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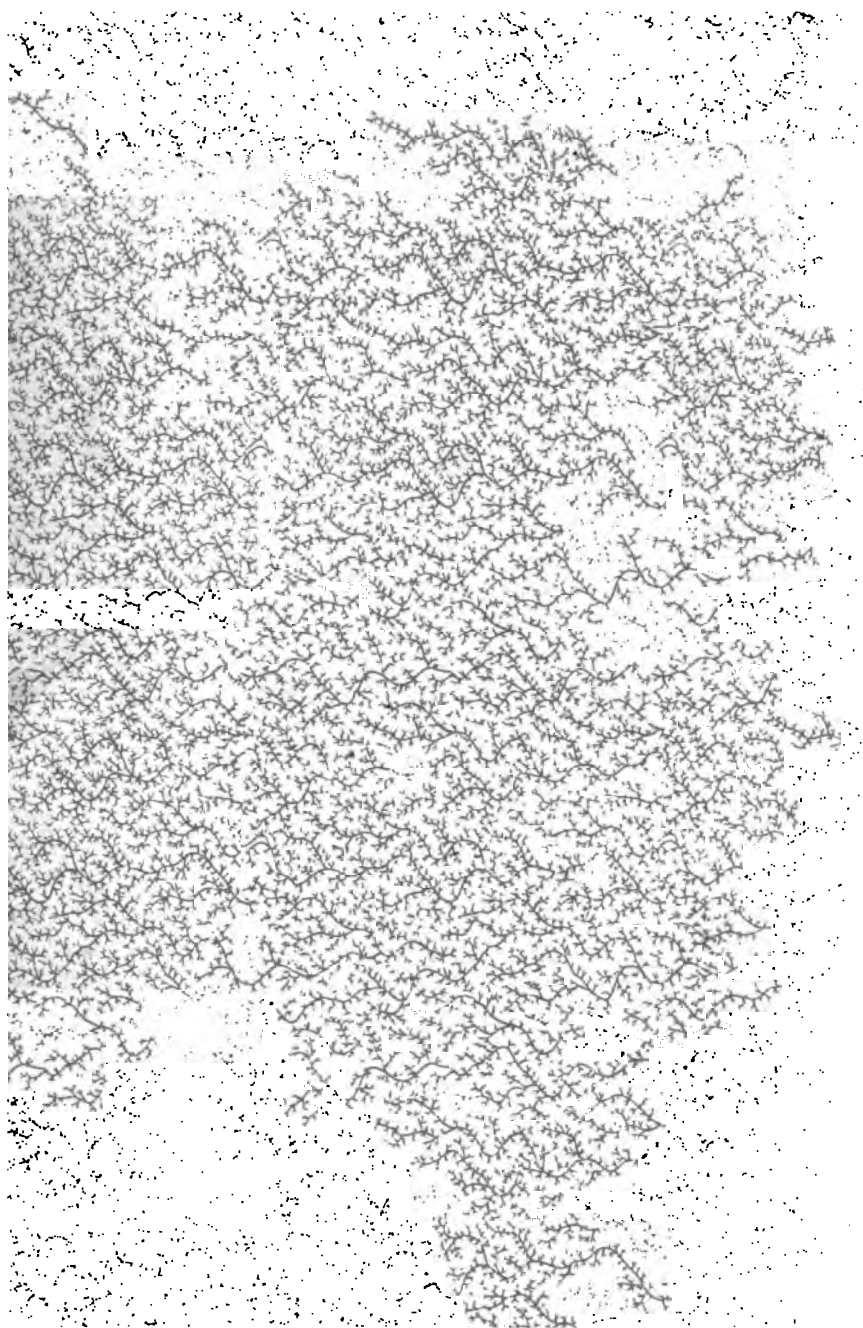
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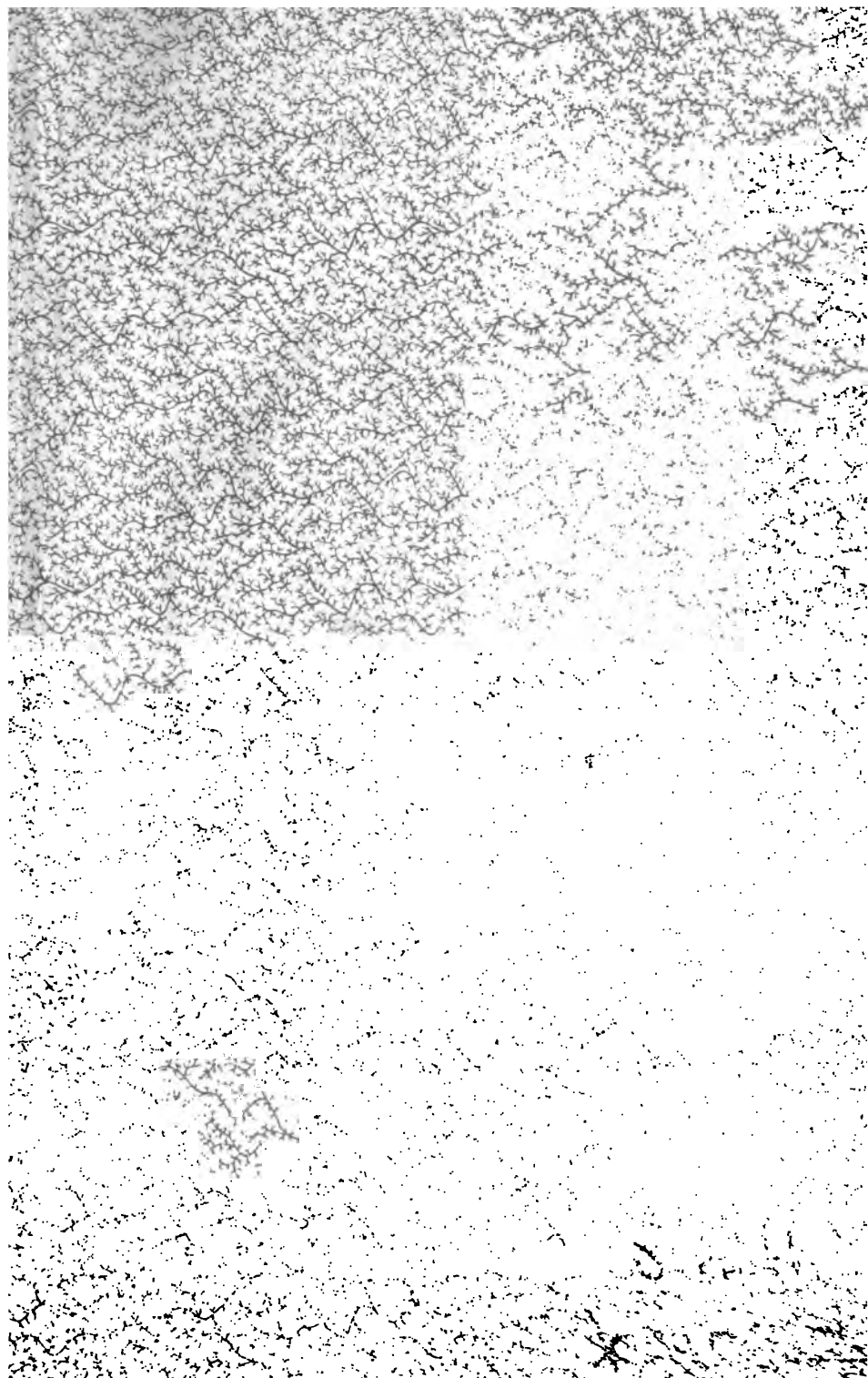
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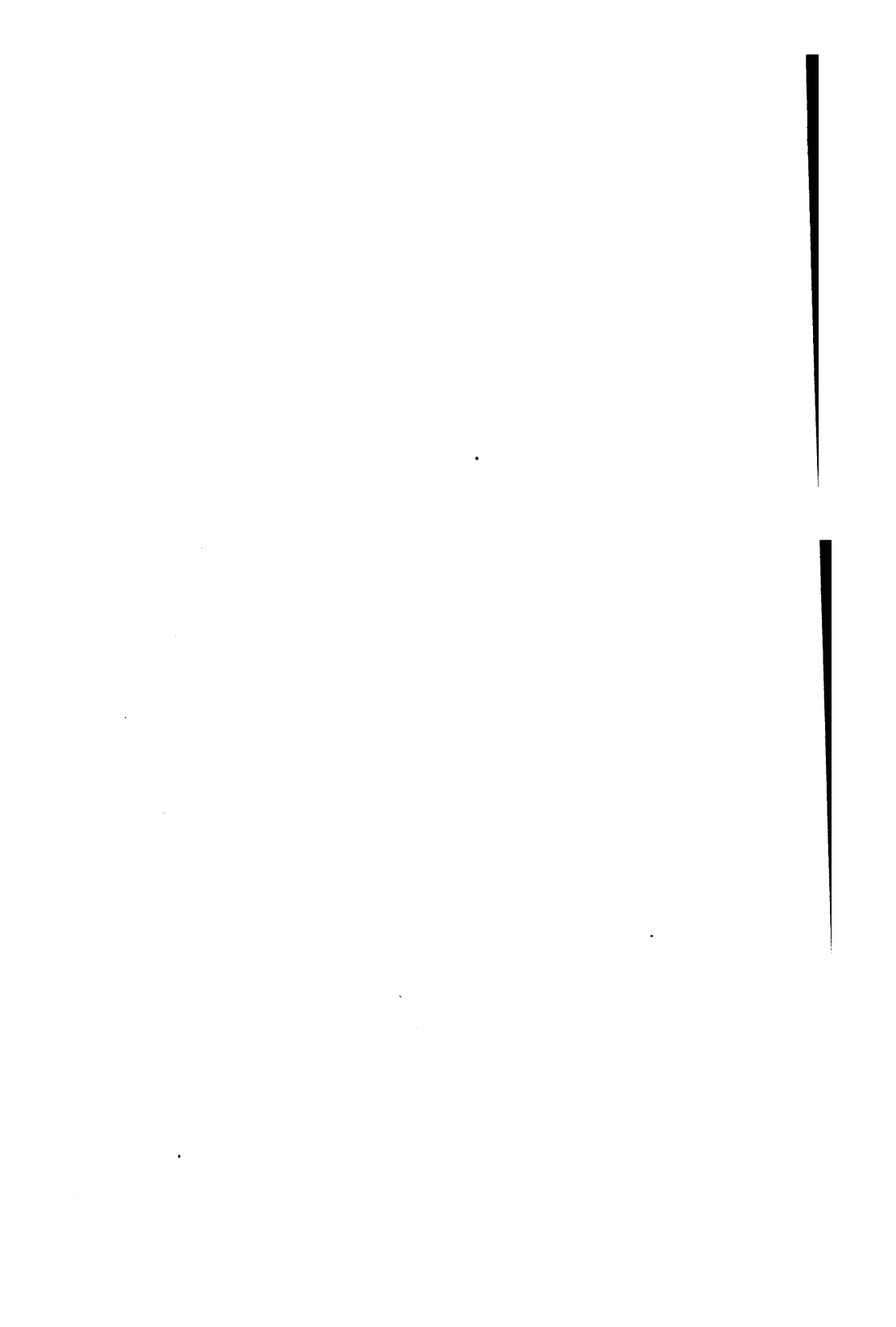
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REMARKS
ON
SHAKESPEARE,
HIS BIRTHPLACE,
ETC.

BY
C. ROACH SMITH, Esq. M.R.S.J.

MR. SMITH WAS ONE OF THE ORIGINAL MEMBERS OF THE SOCIETY OF ANTI-QUARIES, &c.

Second Edition.

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REMARKS
ON
SHAKESPEARE,
HIS
BIRTH-PLACE,
ETC.

SUGGESTED BY A VISIT TO STRATFORD-UPON-AVON
IN THE AUTUMN OF 1868.

BY
C. ROACH SMITH, Hon. M. R. S. L.,

HON. M. NUM. SOC. LON.

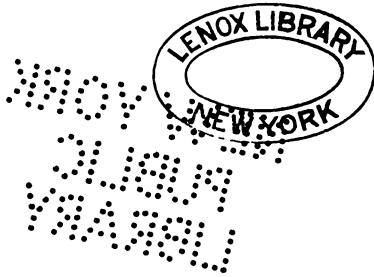
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TO
JOSEPH MAYER, ESQ., F.S.A., F.R.A.S.,
VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE HISTORIC SOCIETY OF LANCASHIRE AND
CHESHIRE, ETC.;

H. B. MACKESON, ESQ., F.G.S.,
MAYOR OF HYPHE;

AND
JOHN GREEN WALLER, ESQ.,
AUTHOR OF A "SERIES OF MONUMENTAL BRASSES FROM THE
13TH TO THE 16TH CENTURY";

IN MEMORY

OF A VISIT TO

STRATFORD-UPON-AVON;

WITH THE SINCERE REGARDS OF THEIR FRIEND,

THE AUTHOR.

TEMPLE PLACE, STROOD,

April 28th, 1877.

P R E F A C E .

THESE pages, written for private distribution in 1868, have procured me considerable correspondence, and many applications for copies.

The portion relating to Shakespeare's country life has been wholly superseded by the pamphlet entitled "The Rural Life of Shakespeare, as Illustrated by his Works," of which a third edition is being prepared.

The suggestions offered as to the proper and consistent, as well as the most obviously successful mode of extending a knowledge of Shakespeare's works, were not entertained by the friends to whom they were specially addressed; but elsewhere they have been received so flattering that I cheerfully accede to requests to make them public.

C. R. S.

STRATFORD-UPON-AVON AND SHAKESPEARE.

A VISIT to the town in which our great bard was born ; in which he passed his early youth ; and in which he died ; is at least projected by all of his countrymen who have been so fortunate as to receive an education to qualify them to understand and master his wonderful works. Many succeed in performing this rational pilgrimage, as the walls of his birthplace and of Anne Hathaway's cottage testify ; for they are covered with thousands upon thousands of signatures of noble as well as gentle, of eminent as well as of obscure, regardless alike of the questionable good taste of their scribbling, and of the perishable material. More durable will be the records in the books which have been kept at the chief inns now for many years. They fill rapidly ; and disclose the remarkable fact that full one-third of the signatures seem to be American, an auspicious sign of community of feeling created by the humanising writings of the Stratford-born poet. " You cannot imagine", said an American lady to us, " how much we think of Shakespeare."

From the obscurity in which his life is shrouded, the coeval remains of Stratford-upon-Avon have far greater importance than they would have possessed had Shakespeare received from his contemporaries notice such as has so frequently been lavished on inferior men. We cannot look upon him through

biographers, through correspondence, or through any of the influences which, at the present day, secure immortality to thousands; but we may, in the streets of Stratford, and in the highways and bye-ways of the neighbourhood, in the fields, meadows, and villages, see objects which must constantly have been before his eyes; the impress of many of these objects is reflected most vividly throughout all his works.

Documentary evidence and tradition combine to vindicate the house in Henley Street as his birthplace; for, although John Shakespeare, his father, had other houses in and about Stratford, yet the honour has never been claimed for any other; and it is considered as certain that he lived in Henley Street about the time of the Poet's birth. Here we may safely trust to tradition. The Poet, in his lifetime, must have had some friends and neighbours who were proud of him; who knew his history, and who had been his companions: to them, no doubt, were well known all the particulars of his early life, and among these the house in which he was born. At his death many persons were probably living who could prove this; and for a long time afterwards could point it out from their personal knowledge. At his death there was nothing so likely to be at once embalmed in the memory as his birth-place; and nothing less likely to be allowed to be misplaced. New Place, where he died, has recently received from the pen of Mr. Halliwell a minute historical description, comprised in two hundred and forty-six folio pages.* It was purchased by Shakespeare some twenty years before his death; and to this spacious house with its gardens and grounds, he retired in what may be termed the prime of life. The house, alas! is no more; and no authentic engravings remain of it, if any were ever made: but the site is unquestioned; and Mr. Halliwell, who has become the Guardian Genius of all that is left to us connected with the personal life of Shakespeare, has caused to be preserved what was spared of the foundations of the house; and to his strenuous exertions we mainly owe the purchase for

* An Historical Account of the New Place, Stratford-upon-Avon. By James O. Halliwell, Esq., F.R.S. Folio, London, Adlard, 1864.

the public of the Poet's great garden. In it stands a modern theatre which is yet private property ; this it is contemplated to buy and pull down ; but surely there is no necessity for destroying a structure which, properly managed, could be made useful for instructing the Stratford public in a fuller knowledge of the works of their great townsman.* For such a purpose a theatre or hall should be raised in every town in the kingdom ; but that upon ground which was once the Poet's, and which is hallowed by the fact that he there recreated his health and spirits in the intervals he could spare from a wearying London life, must hold a charm and preeminence over all others. Shakespeare was also an actor ; and his merits as an actor have been questioned apparently without much reflection. His name stands first among the actors in Ben Jonson's plays of "Every Man in his Humour", and "Sejanus"; and he who could lay down such rules for truly good acting as he has done in "Hamlet", must himself, we may suppose, have been practically, as well as theoretically, accomplished.

In his History of the New Place, Mr. Halliwell has brought together a very large amount of hitherto unpublished documentary evidence, illustrative, not only of New Place and its vicissitudes, but of the habits and manners of the people of Stratford ; and the state of the town in and after the time of Shakespeare ; but the darkness which has surrounded the great object of his researches is almost as dense as ever ; still the historian toils on with unflagging industry and unfailing hope ; not despairing of yet finding in some old chest or long locked cupboard in some old manor house, correspondence or other documents which may in a slight degree fill the present void. Among the most interesting materials which Mr. Halliwell has brought together are those which show the condition of Stratford in the time of Shakespeare ; and he draws from them sound inferences to account for the poet's almost sudden death. Ward, who wrote in 1662, says,—“ Shakspear, Drayton, and

* Since our visit it has been pulled down. It must have its history, which it would be interesting to learn. A complete collection of its playbills, it is hoped, is preserved in the Shakespearean Museum.

Ben Jhonson had a merry meeting, and, it seems, drank too hard, for Shakspear died of a feavour there contracted." That he died of a fever is highly probable ; but Mr. Halliwell, after patiently weighing Ward's statement and traditions, concludes that in all human probability he died of typhoid fever, arising from the bad drainage of the town, and the neglected state of Chapel Lane which flanked New Place. The filthy condition of this lane for a long series of years is proved by the town archives, from which Mr. Halliwell extracts numerous startling revelations ; and this view is confirmed by the cast of Shakespeare's face, taken after death, which shows the countenance unemaciated, as it would have been after a short illness. Stratford has only during the present century, and, indeed, of late years, put on the garb of modern cleanliness in which it now appears, at the sacrifice of much that was picturesque and Shakespearean. Even at the time of the Jubilee it drew from Garrick, in a letter to Mr. Hunt, (the grandfather of the present Town Clerk), a strong remonstrance. He speaks of it as " the most dirty, unseemly, ill-paved, wretched-looking town in all Britain."

But there are yet standing houses of the time of Shakespeare ; and, above all, the Grammar School in which he was educated ; the Chapel of the Trinity, opposite New Place ; and the Church close to the Avon, in which he was buried. All these may be considered as pure and fine relics of Shakespeare and his times, free from all doubt. Of minor objects there are many varieties : some are old enough, but they want certificates or connecting links. Of the few which may be said to have belonged to him, the most remarkable, perhaps, is the square of glass from New Place, with the letters S. W. A., for William and Ann Shakespeare, tied in " a true lover's knot," and the date, 1615, beneath. This was first published by Mr. Fairholt in his excellent little guide-book.* The mulberry tree which grew in the garden of New Place, and was cut down in about 1756, has been turned into a variety of ornaments and utensils. Mr.

* The Home of Shakspeare Illustrated and Described. By F. W. Fairholt. Chapman and Hall, 1847.

Hunt possesses a superb circular table, the upper part of which is formed out of veneers made from one of the smaller branches, blended together with good taste and skill. Some of these objects have a history of their own, independent of their special connection with Shakespeare. Such was the cup presented during our visit, by Mr. Joseph Mayer, to the Shakespearean Museum. Upon the pedestal is inscribed ;

“ Cup made from
Shakespeare’s Mulberry Tree
By Sharpe of Stratford-upon-Avon.
Formerly in possession of Mr. Munden,
and used at the meetings of
‘ The Rebellious Seven ’
to drink to
The Immortal Memory of Shakespeare.”

and on a silver band round the rim :

“ And that I love the tree from whence thou sprangest,
Witness the loving kiss I give the fruit.”

Henry VI, Part 3, Act v, Scene 7.

The “rebellious seven” were, I believe, some of Garrick’s dramatic corps who resented the curtailment of certain privileges. This museum, which has been established mainly through the exertions of Mr. Halliwell, contains a valuable collection of documents and other objects which, although they do but scantily relate directly to Shakespeare himself, give considerable information on the property of the family ; and are yet more important as regards the history of Stratford in the time of the Poet. One letter only remains of the thousands which he must have received ; and of the hundreds he probably laid by for reference, or from respect for the writers ; and this is preserved in the museum. It is from one of the Quiney family asking for a loan of money, dated from the “ Bell,” in Carter Lane, the 25th Oct., 1598, and signed “ Ryc. Quyne.” It is endorsed, “ To my loveinge good ffrende and contreyman Mr. Wm. Shakespere, deliver thees” ; and was, no doubt, sent by a messenger to Shakespeare’s residence. Where that was does not appear, but probably near the Wardrobe, Blackfriars,

where he had a house. We may owe the safety of this solitary letter to the fact of its being a sort of proof of a debt ; and thus retained by his family after his death. But what became of the rest of his correspondence ? It is neither unreasonable nor uncharitable to suppose it was destroyed by some puritanical member of the family, who could not understand the great moral and religious worth of the writings of such a teacher ; but saw, through a narrow-minded medium, only the player and the writer of plays, as Puritans have ever seen.*

Anne Hathaway's cottage divides with her husband's birth-place the homage of the visitor. To credulity, once so unbounded, has succeeded scepticism ; often as unsound, as, happily, it is proved to have been in relation to the history of this cottage. The house has been in the possession of the Hathaways for over three centuries ; and even now a descendant, in the female line, is tenant. It was repaired in 1697 by John Hathaway ; but much remains as it was when Shakespeare visited it to woo Anne, whom he married when very young. The village of Shottery, a hamlet of Stratford, is, altogether, much the same as it must have been at that sunny time in the Poet's life when, after the exit of the school-boy, he trod the stage of the world as the lover. And the fields through which the footpath leads, the hedges, the stiles, and the general aspect of the place, are perhaps, now, much the same as they were three centuries ago. Here the fumitory thrives rankly conspicuous among

"The idle weeds that grow,
In our sustaining corn ;"

and also the "hind'ring knot-grass".

Those who have read Shakespeare and studied him chiefly in the depths of his knowledge of human life in all its grades

* The spirit of puritanism is yet alive in Stratford-upon-Avon ; and of this I had startling evidence. By request, during our visit, I gave Readings in the theatre for the benefit of the Shakespearean Museum. Mr. Hunt, the Town Clerk, expressed to me his regret that the Town Hall or some other public room had not been taken, as many of the leading families had a strong aversion to the name of a *theatre* ; and for this reason would not attend !

and stages, may yet learn much from him in the fields, in the meadows, and, indeed, in the general kingdom of nature. Here he is so much at home that we feel assured his boyhood and early youth were passed much, if not wholly, in the country; and that his acute powers of observation were strongly exercised among rural scenery and country pursuits. Not a weed or flower escaped him: the labours of the husbandman, the business of the gardener, and even the scientific manipulations of the horticulturist were all familiar to him. The "fumitory" we noticed in our walks to Shottery, recalled his ready and apt enumeration of the wild flowers plucked by Lear when he was

"Crown'd with rank fumiter, and furrow weeds,
With harlocks, hemlock, nettles, cuckoo-flowers,
Darnel, and all the idle weeds that grow
In our sustaining corn;"

and, as we strolled back to Stratford by another road which Shakespeare must have walked frequently, we could but imagine that the *Lemna minor*, or "duckweed", which we saw covering a large portion of a pond near a farm-house, was the offspring of that which dictated "the green mantle of the standing pool", the unwholesome beverage he makes Edgar, in "King Lear", say he drank. The pond, apparently, is centuries older than his time: the duckweed must have covered it annually; and it was, probably, one of the objects which, by thousands passed by and regarded not, was stored in his capacious memory, and used so happily in proper time and place. By the side of this old pond was a 'hedge-pig', one of the creatures Shakespeare introduces so effectively in "Macbeth".

The crab, or wild apple-tree, is one of the striking features in the scenery round Stratford-upon-Avon. This tree, whatever it may have been formerly, is by no means common now in many parts of England; and when met with is usually in hedgerows; but here we find it also in the fields and parks, a large forest tree. On approaching Stratford the crab-trees were conspicuous, with bushels of fruit lying beneath them.

The crab is constantly mentioned by Shakespeare; as, for example, by way of simile, "She 's as like this as a crab is like an apple"; and "She will taste like this as a crab does to a crab"; also as an emblem of winter in the exquisitely charming song which closes "Love's Labour's Lost";

"When roasted crabs hiss in the bowl:"

a song replete with rural imagery and pastoral life. In our rambles we learned that crab apples roasted are yet a common Christmas dish in the neighbourhood of Stratford. The beautiful and extensive meadow scenery through which the Avon flows is doubtless the source of numerous allusions in our poet's writings, as in that portion of the above-mentioned song assigned to Spring:

"When daisies pied, and violets blue,
And lady-smocks all silver-white,
And cuckoo-buds of yellow hue,
Do paint the meadows with delight."

The tradition relating to the mulberry tree is not weakened by the abundant evidence Shakespeare's writings afford of his knowledge of horticulture, from which it may be concluded that he himself was attached to gardening; and was practically experienced in it. Relieved from the toil and exhausting effects of a London life, he could scarcely avoid, with the favourable appliances at his command, engaging warmly in a study and amusement so intellectual, and for which it is obvious he had ever a strong inclination. They who have supposed that Shakespeare had little knowledge of gardening, have failed to see or understand the proofs to the contrary. No one who had not studied the science of horticulture, could have written as he does in "The Winter's Tale":—

"You see, sweet maid, we marry
A gentle scion to the wildest stock;
And make conceive a bark of baser kind
By bud of nobler race: this is an art
Which does mend nature: changes it rather; but
The art is nature."

And in "Richard II." :—

" Oh ! what pity is it,
That he had not so trimm'd and dressed his land,
As we this garden ! We at time of year
Do wound the bark, the skin of our fruit-trees ;
Lest, being over-proud with sap and blood,
With too much riches it confounds itself."

* * *

" All superfluous branches
We lop away, that bearing boughs may live."

The whole vegetable kingdom seems also to have been searched by him with attentive eye and reflective thought ; so that although similes, metaphors, and allusions to plants and herbs are occurring throughout his works, they are in most cases, if not in all, strikingly correct and appropriate. Why, it may be asked, did he give "sweet marjoram" as the pass-word with Lear and Edgar, near Dover ? There might have been no special reason ; and its use on this occasion is not rendered more fit and proper by the cause ; but Miss Pratt, the well-known writer on our native wild flowers, tells me she believes that this pass-word was suggested to Shakespeare by the sweet marjoram, which formerly grew in immense quantity upon the heights between Folkestone and Dover. That he had visited this locality, no one who is acquainted with it, and has read "King Lear", can possibly doubt. And therefore, Miss Pratt's explanation is probably correct.*

One of the most remarkable traditions respecting Shakespeare, is that relating to his having, in early life, been brought before Sir Thomas Lucy, for stealing deer from Charlecote Park. This tradition was generally accepted, in all its details and consequences, for truth, until the criticising judgment of recent times rejected it, if not wholly, at least in part. But may there not be some truth in the story without at all dimming the glory of the poet ; and without fixing on Sir Thomas Lucy the shadow of reproach ? I can well believe that in some hour of

* I have since more fully studied this subject ; and my views are developed in *The Rural Life of Shakespeare, as Illustrated by his Works*, a third edition of which is about to be published.

youthful excitement he may have trespassed, either alone or with wild companions, beyond bounds, in pursuit of game, have been apprehended by the keepers, and brought before Sir Thomas Lucy, as the nearest magistrate. He may even have been arrested by mistake; and have stood before the judgment seat of Sir Thomas. Prominent throughout his works is evidence of his knowledge of all kinds of field sports, such as hunting, falconry, fishing, and even ferretting out rabbits. It is very probable that he himself was attached to these amusements before he entered seriously upon the grand object of his life; that on some occasion he stood charged before Sir Thomas Lucy; and the scurrilous verses imputed to him are just such as a highly sensitive youth, as Shakespeare must have been, might have written when deeply incensed. Had he gone to his grave like his fellow-townsmen, such an incident would have been forgotten; but when he rose to eminence, and when, after his death, he became a frequent theme of conversation, incidents of early life would naturally be seized upon; and, as generation after generation told the tales, proneness to exaggeration added something from time to time, and disguised the simple original facts.

The walk to Charlecote from Stratford is an agreeable one; both the mansion and the fine monuments of the Lucy family in the church are of much interest. The house was built in 1558, and as it has preserved most of its original features, the visitor sees it much as Shakespeare saw it.

The Mayor of Stratford (Dr. Kingsley) having announced his intention to celebrate, in 1869, the centenary of the visit of Garrick, a brief review of what was then done, and also a notice of the festivities in 1864, may not be ill-timed. Garrick, with all his abilities, and they were great, did not always show sound judgment. He was generous and warm-hearted, and no one before him, on the stage, had evinced so keen an appreciation of the genius of Shakespeare. Still he consented to give the plays, not from the original text, but from Tate's edition, which would have never been used, one would have supposed, by any manager of taste or of power to understand and feel the full force of the plays as written by Shakespeare; and

Garrick never fully estimated propriety in costume. At the same time we can but ask how it was he could have consented to place upon the stage such tame and witless plays as he produced in abundance with those of the great dramatist? It is obvious that both Garrick and the drama had to be judged by a public that could tolerate and be pleased with what would not be thought upon at the present day; a public that could relish coarse language, unrefined, and often immoral sentiment, and gross vulgarity unrelieved by a spark of wit.* He had few, if any, advisers whose high character would have commanded attention, else his anxiety to pay tribute to the great master, might have been directed into a more wholesome channel. The course he took to give, at so much cost, very common-place amusements at Stratford-upon-Avon, could in no way have contributed to make the works of Shakespeare better known, the only rational mode, I suggest, of doing honour to such a man; or rather, of doing honour to ourselves. A procession of the leading characters of his plays has, in the very idea, something startling. The reader, by his fireside, pictures in his mind the prominent features of the various personages in shadowy outline, rather than in fixed and formal personifications; and this indefiniteness in no way interferes with the effect the author designed; but, on the contrary, helps it. When, however, it is attempted to exhibit these creations in flesh and blood, upon the stage, with all the aid of costume and scenery, but few who have read deeply, and who have pictured in their minds the leading characters, will be satisfied altogether even with the best performances. Take the personages away from the stage and its appropriate scenery, and the adjuncts which help scenic illusion; and make a procession of them in the open air; the mental conception is immediately dispelled, and replaced by something visibly inferior, and possibly ridiculous. The thousands who would flock together anywhere, any day, to witness such a procession would, in no

* "The Provoked Wife" may be instanced. In this play Garrick took the part of Sir John Brute, a character of intense vulgarity, such as no actor would now condescend to appear in, and such as no audience would endure. And yet Garrick sat for several portraits in this popular part!

way, comprehend its object, or view much more in the characters than they would see in any exhibition in any country fair. If the object in such shows be to help the public to appreciate Shakespeare, the object is not attained.

Yet, after all, we can but admire the enthusiasm of Garrick, and respect his motives. His visit to Stratford at the time created a great sensation: it was supported by many; discountenanced and ridiculed by some of his rival actors, and by a portion of the press. 'Tis a hundred years since; and we, who are now attracted by an intimation that there is an intention to commemorate, next year, the centenary of Garrick's visit to Stratford, cannot but review with curiosity and interest the details of so remarkable an event. The materials for a complete history of the Jubilee, as it was called, cannot be wanting; and they must be, I should suppose, voluminous. In several points of view the publication of a collection of edited and inedited accounts, and of correspondence relating to this episode in the life of Garrick would be acceptable; and it might prove one of the best modes of celebrating Garrick's Jubilee of 1769.

So early as five o'clock in the morning of Wednesday, the 6th of September in 1769, some of the Drury Lane company serenaded the people of Stratford and the visitors with an ode and a song composed by Garrick; guns were fired; and the magistrates and chief citizens assembled in the street. At nine a public breakfast was given in the Town Hall, to which the holders of guinea tickets were admitted on payment of a shilling. Garrick, as steward, was early in attendance; and was himself waited upon by the Mayor and Corporation "in their formalities"; and the Town Clerk, in a polite speech, presented him with a medallion of Shakespeare carved in a piece of the mulberry tree from New Place, and mounted in gold. The room soon filled; and during the breakfast, at intervals, the company was entertained with music in the street, opposite the Hall. Half-past ten was the time appointed for leaving for the church, where the oratorio of "Judith" was performed by the entire Drury Lane orchestra, conducted by Dr. Arne. At the conclusion, Garrick and the performers walked in procession to

the amphitheatre (a temporary building), singing in chorus, to instrumental accompaniment, another composition by Garrick. Indeed, he seems to have written most of the songs sung and the odes recited on this occasion. He complained of the apathy of the poets of Oxford and Cambridge, none of whom responded to his invitation to assist. Here, at three o'clock, was a public ordinary, enlivened at intervals by songs and catches. From the amphitheatre the assembly retired to prepare for the ball in the assembly room, constructed in imitation of the Ranelagh Rotunda, but about half as large.

On Thursday, the 7th of September, after a breakfast at the Town Hall, the company was assembled in the amphitheatre. Here was performed, under the direction of Dr. Arne, what was called the Dedication Ode, the recitative parts of which were delivered by Garrick, dressed in a suit of brown and gold, with the medallion suspended from his neck. While the airs and choruses were being sung, he sat with his steward's rod in his hand. At the conclusion of the ode he gave a prose eulogy on Shakespeare, and challenged the inimical to say what they could against him. Mr. King, the comedian, who was among the spectators, wrapt in a great coat, begged to be heard. This unlooked-for opposition astounded the majority of the audience; but those who knew the actor were much amused, knowing that something humorous was forthcoming. Mr. King then came into the orchestra in a blue suit, ornamented with silver frogs, and addressed the audience, the better-informed part of whom were highly amused, not only with the speech, but with the want of perception of many who misunderstood the drift of this portion of the performance. Then Garrick addressed the ladies in a poetical speech, complimenting them on their attachment to the great poet who, among his many delineations of human life had ever supported the grace and dignity of the female character. It was during that part of the performance that some of the benches, from the great pressure of the audience, gave way, and Lord Carlisle narrowly escaped being killed. In the evening, or rather, near midnight, was a masquerade, which was crowded to excess. The meanest dresses were, it is stated, hired at four guineas each; and above four hundred were sent from London.

On the following morning, the rain, which fell heavily, prevented the procession or pageant of Shakesperean characters. We are told that several people considered the rain "as a judgment on the poetical idolatry of the Jubilites". Two engravings of the processional personages were published in the *Oxford Magazine*. They are curious as shewing the state of stage costume at that time. Garrick spent a large sum of money on this occasion; but he recovered it in producing the pageant at Drury Lane, which drew full houses.* With less success it was exhibited at Covent Garden Theatre in a comedy called "Man and Wife", or "The Shakespeare Jubilee", by Colman. Both this and Garrick's "Jubilee", are, it may be said, equally tame as dramatic compositions. The "show" alone sustained them, as at the present day scenery is the main support of the modern popular drama: in no way can it be shewn that any honour was conferred on Shakespeare by such exhibitions, or any instruction given to the thousands "who, for the most part, are capable of nothing but inexplicable dumb shows and noise." Garrick, however, estimated his audience better than his rival; for we are told by a publication of the time, that at Drury Lane "the inscribed streamers are very useful in notifying to the audience the different plays in which the characters appear; as, for want of a similar index at Covent Garden, half of the spectators are entirely ignorant of the pieces to which they belong."

Garrick's rivals and enemies lost no time in disparaging the

* The great actor would look with dismay on the general state of the modern drama, and on the taste of the public at the present day, exemplified by the support given to what are called "sensational" plays. One of the latest is thus spoken of in a critique in *The Times* of November 9th, 1868, on which my eye has fallen while writing these remarks: "The convict morally disarms him by drawing out a pistol and placing it in his hands, for, with all his reverence for the criminal code, Javert feels that he cannot, in honour, arrest a man who has just made him a present of his own life. In the meantime, Thenardier has fired the house from beneath, and the room being enveloped in flame and smoke, the officer and Jean find themselves involved in a common peril. Jean saves himself by leaping from the roof into the Seine, while Javert, as the act closes, is dangling from a beam. This scene, if we may judge by the precedents of the day, will be the making of the piece."

Jubilee; and Foote, then manager of the Haymarket Theatre, seizing upon every misadventure, thus presented a description in "The Devil upon two Sticks":—"A Jubilee, as it has lately appeared, is a public invitation, urged by puffing, to go post without horses, to an obscure borough without representatives, governed by a mayor and aldermen who are no magistrates, to celebrate a great poet, whose own works have made him immortal; to an ode without poetry; music without harmony; dinners without victuals; and lodgings without beds; a masquerade where half the people appeared bare-faced; a horse-race up to the knees in water; fireworks extinguished as soon as they were lighted; and a gingerbread amphitheatre, which, like a house of cards, tumbled to pieces as soon as it was finished."

A writer in the *Town and Country Magazine*, after complaining of "a scarcity of provisions, a want of conveyances, or even covering from the inclemency of the weather, a rotunda that was not waterproof", and other "omissions and impositions", says:—"We were prepared for great merriment and wit, by a long list of the geniuses and literati who were to be present upon this occasion, and the masquerade might doubtless have afforded them sufficient opportunities of displaying their humour; but we do not find there was a single good thing said amongst them. Whether the weight of the atmosphere too much oppressed their spirits, or whether the gloomy disappointment they had met with after so much fatigue, damped their genius, it is certain there was not a *bon mot* attempted but by Roscius. How far he succeeded your readers shall judge by the following recital. A mask said to him, 'Indeed, my friend David, you have out-frescoed all the alfrescosities, and out-paréed all the bal-parés that the public have yet been hummed with; beware of the critics.' To which he replied: 'The sweet swan of Avon will with his melodious notes soothe them to good humour; and by a poetic flight, transport them, as we have done, to such a scene of Elysium as they will wish to last for ever.'"

The writer gives the details of his expenses on this occasion. The contrast between the past and present time, with the cost

for travelling a hundred years ago and now, is not the least curious part of the account.

Ticket	...	...	...	...	£1	1	0
Post-chaise to Stratford, at 3s. per mile the last sixty miles	...	...	...	...	12	0	0
Expenses upon the road	...	...	...	...	1	11	6
Lodging	...	...	...	...	6	6	0
Board and other expenses	...	...	...	...	4	12	0
Masquerade dress	...	...	...	...	5	5	0
Masquerade ticket	...	...	...	...	0	10	6
Occasional impositions to know the hour of the day, &c.	...	...	...	...	1	8	0
Chair hire	...	...	...	...	2	2	0
Servants	...	...	...	...	0	12	0
Post-chaise back	...	...	...	...	12	0	0
Expenses upon the road	...	...	...	...	1	14	0
					<hr/>		
					£49	2	0

A very fine full-length portrait of Garrick, executed by Gainsborough for the Corporation of Stratford, hangs in the Town Hall. He is represented with one arm round a column surmounted by a bust of Shakespeare; and in the Museum is a half-length portrait of him as "Kitley", in Ben Jonson's "Every Man in his Humour."* The painting in the Town Hall enables us to form an excellent notion of his personal appearance; and it may be accepted as a striking likeness. The countenance, highly pleasing, is not marked by any strong expression; but the features are just such as can be imagined capable of giving power to a great variety of mental conceptions; and it must have been the facial flexibility and force of expression which enabled Garrick to assume so successfully characters, many of which could never have been made effective by actors whose features were more marked and strongly cast. While his countenance was not moulded by nature exclusively for tragedy or for comedy, it was capable of expressing the passions peculiar to both by the actor's perfect conception and intense feeling. In comedy it was not a face to be laughed at

* The best of Ben Jonson's plays are, in my opinion, *Volpone* and *The Alchymist*. Most of them are intricate in the plot, and the reader has difficulty in following it.

before a word could be uttered : and in tragedy it had to be lighted up by the fire of the soul. Mr. Fitzgerald, in his "Life of David Garrick", gives an interesting account of the impression he made on a spectator, in the character of Hamlet, played by him not long previous to his leaving the stage. At first it did not seem he could sustain his reputation in personifying the youthful prince ; but after awhile his years and appearance were so thoroughly lost sight of that all inconsistency vanished and was lost in the charm of voice and action. There were certain characters which his admirable "make up" contributed to render unexpectedly successful. Such was "Abel Drugger", in Ben Jonson's "Alchymist",* which, like Mr. Phelps's "Bottom" in "A Midsummer Night's Dream", may be called a creation. Should Dr. Kingsley's proposal to commemorate Garrick's visit to Stratford be entertained, an exhibition of portraits and of engravings could form one department, together with portraits of contemporary actors, as suggested by Mr. Waller. To this project I now come, passing over all details of the festival of 1864, called the Tercentenary Celebration of the Birthday of Shakespeare ; referring my readers to Mr. Robert E. Hunter's elaborate, well-written, and impartial account† of this remarkable event. Remarkable it was in several points of view ; and although there may be differences in opinion as to the most worthy mode of celebrating the Poet's natal day, there can be no dispute as to the earnestness and zeal shown by several of the inhabitants of Stratford and its vicinity ; and if Mr. Hunter had been able to show a completed balance-sheet, it would have been proved that some of them confirmed their sincerity by sacrifices which

* There is a portrait of Garrick in this character from which we may conceive how he treated it. It was attempted by Edmund Kean ; but, it is said, not to the satisfaction either of Mrs. Garrick or of himself.

† *Shakespeare and Stratford-upon-Avon*, a "Chronicle of the Time"; comprising the salient facts and traditions, biographical, topographical, and historical, connected with the poet and his birth-place, together with a full record of the *Tercentenary Celebration*. London, Whittaker and Co.; Stratford-upon-Avon, Adams.—Should a second edition be required, Mr. Hunter will find in the late Mr. Macready's "Diary" abundant evidence of his earnest anxiety to erect a memorial to Shakespeare ; but he failed.

amounted to a pecuniary martyrdom. Should Dr. Kingsley, the Mayor, be able to lay the foundation of a commemoration of the visit of Garrick, he will have large experiences to aid him ; he will be able to estimate properly the solid and permanent worth of what, five years ago, was considered as indispensable ; and he will probably be induced to abandon as worse than worthless much that was then sanctioned almost universally.

It is a costly luxury for any town or city to import from a distance, for a special occasion, companies of professional actors, even if their services are given gratuitously ; but it is infinitely more costly when a theatre has to be constructed, and scenery, music, and other necessaries have to be hired ; yet the spirited people of Stratford in 1864 found money enough to provide these expensive entertainments among others ; and as the public did not respond adequately, they sealed their sincerity and earnestness by heavy pecuniary sacrifices. It may and will be asked whether it was prudent to undertake this obviously unremunerative kind of entertainment ? Can it be said that there was on the part of the public a full appreciation of the efforts of the people of Stratford when, after all the feasting and shows had passed away, the receipts did not balance the expenses by many thousands of pounds ? The number of people who attended, if estimated by the staff of officers, it may be supposed was enormous. The vice-presidents were one hundred and seventy ; the local committee, fifty-one ; but as we have seen more vice-presidents in a society than members, no reliance on the strength of an assembly can be placed in a showy, numerous staff ; and the vice-presidents at Stratford did not represent a large multitude ; they did not, indeed, represent money enough to pay the costs, to say nothing of the proposed scholarship and the statue !

At the same time there was a committee working in London soliciting subscriptions for a similar object, and appealing to the country. This committee, I believe, succeeded, as well as that of Stratford, in enlisting a large number of names. What the result was I do not know ; but it could not have been successful. The name of Shakespeare is not a name, at any given

moment, to raise money by, or to excite enthusiasm ; its influence, though great, wherever civilisation and education are well rooted, is not universal ; but it has to await time and schooling ; and in any renewal of the celebration of Shakespeare's birthday, or in commemorating Garrick's visit to Stratford, which is, indeed, much the same thing, it is wise to review the past and gain wisdom from experience. It is probable that the failures of the past may only be preparatives to the success of the future.

In 1864 I told a friend on the London Committee that I felt assured that all appeals to the various towns for money would be attended with no good result ; but I suggested that a proposal to establish readings of the plays of Shakespeare in every town would be likely to meet favour ; and that from this source a very large sum of money might not only be raised, but be retained to be applied for some permanent object that should be worthy of the occasion. I considered that theatricals must necessarily involve expenses which would entirely exhaust the money received, and leave the promoters in the end, after much trouble, no richer than they were at the beginning. I believe that this suggestion will bear consideration on the present occasion, for which it may be somewhat modified. As originally designed, there seems every reason to feel that it would have succeeded well ; although, no doubt, objections would have been raised, just as objections are raised to everything novel. I do not think so meanly of our Shakespearean students as to suppose that there are not a few in or around every town in Great Britain, capable of making the writings of their master a source of amusement and instruction in a public hall, or in a theatre ; neither do I think they are so void of elocutionary powers as to be unable to make their acquirements palatable to large audiences. It need not be expected that all should be equally capable ; but the noble object would plead for deficiencies, were they not covered by others' excellences. Had the experiment been made, it is probable some thousands of pounds would have been realised, while the entire country would have assisted in the pleasing task of making the works of Shakespeare more generally known. To me it seems that

extending a taste and relish for his writings should be the main basis of any public gathering to testify our appreciation of the great teacher.*

Garrick, in connection with Stratford-upon-Avon, cannot be dissociated from Shakespeare : and lectures on the works of the latter, and readings from his plays, should, I think, be the main provisions for at least a week's entertainments, made accessible by low charges to the working classes. It is most likely that on such an occasion some of our first professional actors would offer their services ; others whose stars are not yet in the ascendant would, doubtless, assist ; while Stratford and its neighbourhood, it may be supposed, would probably supply a few. Garrick did not undergo what is absurdly thought indispensable, the tedious drudgery of a provincial stage-training ; neither was he helped by the favour of the press, or the prejudices of the critics : he walked from a counting-house to the stage ; and the public at once received and sealed him as its own. The word *patronage* should therefore not be used in any celebration connected with Garrick. Where patronage is true, it is seldom ostentatious ; but it too frequently means only the appearance of aid from rank or position, without the reality : it is one of the specious pretexts in which destined failures are often clothed.

There is a portion of Mr. Hunter's Chronicle of the Tercentenary Celebration, which might be reprinted with good effect with a view to extensive distribution ; and its issue on the forthcoming occasion would be most appropriate. It comprises

* In our chief schools there can be no excuse for neglecting the national literature ; and in this department of a liberal education Shakespeare stands first and unrivalled. And, further, and perhaps better still, in every town there should be found at least one class devoted to a study of the plays from readings and lectures. In these the members, when qualified, may take part, and be encouraged to criticise and solicit information. The theatre will ever be sanctioned and resorted to for witnessing the powers of the actor ; but lectures, readings, and closet study, the last especially, comprise the course of training which alone can make a Shakespearean scholar ; which can alone give a true and full insight into the depth of the mighty master's works. Let all then unite in forming institutions such as I suggest, and they will prove the best memorial that can be desired ; a monument more lasting than brass or stone.

the sermons preached in the church of the Holy Trinity at Stratford by Dr. Trench, Archbishop of Dublin, and by Dr. Wordsworth, Bishop of St. Andrews, which are conceived in a spirit so enlightened and philosophical, and evince such a correct and elevated appreciation of the genius and the moral and religious influence of the works of Shakespeare, that they deserve to be universally read and studied, and particularly by that ascetic and prejudiced portion of society which cheats itself into a belief that in refusing to hear the teachings of the drama upon the stage or to read them in the closet, it is doing something religious and commendable.

It is Shakespeare who has conferred the greatest character on the literature of our country; and the great importance of a nation's literature, Dr. Trench thus set forth: "The work of its noblest and most gifted sons; the utterance of all which is deepest and nearest to their hearts, it evokes and interprets the unuttered greatness which is latent in others, but which, except for them, would never have come to the birth. By it the mighty heart of a people may be animated and quickened to heroic enterprise and worthiest endeavour. With the breath of strong and purifying emotions, it should stir to a healthy activity the waters of a nation's life, which would else have stagnated and putrefied and corrupted. Having such offices, being capable of such effects as these, of what vast concern it is that it should deal with the loftiest problems which man's existence presents; solve them so far as they are capable of solution here; point to a solution behind the veil where this only is possible; that whatever it handles, things high or things low, things eternal or things temporal, spiritual or natural, it should be sound, should be healthy; clear, so far as possible, of offence; enlisting our sympathies on the side of the just, the pure, and the true. Such a poet, we possess in Shakespeare. For must we not, first of all, thankfully acknowledge a healthiness, a moral soundness, in all, or nearly all, which he has written? Then, too, if he deals with enormous crimes; and he could not do otherwise; for those, alike in fiction and in reality, constitute the tragedy of life: yet the crimes which he deals with travel the common road of human

guilt, with no attempt on his part to extend and enlarge the domain of possible sin : and certainly with no desire to paint it in any other colours than its own. And in his dialogue, if we put him beside those of his own age and time, how little, by comparison with them, is there which we wish away from him, would fain that he had never written. There are some of his contemporaries whose jewels, when they offer such, must be plucked out of the very mire ; who seem to revel in loathsome and disgusting images, all of which, for poor human nature's sake, we would willingly put out of sight altogether. What an immeasurable gulf in this matter divides him from them ! While of that which we *must* regret even in him, a part we have a right to ascribe to an age, I will not say of less purity, but of less refinement, and coarser than our own ; and of that which cannot be thus explained, let us at all events remark how separable almost always it is from the context, leaving, when thus separated, all which remains, perfectly wholesome and pure."

Extracts convey but a faint idea of the masterly manner in which Dr. Trench set forth the great moral and intellectual tendency of the writings of Shakespeare ; and I must refrain from quoting more here than a portion of the conclusion of his sermon : " I will only ask you, each to imagine to himself this England of ours without a Shakespeare ; in which he had never lived or sung. What a crown would be stricken 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 bound 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 sayings, 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'."

Dr. Wordsworth, in the afternoon, addressed an auditory, crowded as was that in the morning. After some preliminary remarks on the order and excellence of creation, he observed that no apology was needed for speaking in that sacred place of one whom God had raised up three centuries ago, from among the inhabitants of the adjoining town, to be at once a mighty prince over the thoughts of men, through the pre-eminence of his intellectual powers ; and through the richness of his genius, a munificent benefactor for ages and upon ages, not to his own country and nation only, but to the world at large. Neither was the time, he added, even of this holy day, at all improper for such a commemoration.

"Entering then", he said, "upon the subject before us with no mistrust, I shall, in the first place, be fully justified, I believe, in assuming that this celebration would not have taken place, would not, certainly, have been promoted so generally, or conducted on so grand a scale, unless it had been commonly felt that the works of Shakespeare are plainly on the right side ; the side of what is true, and honest, and just, and pure, and lovely, and of good report ; in a word, on the side of virtue and of true religion. Nor can it be said, in this case at least, that the popular voice has erred. It is in accordance with the voice of one whose testimony upon such a point will be accepted as of the highest and most unquestionable authority. I allude to the reverend author of 'The Christian Year'. In the lectures which he delivered as Professor of Poetry in the University of Oxford, and which were published twenty years ago, while specifying the notes or characteristics by which poets of the first rank are to be discerned, the distinguishing mark which he requires, first of all, is CONSISTENCY. The first-class poet, he remarks, is *throughout consistent, and in harmony with himself*. And where does the critic look for

his examples in proof of this proposition? He brings forward two poets, who flourished in the same, that is our own, country, and at the same time. First he produces Spenser, in whom he sees *everywhere sustained the same easy form and look of true nobility*; and next he produces Shakespeare; and this consistency of character which, as a first and most decisive test, assigns our poet to the highest rank, in what is it to be found? It is to be found in *the universal impression which his works convey*. And for this the lecturer confidently appeals to the memory of his hearers: 'Recollect', says he; 'I beseech you, how you each felt when you read these plays for the first time. Do you not remember that all along, as the drama proceeded, you were led to take the part of whatever good and worthy characters it contained; and more especially when you reached the end and closed the book, you felt that your inmost heart had received a spur which was calculated to urge you on to virtue; and to virtue, not merely such as is apt, without much reality, to warm and excite the feelings of the young; but such as consists in the actual practice of a stricter, more pure, more upright, more industrious, more religious life? And as for the passages of a coarser sort, here and there to be met with in those plays, any one may perceive that they are to be attributed, in part, not to the author, but to the age in which he lived; and partly they were introduced as slaves in a state of intoxication were introduced into the presence of the Spartan youths—to serve as warnings and create disgust.' Nor do I scruple to consent to the still higher praise which the same unexceptionable judge has bestowed in another part of his work upon the same two poets. 'Not only', he says, 'did they measure everything by a certain innate sense of what is virtuous and becoming; not only did they teach to hate all profaneness, but they trained and exercised men's minds to virtue and religion, inasmuch as each of them is wont to refer all things which the eye beholds to the heavenly and the true, whether as occurring in the actions of men and upon the stage of life, or as seen in the glorious spectacle everywhere presented in the heavens and the earth.'

"But there is another consciousness no less generally felt,

which has tended to give to this celebration its comprehensive character ; I mean the consciousness of our poet's nationality. Like Homer to the Greeks, he is *the poet* of us Englishmen. And as we look for no better, so we desire no other.—And now, I think, it may be said we see the first rude outline of a character which, in paying honour to the man, we shall do well to contemplate ; for it is not merely as a poet who wrote, in a high and genuine sense of the word, religiously ; but as a man, a Christian man, that we, as a congregation of Christians, should be content to honour Shakespeare. Let us see, then, what he was as such. Undazzled by the world, and courting nothing which the world can give, we find him indifferent to the fate even of the produce of his own immortal mind, and throwing his pearls with child-like simplicity into the lap of time, as if unconscious of their amazing worth. A man of less simple, or less sober temper, after he had attained to prosperity and to fame, would never have chosen, when not yet fifty years old, to settle down for the remainder of his days in rural quietude, and in the place which had known him not only in obscurity, but in poverty and distress.* But, seeking, as he did, to shun, rather than to court, distinction, the fact that ' a prophet is not without honour, save in his own country and in his own house', tended rather to recommend this choice to him the more ; happy if only he might be allowed to study nature, and to cultivate his own moral being, in order that he might be 'ripe' in God's own time.

" We know how he has written ! What truth has he not taught ? What duty has he not enforced ? What relation of life, and of living things, rational or irrational, has he not illustrated ? How has he looked *through* nature, and, above all, into the heart of man, with the intuitive knowledge with which the skilful artisan inspects the mechanism of the watch which he himself has made ! And knowing these things, we know enough to teach us how little true greatness is dependent upon external circumstances. We know enough to shame us, if any of us should complain of the

* "Comparatively poor" would be better ; it does not appear that he was ever in distress.

difficulties and disadvantages in which God has placed him. Shakespeare lived to become a teacher of the world, so long as time shall last. And, what deserves to be commemorated more especially in this place, Shakespeare lived to receive, as a benefactor, the blessings of the poor, not forgetting them, we may be sure, while he lived, inasmuch as he remembered them when he died."

* As I have before observed, the sermons of these two eminent divines deserve to be printed and widely circulated; they should be spread abroad, sown indeed, wherever the English language is read. They form, with the speeches delivered at the Banquet, the solid and enduring portions of the Festival in 1864. The concerts and the theatrical performances, excellent as they were, have no such claims; they gratified for the hour; and are the continual and common amusements which are, more or less, at the command of all; and these fugitive pastimes, as Mr. Hunter's "Chronicle" shows, were unremuneratively costly, while the printing of hundreds of thousands of the sermons, public lectures on Shakespeare, and readings of his plays, would produce a lasting good effect without a severe and unjust taxation of the purses of a few generous individuals.

The visit to Stratford-upon-Avon which gave rise to the foregoing remarks, was undertaken in company with Mr. J. G. Waller, on September 26th, in order to superintend the erection of a mural brass tablet* in the church of the Holy Trinity, to the memory of Frederick William Fairholt, who bequeathed his Shakespearean collections to the town of Stratford. We were joined there on the same day by Mr. Joseph Mayer, President of the Cheshire and Lancashire Historic Society; and by Mr. H. B. Mackeson, F.G.S., of Hythe, in Kent; and we passed together five days very agreeably. Mr. J. G. De Wilde, the Editor of the "Northampton Mercury", also attended, but he was called away soon after his arrival, on business. Our visit cannot be mentioned without recording, at the same time, attentions and hospitalities received from Mr. E. F. Flower of

* Executed for me by Mr. Waller.

the Hill; from Mr. W. O. Hunt; and from Dr. Kingsley, the mayor; and I avail myself also of this opportunity to acknowledge the kind manner in which the vicar, the Rev. Dr. Collis, granted me permission for the memorial to be set up in the church; and his generous refusal to take the customary fee.*

It will not be out of place to append to this record of our visit an extract from Mr. Fairholt's manuscript memoranda written at Stratford. At all events it affords a pleasing testimony of enthusiasm:—

“August 29, 1839.—Paid my first visit to Shakespeare's birthplace. It was dark when the coach set me down at Stratford; and I felt an extra degree of excitement at each mile nearer the town. So after leaving my luggage with the waiter, and inquiring the way, I sallied off in the dark to visit this immortal house. I soon recognised it. But, alas! that portion once shewn as the Swan and Maidenhead has been renewed by a fronting of red brick. The interior, they say, has not been much altered; but the exterior parts, the straight, plain front, and adjoining sash windows of a modern residence for a labouring man, one story high, such as you frequently see in the small suburban streets near London. Let us try to forget this rascally spoliation. That portion remains untouched in which he was born. I gazed at it as well as the darkness would permit, crossed the road, returned again, and felt most deeply sorry that it was too late for a visit then. With regret I passed on; and again returned for another final look, until the morning arrived. I then walked up the street, to stroll round the town; but it was in vain for me to collect my thoughts, or leave the street in which the house was situate. At the top of it I suddenly turned; and walking back as fast as I could, full resolved to stay no longer. On my inquiring, fearfully, if it were not too late to see it then, I was answered: ‘Oh, dear, no! Walk in, sir, and I'll fetch a light immediately.’ No words ever sounded so delightfully.”

* Could our friend have foreseen the setting up of this memorial in this church and near the tomb of Shakespeare himself, he would have desired no higher honour.

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