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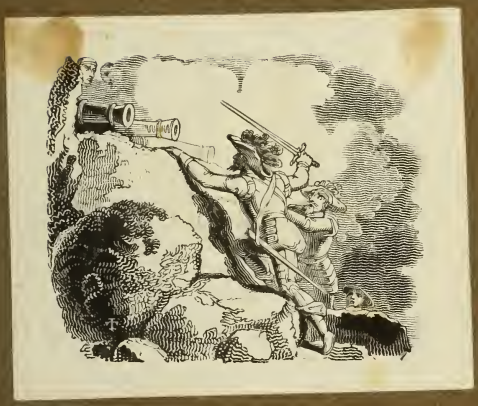

See Champion Jan. 1. 1815

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Shakspearian Age

Wanted - Portraits -

James 1 -
Dr Wm Harvey
Shakspear by Vertue
Drawn by Miller Mezo.
M. Drayton 1613. W. Hole Sc
Beaumont d. 1615. Vertue
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John Donne. Lombart -
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Sir Thos Overbury. d. 1613.
Oven & Chan[s]
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Plates

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The fac-simile of Shakspeare's hand-writing with a Label and seal, to a Mortgage. March 11. 1612/13

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REMARKS

ON THE

LIFE AND WRITINGS

OF

William Shakspeare.

WITH A LIST OF

ESSAYS AND DISSERTATIONS

ON HIS

Dramatic Writings, &c.

BY

JOHN BRITTON, F. S. A.

London:

PRINTED BY CHARLES WHITTINGHAM.

1814.

No. 2. Note

Britton's Remarks on dispersion of Sh.[ee] 1814. Dupl. Copy

Britton's own pencil MS. Note

See this pamphlet, and Britton's Letter, No. 16.

I would seem that 3 Copies of this Work were printed with 9 engravings. (See Sh.[ee] Table, p. 482.) This I have not seen. Binding suspended.

See same work, with date of 1818.

This account materially altered & enlarged for 2nd Edn of Whittingham's Shakspeare. March 1818.

REMARKS
ON
THE LIFE AND WRITINGS
OF
WILLIAM SHAKSPEARE.

BY

JOHN BRITTON, F.S.A.

" ———— For lofty sense
Creative fancy, and inspiration keen *
Through the deep windings of the human heart,
Is not wild Shakspeare thine and Nature's boast?"
Thomson.

* Creative fancy and inspection keen.

" Heaven-born Genius acts from something superior to rules, and antecedent to rules; and has a right of appeal to Nature herself." *Mrs. Montague.*

IT has been frequently and justly remarked, that no department in the dignified and almost boundless circle of literature, excites so much general interest as *biography*. From what cause this arises it is not expedient, in this place, to inquire; but it is unquestionably true that every man, who pretends to an elevation of mind above the vulgar level, evinces an eager curiosity relative to those who have at any time astonished the world by their exploits, or enlightened it by their genius and wisdom. Not contented with the most ample information respecting their public career, the philosopher endeavours to penetrate the uncertainty which usually veils the incidents of private life. The genealogy of their families, the events of their childhood, the nature of their education, their personal appearance, their manners, their habits, their friendships, their amusements, and even their foibles, constitute subjects of solicitude and investigation. Nor ought such inquiries to be rashly stigmatized as

puerile, or neglected as unimportant. To judge of an individual through the glare of his public actions only, is to estimate character by a confined and deceptive light. It is like determining the natural colour of the skin through the medium of a prism, and under the influence of a single ray.

Every species of literary composition ought to be devoted to some useful end. The legitimate province of the biographer, is to impart that kind of information which is calculated to inform the understanding and ameliorate the heart. It is his duty to state every illustrative fact connected with the person whose life he portrays; to rouse the ardent mind to emulation, by the display of such qualities as do honour to human nature, and to point out and reprove those failings which detract from the perfection of human character. It is also his province to trace the progress of genius from the cradle to the grave, to observe the gradations of its developement into bloom, and to mark those peculiarities by which it is distinguished; those accidents by which it is attracted or repelled, incited or repressed. Could such a sketch be drawn of Shakspeare with the unerring pencil of truth, directed by some corresponding mind, what an interesting scene would be unfolded for the contemplation of philosophy.

When we reflect on these circumstances, and consider the defective state of biographical knowledge in general, we cannot refrain from expressing the deepest regret that so few illustrious men have thought proper to bequeath to the world memoirs of their own lives. Such legacies, if more frequently bestowed, would be of incalculable benefit to society; and would tend to prevent a vast deal of useless, because for the most part, uncertain and indefinite controversy.

But if the want of faithful biography be a subject of ordinary lament, how greatly is it to be deplored when it regards men endowed with minds of the very highest order. Men who, like the comets of heaven, appear only at distant periods to attract the gaze of admiring nations, and to shed an unusual glory over the intellectual system. Of such beings every characteristic

trait should be recorded with the most scrupulous care; and then, instead of a deficiency of materials from which to draw a full length portrait of their lives, we should be presented with superabundant stores of anecdote and information.

That SHAKSPEARE was one of that class of men who, in relation to their species, deserve to be termed prodigies of intelligence, must be acknowledged by all to whom nature and education have given the capacity of understanding and appreciating his works. Not only does he stand unrivalled as a dramatic author, but in every quality of poetical composition he may challenge the most renowned competitor. In invention he is scarcely equalled by Homer; and though he seldom attains the suavity and graceful majesty of Maro, he far excels that poet in striking imagery and in originality of conception. Even the genius of Milton, with all the aid which the sublimity of his subject afforded, is not more successful in its boldest flights than the wild and creative fancy of "our immortal bard." And what renders him peculiarly an object of admiration, and an apparent anomaly in the poetical world, is the amazing versatility of his powers. He seems to have been the chief favourite of all the Muses; the adopted son of Apollo himself. Whether his aim be to move the passions or to assuage their tumult, to excite pity or rouse indignation; whether he delineates scenes of terror or incidents of pleasure; in fine, whether he wishes to excite grief or joy, to awaken in the breast powerful emotions of anguish or of mirth, he appears to be a perfect master of his inimitable art. Nor does he excel only in commanding and influencing the passions, for in his reflections on men and manners, and on subjects of religion and philosophy, his sentiments are uniformly appropriate, and are delivered with a force of argument not unworthy of the most profound divine, or the most acute and discriminating moralist.

"Different minds
Incline to different objects; one pursues
The vast alone, the wonderful, the wild;
Another sighs for harmony, and grace,

And gentlest beauty. Hence when lightning fires
The arch of heaven, and thunders rock the ground,
When furious whirlwinds rend the howling air,
And ocean, groaning from his lowest bed,
Heaves his tempestuous billows to the sky;
Amid the mighty uproar, while below
The nations tremble, *Shakspeare* looks abroad
From some high cliff, superior, and enjoys
The elemental war." *Akenside.*

The dramatic writings of Shakspeare, are numerous, and are distinguished for the great diversity of characters they include and portray. Some of his plays certainly acquired much popularity during his own life, and were also published by his contemporaries: yet he must have been regardless of posthumous fame, for he neither prepared any of them for the press, nor gave directions concerning their appropriation in his last will. Equally careless as to the praise or censure of critics and biographers, he either neglected to preserve, or destroyed all records, documents, and memoranda, relating to his own life and writings. Hence the laudable curiosity of the present age is unrewarded by facts, and is held in continued and aggravated suspense, as to the peculiarities of his personal actions and pursuits. His writings have occasioned several volumes of comment; and many authors have used them as stilts to publicity. Several also have written conjectures and dissertations on his life: but all have hitherto failed in their design to develope many biographical facts. An extraordinary and astonishing degree of mystery envelopes his name; and it is not without considerable difficulty and doubt that we have drawn up the following narrative, which has been derived from a careful examination of all preceding memoirs, aided by the intelligent communications of the historian of Stratford.

Of Shakspeare's remote and immediate ancestors, scarcely any facts are recorded. Only one solitary document has been found to notify his reputed parents, and to display the condition of his father. This is a "grant, or confirmation of arms," dated 1599, by William Dethick and William Camden, officers of the Heralds' College, empowering John Shakspeare to

impale the arms of Arden with his own. After the usual preamble, it proceeds:—"Wherefore being solicited, and by credible report informed, that *John Shakspeare, now* of Stratford-upon-Avon, in the counte of Warwicke, *gent.* whose parent, great grandfather, and late antecessor, for his faithefull and approved service to the late most prudent prince, King Henry VII. of famous memorie, was advanunced and *rewarded with lands and tenements*, geven him in those parts of Warwickshere, where they have continewed by some descents in *good reputacion and credit;* and for that the said John Shakspeare, having maryed the daughter and *one of the heyrs* of Robert *Arden* of Wellingcote, in the said countie, and also produced this *his auncient cote of arms heretofore assigned* to him, *whilest* he was her *Majesties officer and baylefe* of that town; In consideration of the premisses, and for the encouragement of his posteritie, unto whom suche blazon of arms and acheivements of inheritance *from theyre said mother*, by the auncyent custome and lawes of arms, maye lawfully descend: We the said Garter and Clarencieulx have assigned," &c. (here follows a description of the arms) "signifying thereby, that it maye and shalbe lawfull for the said John Shakspeare, gent. to bear and use the same shield of arms, single or impaled, as aforesaid; and that it shalbe lawfull for his children, yssue, and posteryte (lawfully begotten) to beare, use, and quarter, and shew forth the same, with their dewe differences, in all lawfull warlyke facts, and civile use or exercises," &c. By a MS. note to the above grant of arms, John Shakspeare is further stated to possess "lands and tenements in the county of Warwick," valued at 500*l.* These documents serve to show that he was a man of property and respectability; yet Rowe, Alexander Chalmers, and some other biographers, state that he was poor, or "reduced in the latter part of life," and incapable of supporting his son William at school. They found this opinion on an entry in the books of the corporation of Stratford; whereby it appears, that John Shakspeare and Robert Bruce, in 1579, were excused paying a weekly tax of

4d. which was levied on the other aldermen. In 1586 his name was erased from the list of corporate members, and another substituted in his place, "because he doth not come to the Halls." These facts, however, are not demonstrative either of poverty or disgrace; for they might arise from personal disputes, or political opinions, which too frequently occur in boroughs. By another memorandum in the Heralds' College, and written apparently after the death of the alderman, we are justified in thinking favourably of his circumstances. "As for the *Speare in bend*, it is a patible difference; and the person to whom it was granted hath borne magistracy, and was justice of peace at Stratford-upon-Avon. He married the daughter and heire of Arderne, and *was able to maintain that estate.*"

In the above documents we do not find any allusion to a second wife, or reference to the decease of the heiress of Arden: yet Malone, and Wheler (in his useful "History of Stratford") assert that JOHN *Shakspeare*, the presumed father of the poet, was thrice married: 1st. to ——— Arden, daughter and co-heir of Robert Arden, of Wellingcote in Warwickshire, before 1558; 2nd. to Margery Roberts, Nov. 1584; and 3dly, to Mary ———, whose maiden name is not specified, in 1588. Of these marriages we have no other evidence than entries of children, by different mothers, in the Stratford register. These entries, however, merely state names and dates, without particulars. Hence some doubts arise; for if the father of William Shakspeare married a third wife, that ceremony must have occurred within seven months after the decease of the second; and when he applied for the grant of the Arden arms, he is stated in the register to have had three children by this third wife. Yet these children are not alluded to by the college record, nor does it contain any reference to a second or third wife. It is also strange that the armorial coat on the poet's tomb has no quartering, nor is the impalement of the Arden and Shakspeare arms to be found on any public monuments. Rowe, who wrote the earliest account of our poet's life, does not mention the name of his mother.

Thus, is it not extremely probable, that there were two or more persons named *John* Shakspeare, living at Stratford, or in its immediate vicinity? On this questionable point, however, we must forbear to dilate at present, though it is certainly entitled to particular investigation, in a more extended memoir than can be admitted into this work.

William Shakspeare, the pride of England and of nature, first drew breath in the town of Stratford-upon-Avon, in the county of Warwick, on the 23rd day of April, 1564. His juvenile habits and early associations are unknown; but it appears evident from his writings, that he did not receive a very liberal, or as it is commonly called, "learned education." Rowe states, that he was "for some time at a free-school, where it is probable he acquired what Latin he was master of; but that the narrowness of his circumstances, and the want of his assistance at home, forced his father to withdraw him from thence, and unhappily prevented his further proficiency in that language." On this statement Malone remarks, in a note, "I believe that on leaving school, Shakspeare was placed in the office of some country attorney, or the seneschal of some manor court." The principal reason which this laborious commentator urges for his opinion, is the appearance of legal "technical skill" which is manifested in our poet's plays. But whatever doubts there may be as to his employment on leaving school, it is certain that he early entered into the matrimonial condition, for an entry in the Stratford register mentions, that "Susanna, daughter of William Shakspeare, was baptised May 26, 1583," when he was only nineteen years of age. His wife was *Anne Hathaway*, who is said to have been the "daughter of a substantial yeoman, then residing at the village of Shottery," which is distant about a mile from the town of Stratford. This lady, as may be inferred from the inscription (quoted in the sequel) on her tombstone in the church, was eight years older than her husband, to whom she brought three children, Susanna, Judith, and Hamnet: the two last were twins, and were baptized February 2, 1584-5.

Concerning the domestic economy of Shakspeare after his marriage, and the means by which he maintained his family, neither tradition nor record furnish the most distant hint. Nor is the date of his leaving Stratford better ascertained; but it is conjectured, with much plausibility, that it did not take place till after the birth of his twin children. As to the cause of his flight to the metropolis, the common story is, that being detected in robbing the deer park of Sir Thomas Lucy of Charlecote, that gentleman, who was one of the county magistrates, prosecuted him with so much rigour, that he found it necessary to escape out of the boundaries of his influence and jurisdiction. Sir Thomas's spirit of justice, or, as some call it, revenge, is said, on this occasion, to have been stimulated by a ballad written by Shakspeare, of which the following stanza was communicated to Steevens by Mr. Oldys, Norroy King at Arms:

"A parliemente member, a justice of peace,
At home a poore scare-crowe, at London an asse;
If lowsie is Lucie, as some volke miscalle it,
Then Lucie is lowsie whatever befall it.
He thinks himself greate,
Yet an asse in his state
We allowe by his ears but with asses to mate.
If Lucie is lowsie, as some volke miscalle it,
Sing lowsie Lucie, whatever befall it."

These lines, if really from the pen of Shakspeare, are not calculated to impress his admirers with a favourable idea of his early powers of composition; nor, if the circumstances which are said to have occasioned them be true, can any one regard them otherwise than as the effusion of a sarcastic heart, and of a mind insensible to moral propriety. As our bard, however, both in his writings and in his subsequent life, exemplifies a very opposite character, we are inclined to regard the whole story as fictitious, and to ascribe his removal to London either to natural inclination or to family disagreement,—perhaps estrangement from his wife. This notion derives some probability from the neglect of her manifested in his will, and the fact of his not cohabiting with her, or at least having any children by her, after 1584. It is curious also, that an entry

occurs in the Stratford register, recording the burial of a child named "Thomas Greene, *alias* Shakspeare," in 1589-90. The inference of which this circumstance is susceptible must be obvious.

The inducement of Shakspeare to resort to the theatre, and his first employment after his arrival in London, are matters no less clouded with obscurity, than the previous incidents of his life. Pope, on the authority of Rowe, who has however omitted the anecdote in his published memoir, says that he became acquainted with the players in consequence of waiting at the theatre door to take charge of the horses of those gentlemen who had no servants: but this story is discredited by Steevens and by Malone; the latter of whom suggests an opinion, that Shakspeare was introduced to theatrical connexion by his townsman and relation, *Thomas Green*, who was one of the best actors of his day. The office which he first held in the theatre, according to a stage tradition, was that of "call-boy, or prompter's attendant," but this statement is almost as questionable as the legendary tale of Pope. At all events, his continuance in that capacity was of very short duration. Talents like his could not remain long unnoticed or unemployed; but we are inclined to think that he was earlier distinguished as a player than as a dramatic writer. He must have made himself conversant with the machinery of the stage, its language, &c. before he composed even the simplest and least difficult of his plays.

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 by a strange fatality, 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 was 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, in his "Supplemental Apology," however, endeavours to controvert 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 be composed about the year 1591, but certainly not earlier than 1590. The other plays of our great dramatist, are placed in the following order of time by him and Chalmers:—

Third Part of King Henry VI.	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 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	1608

Shakspeare, besides his plays, wrote several poetical pieces, *viz.* "Venus and Adonis," printed in 1593; "The Rape of Lucrece," printed in 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 productions our author dedicated to the Earl of Southampton, who is stated, on the authority of Sir William D'Avenant, to have given him a thousand pounds. If this anecdote be really true, it evinces a spirit of liberality and well-directed munificence, which entitles his lordship to the highest rank among the patrons of genius. It shows also that Shakspeare's merits were appreciated by some eminent characters, even in his life-time; a truth which is confirmed by the rapid sale of his poems, and by the attentions which he received from Queen Elizabeth, and her successor King James. The former, says Rowe, had several of his plays acted before her, and "without doubt gave him many gracious marks of her favour." According to the same writer, it was at her desire he composed the Merry Wives of Windsor. King James also was present at the representations of many of his pieces, and is stated by Lintot to have written to him "an amicable letter" with his own hand, and as Dr. Farmer conjectures, in return for the compliment paid him in Macbeth. This letter, though now lost, is said to have remained long in the possession of Sir William D'Avenant.

Shakspeare, as already hinted, was an actor as well as a writer of plays, and seems to have taken a share in the representation of many of his own productions. As late as the year 1603, only thirteen years before his death,

his name appears among the actors of Ben Jonson's play of Sejanus. Thus it is evident that he continued to perform many years: but of his merits as a player, we find no positive data to found an accurate estimate, and hence there is much diversity of opinion among his commentators. Performers and dramatic authors were not then so closely watched, and fastidiously criticised as in the present age; indeed diurnal reviewers were then unknown. From some satirical passages in the writings of his contemporaries, he appears not to have been a favourite actor with the public. His instructions on the subject of acting, however, in Hamlet, are so peculiarly excellent, that we are not a little inclined to suspect that his unpopularity arose rather from the want of taste in his audience, than from the deficiency of theatrical powers in himself. The "science of acting" was then only in its infancy; and as he that "strutted and bellowed" most, was probably esteemed the best player, Shakspeare's gentleness would be considered tameness, and his observance of nature ignorance of his art.

At what period our poet gave up all personal connexion with the theatre has not been discovered; but it is probable that he retired from it at least three years before his death. Rowe indeed states, that "the latter part of his life was spent, as all men of good sense would wish theirs may be, in ease, retirement, and the conversation of his friends." During his dramatic career, he appears to have acquired a share in the property of the Globe Theatre, and to have been joint manager of the same, as his name is mentioned in the licence granted by King James, in 1603, for the exhibition of plays in that house, and in any part of the kingdom. This share he probably sold when he finally retired to Stratford, as it is neither alluded to in his will, nor does his name occur in the accounts of the theatre for 1613.

Shakspeare, like most men of pre-eminent talents, is said to have been much assailed by the attacks of envious rivals, notwithstanding that diffidence and good nature were the peculiar characteristics of his personal deport-

ment. Among those who are stated 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 superciliously over, were just upon returning it to him with an illnatured 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 criterions of merit. Accordingly Jonson's grand 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 show something upon 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.

"Shakspeare," observes Rowe, "had the good fortune to gather an estate equal to his occasion, and in that to his wish;" but the biographer does not even hint at the amount of the poet's income. Malone, however, judging from the bequests in Shakspeare's Will, thinks it might be about 200*l.* per year; which at the age when he lived, was equal to 800*l.* a year at the present time. Subsequent to his retirement from the stage, he resided in a house at Stratford which he had purchased, according to Wheler, in 1597, from the family of Underhill, and which, previous to that time had been called *the Great House*, probably from its having been the best in the town, when it was originally erected by Sir Hugh Clopton, in the reign of Henry the Seventh. The poet appears to have made considerable alterations in this house, and changed its name to *New-place*. Here he appears to have resided a few years in retire-

ment, but not without devoting some time to dramatic composition; for Malone asserts, that the play of Twelfth Night was written after his final residence at Stratford. In this house he died, on Tuesday, April 23, 1616, being the anniversary of his 52d year: in two days afterwards his remains were interred within the chancel of the parish church; where a flat stone and a mural monument were afterwards placed to point out the spot, and commemorate his likeness, name, and memory.

Such is the substance of the scanty notices of the life of Shakspeare, which we have been enabled to collect from Rowe, and from the various commentators on his works, to Malone inclusive. To these we shall add, in his own words, the following anecdotes recorded by *John Aubrey* in his MS. collections in the Ashmolean Museum, at Oxford. "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 helde not at all inferior to him for a naturall witt, his acquaintance and coetanean, but dyed young. This W^m^ being inclined naturally to poetry and acting came to London, I guesse about 18, and was an actor at one of the playhouses, and did act exceedingly well. Now B. Jonson never was 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't man, very good company, and of a very readie and pleasant smooth witt: the humour of Z---, 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. Ben Jonson and he did gather humours of men dayly, wherever they came. One time, as he was at the tavern, at Stratford-upon-

C/ say: Harris
qu? is there any Constable in
y^e midst^r N. D.?
no—but in "Love's
Labour's Lost."
Dull—

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 think I have been told, that he left 2 or 300 lib. per annum, there and thereabout, 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 natnrall 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 comœdies 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 years a schoolmaster in the conntry." See Letters from the Bodleian Library, &c. Vol. iii. p. 307.

The above account, though apparently sanctioned by good authority, and probably written about thirty years after Shakspeare's death, is treated by almost all his biographers as wholly incredible. Of this opinion is Malone, in his notes upon the Life of our poet by Rowe; but in his own "Historical Account of the English Stage," he seems at a loss whether to argne for or against the probability of Aubrey's statement. The same wavering and inconsistency, on dubious points, are visible in other parts of the writings of that commentator. Thus in one place he is positive that Shakspeare's father was thrice married; and in another, he is equally confident that he had not more than two wives. In his chronology, he states 1591 to be the year in which our author commenced writer for the stage, and argues throughout the whole essay on that presumption; but

by Accident or Design — was unfair to saddle it upon Shakespeare, more especially as other good classical Scholars had adopted the word before him. In addition to Speed 3d. Ed. and Hollingshead, see how it was understood by Trussel in his Continuation of Samuel Daniels Hist. of Engl. p. 118. "And that the French King should write and and entitle him "our thrice noble Sonne" What is that but proclarissimus? Take also the Sense of tres cher as given us by Tindal "dearly beloved" — Perhaps Shakespeare understood full as well if not better than Dr. Farmer that even procarissimus is not perfectly correct for tres cher. The fact is, the French have no superlative for cher; they are content to make up with tres cher, which according to the true genius of their own Language amounts to no more than very dear: and Henry the 5th. the Son in Law, might have been denominated the very dear Son of Charles without disparagement to his own Sons: and our Highlanders might with equal propriety call him in Latin procarissimus, the most famous or the most noble, because they certainly had a right to do so.

2. As our Authors knowledge of French has been combated with equal pertinacity. Pistols "par donner moy" and a passage in Richard the 2d where moy rhimes with destroy made him deemed decisive: not to mention Pistols other "eply of "Brass cur" & le ton Borras" of the same French Soldier. The Flyleaves however, did not recollect that by charging Shakespeare with those blunders, they give him credit for having written the French scenes which (sorry as they are) display a knowledge of that Language absolutely incompatible with such Ignorance. If he was not Author of the French, he must be acquitted of the Blunders, unless they are intentional ones. That they are intentional ones appears from this, Pistol is represented as possessing just French enough to be able to understand part of the Soldiers words, and he corrects them thus. The Frenchman says ton bras, pronouncing it properly, Pistol knowing how that word is written, and how he would probably have pronounced it, says Brass Cur; or perhaps it was intended by the writer that Brass should be so pronounced by the Soldier in order to introduce the wit, such as it is, of Pistol. Whichever might have been the Cause of the erroneous pronunciation, I think it could not have been ignorance, because 50 corrections would have been offered long before the play could have been ready for Representation. It was enough for our Author that it would please the greatest part of his Audience, whom he knew to be ignorant; if he had been really ignorant of French some of his envious Contemporaries would have noticed it, as the French Scenes was a throwing down of the Gauntlet, which any of them would have been ready enough to take up.

The par donner moy of Shakespeare is on a par with a Song written on the occasion of Miss Nelly Bennets receiving a very high Compliment from the King of France "whose Cat she had the honour to help at Court."

"But not a Man did look employ,
Except on pretty Nelly:
Then said the Duke de Villeroi
Ah! qu'elle est bien jolie."

See also Swifts nonsense to Stella

you expect Mrs Wallis,
To dread when she calls,
To carry to Stoyte,
Or else honi soit."

If these instances be too ludicrous, take the more solemn and serious words of Queen Cordelia in the Mir. for Magistrates

Because he first decreast my wealth bereft my joy.
I pray you Gods he never be a Roy.

In the same piece we have anoy and Roy; or see also Promos and Cassandra

- - - - - - - yet ten times more we joye
- - - - - - - for to receive a Roye.

With so strong a Disposition to depreciate his Knowledge of Languages it is not extraordinary that the Introduction of the French Motto in the merry Wives of Windsor should have been brought forward with the same Confidence

And honi soit qui mal y pense write,
In Emerald Tufts, Flowers purple, blue and White.

Act v. Sc. v. p. 207. Vol. v. of Reed's Ed.

It afterwards we are told Testimony that he could quote French without understanding its pronunciation: the first line cannot be read without making two Syllables of pense, which if Shakespeare did not know, he could not understand the French Language."

It is notorious that many of the Corruptions of Shakespeares Text have arisen from mistakes of the Ear in copying from recitation, and I can see no Reason why it might not have been originally thus written

"And honi soit qui mal y pense y-write"

but perhaps Shakespeare might imagine that in the reading of French Verse the e final which is lost in many words in prose, may by a Licentia poetica become an additional Syllable.

If there were not very strong Reasons for believing that Shakespeare had the Benefit of Education at the free grammar School of Stratford upon Avon till the Age of 15 or 16, his minor Poems would for ever afford incontrovertible Testimony to the Fact that his Mind had been early imbued with classical Ideas; for it is impossible on any other Supposition to account for the Choice of Subjects on which they were exercised. What could have induced a mere english Scholar to fix upon such as he, following, viz. Venus and Adonis – Tarquin and Lucrece – The Tale of Cephalus and Procris – Cupids Trickery – that Mars clawes was the Cause of his own Wrongs – Mars and Venus – Birth of the Minotaur – The Tale of Dedalus and ~~Icarus~~ Icarus – Concealment of Achilles – Epistle of Paris to Helen and of Helen to Paris &c &c – Or, if such a one had chosen similar Subjects would it have been in his Power to have exercised his Talents upon them through more than 200 closely printed octavo Pages and, with scarcely an Instance of false Quantity, to have introduced into heroic or any other Verse the Names of Tantalus – Elysium – Ardea – Colatium – Colatine – Colatinus – Lucretia – Orpheus – Simois – Hecuba – Boreas – Atrides – Dardanian – Ægean – Philomela – Hymettus – Cephalus –

Orestes – Hermione – Menelaus – Pasiphae p175 doubtful & p.175
mmm – Bootes – Lebinthos – Astipale – Pachine – Sygean – Achaia –
Athra – Clemare – Hyppomanes – Dejaneira – Achelous – Tonarian –
Laomedon – Idian – Hypsipile – Mynosian – Medea – Ates Calciope –
Hypodomia – Lapythes and Tyndarues. Pendion &.

If a fastidious critic should discover Troilus in two Syllables he may also find that his contemporaries, who were good classical Scholars, have many of them used that word in the same manner, where the Structure of their Verse required it. And he may also find that Shakespeare could when he pleased pronounce it properly as in the following Line.

"Well I say Tro-i-lus is Tro-i-lus"

If such a Critic should imagine that he finds him tripping in Cytherea

"If Cytheria her firm Covenant keep

Let him proceed a few Lines further, in the same page, and he will be convinced that Covenant ought to be pronounced in two Syllables, consequently that Shakespeares Cytherea no longer exists. "If the Gods grant me my expected Day,

It to the full shall all the Covinants pay."

Therefore

If Cytherēa her firm Covinant keep

If 500 tolerably good classical scholars were to use the same Names repeatedly in the Composition of 220 octavo pages, it may be with Confidence asserted that very few of the number would be more frequently correct than Shakespeare, who, if he give us Ardēa in one Line has Ardĕa in another, and so of Ilion and Ilion; and if four or five other Instances of Incorrectness are found, the Structure of the Verse will justify the Deviation.

Do not imagine my dear Sir that I am contending for the very great Degree of Learning in Shakespeare which some of his advocates have done. They appear to me to have been as wide of the mark as Mr Farmer, who depreciates his knowledge of Latin down to the hig, hag, hog of Sir Hugh Evans; a Tone unremittingly adopted in Reeds Edition by Stevens, Malone and others. We did not want the Testimony of Drummond of Hawthornden to the Fact that Ben Jonson "was a great Lover and Praiser of himself, a Contemner and Scorner of others" He was, beyond a Doubt, a very arrogant self sufficient pedagogue, vain of his classical Knowledge; and would have equally despised the pretensions of any Man who had been guilty of all false Quantity, or whose Learning had been in any Degree inferior to his own. — He admits that Shakespeare understood some greek, no matter how little, it carries with it strong presumption to his being possessed of a good deal of Latin. I repeat that it is impossible Shakespeare could have been an Exception to the general Rule, that there neither is, nor ever was, a person in this Kingdom who understood a little greek without all the same

professing a good deal of Latin.

Shakespeare was a compleat Master of the english Language as it was written and spoken in his own Time, and his Works afford strong internal Evidence in favour of the presumption that he was very far from being an absolute Stranger to those with which it is closely allied. — What mere english Scholar could be in the habit of frequently using without frequently misapplying such Expressions as the following: "The pendant bed and procreant cradle — the extravagant and erring Spirit — corporal Agent — frequent Messengers — multitudinous Seas — unlineal Hand — sweet Aspersion — Semblative — rubious dip — circumnured — unscouring — generous for noble Citizens — Juvenal — congruent Epithelon — festinately and festinate — Remuneration — innumered — Thrasonical — perigrinate — capricious in the Sense of lascivious — dulcet Diseases — country copulatives — inhibited Sin — captious and intenible Sieve — questant — armipotent — pestiferous Reports — Lave in Streams — Natures Germins — oblicious Antidote — capitulate to make head — Legerity — exterge — Kinst intrinsicate — radent or candent Tears — stilled fires — precursors and precurrers — intrenchant — tenable in Silence — segregation — Nature crescent — prenominate Crimes — Ventages — Goddess argentine — sustaining Garments — Executor in the Sense of Actor or Doer — Suspiration retrograde — distracted Clouds for Clouds separated or torn asunder — pendulous air — aspired the Clouds — Reflex of brittish Brows — preceptorial Medicine — sacred Aunt — unseminared — submerged — frustrate Search — Vanity for Illusion that which vanishes — Ardours for heat of Livers — Corollary in the Sense of Surplus. fr. — Sea marge — pre supposed previously laid upon — ungenitured — promethean Fire — Trance for a Ferry — capricious for a goatish Poet — dulcet — facinorous — contrive to wear away — credent — suspire — Love they for let them Love — Iteration — crescive — congrueth — periapto — effuse of Blood — effeminate remorse — deracinate — convive — portance — Phantasma — Exorcist from excoro to invoke — Lethe Death — reverbs — remediate — amplify — fracted Dates — toged Consuls — agnize — sufficate — reduce to bring back — maculate — Digression going out of the right way — relapse for redescent — simulacr Man of Virtue — &c &c. ***

95

by Shakespeare

Bath

× With Nestor's judgment blest, & Maro's skille
The muse of Sophocles he rulde at wille;
Shakspeare beweepte of nations here doth lie,
Earthe hides his earthe:—his Soule hath found
the skie"

translation, or paraphrase of the two lines, said to be old - Gents Mag. Nov 1821 - p 403

in his remarks relative to the passage above quoted, he says, "We have no proof that he did not woo the dramatic muse even so early as 1587 or 1588; and therefore till such proof shall be produced, Mr. Aubrey's assertion, founded apparently on the information of those who lived very near the time, is entitled to some weight."

Shakspeare 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, Olympvs 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 cosie; sieth 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 which covers our poet's grave is this curious inscription:

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

The common tradition is, that the last four 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 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. Shakspeare, who survived her husband eight years, was buried between his grave and the north wall

Written in the Album at Stratford Church

"Stranger to whom this monument is shown
Invoke the Poets curses on Malone
Whose meddling zeal his barbarous book displays
And smears his tomb-stone as he marred his plays"

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, Susanna, 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, 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, Susanna 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, beside 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 same 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, Susanna Hall, he bequeathed Newplace, with its appurtenances; two messuages or tenements, with their appurtenances, situated in Henley-street (represented in the accompanying print); 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 Susanna 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 males 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 males 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 males: "and for default of such issue, the said premises to be and remain to my said neice Hall, and the heirs males of her body lawfully issuing; and for default of such issue, to my daughter Judith, and the heirs males of her body lawfully issuing; and for default of such issue, to the right heirs of me the said William Shakspeare."

To the said Susanna 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 expenses; 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.

The houses mentioned above, as being situated in Henley-street, are those represented in the annexed wood cut*. According to tradition, they originally constituted a single mansion, the residence of our poet's father, and the immediate scene of his own birth. This view was sketched by Mr. W. Alexander, in June 1807; but the figures, representing the procession at the *Stratford Jubilee*, are inserted from a drawing made by Samuel Ireland.

New-Place, the residence of Shakspeare, was occupied after his death by Mr. and Mrs. Hall, the latter of

* This wood cut, which represents the houses in Henley-street, and the Jubilee Procession in 1769, together with the Portrait described in the following page, are inserted in the *embellished edition* of *Shakspeare*, published in Seven Volumes, price 1*l.* 18*s.* 6*d.* in boards.

whom survived her husband several years. During her residence in it in her widowhood, it was honoured by the temporary abode of Henrietta Maria, queen to Charles the First. On the decease of Mrs. Hall, it became the property of her daughter, Lady Barnard, and was sold by her surviving executor, to Edward Nash, Esq. who bequeathed it to his daughter Mary, wife of Sir Reginald Forster. By that gentleman it was sold to Sir John Clopton, a descendant from the original proprietor and founder. Here, under a mulberry tree planted by Shakspeare's own hand, Garrick, Macklin, and Delane, were hospitably entertained, when they visited Stratford, in 1742, by Sir Hugh Clopton, barrister at law, who repaired and beautified the house, instead of (as Malone asserts) pulling it down, and building another on its site. On his death it was sold, in 1752, by his son-in-law, Henry Talbot, Esq. to the Rev. Francis Gastrell, who cut down the mulberry tree to save himself the trouble of showing it to visitors.

With a few remarks on the accompanying Portrait, we must close the present essay. This is taken from the *bust* of the bard in Stratford church; and that head is indubitably the most authentic and probable likeness of the poet. It was executed soon after his decease, and according to the credible tradition of the town, was copied from a cast after nature. We also know that Leonard Digges mentions the "Stratford monument," in his lines prefixed to the folio edition of Shakspeare's plays of 1623; whence it is certain, that the bust was executed within seven years of the poet's death. The common practice in that age of executing monumental busts of illustrious and eminent persons, is also in favour of this at Stratford: but we have still a better criterion, and a more forcible argument in its behalf: one that "flashes conviction" to the eye of the intelligent artist and anatomist. This is the truth of drawing with the accuracy of muscular forms, and shape of the skull which distinguishes the bust now referred to, and which are evidences of a skilful sculptor. The head is cut out of a block of stone, and was formerly coloured in imitation of nature: but Mr. Malone pre-

× Mr G. F. Waldron, who was present at the Stratford Jubilee, informs me that in consequence of the incessant rain, which prevailed at that time, there was no procession, altho' every thing was prepared for it.

J B. Nov 18/4

vailed on the present respectable clergyman of Stratford, to have it re-painted all over with white lead, &c. By this absurd and tasteless operation, the character and expression of the features are much injured: but it is proposed to divest the head of this exterior coat, and preserve it with care and caution in proportion to its value. Mr. Malone characterises the bust, for its "*pertness of countenance;* and therefore totally differing from that placid composure and thoughtful gravity, so perceptible in his *original portrait,* and his best prints. Our poets monument, having been erected by his son-in-law, Dr. Hall, the statuary probably had the assistance of some picture, and failed from want of skill to copy it." Thus prepossession and prejudice will always pervert facts, and resort to sophistry. In spite of all that has been advanced by Mr. Malone, by Jonson, and by other writers, in behalf of different pictures and prints professing to be the head of Shakspeare, they are all unsatisfactory, and mostly futile: for a bad artist can never produce a good likeness, nor can we place any reliance on the execution of an unskilful engraver, or a worn-out picture. Whatever comes in "a questionable shape," should be severely and fastidiously investigated; if not authenticated by proof, or supported by powerful probability, should be banished from the page of history, and from the receptacles of belief.

From what has already been 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 fame 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

179. Shakspeare's Plays and Poems, with corrections, illustrations, &c. by various commentators; and Essays and Notes by Edmond Malone, *fine portraits*, 11 vols. *neat in calf*, £8. 8*s*. .... *Lond.* 1790.

7180. Shakspeare (Bell's edition) from the text of Johnson and Steevens, with copious notes, and illustrative matter; A SUBSCRIBER'S LARGE PAPER COPY, *fine early impressions of the numerous engravings*, 20 vols. in numbers, £15. *ib.* 1788.

7181. Shakspeare.—Twenty of the Plays of Shakspeare, from the originals printed in quarto, by G. Steevens, 4 vols. *very neat*, £1. 12*s*. ..... *ib.* 1766.

7182. Shakspeare, *beautifully printed by Ballantyne, with fine engravings*, LARGE PAPER, 12 vols. *boards*, £8. 8*s*. *ib.* 1807.

7183. Shakspeare's Much Ado about Nothing, *Bell's edition, a unique copy, printed upon vellum, green morocco*, £2. 2*s*. *ib.* 1785.

7184. ———— Poems, *calf extra, gilt leaves*, £1. 1*s*. *Lond. by T. Evans*, 1774.

7185. ———— (Ayscough's Index to) *very neat in calf*, £1. 9*s*. *Lond.* 1790.

7162. Rawlet's (John) Poetick Miscellanies, *portrait* 3*s*. .. *ib*. 1687.

163. Ross's (Alexander) Mystagogus Poeticus, or the Muses Interpreter, *with frontispiece, neat in calf*, 15*s*. ..... *ib*. 1648.

7164. Another Edition, *calf extra, gilt leaves*, 12*s*. 6*d*.....*ib*. 1675.

7165. Radcliffe's (Alexander) Ramble, an Anti-Heroick Poem, *calf extra, gilt leaves*, 12*s*.....*ib*. 1682.

7166. Another Copy, with Ovid Travestie, a Burlesque upon Ovid's Epistles, by the same Author, *calf extra, gilt leaves*, 18*s*. *ib*. 1682-1705.

7167. Rymer (Thomas) on the Tragedies of the last Age, *calf extra, gilt leaves*, 10*s*. 6*d*.....*ib*. 1678.

7168. Ritson's (Joseph) Remarks on the Text and Notes of Johnson and Steevens's Shakspeare, with the Quip Modest, *boards*, 18*s*. ..... *ib*. 1783-8.

7169. ———— Ancient Songs, *boards*, 14*s*. ..... *ib*. 1790.

7170. ———— Another Copy, *calf extra*, 17*s*. 6*d*...*ib*. 1790.

7171. ———— English Songs, 3 vols. *very neat*, £2. 2*s*. *ib*. 1783.

7172. ———— Robin Hood, 2 vols. *boards*, £1. 11*s*. 6*d*. *ib*. 1795.

7173. ———— Another Set, 2 vols. *neat*, £1. 13*s*. *ib*. 1795.

action the full powers of a correllative mind. Hence the British theatrical hemisphere has been repeatedly illumined by the coruscations of a *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: whilst the engraver has translated these designs into a new language, and given them extensive circulation and permanent record. It may thus be said that the works of Shakspeare have conferred a literary and dramatic immortality on Great Britain, which nothing less than annihilation can destroy.

It may be both useful and amusing to close this essay with an account of the principal editions of Shakspeare's plays and poems, and also with an enumeration of the most considerable volumes and pamphlets that have been expressly devoted to comment on, elucidate, or perplex the original writings.

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 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, Sculspit, London;" and on the opposite page are these lines by Ben Jonson, addressed "To the Reader."

> "This figure that thou here sees't put,
> It was for gentle Shakspeare 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 on brasse.
But, since he cannot, Reader, looke
Not on his Picture, but his Booke. B. I.

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.

Of those *editions* which are distinguished by the title *modern*, the earliest was published by *Nicholas Rowe* in 1709, in 6 vols. 8vo. This was followed by an edition in 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, and the merits of his commentators, are discussed with that perspicuity and critical judgment for which this renowned author was so much distinguished. In 1766, *Steevens's* edition was published in 4 vols. 8vo.

(consisting of the 20 plays that had been published in 4to, before the whole were collected in folio (Harris)

King Lear. collâ with the old & modern edns. pr. 1770. 3s.
with Pref. in mss.

Hamlet, Prince of Denmark a Tragedy by Wm Shakespeare, collated with the old & modern editions: Lond. printed by Bowyer & Nichols 8vo 1778. - fronts. Des. by Hayman & Engd by Grignion - 1st ed. collated 4to 1604

See Nichols Anec. III. 120.

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 4to. edition 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. 1794. In 1784 was published, in 1 vol. royal 8vo. an edition printed for Stockdale, with a very copious verbal index, by the Rev. Mr. *Ayscough*. *Bell's* edition appeared in 1788, in 20 vols. 12mo.; and in 1790, *Malone's* was ushered into the world, in 10 vols. crown 8vo. In 1793 a fourth edition, by Johnson and Steevens, &c. "revised and augmented," in 15 vols. 8vo. was edited by Reed. A fifth edition, in 21 vols. 8vo. was published in 1803; and another edition, 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 of them 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.

7

The Rev^d died 18[illegible] from the Clarendon Press 1786 of no pages p. 38. Mr Harris says by "Steevens, himself"

* Vicar of Trinity Church, Coventry. - M.A. of Trin. Coll. Oxford. 1758. B.C.L. 1769 - died. Sept. 1805. G. M. Oct. 380

LIST OF DETACHED ESSAYS AND DISSERTATIONS

ON THE

WRITINGS OF SHAKSPEARE.

1. A short View of Tragedy; its original Excellency, and Corruption; with some Reflections on Shakspeare, and other Practitioners for the Stage. By Mr. Rymer, Servant to their Majesties. 8vo. 1693.

2. Remarks on the Plays of Shakspeare. By C. Gildon, 8vo. Printed at the end of the seventh volume of Rowe's edition, 1710.

3. An Essay on the Genius and Writings of Shakspeare, with some Letters of Criticism to the Spectator. By Mr. Dennis. 8vo. 1712.

4. Shakspeare Restored: or a Specimen of the many Errors, as well committed as unamended, by Mr. Pope, in his late Edition of this Poet. Designed not only to correct the said Edition, but to restore the true Reading of Shakspeare in all the Editions ever yet published. By Mr. Theobald. 4to. 1726.

5. An Answer to Mr. Pope's Preface to Shakspeare, in a Letter to a Friend; being a Vindication of the old Actors, who were the Publishers and Performers of that Author's Plays. Whereby the Errors of their Edition are further accounted for, and some Memoirs of Shakspeare and the Stage History of his Time are inserted, which were never before collected and published. By a Strolling Player (John Roberts.) 8vo. 1729.

6. Some Remarks on the Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, written by William Shakspeare. Printed for W. Wilkins. 8vo. 1736.

7. Explanatory and critical Notes on divers Passages of Shakspeare's Plays. By Francis Peck. Printed with his new Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Mr. John Milton. 4to. 1740.

8. An Essay towards fixing the true Standards of Wit and Humour, Raillery, Satire, and Ridicule: to

of Pope and Shakspeare, the Rev. Mr. William Warburton, Preacher of Lincoln's-Inn; with Remarks upon the Epistle of Friend A. E. In which his unhandsome Treatment of this celebrated Writer is exposed in the Manner it deserves. By a country Curate (Dr. Grey). 8vo. 1750.

14. The Beauties of Shakspeare; regularly selected from each Play: with a general Index, digesting them under proper Heads. Illustrated with explanatory Notes, and similar Passages from ancient and modern Authors. By William Dodd, ~~B.A.~~ late of Clare Hall, Cambridge. 2 vols. 12mo. 1st edition, 1752; 2d edition, 1757; 3d edition, 3 vols. 12mo. 1780

15. Remarks upon a late Edition of Shakspeare; with a long String of Emendations, borrowed by the celebrated Editor from the Oxford Edition without Acknowledgment. To which is prefixed, a Defence of

J. 13 2 vol. 8vo

LL2. to 3d edit "with Copy additions & the author last corrections"

1 vol J. 13 The Works of Shakespeare. In 8. vols. 8vo 1635. London. printed for I. Tonson, & the rest of the Proprietors. (with Plates & an account of Shakespeares life &c)

old 4-5-7 13 The Works of Mr Wm Shakespeare. in vols. 8vo London, printed for Jacob Tonson 1709. (with Plates & an account of Shakespeares life &c).

the late Sir Thomas Hanmer, Bart. addressed to the Rev. Mr. Warburton, Preacher of Lincoln's-Inn, &c. 8vo. No Date.

16. An Answer to certain Passages in Mr. W——'s Preface, in his Edition of Shakspeare; together with some Remarks on the many Errors and false Criticisms in the Work itself. 8vo. 1748.

17. Miscellaneous Observations on the Tragedy of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark: with a Preface, containing some general Remarks on the Writings of Shakspeare. 8vo. 1752.

18. Shakspeare Illustrated; or the Novels and Histories on which the Plays of Shakspeare are founded, collected and translated from the original Authors, with critical Remarks. 2 vols. By Mrs. Lennox. 12mo. 1753. A third Volume, with the same Title, was published in 1754.

19. Critical, historical, and explanatory Notes on Shakspeare; with Emendations of the Text and Metre. By Zachary Grey, LL.D. 2 vols. 8vo. 1755.

20. The Canons of Criticism and Glossary; being a Supplement to Mr. Warburton's Edition of Shakspeare. Collected from the Notes in that celebrated Work, and proper to be bound up with it. By the other Gentleman of Lincoln's-Inn (Mr. Edwards). 1st. edition, 1748; 7th edition, with additions, 8vo. 1765. Remarks on Shakspeare, by Mr. Roderick, are printed at the end of this edition.

21. A Revisal of Shakspeare's Text, wherein the Alterations introduced into it by the more modern Editors and Critics are particularly considered. By Mr. Heath. 8vo. 1765.

22. A Review of Dr. Johnson's new Edition of Shakspeare, in which the Ignorance and Inattention of that Editor is exposed, and the Poet defended from the Persecution of his Commentators. By W. Kenrick. 8vo. 1765.

23. An Examination of Mr. Kenrick's Review of Mr. Johnson's Edition of Shakspeare. 8vo. 1766.

24. A Defence of Mr. Kenrick's Review of Dr. Johnson's Shakspeare; containing a Number of curious and ludicrous Anecdotes of literary Biography. By a Friend. 8vo. 1766.

25. Observations and Conjectures on some Passages of Shakspeare. By Thomas Tyrwhitt, Esq. 8vo. 1766.

26. An Essay on the Learning of Shakspeare. By the Rev. Dr. Richard Farmer. 8vo. 1767; 2d edition, 12mo. 1767.

27. A Letter to David Garrick, Esq. concerning a Glossary to the Plays of Shakspeare, on a more extensive Plan than has hitherto appeared. To which is added, a Specimen. By Richard Warner, Esq. 8vo. 1768. 110. pages.

28. 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. 1770; 2d edition, 1776; 6th edition, corrected, to which are added, Three Dialogues of the Dead, 8vo. 1810.

29. The Morality of Shakspeare's Drama Illustrated. By Mrs. Griffiths. 8vo. 1775. 528 pages.

30. Notes and various Readings to Shakspeare. By Edward Capell. 3 vols. 4to.

31. A second Appendix to Mr. Malone's Supplement to the last Edition of the Plays of Shakspeare; containing additional Observations by the Editor of the Supplement. 8vo. 1783.

32. Essays on Shakspeare's Dramatic Characters; with an Illustration of Shakspeare's Representation of National Characters in that of Fluellen. The Sixth Edition. By William Richardson, M.A. F.R.S. E. Professor of Humanity in the University of Glasgow. London. 1812. 8vo. The above Essays were published at different times. The first portion appeared in 1774,

under the title of "A Philosophical Analysis and Illustration of some of Shakspeare's Dramatic Characters." In 1784 were published, "Essays on Shakspeare's Dramatic Characters of Richard the Third, King Lear, and Timon of Athens." To which were added, "An Essay on the Faults of Shakspeare, and additional Observations on the Character of Hamlet." Soon after were published, "Essays on Shakspeare's Dramatic Character of Sir John Falstaff; and on his Imitation of Female Characters." To which were subjoined, "Observations on the chief Objects of Criticism in the Works of Shakspeare." These various performances were originally collected into one volume, with one uniform title, in 1797. The Essay on the Representation of National Characters illustrated in that of Fluellen, with two original Letters from the late Edmund Burke, Esq. were added to the edition 1812.

33. Essay on the Dramatic Character of Sir John Falstaff. By Mr. Maurice Morgan. 8vo. 1777.

34. A Supplement to the Edition of Shakspeare's Plays, published in 1778. Containing additional Observations by several of the former Commentators. To which are subjoined, the genuine Poems of the same Author, and seven Plays that have been ascribed to him; with Notes, by the Editor (Mr. Malone) and others. 2 vols. 8vo. 1780.

35. Remarks, critical and illustrative, on the Text and Notes of the last Edition of Shakspeare (Steevens, 1778). [By Mr. Ritson.] 8vo. 1783. Published anonymously

36. Dramatic Miscellanies; consisting of critical Observations on the Plays of Shakspeare, &c. By Thomas Davies. 3 vols. Crown 8vo. 1784.

37. Comments on the last Edition of Shakspeare's Plays. By John Monck Mason, Esq. 8vo. 1785.

38. Macbeth Reconsidered: an Essay intended as an Answer to Part of the Remarks on some of the Characters of Shakspeare. By J. P. Kemble. 8vo. 1786.

39. An Inquiry into the Authenticity of certain Miscellaneous Papers, published Dec. 24, 1795, and attributed to Shakspeare, Queen Elizabeth, and Henry Earl of Southampton: illustrated by Fac-similes of the genuine Hand-writing of that Nobleman and of her Majesty; a new Fac-simile of the Hand-writing of Shakspeare, never before exhibited; and other authentic Documents. By Edmund Malone, Esq. 8vo. 1796. London.

40. A Concordance to Shakspeare: suited to all the Editions, in which the distinguished and parallel Passages in the Plays of that justly admired Writer are methodically arranged. To which are added, Three Hundred Notes and Illustrations entirely new. ~~(By H. Twiss.)~~ 8vo. 1787.

41. Cursory Criticisms on the Edition of Shakspeare, published by Edmund Malone. By Mr. Ritson. 8vo. 1792.

42. Specimen of a Commentary on Shakspeare; containing, 1. Notes on As You Like It; 2. An Attempt to explain and illustrate various Passages on a new Principle of Criticism, derived from Mr. Locke's Doctrine of the Association of Ideas. By the Rev. Walter Whiter. 8vo. 1794.

43. An Apology for the Believers in the Shakspeare-papers, which were exhibited in Norfolk Street. London. (By Geo. Chalmers.) 8vo. 1797.

44. A Supplemental Apology for the Believers in the Shakspeare-papers; being a Reply to Mr. Malone's Answer, which was early announced, but never published; with a Dedication to George Stevens, F.R.S. S.A. and a Postscript to T. J. Mathias, F.R.S. S.A. the Author of the Pursuits of Literature. By George Chalmers, F.R.S. S.A. 8vo. 1799.

45. Comments on the Commentators of Shakspeare, with preliminary Observations on his Genius and Writings, and on the Labours of those who have endeavoured to elucidate them. By Henry James Pye, London. 8vo. 1807.

* 40. was by Mr. Beckett, not Twiss Harris.

vol. I. J.B. The Plays of Lear and Cymbeline, by Wm Shakspeare ~~Poets~~, with the notes and Illustrations of various Commentators to which are added Remarks by the Editor. 2 Vols. 8vo London 1794. vol. I. 523. p/.

Shakespeare's Jest Book. 8vo Chiswick
1814. printed by C Whittingham 116. pp.

An Investigation of Mr Malone's Claim to the Character of Scholar or Critic, being an Examination of his Inquiry into the Authenticity of the Shakspeare Manuscripts &c. by Samuel Ireland. 8vo London. 153. pp. 913

Tales from Shakespeare. Designed for the use of Young persons. By Charles Lamb. 2 vols. small 8vo 320 pp. Price 8/ London. 1807.

"Another account of the Incidents from which the Title & part of the story of Shakspeare's Tempest were derived; & the time era of it ascertained, having the original connection of the royal family with the Poetry Drama. By George Chalmers. F.R.S.S.A. London; only 40 copies printed by R & A Taylor, but not published, as intended to 1815" — pp. 82. 8vo J.B.

46. An Account of the Incidents from which the Title and Part of the Story of Shakspeare's Tempest were derived, and its true Date ascertained. By Edmund Malone. London. 1808. This pamphlet was not published; only eighty copies of it were printed and distributed by the Author.

47. Remarks on Shakspeare's Tempest: containing an Investigation of Mr. Malone's Attempt to ascertain the Date of that Play, and various Notes and Illustrations of abstruse Readings and Passages. By Charles Dirrill, Esq. (*i. e.* Richard Sill.) 8vo. 1797.

48. Comments on the Plays of Beaumont and Fletcher: with an Appendix, containing some further Observations on Shakspeare, extended to the late Edition of Malone and Steevens. By the Right Honourable J. Monck Mason. 8vo. 1798

49. The Shaksperian Miscellany. By F. G. Waldron. 4to. 1802.

50. Illustrations of Shakspeare, and of ancient Manners; with Dissertations on the Clowns and Fools of Shakspeare; on the Collection of popular Tales, entitled Gesta Romanorum; and on the English Morris Dance. By Francis Douce. 2 vols. 8vo. London, 1807. wood cuts

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"At Darmstadt, I heard that SCHLEGEL, the eminent German writer, was at our inn. I wrote him a note, saying I was from England, and requesting an interview. He immediately sent his servant to say it would give him great pleasure if I would visit his apartments, where I found him alone. He said, the Librarian of Darmstadt, with whom he had been spending the day, had just left him. I found him a man of the most pleasing manners, full of vivacity and cheerfulness. He speaks English fluently. We talked much about English literature, but he was very cautious and guarded, and gave no decided opinion of any living author in our country. He thought himself partially and kindly treated by the critics who had reviewed his Lectures, and obliged to Mr. BLACK, who, in general, had faithfully translated them, but he desired me to tell that Gentleman he should be happy to suggest to him a few hints, in the event of another edition. He had read in an English Journal, that the leading views in his observations on SHAKESPEARE, had been taken from Mr. COLERIDGE, which was quite untrue, as he had never read one line that Mr. COLERIDGE had written on the subject, although he entertained a high opinion of his talents. SCHLEGEL delivered these Lectures publicly at Vienna six or eight years ago. SCHLEGEL said, that DUGALD STEWART, in his introduction to the History of Philosophy, recently published in CONSTABLE'S Supplement to the Encyc. Brit. had mistaken the meaning of Professor KANT, and attributed to that author opinions, which he neither entertained nor had written. He added, that when he was in England, which was but for one month, or six weeks, Professor PLAYFAIR told him, that DUGALD STEWART did not read or understand German. He was going to Heidelberg to study.

"At Frankfort we were introduced to Chevalier HORN, a learned Scotchman, who represented the British Government in Germany for 35 years, and was its secret agent during the whole of last war. He was, however, owing to some caprice at Carlton-house, relating to certain valuable documents about JAMES II. in the possession of Mr. HORN, and which he refused to deliver to any other than the REGENT'S own hands, dismissed about two years ago. This intelligent and very talkative Chevalier is a great Bibliopolist; nearly one-third of Lord SPENCER'S early printed books were collected by him on the Continent; likewise many of the most rare in the possession of our King. Lord SPENCER presented the Chevalier with a copy of Dibdin's Spenceriana, on the merits of which he entertains a very contemptuous opinion. There is a story in England, and it would not be difficult to ascertain its source, that DIBDIN'S books are too expensive for the Continent. That is not the fact; the most eminent Critics and Bibliographers in Germany laugh at the credulity and duplicity of the English people, for permitting themselves to be duped and taken in with fine paper and printing. They refuse to place Dibdin's Spenceriana in their public libraries. The intelligent and learned Librarian at Mayence, who shewed us the first printed book, had perused this *hodge podge*, as it is called, and he spoke about it with the utmost contempt.

"Apprenticeship to what SHAKESPEARE calls "*the trade of war*," is going on briskly in every town on the Continent. We are lodged at the Roman Emperor, in *Konig's Strasse*, where I am dinned to death by the perpetual rumble of half-braced drums, and the marching and counter-marching of recruits and soldiers. In this City there are some admirable regulations for the comfort of foreigners (English), which are stuck up by the King's command in our rooms. Amongst others, and one *unique*, as I guess, is—Any person smoking his pipe in the streets to be subject to a fine of three florins, and the *forfeiture of his pipe*. Any person driving or riding full speed in the streets, three florins—any accident resulting, 15 florins, and the consequence of an action. There are other rules, worthy of a better fellow than their late founder, the *pot-bellied King*. Two days ago the young Queen *(the Duchess of Oldenburg)* was delivered of a daughter. The Queen Dowager *(Princess Royal of England)* is now on a visit to her. I had yesterday an excellent opportunity of seeing her quite close. We were going to view the interior of the Palace about noon, when we perceived at the opposite wing a sort of procession. A tall footman, with a long silver-headed cane in his hand, uncovered, followed by two Ladies, one the Queen Dowager, leaning on the arm of a wrinkled old Englishwoman. She was going to the apartments of the young Queen, and had to pass the door at which we entered. We waited her approach, and perceiving we were her countrymen, she courteously saluted us. She resembles her brothers and sisters, and looks neither so old nor so ordinary as I expected. Though said to have disagreed, she expresses great grief at the death of her husband."

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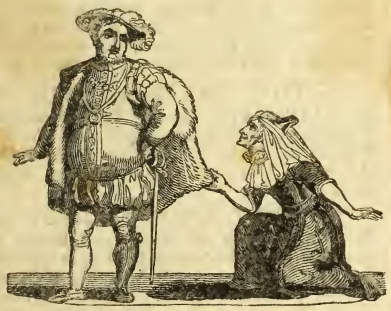

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