23, 1616, and was interred on the ſecond day after his death, in the chancel of Stratford church, where a monument ſtill remains to his memory. It is conſtructed partly of marble and partly of ſtone, and conſiſts of a half-length buſt of the deceaſed, with a cuſhion before him, placed under an ornamental canopy, between two columns of the Corinthian order, ſupporting an entablature. Attached to the latter is the Shakſpeare arms and creſt, ſculptured in bold relief. Beneath the buſt are the following lines:

Judicio Pylivm, genio Socratem, arte Maronem,
Terra tegit, popvlvs mæret, olympus habet.

Stay, paſſenger, why goeſt thov by ſo faſt,
Read, if thov canſt, whom enviovs death hath plaſt
Within this monvment, Shakſpeare: with whome
Qvick natvre dide; whoſe name doth deck ys tombe
Far more than coſte; ſieh all yt he hath writt
Leaves living art, bvt page to ſerve his witt.
Obiit Ano. Doi. 1616, Ætatis 53, die 23 Ap.

On a flat ſtone, covering the grave, is this curious inſcription:

Good frend for Jeſvs' ſake forbeare,
To digg the dvſt encloaſed heare;
Bleſt be ye man yt ſpares theſe ſtones,
And cvrſt be he yt moves my bones.

The common tradition is, that the four laſt lines were written by Shakſpeare himſelf; but this notion has perhaps originated ſolely from the uſe of the word "my," in the laſt line. The imprecation, ſays Mr. Malone, was probably ſuggeſted by an apprehenſion "that our author's remains might ſhare the ſame fate with thoſe of the reſt of his countrymen, and be added to the immenſe pile of human bones depoſited in the charnel-houſe at Stratford."

Mrs.

Mrs. Shakſpeare, who ſurvived her huſband eight years, was buried between his grave and the north wall of the chancel, under a ſtone inlaid with braſs, and inſcribed thus: "Heere lyeth interred the bodye of Anne, wife of Mr. William Shakeſpeare, who depted. this life the 6th day of Avgvſt, 1623, being of the age of 67 yeares."

Vbera, tv Mater, tv lac vitamq. dediſti,
Væ mihi; pro tanto mvnere ſaxa dabo!
Qvam Mallem, amoveat lapidem, bonvs angel'ore'
Exeat vt Chriſti Corpvs, imago tva,
Sed nil vota valent, venias cito Chriſte reſvrget,
Clavſa licet tvmvlo mater, et aſtra petet.

The family of Shakſpeare, as already mentioned, conſiſted only of one ſon and two daughters. The ſon died in 1596; but both the daughters ſurvived their father. The eldeſt, Sufanna, married Dr. John Hall, a phyſician of Stratford, who is ſaid to have obtained much reputation and practice. She brought her huſband an only child, Elizabeth, who was married, firſt to Thomas Naſhe, eſq. and afterwards to ſir John Barnard, of Abingdon, in Northamptonſhire; but had no iſſue by either of them. Judith, Shakſpeare's ſecond daughter, married Thomas Quiney, a gentleman of good family, by whom ſhe had three children; but as none of them reached their twentieth year, they left no poſterity. Hence our poet's laſt deſcendant was lady Barnard, who was buried at Abingdon, Feb. 17, 1669-70. Dr. Hall, her father, died Nov. 25, 1635, and her mother July 11, 1649; and both were interred in Stratford church under flat ſtones, bearing inſcriptions to their reſpective memories.

Shakſpeare, by his *will*, yet extant in the office of the prerogative court in London, and bearing date the 25th day of March, 1616, made the following bequeſts.

To his daughter Judith he gave 150*l.* of lawful Engliſh money; one hundred to be paid in diſcharge of her marriage portion, within one year after his deceaſe, and the remaining fifty upon her giving up, in favour of her elder ſiſter, Sufanna Hall, all her right in a copyhold tenement and appurtenances, parcel of the manor of Rowington. To the ſaid Judith he alſo bequeathed 150*l.* more, if ſhe, or any of her iſſue, were living three years from the date of his will; but in the contrary event, then he directed that 100*l.* of the ſum ſhould be paid to his niece, Elizabeth Hall, and the proceeds of the fifty to his ſiſter, Joan, or Jone Hart, for life, with reſidue to her children. He further gave to the ſaid Judith a broad ſilver gilt bowl.

To his ſiſter Joan, beſides the contingent bequeſt above-mentioned, he gave twenty pounds and all his wearing apparel; alſo the houſe in Stratford, in which ſhe was to reſide for her natural life, under the yearly rent of twelve pence. To her three ſons, William Hart, —— Hart, and Michael Hart, he gave five pounds a-piece; to be paid within one year after his deceaſe. To his grand-daughter, Elizabeth Hall, he bequeathed all his plate, the ſilver bowl above excepted.

To the poor of Stratford he bequeathed ten pounds; to Mr. Thomas Combe, his ſword; to Thomas Ruſſel five pounds; to Francis Collins, eſq. thirteen pounds ſix ſhillings and eight-pence; to Hamlet (Hamnet) Sadler twenty-ſix ſhillings and eight-pence, to buy a ring; and a like ſum, for the fame purpoſe, to William Reynolds, gent., Anthony Naſh, gent., John Hemynge, Richard Burbage, and Henry Cundell, his "fellows;" alſo twenty ſhillings in gold to his godſon, William Walker.

To his daughter, Sufanna Hall, he bequeathed New-place, with its appurtenances; two meſſuages or tenements, with their appurtenances, ſituated in Henley-ſtreet; alſo all his "barns, ſtables, orchards, gardens, lands, tenements, and hereditaments whatſoever, ſituate, lying, and being, or to be had, received, perceived, or taken within the towns, hamlets, villages, fields, and grounds of Stratford-upon-Avon, Old Stratford, Biſhopton, and Welcombe, or in any of them, in the ſaid county of Warwick; and alſo all that meſſuage or tenement, with the appurtenances, wherein one John Robinſon dwelleth, ſituated, lying, and being in the Blackfriars, London, near the Wardrobe; and all my other lands, tenements, and hereditaments whatſoever: to have and to hold all and ſingular the ſaid premiſes, with their appurtenances, unto the ſaid Sufanna Hall, for and during the term of her natural life; and after her deceaſe, to the firſt ſon of her body lawfully iſſuing, and to the heirs male of the body of the ſaid firſt ſon, lawfully iſſuing; and for default of ſuch iſſue, to the ſecond ſon of her body lawfully iſſuing, and to the heirs male of the body of the ſaid ſecond ſon lawfully iſſuing;" and ſo forth, as to the third, fourth, fifth, ſixth, and ſeventh ſons of her body, and their heirs male: "and for default of ſuch iſſue, the ſaid premiſes to be and remain to my ſaid niece Hall, and the heirs male of her body lawfully iſſuing; and for default of ſuch iſſue, to my daughter Judith, and the heirs male of her body lawfully iſſuing; and for default of ſuch iſſue, to the right heirs of me the ſaid William Shakſpeare."

To the ſaid Sufanna Hall and her huſband, whom he appointed executors of his will, under the direction of Francis Collins and Thomas Ruſſel, eſqrs. he further bequeathed all the reſt of his "goods, chattels, leaſes, plate, jewels, and houſehold ſtuff whatſoever," after the payment of his debts, legacies, and funeral expences; with the exception of his "ſecond beſt bed with the furniture," which conſtituted the only bequeſt he made to his wife, and that by inſertion after the will was written out.

Among the myſteries connected with our poet's private life and actions is one, which has hitherto eſcaped the inveterate reſearches and countleſs opinions of his biographers and commentators. We have already ſeen, that his wife bore him three children in leſs than two years after marriage. In the Stratford regiſter is an entry of "Thomas Greene, *alias Shakſpeare*," in 1589-90, which excites ſome ſuſpicion reſpecting the fidelity of our bard's wife: and it may be inferred from his will, that his lady could not have enjoyed much of his affection, to have been put off with only the bequeſt of a "ſecond beſt bed:" beſides, we do not hear of any other children by the poet.

The firſt collection of Shakſpeare's plays was publiſhed in 1623, with the following title: "Mr. William Shakſpeare's Comedies, Hiſtories, and Tragedies. Publiſhed according to the true original copies. London, printed by Iſaac Jaggard and Ed. Blount, 1623, folio." This volume was edited by John Hemynge and Henry Condell, and was dedicated to "the moſt noble and incomparable pair of brethren," William, earl of Pembroke, and Philip, earl of Montgomery. In the title page is a portrait, ſaid to be a likeneſs of the author, with the engraver's name, "Martin Droeſhout, ſculpſit, London;" and on the oppoſite page are theſe lines by Ben Jonſon, addreſſed to the reader:

"This figure that thou here ſeeſt put,
It was for gentle Shakeſpeare cut,
Wherein the graver had a ſtrife
With nature to outdoo the life:
O, could he but have drawne his wit
As well in braſſe, as he hath hit
His face; the print would then ſurpaſſe
All that was ever writ in braſſe.
But, ſince he cannot, Reader, looke
Not on his picture, but his Booke." B. I.

The

The above volume was carefully reprinted, in close imitation of the original, a few years back, by J. Wright, for Vernor and Hood, London. A second edition of Shakspeare's plays was published, in folio, in 1632, a third in 1664, and a fourth in 1685. These several impressions are usually denominated "ancient editions," because published within the first century after the death of the poet, and before any comments or elucidations were employed to expound the original text. Some of his dramas were published, in 4to., during his own life.

Of those editions which are distinguished by the title "modern," the earliest was published by Nicholas Rowe, in 1709, in 7 vols. 8vo. This was followed by an edition in 9 vols. 12mo. by the same author, in 1714; and to both were prefixed a biographical memoir of the illustrious bard. In 1725, Pope, who first introduced critical and emendatory notes, published his edition in 6 vols. 4to. with a preface, which Johnson characterizes as valuable alike for composition and justness of remark. A second edition by the same editor was published in 10 vols. 12mo. with additional notes and corrections, in 1728. The successor of Pope was Theobald, who produced a very elaborate edition in 7 vols. 8vo. in 1733; and a second, with corrections and additions, in 8 vols. 12mo. in 1740. Sir Thomas Hanmer next turned his attention to the illustration of Shakspeare, and in 1744 gave the world an edition of his plays in 6 vols. 4to. Warburton published his edition in 8 vols. 8vo. in 1747; from which time no critic attempted the task till the year 1765, when Dr. Johnson's first edition made its appearance in 8 vols. 8vo. It was preceded by an able and ingenious preface, in which the character of Shakspeare's writings are commented on in a powerful style of eloquence, but with a severity far removed from accuracy and justice. Indeed Johnson did not fully understand the varied merits of his author. In 1766, Steevens published the twenty "Old Plays," in 4 vols. 8vo. This was followed, in 1768, by an edition in 10 vols. crown 8vo. by Mr. Capell. Next came out, in 1771, a second and improved edition in 6 vols. 4to. by sir Thomas Hanmer, which was succeeded by an edition in 10 vols. 8vo. in 1773, by Johnson and Steevens, conjointly. Of this last, a second edition was published in 1778; a third, revised and corrected by Reed, in 1785. In the year following was produced the first volume of the dramatic works of Shakspeare, with notes by Joseph Rann, A.M. which work was completed in 6 vols. 8vo. in 1794. In 1784 was published, in 1 vol. royal 8vo. an edition by Stockdale, with a very copious index of passages, by the Rev. Mr. Ayscough. Bell's edition appeared in 1788, in 20 vols. 18mo.; and in 1790 Malone's was ushered into the world in 10 vols. crown 8vo. In 1793, a fourth edition, "revised and augmented," in 15 vols. 8vo. was produced by Mr. Steevens. A fifth edition, in 21 vols. 8vo. was published in 1803, from the text and with the notes of Johnson, Steevens, and Reed; and another edition of 21 vols. with corrections, &c. appeared in 1813.

Many other impressions of our author's plays have been published by different booksellers, in different sizes, and of various degrees of typographic merit. Most of them, however, are unauthenticated reprints: but many have the popular attraction of embellishments. The most splendid of this class was published by Boydell, in 9 vols. folio, embellished with 100 engravings, executed by and from artists of the first eminence. The same work was also printed in 4to. In 1805 was published an edition of Shakspeare's plays in 10 vols. 8vo., with a prefatory essay by Alexander Chalmers, F.S.A. and a print to each play from a design by Henry Fuseli, esq. R.A. The last edition of this kind has just appeared in 7 vols. 18mo. with 230 engravings on wood, from the tasteful press of Whittingham.

Steevens estimated, at the time he published his notes on Shakspeare, that "not less than 35,000 copies of our author's works" had been then dispersed; and it may now be confidently said, that nearly 100,000 of them have been printed and sold.

From what has been already stated, it is evident that the writings of Shakspeare have progressively acquired considerable publicity; and that they now rank as chief, or in the first list, of British classics. This high celebrity is to be attributed to various secondary causes, as well as to their own intrinsic merits. To players, critics, biographers, and artists, a large portion of this popularity is to be ascribed; for had the plays been represented by Garrick, Kemble, &c. as originally published by Condell and Hemynge, or reprinted verbatim from that text, the spectators to the one, and readers of the other, would have been comparatively limited. It is talent only that can properly represent and appreciate talent. The birth and productions of one man of brilliant genius, will stimulate the emulation, and call into action the full powers of a correlative mind. Hence the British theatrical hemisphere has been repeatedly illumined by the coruscations of Garrick, Henderson, Pritchard, Kemble, Siddons, Cooke, Young, and Kean; and these performers have derived no small portion of their justly acquired fame from the exquisite and powerful writings of the bard of Avon. Whilst the one may be considered as the creator of thought and inventor of character, the others have personified and given "local habitation" and existence to the poetical vision. The painter has also been usefully and honourably employed in delineating incidents, and portraying characters from the poet: while the engraver has translated these designs into a new language, and given them extensive circulation and permanent record.

The consummate acting of Garrick tended, in a great degree, not only to revive the fame of Shakspeare, but to augment and extend it. The peculiar powers of Betterton, and of his other dramatic predecessors, have not been sufficiently defined to enable us to estimate their real talents; but those of the English Roscius have been commented on and described by so many able critics, that we are certain they were of the most accomplished kind. He was therefore amply qualified to personify, and give life and effect to the characters of Macbeth, Hamlet, Lear, Richard the Third, Romeo, &c.; and by his exquisite representation of these histrionic personages, the public were additionally delighted and astonished with the amazing genius of the author. Since Garrick's time other actors have judiciously chosen some of Shakspeare's characters, as best calculated to shew their own talents; and as the most certain touchstone of passion. A Kemble and a Siddons have enwreathed their brows with never-fading laurel by diligently studying and successfully personating many of our poet's great characters. As the former has acquired a well-earned fame in portraying Macbeth, Lear, Coriolanus, Prospero, Cardinal Wolsey, Richard, Hamlet, and Othello; the latter has astonished and gratified many thousand spectators by her horrifying representation of lady Macbeth, her dignified playing of the queen in Henry VIII., and the queen in Hamlet; by her commanding powers in Portia; and in her pathetic eloquence of Desdemona. Cooke displayed the characters of Richard the Third, Iago, and Shylock, with great skill and excellence: and in the present day, Kean has personated these characters, with that of Richard II. and Hamlet, so as to command the approbation of the most acute and intelligent critics.

The number, variety, and verſatility of commentaries that have been ſucceſſively publiſhed on the text of Shakſpeare's plays almoſt exceed credibility; and a foreigner, or ſtranger to the ſubject, would be more than aſtoniſhed, were the whole brought in one maſs before him. It is true, that many of them are unimportant and uſeleſs, but it is equally true, that ſeveral of his critical annotators have diſplayed much reſearch, learning, and acuteneſs; and to ſuch the philologiſt and poetical antiquary are much indebted. It was our intention to have given a conciſe account of theſe; becauſe the whole conſtitute the Shakſpearian library; and all may be regarded as ſatellites to the vaſt and reſplendent poetical planet. The chief editors of his plays have been already noticed, as well as the reſpective eras of their different writings. Rowe was the firſt to add any thing to the original text, by prefixing a memoir of the author. This memoir has been reprinted with almoſt every ſucceeding edition, and without any alteration or comment, till Malone accompanied it with notes to his edition of 1790. Mr. Alexander Chalmers, in an edition of 1805, has prefixed a "Sketch of the Life of Shakſpeare," in which he has adopted moſt of the ſtatements of Rowe, with the additional and corrective remarks of Malone and Steevens. "The whole, however," he remarks, "is unſatisfactory. Shakſpeare in his private character, in his friendſhips, in his amuſements, in his cloſet, in his family, is no where before us."

The plays of Shakſpeare are divided into three claſſes, and called in the firſt edition "comedies, hiſtories, and tragedies." Each is of a diſtinct character; but in ſome of them there is a mixture of the three in one. "The Merry Wives of Windſor," "The Comedy of Errors," and "The Taming of the Shrew," are all comedies; the reſt have ſomething of both kinds. It is not eaſy to determine in which way of writing he moſt excelled. His Falſtaff is univerſally allowed to be a maſter-piece: the character is always well ſuſtained, though drawn out into three plays; and even the account of his death, given by his landlady, Mrs. Quickly, in the firſt act of Henry V. is as natural and diverting as any part of his life. "If there be any fault," ſays the critic, "in the draught he has made of this lewd old fellow, it is, that though he has made him a thief, a liar, and a coward, and, in ſhort, every way vicious, yet he has given him ſo much wit, as to make him almoſt too agreeable; and I do not know whether ſome people have not, in remembrance of the amuſement which he had formerly afforded them, been ſorry to ſee his friend Hal uſe him ſo ſcurvily when he comes to the crown, in the end of the ſecond part of Henry IV. Among other extravagancies in the 'Merry Wives of Windſor,' he has made him a deer-ſtealer, that he might have the opportunity of remembering his Warwickſhire proſecutor under the name of Juſtice Shallow." The whole play is admirable, the humours are various and well oppoſed; the main deſign, which is to cure Ford of his unreaſonable jealouſy, is extremely well conducted.

Another of the characters which has been fixed on as one of Shakſpeare's fine delineations, is that of Shylock, the Jew, in "The Merchant of Venice," in which there appears ſuch a deadly ſpirit of revenge, ſuch a ſavage fierceneſs, and ſuch a bloody deſignation of cruelty and miſchief, as cannot agree either with the ſtyle or character of comedy, though uſually ranked as ſuch. Taken altogether, it is perhaps one of the moſt finiſhed of Shakſpeare's pieces; the tale indeed is improbable in ſome of its parts; but taking the facts for granted, the ſtory is beautifully written. There is ſomething in the friendſhip of Antonio and Baſſanio very great and generous. The whole fourth act is extremely fine, but there are two paſſages that are univerſally known and applauded, the one is in praiſe of *mercy*, and the other is on the power of *muſic*.

The melancholy of Jaques in the comedy of "As you like it," is as ſingular and odd, as it is amuſing, and if, according to the maxim of Horace,

"Difficile eſt proprie communia dicere,"

it will be a hard taſk for any one to go beyond him in the deſcription of the ſeveral degrees and ages of a man's life. See the article AGE.

His images are indeed every where ſo lively, that the thing he would repreſent ſtands full before you, and you poſſeſs every part of it. Rowe mentions his image of Patience, in the perſon of a young woman in love, as one of the fineſt and moſt uncommon things ever written; it is as follows:

"——————— She never told her love;
But let concealment, like a worm i'th' bud,
Feed on her damaſk cheek: ſhe pin'd in thought,
And ſat like PATIENCE on a monument
Smiling at grief."

The ſtyle of his comedy is, in general, natural to the characters, and eaſy in itſelf; and the wit moſt commonly ſprightly and pleaſing, except in thoſe places where he runs into doggrel rhimes. But the greatneſs of this author's genius does no where ſo much appear, as where he gives his imagination the entire looſe, and raiſes his fancy to a flight above mankind, and beyond the limits of the viſible world. Such are his attempts in the Tempeſt, Midſummer Night's Dream, Macbeth, and Hamlet. Of theſe, the Tempeſt is thought by able critics to be the moſt perfect in its kind of any thing that Shakſpeare has left behind him. His magic hath ſomething in it very ſolemn, and very poetical: and that extravagant character of Caliban is extremely well ſuſtained, and ſhews a wonderful invention in the author, who could ſtrike out ſuch a particular wild image, and it is certainly one of the fineſt that was ever exhibited to the human imagination. It has been ſaid by able judges, that "Shakſpeare had not only found out a new character in his Caliban, but had alſo deviſed and adapted a new manner of language for that character."

It is the ſame magic that raiſes the fairies in the Midſummer Night's Dream, the witches in Macbeth, and the ghoſt in Hamlet, with thoughts and language ſo proper to the parts they ſuſtain, and ſo peculiar to the talent of this writer. "If," ſays the author whom we have ſo often quoted, "one undertook to examine the greateſt part of his tragedies by thoſe rules which are eſtabliſhed by Ariſtotle, and taken from the model of the Grecian ſtage, it would be no difficult taſk to find a great many faults; but as Shakſpeare lived under a kind of mere light of nature, and had never been made acquainted with the regularity of thoſe written precepts, ſo it would be hard to judge him by a law of which he was ignorant. We are to conſider him as a man, that lived in a ſtate of almoſt univerſal licence and ignorance; there was no eſtabliſhed judge, but every one took the liberty to write according to the dictates of his own fancy. When one conſiders, that there is not one play before him of a reputation good enough to entitle it to an appearance on the preſent ſtage, it cannot but be a matter of great wonder, that he ſhould have advanced dramatic poetry as far as he did.

"It is now a received article of literary faith in England, that notwithſtanding the faults and defects with which Shakſpeare abounds, and which were chiefly thoſe of his age, no dramatiſt in any country has diſplayed ſuch intimate

intimate knowledge of the human heart; ſuch extenſive acquaintance with nature in its various forms, an imagination ſo powerful and poetical, and ſuch a copiouſneſs of moral ſentiment expreſſed in the moſt forcible language." Dryden ſays, "he was a man, who, of all modern and, perhaps, ancient poets, had the largeſt and moſt comprehenſive ſoul. All the images of nature were ſtill preſent to him, and he drew them not laboriouſly, but luckily. When he deſcribes any thing, you more than ſee it, you feel it too. He needed not the ſpectacles of books to read nature; he looked inwards, and found her there. I cannot ſay he is every where alike; were he ſo, I ſhould do him injury to compare him with the greateſt of mankind. He is many times flat and inſipid: his comic wit degenerating into clenches, his ſerious ſwelling into bombaſt. But he is always great, when ſome great occaſion is preſented to him. No man can ever ſay, he ever had a fit ſubject for his wit, and did not then raiſe himſelf as high above the reſt of the poets,

"Quantum lenta ſolent inter viburna cupreſſi."

Shakſpeare, like moſt men of pre-eminent talents, is ſaid to have been much aſſailed by the attacks of envious rivals, notwithſtanding, that gentleneſs and good nature were the peculiar characteriſtics of his perſonal deportment. Among thoſe who are ſaid to have treated him with hoſtility was the celebrated Ben Jonſon; but Dr. Farmer departs from the received opinions on this ſubject, and thinks that, though Jonſon was arrogant of his ſcholarſhip, and publicly profeſſed a rivalſhip of Shakſpeare, he was in private his friend and aſſociate.

Pope, in his preface, ſays, that Jonſon "loved" Shakſpeare "as well as honoured his memory; celebrates the honeſty, openneſs, and frankneſs of his temper; and only diſtinguiſhes, as he reaſonably ought, between the real merit of the author, and the ſilly and derogatory applauſes of the players." Mr. Gilchriſt, whoſe dramatic criticiſms are generally profound and acute, has publiſhed a pamphlet, to prove that Jonſon was never a harſh or an envious rival of Shakſpeare; and that the popular opinion on this ſubject is founded in error. The following ſtory reſpecting theſe two great dramatiſts is related by Rowe, and has been generally credited by ſubſequent biographers. "Mr. Jonſon, who was at that time altogether unknown to the world, had offered one of his plays to the players, in order to have it acted; and the perſons into whoſe hands it was put, after having turned it careleſsly and ſupercilioufly over, were juſt upon returning it to him with an ill-natured anſwer, that it would be of no ſervice to their company, when Shakſpeare luckily caſt his eye upon it, and found ſomething ſo well in it, as to engage him firſt to read it through, and afterwards to recommend Mr. Jonſon and his writings to the public."

The oppoſition or rivalſhip of Shakſpeare and Jonſon produced, as might naturally be expected, much contention, concerning their relative merits, between their reſpective friends and admirers; and it is not a little remarkable, that Jonſon ſeems to have maintained a higher place in the eſtimation of the public in general than our poet, for more than a century after the death of the latter. Within that period Jonſon's works are ſaid to have paſſed through ſeveral editions, and to have been read with avidity, while Shakſpeare's were comparatively neglected till the time of Rowe. This circumſtance is in a great meaſure to be accounted for on the principle that claſſical literature and collegiate learning were regarded in thoſe days as the chief criteria of merit. Accordingly Jonſon's charge againſt Shakſpeare was the want of that ſpecies of knowledge; and upon his own proficiency in it, he arrogated to himſelf a ſuperiority over him. That all claſſical ſcholars, however, did not ſanction Jonſon's pretenſions, is certain; for among the greateſt admirers of Shakſpeare, was one of the moſt learned men of his age, the ever-memorable Hales. On one occaſion, the latter, after liſtening in ſilence to a warm debate between ſir John Suckling and Jonſon, is reported to have interpoſed by obſerving, "That if Shakſpeare had not read the ancients, he had likewiſe not ſtolen any thing from them; and that if he (Jonſon) would produce any one topic finely treated by any one of them, he would undertake to ſhew ſomething on the ſame ſubject, at leaſt as well written, by Shakſpeare." A trial, it is added, being in conſequence agreed to, judges were appointed to decide the diſpute, who unanimouſly voted in favour of the Engliſh poet, after a candid examination and compariſon of the paſſages produced by the contending parties.

In September, 1769, was celebrated the Shakſpeare jubilee, at Stratford, under the direction of Garrick.

In pointing out the authorities for the preceding article, and noticing a few of the moſt intereſting works that have been publiſhed in illuſtration of the writings of the "bard of Avon," we muſt conclude this eſſay, which may be deemed too prolix by ſome, and too brief by others. "Some Account of Shakſpeare," by N. Rowe. Malone's, Steevens's, and Reed's "Prolegomena." "Remarks on the Life and Writings of W. Shakſpeare," by John Britton, F.S.A. prefixed to Whittingham's edition of his plays, with wood-cuts, 1814. "A Guide to Stratford-upon-Avon," by R. B. Wheler, 12mo. 1814. "Critical, hiſtorical, and explanatory Notes on Shakſpeare; with Emendations of the Text and Metre," by Zachary Grey, LL.D. two vols. 8vo. 1755. "Obſervations and Conjectures on ſome Paſſages of Shakſpeare," by Thomas Tyrwhitt, eſq. 8vo. 1764. "An Eſſay on the Learning of Shakſpeare," by the Rev. Dr. Rich. Farmer, 8vo. Three editions of this were publiſhed by the author, and it has, ſince 1789, been reprinted in different editions of Shakſpeare's plays. "An Eſſay on the Writings and Genius of Shakſpeare, compared with the Greek and French dramatic Poets; with ſome Remarks upon the Miſrepreſentations of Monſ. de Voltaire," by Mrs. Montagu, 8vo. A ſixth edition of this eloquent and intereſting volume was printed in 1810. "Eſſays on Shakſpeare's Dramatic Characters," by W. Richardſon, M.D. 8vo. 1812, are replete with judicious criticiſm and appoſite comment. "Remarks, critical and illuſtrative, on the Text and Notes of the laſt Edition of Shakſpeare," (1778,) by Mr. Ritſon, 8vo. 1783. "An Inquiry into the Authenticity of certain miſcellaneous Papers, publiſhed Dec. 24, 1795," &c. by Edmond Malone, Eſq. 8vo. 1796. This inquiry called forth two vols. called "An Apology for the Believers in the Shakſpeare Papers," by G. Chalmers, 8vo. 1797: and a "Supplemental Apology for the Believers, &c." by the ſame author, 8vo. 1799. "Illuſtrations of Shakſpeare, and of ancient Manners, &c." by Francis Douce, 2 vols. 8vo. 1807, is a work of very conſiderable merit.

Shakſpeare was fond of muſic, and not wholly ignorant of the art. He not only frequently introduces *maſques for muſic* in his plays, but ſinging in almoſt all his fourteen comedies; and even in moſt of his tragedies, where this wonderful and exquiſite dramatiſt has manifeſted the ſame predilection for muſic as poetry.

In the "Tempeſt," the uſe that he has made of it is admirable, as well as the deſcription of its effects. Act i, ſc. 5. Ariel, inviſible, playing and ſinging to Ferdinand, ſays,

" Where ſhould this muſic be, i' th' air or earth?
It ſounds no more: and ſure it waits upon
Some god o' th' iſland."

And afterwards:

" This is no mortal buſineſs, nor no ſound
That the earth owns: I hear it now above me."

Indeed, the ſerious part of this moſt fanciful play is very fortunately calculated for an opera. Shadwell, in the laſt century, made one of it, in the manner of what were then called operas on our ſtage. It has been performed of late years more as a muſical maſque, than opera or play, at Drury-lane, to the muſic of the late Mr. T. Linley, as it uſed to be to that of Dr. Arne, and others. The ſongs in this play, Dr. Wilſon, who reſet and publiſhed two of them, tells us, in his "Court Ayres, or Ballads," publiſhed at Oxford, 1660, that "Full fathom five," and "Where the bee ſucks," had been firſt ſet by Robert Johnſon, a compoſer contemporary with Shakſpeare.

Act ii. ſc. 1. "Enter Ariel playing ſolemn muſic." We never could underſtand this indication: no muſic ſeems to be heard by the characters on the ſtage, nor do they take any notice of it through the whole ſcene. Afterwards, when with muſic and a ſong he acquaints Gonzalo of the danger he is in, his miſſion has meaning. "While you here do ſnoring lie," &c.

Even Caliban talks well about muſic:

" ——the iſle is full of noiſes,
Sounds and ſweet airs, that give delight and hurt not."

Ariel never appears or is employed without muſic, which is ſweetly deſcribed, and introduced with perfect propriety. Proſpero calls for medicinal muſic:

" A ſolemn air, and the beſt comforter
To an unſettled fancy, cure thy brains."

" Midſummer Night's Dream."

Act ii. ſc. 5. "Come now a *roundel*, and a fairy ſong." If, as Dr. Gray ſays, a *roundel* is "a dance in a ring," a *roundelay* was the ſong and tune to ſuch dance; as *ballad*, from *ballata*, Italian; ſo *roundelay*, from *rondelet*, old French, *rondeau*, modern.

The ideas and language of fairyiſm are wonderfully imagined and ſupported in this play; and the uſe aſſigned to muſic happy and fertile.

Act iv. ſc. 1. "Rural muſic, tongs, &c." Poker and tongs, marrow-bones and cleavers, ſalt-box, hurdy-gurdy, &c. are the old national inſtruments of muſic on our iſland.

Queen. "Muſic, ho! muſic: ſuch as charmeth ſleep."

Still muſic, meaning ſuch ſoft and gentle muſic as tranquillizes, ſoothes, and lulls to muſic.

Act v. ſc. 1. In the liſt of ſports ready for the nuptial feaſt of Theſeus, is "the battle with the Centaurs; to be ſung by an Athenian eunuch to the harp." This ſeems to imply a more ancient practice of caſtration for the voice than can be found in opera annals.

Speaking of Quince, in the clown's prologue, Hippolita ſays, "indeed, he hath play'd on his prologue, like a child on a recorder; a ſound, but not in government."

Two ſongs alluded to in the laſt ſcene of this play are loſt.

Oberon. "And this ditty after me
Sing and dance it trippingly."

Queen. "Firſt rehearſe this ſong by rote,
To each word a warbling note;
Hand in hand, with fairy grace,
Will we ſing, and bleſs this place."

" Two Gentlemen of Verona."

Though this comedy furniſhes fewer occaſions for muſic than the two preceding dramas, yet muſicians are employed in it as well as muſical alluſions. As Ben Jonſon, in his maſque of "Cynthia's Revels," ſpeaks of the gamut or ſyllables of ſolmiſation, *ut, re, mi, fa, ſol, la*, which pſalm-ſingers had made well known to his audience; ſo Shakſpeare, in this play, act i. ſc. 3. introduces all the muſical terms then in uſe: as, a *tune*, a *note*, a *light*, a *heavy tune*, *burden*, *melodious*, to *reach high*, *keep in tune*, *ſing out*, *too ſharp*, *too flat*, *concord*, *harſh deſcant*, *the mean baſe*, *&c.*

Act iv. ſc. laſt, there is a laboured deſcription of the powers of poetry and muſic; Orpheus's lute, *concert*, ſpelt as now:

" ——to their inſtruments
Tune a deploring *dump*,"——

or lament (*lamentatione*), ſung by a wretched and ſorrowing lover in the *dumps*.

Sc. 2. A ſerenata, or notturno, is introduced:

" ——now muſt I to her window,
And give ſome *evening* muſic to her ear."

Enter Muſicians.

" ——now, gentlemen,
Let's tune, and to it luſtily."

Song. "Who is Sylvia? what is ſhe?" &c.

" Meaſure for Meaſure."

Though this play has leſs muſic in it than the three preceding, yet at the beginning of act iv. a ſong, from his own Paſſionate Pilgrim: "Take, oh, take thoſe lips away," is ſung to Mariana by a boy, who is ſent away on the arrival of the duke, in the character of a friar; when apologizing for the ſeeming levity of liſtening to muſic, ſhe ſays:

" I cry you mercy, ſir, and well could wiſh
You had not found me here ſo muſical."

To which the duke anſwers:

" 'Tis good; though muſic oft hath ſuch a charm,
To make bad good; and good provoke to harm."

This is a heavy charge, which it would not have been eaſy for Shakſpeare to ſubſtantiate, and does not very well agree with what he ſays in the "Tempeſt," of the *innoxious* efficacy of muſic. "Sounds and ſweet airs, that give delight, and *hurt not*." Muſic may be applied to licentious poetry; but the poetry then corrupts the muſic, not the muſic the poetry. It has often regulated the movements of laſcivious dances; but ſuch airs heard, for the firſt time, without the ſong or dance, could convey no impure ideas to an innocent imagination; ſo that Monteſquieu's aſſertion is ſtill in force: that "muſic is the only one of all the arts, which does not corrupt the mind."

" Merchant of Venice."

Act ii. ſc. 1. A flouriſh of cornets when the Mooriſh prince comes in.

Act ii. ſc. 6. "The vile ſqueaking of the wry-neck'd fife."

Act

Act iii. sc. 2. " Let music sound, while he doth make his choice;
Then, if he lose, he makes a swan-like end,
Fading in music.
—— he may win;
And what is music then? then music is
As are those dulcet sounds at break of day,
That creep into the dreaming bridegroom's ear,
And summon him to marriage."

Music within.

A song while Bassanio examines the caskets:

" Tell me where is fancy bred," &c.

The passages in the fifth act of this interesting play are beautiful, numerous, and celebrated:

" And bring your music forth into the air," &c.

" —— soft stillness and the night
Become the touches of sweet harmony."

Jessica. " I am never merry when I hear sweet music." This is the initial of a well-known, and now *proverbial*, eulogium on modulated sound: " The man that has no music in his soul," &c.

" As you like it."

Act ii. sc. 1. A song:

" Under the green-wood tree," &c.

Remarks on music by Jacques. Then another song:

" Blow, blow, thou winter's wind."

Music. Song: " What shall he have that kill'd the deer."
Song: " 'Twas a lover and his lass."
Still music. Song: " Then is there mirth in heav'n."
Another song: " Wedding is great Juno's crown."

" Love's Labour's lost."

Act iii. Armado. " Warble child; make passionate my sense of hearing."
This is a most beautiful and comprehensive request: none of the fine arts can subsist, or give rapture, without *passion*. Hence mediocrity is more intolerable in them than in other inventions. Music without passion is as monotonous as the tolling of a bell.
But no song is printed: though the author tells us there is *singing*. Dr. Johnson says, " here is apparently a song lost."

Music as for a masquerade.

Songs for spring and autumn:

" When daisies pied."—And, " When icicles hang on the wall."

" Winter's Tale."

Two nonsensical songs, by the rogue Autolychus:

" When daffodils begin to peere."—" Jog on, jog on, the footpath way."

" He's main musical." This Autolychus is the true ancient minstrel, as described in the old Fabliaux. See Gen. Hist. Mus. vol. ii. p. 208.
A three-part catch, ready planned by the poet, and another pedlar's song; " Will you buy any tape?"

" Twelfth Night."

Act i. sc. 1. This play opens with a beautiful eulogium on music:

" If music be the food of love, play on," &c.

The use of *Evirati*, in the same manner as at present, seems to have been well known at this time (about 1600). For Viola says:

" —— I'll serve the duke;
Thou shalt present me as a *eunuch* to him,
It may be worth thy pains, for I can sing,
And speak to him in many sorts of music,
That will allow me very worth his service."

And the duke's sensibility to the power of music is disclosed in the first interview, when he says to Viola:

" —— thy small pipe
Is as the maiden's organ, shrill and sound,
And all its semblative—a woman's part.
I know thy constellation is right apt
For this affair;"——

supposing her to be a eunuch.
Act ii. sc. 3. The clown is asked for a love-song, and sings:

" O mistress mine, where are you roaming?" &c. And
" What is love; 'tis not hereafter," &c.

Ibid. They sing a catch, beginning,

" Hold thy peace."

Sc. 4. Scraps of songs and catches are roared out by sir Toby, sir Andrew, and clown, as " Three merry men be we."—" Tilly, valley, lady!"—" There dwelt a man in Babylon, lady, lady."—" O the twelfth day of December."—" Farewel, dear heart, since I must needs begone."—" His eyes do shew his days are almost done."—" Shall I bid him go? what, an' if you do?"—" Shall I bid him go, and spare not? O no, no, no, you dare not." All these, probably, were well known in Shakspeare's time.
Sc. 5. The duke, who is as constant in his passion for music, as for Olivia, says:

" —— give me some music now—
Now, good Cesario, but that piece of song,
That old and antique song, we heard last night;
Methought, it did revive my passion much;
More than light airs, and recollected terms
Of these most brisk and giddy-paced times:
—— how dost thou like this tune?—
It gives a very echo to the seat
Where love is thron'd."

Ibid. " —— the song we had last night—
—— it is old and plain;
The spinsters and the knitters in the sun,
And the free maids that weave their thread with bones,
Do use to chaunt it: it is silly sooth,
And dallies with the innocence of love,
Like the old age."

Song: " Come away, come away, death."

Act iv. sc. 4. The clown, as elsewhere, is much addicted to singing. Song, by the clown:

" When that I was a little tiny boy," &c.

serves as an epilogue to this entertaining play.

In

In "The Taming of the Shrew," no other uſe is made of muſic than to introduce minſtrels at the wedding, and diſguiſe Hortenſio in the character of a man *well ſeen in muſic*, to facilitate his admiſſion to the preſence and courtſhip of Bianca; an expedient, however, which was unſucceſsful.

More fragments of old ballads are here quoted than in any other of Shakſpeare's plays; though, as Dr. Warburton ſaid, "he ſeemed to bear the ballad-makers a very particular grudge, and often ridicules them with exquiſite humour."

In "The Comedy of Errors," muſic has no admiſſion or concern.

"Much ado about Nothing."

Muſic at the maſquerade, act ii. ſc. 2. And in Benedict's dainty deſcription of ſuch an all-accompliſhed woman as could ever incline him to wed, he adds to her qualifications, *muſic:* "—of good diſcourſe, an *excellent muſician*, and her hair of what colour it ſhall pleaſe God." Sc. 8.

Act ii. ſc. 9. The ſong, "Sigh no more, ladies, ſigh no more," is introduced by ſeveral reflections on muſic, and the affectation of ſingers. Baltazar, the muſician and ſervant to Don Pedro, was perhaps thus named from the celebrated Baltazarini, called "De Beaujoyeaux," an Italian performer on the violin, who was in the higheſt fame and favour at the court of Henry III. of France, 1577. In the laſt act, ſc. 8, the epitaph and ſong are beautiful, and well calculated for muſic.

"All's Well that ends Well."

Act i. ſc. 5. Flouriſh of cornets for the king of France's entrance and exit.

Act iii. ſc 8. A tucket afar off. *Ibid.* A march afar off.

Act v. ſc. 3. Sound trumpets.

Hiſtorical plays. "King John."

No muſic but trumpets and the din of war.

"King Richard II."

Act i. ſc. 4. Military inſtruments are admirably deſcribed:

"——rous'd up with boiſt'rous untun'd drums,
With harſh reſounding trumpets dreadful bray."

Ibid. Mowbray, duke of Norfolk, on being ordered into baniſhment, ſays:

"My native Engliſh, now I muſt forego;
And now my tongue's uſe is to me no more,
Than an unſtringed viol, or a harp;
Or, like a cunning inſtrument cas'd up,
Or being open, put into his hands
That knows no touch to tune the harmony."

Act ii. ſc. 1. "——the tongues of dying men
Inforce attention, like deep harmony:
——more are men's ends mark'd, than their lives before;
The ſetting ſun, and *muſic in the cloſe*,
As the laſt taſte of ſweets, is ſweeteſt laſt——"

Ibid. ſc. 3. Speaking of John of Gaunt's death:

"——all is ſaid,
His tongue is now a ſtringleſs inſtrument."

Act v. ſc. 10. Richard, in his priſon, ſays:

"——Muſic do I hear?
Ha, ha! keep time: how ſow'r ſweet muſic is,
Where time is broke, and no proportion kept?"

Here he plays on muſical terms for ſeveral lines.

All inſtruments played with the bow, in Shakſpeare's time, were fretted, except violins.

In "The Taming of the Shrew," act ii. ſc. 3, he could not reſiſt the temptation of quibbling on the term *fret*.

"Frets call you them? quoth ſhe: I'll fume with them."

"——then call'd me raſcal, fidler,
And twangling *Jack*;"

alluding to a famous ſtreet muſician of the time.

"Firſt Part of Henry IV."

Act i. ſc. 2. Falſtaff ſays he's as melancholy as the "drone of a Lincolnſhire bagpipe."

Act ii. ſc. 3. "An I have not ballads made on you all, and ſung to filthy tunes, let a cup of ſack be my poiſon."

Act iii. ſc. 3. "——thy tongue
Makes Welch as ſweet as ditties highly penn'd,
Sung by a fair queen in a ſummer's bower,
With *raviſhing diviſion* to her lute."

"Second Part of Henry IV."

Induction. "——Rumour is a pipe,
Blown by ſurmiſes, jealouſies, conjectures;
And of ſo eaſy and ſo plain a ſtop,
That the blunt monſter with uncounted heads,
The ſtill diſcordant wavering multitude,
Can play upon it."

We advanced no farther in hunting through the pleaſant wilds of Shakſpeare; but in dipping accidentally, the following paſſages ſtruck us as worthy of notice.

"Henry V." Act i. ſc. 2. There is a manifeſt alluſion to the different parts of muſic.

"For government, though *high*, and *low*, and *lower*,
Put into *parts*, doth keep in one *conſent*,
Congreeing in a full and natural cloſe,
Like muſic."

In "Othello," act iv. ſc. 13. Deſdemona ſays:

"My mother had a maid, called Barbara;
She was in love; and he, ſhe lov'd, prov'd mad (falſe),
And did forſake her: ſhe had a ſong of *willow*,
An old thing 'twas, but it expreſs'd her fortune,
And ſhe died ſinging it. That ſong, to-night,
Will not go from my mind; I've much ado,
Not to go hang my head all o' one ſide,
And ſing it like poor Barbara."

"King Lear," act i. ſc. 7. "O, theſe eclipſes portend theſe diviſions! *fa, ſol, la, mi.*"

None of the commentators have hitherto been ſufficiently ſkilled in muſic to ſee the meaning of theſe ſyllables in ſolmiſation, which imply a ſeries of ſounds ſo unnatural, that ancient muſicians prohibited their uſe. "Mi contra fa eſt diabolus." Shakſpeare, however, ſhews by the context, that he was well acquainted with the property of the muſical intervals contained in the tritonus, or ſharp 4th, which conſiſting of three tones, without the intervention of a ſemitone, is extremely difficult to ſing, and diſagreeable ſung, if mi, or fa is the laſt note of the when phraſe, or paſſage.

end.

that [illegible] could be particularly fond of Music seems to be nearly as much to be regretted, as that they should be admirers of Beauty: elegant & [illegible] spectators. Of none, perhaps, has [illegible] been so strikingly true, as of Shakespeare and Milton.

Shakespeare abounds in songs exquisitely adapted to music; and he abounds, like Plato, with allusions from it to link beauty and the actual harmony of life.

Thus in Troilus and Cressida:

> Take but degree away, untune that string,
> And hark, what discord follows: each thing meets
> In mere oppugnancy.

And in another place:

> —— the thing of courage,
> As roused with rage, with rage doth sympathize;
> And with an accent tuned in self-same key
> Retires to chiding fortune.

The style of Troilus and Cressida is quite singular, more entangled, it is true, than dramatic: but full, musical, sonorous; of a platonic dignity; abounding in high and weighty aphorisms, in the more elevated metaphysics of poetry and often in a tone and manner classically antique.

Shakespeare, like most men of lavish imagination and strong feeling and pre-eminent he was in both, varies his style so much, that scarcely any two of his plays perhaps can be found, which are not characteristically different in this respect. But generally there runs through the same play a certain colour of style, a certain harmonized tone & manner not perhaps so much the effect of design, as of the bias imbibed from his then latest studies, or of the key given to his composition by the actual state of his sentiments and feeling; which modulated the rapid energies of his diction and numbers accordingly.

There appears to be some similarity between Homer's monster Polyphemus, and Shakespeare's monster Caliban

Merry Wives of Windsor Act V.

Mrs Ford. Mistress Page is come with me sweetheart
Falstaff. Divide me like a bribe — buck — *

* Falstaff afterwards says, dividing himself like a buck. "I will keep — my shoulders for the fellow of this walk." On which passage Dr Johnson observes, "Who the fellow is, or why he keeps his shoulders for him, I do not understand." The shoulders we know are part of the keeper's perquisite almost every where. Now "the fellow of this walk" is Herne the hunter, "sometime a keeper in Windsor forest", as the Poet, by Mrs Page, informs us Herne's oak, a very venerable and picturesque tree, both by the size, age, shape, and site, was standing within these few years on the brow of a steep and rude declivity, leading from the upper to the lower little park. It has been the subject of some beautiful verses.

Many instances have been, and many more might be given, to shew that Shakespere was habitually conversant in this bible. That his acquaintance with it was not confined to English, but that he read it occasionally, at least, in French, the following quotation will shew.

Le chien est retourné a son propre vomissement et la truye lavée au bourbier. H.V. which is the proverb exactly quoted from 2 Peter ii. 22. where it thus stands word for word, as above cited, except in the latter member of the sentence, where it is est retournée à se veautrer au bourbier.

Edward Dubois.

Wreath. 8vo.