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SHAKSPERE:

HIS TIMES AND CONTEMPORARIES.

BY GEORGE TWEDDELL.

"Since the most that is known of the personal history of Shakspere is but trifling, let us carefully study the history of the period in which he lived."—PETER PROLETARIUS.

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MDCCCLII.

TO

THE REV. E. R. LARKEN, M.A.,

RECTOR OF BURTON, NEAR LINCOLN, AND CHAPLAIN TO LORD MONSON;

A CLERGYMAN who preaches the glad tidings of salvation for all Men, by living the holy precepts of Jesus, as well as teaching them with his lips; one of whom a true man has said, that his "parish has no bound, except the bound of human sorrow;" this volume is dedicated, as a humble token of sincere esteem by his warm well-wisher,

THE AUTHOR.

Stokesley, February, 1852.

PREFACE.

A FEW words may be necessary, by way of preface, to my little volume, lest its purport be misunderstood. Not for the wealthy man of learning and leisure, who can afford to buy many books, and devote much time to any favourite study, is this humble contribution to our English history intended; but for my own order, the men who never purchase books without sacrificing some other of the few comforts of life which a poor man enjoys,—the men who love Literature as a benignant goddess, whose countenance is surrounded by a holy halo, like the Christ of some poet-painter, but who must curtail their small wardrobe and pantry expenses, to afford the glorious luxury of good books. I have aimed at conveying that information in one cheap eighteen-penny volume, which it has cost me the perusal of a hundred higher-priced books to obtain; to give, in a few hours' reading, a condensation or epitome of the history of Shakspere's days, which, scanty as it undoubtedly is, has cost me the labour of some months. I have endeavoured to make my little book as correct as possible; and if I have ever erred in dates, the fault is in the books to which I have had access; and any error of this description which may be pointed out to me, will be carefully attended to in another

edition, should one ever be required. I think it is WILLIAM COBBETT who gives us the shrewd advice, never to write a book unless we have first found the want of such a one ourselves. I have acted upon this maxim, having often found the want of a book like the present; and the memorandums from which the present volume is compiled were, at first, merely collected for my own instruction; and, I must confess, that I am more "impelled by hunger" to publish them, than by any great "request of friends:" though several literary men, whose opinions I respect, have encouraged me to print the work, as they thought a contemporaneous history of the period treated of in the following pages could not but be acceptable to the general reader. For as William Oldys, the antiqnary, well observes:—"How many readers are there who would be glad of attaining to knowledge the shortest way, seeing the orb thereof is swollen to such magnitude, and life but a span to grasp it? . . . In a word, if he be ignorant, who would not wish to enlarge his knowledge? If he be knowing, who would not willingly refrésh his memory?"

I regret to say, that having treated of the early years of Shakspere at too great length for the limits of the present volume, notwithstanding the close manner in which it is printed, I have been reluctantly compelled to materially curtail my notice of men and events during the manhood of Shakspere, in order that the work may appear at the low price advertised by the publisher. This will also account for the non-appearance of the long notes referred to in the commencement of the volume.

G. T.

SHAKSPERE:

HIS TIMES AND CONTEMPORARIES.

INTRODUCTION.

" That demi-god!
Who Avon's flowery margin trod,
While sportive Fancy round him flew;
Where Nature led him by the hand,
Instructed him in all she knew,
And gave him absolute command "

DAVID GARRICK.

PRE-EMINENT amongst all the writers in our English literature, and towering over the classic authors of antiquity, like an Egyptian pyramid over humbler obelisks, stands the name of WILLIAM SHAKSPERE: a name that will reverberate through the world,

" From day to day,
To the last syllable of recorded time."

Macbeth, act v., scene 5th.

Living at a time when the minds of Englishmen had but partially burst their swaddling-bands, it is marvellous at what perfection the poets of the Elizabethian era had arrived. It has been too much the fashion to under-rate all the contemporaries of Shakspere—many of them, doubtless, his comrades and bosom-friends—as though his imperishable fame required that every other writer of his day should be covered with

" The fat weed
That rots itself in ease on Lethe wharf."
Hamlet, act i., scene 5th.

To me it seems greater praise, as well as justice, to declare, that amidst a glorious galaxy of bards, such as the world has not before or since surpassed; that among many "a choice young man and goodly" in the world of letters, not only was there "no goodlier a person than he," but—as Samuel said of Saul amongst the Israelites—"from his shoulders and upwards he was higher than any of the people."*

" One of those giant minds, who, from the mass
Of millions, soar aloft, and spurn control.
. . . . He was one
Born to ascend superior over all!
A monument of greatness, and—alone!
An intellectual monarch, with the mind his throne."
JOHN WALKER ORD.

Never, perhaps, did man possess so deep an insight into the workings of the human heart; never had man a finer perception of the good, the beautiful, and the true, than the player Shakspere. Most assuredly we possess no landscapes so graphic; no portraits so correctly or strikingly sketched; no delineations of humanity, in all its various and varying phases, so truthfully given, as are to be found in his inimitable dramas. In his hands the stage indeed accomplishes "the purpose of playing," which his own "Hamlet" (act iii., scene 2nd,) so judiciously tells us, "both at first, and now, was, and is, to hold, as 'twere, the mirror up to Nature; to show Virtue her own image, Scorn her own feature, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure."

To become a great dramatist requires genius of the highest order, and a knowledge of man and history most extensive; for all the characters must be drawn to the life; their actions truly represented, and not *mis*-represented; else the piece will degenerate into a mere caricature. Successfully to accomplish dramatic writing, the author must comprehend the actions of all his characters, and the motives from which their actions spring; and he must be able to sympathise with all men, under all circumstances, or his own prejudices will speak in every line. Compare, for instance, poor Kit Marlow's "Rich Jew of Malta," with Shakspere's Jew in the "Merchant of Venice." Both

* I Samuel, chap. ix., verse 2nd.

are villains, and both have known persecution; yet how life-like is Shylock compared to the abortion Barabas! Barry Cornwall has somewhat severely, but too truly, remarked, that "Marlow (although he has fine and even grand bursts of poetry) stands forth, the historian of lust, and the demonstrator of physical power; whilst Shakspere is ever the champion of humanity and intellect."

But not merely as a great dramatist—though decidedly the greatest of all dramatists—is Shakspere immortalised. He is the poet not of Englishmen alone, but of the whole human race; and wherever human hearts are warmed with the "ruddy drops" of life—from the artic to the antartic circle—there will his delineations be found to be truthful. Because he has not drawn his Romans as mere Romans, but as men actuated by the same motives, moved by the same passions, as have in all ages reigned in human hearts, whether Roman or not, they are "not sufficiently Roman" for shallow critics like Dennis and Rhymer. Even Voltaire, whom Oliver Goldsmith* called "the poet and philosopher of Europe"—even this master-mind totally failed to comprehend the genius of Shakspere, and "censures his kings as not completely royal." They would have all conventional, and allow nature no scope. "What king," says Ralph Waldo Emerson, "has he not taught state, as Talma taught Napoleon? What maiden has not found him finer than her delicacy? What lover has he not outloved? What sage has he not outseen? What gentleman has he not instructed in the rudeness of his behaviour?"

Dr. Samuel Johnson, in his "Preface to Shakspere," published in 1768, justly remarks:—

"Shakspere is, above all writers, at least above all modern writers, the poet of nature; the poet that holds up to his readers a faithful mirror of manners and of life. His characters are not modified by the customs of particular places, unpractised by the rest of the world; by the peculiarities of studies or professions, which can operate but upon small numbers; or by the accidents of transient fashions or temporary opinions: they are the genuine progeny of common humanity, such as the world will always supply, and observation will always find. His persons act and speak by the influence of those general passions and principles by which all minds are agitated, and the whole system of life is continued in motion. In the writings of other poets, a character is too often an individual: in those of Shakspere it is commonly a species.—It is from this wide extension of design that so much instruction is derived. It is this which fill the plays of Shakspere with practical axioms and domestic wisdoms

* "Letters from a Citizen of the World," letter xliii.

It was said of Euripides, that every verse was a precept; and it may be said of Shakspere, that from his works may be collected a system of civil and economical prudence. Yet his real power is not shown in the splendour of particular passages, but by the progress of his fable, and the tenor of his dialogue; and he that tries to recommend him by select quotations, will succeed like the pedant in Hierocles, who, when he offered his house to sale, carried a brick in his pocket as a specimen."

Fine, indeed, must have been the organisation of our Shakspere's brain: fully and equally must his moral and intellectual organs have been developed! What a study would his noble head have been for a Gall or a Spurzheim, a Combe, or a Spencer Hall! What a theme for a Lavater would his beautiful countenance have afforded! How far the bust at his burial-place—erected within seven years after his death—may be relied upon as a likeness, I know not. "The effigy was at first coloured," says Dr. James Dugdale,* "the eyes, light hazel, and the hair and beard, auburn; but, in 1793, it was painted white, at the request of Mr. Malone." And he adds: "It has the forehead high, the eye-brows marked, the head nearly bald, and an expression in the features of habitual serenity, not apathy; the whole not discrediting our preconceived opinion of his mental qualifications." Washington Irving and others bear similar testimony.

In the first collected edition of his works, the folio of 1623—printed in the same year as the death of his widow, and after the erection of his monument in the church of Stratford-upon-Avon—an engraving by Martin Droeshout was given; and to the correctness of this portrait of Shakspere, we have the testimony of a competent and credible witness, his friend and brother dramatist, Ben Jonson:—

> "This figure that thou here seest put,
> It was for gentle Shakspere cut,
> Wherein the graver had a strife
> With Nature, to outdo the life;
> O, could he but have drawn his wit
> As well in brass, as he has hit
> His face; the print would then surpass
> All that was ever writ in brass:
> But since he cannot, reader, look
> Not on his picture, but his book."

True, it is in "his book"—the invaluable legacy he has

* "The British Traveller; or, Modern Panorama of England and Wales." vol. iv, page 398.

left us—that we have the truest picture of the "gentle Shakspere:" the firm friend of every virtue and accomplishment; the enemy of all that is vicious and unlovely. Compared with the likeness which the judicious reader may there trace of him, all the Chandos pictures, the Stratford busts, and engravings of the first folio—much as we undoubtedly ought to value them—are indeed insignificant. Had we known no single incident in his whole career; had every circumstance of his life been shrouded in the darkest obscurity—buried in oblivion, "deeper than did ever plummet sound;" we could still have traced his *gentle* disposition and universal sympathies in each of his undoubted pieces. All his writings are fragrant of the country. The sweet song of uncaged birds, and the gurging of limpid brooks,

"Giving a gentle kiss to every sedge,"

chime through all his productions, like silver bells in the air at eventide. He has known every sweet wild flower of his native land, and, what is better than all, he has loved them too; for all his dramas are redolent of their beauty and perfume. So many passages run to my pen, as if begging for quotation, that I must rest content with referring the reader merely to three,—to the Spring song in the last scene of "Love's Labours Lost;" to "some flowers o'the Spring," woven into a sweet garland of words, by the lovely Perdita, in the fourth act of the "Winter's Tale;" and to Oberon's well-known description of a fairy bank, "whereon the wild thyme blows" for ever, in the "Midsummer Night's Dream." And then the pleasant woodland scenes in "As You Like It"—the forest of Arden, with its antlered deer—how it lingers in one's memory, like a dream of Paradise, its leaves for ever green. There is such a rustling of oaks throughout the whole play, that one half longs for their friendly shade during the sultry days of Summer, and would fain listen to the moralising of Jaques, among the falling acorns of Autumn,

"Under the greenwood tree."

Was jealousy—"the green-eyed-monster, which doth mock the meat it feeds on"—ever more truly painted than in "Othello?" Has the folly and crime of

"Vaulting Ambition, which o'erleaps itself
And falls on t'other side,"

ever been fuller shown than in "Macbeth," or "Richard III.?" When was the deformity of the "monster, Ingratitude," so strikingly depicted as in "King Lear?"

> "Ingratitude! thou marble-hearted fiend;
> More hideous when thou show'st thee in a child,
> Than the sea-monster!"

Every one who has ever loved, can share the sorrows of a "Romeo and Juliet;" that sweet tragedy, in which Shakspere, that mighty master of the human heart, so powerfully impresses upon us the Godliness of love and friendship, by showing up, in all its hideous deformity, the fiendishness, the heart-blighting misery, of Hate, as shown in the feud, the "ancient grudge," of the Montagues and Capulets,—

> "Two households, both alike in dignity,
> In fair Verona."

Then, again, when was Avarice so deeply scarified as in the "Merchant of Venice?" though modern millionaires and their scribes would fain persuade us that Shakspere was a bad political-economist, forsooth, because he makes the good Antonio an enemy of usury—of taking "a breed for barren metal"—which the wealth-worshippers of this profit-mongering age regard as the very acme of civilization, as it certainly is, as they apply the word. Most assuredly these money-grubbers will never be the true critics of the inspired Shakspere: he never wrote for such as them. But ages after these poor earthworms have gone to their last account; when enfranchised Labour shall sing his holy pæans where now the night-birds of Superstition and Oppression scream their soul-polluting discords,—then will this glorious trait in the character of Antonio the merchant prove to an enlightened world, that Shakspere was indeed a poet of progress, and not a mere conventional playwright for cunning traders and greedy money-lenders. In the mean time, let those very unpoetic people, if they will, still speak of the character of the good merchant, Antonio, as Shakspere himself made their true prototype, Shylock, do before them:—

> "I hate him, for he is a Christian:
> But more for that, in low simplicity,
> He LENDS OUT MONEY GRATIS, and brings down
> The rate of usance here with us in Venice.
> If I can catch him once upon the hip,
> I will feed fat the ancient grudge I bear him.
> He hates our sacred nation; and he rails

> Even there where merchants most do congregate,
> On me, my bargains, and my well-won thrift,
> Which he calls INTEREST, Cursed be my tribe
> If I forgive him!"

Cumberland, in his play of "The Jew," has complained of other dramatists supplying mirth for the play-goers by bringing out "a Jew to be baited through five long acts." It was not as a mere Jew or Hebrew that the bard held up Shylock to the detestation of his countrymen; but the avaricious money-lender, the heartless creditor; the genuine representative of a too numerous class, now everywhere honoured as "respectable;" a harpy brood which prey upon society, even under the very protection of law, to an infinitely greater extent than the thirty thousand professed thieves who are said to infest the English metropolis, in this superficially-enlightened nineteenth century. That "gentle Willy" was no friend to the persecution of "the chosen race," is evident from the bitter, but too true, satire he has put into the mouth of Shylock in the first scene of the third act:—

> "Hath not a Jew eyes? hath not a Jew hands, organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions? fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons, subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means, warmed and cooled by the same Winter and Summer, as a Christian is? If you prick us, do we not bleed? if you tickle us, do we not laugh? if you poison us, do we not die? and if you wrong us, shall we not revenge? If we are like you in the rest, we will resemble you in that? If a Jew wrong a Christian, what is his humility? —revenge? if a Christian wrong a Jew, what should his sufferance be by Christian example?—why, revenge. The villany you teach me, I will execute; and it shall go hard but I will better the instruction."

Shakspere is the greatest of all magicians. How we enjoy the merry mood of fat old Sir John Falstaff—"unimitated, unimitable Falstaff," as Dr. Johnson calls him—a character which no other dramatist but Shakspere could have conceived; how we laugh at the happily portrayed self-importance of a Dogberry, a Justice Shallow, and a Parson Evans. We are delighted with the aerial sprite, Ariel, and even with that unearthly monster of the earth, Caliban, in "The Tempest;" and those "secret, black, and midnight hags," the witches, in "Macbeth,"—"each at once her choppy finger laying upon her skinny lips"—how awful must they have appeared in an age when thousands, yea tens of thousands, of unfortunate human beings were burnt alive—the holocausts of Superstition—in retribution of an imaginary crime, which never did or can exist!—Then again, the Ghost, in "Hamlet"—performed by the

immortal bard himself—how true an embodiment of the superstition of the past does that character present! His historical characters, from "King John" to "Henry VIII."—comprising at least two hundred distinctly marked personages—how strikingly correct, with some few exceptions—has he presented them to the world: and even where he has been too partial, the fault seems to rest more in the authorities to which he had access, than in the great dramatist himself. His clowns are all distinct and admirable characters in their way; and even the wishy-washy sort of folks, of which the world is even yet principally composed, and of whom there never was, and perhaps never will be, any great lack; those soulless people, who—ignorant of the high purposes of human existence—seem to vegetate rather than to live; do they not all speak and act as in real life,—so that we could appropriately fill up any blanks in the list of "Persons Represented," by a hundred of the names of our own neighbours and acquaintance?—For the great merit of Shakspere, after all, however much we may love his sweetness—and there is music sweeter than the trill of mountain streams in almost every sentence—is his truth fulnessto nature, at all times, and under all circumstances possible or imaginable. He has not merely laboured to delineate a very good or a very bad character, but such personages as do really exist; virtue and vice joined together in the same soul, and developed in a thousand various ways, according to an infinite variety of circumstances.

But his female characters—that glorious gallery of ever-living portraits—how beautiful and womanly they are; save his intention be to show how fallen, how depraved, even the gentle heart of woman may become,—as in the unkind daughters of poor King Lear, and the proud and cruel Lady Macbeth. Virtue with him is ever victorious; it is undaunted under suffering, and triumphant even in death. What a fine philosophy pervades each of his dramas; and weak indeed must be the penetration of the man who can discover no high moral purpose, running, like veins of silver in the earth, through all the writings of Shakspere. We need not envy the soul that has never felt its self-reliance strengthened by a perusal of these immortal dramas. They are not only moral, but religious, in the highest meaning of that word.

Compared with Marlow—a man of undoubted genius, to whom both Shakspere and the English drama owe much—how superior he is!—"Hyperion to a satyr:" and yet Marlow was perhaps the greatest of the precursors of

Shakspere, though much merit is undoubtedly due both to Lyly and Greene. I do not contend that Shakspere, with all his unequalled inspiration and judgment, was either impeccable or infallible, for we know that he was "a man subject to the like passions as we are;"* but all his contemporaries—with the single exception of poor unhappy Robert Greene, as we shall see anon—whenever they have occasion to mention him, either as an author or otherwise, ever speak of him in terms of the highest encomium and endearment. One can excuse Greene's injustice to Shakspere, when we remember his misfortunes, and say with their mutual friend and brother-dramatist, Henry Chettle, "I am as sorry as if the original fault had been my fault."

It is not my province here to attempt any criticism on the writings of the greatest of all dramatists: nor do I possess either the time, the learning, or the genius requisite for so important a task. Shakspere is far above the comprehension of that feeble-minded school of would-be-critics who have presumed to sit in judgment and pass sentence upon him. These "clever" men—clever, at least, in their own estimation, and in that of a hood-winked world—can never comprehend the aims of genius: for between this said cleverness and true genius "there is a wide gulph fixed." The world, the British nation, the individual man or woman, can never fully know how much they are indebted to those plays of Shakspere; plays of which the majority of our population are most lamentably ignorant, in the direct sense; but plays, nevertheless, whose language, ideas, and moral sentiments, have exercised a most powerful and beneficial influence on humanity, from which it can never altogether backslide. It is not too much to say, that every man, woman, and child, wherever the English language is spoken, are deeply indebted to the writings of William Shakspere,—even though they may never have witnessed the performance, or read one scene, of his plays. No human being ever lived without *some* influence in the world.

"Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,"

as the poet Gray beautifully expresses it; but there is not one that "*wastes* its perfume," no, not even when it breathes and renders fragrant "the desert air." Never was a true word spoken, or a righteous action done, altogether in vain; perhaps no valuable thought that ever lingered in a human brain has been altogether lost in the

* James, chap. v., ver. 17.

world! But the influence of a Shakspere's mind is universal and eternal; it is the concentration of the mental influence of a thousand other men, both in his own and all former ages; and may well be termed a mighty instrument in the hands of our All-Wise Creator, for accomplishing the most important objects in the civilisation of the whole family of man. "It was not possible to write the history of Shakspere till now," says Waldo Emerson; "for he is the father of German literature: it was on the introduction of Shakspere into German, by Lessing, and the translation of his works by Wieland and Schlegel, that the rapid burst of German literature was most intimately connected." And he adds:—

"Now, literature, philosophy, and thought, are Shaksperised. His mind is the horizon beyond which, at present, we do not see. Our ears are educated to music by his rythm. Coleridge and Goethe are the only critics who have expressed our convictions with any adequate fidelity: but there is in all cultivated minds a silent appreciation of his superlative power and beauty, which, like Christianity, qualifies the period."

The more we read the writings of Shakspere, the more we love them; every fresh perusal discovers to us new worlds of beauty; and the more we become acquainted with them, the more we become acquainted with our own souls. Why do not the rational portion of our population make a firm stand for the revival of Shakspere in all his glory on the boards of every theatre, and banish Italian operas, Nigger songs, lewd dances, pantomimes, and all namby-pamby pieces, from the stage? And let not those men who wish well to humanity, and are disgusted with the present degraded condition of our theatres, set their faces against dramatic representations altogether, but rather fight manfully for their reformation. Never let us despair of progress: no, not even under the greatest re-action. The good work which a Macready so bravely attempted for the purification of the stage, would have succeeded beyond his most sanguine anticipations, but for the accursed apathy of professed moral reformers. Defeat in a just cause is more glorious than a victory unsanctioned by justice. The good seed will germinate, and one day yield its harvest. It was no mere partial friendship, but true discernment of "rare Ben Jonson," when he declared of Shakspere, that

"He was not of an age, but for all time!"

and "all time," through every change of faction and of fashion, will confirm the decision, whilst Truth and Beauty

have their worshippers on earth: and Keats truly tells us, in the opening of his "Endymion," that

"A thing of beauty is a joy for ever."

And yet the life of Shakspere—the greatest genius the world has ever yet produced—remains to be written: all that has hitherto been penned on the subject being so much material piled up, and carefully preserved, for the building. Some day, a new architect will spring up in the literary world, and—whilst he reverently thanks all other architects for the aid their various styles have given him—will skilfully work up the accumulated materials into an artistic temple, worthy of the memory of him who "being dead yet speaketh," in his writings, to the hearts and intellects of all his countrymen.

——"In our halls is hung
Armoury of the invincible knights of old:
We must be free, or die, who speak the tongue
That Shakspere spake."

WORDSWORTH.

How interesting, how instructive, how heart-ennobling, such a tome will prove! Then will the great prophetic mission of the inspired bards of every land be duly appreciated: then will the much-despised poets—despised of silly and self-styled "practical" men—be found to have been the truest utilitarians,—the priests of progress in all ages of the world. If I might be permitted, for a moment, to resume that figure of the temple, I would say, It must be a Pantheon in which all the demi-gods and heroes of our literature will stand enshrined: those who have used their God-given genius for the advancement of their race, crowned with the bloodless laurel and chaplets of the well-earned bays; but they who have prostituted their talents—who have steeped their souls in the dark pools of Pollution—let them wear the degrading sackcloth and ashes, as a warning-penance to all future writers, for all time. In that temple there should be room for all who seek instruction, or come to worship: a temple with which the capacious theatres of Athens, of Pompeii, of Herculaneum, or of Rome—mere blocks of polished marble at the best, however deftly piled—will be insignificant, and compared with which Solomon's Temple would be but a useless toy. That temple will one day be built; or, to drop the metaphor, that volume will one day be written. When all the materials are ready, and the ages are ripe to

receive it, rest assured that God will find a builder. The law of progression is not yet extinct.

The whole of our information respecting Shakspere is but limited: there is a cloud of obscurity hanging about his personal history, which perhaps may never be altogether removed. His contemporaries, whilst they carefully secured to us his unequalled productions, contented themselves with bearing their testimony to his "gentle" demeanour in private life, and wailing their threnodies around his tomb. The same mystery shrouds several other of our early dramatic and other poets. To *live* while upon this beautiful earth, and not merely to vegetate; to aid the cause of civilization in its slow but ever onward march; and to leave their lasting monuments in the productions of their minds, seem to have been their chief objects. They wrote no biographies for us: they did better—they endeavoured to deserve them. Nevertheless, who does not wish to know more of the private life of Shakspere? Truly enough has Waldo Emerson remarked:—

"There is somewhat touching in the madness with which the passing age mischooses the object on which all candles shine, and all eyes are turned; the care with which it registers every trifle touching Queen Elizabeth and King James, and the Essexes, Leicesters, Burleighs, and Buckinghams; and lets pass without a single valuable note the founder of another dynasty, which alone will cause the Tudor dynasty to be remembered,—the man who carries the Saxon race in him by the inspiration which feeds him, and on whose thoughts the foremost people of the world are now for some ages to be nourished, and their minds to receive this and not another bias. A popular player,—nobody suspected he was the poet of the human race; and the secret was kept as faithfully from poets and intellectual men, as from courtiers and frivolous people. Bacon, who took the inventory of the human understanding for his time, never mentioned his name. Ben Jonson, though we have strained his few words of regard and panegyric, had no suspicion of the elastic fame whose first vibrations he was attempting. He no doubt thought the praise he has conceded to him generous, and esteemed himself, out of all question, the better poet of the two."

The few facts that have been ascertained respecting Shakspere have been the rewards of many years of mental toil on the part of a few zealous and industrious men of letters, from Nicholas Rowe, in the 17th century, to Charles Knight, in the present. What other information may yet be in store for us, no one can divine. Doubtless there are documents yet remaining—laying like useless lumber, rotting amidst dust and dampness, unvisited by mortal eye—which only need a Payne Collier's penetration to

throw additional light on this important subject. I do not wish to disparage the humblest of the biographies of Shakspere; and for all of them I feel extremely thankful. But of a writer whom Hallam has declared "is the greatest in our literature—is the greatest in all literature," a simple biography, however fully given, will not content us. We feel a longing to know more—to know all that concerned him: who were his contemporaries, what they were doing, and what was the state of society, in religion, politics, learning, amusements, and social well-being, at that era. We want a sort of panorama, or bird's-eye-view, of the times. It is in this spirit I propose, as far as circumstances permit, to conduct my brethren of the humbler classes through the times of Shakspere, indulging in a pleasant gossip on him and his contemporaries, and thus to give to the unread man that information which he could not otherwise obtain with the same expenditure of time and money. And if I should succeed in awaking within the minds of my working-class readers an earnest desire to provide themselves with the standard writings of the Elizabethian worthies, my humble labours will not be in vain. A new world of delight will be opened to them; mental riches in which the soul of the poorest man can revel, and a never-failing source of enjoyment by the humblest hearth in the stormy nights of winter, will be their's.

"Wings have we,—and, as far as we can go,
We may find pleasure: wilderness and wood,
Blank ocean, and mere sky, supply that mood,
Which, with the lofty, sanctifies the low:
Dreams, books, are each a world; and books, we know,
Are a substantial world, both pure and good.
Round these, with tendrils strong as flesh and blood,
Our pastime and our happiness will grow.
There do I find a never-failing source
Of personal themes, and such as I love best;
Matter, wherein right voluble I am:
Two will I mention, dearer than the rest;
The gentle Lady married to the Moor,
And heavenly Una with her milk-white lamb."

WORDSWORTH.

THE BIRTH AND FIRST YEAR OF SHAKSPERE.

"When Learning's triumph o'er her barbarous foes
First rear'd the stage, immortal Shakspere rose;
Each change of many colour'd life he drew,
Exhausted worlds, and then imagined new:
Existence saw him spurn her bounded reign,
And panting Time toil'd after him in vain.
His powerful strokes presiding Truth impress'd,
And unresisted Passion storm'd the breast."

DR. JOHNSON.

A.D. 1564. CHAUCER and GOWER—who may be styled the parents of English poetry—had left the earth more than a century and a half, when William Shakspere was born; and John Lydgate had rested in his grave about one hundred and thirty-four years. Skelton, Surrey, Wyatt, and others of lesser fame, after aiding in refining their native language, by many polished poems, now slept the sleep of death. The reformation in religion, for which Wickliffe had contended two hundred years before, had spread wider than his scattered ashes;* and the lion-hearted Luther—

"The solitary monk who shook the world,"

had died in peace only eighteen years before. The Protestant prelates, Hooper, Ridley, Latimer, and Cranmer, with numerous other martyrs for conscience sake, had perished at the stake only nine years agone; and the people of England had now thrown off the papal yoke for ever. But whilst boldly contending for their own right of private judgment in religious matters, our protestant forefathers had not yet learned to respect the consciences of other men. To be a papist or a nonconformist was a dangerous thing in those days. One great object the people had already accomplished, in spite of all the persecution of papal power, in obtaining possession of the Scriptures in the vulgar tongue; and no one can calculate the benefits civilization has and will derive from that simple boon. The printing press—even in its then rude construction, a mighty auxiliary of human enlightenment—had only been introduced into England some eighty-seven years; and the venerable Caxton, our first English printer, had rested from his labours for half a century, in his West-

* See note B.

minster grave. And yet how great were the results that printing press had already accomplished! It had given the Bible and many of the classics to the people, and even then was beginning to cause a demand for new contributions to literature; so that an author would not be altogether dependent on a single patron, as before. Even in the provinces, as well as in the metropolis, were printing-presses springing up: for after the establishment of Caxton's press, in 1477, we find others at London and St. Alban's, in 1480; at York, in 1509; at Beverley, in 1510; at Southwark, in 1514; at Cambridge, in 1521; at Tavistock, in 1525; at Winchester, in 1545; at Ipswich and Worcester, in 1548; and at Greenwich, in 1554. Even in its infancy, Printing, like a second Hercules, could seize the serpent Ignorance by the throat, inflicting wounds upon the reptile from which it could never altogether recover. Charles Knight, in his excellent little biography of Caxton, gives a list—supplied by Sir Henry Ellis, Principal Librarian of the British Museum—of sixty-four books issued by the first English printer, in which list one is glad to see that the works of Chaucer and Lydgate were not forgotten. Most industrious men were the early English printers, and courageous in every sense of the word.—Maugre all the opposition that could be offered to the new art, Wykin de Worde, Richard Pynson, and other successors of Caxton, appear to have issued in England not less than two thousand works, in the various departments of letters, previous to the birth of Shakspere. And yet we find that a hundred years after this event (October 23rd, 1666) there were only one hundred and forty working printers in London and its vicinity. Truly has the poet sung:—

"Lord! taught by Thee, when Caxton bade
His silent words for ever speak,
A grave for tyrants then was made
Then crack'd the chain, which yet shall break.

"For bread, for bread, the all-scorn'd man,
With study worn, his press prepared;
And knew not, Lord, thy wond'rous plan,
Nor what he did, nor what he dared.

"When first the might of deathless thought
Impress'd his all-instructing page,
Unconscious giant! how he smote
The fraud and force of many an age.

"Pale wax'd the harlot, fear'd of thrones,
And they who bought her harlotry:

He shook the throned on dead men's bones,
He shakes—all evil yet to be!

"The power he grasp'd let none disdain;
It conquer'd once, and conquers still;
By fraud and force assail'd in vain,
It conquer'd erst, and ever will."

EBENEZER ELLIOTT.

The unnatural wars of the Red and White Roses—the bloody contentions of the rival houses of Lancaster and York—had ceased with the destruction of the usurper Gloucester, on Bosworth-field,—an event on which the poet has built one of his noblest historical dramas; and, but for the unchristian persecutions carried on in the sacred name of religion, England might already have enjoyed the blessings of nearly four-score years of peace, and have fully recovered from those evils which civil war will always bring upon the country it visits. Even as it was, our prose literature had already been enriched with the "Utopia" of Sir Thomas More, and his "History of Edward V., and of his brother, and of Richard III." (which account of the latter king, Shakspere has followed in his drama of that name); with the chronicles of Fabian and Hall, and numerous other works, all of which were destined to aid the labours of the future dramatist.

I cannot here enter into any lengthened description of the social condition of the people, at the period when a Shakspere was born. It could be no effeminate age to produce such a man. But commerce was crippled by monopolies, and of the arable land of the country not more than one-fourth was in a state of cultivation; but large flocks of sheep were kept on account of the wool. Manufactures were only in their infancy; and great numbers of thieves and vagrants infested every part of the kingdom. To repress this evil, the most severe laws were useless, and the famous poor-law of Elizabeth had not yet been enacted. The flower-garden was but little cultivated, the parks of the nobility and gentry serving them for pleasure-grounds. Some valuable esculent herbs and fruits had been recently introduced into the country, amongst which were turnips, carrots, salads, apricots, melons, and currants; and the cultivation of hops and flax were not neglected. The old dungeon-like castles of the nobility now gave way to the more commodious halls or mansions; but the houses of the people improved slowly.* Few of them had glass for their windows, and even in towns

* See Note C.

of importance chimnies were an unknown luxury; the smoke being allowed to escape as best it could, from the lattice, the door, or from openings in the roof. On an humble pallet of straw would the poor husbandman repose his wearied limbs; and wheaten bread was not used by more than one-half of the population. We have progressed much since then, whatever we may be told by political agitators; and that England was rapidly, though gradually, progressing even then, we shall see as we proceed.

The amusements of the people, for the most part, were gross and debasing. Cockfighting—a cruel pastime, which no Grecian or Asiatic antiquity can justify—was not then confined to the lowest of the people, but had the patronage of the learned and powerful of the land; for, though Edward the Third, as early as 1366, had prohibited it, with other disorderly games, by public proclamation, we find queen Elizabeth's father, Henry the Eighth, "defender of the faith," building a cockpit at the palace of Whitehall, and James the First, to whom our translation of the Bible is dedicated, amusing himself with cockfighting *twice a week;* and the learned author, Roger Ascham—the university orator at Cambridge, and the tutor of Queen Elizabeth—was a passionate admirer of this disgraceful sport. Then at Shrovetide, what a torturing of poor poultry did cock-throwing and thrashing-the-hen occasion! Both the popish Mary and the protestant Elizabeth derived pleasure from the baiting of bulls and bears; and many a fair lady of that day might say with Slender, in the "Merry Wives of Windsor,"—"I have seen Sackerson loose twenty times." Even the gentle, but unfortunate, Mary queen of Scots, when rendered so weak by her unjust imprisonment as not to be able to walk without support, according to the report of Sir Amias Powlet, her keeper, (June 3rd, 1586,)was sometimes "carried in a chair to one of the adjoining ponds, to see the diversion of duck-hunting;" and, perchance, at times, compared the hard fate of the poor persecuted fowls with the harder and more lingering one of her own. I do not mean to charge these inhuman amusements as peculiar only to the period of which I write; but they were then alike patronised by rich and poor. Even as late as the reign of Queen Anne, they were still prevalent, but the literary men—who ought always to march in the van of the army of progress—were beginning to oppose them manfully. In "The Tattler," No. 134, dated Thursday, February 16th, 1709, Sir Richard Steele thus writes on

throwing-at-cocks and other like brutal usages:—"Some French writers have represented this diversion of the common people much to our disadvantage, and imputed it to a natural fierceness and cruelty of temper, as they do some other entertainments peculiar to our nation; I mean those elegant diversions of bull-baiting, and prize-fighting, with the like ingenious recreations of the bear-garden. I wish I knew how to answer this reproach which is cast upon us, and excuse the death of so many innocent cocks, bulls, dogs, and bears, as have been set together by the ears, or died an untimely death, only to make us sport." Reader! are there no sports with which *thou* art apt to indulge thyself, which cause misery to that animated nature towards which thou art nearer related than thou wottest of?

But the amusement of the people which most concerns us in the present work, is that of dramatic representation, whether in the form of mysteries, moralities, interludes, or plays of any description, from which the English drama can in any way be thought to have taken its rise. I cannot here fully enter into the origin and subsequent history of the dramatic art: how Æschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, and Aristophanes, perfected the Grecian drama; and how Plautus and Terence copied after, and borrowed from them, in Rome. The classical tragedies and comedies were doomed to banishment by priestly intolerance, and in their places were substituted those ridiculous pieces of blasphemy and buffoonery, called mysteries or miracle-plays. All their curses of "bell, book, and candle," were powerless against the most rational of all amusements, until a mental garbage was substituted by the monks in its stead, on which the souls of the poor cheated millions were fated for centuries to be fed.

"We have little information respecting the Jewish drama," says Dr. Nuttall; "but one of their plays has been preserved in Greek iambics, which is the first known to have been written on a Scripture subject. It was taken from Exodus. The principal characters are Moses, Sapphora, and God from the bush. Moses delivers the prologue in a speech of sixty lines, and his rod is turned into a serpent on the stage. The author of the play was Ezekiel, the tragic poet of the Jews. Warton supposes that he wrote it after the destruction of Jerusalem, as a political spectacle to animate his dispersed brethren with the hopes of a future deliverance from their captivity, under the conduct of a new Moses, and that it was com-

posed in imitation of the Greek drama at the close of the second century."

"At what period of time the moralities had their rise," says Bishop Percy, "it is difficult to discover. But plays of miracles appear to have been exhibited in England soon after the Conquest. Matthew Paris tells us that Geoffrey, afterwards abbot of St. Albans, a Norman, who had been sent over for by Abbot Richard, to take upon himself the direction of that monastery, coming too late, went to Dunstable, and taught in the abbey there; where he caused to be acted (probably by his scholars,) a miracle-play of St. Catharine, composed by himself. This was long before the year 1119, and probably within the eleventh century. The above play of St. Catharine was, for aught that appears, the first spectacle of this sort that was exhibited in these kingdoms." In the reign of Henry the Second [1154 to 1189], these miracle plays—so called because they set forth to the credulous people the lying miracles alleged to have been wrought by certain fanatics and cunning impostors, who arrogated to themselves the sacred name of saints—appear to have become quite common; and fit representations they were for a people whose monarch could bare his back to be lashed by the monks of Canterbury when his own queen, Eleanor, would have done it so well! In the following reign—that of the brave, but fanatic, Richard the First—when the poor Jews were cruelly butchered in cold blood at home, and the Saracens in those mad and wholesale murders, the Crusades in the Holy Land, anything better than mysteries would have been but as "pearls before swine." Robin Hood, with Sherwood Forest for his capital, and the whole of the northern and midland counties for his tributary states, was the truest king of England, and reigned supreme, whilst the royal knight-errant was murdering and plundering abroad. Not only was the bold outlaw destined to become "the English ballad-singer's joy," but the subject of various representations that rivalled, in the affections of the multitude, those miracle-play abortions of the monkish mind.

The usual place for the performance of a miracle-play was the interior of the church or chapel, where a temporary scaffold was erected to serve for the stage; and sometimes the representations took place in the churchyard. The church ornaments appear to have been used for theatrical property, and Sundays and holy-days were the times chosen for the exhibition. Thus Chaucer's Wife of Bath amuses herself during Lent:—

> "Therefore made I my visitations
> To vigilies and to processions,
> To preachings, and to those pilgrimages,
> To PLAYS OF MIRACLES, and to marriages."

The famous "Household Book" of the fifth earl of Northumberland, begun in 1512, clearly proves that on all great festivals of the church, the chaplains of the nobility were in the habit of providing plays on the event, mythical or historical, which either superstition or piety meant to celebrate. The principal performers were the clergy, who looked with extreme suspicion on any secular players that might attempt to break through the monkish monopoly. But even in those days we find persons of superior sanctity, who might say with the friar minor in the valuable old poem of "Pierce Ploughman," supposed to have been written by a secular priest named Robert Longlande, one of the immediate predecessors of Chaucer :—

> "We haunten no tavernes, ne hobelen abouten:
> At markets AND MIRACLES we meddley us never."

In the sixteenth century so great was the outcry against this monkish buffoonery by the religious reformers, that we find even the notorious Bishop Bonner, in 1542, issuing a proclamation to the clergy of his diocese, in which every description of common play, game, or interlude, is forbid to be played in their churches or chapels.

"Whatever was the rudeness of the English stage prior to the fifteenth century," says Dr. Dunham, "at that time we certainly find a more artificial expedient. *Then* there was a change of scene, inasmuch as there were often two, sometimes three distinct stages, which rose like the boxes of a theatre one above another : the highest was heaven, when there were three, the middle one earth, and the lowest hell." One of the most celebrated places for the exhibition of mysteries was the city of Coventry, from which Stratford-on-Avon is only nineteen miles distant ; and doubtless thither "many a time and oft" has Shakspere in his youth gone to amuse himself with these ridiculous mummeries, for his writings abound with allusions and sarcasms thereon. In the Cotton MSS. there is a series of forty-two of these mysteries, beginning with the Creation, and ending with Doomsday, which were once the property of the monastery of Grey Friars in Coventry ; and these, we are told by Sir William Dugdale, were "acted with mighty state and reverence by the friars of this house, who had theatres for several scenes, very large

and high, placed upon wheels, and drawn to all the eminent parts of the city, for the better advantage of spectators." And he adds, "I have been told by some old people, who in their younger years were eye-witnesses of these pageants so acted, that the yearly conflux of people to see that show [*Corpus Christi*] was extraordinary great, and yielded no small advantage to this city." And in John Heywood's "Four P's" we have :—

> "For as good hope would have it chance,
> This devil and I were of old acquaintance;
> For oft, in the play of Corpus Christi,
> We both play'd the devil at Coventry."

But the representation of those sorry blasphemies were not confined altogether to the clerical class, though doubtless they were all written by them. Various trades had been in the habit of representing them, at stated periods, in most of the principal places in England. Some of the entries in the records of the Coventry gilds are, as Dr. Dunham observes, "strange enough, but certainly never dictated by irreverence." Thus, in the expenditure of the Smiths' company, we have :—"God's coat of white leather (6 skins). Cheverel (chevelure, peruke) for God. Girdle for God. Paid to God, 2*s*. Item, paid to Herod, 3*s*. 4*d*. Item, to Pilate's wife, 2*s*. Item, to the Devil and to Judas, 18*d*." Again, in the Cappers' expenditure, we have :—"Item, paid to Pilate, 4*d*. Item, paid to the four knights, 4*s*. 8*d*. Item, paid to the two bishops, 2*s*. Item, paid to God, 20*d*. Item, paid to the Spirit of God, 16*d*. Item, paid to the two angels, 8*d*. Item, paid to the three Maries, 2*s*. Item, paid to the Demon, 16*d*."

I am sorry that my limits prevent me from here giving a few extracts as specimens of those ecclesiastical plays of our forefathers. "How they were exhibited in their most simple form," says Bishop Percy, "we may learn from an ancient novel, often quoted by our old dramatic poets, entitled 'A Merry Jest of a Man that was called Howleglas,' &c., being a translation from the Dutch language, in which he is called 'Ulenspiegle.' Howleglas, whose waggish tricks are the subject of this book, after many adventures comes to live with a priest, who makes him his parish-clerk. This priest is described as keeping a leman or concubine, who had but one eye, to whom Howleglas owed a grudge for revealing his rogueries to his master." I give the passage below, as quoted by the worthy bishop, in his "Reliques of Ancient English

Poetry," the only liberty I have taken with it being that of modernising the spelling,—a liberty I have taken with most of my quotations from old writers :—

"And then in the mean season, while Howleglas was parish-clerk, at Easter they should play the Resurrection of our Lord: and for because than the men were not learned, nor could not read, the priest took his leman, and put her in the grave for an angel: and this seeing Howleglas, took to him three of the simplest persons that were in the town, that played the three Maries: and the parson played Christ, with a banner in his hand. Then said Howleglas to the simple persons, 'When the angel asketh you whom ye seek, you may say, "The parson's leman with one eye"' Then it fortuned that the time was come that they must play, and the angel asked them whom they sought, and then said they, as Howleglas had showed and learned them afore, and then answered they, 'We seek the priest's leman with one eye.' And then the priest might hear that he was mocked. And when the priest's leman heard that, she arose out of the grave, and would have smitten with her fist Howleglas upon the cheek, but she missed him, and smote one of the simple persons that played one of the three Maries; and she gave her another; and then took she him by the hair; and that seeing his wife, came running hastily to smite the priest's leman; and then the priest seeing this, cast down his banner, and went to help his woman, so that one gave the other sore strokes, and made great noise in the church. And then Howleglas, seeing them lying together by the ears in the body of the church, went his way out of the village, and came no more there."

Such were the base substitutes for the classical drama palmed upon our poor forefathers, by the church, in the dark night of the middle ages: but God, whose immutable law of progression is ever active, though often working unseen by the finite eye of the philosopher, was about to produce a band of bards, whose minds would throw off the monkish trammels imposed upon them, and exult in the sunshine of their own souls. Nature to them should be a mother and a companion, and not some mere legendary saint, known to them only through the uncertain medium of tell-tale Tradition. The Sun, did he not still shine as brightly as when poor blind Homer basked in his golden rays, five-and-twenty centuries before? Were not the moon and stars as glorious in the heavens as when a Virgil sang? Why should not they also look on the great book of nature everywhere opened around them, and obey the promptings of the spirit within them, and try to regenerate the fallen drama? Miracle-plays were already in some measure giving way to moralities, and interludes, and court-pageants, and it was evident that the awakening minds of the people could no longer be fed on mere men-

tal garbage. Secular plays, rudely constructed in every respect though they were, already were making headway, and acting was becoming a distinct profession.

The earliest comedy we have remaining is that of "Ralph Royster Doyster," written about the reign of Harry the Eighth, by Nicholas Udall, master of Westminster school: and the indefatigable Payne Collier has discovered four acts of a comedy called "Mesogonus," written by one "Thomas Rychardes," the characters of which are English, though the scene is laid in Italy; and this piece Mr. Collier supposes to have been written in 1560,—four years before the birth of Shakspere.

Tragedy is of a rather later date; the earliest known specimen being the "Tragedy of Ferrex and Porrex," performed before Queen Elizabeth, at Whitehall, by the gentlemen of the Inner Temple, in the January of 1561. It was written by Thomas Sackville (afterwards Earl of Dorset) and Thomas Norton; consists of five acts; is in regular blank verse; and contains some excellent writing. The classical models afforded by the Greek dramatists have been in many respects patterned after. Though mysteries and moralities continued to be performed for years after, their death-knell may now be said to have been rung; they were sentenced, without hopes of a reprieve.

Such, at a rapid glance, was the condition of England and her drama when William Shakspere was born,—the sun around which all the lesser orbs of our English literature may be said to revolve. How the energies of England —especially in literature, and the drama in particular— grew with Shakspere's growth, and strengthened with his strength, it is the object of the following pages to show.

The exact date of Shakspere's birth is unknown. The parish register of Stratford-on-Avon shows that William, the son of John Shakspere, was baptised on the twenty-sixth of April, 1564, being the sixth year of the reign of Queen Elizabeth, who was then thirty-one years of age. Some writers have supposed that the birth of Shakspere took place only three days before,—viz., on the twenty-third of April, a day dedicated to St. George, the patron saint of England. But in this "the wish was father to the thought." It is a most improbable conjecture. Unless there was evident danger of death, no one would think of baptising a child in that day so soon after its birth; the private baptism of infants being only intended for those who would otherwise be likely to die unbaptised. In all probability, Shakspere, like all other children at that time,

would be kept muffled up for a full fortnight; the gossips being afraid that the light would injure a new-born infant's eyes, even within the recollection of many of our own generation. A christening then, was not a mere religious ceremony, but a family festival, to which all friends were sure to be invited; just as, forty-two years afterwards (1606), we find Shakspere himself standing godfather to the son of his friend John Davenant, of the Crown Inn, Oxford. The christening of William Shakspere would not take place till his mother attended the church, to offer up her thanks for her safe recovery; and that would not be until a full month had expired after her confinement. So that the probability is that he was not born in April, but somewhat earlier.

The very profession of John Shakspere, the father of the poet, is uncertain. He has been differently described, as a glover, a butcher, a dealer in wool, and a yeoman. We have nothing but what Thomas Carlyle would call "tombstone information" respecting him, and not even that with any degree of certainty. "In the archives of the town," says Charles Knight, "by which his course may be traced for some years, we find that he was, in 1556, one of the jury of the court-leet; in 1557, one of the ale-tasters; at Michaelmas of that year, or very soon afterwards, he was elected, a burgess or junior member of the corporation; in 1558 and 1559 he served the office of constable, which duty appears then to have been imposed upon the younger members of the corporate body; lastly, in 1561, he was elected one of the chamberlains. Here, then, previous to the birth of William Shakspere, we find his father passing through the regular gradations of those municipal offices which were filled by the most respectable inhabitants of a country town—those who, following trades or professions, or possessed of a small independence, were useful in their several degrees, and received due honour and reverence from their neighbours."

The wife of John Shakspere, and mother of the poet—who *must* have been a good woman to produce so "gentle" souled a son—was Mary the youngest daughter of Robert Arden, a gentleman-farmer, who by his will, made November 24th, 1556, bequeathed to her all his "land in Willmecote, called Asbyes, and the crop upon the ground," and the sum of six pounds, thirteen shillings, and fourpence. Charles Knight says:—

"The grandfather of Mary Arden was groom of the chamber to Henry VII., and he was the nephew of Sir John Arden, squire of the body to the same monarch. Sir John Arden was a son of Walter

Arden and of Eleanor, the daughter of John Hampden of Buckinghamshire. There were thus the ties of a common blood between William Shakspere and one of the most distinguished men of the next generation – John Hampden, who was a student in the Inner Temple when the poet died. Mary Arden's property has been computed to be worth some hundred and ten pounds of the money of *her* time. Let not the luxurious habits of the present age lead us to smile at such a fortune. All the worldly goods (except his lands) belonging to her father, were, in the inventory attached to his will, valued at seventy-seven pounds eleven shillings and tenpence; and these goods included numerous oxen, bullocks, kine, horses, sheep, besides wheat in the field and in the barn."

William Shakspere appears to have been the oldest son, but not the first child, of John and Mary Shakspere. The parish register of Stratford-on-Avon contains entries of the baptism of two of their daughters previous to that of William,—viz., Jone, September 15th, 1558, and Margaret, December 2nd, 1562; the latter of whom was buried April 30th, 1563. Augustine Skottowe says:—

"John Shakspere died in 1601. His family was numerous: Jone, Margaret, William, Gilbert, Jone, Ann, Richard, and Edmund. The first-born, Jone, died in earliest infancy, and Margaret when only five months old. William was the poet Of Gilbert nothing appears after the registry of his baptism: the register, indeed, mentions the burial of 'Gilbert Shakspere, adolescens,' in 1611—2, who might, or might not, have been the son of the elder Gilbert. Jone married William Hart, a hatter in Stratford. She died in 1646, leaving three sons. She was remembered in her immortal brother's will by a contingent legacy of fifty pounds to her and her children; a bequest of twenty pounds, all his wearing apparel, and the house which she then occupied, at a yearly rent of one shilling, for her life. The Harts have continued at Stratford during the two centuries that have elapsed since the poet's death. In 1794, one of Shakspere's two houses in Henley street was the property of Thomas Hart, a butcher, the sixth in descent from Jone. Ann Shakspere died in infancy. Richard was buried in 1612-13. Edmund Shakspere embraced the calling of an actor, influenced, probably, in his choice, by the connection of his brother with the theatre He was a player at the Globe, lived in St. Saviour's, and was buried in the church of that parish, on the 31st of December, 1607."

The house now shown as the birth-place of Shakspere, is situated in Henley-street, and may really have been such; for eight years *before* that event (1556), John Shakspere had the lease of a house in that street, and of another in Greenhill-street; and ten years *after* the poet's birth (1574), John Shakspere purchased two houses in Henley-street, each with a garden and orchard attached. But allowing the so-called birth-place of Shakspere to be what it is supposed, which is probable enough, it has

been so infamously altered from what it formerly was—altered so much for the worse—that one is tempted to wish it had altogether fallen during the alterations, and become a mere heap of ruins. In its ancient state, it was a residence fit for a gentleman of that day, or even of our own, and compared to its present condition was as "Hyperion to a satyr." Better that it had fallen into the unhallowed clutches of the Frodsham vicar, instead of the New Place and the mulberry tree, than that it should have been so awfully mutilated. Pity it is that poetic sites so oft become the possession of such unpoetic characters! Truly "they know not what they do."

Washington Irving, in his beautiful "Sketch Book," thus describes the birth-place of Shakspere :—

"I had come to Stratford on a poetical pilgrimage. My first visit was to the house where Shakspere was born, and where, according to tradition, he was brought up to his father's craft of wool-combing. It is a small mean-looking edifice of wood and plaster; a true nestling-place of genius, which seems to delight in hatching its offspring in by-corners. The walls of its squalid chambers are covered with names and inscriptions in every language, by pilgrims of all nations, ranks, and conditions, from the prince to the peasant: and present a simple, but striking, instance of the spontaneous and universal homage of mankind to the great poet of nature. . . . There was the shattered stock of the very matchlock with which Shakspere shot the deer, on his poaching exploits. There, too, was his tobacco-box; which proves that he was a rival smoker of Sir Walter Raleigh; the sword, also, with which he played Hamlet; and the identical lantern with which Friar Laurence discovered Romeo and Juliet at the tomb! There was an ample supply also of Shakspere's mulberry tree, which seems to have as extraordinary powers of self-multiplication as the wood of the true cross; of which there is enough extant to build a ship of the line. The most favourite object of curiosity, however, is Shakspere's chair. It stands in the chimney-nook of a small gloomy chamber, just behind what was his father's shop. Here he may many a time have sat when a boy, watching the slowly revolving spit, with all the longings of an urchin; or of an evening, listening to the cronies and gossips of Stratford, dealing forth churchyard tales and legendary anecdotes of the troublesome times of England. In this chair it is the custom of every one that visits the house to sit: whether this be done with the hope of imbibing any of the inspiration of the bard, I am at a loss to say; I merely mention the fact; and mine hostess privately assured me, that, though built of solid oak, such was the fervent zeal of devotees, that the chair had to be new bottomed at least once in three years. It is worthy of notice also, in the history of this extraordinary chair, that it partakes something of the volatile nature of the Santa Casa of Loretto, or the flying chair of the Arabian enchanter; for though sold some few years since to a northern princess, yet strange to tell, it has found its way back again to the old chimney corner."

In the month of June—but two months after the baptism of Shakspere—that fearful pestilence, the plague, visited Stratford-upon-Avon; and instead of a yearly average of some forty deaths, two hundred and thirty-eight souls, in the space of six months, were swept into eternity. The infant who was afterwards so to bless the world, was happily spared, nor does any member of his family appear to have perished; but one may well imagine that anxiety of mind that Master John Shakspere would experience for the safety of his family; and how Mary Shakspere would tremblingly kiss her sleeping babe, as the deep toll of the passing-bell daily smote upon her ear, announcing to all that

> "Another soul from earth had fled,
> Another body with the dead
> Beneath the sod was numbered."

And I durst swear that dewdrops never stood more conspicuous on the lupin, or raindrops thicker on the hawthorn, than did the tears in that mother's eyes. But dear as their infant son doubtless was to them, as he nestled in their arms, they dreamt not what more than monarch they were rearing for mankind. Could *she* have known, it would have turned her brain! One may also imagine the boy Shakspere, when a few more years were past, listening devoutly, as his mother related the particulars of that dreadful plague, as they sat around the fire on winter nights, when the storm-king ruled supreme without, and the blazing logs crackled merrily on the capacious hearth; whilst ever and anon the stool of the future poet of mankind would advance an inch or two nearer to the cheerful blaze. Even to read the narrative of a plague is enough to curdle one's blood; how awful, then, must it have been to those who witnessed the dreadful mortality! Doubtless his mother's vivid reminiscenes of that awful event,

> "Would harrow up his soul: freeze his young blood;
> Make his two eyes, like stars, start from their spheres;
> His knotted and combined locks to part,
> And each particular hair to stand on-end,
> Like quills upon the fretful porcupine."
>
> Hamlet, act i., scene 5th.

It is worthy of remark that Erasmus, more like a philosopher than a divine, ascribes the frequent visits of the plague in England to the want of cleanliness amongst the people. If men will break the laws of nature, they can never do it with impunity: there are blessings for obedience, but pains and penalties, from which no repentance

can save us, whenever we rebel. Some day (let us cherish the hope) man will fulfil the high purposes of his existence, and ignorance, sin, disease, and misery, will be banished for ever from this beautiful world.

At the dissolution of the monasteries by Harry the Eighth, seven-eighths of the land of England had become the property of the popish church, principally extorted from the fears of ignorant sinners, to save their souls from the bottomless pit; and out of this large accumulation the poor were in some sort kept. The monasteries had become corrupt, and were suppressed; but the property they had amassed, instead of being applied to state purposes as it ought, was divided, like robbers' booty, amongst the great and powerful partisans of the king. The poor, now left without any legal support, became vagabonds and thieves; and as neither reducing many to slavery, nor hanging others, could abate the evil, (for the cause was not removed,) the people were saddled with their support. Accordingly we find that this year, Master John Shakspere is one on whom the new burden falls. "In a subscription for the relief of the poor in 1564," says Augustine Skottowe, "out of twenty-four persons, twelve gave more, six the same, and six less than John Shakspere: in a second subscription by fourteen persons, eight gave more, five the same, and one less." This is an interesting fact, as giving us some clue to the social position of Shakspere's father. Into the question of John Shakspere's ability to write his name I will not here enter, as Charles Knight has satisfactorily settled that point, by proving that the mark, which, as Malone says, "nearly resembles a capital A," does not belong to "John Shacksper" at all, but to another member of the Stratford corporation named "George Whateley!"

Queen Elizabeth, who visited Cambridge this year, witnessed the play of "Aulularia Plauto," on Sunday, August 6th; that piece being got up in the body of King's College church, at her expense. For Sunday was at first the great day for theatrical entertainments; a practice inherited from the old miracle-plays, which they had now in some measure displaced. After spending five days in Cambridge, during which time she inspected all the colleges, and was entertained with orations, disputations, and various dramatic exhibitions, the queen returned to London, sleeping on the night of August 18th, at Hinchingbrook, near Huntingdon, the seat of Sir Henry Cromwell, whom she greatly esteemed; a gentleman called for his liberality "the Golden knight," and to whom the future

protector of England, Oliver Cromwell, whom Milton styles "chief of men," was grandson.

In the political world, we find the infamous Lord Robert Dudley almost omnipotent. Elizabeth, who had but a year before proposed him as a husband to her cousin, Mary Queen of Scots, now creates him Earl of Leicester, and grants him the castle and manor of Kenilworth, in Warwickshire, thirteen miles distant from the birth-place of Shakspere. The historian Hume tells us, that this "great and powerful favourite of Elizabeth possessed all those exterior qualities which are naturally alluring to the fair sex; a handsome person, a polite address, an insinuating behaviour; and by means of these accomplishments he had been able to blind even the penetration of Elizabeth, and conceal from her the great defects, or rather odious vices, which attended his character. He was proud, insolent, interested, ambitious: without honour, without generosity, without humanity; and atoned not for these bad qualities by such abilities or courage as could fit him for that high trust and confidence with which she so highly honoured him. Her constant and declared attachment to him had naturally emboldened him to aspire to her bed; and in order to make way for these nuptials, he was universally believed to have murdered, in a barbarous manner, his wife, the heiress of one Robesart. The proposal of espousing Mary was by no means agreeable to him; and he always ascribed it to the contrivance of Cecil, his enemy; who, he thought, intended by that artifice to make him lose the friendship of Mary, by the temerity of his pretensions, and that of Elizabeth, from jealousy of his attachment to another woman. The queen herself had not any serious intention of effecting this marriage; but as she was desirous that the Queen of Scots should never have any husband, she named a man who, she believed, was not likely to be accepted of; and she hoped, by that means, to gain time, and to elude the project of any other alliance. The Earl of Leicester was too great a favourite to be parted with; and when Mary, allured by the prospect of being declared successor to the crown, seemed at last to hearken to Elizabeth's proposal, this princess receded from her offers, and withdrew the bait which she had thrown out to her rival."

In the religious world, all is unsettled. Thomas Sampson, one of the most learned and earnest puritans of that day, who had assisted to translate the Genevan Bible, and refused the bishopric of Norwich, when offered it on the accession of Elizabeth to the throne, is this year deprived

of the deanery of Christchurch, Oxford, and thrown into prison, for refusing to wear the clerical habits. In Scotland, the learned George Buchanan, having returned to his native country in 1561, after having been driven from country to country by priestly persecution, is this year presented with the temporalities of the abbey of Crossraguell, by Mary, Queen of Scots, whose studies he now directed; doubtless to the great horror of those holy fathers, the Franciscans, whose licentiousness he had lashed in one of his poems.—On the twenty-seventh of May, at Geneva, the gloomy and intolerant bigot, John Calvin, died in the fifty-fifth year of his age. Much as one may be able to extenuate his failings, when we remember that persecution was the order of the day, the cruel and cowardly murder of the more enlightened Servetus will ever be a deep blood-stain on the name of Calvin, which, like the "damned spot" on the hand of Lady Macbeth, has "the smell of the blood still: all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten" it.—The Duke of Cleves sends George Cassander on a mission to convert the Anabaptists; and the Council of Trent, on the twenty-fourth of March, present Pope Pius the Fourth with a catalogue of books to be forbidden, and the literary despotism called "The Congregation of the Index," seems to have begun its unholy crusade, in a systematic manner. But these mental tyrants could not agree amongst themselves as to what works might be read and what might not, and even condemned the writings of each other. In one thing only did they seem unanimous—to crush the rising liberties of men, and bow their necks once more to the priestly yoke. Vain and futile thought!—as though the light that once illumines human minds can ever be totally extinguished!

This year is also claimed for the nativity of Thomas Nash, a brother dramatist and contemporary of Shakspere, a satirical poet, much dreaded by the puritans of his day. In the "Return from Parnassus," a play acted in 1606, by the students of St. John's College, Cambridge, Nash, who had then been dead some six years, is spoken of as "a fellow that carried the deadly stock in his pen, whose muse was armed with a jay tooth, and his pen possest with Hercules' furies." Michael Drayton, another of his contemporaries, thus alludes to him:—

> "And surely Nash, though he a proser were,
> A branch of laurel yet deserves to bear:
> Sharply satiric was he, and that way
> He went; since that his being to this day,
> Few have attempted, and I surely think,

These words shall hardly be set down in ink
Shall scorch and blast so, as his could when he
Would inflict vengeance."

Nash was a native of Lowestoft, in Suffolk, and educated at St. John's College, Cambridge; nearly all the early English dramatists having had an university education, save William Shakspere, who, thank God! had not. If he had not been reared in a rural district, and associated with unsophisticated men, and women unruined by the seductions of a false refinement, William Shakspere might have had more "school-cram," but he had never become the greatest of all our delineators of the human heart!

Andrew Vesalius, the great anatomist, who had given to the world his famous treatise "On the Structure of the Human Body," nine years before, and whose lectures in various countries of Europe had procured for him a wide reputation, died this year, from the effects of hardship and hunger, at the Island of Zante, where he had been shipwrecked, on his return from a foolish pilgrimage to Jerusalem.

The year which enriched the world by the birth of a Shakspere in England, is also famous for the nativity of the poor, persecuted philosopher, GALILEO GALILEI, who was the son of a Tuscan nobleman of small fortune, residing at Pisa. And what is the great mission of Galileo on this beautiful earth, where happiness is marred by blundering man? Verily, his Maker has given him work to do. The false notion of astronomy, which represented our globe as the immoveable centre of the universe, around which the sun, and moon, and all the planets of the heavens revolved, now generally known as the Ptolemæan system, rendered sacred to the superstitious as it was, by the traditions of many centuries, was now to be destroyed; and the great truth, that the sun was the fixed body, and the earth but one of the orbs revolving round it,—a truth for which Anaximander and Pythagoras had struggled in ancient Greece, and which the learned Nicolas Copernicus had re-discovered in that ever-memorable sixteenth century,—this truth was now to be fairly established. Truth is eternal, and is one day sure to triumph; but all error and evil contain the germs of their own destruction within themselves. Every great truth revealed to mankind has met with opposition, and its apostles have ever been subject to persecution. The ancient Jews, "stiffnecked people" as all Scripture records them to have

been, were not the only people who "killed the prophets, and stoned them that were sent unto them."* Of how many peoples might the question of the martyred Stephen be asked,—"Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted?"† Poor slaves of Ignorance as we are, we thrust away from us all instruction, unless it has been spoken by tongues that ages ago have been silenced in the tomb. We prefer the golden calves and mud idols of our own superstition to that philosophy which would teach us to

"Look from nature up to nature's God."

What marvel, then, that the brave Galileo—brave despite of the momentary recantation wrung from the good old man by the horrid tortures of the accursed Inquisition—should lead a life of suffering for the truth? But I shall have occasion to speak of Galileo anon, and will not linger here further than to remark, that whenever men commit those acts of tyranny which human nature feels to be beneath its noble dignity, they love to cloak it in the garb of religion. Religion is a holy and a spotless thing, despite the injustice that in all ages has been done in its sacred name. "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good," says Micah, the Morasthite; "and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"‡

John Buxtorf, a learned Calvinist, is this year born at Basil, and John Rothenhamer, a German painter, five of whose pieces the reader will find at Hampton Court, is born at Munich. David Rizzio, the musician, arrives at Holyrood, in the train of the ambassador from Savoy, and becomes the favourite of the unhappy Queen of Scots.—Coaches are now introduced into England by William Booner, a Dutchman, who becomes coachman to Queen Elizabeth.

Such, at a rapid glance, is the chronology of our Shakspere's first year.

* Matthew, chap. xxiii., verse 37th, and Luke, chap. xiii., verse 34th
† Acts, chap. vii., verse 52nd.
‡ Micah, chap. vi., verse 8th.

SHAKSPERE'S SECOND YEAR.

A.D. 1565. MASTER JOHN SHAKSPERE, the father of our bard, was this year so far honoured as to be elected one of the aldermen of Stratford-upon-Avon; and, by and by, we shall see him arrive at the head of the corporation. Prosperity now smiled upon him; and, in his own pleasant little town at least, doubtless he was a man of mark. And how he and his good wife, the descendant of the Ardens, would now gaze enraptured on every little manifestation of consciousness in their infant son, as only parents can! For let us believe that the "gentle Willy" was a lovely babe, worthy of the innumerable kisses which his delighted mother so profusely lavished on his peach-like cheeks; and that, gazing on his smiling boy, Master John Shakspere, like a true father, rather than an alderman, would forget alike the cares of his own private business and of the corporation, as he drained his frothing cup of nut-brown ale by his own capacious hearth at eventide.

The secular drama continues to make headway. To this year is ascribed the composition of "Gammer Gurton's Needle," a comedy written by John Still, M.A., afterwards bishop of Bath and Wells. "This is a piece of low rustic humour," says Robert Chambers, "the whole turning upon the loss and recovery of the needle with which Gammer Gurton was mending a piece of attire belonging to her man Hodge. But it is cleverly hit off, and contains a few well-sketched characters." It is in this play that the following "famous old drinking trowl," as Washington Irving calls it, occurs:—

"I cannot eat but little meat,
My stomach is not good,
But sure I think that I can drink
With him that wears a hood.
Though I go bare, take ye no care,
I nothing am a-cold,
I stuff my skin so full within
Of jolly good ale and old.

"Back and side go bare, go bare,
Both foot and hand go cold,
But belly, God send thee good ale enough,
Whether it be new or old.

"I have no roast, but a nut-brown toast,
And a crab laid in the fire;

A little bread shall do me 'stead,—
Much bread I not desire.
No frost nor snow, nor wind, I trow,
Can hurt me if I would,
I am so wrapt and throwly lapt
Of jolly good ale and old.
" Back and side, go bare, go bare, &c.

" And Tyb, my wife, that, as her life,
Loveth well good ale to seek,
Full oft drinks she, till ye may see
The tears run down her cheek.
Then doth she trowl to me the bowl,
Even as a maltworm should,
And saith, ' Sweetheart, I took my part,
Of this jolly good ale and old.'
" Back and side go bare, go bare, &c.

" Now let them drink, till they nod and wink,
Even as good fellows should do;
They shall not miss to have the bliss
Good ale doth bring them to
And all poor souls that have scour'd bowls,
Or have them lustily trowl'd,
God save the lives of them and their wives,
Whether they be young or old.

" Back and side, go bare, go bare,
Both foot and hand go cold,
But belly, God send thee good ale enough,
Whether it be new or old."

WILLIAM CAMDEN—who being born in London, on the second of May, 1551, was nearly thirteen years older than William Shakspere—was this year removed from St. Paul's School to Magdalen College, Oxford. He was the son of a painter, named Sampson Camden. "About that time," says Bishop Gibson, "Dr. Cooper (successively promoted, first to the Bishopric of Lincoln, and then to that of Winchester,) was Fellow of Magdalen College, in Oxford, and master of the school belonging to it. To his care he was recommended; and by his means, probably, admitted chorister; but missing of a demy's place, and being thereby disappointed of his hopes in that rich and ample foundation, he was obliged to seek a new patron, and to frame a new scheme for his future fortunes."—Thomas Bilson, D.D., a native of Winchester, but of German parentage, who afterwards assisted Dr. Miles Smith in the final revision of the present translation of the Bible, is now admitted Perpetual Fellow of New College, Oxford; and will one day be a bishop.—A translation of "Ovid's Metamorphoses"

into English metre, by Arthur Golding, "a work very, pleasant and delectable," was given to the public this year with the following admonitory distich :—

> "With skill, heed, and judgment, this work must be read,
> For else to the reader it stands in small stead."

JOHN STOW—the son of a tailor, and himself bred to the same humble calling, which he only abandoned for the (to him) less lucrative profession of literature—now publishes an edition of his "Summary of English Chronicles," dedicated to the Earl of Leicester, at whose request the work is said to have been undertaken. There is something very venerable in this true labourer in the world of letters, trudging from town to town, a foot-sore pedestrian, to examine the records preserved in cathedral and other libraries, that he might give mankind the fruits of his industrious toil; and how one loves him for his manly efforts to preserve, as far as his poverty would permit, those valuable manuscripts from the libraries of the pillaged monasteries. Bishop Bale, an intemperate enemy of the popery, whom Warton charges with being "angry with many authors who flourished before the thirteenth century for being catholic!" and who therefore would not be likely to misrepresent in favour of monachism, thus describes the worse than Gothic barbarity with which records that might have thrown much light on the social history of our countrymen were ruthlessly destroyed :— "A number of them which purchased these superstitious mansions, reserved of those library books some to serve their jakes, some to scour their candlesticks, and some to rub their boots, and some they sold to the grocers and soap-sellers, and some they sent over sea to bookbinders, not in small numbers, but at times whole ships full. Yea, the universities are not all clear in this detestable fact; but cursed is the belly which seeketh to be fed with so ungodly gains, and so deeply shameth his native country. I know a merchantman (which shall at this time be nameless) that bought the contents of two noble libraries for forty shillings price: a shame it is to be spoken. This stuff hath he occupied instead of grey paper, by the space of more than these ten years, and yet hath he store enough for as many years to come." And the editor of "Letters written by Eminent Persons in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries" tells us, that "the splendid and magnificent abbey of Malmesbury, which possessed some of the finest manuscripts in the kingdom, was ransacked, and its treasures either sold or burnt to serve the com-

monest purposes of life. An antiquary, who travelled through that town many years after the dissolution, relates that he saw broken windows patched up with remnants of the most valuable manuscripts on vellum, and that the bakers had not even then consumed the stores they had accumulated, in heating their ovens!" How valuable, then, are the labours of heroic antiquaries like Stow, under such circumstances! To the honour of Archbishop Parker —himself an accomplished scholar, the liberal patron of literature and the fine arts, and founder of the first Society of Antiquaries in England—let it ever be remembered, that when the poverty of Stow obliged him to leave the literary labours he so much loved, and to resume his goose and shears, that venerable prelate assisted him with his purse, and thus enabled him to prosecute his studies. How Stow must have regretted the loss of his patron, especially when poverty and old age, in 1604, made him glad to accept from "the British Solomon," King James the First, a license to beg!

This year died John Pullain, one of the translators of the Genevan Bible; Sir Thomas Chaloner, author of "The English Republic;" and John Heywood, the poet and dramatist.

The Rev. John Pullain was a native of Yorkshire, and was born in 1517, educated at Oxford, presented to the rectory of St. Peter, Cornhill, London, in 1552, but deprived thereof in 1555, and glad to flee to Geneva, to save himself from the stake under the popish persecution of Queen Mary. When the Protestant Elizabeth came to the throne, he returned to England, but being a Puritan, he was soon cast into a dungeon, for preaching contrary to the queen's prohibition. In 1559, he was made rector of Capford, in Essex, and archdeacon of Colchester. He died in July of the present year, and is said to have been "a truly pious man, a constant preacher, a learned divine, a thorough Puritan, and an admired English and Latin poet."

Of Sir Thomas Chaloner the elder, (so called to distinguish him from his equally celebrated son, Sir Thomas Chaloner the younger, who was so severely anathematised by the pope for commencing the manufacture of alum at Guisborough, in Yorkshire, and thus breaking in upon one of the lucrative monopolies of the papal see,) was descended from Maydoc Krwme, one of the fifteen peers of North Wales. Speaking of the Chaloner family, J. W. Ord says: —"Its most illustrious members were Sir Thomas Chaloner, the elder and younger, excellent portraits of whom,

in a fine style of art, grace the residence at Long Hull, near Gisborough. Sir Thomas, the first, excelled as a statesman, soldier, and poet, and was born at London about the year 1515. Having been educated at both universities, but chiefly at Cambridge, he was introduced at the court of Henry VIII., who sent him abroad in the retinue of Sir Henry Knevett as ambassador to the illustrious Charles V., and he attended that monarch on the fatal expedition to Algiers, in 1541. Soon after the fleet left that place, he was shipwrecked on the coast of Barbary, in a very dark night; and having exhausted his strength by swimming, he chanced to strike his head against a cable, which he had the presence of mind to seize with his teeth, and, with the loss of several of them, was drawn up into his ship. Sir Thomas returned soon afterwards into England, and was appointed first clerk of the council, which office he held during the remainder of that reign. On the acession of the young prince, Edward VI., he became a favourite of the Duke of Somerset, whom he attended to Scotland, and from that nobleman received the honour of knighthood, after the battle of Musselburgh, A.D. 1547. The Protector's fall interfered with Sir Thomas Chaloner's expectations; and, being a determined protestant, he was exposed to much danger during the reign of Queen Mary. On the accession of the 'maiden queen,' he again rose into favour, and was so immediately distinguished by her majesty, that she appointed him ambassador to Ferdinand I., being the first she nominated. So well satisfied was the queen with his conduct, that on his return she commissioned him to the court of Spain, in a similar capacity, A.D. 1561. In 1564, he addressed an elegy to his sovereign, after the manner of Ovid, soliciting his return to England, which was graciously permitted by the queen. Sir Thomas then resided in a house which he had built in Clerkenwell Close [London], where he died [on the seventh of October], 1565, and was honourably interred in St. Paul's [Cathedral], Sir William Cecil officiating as chief mourner on the occasion.—The accomplishments of Sir Thomas Chaloner were great and various, so that he excelled in every pursuit in which he engaged. He was a considerable proficient in poetry during an age of unusual brilliancy and splendour, when the wisdom and genius of the world were concentrated about the court of Elizabeth. His works were published by William Malin, in 1579; the most celebrated of which, 'Of Restoring the English Republic,' in ten books, written whilst ambassador in Spain, may still be consulted in the family library at Long Hull, being a very

ancient edition, neatly bound, in fine preservation. He also condescended to compose 'A Dictionary for Children,' and translated a Latin book, 'Of the Office of Servants;' thus exhibiting a greatness, dignity, and simplicity of mind truly admirable."—In a collection of epitaphs, published by Lackington, is the following, on that "gallant soldier, able statesman, and very learned writer," Sir Thomas Chaloner:—

> "Nature and art in Chaloner combined,
> And for his country form'd the patriot's mind.
> With praise deserved his public posts he fill'd,
> An equal fame his learned labours yield.
> While yet he lived, he lived his country's pride,
> And first his country injured when he died."

John Heywood—"merry John Heywood," "a fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy," whose "flashes of merriment," like those of Yorick, "were wont to set the table on a roar"—was born in London, but in what year is now unknown. He studied, or should have studied, at Oxford, which university he left, for some cause or other, before the usual time. His wit and humour made him a favourite at the court of Henry VIII., to whom he is supposed to have been introduced by his friend, Sir Thomas More. There he was supported as a musician, professed wit, and writer of interludes,—a species of composition between the moral play and modern drama, part of which were performed previous to the year 1521, at a time when Henry was striving so zealously to crush that protestantism, of which he has unjustly been said to be the father. In the reign of Queen Mary, John Heywood "was again the amusement of royalty," says Dr. Dunham; "being alike, for his attachment to the ancient faith, and for his facetious talents, a welcome visitor of that queen, whose rigid muscles were often relaxed at his sallies. Of these, time has spared a few, which may serve to exhibit both his peculiar character and his familiarity with his sovereign. 'What wind has blown you to court?' was her demand one day, on seeing him approach. 'Two winds,' was the reply. 'What are they?' 'One that I might have the pleasure of seeing your grace.' 'We thank you for that: what is the other?' 'That your grace might have the pleasure of seeing me.!' On another occasion, when Mary expressed her determination to prevent the clergy from having wives, he replied, with a pun: 'Then your grace must allow them lemans, for they cannot live without sauce!' Even on

her death-bed, Heywood was admitted to her chamber, to soothe the languor of decaying nature. After her demise, he was not without apprehension for the future. Once already he had been in jeopardy: and, considering that he should be obnoxious on two accounts,—as a papist, and as the favourite of the deceased queen,—he retired from the kingdom, and passed the remainder of his days in exile." He died at Mechlin, in Brabant. Two of his sons were Jesuit priests, one of whom, Gaspar, or Jasper, translated three of the plays of Seneca, and was one of the writers of the poems in the "Paradise of Dainty Devises." It is astonishing how John Heywood—himself still hanging by the Romish religion, most probably from motives of policy—lashes the vices, and exposes the cruel rapacity of the priesthood, to whose flock he pretended to belong.—Had he not thus saved himself, doubtless he had been burnt as an infidel by the consent of both papist and protestant; for, your bigot never requires any true religion, burning like holy incense on the altar of the human heart, and purifying the whole temple of man; but only a slavish obedience to the hollow forms of pharisaical imposition. Thus John Heywood lashes the whole priesthood of his day, with a whip of scorpions, wielded with a boldness compared to which that of good old Chaucer was but tame: and yet he can pass muster as a good catholic! In his "Merry Play between a Pardoner and a Friar, the Curate and Neighbour Pratt," the three ecclesiastics constantly indulge in horrid oaths, whilst the layman is totally free from them. The friar, like similar mendicants in our own day, whilst preaching the evil of riches, is anxious to make a collection! and the relic-mongering pardoner is ridiculed as having "the great toe of the Holy Family, which, when put in the mouth, is an infallible cure for the toothache. Next comes the *bon grace*, and French head of Our Lady: and, lastly, the blessed jawbone of All-saints!" In the "Merry Play between John the Husband, Tyb the Wife, and Sir John the Priest," he is not more favourable to the regular clergy than he is in his other pieces to the mendicant orders. Sir John the Priest is one of those numerous "spiritual pastors and masters" who are so ably described by Shakspere, where Ophelia says to her brother Laertes ("Hamlet," act i., scene 3rd):—

"Do not, as some ungracious pastors do,
Show me the steep and thorny way to Heaven;
Whilst, like a puff'd and reckless libertine,

> Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads,
> And recks not his own rede"

Tyb is completely the tyrant over her poor soulless husband, who is indeed "the greatest slave in life," and one of those for whom glorious Robert Burns has an epitaph well suiting:—

> "As father Adam first was fool'd,
> A case that's still too common,
> Here lies a man a woman ruled;
> The devil ruled the woman."

Tyb commands her husband to invite the priest (with whom she has been previously drinking, and so forth) to dinner, and he dare not refuse to obey her. John is then ordered to fetch water, that his wife and the priest may wash their hands before eating, but he returns complaining that the pail will not hold water; and whilst he is engaged in repairing it with the wax they have given him for the purpose, they eat up all the pie before his face. He throws down the pail in a rage, and they both set upon him, and beat him brutally; after which they retire "to make him a cuckold," as they have often done before.—But the most celebrated of John Heywood's dramas is the "Four P's," which is a dialogue between a palmer, a pardoner, a potticary, and a pedlar, and which Warton never could have read, or he would not have pronounced it "destitute of plot, humour, or character." Those strolling fanatics, the palmers, are severely ridiculed for making useless pilgrimages to dead men's tombs, all over the world; and the character he has drawn of the pardoner is a rich satire on the whole tribe of sin-shriving impostors.

> "Right seldom is it seen, or never,
> That Truth and pardoners dwell together!"

says the enraged palmer, when the pardoner tells him that he could have absolved him from his sins without any of his long and weary wanderings. And the pardoner, like a real impostor, shows him his trumpery relics:—"Here is the blessed jaw-bone of Allhallows! the great toe of the Trinity! the rump-bone of the Pentecost! the slipper of the Seven Sleepers! an eye-tooth of the Grand Turk! a box of the very bees which stung mother Eve when she ate the forbidden fruit! a glass of the very liquor served up at the wedding of Adam and Eve!" This language may sound profane to modern Christians; and yet—such is ever the blindness of bigots—while the

Romish church was burning pious protestants by wholesale, John Heywood, who was helping the Reformation with a giant's might, was looked upon, at popish courts, as a good Romanist! My limits prevent me from quoting at any great length; but we see how admirably he has depicted the roguish pardoner in the following six lines:—

> "With small cost, and without any pain,
> These pardons bring them to Heaven plain:
> Give me but a penny, or two pence,
> And as soon as the soul departeth hence,
> In half an hour, or three quarters at most,
> The soul is in Heaven with the Holy Ghost!"

But as they cannot agree amongst themselves which has the most merit, the pedlar proposes that each of them shall try to excel the other in the art of lying, to which he knows they are all greatly addicted:—

> "And all ye there can lie as well
> As can the falsest devil in Hell."

The pardoner's tale of his journey to Purgatory, where, with his indulgencies in his fist, he could "do there what he list;" how he "knocked and was let in quickly," and "how low the souls made curtesy," whilst he, charitable priest! who would not liberate them without pay,

> ——— "to every soul again
> Did give a beck them to retain!"

for he was searching for the soul of one Margery Coorson, whom he did not find there;

> "Then fear'd he much it was not well:
> Alas, thought he, she is in Hell!
> For with her life he was so acquainted
> That sure he thought she was not sainted;"

how with his "pardons of all degrees" he "liberated a soul that lay for his fees;" how the liberated soul went to Heaven, whilst the indefatigable pardoner posted "from thence to Hell that night," to gain Margery's liberation,—

> "Not as who saith by authority,
> But by the way of entreaty;"

how "the devil that kept the gate" and the pardoner "were of old acquaintance,—

> "For oft in the play of Corpus Christi
> He had play'd the devil at Coventry;"

how his friend, the devil-porter, showed him "right friendly favour," and introduced him to the infernal court of "Lucifer, by the power of God, chief devil of Hell," and how it happened to be the very anniversary of the ex-archangel's fall; how the pardoner's request was then and there granted; and the exquisite description of the festival of the fiends;—all this is worthy of a Dante's or a Milton's muse, mixed with the pleasant humour of a Cervantes or a Rabelais. Take, for instance, the following extract, which must conclude my notice of "merry John Heywood," whose name is too oft passed over with unmerited contempt:—

"This devil and I walk'd arm in arm
So far till he had brought me thither,
Where all the devils of hell together
Stood in a row, in such apparel
As for that day there meetly fell.
Their horns well gilt, their claws full clean,
Their tails well kempt, and, as I ween,
With sothery butter their bodies anointed:
I never saw devils so well appointed.
The master devil sat in his jacket,
And all the souls were playing at racket.
None other rackets they had in hand,
Save every soul a good firebrand,
Wherewith they play'd so prettily
That Lucifer laugh'd merrily;
And all the residue of the fiends
Did laugh thereat full well like friends."

The above description is unequalled by anything in the Visions of Quevedo. The pardoner bears off the palm, as the greatest liar of the "Four P's."

The principle event of importance in the political world is the marriage of Mary, Queen of Scots, (July 27th,) to Lord Darnley, son of the Earl of Lennox; an event which caused a formidable insurrection in Scotland. "He was Mary's cousin-german," says Hume, "by the Lady Margaret Douglas, niece to Harry VIII., and daughter of the Earl of Angus, by Margaret, Queen of Scotland. * * * He was also, by his father, a branch of the same family with herself; and would, in espousing her, preserve the royal dignity in the house of Stuart. He was, after her, next heir to the crown of England; and those who pretended to exclude her on account of her being a foreigner, had endeavoured to recommend his title, and give it the preference. It seemed no inconsiderable advantage that she could, by marrying, unite both their claims; and as he was

by birth an Englishman, and could not by his power or alliances, give any ground of suspicion to Elizabeth, it was hoped that the proposal of this marriage would not be unacceptable to that jealous princess." But although it is said that Elizabeth at first favoured this alliance, "no sooner did she learn that the Queen of Scots was taken with his figure and person, and that all measures were fixed for espousing him, than she exclaimed against the marriage; sent Throgmorton to order Darnley immediately, upon his allegiance, to return to England; threw the Countess of Lennox and her second son into the Tower, where they suffered a rigorous confinement; seized all Lennox's English estate; and though it was impossible for her to assign one single reason for her displeasure, she menaced, and protested, and complained, as if she had suffered the most grievous injury in the world." Darnley was a comely looking young man, some twenty years old, and the day after his marriage was proclaimed king; but as both he and Mary were favourable to the Romish faith, great excitement prevailed amongst the protestants. John Knox, preaching before Darnley, then styled King Henry, openly told his hearers that "God set over them, for their offences and ingratitude, boys and women."

Nor was it the marriage of Mary and Darnley alone that engrossed political attention in England; for Maximilian the Second, Emperor of Germany, had sent his ambassador once more to solicit the hand of Elizabeth for his brother, Charles of Austria. The Earl of Sussex and one party in the court were in favour of the match; whilst her favourite, the Earl of Leicester, and another party, were formidably opposed to it; so that the courtiers were split into factions, and mutually hated each other.

"See the honour done at this time to Queen Elizabeth," says Sir Richard Baker, "not much inferior to the honour done to Solomon by the Queen of Sheba; for now Cecil, the sister of Eric King of Sweden, and wife of Christopher Marquis of Baden, being great with child, came from the farthest part of the north, (a long journey,) thorow Germany, of purpose to see her, for the great fame she had heard of her wisdom. At her being here she was delivered of a child, to whom, in requital of her kindness, Queen Elizabeth was godmother, and named him Edwardus Fortunatus; giving to her and her husband, besides royal entertainment, a yearly pension. At this time also, for the great fame of her wisdom, Donald mac Carti More, a great potentate of Ireland, came and delivered up into her hands all his most ample territories; and then receiving them

again from her, to hold them to him and his heirs, males lawfully begotten; and for want of such issue, to remain to the crown of England. The queen in requital invested him with the honour of Earl of Glenkare, and Baron of Valence; and, besides many presents given him, paid the charges of his journey."

In the religious world, the puritans increase in numbers and in influence, despite of the persecution of the prelacy, and number in their ranks men of undoubted learning and piety. At Cambridge, Thomas Cartwright, a learned professor in that university, and three hundred students, throw off their surplices in one day. Bishops they regard as a worse than useless incumbrance to the church; a remnant of popery that ought to be abolished; and maintain that the true apostolical form of church-government consists not in a proud and extravagant prelacy, that "rear their mitred fronts in courts and parliaments," but in republican simplicity.—In the Netherlands, the Spaniards—ever a proud and cruel people—establish the accursed Inquisition, to destroy the reformed religion by fire and steel. But tyranny is ever short-sighted. Though Philip II. sends his "best of cut-throats," the Duke of Alva, with a numerous army of soldiers and executioners, they are all too weak to suppress the doctrines of Luther. Many merchants and mechanics escape to England, and settle down at Norwich, where they commence various descriptions of woollen manufactures, in which they are greater proficients than our English workmen, and they are admitted to the freedom of the city. Amongst their number is a printer, named Anthony de Solempne, who erects the first printing-press in Norwich, like a brave man as he was,—honour to his name. The patient Dutchmen, goaded to revolt, will at length achieve their independence.

Glancing for a moment at the literary men in foreign parts, we shall find the young and hopeful Torquato Tasso, now just arrived at manhood, with a fame spread throughout Italy by the publication of his epic poem of "Rinaldo," four years before, attending the splendid fetes at Ferrara, given in October, in honour of the nuptials of the Duke Alphonso and an Archduchess of Austria, whither he has been sent by his patron, the Cardinal Ludovica, of Este, who is brother to the duke. The beautiful sisters of the cardinal, Lucretia and Leonora, present the young poet to their brother Alphonso, who receives him so kindly that he determines, when his poem of the "Conquest of Jerusalem" is completed, to dedicate it to the duke. Bright

and glowing are now the prospects of Tasso; but, alas! alas! the lovely Leonora, whose gentle eyes now beam so kindly on the poet, is doomed to be the (perhaps innocent) cause of all his woes. The friendship which now begins, will in the course of years grow to strongest love, and the harsh conventionalities of the world—its unholy distinctions of caste or rank—will present an insuperable barrier between them, which will for ever forbid their union; and poor Tasso now little dreams that, fourteen years after this, he will be imprisoned in the hospital of St. Ann, as a raving lunatic!—In Denmark, we find Tycho Brahe, the famous but superstitious astronomer, returning home, and losing his nose in a quarrel with one of the nobility, so that he has to procure an artificial one, cunningly made, to escape observation!—Conrad Gesner, "the Pliny of Germany," this year pays the debt of nature, aged forty-nine years. He was born of poor parents, at Zurich, in 1516, where he afterwards taught a school. Besides rendering great services to his countrymen in the sciences of botany and zoology, he published a full catalogue of all writers extant, in three languages, Latin, Greek, and Hebrew, a work requiring great learning and industry. He was ennobled the year before his death.—Abraham Bloemart, the Dutch landscape painter, was this year born at Gorcum; Alexander Tassoni, an Italian comic-epic poet, at Modena; and, in our own country, John Spotiswood, successively Archbishop of Glasgow and of St. Andrews, the author of a "History of the Church of Scotland," and one of those who attempted to fasten the episcopal yoke on the necks of the Scottish people.

SHAKSPERE'S THIRD YEAR.

A.D. 1566. Once more there is anxiety in the house of Master John Shakspere, at Stratford-upon-Avon; the mid-wife and the gossips are assembled; and the worthy alderman is again enabled to thank God for the birth of a son, who is baptized by the name of Gilbert. William is no longer the monopolist of Mary Shakspere's maternal love; but then, is he not old enough to climb his father's knee, or to gambol, in all the innocent glee of happy child-hood, beneath the over-arching boughs of the fruit trees in the orchard? And Mary Shakspere has now two cherub boys, to wean her from her sorrow for the death of her two infant girls, Jane and Margaret, her first-born. Is it

too much to imagine the good dame sitting beneath the summer foliage, or around the log-piled hearth, with little Gilbert smiling in her lap; whilst "gentle Willy," following the infallible dictates of nature, ever and anon impresses his spontaneous kisses on his infant brother's velvet cheeks; kisses which the fond mother repays fourfold, for her heart once more is brimful of joy.

> "Ah, happy Childhood! thou art ever free
> From the sad plight of unproductive years.
> Thy temple is the cloister'd canopy,
> Thy anthems are the music of the spheres;
> And thy young soul goes forth in storm and shine,
> Nor doubts the deep religion; but reposes
> With sweet and holy trustfulness divine,
> In every marvellous truth which Nature's book discloses."
>
> GEORGE S. PHILLIPS.

Of Gilbert Shakspere no other record now remains, but the brief registry of his baptism. "I have no doubt," says Skottowe, "that Gilbert lived till after the Restoration of Charles II., and was that brother of Shakspere of whom Oldys reports, that he saw the dramatist perform the character of Adam in 'As You Like It.'" "The register, indeed," says the same author, "mentions the burial of 'Gilbert Shakspere, adolescens,' in 1611-12, who might, or might not, have been the son of the elder Gilbert." Verily, there is something melancholy in the brief histories of a parish register! What reveries they give rise to, as one looks upon them in an idle hour! how imagination tries to depict the beings whose entrance or exit from the stage of life they chronicle! and when one is in a contemplative mood—a state of mind they are indeed apt to beget—how touching, to a feeling heart, is the less than "tombstone information" they give. "Every line," as Walker Ord well observes, "chronicles a whole life, its fears, hopes, enjoyments, aspirations. What a record of humanity—what heart-histories—what wondrous biography!" And such is all the history we now possess of Gilbert, the brother of William Shakspere! We may *guess* him to have been a player like his eldest brother, William, and his youngest brother, Edmund; but all that we can with any safety conjecture of him, is—

> "That joy, and grief, and hope, and fear,
> Alternate triumphed in his breast;
> His bliss and wo—a smile, a tear!
> Oblivion hides the rest.

"The bounding pulse, the languid limb,
The changing spirits' rise and fall;
We know that these were felt by him,
For these are felt by all."

JAMES MONTGOMERY.

Whether or not Gilbert Shakspere (whose birth we have just noticed) ever lived to become the friend and companion of his renowned brother when he had arrived at man's estate, certain it is that a child was born in London, on the first of September, this year, who not only became both, but a player as well,—the greatest actor of his age, Edward Alleyn, well known as the munificent founder of Dulwich College, Camberwell. He was born in Lombard-street, in the parish of All-Hallows, of parents well to do in the world, from whom he derived some small fortune. Thomas Heywood, the dramatist, speaking of Alleyn's merit as an actor, calls him,—

"Proteus for shapes, and Roscius for a tongue."

Ben Johnson addressed to him an epigram, which thus concludes:—

——"others spake, but only thou dost act.
Wear this renown: 't is just that who did give
So many poets life, by one should live."

Fuller says that he "made any part, especially a majestical one, become him." And a letter of George Peele, (who was a dramatic poet of great celebrity in his day, and a brother-actor and shareholder with Shakspere in the Blackfriars theatre,) has been preserved, from which we learn, that at one of the merry meetings of Shakspere, Ben Jonson, and Alleyn, "royal Ben" told "gentle Willy" that he was indebted to his observation of their friend Alleyn's acting for the excellent directions which he has made Hamlet give to the players in the opening of act iii., scene 2nd, of that tragedy. One of his most famous parts was that of Barabas, in Kit Marlow's "Rich Jew of Malta," in which character he is said to have won for himself the title of Peerless. Nor was fame, or celebrity in his own day, the only recompense he received for his acting; for the player was a more lucrative profession at that time than was that of dramatic author. Alleyn built the Fortune theatre near Whitecross-street, Moorfields, which a writer towards the end of the seventeenth century describes as "a large, round, brick building;" and of this he was sole proprietor. It was said that he found some treasure in

the ground, whilst laying the foundations of this theatre, which "treasure trove" he was wise enough to keep towards the expenses of the building. He was also whole or part proprietor of the Bankside bear-garden in Southwark, which is said to have sometimes yielded him five hundred pounds a year,—a large sum in those days. In addition to this, he purchased, from Sir William Steward, in the reign of James I., the office of "Chief Master, Ruler, and Overseer of all and singular his Majesty's games of bears, and bulls, and mastive dogs, and mastive bitches." For bear-baiting was a popular sport, patronised by many of our monarchs, and kept its ground even for many years after Shakspere had given his dramas to the world; for the march of civilization is slow, though sure. We find bear-baiting in England even as early as the reign of Henry II., and as late as that of Queen Anne; but it appears to have been most popular, and most under royal patronage, from the time of Henry VIII., to that of James I. Our Spanish friends seem determined to keep up those brutal sports to the last, for fear their country should be mistaken for a civilized one. It is satisfactory to us, that in our own nation they are but existing in the pages of history, as things that were. One cannot but feel a greater antipathy to those amusements that cause pain to the brute creation, from a knowledge that good and wise men have failed to perceive the cruelty of such pastimes. Alleyn was a pious man, and devoutly thanked God for his income from the bear-garden, even after he had devoted all his wealth to the pious purpose of founding the hospital at Dulwich, which he called "The College of God's gift." Though he was twice married, (or, according to the college tradition, thrice) he left no issue. He died on the 25th of November, 1626, aged sixty years, and was buried in the chapel of his own college: thus surviving his friend, Shakspere, ten years and six months. I have no doubt that he was one of the first to purchase a copy of his friend's collected dramas, at the publication of the folio, in 1623; and perhaps a tear might start into his eye when the engraved portrait of "gentle Willy," with whom he had spent so many happy hours, met his eye.

The secular drama—where the great mission of the inspired Shakspere is to lay—"grows with his growth, and strengthens with his strength." Still's comedy of "Gammer Gurton's Needle," which, like Udall's "Ralph Royster Doyster," is written in rhyme, is this year acted at Christ's Church, Cambridge; and, at Oxford, we find Queen Elizabeth witnessing the performance of the first English tragedy

on a classical subject,—"Damon and Pythias," written by a learned member of that university, Richard Edwards, who holds the office of court-musician and poet; and in London we have George Gascoigne and Francis Lincwelmerse translating, or rather paraphrasing, a tragedy of Euripides ("The Phœnisses,") which they style "Jocasta," and which is this year acted in the hall,—as is also a comedy adapted from Ariosto, the great Italian poet, called "The Supposes."

In the churchwarden's accounts of the parish of St. Helen, in Abingdon, Berkshire, there is this year an entry of eighteen pence, paid for setting up Robin Hood's bower. Already had the fine old legends of the outlawed patriot become "the English ballad-singer's joy," and "familiar in men's mouths as household words." Even in the Morris-dance and the May-games we find him and his Maid Marion personified; and, in the latter sport, bold Robin is substituted for the lord of the May, and Marian leads the dance as queen or lady of the same. How heartily the people entered into those pastimes in the youth of Shakspere's father, and when Mary Arden was a blooming young woman at Willmecote,

"In maiden meditation, fancy free,"

is evident from the following passage in a sermon preached by Bishop Latimer before Edward VI.:—"Coming," says the good bishop, "to a certain town, on a holiday, to preach, I found the church door fast locked. I tarried there half an hour and more, and at last the key was found, and one of the parish comes to me, and says, 'Sir, this is a busy day with us, we cannot hear you; it is Robin Hood's day: the parish are gone abroad to gather for Robin Hood; I pray you let [hinder] them not.' I was fain, therefore, to give place to Robin Hood; I thought my rochet would have been regarded; but it would not serve; it was fain to give place to Robin Hood's men." According to Hall, the historian—with whose works Shakspere was well acquainted in manhood, and in all probability had been so from his boyhood—Henry VIII., in the first year of his reign, had himself personated Robin Hood, and, attended by twelve of his nobles, who represented his "merrymen," dressed from top to toe in green, and armed with bow and arrows, sword and buckler, rushed suddenly into the chamber where Queen Catharine and her ladies were sitting, to the no small dismay of the queen and her attendants. Happy Henry! avarice, lust, and cruelty had not then curdled the "milk of human kindness" in his young breast.

Shakspere—the child Shakspere—with what delight would he listen to the then familiar legends of bold Robin Hood's prowess, told by his gentle mother, sitting in the ingle-nook; how he would picture to himself the sylvan retreats of the glorious outlaws, until he half longed to "live," as his own Adam says in "As You Like It," "like the old Robin Hood of England."

A folio edition of the English Bible was this year printed at Rouen, in France, but as I have generally modernised the spelling in my quotations from old authors, the title is here given in the original orthography:—"The Byble in Englyshe, of the largest and greatest volume, that is to saye, the contentes of all the Holy Scripture, booth of the Oulde and Newe Testament, according to the translation apoynted by the Queenes Majesties Injunctions, to be read in all churches within her Majesties Realme. At Rouen, at the cost and chargis of Richard Carmarden." Venerable Bede's Ecclesiastical History, written in Latin, at the monastery of Jarrow, near Gateshead, eight hundred and thirty-five years before—a work which the wise Alfred the Great had himself translated for our Anglo-Saxon ancestors—was now rendered into English by Thomas Stapleton, and printed at Antwerp. The "Epigrams" of John Heywood were this year given to the reading public by the English press; and the printing of "Almanacs" had already commenced in London,—a practice that prevailed in Poland nearly a century before. The arbitrary court of Star-chamber has commenced its unholy crusade against the liberty of the press, and on the twenty-ninth of June issues an ordinance, to which the ecclesiastical commissioners also affix their signatures, ordering heavy pains and penalties on all who print, or cause to be printed, such books as they may disapprove: the very binders and sewers of such books to be fined for every copy twenty shillings,—a goodly sum when a gallon of the best French wine might be had for a shilling, a quarter of veal for two shillings, a loin of mutton for a shilling, a fat goose for eighteen-pence, a gallon of cream for one-and-fourpence, and six rabbits for one-and-tenpence; and this too in the very metropolis!

In Scotland, dark deeds are done in the land. The Italian musician, David Rizzio, who since his arrival at Holyrood-house, in 1564, had become the great favourite and secretary of Mary, now excites the jealousy of the king, and provokes the enmity of the rough Scottish nobles, and a conspiracy is formed for his assassination. Buchanan thus describes the murder:—

"When the queen was at supper, in a narrow private room, the

Earl of Argyle's lady and Rizzio sitting with her, as they were wont, and only a few attendants, for the room would not hold many, James Douglas, Earl of Morton, with a great number of his friends, were walking in an outer chamber, their faithful friends and vassals being commanded to stay below in the yard, to quiet the tumult, if any should occur. The king then came out of his own chamber, which was below that of the queen, and went up to her by a narrow pair of stairs, that was open to none but himself; while Patrick Ruthven followed him armed, with only four or five companions at most. They entered into the parlour where the party sat at supper, and the queen, being somewhat moved at this unusual appearance of armed men, and also perceiving Ruthven haggard and lean by reason of his late disease, and yet in his armour, asked him what was the matter? For the spectators thought that his fever had disturbed his head, and put him beside himself. He, without answering, commanded Rizzio to rise, and come forth; for the place he sat in was not fit for him. The queen presently rose, and sought to defend him by the interposition of her own person; but the king took her in his arms, and bade her take courage, for that they would do her no hurt, as it was only the death of that villain that was resolved on. While this passed, Rizzio was drawn out into the next, and then into the outer chamber; where those who waited with Douglas despatched him at last, after giving him many wounds; which was against the mind of all those who at first conspired his death, for they had resolved to have hung him up publicly, as knowing that such a sight would be a grateful spectacle to all the people."

The assassination of Rizzio took place on the ninth of March; fifty-six stabs being inflicted upon him. Some of the principal murderers fled to England, and were received by Elizabeth. Rizzio, it is said, did much towards refining the Scottish music.—On the nineteenth of June—little more than three months after her favourite's assassination—Mary was delivered of a son, afterwards, James the Sixth of Scotland; and whom, on the death of Elizabeth, we shall see ascending the throne of England, by the title of King James the First.

Amongst the deaths of illustrious men this year, I may mention that of John Agricola, (or, more properly, Schnitter,) the German theologian, who was the son of a a tailor at Eisleben, where he was born in 1492; Annibale Caro, the accomplished Italian author, and translator of several of the classics; and Mark Jerome Vida, author of the "Christiad" and other poems, who was born at Cremona, in Italy, in the year 1490, and died at Alva, of which he was bishop, on the twenty-seventh of September.

SHAKSPERE'S FOURTH YEAR.

A.D. 1567. THE ill feeling at the Scottish court still continues. Darnley, who by his marriage with Mary had nominally become King of Scotland, is murdered on the 9th of February, by a brutal nobleman named Bothwell, who, having in the interval divorced his own wife, was married to the fair and frail Mary on the 15th of May following. One may say of this indecent alliance, as Hamlet says to his friend Horatio touching another :—

> "The funeral baked meats
> Did coldly furnish forth the marriage tables."
> Hamlet, act i., scene 2nd.

No marvel that the patricians and plebians of Scotland should alike take umbrage at such proceedings. On the twenty-ninth of July the infant prince was crowned at Stirling, by the title of King James the Sixth, he being then only thirteen months and eight days old.—The learned George Buchanan, who has been chosen tutor to the young prince, the infant monarch, is now made moderator to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, and the principal of St. Leonard's college, at St. Andrews, where he teaches moral philosophy to his young countrymen. This year, the venerable scholar also accompanies his former pupil, the Earl of Murray, into England, and writes encomiastic verses on Elizabeth, by which he gains the favour of the English queen—herself a poet and accomplished scholar—who bestows upon him a pension of one hundred pounds sterling a-year.—Elizabeth, who will not give her hand to the Duke of Austria, now holds her court at time-honoured Woodstock, in Oxfordshire; a place famous alike in history and romance, from the days of Alfred the Great; and where Elizabeth herself, when a prisoner, only twelve years before, had wooed the Muses, as Chaucer of old had done on the same spot. Witness the following verses "writ with charcoal on a shutter," when her sister Mary had her shut up in the manor-house, or palace, under the jailorship of Sir Henry Beddingfield :—

> "Oh, Fortune! how thy restless, wavering state,
> Hath fraught with cares my troubled wit!
> Witness this present prison, whither Fate
> Could bear me, and the joys I quit.

"Thou causedest the guilty to be loosed
From bands, wherein are innocents inclosed:
Causing the guiltless to be straight reserved,
And freeing those that death hath well deserved.

"But by her envy can be nothing wrought;
So God send to my foes all they have thought.
"A.D. MDLV. Elizabeth, Prisoner."

On the seventh of June we find Sir Thomas Gresham laying the foundation-stone of a bourse for the merchants in London, in imitation of that at Antwerp; and so originating our Royal Exchange. Francis Drake, now only twenty-two years of age, and whose whole experience of maritime affairs has hitherto been confined to a few voyages between England and France, or to Ireland, in a coasting vessel, receives the command of a ship under his relative, Sir John Hawkins, and distinguishes himself by his valour against the Spaniards, in the harbour of Vera Cruz; an unfortunate expedition, in which the youthful hero lost all he possessed, indomitable perseverance alone excepted.—In Ireland, unhappy Ireland, we have Shane O'Neil in open rebellion; and the Earls of Ormond and Desmond at war with each other for lands which are properly the property of the community. The strong arm of English Might, however, can suppress them all.—Richard Hooker, now in his fifteenth year, is sent to Corpus Christi College, Oxford, by Bishop Jewel, who recommends him to the care of Dr. John Cole, one of Miles Coverdale's assistants in the translation of the Bible.

John Stow now publishes another edition of his "Summary of English Chronicles," in the epistle dedicatory prefixed to which, his rival, Richard Grafton—a printer who had turned author, without the requisite qualifications for the work—is somewhat roughly castigated. "Truth's quarrel it is," says Stow, "I lay before you, the which hath been (if not hitherto wholly permitted) truly miserably handled, mangled I should say, and such a hotch-pot made of truth and lies together, that of the ignorant in histories, the one could not be discerned of the other. A strange case it is, and negligence shall I call it, or ignorance, that he that was moved to write for pity's sake, to restore the truth to her integrity, should commit so great errors, and so many, that he himself had need of a corrector, and truth of a new labourer. For me, a heap of old monuments, witnesses of times, and bright beams of the truth, can testify that I have not swerved from the truth; the which, as I am ready at all times to show for

mine own safe conduct against the adversaries, so am I most certain that he that pretendeth most hath had very small store of authors for himself before time, and now hath fraught his mannerly 'Manual' with such merchandize (as to you it shall be most manifest at your conference), that by the buying of my 'Summary,' he scoured newly, or cleanly altered his old 'Abridgement.'" Stow had published the first edition of his "Summary" in 1561, and in 1562 Grafton brought out his rival work, "An Abridgement of the Chronicles of England," compiled chiefly from Hall; and both Stow and Grafton seem to have issued small editions almost annually. In the present year, Grafton had altered the title of his work from "Abridgement" to "Manual," as the foregoing extract shows, and made rather free with Stow's labours, which was too bad. Hence Stow punningly alludes to the "thundering noise of empty *tons* and unfruitful *graffes* [grafts] of Momus' offspring"—for the printers in that day all used woodcut devices in the books they printed, which were generally rebuses or puns upon their own names; and that of Grafton was a *tun* or cask, with a *grafted* fruit-tree growing out of the bung-hole, and the Scripture motto, "By their fruits ye shall know them." Grafton, though inferior to Stow as a historian, was equal to him as a punster, and accordingly retaliated with a sneer at "the memories of superstitious fables and lies, foolishly *Stowed* away." Although one can enjoy those bandyings of witticisms at one another, there is always something sorrowful in the contemplation of the quarrels of literary men. Whilst there is so much work for all to do, in aiding the cause of human progress, and but a few short years allowed us for our own spiritual developement before we are summoned to eternity, why should we stand here throwing foul epithets at each other, and defiling so fair a planet as the Earth undoubtedly is, with our infernal hatreds? "Hate," says the eloquent January Searle, "is a fearful weapon to handle: let us bury it with the Indian tomahawk, and smoke the pipe of peace in the great wigwam of the world." To Richard Grafton belongs the merit of printing Tyndale's translation of the New Testament, in 1526, at Antwerp, at a time when it was heresy in England to possess a copy, and when ignorant monks were denouncing the art of printing, as an invention of the devil! "We must root out printing," said the vicar of Croydon, in Surrey, "or printing will root out us!"

But printing is not fated to be rooted out. New works, and editions of old ones, teem from the press, amongst

which, this year, we have a "History of Italy," by one W. Thomas, containing a section "On the liberty of strangers at Venice," from which Shakspere is afterwards supposed to have derived some information, used in his comedy of the "Merchant of Venice;" as, for instance, where Antonio, "the fool that lent out money gratis!" as unhappy Shylock has it, tells his friend Salarino (act iii., scene 3rd,) that,—

> "The duke cannot deny the course of law;
> For the commodity that strangers have
> With us in Venice, if it be denied,
> Will much impeach the justice of the state;
> Since that the trade and profit of the city
> Consisteth of all nations."

Brave John Stow, aided by Archbishop Parker, causes the chronicle of Matthew of Westminster, a Benedictine monk of the fourteenth century, to be printed. For time was when the monastery was the only refuge of learning, and the sacerdotal order were the only historians and men of letters. "These honourable pioneers of truth," says Walker Ord, "the sole lights of a dark and dreary age, although dwelling amid 'evil tongues and evil men,' preserved alive and brilliant the pure flame of literature; and through all the blind bigotry of early superstition, and the fierce rage of crusading zeal, and the barbarous manners and occupations of savage times, still maintained in due estimation the noble writings of the fathers, and beautifully transcribed into their parchment-missals,* the immortal remains of the poets, philosophers, and historians of Greece and Rome. These men—men of pure and lofty intellect, such as Cedmon, Alcuin, and Bede—upheld in their solitary, arduous, and unselfish exertions by the generous liberality of their monastic patrons (and not, as now, spurned by the wealthy and great, or pitilessly left to languish in poverty and obscurity, exposed to all 'the stings and arrows of outrageous fortune,') were appointed to record the principal occurrences of the kingdom, and to form those faithfully-accurate chronicles from which all the larger and more elaborate histories of the empire have subsequently been compiled."

Another work, with which Shakspere in after life became well acquainted, was "Painter's Palace of Pleasure," from which our bard is said to have derived some assistance in composing his poem of the "Rape of Lucrece," and his tragedy of "Timon of Athens." It was on a novel in

* See note D.

the "Palace of Pleasure," entitled "Giletta of Narbonne," that Shakspere founded the plot of his comedy of "All's Well that Ends Well;" a novel which Painter had derived from the celebrated "Decameron" of Giovanni Boccaccio, —a famous poet and the greatest of all the prose-writers of Italy, the friend of Petrarch, and the contemporary of our own Gower and Chaucer. Indeed, Chaucer appears to have in some measure copied the plan of the "Decameron" in his "Canterbury Tales;" though the Italian poet has given his stories in the choicest prose, whilst those of good old Chaucer, are in noble rhyme. Some other of Chaucer's poems were imitations, or partly translations, of Boccaccio. It is a pleasant thing thus to contemplate the writers of one country contributing, directly and indirectly, to enrich the literature of another. Such contemplations are calculated to destroy those unnatural national animosities with which the foolish people of one country regard those of another; as though the wide ocean was not sufficient separation, but Ignorance—which the wise Shakspere so truly calls "the curse of God"—must erect her barriers of hate! An illustrious English writer, in his "Letter to the Abbe Raynal," written at a time when it was considered patriotism to hate every other country but our own, and France especially was regarded as our "natural enemy!" —very beautifully observed:—"Letters, the tongue of the world, have in some measure brought all mankind acquainted, and by an extension of their uses, are every day promoting some new friendship. Through them distant nations become capable of conversation, and losing by degrees the awkwardness of strangers, and the moroseness of suspicion, they learn to know and understand each other. Science, the partisan of no country, but the beneficent patroness of all, has liberally opened a temple where all may meet. Her influence on the mind, like the sun on the chilled earth, has long been preparing it for higher cultivation and further improvement. The philosopher of one country sees not an enemy in the philosopher of another: he takes his seat in the temple of Science, and asks not who sits beside him."

This year was born Robert Devereux, the celebrated Earl of Essex, of whom more mention will be made in another part of this work.

SHAKSPERE'S FIFTH YEAR.

A. D. 1568. MASTER JOHN SHAKSPERE still advances in the little corporation of Stratford-on-Avon, being this year chosen to fill the office of high-bailiff, or chief magistrate. His son, William, now in his fifth year, was, in all probability, mastering his English alphabet, either under the tuition of his own good mother, or at the best dame's school in their pleasant little market-town. And it is worthy of the consideration of the young, and of all the working-classes, whom the unreasonable hours of toil leave but short time for mental culture, that there was a time in the life of every man and woman, however great their genius or deep their learning, when they did not know how to read the simplest book. A sinewy man, trying to learn his A B C, is a more glorious sight than one whose early education has been neglected, and who on that account is ashamed to learn! Without some little book-learning, the sublime thoughts of the wise Shakspere could never become our thoughts; nor the thoughts of ancient and contemporary writers have become his thoughts; and every man and woman of common sense will regret any want of proper schooling that may have been their untoward fate. But Shakspere—who doubtless had a good school education, though, as a German critic, Augustus William Schlegel, well remarks, he was "poor in dead school-cram"—possessed a better education than that merely of the schools. To our mothers we are, most of us, more indebted for both moral and mental training than we are, perhaps, apt to think; and that William Shakspere both received a good training from his mother, and felt it too, must be evident to every true reader of his dramas. I have already alluded to his fine delineations of his female characters. Hear now what he has got to say about the ingratitude of children to their parents:—

> "Ingratitude! thou marble-hearted fiend,
> More hideous, when thou show'st thee in a child,
> Than the sea-monster."
>
> King Lear, act i., scene 4th.

And in the same scene, how awfully-grand is poor Lear's curse on his ungrateful daughter, Goneril, between whom and her sister Regan he had divided his kingdom, leaving himself, as his fool says, "a shealed peascod:"—

"Hear, Nature, hear; dear goddess, hear!
Suspend thy purpose, if thou didst intend
To make this creature fruitful!
Into her womb convey sterility!
Dry up in her the organs of increase;
And from her derogate body never spring
A babe to honour her! If she must teem,
Create her child of spleen; that it may live,
And be a thwart disnatured torment to her!
Let it stamp wrinkles in her brow of youth;
With cadent tears fret channels in her cheeks;
Turn all her mother's pains and benefits
To laughter and contempt; that she may feel
How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is
To have a thankless child!"

And in the fourth scene of the second act, after posting from the ungrateful and inhospitable Goneril, when he addresses the equally unkind Regan, whom he fondly hopes—

"better know'st
The offices of nature, bond of childhood,
Effects of courtesy, dues of gratitude,"

there is something so simply pathetic, that one is sure the dramatist well knew and felt the affection that should always exist between parent and child:—

"Beloved Regan,
Thy sister's naught. Oh, Regan, she hath tied
Sharp-tooth'd unkindness, like a vulture, here;
[Points to his heart.]
I can scarce speak to thee: thou'lt not believe
Of how depraved a quality—Oh, Regan!"

And then (act iii, scene 4th) when he is abroad on the barren heath, with Kent and the fool, exposed to "the pelting of the pitiless storm," how fine is the exclamation of Lear, who is indeed "a man more sinned against than sinning:"—

"When the mind's free,
The body's delicate: the tempest in my mind
Doth from my senses take all feeling else,
Save what beats there.—Filial ingratitude!
Is it not as this mouth should tear this hand
For lifting food to't?"

Well might the faithful Glo'ster, loyal to the last, tell the perfidious Regan, that he would see

"The winged vengeance overtake such children."

When Shakspere wrote the passages I have here quoted, his father had paid the debt of nature, and been in his grave some six years; whilst his mother would be an aged and infirm woman,—most probably upon her death-bed, for she died soon after. Have we here, then, no index to the heart of "gentle Willy" in his prosperity? But it is not as a man of forty-three years, the popular dramatist, the wealthy player, the friend of Lord Southampton, that we are now considering him; only these passages let us into the very heart of Shakspere, and prove, to my individual satisfaction at least, what good parents this boy Shakspere (for as such we are now to consider him) possessed in his Stratford home.

In the political world we have Mary, Queen of Scots, raising an army to oppose the arms of her rebellious subjects, defeated by Murray, flying to England for protection, and detained as a prisoner. We have also the commencement of a war with Spain, and the papists establish an English college at Douay, to supply England with their priests. In the church, the puritans create divisions; and a new and beautiful edition of the Bible is printed in London, revised by the bishops, under the auspices of Matthew Parker, the Archbishop of Canterbury. The engravings are curiously chosen,—portraits of Queen Elizabeth, and of her favourites, Leicester and Burleigh; and St. Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews is illustrated by a woodcut from the heathen, instead of the Christian mythology,—the story of Leda and Jupiter!—The English Bible is this year introduced into Scotland.

The poems of the brave Sir David Lyndsay, whose powerful pen was alike dreaded by the corruptionists in church and state, are now collected and given to the Scottish readers in a corrected edition; Sir David having died about thirteen years before.—From the English press we have "A new, merry, and witty comedy or interlude, newly imprinted, treating upon the history of Jacob and Esau, taken out of the first book of Moses, entitled Genesis." The secular drama continues to develope itself. "Tancred and Gismunda," the first English play known to be derived from an Italian novel, was this year acted before Elizabeth; and the play of "Like will to Like" was also produced this year.

John Stow being reported to the queen's council as a dangerous character, with heretical books in his possession, the bishop of London, Edmund Grindal, sends Watts his chaplain, a parson named Williams, and Bedel the clerk to the Ecclesiastical Commission, to search the study of the

historian. The result of their search is thus related by his editor, the Rev. John Strype :—

"That he had great collections of his own for the English Chronicles, wherein, as Watts signified to the bishop, he seemed to have bestowed much travel. They found also a great sort of old books printed; some fabulous, as of Sir Gregory Triamour, etc., and a great parcel of old MS. Chronicles, both in parchment and paper. And that besides he had miscellaneous tracts touching physic, surgery, and herbs, and medical recipts; and also fantastic popish books, printed in old time; and also others written in old English, in parchment. But another sort of books he had more modern; of which the said searchers thought fit to take an inventory, as likely most to touch him; and they were books lately set forth in the realm or beyond sea, in defence of papistry: which books, as the chaplain said, declared him a great fautor [favourer] of that religion," etc.

How Stow fared upon the occasion of this second accusation is not known, but we shall find him again accused in 1570. On his first accusation before the Star Chamber, in 1544, the perjured priest himself was sentenced to the pillory, and to have the letters F.A., for false accuser, branded on his cheek!

On the twentieth of May, died Miles Coverdale, formerly bishop of Exeter, a puritan, and translator of the Bible. He was born about the year 1486, in Yorkshire, became an Augustine monk, embraced protestant principles, and was an exile for his freedom of opinion. Protestantism triumphed in England, so he returned to his native land, and was made almoner, or distributer of alms, to Queen Catherine Parr. During Edward the Sixth's reign, he was promoted to the see of Exeter, of which he was deprived by cruel Mary, and thrown into prison; but, at the request of Christian III., of Denmark, he was liberated on condition of his leaving the kingdom. On Elizabeth ascending the throne, he returned to England, but refused his bishopric; he however accepted the small living of St. Magnus, near London-bridge, given him by Bishop Grindal; but he was deprived of that for nonconformity, and died in great poverty. He was interred in the church of St. Bartholomew, under the communion-table. He was a man of great learning, piety, and industry; had assisted Tyndale in his translation of the Pentateuch; and was the first who published a translation of the whole Bible in English, which he did in 1535. Honour to his name!

On the thirtieth of December, Roger Ascham, the learned tutor of Elizabeth, and afterwards her Latin secretary, died at the age of fifty-six years. His writings prove him to have been in advance of his age, and one is sorry to find

such a man addicted to dice and cock-fighting. He was a native of Kirby-Wiske, in the north riding of Yorkshire.

Whilst some men, in the economy of nature, are going down to their graves, there are ever others coming into the world to supply their place. Sir Richard Baker, the historian, and Sir Henry Wotton, the diplomatist, poet, and general author, were both born this year.—William Kay, the Dutch painter, died this year, aged forty-eight years, being born at Breda in 1520. Another Dutch painter, Miervelt, was this year born at Delft. There is a portrait from the pencil of each of them in the collection at Hampton Court.

SHAKSPERE'S SIXTH YEAR.

A.D. 1569. Robert Cooke, Clarencieux king-at-arms, now makes to Master John Shakspere, of Stratford-upon-Avon, a grant of arms, or armorial bearings; a proof of the rank he then held: his great grandfather having been rewarded with something more substantial by Henry VII., for his faithful services to that prince. "It is not difficult," says a pleasant writer, Charles Knight, "to imagine the youthful Shakspere sitting at his mother's feet, to listen to the tale of his 'antecessor's' prowess; or to picture the boy led by his father over the field of Bosworth,—to be shown the great morass which lay between both armies,—and Radmoor Plain, where the battle began,—and Dickon's Nook, where the tyrant harangued his army,—and the village of Dadlington, where the graves of the slain still indented the ground. Here was the scene of his antecessor's 'faithful and approved service.'"

The inhabitants of Shakspere's native town appear to have been amongst the greatest of the patrons of the secular drama. According to Skottowe, "no less than twenty visitations were made unto them by companies of comedians, between 1569, when Shakspere was five years old, and 1587. The names of Burbage and Green occur, both in the London companies of actors, and in the list of the townsmen of Stratford. From his earliest childhood, therefore, to his advancement into manhood, the attention of Shakspere was directed to the stage, by frequently recurring attraction, and in all probability, by an acquaintance and association with comedians. When a change of life became unavoidable, it is natural to suppose that he yielded to the predeliction of his youth. His fugitive steps

were directed to London; he there embraced the occupation of a player, and subsequently of a writer for the stage."—Between this year, 1569, of which I now write, when the father of the boy Shakspere is high bailiff or chief magistrate, and the year 1580, when Shakspere will have attained to sixteen years of age, seven different companies of players were engaged in the performance of the bailiff's plays, at Stratford-upon-Avon. Often, no doubt, had the future master of the English drama in his boyish days said, with his own Hamlet (act ii., scene 2nd):—"He that plays the king shall be welcome; his majesty shall have tribute of me; the adventurous knight shall use his foil and target; the lover shall not sigh gratis; the humorous man shall end his part in peace; the clown shall make those laugh whose lungs are tickled o' the sere; and the lady shall say her mind freely, or the blank verse shall halt for it." And if the youthful admirer of the drama asked, like Hamlet, "What players are they?" then might his father reply, like old Polonius:—"The best actors in the world, either for tragedy, comedy, history, pastoral, pastoral-comical, historical-pastoral, tragical-historical, tragical-comical-historical-pastoral, scene individable, or poem unlimited: Seneca cannot be too heavy, nor Plautus too light. For the law of writ, and the liberty, these are the only men." It was necessary, at that period, for every company of players to place themselves under the special patronage and protection of some high personage: thus the seven companies alluded to are respectfully called, the Queen's Players, the Earl of Leicester's, the Earl of Worcester's, the Earl of Warwick's, Lord Strange's, the Countess of Essex's, and the Earl of Derby's. Man is ever the creature of circumstances; and perhaps this never was more apparent than in the history of the world's greatest writer, William Shakspere. From his cradle was the greatest of all our dramatists familiar with that stage on which he was in future life so well to act his part, for his own profit and glory, and the good of the whole world. In his day, great was the demand for actors and dramatic literature; and it is easy to perceive how, to one of his fine poetic temperament, the stage would offer great attractions. What wonder, then, that when the follies of his youth and the enmity of a neighbouring Justice Shallow should compel him to seek his bread in some place far distant from that native town which all his life he seems so to have loved; what wonder, then, that the profession of an actor and a writer for the stage should become alike his necessity and his choice!—

About this time the first regular playhouse in England was opened in London, under the appropriate name of the Theatre: it stood in Blackfriars. Previous to the erection of regular theatres—which in 1633 had increased, according to the "Histrio-Mastix" of William Prynne, to no less than sixteen—the players performed on temporary stages, erected in such rooms or apartments as they could obtain for the purpose, or in large inn-yards, where the spectators surveyed them from the windows and galleries. Sunday afternoon was the principal time for dramatic performances,—devotion before dinner, and diversion after; and all female parts were performed by young men.

And now the Queen of England is excommunicated by the pope; and there is a great rebellion in the north, under the Earls of Northumberland and Westmoreland, to liberate the queen of Scots, and restore popery once more as the religion of the state. Eight hundred of the insurgents are executed on the rebellion being suppressed.—An act was passed this year for confiscating the estates of the great chieftain, Shane O'Neil, (who had rebelled against Elizabeth, and been treacherously murdered by some Scottish rovers, in whose camp he had sought refuge,) the preamble to which statute is a curiosity.—Edmund Bonner, of Smithfield notoriety died on the fifth of September, in the Marshalsea prison. His body was interred at night, to save it from the fury of the mob, in St. George's churchyard, Southwark. The son of a Worcestershire peasant, Bonner, by dint of tact and perseverance, had risen to the see of London, where he earned for himself everlasting notoriety, for sending to the stake all who had the temerity to doubt the dogmas of his religion. He was a man of a cruel and furious disposition, and was chosen by Henry VIII., to whom he was then chaplain, to go to Rome, to obtain the pope's confirmation of the divorce of Catharine of Arragon; on which occasion, it is said, Bonner was so anxious to serve his royal patron, having a bishopric in view, that he exasperated Clement VII. so much that the successor of St. Peter threatened to throw him into a cauldron of boiling lead!

England, whose commerce is yet in its infancy, now opens a trade to Persia, through Russia, and establishes the Hamburgh trade.

Death now robs the Portuguese of their classic poet, Antonio Ferreira, an elegant elegiac and epistolary writer, the admirer and imitator of Horace, and author of "Inez de Castro," the second regular tragedy that appeared after the revival of letters in Europe; the

"Sophonisba" of Trissino, an Italian poet, being the first. Men of letters in Portugal still regard Ferreira's tragedy as one of the choicest gems of their literature; a piece full of pathos, and distinguished by great purity of style.—Frederick von Schlegel—a critic whose acquaintance with Portuguese literature, however, as he himself admits, was very limited—pronounces "Inez de Castro" "cold and unworthy the melancholy grandeur of the theme;" that although "not altogether deficient in poetical ideas, . . . still beauty of diction or romantic feeling would here be sought for in vain." I believe that Portugal, though rich in chronicles, is poor in poetry; always excepting the undying lays of the unfortunate Camoens. Conrad Vorstius, an eminent divine, the son of a dyer, was this year born at Cologne. Persecution was his untoward fate; the "British Solomon," James I., acting towards him with all the hateful intolerance of an inquisitor of the "Holy Office."—Caravaggio, the celebrated painter, was also born this year: there are specimens of his works in the National Gallery, the Dulwich Gallery, and at Hampton Court.

SHAKSPERE'S SEVENTH YEAR.

A.D. 1570. On the twenty-third of January, the regent of Scotland, Murray, is shot in the belly, as he rides along the streets of Linlithgow. His character is thus beautifully given by Buchanan:—

"His death was lamented by all good men, especially the common people, who loved him when alive, and lamented his loss, as that of the public father of his country: for, besides his many other noble achievements, they called to mind that, not a year before, he had so quieted all the troublesome parts of the kingdom, that a man was as safe on the road, or at an inn, as in his own house. Even they who were disaffected to him when living, unaffectedly praised him when dead. They admired his valour in war, which was ever accompanied with the desire of peace; and his celerity in business was always so successful, that Divine Providence always seemed to shine on all his actions; and his clemency was as great in punishing, as his equity was conspicuous in legal decisions. When he had any spare time from war, he would sit all day in the college of judges; into which his presence struck such a reverence, that the poor were not oppressed by false accusations, nor tired out by long attendances, neither were their causes put off to gratify the rich. His house, like a holy temple, was free, not only from impiety, but even from wanton words; after dinner and supper, he always caused a chapter to be read out of the Bible; and, though he had constantly a learned man to interpret it,

yet if, as was frequently the case, there were eminent scholars present, whom he always respected, he would ask their opinions of it; not out of ostentation, but with a desire of knowledge, and to conform himself to its rules. He was in a manner too liberal; bestowing his bounty to many, and that often; his alacrity in giving, enhancing the value of the gift; besides which, that he might spare the modesty of those whom he assisted, he commonly relieved them very privately, with his own hand. In a word, he was honest and plain-hearted with his friends and domestics; and when any of them did amiss, he reproved them more sharply than he would strangers. Thus his manners, deportment, and innocency of life, made him dear and venerable, not only to his countrymen, but even to foreigners, especially the English, to whom, in all the vicissitudes of Providence, throughout his life, his virtues were more known than to any other nation."

It will seem strange to the reader now, to find a Scottish writer like Buchanan speaking of the English as foreigners; but in that day their sympathies were widely different, as all history will testify; and though on the ascension of James VI. of Scotland to the English throne the two monarchies became one, it was not until the 1st of May, 1707, that England and Scotland became a united kingdom, governed by one parliament, under the title of Great Britain. "After Murray's death," says Sir Richard Baker, "the country being without a regent was cause of many disorders. Thomas Carr and Walter Scott, two principal men amongst the Scottish borderers, and devoted to the Queen of Scots, made inroads into England, wasting all places with fire and sword, till by forces sent out of England, under the command of the Earl of Sussex and the Lord Hunsdon, they were defeated: in whose pursuit three hundred villages were fired, and above fifty holds [castles] were overturned. Mary Queen of Scots is now a prisoner at Chatsworth, in Derbyshire. Queen Elizabeth goes in state to see the new bourse built by Sir Thomas Gresham, and names it the Royal Exchange. A few days afterwards, she creates Sir William Cecil a peer, by the title of Lord Burleigh.

Pope Pius V. now publishes his bull, absolving the subjects of Elizabeth of their obedience to her, and cursing them if they obey her. But the days of papal power are gone in England; all the pope's curses of "bell, book, and candle," cannot "fright the isle from its propriety." Elizabeth and the majority of her subjects despise these papal anathemas, which are but prostituted words, and might reply in that brave manner which Shakspere has made King John (act iii., scene 1st,) do to Pandulph:—

> "Thou canst not, cardinal, devise a name
> So slight, unworthy, and ridiculous,

To charge me to an answer, as the pope.
Tell him this tale; and from the mouth of England
Add this much more,—that no Italian priest
Shall tithe or toll in our dominions.
* * * *
So tell the pope; all reverence set apart
To him and his usurp'd authority!"

A poor fool, named John Felton, is hung, drawn, and quartered, on the eighth of August, before the bishop of London's palace-gate, for setting up the pope's bull thereon.

John Stow, now in his forty-sixth year, is again in trouble. "In 1570," says his latest editor, William J. Thoms, "he was again accused before the Ecclesiastical commission by one who, when in his service, had despoiled him of his goods, and, what must have added to the bitterness of his grief, was his own brother. Stow escaped the danger which upon this occasion threatened to deprive him of his liberty, perhaps life; but the impression it made upon his mind was too great for him to avoid frequent allusion to it." Grafton, the rival of Stow, now publishes the third edition of his Chronicles. Edmund Grindal, who had assisted John Fox in compiling his "Acts and Monuments of the Church," better known as the "Book of Martyrs," (the second edition of which is printed this year, the first being in 1563), is now translated from the bishopric of London to the archbishopric of York. Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, whose "Don Quixote" afterwards made the name of Cervantes a "household word" in every country of Europe, now serves as a soldier, against the Turks and African corsairs, under the papal commander, Marco Antonio Colonna. "Under this celebrated captain," says Smollett, "Cervantes embarked in the Christian fleet, commanded by Don John of Austria, who obtained over the Turks the glorious victory of Lepanto, where our author lost his left hand by the shot of an arquebus."

The play of "Common's Conditions" is supposed to belong to this year. We have also "the tragical comedy of Damon and Pithias, newly imprinted, as the same was plaid before the queen's majesty, by the children of her grace's chapel: made by mayster Edwards, then being master of the children." And Thomas Preston's "lamentable tragedy of Cambyses" belongs to the present year. It is to this last piece, that Shakspere has made Falstaff allude, in the first part of King Henry IV., (act ii., scene 4th,) when he says to Prince Henry, (for they are at that forever famous tavern, the Boar's Head, in Eastcheap):—

"Well, an the fire of grace be not quite out of thee, now shalt thou

be moved.—Give me a cup of sack, to make mine eyes look red, that it may be thought I have wept: for I must speak in passion, and I will do it in King Cambyses' vein."

To this year we owe the births of two poets, Sir John Davies and Sir Robert Ayton, and the celebrated antiquary, Sir Robert Cotton.

Davies, who was an English barrister, held several important legal situations in Ireland, such as speaker of the house of commons, solicitor-general, attorney-general, and judge of assize. He was the first justice in Ireland who ventured on circuits out of the English pale, and though he had himself recommended "the maistering the Irish by the sword, and breaking them by war, in order to make them capable of obedience and good seed," and tells us that the people of Ireland were "brayed as it were in a mortar," he nevertheless bears this impartial testimony to the love of justice inherent in the Irish character, and I would recommend it to the attention of all who wish to fan the now fast-dying embers of national animosity :—

"There is no nation under the sun that love equal and indifferent justice better than the Irish, or will rest better satisfied with the execution thereof, when, upon a just cause, they do desire it, although it be against themselves."

The poetry of Sir John Davies is praised by two competent judges, Southey and Campbell, and some specimens are given by Robert Chambers, in his excellent "Cyclopedia of English Literature."

Sir Robert Ayton was a native of Kinaldie, in Fifeshire, and was one of the gentlemen of the bed-chamber to James the First, and private secretary to his queen. He was the friend of Ben Jonson. "The few pieces of his composition," says Robert Chambers, "are in pure English, and evince a smoothness and delicacy of fancy that have rarely been surpassed."

Of Sir Robert Cotton, it will be sufficient to say, that he was the friend of the celebrated Camden; that he was the author of several antiquarian, historical, and political productions; that many valuable documents were rescued by him from destruction—documents that Bacon, Herbert, Raleigh, and Seldon, found worthy of their careful perusal —and which are now preserved in our British Museum, with additional manuscripts collected by his son and grandson. It is to be regretted that one hundred and eleven of those valuable manuscripts were unfortunately burnt before they were placed in the museum. It was Cotton who suggested to James I. the plan of selling the hereditary title of baronet, to replenish his empty ex-

chequer. A deep dodge enough, and one would not have thought the man who was shrewd enough to give such advice would have been fool enough to purchase the trumpery title; but he did though. He deserved it at least for the hint. How true is the remark of that sterling poet, Robert Burns:—

> "A prince can mak a belted knight,
> A marquis, duke, and a' that;
> But an honest man's aboon his might,
> Guid faith he manna fa' that.
> For a' that, and a' that,
> Their dignities, and a' that,
> The pith o' sense, and pride o' worth,
> Are higher ranks than a' that."

Peter Breughel the Elder, and Francis Floris, two Flemish printers, both pay the debt of nature; Breughel being sixty, and Floris fifty, years of age.—The births of four painters belong to this year: Cagliari, Carlo, or Carletto, being born at Venice; Peter Neefs and Francis Bourbis the Younger, both at Antwerp; and Saenredam, somewhere in Holland.

SHAKSPERE'S EIGHTH YEAR.

A.D. 1571. MASTER JOHN SHAKSPERE is now elected and sworn chief alderman of the corporation of Stratford-upon-Avon. His son William most probably being, as his own Jaques expresses it, a

> "whining school boy, with his satchel,
> And shining morning face, creeping, like snail,
> Unwillingly to school."
>
> As You Like It, act ii., scene 7th,

In all probability, the Grammar School of his native place had the honour of teaching him the "little Latin and less Greek" which his friend Ben Jonson speaks of. This Grammar School was founded in the reign of Henry VI., by a priest named Jolepe for all boys who are natives of Stratford-upon-Avon; and Edward VI. granted it a charter. There the future dramatist would be able to pick up as much scholarship as in any school in the neighbourhood; and though doubtless the youngster would then, like all other boys, have preferred the wild liberty of truanting in the neighbouring woodlands; indulging, as Benedick says in "Much Ado About Nothing," (act ii.,

scene 1st,) in "the flat transgression of a schoolboy; who, being overjoyed with finding a bird's nest, shows it to his companion, and he steals it." Let us hope that the Welsh parson, Sir Hugh Evans, in the "Merry Wives of Windsor," (act iv., scene 1st.,) bore no resemblance to the parson who taught the Grammar School at Stratford; and that William Shakspere's mother had not to complain, like the mother of the schoolboy, William Page;—"Sir Hugh, my husband says my son profits nothing in the world at his book; I pray you ask him some questions in his accidence." Let us rather hope that the clerical tutor at the Stratford Grammar School, earned the same praise that the schoolmaster, Holofernes, does in "Love's Labour Lost," (act iv., scene 2nd,) where the curate, Sir Nathaniel, says:—"Sir, I praise the Lord for you; and so may my parishioners; for their sons are well tutored by you: . . . you are a good member of the commonwealth."

Queen Elizabeth now sends a printing-press and Irish types into Ireland; and printing is this year introduced into the city of Stirling. The venerable John Stow—and the title of venerable of right belongs to him who has so well won it—now causes the Chronicle of Matthew Paris to be printed in London.

Parliament now made it high-treason to doubt the title of Elizabeth to the throne, to be reconciled to popery, or to reconcile others. The unfortunate Queen of Scots is more strictly confined; the Duke of Norfolk and the Bishop of Ross are sent to the Tower; and Dr. Story is executed for high treason. The Earl of Lennox, regent of Scotland, is murdered on the 4th of September, and the Earl of Mar appointed in his stead. Christopher Goodman, one of the translators of the Genevan Bible, who had been chaplain to Sir Henry Sidney in Ireland, is summoned to appear before Archbishop Parker, and others, at Lambeth, to answer for some opinions he had published when an exile at Geneva, against petticoat government. He was now obliged, to save his life, to sign a recantation, acknowledging that "good and godly women might lawfully govern whole realms and nations," and of course acknowledging his submission to Elizabeth,—a submission which that virago would soon have forced from him by the rack.

An act was passed this year "for the continuance of making and wearing woollen caps, in behalf of the trade of cappers," by which it was enacted that all above six years old, except the nobility and certain other privileged classes, should wear on Sundays and holidays, caps of wool, of English manufacture, under a penalty of four groats.

These, no doubt, are the "plain statute-caps" to which Shakspere has made Rosaline allude, in "Love's Labour Lost," (act v., scene 2nd):—

"Well, better wits have worn plain statute-caps."

And a contemporary of Shakspere, John Marston, in his "Dutch Courtesan," makes Mrs. Mullygrub say:—"Though my husband be a citizen, and his cap 's made of wool, yet I have wit."

Some idea of the sports of our ancestors in Elizabeth's reign may be formed from a license she now grants to one John Swinton Powlter, to use certain plays and games, on nine several Sundays, in the county of Middlesex, amongst which are particularly specified shooting with the broad arrow, leaping, and pitching the bar. What would Sir Andrew Agnew and the saints have said to this "profanation of the Sabbath," to which may be added theatrical performances?

Elizabeth still refuses her hand in marriage, to the great discomfiture of the Duke of Anjou; Hugh Price, L.L.D., founds a College at Oxford, which he dedicates to Jesus; William Camden leaves his studies at Oxford, and goes to London; and John Jewel, Bishop of Salisbury, author of an "Apology for the Church of England," died in September. This "Apology" was written in Latin, but it was translated into the vulgar tongue by Lady Anne, wife of Sir Nicholas Bacon, the mother of the immortal Lord Bacon. "As it was one of the first books published in this reign," says Bishop Burnet, "so it was written with that strength and clearness, that it, together with the 'Defence' of it, is still to this day reckoned one of our best books." Jewel was born in 1522, and was educated at Oxford, where he rose at four o'clock in the morning, and studied until midnight. He was a learned, pious, and industrious prelate.

An earthquake occurred this year, in Herefordshire, at Marcley-hill, which Camden describes thus in his "Britannia:—"

"Near the conflux of the Lug and the Wye, eastward, a hill, which they call Marcley-hill, did * * * rouse itself as it were out of sleep, and for three days together shoving its prodigious body forward with a horrible roaring noise, and overturning everything in its way, raised itself (to the great astonishment of the beholders,) to a high place; by that kind of earthquake, I suppose, which the naturalists call Brasmatia.

The account given by Sir Richard Baker, in his "Chronicle," is more complete:—

"A prodigious earthquake happened in the east parts of Herefordshire, [at] a little town called Kinnaston. On the seventeenth of February, at six of the clock in the evening, the earth began to open, and a hill with a rock under it (making at first a great bellowing noise, which was heard a great way off,) lifted itself up a great height, and began to travel, bearing along with it the trees that grew upon it, the sheep-folds, and flocks of sheep abiding there at the same time. In the place from whence it was first moved, it left a gaping distance forty feet broad, and fourscore ells long: the whole field was about twenty acres. Passing all along, it overthrew a chapel standing in the way, removed an ewe-tree [a yew tree] planted in the churchyard, from the west into the east; with the like force, it thrust before it highways, sheepfolds, hedges, and trees, made tilled-ground pasture, and again turned pasture into tillage. Having walked in this sort from Saturday in the evening till Monday noon, it then stood still."

Glancing our eyes once more abroad, we will find that Tasso, who accompanies the cardinal of Este to France, is daily at work on his poem of "Jerusalem Delivered," of which eight cantos is by this time finished; Theodore Beza is chosen moderator of the national synod of Rochelle; and a child is born at Weil, in Wurtemburg, named John Kepler, who shall not only become one of the greatest astronomers of Germany, but of the world.

SHAKSPERE'S NINTH YEAR.

A.D. 1572. THE Duke of Norfolk, who has been convicted of high treason in January, is beheaded on Tower-hill, on the second of June. The Earl of Northumberland, who has been delivered up by the Scots—basely sold for money, as Charles I. will be in after days—is beheaded at York, on the twenty-second of August. The Spanish ambassador is ordered to quit the kingdom, for being concerned in a plot to murder the queen and Burleigh; and three of the conspirators, named Mather, Barney, and Hall, are executed. Francis Drake, burning with hatred against the Spaniards, at whose hands he has been a sufferer, is appointed to the command of two vessels, and is off to plunder the commercial ports of the Spaniards in America, from whence he will return laden with booty. And the Marquis of Winchester,* who has held the office of lord treasurer, now dying in the ninety-seventh year of his age, Lord Burleigh is appointed to the vacant post. The

* A poem on the death of this nobleman was published this year, from the pen of one Rowland Broughton. Let us hope it *paid* the author, as most assuredly it will not give him much fame, judging from the specimen before me.

puritans would fain introduce the Geneva discipline into the church, but the queen dislikes them more than the Romanists.

Perhaps the popish infatuation, that priests can forgive even the murderer his sins, never led to greater excesses than are committed in Paris, on the twenty-fourth of August, the eve of St. Bartholomew, when many thousand protestants are massacred; the French king, Charles IX., amusing himself by discharging his long arquebuse, from the Louvre, on the poor fugitives, as they endeavour to escape. Day and night, for upwards of a week, does the infernal madness of murder and pillage continue; rich and poor alike becoming the victims of papal intolerance. Our own two most illustrious countrymen, Sidney and Raleigh, contrive to escape. The bravest of the admirals of France, Gaspard de Coligny, (whom Charles basely pretended to honour, and whom some of the murderers had fired at two days previously, wounding him in the right and left arm,) is murdered by a mob, under guidance of the Duke of Guise. A villain named Behme, or Besme, enters the room of the admiral with a drawn sword, followed by others of the gang. "Young man," says the veteran, "my grey hairs ought to command thy respect; but do as thou pleasest; thou canst shorten my life but a few days." The wretch then stabs the brave admiral several times, and throws the body out of the window; and the mob, to whose fury the poor corpse has been exposed for three days, at last hang it by the feet on a gibbet, at Montfaucon. Nor is Paris the only scene of those brutal outrages. Butcheries of a similar character occur at Bordeaux, Lyons, Meaux, Tolouse, Troyes, and Orleans. According to some writers, one hundred thousand huguenots, or protestants, are massacred, in various parts of France, by what Shelley would truly call—

> "The mob of peasants, nobles, priests, and kings."
> Queen Mab, canto v.

In their beds, on the house-tops, at their own domestic hearths, in the streets, or wherever the exasperated multitude can meet with them, are the "heretics" instantly murdered. The true catholic shrinks not from imbruing his hands in the blood of his brother-man of a different creed, for his priest has promised him absolution. Many of the huguenots fly to England, where the whole court goes into mourning for those who are slain. But at Madrid the court celebrates the butchery by a public fes-

tival: whilst at Rome, the pope and cardinals blasphemously return God thanks for the massacre!

"Where is the fame
Which the vain-glorious mighty of the earth
Seek to eternize? Oh! the faintest sound
From time's light footfall, the minutest wave
That swells the flood of ages, whelms in nothing
The unsubstantial bubble. Ay! to-day
Stern is the tyrant's mandate, red the gaze
That flashes desolation, strong the arm
That scatters multitudes! To-morrow comes!
That mandate is a thunder-peal that died
In ages past; that gaze, a transient flash
On which the midnight closed, and on that arm
The worm has made his meal."

SHELLEY.

The age of Elizabeth is one of monopolies: our protectionists should have lived then. Amongst the printers, this year, we have a patent granted to John Barret, to print a Latin and English dictionary; Francis Flower has a monopoly of the grammar printing; and a license is granted to Thomas Marshe, to print certain classical works for twelve years,—none else to print them on pain of forfeiture.—On the first of June, "Ovid's Elegies" are burnt at Stationers'-hall, by order of the archbishop of Canterbury and the bishop of London. "The Works of Henry Nicholas, relating to the Family of Love, and other subjects, translated out of Bacer Almayne into English," forming ten volumes 16mo., are also ordered to be burnt, by royal proclamation, and any of her majesty's subjects are to be punished if they retain copies of the book in their possession. William Grafton, the printer and historian, who issues a fourth edition of his Chronicle, unfortunately breaks his leg in two places, by a fall, after which nothing is known of his history; but as his third son, Richard, was a barrister, sporting his armorial bearings, it appears that he was more fortunate in his old age than his rival Stow, who was glad to beg his bread!

On the twenty-fourth of November died the celebrated Scottish Reformer, John Knox; a learned man, but of harsh manners, and a gloomy bigot, like his friend Calvin, unable to respect the earnestness of other men, if they did not see with his eyes. His blunt eloquence and indomitable perseverance, however, was admirably adapted to the fiery and half-civilized people of Scotland, and he succeeded in overthrowing the episcopal, and establishing the presbyterian, form of church government in his country. Pope

Pius V. died, on the thirtieth of September, aged sixty-eight years: he was succeeded in the pontifical chair by Gregory XIII.

This year was born in London, Inigo Jones, the reviver of classical architecture. Francis Aarsens, the celebrated diplomatist, was born at the Hague; and Cornelius Drebbel, the inventor of the thermometer, was born somewhere in North Holland.

SHAKSPERE'S TENTH YEAR.

A D. 1573. FRANCIS WALSINGHAM, who has been ambassador from Elizabeth to the French king, now returns home; and if immense cunning and equivocation be, as some bright politicians maintain, the best qualifications for a diplomatist, then was Walsingham the very man for such an office; Pitt, Castlereagh, or Sidmouth, never carried the unholy system of government plots and paid spies to a greater extent, and for the opening of letters Sir James Graham must yield the palm to him.—The French king, who thought that he had got rid of the huguenots altogether, now finds them resolved to defend themselves like men, and avenge the blood of their murdered brethren; for

> "Blood will follow where the knife is driven:
> The flesh will quiver where the pincers tear."
> YOUNG'S "Revenge," act v., scene 2nd.

"The sect," says Hume, "which Charles had hoped at one blow to exterminate, had now an army of eighteen thousand men on foot, and possessed, in different parts of the kingdom, above a hundred cities, castles, or fortresses; nor could that prince deem himself secure from the invasion threatened him by all the other protestants in Europe. The nobility and gentry of England were roused to such a pitch of resentment, that they offered to levy an army of twenty thousand foot and four thousand horse, to transport them into France, and to maintain them six months at their own charge; but Elizabeth, who was cautious in her measures, and who feared to inflame farther the quarrel between the two religions by these dangerous crusades, refused her consent, and moderated the zeal of her subjects." Popery being thus at a discount in England, and considering the position Shakspere's father holds in the corporation of Stratford-upon-Avon, it seems to me a most

ignorant conjecture for any man to suppose that our future poet is now being reared in the Romish faith. But as he is yet only in his tenth year, the dogmas of either party are most probably indifferent to him as yet.

This year we have an interlude, which the author tells us is "no less witty than pleasant," written to advocate protestantism, the title of which is "New Custom." The characters are all allegorical, and much more abusive than argumentative in their theological discussions, in which respect the unknown author is true enough to nature, as everybody's experience will prove. The following specimen will suffice :—

"LIGHT OF THE GOSPEL.

"O, imp of Anti-Christ, and seed of the Devil!
Born to all wickedness, and nusled in all evil.

"PERVERSE DOCTRINE.

"Nay, thou stinking heretic, art thou there indeed?
According to thy naughtiness thou must look for speed.

"NEW CUSTOM.

"God's holy word in no wise can be heresy,
Though so you term it never so falsely.

"PERVERSE DOCTRINE.

"Ye precious whoreson, art thou here too?
I think ye have pretended some harm me to do.
Help, help, I say, let me be gone at once,
Else I will smite thee in the face, by God's bones.

"NEW CUSTOM.

"You must be contented a little season to stay;
Light of the gospel, for your profit, hath something to say."

Etienne Jodelle, a native of Paris, who wrote the first regular comedies and tragedies for the French stage, and who enjoyed the favour of more than one of the kings of France, now dies in great poverty, aged forty-one years. "The endeavour to imitate the ancients," says A. W. Schlegel, "showed itself from the very earliest period in France. Moreover, they considered it the surest method of succeeding in this endeavour, to observe the outward regularity of form, of which their notion was derived from Aristotle, and especially from Seneca, rather than from any intimate acquaintance with the Greek models themselves. In the first tragedies that were represented, the 'Cleopatra' and 'Dido' of Jodelle, a prologue and chorus were introduced."

William Camden now takes his degree of Bachelor of Arts: Raphe Lever publishes his "Art of Reason;" John Stow publishes another edition of his "Summary of English Chronicles," in which is inserted an address "to the reader," hitting hard at Grafton; and Tycho Brahe, the Danish astronomer, discovers a new star in the constellation of Cassiopeia.

Dr. John Donne, a divine and poet, whose life has been ably written by Izaak Walton, was born this year in London; as also, at Reading, in Berkshire, on the seventh of October, William Laud, the tyrannical and unfortunate archbishop of Canterbury, in the reign of the equally tyrannical and unfortunate monarch, Charles I. Henry Wriotesley, Earl of Southampton, to whom Shakspere dedicated his poem of "Venus and Adonis," in 1593—a nobleman who belonged to the true nobility of nature, as well as to the aristocracy of wealth and titles—was born on the fourth of October of the present year. He was ever the friend of genius, and is reported to have presented Shakspere with one thousand pounds—an immense sum in that day. One thing is certain, that about the year 1608, Lord Southampton, in a letter to Lord Chancellor Ellesmere, speaks of our bard as his "especial friend."

Fialetti, the Venetian painter, was this year born at Bologna. Five of his pictures, now in Hampton Court, were bequeathed to Charles I., by Sir Henry Wotton.

SHAKSPERE'S ELEVENTH YEAR.

A.D. 1574. MASTER JOHN SHAKSPERE now purchases two houses, with a garden and orchard attached to each, in Henley-street, Stratford-upon-Avon. One of these is the house now shown as the birth-place of the immortal bard, lately purchased by the nation, after a great deal of difficulty in raising the trifle required. But any one who looks upon the two views of that house given by that true Shaksperian worshipper, Charles Knight—a man who has done more to make knowledge the poor man's portion, than any man in England; any one who looks upon that house in Henley-street *as it was*, and then compares it with that of the present castrated remains of it, must, I think, sincerely regret that churlish innovators have so rudely profaned it. Whether it be really the poet's birth-place or not, certainly it was the home of his boyhood; and would to God that it had been preserved in all its pristine beauty.

On the 10th of May, Elizabeth grants the actors of her favourite, the Earl of Leicester, a license to perform plays without molestation,—for the secular drama, like every other good thing, had much opposition to encounter in its infancy; and as this appears to have been the first establishment of a regular company of actors under the patronage and protection of the law, a copy of this licence will probably be acceptable to the reader.

"Elizabeth, by the grace of God, Queen of England, etc. To al justices, mayors, sheriffs, bailiffs, head constables, under constables, and all other our officers and ministers, greeting. Know ye, that we of our especial grace, certain knowledge, and mere motion, have licensed and authorised, and by these presents do license and authorise, our loving subjects, James Burbage, John Perkyn, John Lanhum, William Johnson, and Robert Wilson, servants to our trusty and well-beloved cousin and counsellor, the Earl of Leicester, to use, exercise, and occupy, the art and faculty of playing comedies, tragedies, interludes, stage-plays, and such other like as they have already used and studied, or hereafter shall use and study, as well for the recreation of our loving subjects, as for our solace and pleasure, when we shall think good to see them; as also to use and occupy all such instruments as they already practised, or hereafter shall practise, for and during our pleasure; and the said comedies, tragedies, interludes, and stage-plays, together with their music, to show, publish, exercise, and occupy, to their best commodity, during all the term aforesaid, as well within the liberties and freedoms of any of our cities, towns, boroughs, etc., whatsoever, as without the same, throughout our realm of England. Willing and commanding you, and every of you, as ye tender our pleasure, to permit and suffer them herein, without any lets, hinderance, or molestation, during the time aforesaid, any act, statute, or proclamation, or commandment, heretofore made, or hereafter to be made, notwithstanding; provided that the said comedies, tragedies, interludes, and stage-plays, be, by the Master of our Revels for the time being, before seen and allowed; and that the same be not published or shown in the time of common prayer, or in the time of great and common plague in our said city of London."

The Chester Mysteries are now revived for the last time. I have already said as much respecting these monkish mongrel productions as my brief space will allow, but a list of the subjects, twenty-four in all, and of the various trades by whom they were represented, may be of interest, and is therefore given below.

1. On the Creations of the Heavens, of Angels, and of Infernal Spirits By the Tanners.
2. In what manner did God Create the World. By the Drapers.
3. On Noah's Deluge. By the Water-drawers of the Dee.
4. On Abraham, Melchisedeck, and Lot. By the Barbers and Wax-chandlers.

5. On Moses and the Law given to him. By the Hatters and Linen-drapers.
6. On the Salutation, and the Nativity of the Saviour. By the Wrights.
7. On the Shepherds Feeding their Flocks. By the Painters.
8. On the Three Oriental Kings By the Vintners.
9. On the Oblation of the Three Kings. By the Mercers.
10. On the Slaying of the Innocents. By the Goldsmiths.
11. On the Purification of the Blessed Virgin. By the Blacksmiths.
12. On the Temptation of the Saviour. By the Butchers.
13. On the Resurrection of Lazarus. By the Glovers.
14. On Jesus entering the House of Symon the Leper. By the Corvisors.
15. On the Supper of our Lord. By the Bakers.
16. On Christ's Passion. By the Fletchers, Bourgers, Coopers, etc.
On the Crucifixion of Christ. By the Ironmongers.
17. On the Descent of Christ into Hell. By the Cooks.
18. On the Resurrection of Christ. By the Skinners.
19. On Christ appearing to the Two Disciples. By the Saddlers.
20. On our Lord's Ascension. By the Tailors.
21. On the Election of Matthias. By the Fishmongers.
22. Ezekiel. By the Clothiers.
23. On the Advent of Christ. By the Dyers.
24. On the Last Judgment. By the Websters.

But those performed by the Grey Friars at Coventry, "with mighty state and reverence," who "had theatres for the several scenes, very large and high, placed upon wheels, and drawn to all the eminent parts of the city, for the better advantage of spectators," were more numerous than any other, being forty-two in number, beginning with the "Creation," and ending with "Doomsday!" "I have been told by some old people, who in their younger years were eye-witness of these pageants so acted," says Sir William Dugdale, "that the yearly confluence of people to see that show was extraordinary great, and yielded no small advantage to this city." The monasteries being long ago suppressed, young Shakspere could not see the acting of the friars, but might he not many a time and oft witness the performances of "the trading companies and incorporated gilds of Coventry," which, "it is certain," according to Dr. Dunham, "were not inferior?"

John Stow, assisted by his patron, Archbishop Parker, now causes the chronicle of Thomas Walsingham to be printed; John Harmer, D.D., becomes perpetual fellow of New College, Oxford, and we shall afterwards find him chosen to assist in the translation of the Bible in the reign of James I.; and poor Cervantes Saavedra, who has already

done much for the Spanish drama, is taken by a Barbary corsair, carried to Algiers, and sold to a Moor, whose slave he remains for five years and a half. The Dey of Algiers during the captivity of Cervantes, is a brutal tyrant named Hassan Aga, whom the captive himself thus describes:—

"He was every day hanging one, impaling another, maiming a third, upon such slight occasions, frequently without any cause assigned, that the Turks themselves owned he acted thus out of mere wantonness and barbarity, as being naturally of a savage disposition, and an inveterate enemy to the whole human race. The person who used the greatest freedom with him was one Saavedra, a Spanish soldier, who, though he did many things which those people will not forget, in attempting to regain his liberty, he never gave him one blow, nor ordered him once to be chastised, nor even chid him with one hasty word; and yet the last of all his pranks was sufficient, as we thought, to bring him to the stake; nay, he himself was more than once afraid of being impaled alive."

It will be seen by the above extract, that Cervantes was an especial favourite with the capricious tyrant, who purchased him for his own slave from the Moor who had bought him first, and used him kindly enough, until his ransom was paid. The reader will find further mention of this circumstance in the particulars of 1581.

Stow tells us, that "about the sixteenth year of Queen Elizabeth, began the making of steel poking-sticks; and until that time all laundresses used setting-sticks, made of bone." They were used to set the large ruffs so much worn at this period, and are the "poking-sticks of steel" to which Shakspere has made the rogue Autolycus allude in the well known pedlar's song in the "Winter's Tale" (act iv., scene 3rd.):—

"Lawn as white as driven snow:
Cyprus black as e'er was crow;
Gloves as sweet as damask roses;
Masks for faces, and for noses;
Bugle bracelet, neck-lace amber,
Perfume for a lady's chamber:
Golden quoifs, and stomachers,
For my lads to give their dears;
Pins, and poking-sticks of steel;
What maids lack from head to heel.
Come, buy of me, come: come buy, come buy;
Buy lads, or else your lasses cry.
Come, buy," etc.

The sumptuary laws against excess of apparel are now put in force by Elizabeth, who does not see that in an antagonistic or competitive state of society, every excess in dress, every foolish change in fashion, everything that

causes a demand for luxuries, causes also money to circulate, which would otherwise remain locked up in wealthy men's coffers, and that employment is given to the starving producers of wealth, who, alas! are glad, in the words of the inspired plough-boy, Burns,

> "To beg a brother of the earth
> To give them leave to toil!"

It is a year of great dearth in England; wheat selling at six shillings a bushel, when it ought only to have been, under ordinary circumstances, about one-third of that sum. But, notwithstanding the ignorant boasting one continually hears of "the roast beef of old England," and "the merry days of good Queen Bess," it is but just that my working-class readers should know, that wheaten bread was never eaten by one-half of the people during the whole of Elizabeth's reign; oats, rye, and barley being the bread stuffs of the majority of the British people, even as late as the ascension of George III. to the throne. Even during those never-to-be-forgotten stagnations in trade which preceded the repeal of the corn-laws, the working men were in a better condition, under the mild sway of Victoria, than their forefathers were in the palmiest days of Elizabeth.

Ben Jonson—"rare Ben Jonson"—who will one day become the friend of Shakspere, as well as his rival actor and dramatist, is born on the thirty-first of July. His father, who was a clergyman in Westminster, has not lived to see his son, and the widow afterwards marries a bricklayer. Speaking of the minor poetry of Jonson—the beautiful songs he has woven into his dramas, as well as his separate poems, Robert Chambers very truly remarks:

> "There is much delicacy of fancy, fine feeling, and sentiment, in some of Jonson's lyrical and descriptive effusions. He grafted a classic grace and musical expression on parts of his masques and interludes, which could hardly have been expected from his massive and ponderous hand. In some of his songs he equals Carew and Herrick in picturesque images, and in portraying the fascinations of love. A taste for nature is strongly displayed in his fine lines on Penshurst, that ancient seat of the Sidneys. It has been justly remarked by one of his critics, that Jonson's dramas 'do not lead us to value highly enough his admirable taste and feeling in poetry;' and when we consider how many other intellectual excellences distinguish him—wit, observation, judgment, memory, learning—we must acknowledge that the inscription on his tomb, 'O rare Ben Jonson!' is not more pithy than it is true."

Joseph Hall, a satirical poet and famous prose-writer, who rose in the church to the see of Norwich, is now

born at Bristow Park, in Leicestershire. Louis Valez de las Duenasy Guevara, a witty and humorous Spanish dramatist, is also born this year, in Andalusia. Bell-chambers says, that "his pieces deserve, for their excellent delineations of character, and their richness in strokes of genuine comicality, the praise which Lope de Vega has given them." Guevara is also the author of a romance, from which Le Sage is said to have derived the idea of his "Devil upon Two Sticks." Adam Elzheimer, the German painter, is this year born at Frankfort. There are specimens of his work both at Dulwich College and at Hampton Court.

John Parkhurst, bishop of Norwich, who had translated the "Apocrypha," from the "Book of Wisdom" to the end, by order of Queen Elizabeth, dies on the second of February. Alexander Cunningham, fifth Earl of Glencairn, the friend of John Knox, and one who has served the cause of protestantism both with pen and sword, dies this year. Also died, at the early age of twenty-four years, Martin Van Veen Hemskerck, the Dutch painter.

SHAKSPERE'S TWELFTH YEAR.

A.D. 1575. On the seventh of March, the General Assembly of the Kirk of Scotland, at Edinburgh, enact that "no comedies, nor tragedies, or such plays, shall be made on any history of canonical scriptures, nor on the sabbath day. If any minister be the writer of such a play, he shall be deprived of his ministry. As for plays of another kind, they also shall be examined before they be pronounced publicly."—"Gammer Gurton's Needle," a comedy, by John Still, M.A., afterwards bishop of Bath and Wells, is now printed in London. I have before spoken of this production, and will only here add the remarks of Henry Neele:—

"'In this play,' says Hawkins, 'there is a vein of familiar humour, and a kind of grotesque imagery, not unlike some parts of Aristophanes; but without those graces of language and metre for which the Greek comedian is so eminently distinguished.' There is certainly much whim and wit in many of the situations; and the characters, although rudely, are very forcibly delineated. The plot is simple, and coarse enough. Gammer Gurton has lost her needle; and, just when she despairs of ever finding it, it is discovered in a part of her servant Hodge's breeches, which she had been lately employed in mending. The fine old song beginning, 'Back and sides,

go bare, go bare,' with which the second act of the play opens, is of itself sufficient to rescue it from oblivion."

"Gammer Gurton's Needle" is described in the title-page as "a right pithy, pleasant, and merry comedy," which had been played on the stage not long ago, in Christ's College, in Cambridge.

George Gascoigne now publishes "A Devise of a Masque," which he has written for Lord Montacute; and every day the demand for theatrical performances is on the increase. Already, even, may the reader perceive the truth of Waldo Emerson's assertion :—

"Shakspere's youth fell in a time when the English people were importunate for dramatic entertainments. The court took offence easily at political allusions, and attempted to suppress them. The puritans, a growing and energetic party, and the religious among the Anglican church, would suppress them. But the people wanted them. Inn-yards, houses without roofs, and extemporaneous enclosures at country fairs, were the ready theatres of strolling players. The people had tasted of the new joy; and, as we could not hope to suppress newspapers now,—no, not by the strongest party,—neither, then, could king, prelate, or puritan, alone or united, suppress an organ, which was ballad, epic, newspaper, caucus, lecture, punch, and library, at the same time. Probably king, prelate, and puritan, all found their own account in it. It had become, by all causes, a national interest,—by no means conspicuous, so that some great scholar would have thought of treating it in an English history,—but not a whit less considerable because it was cheap, and of no account, like a baker's-shop."

Amongst the books now teeming from the press, is "Songs and Sonnets," by Lord Surrey and others. It is from a ballad therein, attributed to Lord Vaugh, that Shakspere has derived the three snatches of song which the First Clown sings, in a mutilated manner, in the famous churchyard scene in "Hamlet" (act v., scene 1st). I give both versions, that the reader may compare the two :—

IN SONGS AND SONNETS.

"I loath that I did love,
In youth that I thought sweet,
As times requires: for my behove
Methinks they are not meet.

. . . .

"For Age, with stealing steps,
Hath claw'd me with his crowch [crutch];
And lusty Youth away he leaps,
As there had been none such.

. . . .

"A pick-axe and a spade,
And eke a shrouding sheet;
A house of clay for to be made
For such a guest most meet."

IN HAMLET.

"In youth, when I did love, did love,
Methought it was very sweet,
To contract, O, the time, for, ah, my behove,
O, methought there was nothing meet.

. . . .

"But Age, with his stealing steps,
Hath claw'd me in his clutch,
And hath shipped me into the land,
As if I had never been such.

[Throws up a skull.]

. . .

"A pick-axe, and a spade, a spade,
For—and a shrouding sheet;
O, a pit of clay for to be made
For such a guest is meet."

[Throws up another skull.]

These stanzas, which do not speak much in favour of Lord Vaugh's poetic attainments, are admirably adapted to the taste of the ignorant and blundering grave-digger; and there is keen satire on these senseless verses in making the clown sing them there: for "this fellow," like most of his fraternity, has "no feeling of his business; he sings at grave-making." "Custom," as Horatio observes to Hamlet, "has made it in him a property of easiness."

George Gascoigne's "Posies;" Robert Laneham's account of the "Entertainment to the Queen at Killingworth Castle, in Warwickshire;" and a work by Thomas Churchyard, called "The first part of Churchyard's Chips," are also among the productions emanating this year from the London press; whilst our Scottish neighbours have "Ane Treatise, callit the Court of Venus, devidit into four Buikes, newly compylit by John Rolland, in Dalkeith," published at Edinburgh.—According to Timperley, the Stationers' Company now number one hundred and seventy-five members.

Bombazine is first manufactured this year, by the Flemish exiles, at Norwich; so that England gains something for her hospitality to the poor victims of the cruel Duke of Alva's persecution—a persecution in which that "best of cut-throats" boasted that he had executed eighteen thousand men; so that it has been remarked that "his

executioners shed more blood than his soldiers." The pope presented him with a consecrated hat and sword,—toys with which his holiness generally pleased princes. But all this horrid bloodshed could never suppress the light that had broken on a benighted world. There are limits to all endurance, and the crown of Holland is now offered to Elizabeth, which she refuses to accept.—Philip Sidney, just arrived at manhood, now returns to England, after a sojourn of three years on the continent, and will become one of the most brilliant ornaments of Elizabeth's court.—William Camden is made second master of Westminster School; the Earl of Essex is appointed captain-general of Ireland; and Edmund Grindal is translated from the archiepiscopal see of York to that of Canterbury, in the place of that patron of learning and the fine arts, Matthew Parker, who dies on the 17th of May, aged three-score-years and ten.—Parker was born at Norwich, on the 6th of August, 1504; educated at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, where he obtained a fellowship in 1527; and was licensed to preach, by Archbishop Cranmer, in 1533, in which year he was made chaplain to Queen Anne Boleyn, who, in 1535, appointed him to the deanery of Stoke Clare College, in Suffolk. In 1537, when the brutally-butchered Anne Boleyn was in the grave, Henry VIII. made Parker his chaplain; and in 1544 that monarch procured him the mastership of Corpus Christi College,* Cambridge; and in the year following, he was chosen vice-chanceller of the university. In 1547, when all laws against the marriage of priests were annulled, Parker married a Miss Margaret Harlstone, of Mattishal, in Norfolk, to whom he had been attached for seven years, but could not marry, one of the statutes of Henry VIII. making it felony for one of the clergy to do so. In 1552, Edward VI. presented him to the canonry or prebend of Lovingham, in the cathedral of Lincoln, of which church he was soon after made dean. But Mary came to the throne, and stripped him of all, forcing him to seek safety in flight. During his exile he studied antiquities and biblical literature, and versified the Psalms; of which versification the following four verses of the twenty-third psalm may serve as a specimen:—

* Matthew Parker, archbishop of Canterbury, was the greatest benefactor to this college. Besides recovering several of its lost rights, and founding two fellowships and five scholarships, he bestowed on it the valuable library of Stoke Clare College, Suffolk, which he also augmented with many printed books and manuscripts."—Dugdale's "British Traveller."

PARKER'S VERSION.

"To feel my need He will me lead
To pastures green and fat:
He forth brought me in liberty
To waters delicate.

"My soul and heart He did convart;
To me He showth the path
Of right wisness, in holiness,
His name such virtue hath.

"Yea, though I go through Death his woe
His vale and shadow wide,
I fear no dart: with me Thou art,
With rod and staff to guide.

"Thou shalt provide a table wide
For me against their spite:
With oil my head Thou hast bespread;
My cup is fully dight."

STERNHOLD'S VERSION.

"My shepherd is the living Lord,
Nothing, therefore, I need:
In pasture's fair, near pleasant streams,
He setteth me to feed.

"He shall convert and glad my soul,
And bring my mind in frame,
To walk in paths of righteousness,
For His most holy name.

"Yea, though I walk in vale of Death,
Yet will I fear no ill;
Thy rod and staff do comfort me,
And Thou art with me still.

"And in the presence of my foes
My table thou shalt spread;
Thou dost fill full my cup, and Thou
Anointed hast my head."

I have given the version of Thomas Sternhold to compare that of Parker with, because the fifty-one Psalms versified by that author were in print when Parker rendered his; and any one possessing a modern Book of Common Prayer, can compare them both with the version of Tate and Brady. To my mind, the prose translation read in the morning and evening service of the Church of England, is more poetical than the more modern one of the authorised

translation of the Bible, or any that have been rendered into English metre by Surrey, Sternhold, Hopkins, Norton, Wyttingham, Hunis, Baldwin, Seager, Parker, Milton, Watts, Burns, or James Montgomery. Who wishes for a versification of Jeremiah or of Ossian? Why, then, try to force the uncontrollable genius of David to walk on the stilts of English rhyme. The Odes of Horace in blank verse would be equally reasonable. What wonder, then, that Parker should fail where the greatest of all England's religious poets, Milton and James Montgomery, could not succeed? But the task whiled away his exile, and Mary went to the worms. Thank God, a tyrant cannot live for aye. Parker returned from his banishment, and Elizabeth presented him to the see of Canterbury, to which he was consecrated on the 17th of December, 1559. We have seen that he was the patron of learning; and he encouraged the then infant art of engraving in England, by employing wood-cutters and copper-plate engravers at his palace at Lambeth. He was also founder and president of the first Society of Antiquaries in England.

The fires of Smithfield, that crackled and blazed so brightly in Mary's cruel reign, are not allowed to be quite extinct by her sister Elizabeth, and two poor Anabaptists, named Peters and Turwent, who cannot see with the eyes of other men, are burnt alive for the glory of God and the amusement of the mob.

> "Know this, ye demons in the shape of men!
> To torture those whom you can not convince
> That our own dogmas only can be true,
> Is never pleasing in the sight of God;
> Whose essence being from pollution free,
> Delights not in the woes of human kind,
> Like those who to themselves do arrogate
> The keeping of the oracles of God."
>
> PETER PROLETARIUS.

In the early part of this year, Tasso, who was just recovering from a fever, finishes his poem of "Goffredo."—Jacob Boehm, the celebrated mystic, was born this year, at Altseidenberg, in Upper Lusatia, near Gorlitz, and was the son of a poor peasant.—Sir Antonio More, the Dutch painter, is supposed to have died this year. There are nine of his portraits at Hampton Court; one being that of Philip the II. of Spain; the other eight, male and female, are alike unknown. Their features are preserved to posterity by the limner's hand, but their very names are now forgotten!—Reni Guido, the famous painter, is born at

Bologna in this or the preceding year. Guido could represent a female on canvass with something like the same fidelity that Shakspere has done in his dramas; both loving the graceful and the beautiful.

SHAKSPERE'S THIRTEENTH YEAR.

A.D. 1576. THE first regularly licensed theatre in London, according to Robert Chambers, was this year opened in Blackfriars. Augustine Skottowe says, it was erected about the year 1570.

On the twenty-sixth of July, there is an entry made in the books of the Stationers' Company, of "A new and pleasant Comedy or Play, after the manner of Common Conditions." Only a single copy, and that a mutilated one, of this literary curiosity is now known to exist, and it was purchased by the Duke of Roxburgh, at the sale of of Mr. Steevens's library, for six pounds ten shillings. It contains a mariner's song, worthy of Dibdin, given below.

"Lustily, lustily, let it sail forth,
The wind trim doth serve us, it blows at the north.

"All things we have ready, and nothing we want
To furnish our ship that rideth hereby;
Victuals and weapons, there be nothing scant;
Like worthy mariners ourselves we will try.
Lustily, lustily, etc.

"Her flags be new trimmed, set flaunting aloft;
Our ship for swift swimming, oh she doth excel:
We fear no enemies; we have escaped them oft;
Of all ships that swimmeth, she beareth the bell.
Lustily, lustily, etc.

"And here is a maister excelleth in skill,
And our maister's mate he is not to seek;
And here is a boatswain will do his good will,
And here is a ship, boy, we never had to leak.
Lustily, lustily, etc.

"If fortune then fail not, and our next voyage prove,
We will return merrily, and make good cheer,
And hold altogether as friends linkt in love,—
The cans shall be filled with ale, wine, and beer.
Lustily, lustily, etc."

George Whetstone, the dramatist, now publishes his "Rock of Regard;" George Gascoigne, his poem in blank verse, called "Steel Glass;" John Sandford, his "Hours

of Recreation;" John Wolton, bishop of Exeter, his "Armour of Proof," and a treatise on the immortality of the soul; and Sir Humphrey Gilbert, his "Discourse of a Discovery for a new Passage to Cataia."—The first edition of the Bible known to have been issued in Scotland, is now printed at Edinburgh, containing the Old Testament, the Apocrypha, and the New Testament. "It is," says Timperley, "perhaps the first edition of the Geneva version printed in Britain, though some earlier have been sometimes mentioned; and the first Bible in Roman letter."

Edwin Sandys, one of the translators of the Bishop's Bible, is now translated from the see of London to that of York; and John Aylmer, who had been an exile in Mary's reign, without learning toleration to other protestants who may differ from him, is appointed to the see of London. Between Aylmer and Whitgift the poor puritans will find no rest for the soles of their feet.—Edmund Spenser takes the degree of Master of Arts, at Cambridge, on the twenty-sixth of June, and has already written some fugitive poems; Philip Sydney is now sent out by Elizabeth as ambassador to the emperor Rodolphus in Germany; Martin Frobisher sails on his unsuccessful search for the north-west passage; and the Earl of Essex dies in Ireland, supposed to be poisoned by the Earl of Leicester, who marries his widow; and Lord Pembroke is married to Philip Sidney's sister, Mary, now to become the famous Countess of Pembroke, herself a poet and scholar, as well as the liberal patron of letters.—Henry Cuffe (who afterwards becomes secretary to the unfortunate Earl of Essex, whose mad expedition he is said to have planned) enters Trinity College, Oxford, but is expelled for some sarcasms on the founder. In other five-and-twenty years—when the boy Shakspere will be a popular dramatist, a player and share-holder in the theatre—we shall see this Cuffe strung up by the neck like a dog, as a traitor, at Tyburn.—Tycho Brahe, to whom the King of Denmark has given the isle of Huen, now builds himself the castle of Uranienburg upon it, and an observatory for his astronomical researches.

Religious intolerance is the order of the day, and our French neighbours form a league to root out protestantism and protestants, and uphold papistry at any price. Atheistical France, somehow, always hangs by popery; witness French bayonets in Rome, to uphold papal power, and suppress the liberty of Italy, in the 19th century!

Geronimo Cardan, a famous physician and mathematician, in Italy, died about this time. He was born at Pavia, in 1501, and a man of great learning and ability; but, un-

fortunately, a dupe to the infatuation of astrology. How true are the remarks of Shakspere, put into the mouth of Edmund, in the first scene of the second act of "King Lear:"—

"This is the excellent foppery of the world! that when we are sick in fortune often the surfeit of our own behaviour, we make guilty of our disasters the sun, the moon, and the stars: as if we were villains by necessity; fools, by heavenly compulsion; knaves, thieves, and treachers [traitors], by spherical predominance; drunkards, liars, and adulterers, by an enforced obedience of planetary influence. and all that we are evil in, by a divine thrusting on. An admirable evasion of whoremaster man, to lay his goutish disposition to the charge of a star! My father compounded with my mother under the dragon's tail, and my nativity was under Ursa Major; so that it follows I am rough and lecherous!—Tut. I should have been that I am, had the maidenliest star in the firmament twinkled on my bastardizing."

Vecellio Tiziano, better known as Titian, one of the best painters—not of Italy alone, but of the world—now dies of the plague at Venice, having reached the patriarchal age of ninety-six years. There are five of his pieces in our National Gallery, and fourteen at Hampton Court.

On the eight of February, was born at Lindley, in Leicestershire, Robert Burton, author of the "Anatomy of Melancholy."—John Fletcher, the dramatist, was born in London this year. His father Dr. Richard Fletcher, was bishop of Bristol, and afterwards of Worcester.—Lionello Spada, the Bolognese painter, and two Flemish painters, Roland Savery and Paul Van Somer, are born this year; Spada at Bologna, Savery at Courtray, and Paul Van Somer at Antwerp.

SHAKSPERE'S FOURTEENTH YEAR.

A.D. 1577. Queen Elizabeth now assists the Dutch in their struggle against Spanish thraldom. On the 13th of November, Drake sails from Plymouth, with five ships, to pass through the straits of Magellan, to the South Seas. James Hepburn, Earl of Bothwell, the brutal husband of Mary Queen of Scots, dies wretchedly in Denmark, confessing his own guilt of the murder of Darnley, but denying that Mary was privy thereto. Ebenezer Elliott has made the death of Bothwell the subject of one of his dramatic sketches.

On the sixth of June, the old miracle play of "Corpus

Christi" is represented at Perth, to the great indignation of the "unco guid" presbyterians, who, on the first of July, make the following entry in the records of their weekly assembly:

"The weekly assembly regret that certain inhabitants of this town, against the express command of the civil magistrate, and the prohibition delivered by the minister from the pulpit, have played 'Corpus Christi' play, upon the sixth day of June last, which day was wont to be called Corpus Christi day: whereby they have offended the Church of God, and dishonoured this haill [whole] town; the said play being idolatrous and superstitious."

The guilty persons are to be cut off from the congregation of the godly, until such times as they show some evidence of repentance. One cannot help here calling to mind the persecution of poor John Home, by the same body of sectaries, for writing his beautiful tragedy of "Douglas." It was of presbyterian intolerance that the divine Milton, in his noble sonnet to Cromwell, was driven to exclaim:—

"Yet much remains
To conquer still; Peace hath her victories
No less renown'd than War: new foes arise
Threatening to bind our souls with secular chains:
Help us to save free conscience from the paw
Of hireling wolves, whose gospel is their maw!"

In July occurred the black assise at Oxford; "so called," says Leigh Hunt, "from the circumstance of judges, jurymen, nobility, gentry, and the majority of the persons present, to the amount of near three hundred, sickening and dying within forty-eight hours after they left the court." From a paper in Leigh Hunt's "One Hundred Romances of Real Life," it appears that some lovers of the marvellous have attempted to fix the blame on the machinations of a poor popish recusant named Rowland Jenks (a bookseller, according to Baker's Chronicle), who was on his trial for "words seditiously and treasonably spoken against the queen's majesty." The rational conjecture, however, is this—that the poor wretches on trial brought some infectious disease with them from their filthy dungeons, which spread like wildfire in that crowded court, and hot July weather; for our prisons in that day, and indeed for many long years afterwards, were mere hot-beds of disease and sin.

As a curious illustration of the manners of the period, I may mention that the ceremony of blessing the bride-bed by the priest was common at all marriages. In France—ever a nation of levity—the priest was often detained until

midnight, amidst the rioting and obscene conversation of a wedding party, who had "well drunk." To remedy the evil, the marriage-bed is ordered this year to be henceforth blessed in the day time, or at latest before supper. This will serve to explain the meaning of Oberon's song in the last scene of the "Midsummer Night's Dream":—

> "Now, until the break of day,
> Through this house each fairy stray;
> To the best bride-bed will we,
> Which by us shall blessed be;
> And the issue there create
> Ever shall be fortunate."

Richard Hooker, now some four-and-twenty years old, takes his degree of Master of Arts, at Corpus Christi College, Oxford. Mr. Edwards, "formerly of her majesty's chapel," publishes his "Paradise of Dainty Devises;" "that excellent chirurgeon, M. Thomas Vicary, esquire, serjeant to the queen, and chief chirurgeon of St. Bartholomew's Hospital," issues his "profitable treatise" of "The Anatomy of Man's Body;" Kendal, his "Hours of Epigrams;" and Raphael Holingshed gives to the world his "Chronicles," in two folio volumes—a valuable work, in which Holinshed was assisted by a clergyman named William Harrison, John Hooker (Richard's uncle), Francis Boteville, (who is said to have been "a man of great learning and judgment, and a wonderful lover of antiquities,") and John Stow, the tailor. Holinshed's "Chronicle" was a book well known to Shakspere, who principally derived his plot of "Macbeth" and others of his historical plays therefrom. It is a useful book, that of Holinshed: but some part of it gave offence to Elizabeth, and so had to be left out of the second edition, in 1587. The dinner hour of modern nobility and gentry, now dine at supper time, has altered strangely since the days of Holinshed, as the following extract will prove:—

> "With us the nobility, gentry, and students, do ordinarily go to dinner at eleven before noon, and to supper at five, or between five and six, at afternoons. The merchants dine and sup seldom before twelve at noon, and six at night, especially in London. The husbandmen dine also as high as noon, as they call it, and sup at seven or eight; but out of term in our universities, the scholars dine at ten."

Samuel Purchas, a clergyman who wrote several prose works, was this year born in Essex. James Cats, one of the fathers of the Dutch language and poetry, was now born at Brouwershaven, in Zealand; Gerard John Vossius, a writer on criticism and philology, was born near Heidel-

berg; C. Allari (Bronzino), the painter, at Florence; and Peter Paul Ruebens, the most eminent of all the Flemish painters, at Antwerp.

This year died, at his seat of Mounthall, in Essex, aged sixty-seven years, Sir Thomas Smith, professor of Greek at Cambridge. Wade says, he was "an acute metaphysician, accomplished statesman, and able soldier;" that he suggested a new mode of accenting Greek, and "also formed a new alphabet for the English tongue, consisting of twenty-nine letters;" and that "to him collegiate bodies are indebted for the statute that directs that the third part of the rent on college leases shall be reserved in corn."—Also, on the seventh of October, died George Gascoigne the poet and dramatist. Timperley calls him, "an English poet who in harmony of diction moved without a peer;" and he says, "the brave, the handsome, and the gay, but dissipated genius, Gascoigne, wrote the first English comedy in prose," and that "his tragedy of 'Jocasta,' which was acted at Gray's Inn, in 1566, is the second theatrical piece in blank verse."

Pocket-watches are said to have been first brought to England this year, from Germany. "Watches," says a paper in William Hone's Year Book, "may be traced to the fourteenth century.' But then, "they were shaped like an egg." Perhaps the watch belonging to Henry VIII. was of this description; and the "round clock, fully garnished with diamonds," which hung pendant from the "armelet or shakell of gold" which Leicester presented to Queen Elizabeth in 1572, might be orb-like, or similar to those of the fourteenth century. Shakspere mentions the watch by name, in the "Twelfth Night," (act ii., scene 5th,) where the fop Malvolio says, "I frown the while, and perchance wind up my watch, or play with some rich jewel;" but in "As You Like It," (act ii., scene 7th,) where Jaques relates to the duke and others, his meeting with "a fool i' the forest, a motley fool," he calls it a dial:—

> "And then he drew a dial from his poke;
> And looking on it with lack-lustre eye,
> Says, very wisely, 'It is ten o'clock,'" etc.

SHAKSPERE'S FIFTEENTH YEAR.

A.D. 1578. MASTER JOHN SHAKSPERE now "mortgages the small estate he enjoyed through his wife, for forty pounds; and," says Skottowe, "his difficulties were so well

known to his brothers of the corporation, that they remitted to him, in the same year, the payment of half the sum of six shillings and eight pence, levied upon each alderman, and entirely exempted him from a weekly contribution of four pence to the poor. At the same time, also, he was indebted five pounds to a baker at Stratford, and compelled to obtain collateral securities for its payment." Charles Knight, however, maintains that there is no reason to think that poverty ever came upon the youthful Shakspere's home at all. There was another John Shakspere, at Stratford, a shoemaker by trade, who, it appears, has been confounded with John Shakspere, the alderman. My brief limits prevent me from entering into this dispute here; and I would advise every working man to provide himself with a copy of Mr. Knight's excellent treatise on "Shakspere and his Writings," (published in his Store of Knowledge,) in which he will find much to interest him, as well as the alleged difficulties of the dramatist's father satisfactorily cleared up.

Thomas Lupton's "moral and pitiful" comedy of "All for Money, plainly representing the manners of men, and fashion of the world now-a-days," is now printed in London. It is the only attempt of Lupton at dramatic writing, is written in rhyme, and the characters are all figurative,—as, All for Money, Wit without Money, Money without Wit, etc.—Another play printed this year is George Whetstone's "right excellent and famous history" of "Promos and Cassandra," on which Shakspere afterwards founded his "Measure for Measure."

William Hunnis, who, in his rage for versifying, has actually turned the whole book of "Genesis" into metre! now publishes it, under the title of a "Hive full of Honey." The Geneva translation of the Bible is also printed in London; but it is better known as the "Breeches Bible," on account of the covering for the loins, which Adam and Eve (in the seventh verse of the third chapter of Genesis, are said to have made of fig-leaves) being rendered "breeches," instead of "aprons" as in the Bishop's Bible and our present authorised translation.—The second part of the "Mirror for Magistrates," the first part of which was published in 1577, is printed this year.

Walter Raleigh, now twenty-six years old, serves in the Netherlands, under Sir John Norris. Edward Coke (a mean-spirited man, who one day will play the part of devil's-deputy, as attorney-general, when Raleigh shall stand at the bar a prisoner, and be convicted of high

treason,) now pleads his first cause, being two years older than Raleigh.

William Harvey, the physician who enriched science by discovering and making known the circulation of the blood, is born on the second of April, at Folkstone, in Kent. The Earl of Ancrum, a Scottish poet of some merit, is born some time in the present year. He was the youngest son of Sir Andrew Ker, of Ferniehurst, and became a favourite with both James and Charles I. Jacob Cuyp, the Dutch painter, is also born this year. Another painter, Francesco Albano, is born at Bologna. His graceful and elegant female figures are much praised, and he is said to have copied them in a great measure from that of his beautiful wife.

As another instance of the bad sanitary regulations of English prisons, at this period, I may mention that twenty influential Romanists, confined in York Castle, perish of a contagious disease.

SHAKSPERE'S SIXTEENTH YEAR.

A.D. 1579. Sir Thomas North now publishes his translation of "Plutarch's Lives," from which source Shakspere derived, in after years, the plot of his Roman historical plays, "Julius Cæsar," "Anthony and Cleopatra," and "Coriolanus." John Stow issues an abridgement of his "Summary of the Chronicles of England," continued to the present year. Edmund Spenser, now twenty-six years of age, having removed to London, at the suggestion of his friend Harvey, whom he calls "the most excellent and learned both orator and poet, Maister Gabriel Harvey," now publishes his "Shepherd's Calander," in twelve eclogues, one for each month of the year, and dedicates it to Harvey. Anthony Munday has already appeared as a dramatist. George Peele, who is afterwards to become a player and dramatist, and one of Shakspere's fellow shareholders in the Blackfriar's theatre, takes the degree of Master of Arts, at Christ Church, Oxford, on the sixth of July; "at which time," says Anthony a Wood, "he was esteemed a most noted poet in the University." Walter Raleigh is off on an unfortunate voyage to Newfoundland, with his half-brother, Sir Humphrey Gilbert. Stephen Gosson, a student at Oxford, publishes his "School of Abuse;" containing, as the title page has it, "a pleasant invective against poets, pipers, players, jesters, and such like cater-

pillars of a commonwealth ; setting-up the flag of defiance to their mischievous exercise, and overthrowing their bulwarks by profane writers, natural reason, and common experience ;" and the title page further tells us, that it is "a discourse as pleasant for gentlemen that favour learning, as profitable for all that will follow virtue." From his sweeping censure of stage-plays, however, Gosson excepts some, amongst which is, "The Jew, shown at the Bull, representing the greediness of worldly choosers, and the bloody minds of usurers." From this play, what aid may Shakspere have received in the composition of his "Merchant of Venice !" It is to be regretted that no copy of this drama has come down to us. "Shakspere," says Waldo Emerson, "in common with his comrades, esteemed the mass of old plays waste stock, in which any experiment could be freely tried. Had the prestige which hedges about a modern tragedy existed, nothing could have been done." It will be seen that the author of "The Jew shown at the Bull," is an enemy of usury, like Shakspere ; and, indeed, most of the old English dramatists were the same—witness the following extract, given in Hone's "Table Book," by Charles Lamb, from the anonymous author of one of the old plays in the Garrick collection, now in the British Museum :—

> "Nature in all inferior things hath set
> A pitch or term, when they no more shall get
> Increase and offspring. Unrepaired houses
> Fall to decay ; old cattle cease to breed ;
> And sapless trees deny more fruit or seed :
> The earth would heartless and infertile be,
> If it should never have a jubilee.
> Only the Usurer's Money 'genders still,
> The longer, lustier ; age this doth not kill.
> He lives to see his Money's Money's Money,
> Even to a hundred generations reach."

The Duke of Anjou, brother to the French king, Henry II., having come to England, to woo Elizabeth, during the month of August, a work suddenly appeared in London against the match, entitled "The Discovery of a Gaping Gulph, whereunto England is likely to be swallowed by another French Marriage, if the Lord forbid not the Banns, by letting her Majesty see the Sin and Punishment thereof." This tract gives great offence to Elizabeth ; and, on the twenty-seventh of September, an order of council is issued to the Lord Mayor of London, calling upon him, and the sheriffs, and aldermen, to convene meetings of all the companies of London, and receive and

destroy all copies of the publication, and inquire how the owners have become possessed of them. The reader will find the barbarous punishment inflicted on the author and publisher of this work noticed under the year 1581.

The protestant provinces of Holland, Zealand, Friesland, and Utrecht, now enter into an alliance for mutual protection; and the King of Spain sends fifteen hundred men into Ireland, to assist the popish rebels, Fitz-Morris and Desmond, against the English crown, and seize upon Ireland for the King of Spain, to whom his infallible holiness has been liberal enough to give that island. The consecrated banner is not to float successful in the air, maugre all the pope's blessings and holy water. Verily, as Douglas Jerrold observes, "there is no impudence like the impudence of what men call religion." There is not a single law of God but what has been outraged in the name of religion. Thus, on the second of May, the Bishop of Norwich offers up a burnt-offering to the Lord, the altar being the ditch at Norwich, and the victim, "an obstinate heretic," named Hammond!

"About this time," says Sir Richard Baker, "Queen Elizabeth, at the request of William Harbauzne, an Englishman, procured a grant from the Turkish emperor, for the English merchants to exercise free traffic in all places of his dominions, as well as Venetians, Polanders, and other neighbouring nations; whereupon, they set up first the company of Turkey Merchants; managing a most gainful trade at Constantinople, Alexandria, Egypt, Aleppo, Cyprus, and other parts of Asia, bringing home spices, perfumes, unwrought silks, tapestry, indigo, currants, and the like."

On the twentieth of October, the Scottish parliament, met at Edinburgh, forbid "all markets and fairs to be kept on the Sabbath-day, all gaming, playing, passing to taverns and ale-houses, and wilful remaining from their parish church, in time of sermon or prayers;" and order that a pecuniary mulct should be laid upon "the transgressors respective, to be paid for the use of the poor of the parish." They also decree, that "every householder, having lands or goods worth five hundred pounds, should be obliged to have a *Bible* and a *Psalm-book* in his house."

On the twentieth of February, dies Sir Nicholas Bacon, the lord-chancellor, whom Baker calls "a very fat man, but singularly wise, and a chief prop of the queen's privy council." His youngest son, Francis, (afterwards the famous Lord Bacon,) now a youth of eighteen years, is compelled

to return from Paris, where he had gone in the suite of the English ambassador, and engage in some occupation that will bring pudding as well as praise. He hopes that his uncle, Lord Burleigh, will give him a good sinecure under goverment; but he solicits in vain. So he must commence life as a lawyer.

George Ferrars, one of the authors of the "Mirror for Magistrates;" Sir Thomas Gresham, one of the merchant-princes of London, the founder of the Royal Exchange; and William Whittingham, one of the translators of the "Genevan Bible," are amongst the deaths this year. Gresham died suddenly, on the twenty-first of November, at the age of threescore years. Of Whittingham, Timperley has the following notice:—

"William Whittingham was born in the city of Chester, in 1524, and educated at Oxford, where he became a fellow of All Souls, and afterwards a senior student of Christ Church. In 1550, he went to France, and settled at Orleans, where he married the sister of John Calvin. In 1563, he was promoted to the deanery of Durham, which he enjoyed for sixteen years. His zeal against popery was so violent, that he destroyed some of the antiquities and monuments in Durham Cathedral, and took up the stone coffins of the priors of Durham, and ordered them to be used as troughs for horses to drink in. During his residence at Geneva, he translated into metre five of the Psalms, of which the hundred and nineteenth was one, together with the 'Ten Commandments,' and a 'Prayer,' distinguished, in the collection of Sternhold and Hopkins, by the initials of his name, W. W. He died July 10th, 1579, in the sixty-fifth year of his age."

The fate of the man of genius is often a melancholy one. From the blind old Grecian beggar, Homer, down to William Thoms, kneeling over his poor starved child in a Scottish barn, or the true English poet, John Critchley Prince, now starving in prosperous Lancashire, what a heart-rending history is that of the most gifted of our race! In this single year, 1579, I find the immortal Tasso shut up as a madman by the cruel Duke Alphonso, in the hospital of St. Ann, at Ferrara, where we must leave him for the next seven years; and turning our eyes to Portugal, we shall find their greatest poetic luminary, Luis de Camoens, at once the glory and the shame of his country, after his immortal poem of the "Lusiad" has been eight years in the possession of his countrymen, dying in the common hospital at his native Lisbon, in the sixty-second year of his age. His father, a ship-captain, had perished by shipwreck, in 1556, on the coast of Goa. In 1550, Camoens was a volunteer to the East Indies. Having involved himself in some disputes concerning a lady of the palace, named Catharine de Attayde, with whom he was

in love, he was exiled to Santarem; and, from despair at his hard fate, he became a soldier, and sailed in the fleet sent against Moroceo. The Muses alone, though all his misfortunes of war or peace, were ever true to him. His right eye was destroyed by an arrow, before Ceuta; but neither genius nor misfortune could recommend him to favour. Indignant at the contumely with which he was treated, in 1553 he embarked for India; and there he commenced the great epic poem of the "Lusiad." But the man of genius is always dreaded by tyrants; and some abuses in the government of India displeasing Camoens, he wrote a satire thereon, for which he was banished to Macao. It was in this banishment that he wrote the principal part of that celebrated "Lusiad" which all his countrymen, rich and poor, are so well acquainted with. After some years had elapsed, he was recalled from exile; but his misfortunes did not end there. He was shipwrecked at the mouth of the river Mecon, in Cochin China, and saved himself by swimming; and the manuscript of his immortal poem was only preserved by him holding it up with one hand above the water! In Goa he was arrested for debt, but his friends becoming sureties for payment thereof, he was allowed to depart, and reached Lisbon in 1569. Here he published his epic, and though the king received the dedication, the author was allowed to starve. A faithful slave, whom he had brought from India, begged in the streets of Lisbon at night, to gain bread for the support of his poor master, the bard. But fifteen years after the poet's death, a beautiful monument was erected to his memory,—which forcibly reminds me of what Samuel Bamford sings of Burns:—

> "And Burns who only asked for bread,
> And has gotten a marble tomb instead."

Francis Sneyders, a painter, who worked in concert with Ruebens and Jordaens, was this year born at Antwerp. There is a painting of Diana and her Nymphs, in the collection at Hampton Court (No. 418), which is the joint production of him and Ruebens.

SHAKSPERE'S SEVENTEENTH YEAR.

A.D. 1580. EDMUND SHAKSPERE, the youngest of the poet's brothers, and who in after years became a player, like "gentle Willy," was born this year, at Stratford-upon-Avon. William by this time must have picked up

many crumbs of learning, at the Stratford Grammar-School, taught in what had formerly been the chapel of the Guild of the Holy Cross; and we may fancy the observing eyes of the future dramatist often straying from the dry task of the school-boy to fix their keen glance on the old fresco paintings that then adorned the wall.—On the sixth of April, an earthquake was felt in many parts of England, and Tyrwhitt supposes it to be the one which Shakspere has made the Nurse allude to in "Romeo and Juliet," (act i., scene 3rd):—

"I remember it well.
'Tis since the earthquake now eleven years."

Walter Raleigh is assisting to quell the rebellion in Ireland: and the Earl of Leicester is imprisoned for marrying the widow of Essex, whom he is supposed to have poisoned. John Stow publishes the first edition of his "Annals;" and Philip Sidney, having expressed himself too freely for Elizabeth, respecting her proposed marriage with the Duke of Anjou, retires from court, and writes his "Arcadia." That true English author, William Howitt, in his "Visits to Remarkable Places," (a cheap edition of which would be a boon to the working-classes, and I hope remunerative to whoever possesses the copyright), thus speaks of the literary merits of Philip Sidney (whom we shall afterwards find knighted by Elizabeth):—

"The evidence of Sir Philip Sidney's genius which have come down to us are to be found in his 'Arcadia:' his 'Astrophel and Stella;' his 'Defence of Poesy;' his 'Sonnets and Songs:' and there have not been wanting those who assert that they do not bear out by their merit the enthusiastic encomiums of his cotemporaries. Lord Orford has pronounced the 'Arcadia' 'a tedious, lamentable, pedantic, pastoral romance;' and Hume, Tytler, and others, have echoed the opinion.—How many are there of our own age who are prepared by actual perusal to sanction or disallow of this dictum? How many have read that poem of which every one speaks as a matter of knowledge—Spenser's 'Faery Queen?' How many, even, have waded through 'Paradise Lost?' Every poetical spirit which has qualified itself to give an answer, must declare that the literary relics of Sir Philip Sidney,—writings thrown off rapidly in the midst of many pursuits and many distracting attentions, and before death, at the early age of twenty-two,—must pronounce them well worthy of his fame—His poetry, and prose too, have all the marks of stiffness, and affected point of that period; but every page of his composition abounds with sober and with brilliant thoughts. His sonnets are delightful testimonies to the inward beauty and tenderness of the man. Many readers have been made familiar with the fine opening of one of his sonnets, by Wordsworth introducing it as the opening of his:

> 'With how sad steps, O moon, thou climb'st the sky,
> How silently, and with how sad a face!'

and every real lover of poetry, if he opens the volume of Sir Philip Sidney, will find much that will equally delight him, and generate within him trains of high and sober thought. But, in my opinion, it is the 'Arcadia' which must stand as thebest image of his 'inner man.' Whoever reads it, should read it with reference to the spirit of the age, and turn relentlessly over all the pastoral episodes, and he will then find a volume full of stirring interest, striking invention, and that living tone of high, pure, heroic spirit, which scorned everything base; which is, in truth, the grand characteristic of Sidney;—a spirit which stands up by the low and cunning knowingness of our day, like one of the statues of Greece by the wigged and sworded objects of modern sculpture. Such passages as the 'Prayer of Pamela' are amongst the noblest specimens of impassioned eloquence in the language. Charles I. showed how deeply that passage had touched him, by adopting it as his own petition to the Supreme Being as he went to the scaffold; and the closing portion of it shall close these passing remarks on Sir Sidney's writings, as very expressive of his nature.—'Let calamity be the exercise; but not the overthrow of my virtue. Let the power of my enemies prevail, but not prevail to my destruction. Let my greatness be their prey; let my pian be the sweetness of their revenge; let them, if so it seem good unto Thee, vex me with more and more punishment: but, O Lord, never let their wickedness have such a hand, but that I may carry a pure mind in a pure body!'"

Philip II. of Spain now seizes on Portugal, on the death of the Portuguese monarch, Henry, who had died without issue. English popish colleges are erected at Rome and Rheims, in lieu of that which has been temporarily suppressed at Douay, in the north of France. From these seminaries whole schools of jesuits arrive in England, where jesuitism is declared high-treason, and a proclamation issued for calling home the children of English subjects who are being educated abroad. To compel attendance at the Church of England, as by law established, a law is now passed, levying a fine of twenty pounds a-month (and twenty pounds was a great sum, when it would purchase about two hundred bushels of wheat!) on all who neglected to attend when the bell gave them warning to do so. If there be truth in the doctrine of Pythagoras, concerning the transmigration of spirits, then has the shades of these defunct legislators of Elizabeth's intolerant period enshrined themselves in the bodies of Sir Andrew Agnew and his clique.

At Lorraine, in France, witches, so called, are burnt by wholesale; so that between the present year and 1595—a period of fifteen years only—no less than nine hundred

unfortunate wretches perish in the agonies of the flames, to satisfy a barbarous law, made in a remote age, when the minds of men were grossly enslaved by ignorance and superstition—"Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live." It is not too much to say, that millions of our fellow-creatures have perished for this imaginary crime in Europe alone. The nine hundred burnt in Lorraine in fifteen years, would allow, on an average, one for every week of the period, and eight each year besides, for high feasts and holidays. At the same time that these poor wretches are burnt, a law is in force in England against the same never-existing crime.

On the third of November, Captain Francis Drake returns from his first buccaneering expedition round the globe, and arrives at Plymouth, from whence he had sailed on the thirteenth of November, 1577. In this voyage he is said to have discovered Cape Horn; but his chief feat was plundering some Spanish ships along the coasts of Chili and Peru, and making a few marauding excursions into the gold districts. Queen Elizabeth restores to the Spaniards a part of the booty. How brightly do the voyages of the Cleveland peasant's son, James Cook, contrast with those of Drake! Even so may we contrast the reign of Victoria with that of Elizabeth.

Robert Brown, the nonconformist, begins his teachings of independency; and the Family of Love land from Holland.—A proclamation is issued against gold chains and cloaks; and the length of swords is limited to three feet, and rapiers to twelve inches, without the hilt. It is on this limiting the length of swords, that Charles Dickens has founded one of his tales in "Master Humphrey's Clock." The use of coaches in England increases from this time; but they were not let for hire in London until 1625, nor in Edinburgh until 1673.—As a precaution against the plague and the high price of the necessaries of life, Elizabeth issues her proclamation against the further growth of London; no more houses are to be built within three miles of the gates of the city, and one family only is to inhabit each house. What would Elizabeth have thought of London now, with its two thousand miles of streets, and nearly three hundred and thirty thousand houses, covering an area of some forty-five thousand acres, and containing a population of more than two million and a quarter souls!

The state of the English press may be judged of at this period, from the two following incidents:—one bookseller, on the twenty-sixth of January, procures a license from

the bishop of London, to print a book called the "English Schoolmaster," "set forth" by one James Bellot, "for teaching of strangers to pronounce English;" and on the thirteenth of February, another bookseller is licensed "to print the romance of 'Palmerin of England,' on consideration that if anything reprehensible is found in the book after publication, all the copies shall be committed to the flames."

This year, dies in London, in great poverty, aged about sixty-seven years, Thomas Tusser, author of the earliest didactic poem in the English language, first printed in 1557, under the title of "A Hundred Good Points of Husbandry," with the following sensible motto:—

> "A hnndred good points of good husbandry
> Maintaineth good h ɔusehold with huswifry;
> House-keeping and husbandry, if it be good,
> Must love one another as cousins in blood:
> The wife too must husband as well as the man,
> Or farewell thy husbandry, do what thou can."

Tusser had a good education, at Cambridge, as he tells us himself in one of his poems, and was ten years at court, for all of which he seems to have been beholden to Lord Paget. He was afterwards a farmer at several places, but whether his own good maxims were neglected, or as he himself tells us,—

> "The gain not great, the pain enough,"

certain it is that Ceres did not prosper his agricultural labours,—perhaps he had forgot his lustrations and offerings. At court, Tusser had paid great attention to music,—

> "No music then was left unsought,
> A care I had to serve that way;"

and this knowledge of music was the means whereby he gained his bread when farming failed him, being both a chorister and a fiddler. His work was afterwards enlarged by other writers, and published under the title of "Five Hundred Points of Good Husbandry." It consists of practical information for those employed in the cultivation of the soil, and is quite as poetical as can be expected.

William Alexander, (afterwards created Earl of Stirling, by Charles I.,) a prolific Scottish poet and dramatist, is born this year, at Menstrie; as is also, at Dublin, the learned James Usher, afterwards archbishop of Armagh, and primate of Ireland. It is also the natal year of Quevedo-Villegas, the Spanish poet, who is born at Madrid; and

of Giovanni Lanfraco, the Bolognese painter, who was a native of Parma. — Agnolo Bronzino, the Florentine painter, dies this year.—Baronius, the popish historian, now commences his ecclesiastical annals, at Rome; and the French sceptic and philosopher, Michael Montaigne, published his valuable "Essays." In the British Museum, the reader may see a copy of Montaigne's "Essays," translated by John Florio, which was once the property of William Shakspere. It is carefully preserved in a glass case, along with the copies of the first editions of Shakspere's works, and I confess I could only look thereon with a reverential feeling,—for it was something to see the handwriting of Shakspere!

SHAKSPERE'S EIGHTEENTH YEAR.

A.D. 1581. THE papists, ever persecutors when themselves in power, are now destined to suffer under protestant intolerance. It has been said, that "an Englishman's house is his castle;" but this year we find the doors of private dwellings rudely forced open at all hours of the night, by pursuivants hunting for popish priests and books; and the names of fifty thousand recusants returned to the privy-council, which may now be termed the protestant inquisition. Everard Hanse, one of the priests, who was condemned on the twenty-eighth of July, is taken to Tyburn three days after, hung up by the neck, cut down again whilst still alive, his belly ripped up, his still-beating heart taken out and cast into the flames, the head cut off, and the quivering body divided into quarters, according to the barbarous sentence of our then treason laws,—a sentence that has only been altered since by allowing the body to be dead before the cutting-up begins! On the first of December, three other Romish priests, Campion, Sherwine, and Brian, are butchered at Tyburn, after having been repeatedly tortured on the rack. They are drawn to the gallows on hurdles, and Campion mounts the cart, has the halter put round his neck, and undergoes the dreadful sentence. Then comes the hangman, and "taking hold of Mr. Sherwine, with his hands all bloody" from the embowelling of Campion, says, "Come, Sherwine, take thou also thy wages!" and Sherwine mounts the cart like a hero, as he undoubtedly was. And when Sherwine has addressed the crowd, and received his wages, then Brian also addresses them, and receives his! Such are "the

glorious days of good Queen Bess," which noisy fools so often laud as mightily superior to the degenerate age of Victoria!

Nor are the puritans greater favourites with "the powers that be." I have already alluded to the publication of "A Gaping Gulph," and the printer, lucky dog! is pardoned, but the author, John Stubbs, and William Page, the publisher, are "brought to the scaffold, made of purpose, in the market-place at Westminster," says Sir Richard Baker, "and their right hands, with a butcher's knife and mallet, cut off by the wrist." And then John Stubbs, who is a lawyer of Lincoln's Inn, holds up the bleeding stump, with his left hand (*left* in every sense of the word) takes off his hat, and with a loud voice exclaims,—"God save the Queen!" Some of the most eminent lawyers doubt the legality of the sentence; but to convince them that all the laws of God and man are alike indifferent to her when they thwart her arbitrary will, Elizabeth commits one to the Tower, and so sharply rebukes the other, that he resigns his office of judge in the court of Common Pleas. On the fourth of August, Elizabeth banquets on board of Drake's ship, at Deptford, and knights the marauder, though she is forced to make him re-gorge much of the plunder to the King of Spain.

Robert Brown (the founder of the Independents, who are at first termed Brownists) now mounts the pulpit at Norwich, and converts to his views a number of the Dutch exiles, for which he gets into trouble with the ecclesiastical commissioners, who commit him to prison. Mr. Philip Sidney (for he is not yet knighted, though the very flower of chivalry) is distinguishing himself in the jousts and tournaments with which Elizabeth entertains her lover, the Duke of Anjou. Nathanial Wood prints his comedy of "The Conflict of Conscience;" and Jasper Heywood, son of John Heywood the epigrammatist, translates three of Seneca's tragedies, "Thyestes," "Hercules Furens," and "Troas." Poor Cervantes, minus his left hand, arrives in his native Spain, after having spent five years and a half as a slave in Algiers; where, however, it is but justice to say that he was gently used, notwithstanding his numerous attempts to effect the escape of himself and his brothers in misfortune. The payment of a thousand ducats as his ransom restored him to freedom.

Thomas Wilson, "the first critical writer on the English language," now "sleeps the sleep that knows no waking." He had been a fellow of King's College, Cambridge, and afterwards dean of Durham. His "System of Rhetoric

and Logic," published some eleven years before the birth of Shakspere, contains many excellent remarks. Wilson is the advocate of simplicity of language; he would laugh, for instance, at full-grown babies using the sickly terms of *pa* and *ma* to designate their fathers and mothers, and the substitution of the French word *bouquet* (pronounced *boo-kay!*) for a bunch of flowers, when either the fine old English words of *posy* or *nos-gay* would do as well, (or much better, seeing that they are pronounced as they are spelt,) would disgust him quite. He would have us to "never affect any strange inkhorn terms, but to speak as is commonly received; neither seeking to be over fine, nor yet living over careless; using our speech as most do, and ordering our wits as the fewest have done." Would to God we had more English critics like Dean Wilson! We need a true penman to do for our language what Stores Smith has done for some other conventional follies, viz., to expose their absurdity with the heroism of a man that has a healthy soul within him.

The brave Lord Herbert—"a brave and high-spirited man," as Robert Chambers well observes, "at a time when honourable feeling was rare at the English court"—was this year born at Eyton, in Shropshire. He became the friend of Hobbes, the Malmesbury philosopher, and wrote a "History of the Life and Reign of King Henry VIII.," much praised by Lord Orford and Bishop Nicolson. He is also the author of several excellent religious treatises, which even yet are in advance of the age.—Domenico Zampieri, an eminent painter of the Lombard school, was this year born at Bologna. There is a painting of his in the collection at Dulwich College, the subject of which is Venus gathering Apples in the Garden of the Hesperides.

SHAKSPERE'S NINETEENTH YEAR.

A.D. 1582. IT is an important year in the life of the young man, Shakspere.

> **"From fairest creatures we desire increase,**
> **That thereby beauty's rose might never die,"**

is the opening of Shakspere's first Sonnet; and on the twenty-eight of November a license is granted from the Bishop of Worcester authorising William Shakspere and Anne Hathaway "to be married together with once asking of the banns of matrimony between them;" but "the

said William Shakspere" is not to "proceed to solemnization of marriage with the said Anne Hathaway without the consent of her friends;" and "the said William Shakspere" is "upon his own proper cost and expenses" to "defend and save harmless the Right Reverend Father in God Lord John Bishop of Worcester and his officers for licensing them;" and for this purpose two farmers of Stratford-upon-Avon, named Fulk, Sandells, and John Richardson, are the poet's bondsmen in the sum of forty pounds. Now Shakspere seems to have been a wild youth in those days, but never devoid of honour. Anne Hathaway (whose name is spelled Hathway in the marriage-license, for the discovery of which we may thank Mr. Wheler) of Shottery, near Stratford, was in a likely way to add one more to the then too scanty population of England, and William Shakspere, not doubting that he was the father of the child, nobly resolved to make her all the satisfaction in his power, by making her his wife, so that her child should be born in honest wedlock, though begot without. Though Anne was eight years older than himself; though he has made the Duke, in "Twelfth Night," (act ii., scene 4th), advise that "the woman take an older than herself;" though in his will the only legacy which he has left his wife, is that of his "second best bed, with the furniture," (she being entitled to dower, as Charles Knight has shown); maugre all this, there is not the least reason in the world for supposing that she ever forfeited the poet's love. I think a careful perusal of his "Sonnets" will show that he loved his wife dearer than aught else beside; and all his writings prove that though he was no puritan, he was ever the friend of virtue. It is strange what a hold the false idea, that men of immense genius must also be men of gross imprudence, has taken of men's minds. And even men of talent and literary taste have bothered their brains to find some cause of disagreement between "gentle Willy" and the wife of his bosom, without having any proof, or even tradition, that any alienation of the affections ever took place at all! One might quote many of his sonnets to show his steadfast affections. Let us take one as a sample:—

"Let those who are in favour with their stars
Of public honour and proud titles boast,
Whilst I, whom fortune of such triumph bars,
Unlook'd for joy in that I honour most
Great prince's favourites their fair leaves spread
But as the marigold at the sun's eye;
And in themselves their pride lies buried,

For at a frown they in their glory die.
The painful warrior famoused for fight,
After a thousand victories, once foil'd,
Is from the book of honour rased quite,
And all the rest forgot for which he toil'd.
Then happy I, that love and am beloved,
Where I may not remove nor be removed.'

Sonnet XXV.

To the various conjectures in what occupation Shakspere was engaged up to the time he left Stratford-upon-Avon for London, I shall not add one more. The probability is, that he was engaged in the same occupation as his father, whether it was farming, or wool-dealing, or both. But a well-written description of Shottery, from the classical pen of William Howitt, cannot be otherwise than acceptable to the reader: for Howitt's descriptions of bucolic scenes linger in one's brain like those of good old Izaak Walton, and his warm sympathy with everything that is just and true deservedly recommends his writings to every true friend of progress. The work from which the following extract is given is his "Visits to Remarkable Places;" a glorious work, in the perusal of which one seems to be actually visiting the places described, for the author fairly carries one along with him, as, like a genial guide, he points out and explains the various objects of interest:—

"I must confess that there was no spot connected with Shakspere at Stratford that so strongly interested me as Shottery, the little rustic village where Ann Hathaway was born, and where Shakspere wooed, and whence he married her. The house in which he was born is turned into a butcher's shop; his birth there was a mere accident, and the accidents of time have not added to the intrinsic interest of the place; the house which he built, or improved for himself, and in which he spent the last years of his life, was pulled down, and dispersed piecemeal by the infamous parson Gastrell, who thus 'doomed himself to eternal fame' more thoroughly than the fool who fired the Temple of Diana; but the birth place and the marriage place of Ann Hathaway is just as it was; and, excepting the tombs of Shakspere and herself, the only authentic and unchanged traces of their existence here. I therefore hastened away to Shottery, the very first moment I could get out of the inn. It is but a short walk to it, across some pleasant meadows, and I pleased myself with thinking, as I strode along, with what delight Shakspere, in his youth, trod the same path, on his way to see his fair Ann Hathaway; and how often, in his latter years, when he had renounced public life, and she was his 'all-the-world,' they might, led by the sweet recollections of the past, often stroll that way together, and, perhaps, visit some of their kindred under the same rustic roof.

"The village is a real rustic village indeed, consisting of a few farm-houses, and of half-timbered cottages of the most primitive con-

struction, standing apart, one from the other, in their old gardens and orchards. Nothing can exceed the simplicity and quiet of this rustic hamlet. It is the *beau ideal* of Goldsmith's Auburn. The village public house is the 'Shakspere Tavern,' a mere cottage, like the rest. No modern innovations, no improvements, seem to have come hither to disturb the image of the past times. The cottages stand apart from each other, in their gardens and orchard-crofts, and are just what the poets delight to describe. The country around is pleasant, though not very striking. Its great charm is its perfect rurality. Ann Hathaway's cottage stands at the farther end of this scattered and secluded hamlet, at the feet of pleasant uplands, and from its rustic casements you catch glimpses of the fine breezy ranges of the Ilmington and Meon hills, some miles southward; and of Stratford church spire eastward, peeping over its trees.

"The cottage is a long tenement, of the most primitive character; of timber framing, filled up with brick and plaster work. Its doors are grey with age, and have the old fashioned wooden latches, with a bit of wood nailed on the outside of the door to take hold of while you pull the string; just such a latch as, no doubt, was on the door of Little Red Riding Hood's grandmother, when the wolf said to the little girl, 'Pull the string, and you'll get in'

The antiquity of the house is testified by the heads of the wooden pins, which fasten the framing, standing up some inches from the walls, according to the rude fashion of the age, never having been cut off. The end of the cottage comes to the village road: and the side which looks into the orchard is covered with vines and roses, and rosemary. The orchard is a spot all knolls and hollows, where you might imagine the poet, when he came here a-wooing, or in the after-days of his renown, when he came hither to see his wife's friends, and to indulge in day-dreams of the past, as he represents the King of Denmark,

> "'sleeping within mine orchard,
> My custom always of the afternoon,'

lying on the mossy turf, and enjoying the pleasant sunshine, and the flickering shadows of the old apple-tree. The orchard extends up the slope a good way; then you come to the cottage garden, and then to another orchard. You walk up a little narrow path, between hedges of box, and amongst long grass. All the homely herbs and flowers which grow about the real old English cottage, and which Shakspere delighted to introduce into his poetry—the rosemary, celandine, honeysuckle, marigold, mint, thyme, rue, sage, etc., meet your eye as you proceed.

"The commentators of Shakspere have puzzled themselves wonderfully about some of the plainest matters of his text, and about none more than the identity of the dewberry. In the 'Midsummer Night's Dream,' Titian tells the fairies to be kind to Bottom:—

> "'Be kind and courteous to this gentleman;
> Hop in his walks, and gambol in his eyes;
> Feed him with apricocks and dewberries,

With purple grapes, figs, and mulberries;
The honey-bags steal from the humble bees,' etc.

"These same dewberries have cost the expounders of his text a world of trouble. As apricots, grapes, and figs, are very good things, they could not bring their fancies to believe that the fairies would feed Bottom on aught less dainty, even though he yearned hungrily after good oats and a bundle of hay. All kinds of fruits were run over in the scale of delicacies, and not finding any of the finer sorts which ever bore the name of dewberry, they at last sagely conclude that it must be a gooseberry, because the gooseberry is only once mentioned as a gooseberry in all his dramas. A wise conclusion! What a pity that those laborious and ingenious commentators would but step occasionally out of their studies, and go into Shakspere's own neighbourhood, and hear the peasantry there talk. They would not only have long ago discovered what a dewberry is, but might have many a phrase and proverb, that would have thrown more light on the text of Shakspere, than will ever stream in through a library window in half a century. A dewberry is a species of blackberry, but of a larger grain, of a finer acid, and having upon it a purple bloom, like the violet plum. It is a fruit well known by that name to botanists (*rubus coesius*), and by that name it has always been well known by the common people in the midland counties. As I walked round the orchard of Ann Hathaway, I was quite amused to see it growing plentifully on the banks; and taking up a sprig of it, with some berries on it, I asked almost every country-man and every country-woman whom I met during the day, what they called that fruit. In every instance, they at once replied, 'the dewberry.' While I was in that neighbourhood, I repeatedly asked the peasantry if they knew such a thing as a dewberry. In every case, they replied, 'To be sure; it is like a blackberry, only its grains are larger, and it is more like a mulberry.' A very good description. 'Yes,' said others, 'it grows low on the banks; it grows plentifully all about this country.' So much for all the critical nonsense about the dewberry.

"I could not avoid noticing many such little touches of natural imagery with which Shakspere has enriched the poetical portion of his text, as I strolled about this garden and orchard. In the 'Midsummer Night's Dream,' act iv., Shakspere says:—

——— "'The female ivy so
Enrings the barky fingers of the elm.'

"Why the *barky* fingers of the elm? Because the young shoots of the elm and those of the maple cover themselves with a singular corky bark, which rises in longitudinal ridges, of frequently more than a quarter of an inch high, and presenting a very singular appearance. It is a curious fact that the elm is the great natural growth of the country about Stratford, and must have been particularly familiar to Shakspere's eye, and in this very orchard he must have seen plenty of the very images he has used. I pleased myself with imagining the quiet happiness which he had enjoyed with his Ann Hathaway in this very spot, while these rural images and happy illustrations silently flowed into his mind from the things around him. There was an old

arbour of box, the trees of which had grown high and wild, having a whole wilderness of periwinkle at their feet; and upon the wooden end of a shed forming one side of this arbour, grew a honeysuckle, which seemed as though it might have grown in the very days of Shakspere, for it had all the character of a very old tree; little of it showing any life, and its bark hanging from its stem in filaments of more than a foot long, like the tatters and beard of an ancient beggar. At the door looking into this orchard is a sort of raised platform, up three or four steps, with a seat upon it, so that the cottagers might sit and enjoy at once the breeze and the prospect of the orchard and fields beyond. There is a passage right through the house, with a very old high-backed bench of oak in it, said to have been there in Shakspere's time, and old enough to have been there long before. The whole of the interior is equally simple and rustic. I have been more particular in speaking of this place, because, perhaps, at the very moment I write these remarks, this interesting dwelling may be destroyed, and all that I have been describing have given way to the ravages of modern change. The place is sold, and perhaps the cottage of Ann Hathaway is now no more. A Mr. Barns, a farmer of the neighbouring hamlet of Luddington, has bought the whole property for 300*l.*, and talks of pulling down the house at Spring. He has already pulled down some of the neighbouring cottages, and built up a row of red staring ones in their places; and already he has made an ominous gap into Ann Hathaway's orchard! The Taylors, the old proprietors, who have lived in the cottage for many years, were gone, the very morning I was there, to Stratford, to sign the conveyance."

Elizabeth, who had encouraged the addresses of the Duke of Anjou, accompanies him, during the month of February, as far as Canterbury, for he is about to leave England unsuccessful; the ministry and the people being alike unfavourable to the match. William Camden now travels through the northern and eastern counties of England collecting information for his famous "Britannia." Richard Hakluyt—whom Robert Chambers calls "another of the laborious compilers of this period, to whom the world is indebted for the preservation, in an accessible form, of narratives which would otherwise, in all probability, have fallen into oblivion,"—publishes a small collection of voyages to America.—Pope Gregory XIII., by the advice of Aloysius Lilius, reforms the calendar; but protestant bigotry prevents the improvement from being adopted in England until a hundred and seventy years afterwards. A Latin play, on the death of Cæsar, is performed at Christ Church, Oxford. And the English seamen are computed at little more than fourteen thousand, and the number of vessels, at twelve hundred and thirty-two, only two hundred and seventeen of which are above eighty tons burthen.

On the twenty-first of January, the infamous Duke of Alva dies, in the seventy-fifth year of his age. On the twenty-eighth of February, the learned George Buchanan rests from his labours, and escapes from his poverty; having just given his "History of Scotland" to his countrymen. He is seventy-six years old, and so poor that his funeral expenses are paid by the public. During his whole life he had "fought a good fight" for the cause of progress, in spite of all manner of persecution, and in his old age his sentiment must have been that since so ably expressed by his country's inspired ploughboy:—

"Oh Death! the poor man's dearest friend—
The kindest and the best;
Welcome the hour, my aged limbs
Are laid with thee at rest!
The great, the wealthy, fear thy blow,
From pomp and pleasure torn!
But, oh! a blest relief to those
That, weary-laden, mourn"

BURNS.

John Harrington, one of the most polished poets of his day, also dies this year, aged forty-eight years. Queen Mary had imprisoned him in the Tower, for corresponding with Elizabeth, who on her accession to liberty and a throne could not fail to reward him.—Schiavone, the Venetian painter, now dies, in his sixty-first year. There are eleven of his paintings in Hampton Court.

Amongst the births this year are those of Sir John Beaumont, a poet and eldest brother of Beaumont the dramatist; Richard Corbet, a gardener's son, who afterwards became a witty poet, as well as bishop of Norwich; William Juxon, born at Chichester, the prelate who attended Charles I. to the scaffold; John Bainbridge, an eminent astronomer and mathematician, born at Ashby-de-la-Zouch, in Leicestershire; at Kipling in Yorkshire, George Calvert, the first baron of Baltimore, a liberal-minded Roman Catholic, under whom the now important American state of Maryland was first colonized, with good faith to the Indians and toleration to all sects in religion; and, on the twenty-fifth of March, at Aber-Conway, in Caernarvonshire, John Williams, a theological writer, who rose to be archbishop of York.—Youet, the French painter, and Teniers the Elder, a celebrated painter of the Flemish school, were both born this year, the latter at Antwerp. There are three of Tenier's pieces at Dulwich College.

The first edition of the Romish English version of the New Testament, is now printed at Rheims. Eleven Romish priests are executed in England this year,—seven at Tyburn, three at York, and one at Chelmsford, in Essex.

SHAKSPERE'S TWENTIETH YEAR.

A.D. 1583. On the twenty-sixth of May, being only six months after the marriage of William Shakspere and Anne Hathaway, their daughter Susannah is baptised. This daughter, in the month of June, 1607, married Dr. John Hall, a physician at Stratford-upon-Avon, and survived him fourteen years. She died in July, 1649, at the age of sixty-six years. It was to her that Shakspere left all his real property in and about Stratford, as well as his house in London. Mrs. Hall had only one child, a daughter, named Elizabeth, who was eight years old when her grandfather died. This grand-daughter of Shakspere's married Mr. Thomas Nash, but being left a widow in 1647, she was married to Sir John Barnard, of Abington, in Northampshire, in 1649, where she was buried in 1670,—the last of the descendants of Shakspere!

On Sunday, the sixth of January, Philip Sidney is knighted by Elizabeth. Christopher Marlow, who is about two years older than Shakspere, now takes the degree of Bachelor of Arts, at Bene't College, Cambridge. Robert Green, who is supposed to have been in holy orders, commences the unfortunate profession of authorship. John Lyly—a native of Kent, some ten years the senior of Shakspere—writes his drama of "Alexander and Campaspe." Richard Stanyhurst publishes his "First Four Books of Virgil's Æneis, translated into English Heroical Verse." "Rich, his Farewell to the Military Profession," a miscellany now printed, containing the "History of Apollonius and Silla," is one of the three sources from which Shakspere is said to have derived the plot of his "Twelfth Night." "It was, however," says T. Wade, "the mere form of which Shakspere availed himself: the subtle spirit of the work is his, and his alone: and the exquisitely comic characters of the drama—that prince-royal of joyous topers, Sir Toby Belch, a joker worthy to have been the intimate of Sir John Falstaff; the foolish, prodigal, conceited, quarrelsome, cowardly, super-silly fortune-hunter, Sir Andrew Aguecheek (a distant cousin, we have always

thought, of Master Abraham Slender,) who 'harms his wit' by his 'great eating of beef;' who has 'an excellent head of hair,' that 'hangs like flax on a distaff;' who, in dancing, has 'the back-trick simply as strong as any man in Illyria;' and who 'delights in masks and revels sometimes all together:' the exuberantly witty clown, Festo the Jester, 'a fool that the lady Olivia's father took much delight in,' and whose veriest freedoms are, therefore, rendered permissive, and even sacred, to the lady Olivia; he, the pathetic vocalist, who 'takes pleasure in singing:' Malvolio, the fantastic, ill-natured, self-admiring, and sadly but deservedly betricked steward: and the vivacious little Maria, 'the youngest wren of nine,' the 'nettle of India:'—these admirable creations are Shakspere's, soul, body, and all!"

Religious persecution still continues to gorge itself with blood. Thacker and Copping, two Brownists, are hung at Bury, for circulating the writings of Robert Brown against the Church of England as by law established.—On the fifteenth of March, William Hart, a Romish priest, who has been kept doubly-ironed in his dungeon, is tied up by the neck, thrown off the ladder, cut down, and quartered alive, at York. Richard Thirkill, another Romish priest, is also hung, and quartered alive, at York, on the twenty-ninth of May. On the thirtieth of October, John Slade, a schoolmaster of the Romish faith, and on the second of November, John Body, M.A., a priest of the same church, both of whom have been tried and condemned together, are cruelly "drawn, hanged, bowelled, and quartered," the former at Winchester, and the latter at Andover. Numbers of the laity are also imprisoned, and have their goods confiscated, for non-attendance at church, —two hundred and forty pounds a year being a pretty considerable sum to be mulcted in.

Sir Humphrey Gilbert takes possession of St. John's harbour, in Newfoundland, in the name of England; but is lost in a storm in returning home.—James Crichton, a Scotchman, who from his many accomplishments was called "the admirable Crichton," is murdered in the street at Mantua, by his pupil, Vincentio de Gonzago, son of the duke.—John Somerville, a Warwickshire gentleman, misled by popish writings, goes raving mad to kill the queen, and actually wounds some of her attendants with his sword. "Being apprehended," says Baker, "he stuck not to say, that he would murder the queen with his own hands. Hereupon he, and upon his intimation, Edward Arden, his father-in-law, (a man of an ancient house in

Warwickshire,) Arden's wife, their daughter (Somerville's wife,) and Hall a priest, were brought to the bar, and all condemned; Somerville as principal, the rest as accessaries. Three days after, Somerville was found strangled in the prison, Arden was executed and quartered; the women and priest were spared. Many pitied the old gentleman Arden, as misled by the priest, and (as it was generally believed) brought to his end through the envy of Leicester, who he used to call whore-master, up-start, and many such opprobrious names." Might not this Edward Arden, (whom Camden calls "a man of very ancient gentility in the county of Warwick) be of the same lineage as Mary Arden,* the mother of William Shakspere? However this may be, certain it is that the poor old man was racked in the Tower before his execution, on the twenty-third of November; for Elizabeth, with all her talents and learning, was a very hard-hearted woman, and therefore in point of true womanhood must rank infinitely below any kind-hearted female, though her situation in life be lowly

> "as the maid that milks,
> And does the meanest chares!"
> Antony and Cleopatra, act iv.; scene 13th.

Dr. John Dee's library of four thousand books and seven hundred manuscripts, is seized at Mortlake, in Surrey, upon suspicion of his having dealings with the devil! In Scotland King James escapes from custody, and the lords who confined him are banished.

On the fourth of March, Bernard Gilpin, "the Apostle of the North," finishes his useful and laborious life, at his rectory of Houghton-le-Spring, in the county of Durham. He was a native of Kentmire, in Westmoreland, where he was born in 1517. During his education at Queen's College, Oxford, the writings of Erasmus converted him to protestantism. In 1556, he was made rector of Easington and archdeacon of Durham; and soon afterwards, he exchanged the rectory of Easington for that of Houghton-le-Spring. The intolerant Bishop Bonner (whose name might with equal propriety be written Burner,) having given orders for his arrest, Gilpin dressed himself for the stake, but the death of the tyrant, Queen Mary, taking place before the arrival of the victim in London, his life was saved, and the bishopric of Carlisle

* Robert Arden, the father of William Shakspere's mother, died in December, 1556. His will is dated on the twenty-fourth of November, in the same year; and he describes himself as "of Wylmcote, in the parish of Aston Cauntlow."

offered to him by Elizabeth, which the good old man refused. His death was deeply regretted by his parishioners, and by all whom bigotry did not prevent from admiring true apostolic zeal. He was sixty-six years of age.—Edmund Grindal, archbishop of Canterbury, (the Algrind of Spenser,) dies at Croydon, in Surrey, on the sixth of July, aged sixty-four years. He was born at Kensingham, in Cumberland, in 1519; chosen master of Pembroke Hall, Cambridge, in 1559, and made bishop of London in the same year; in 1570, was translated to the see of York; and in 1575, was made archbishop of Canterbury. He was one of the contributors to John Fox's "Acts and Monuments," and was much blamed by Elizabeth for his tenderness towards the puritans. His successor, the basely intolerant John Whitgift, who was translated from the see of Worcester, was more to her persecuting mind.

On the tenth of April, Hugo Grotius, the celebrated author and statesman, is born at Delft.—On the fifteenth of September, is born, at Humanie, in Bohemia, Albert Wallenstien, Duke of Friedland, and generalissmo of the Austrian army during the Thirty Years War. His name has been rendered familiar to English readers by Coleridge's translation, from the German, of Schiller's celebrated tragedy of "The Death of Wallenstien."

SHAKSPERE'S TWENTY-FIRST YEAR.

A.D. 1584. On the tenth of January, a printer named William Carter is tried at the Old Bailey, for printing a popish book, and hanged, bowelled, and quartered at Tyburn, on the following day, according to his sentence; on the twelfth of February, five Romish priests share the same fate, at this same Tyburn; on the twenty-fifth of the same month, William Parry, a Welsh gentleman, who had opposed the severe measures against the Roman Catholics in the house of commons, of which he was a member, is executed in Palace-yard, Westminster, for high treason; on the twentieth of April, a priest and a layman of the same faith are executed at Lancaster; on the twelfth of July, Francis Throgmorton, who has been five times stretched upon the rack, is brought to the scaffold, on a charge of plotting the queen's death; and on the seventeenth of October, a popish schoolmaster is executed at Wrexham, in Denbighshire. Most, if not all, of those men were sensible when the executioner begun the dread-

ful work of embowelling; the last named victim, for instance, according to Bishop Challoner, "pronouncing the sacred name of Jesus twice whilst the hangman had his hands in his bowels!" Yet despite of those persecutions, Robert Southwell, a jesuit priest and a good poet, of whom I shall have to speak anon, returns to England, and will assuredly fall another victim to religious bigotry.

John Penry, or Ap Penry, (a puritan leader who will one day die in a dungeon, another victim of religious intolerance,) now takes his degree of Bachelor of Arts at Cambridge; and Sir Walter Mildmay founds the college of Emanuel in that university. These, with the assassination of the Prince of Orange at Delft, are a few of the most interesting incidents in the religious world. No marvel that Shakspere should be a freethinker!

Reginald Scott now publishes his "Discovery of Witchcraft," in which he attacks the popular belief in witches, ghosts, hobgoblins, and other such like superstitions—

> "Which are the children of an idle brain,
> Begot of nothing but vain fantasy,"

as Shakspere makes Mercutio say of dreams, in the fourth scene of the first act of "Romeo and Juliet." Richard Hooker is presented to a rectory in Buckinghamshire; Walter Raleigh is knighted by Elizabeth; John Lyly produces his "Sappho and Phaon," a court-show, which is performed before the queen at Shrove-tide, by the boys of St. Paul's; a comedy entitled the "Three Ladies of London" is issued from the press; as is also Clement Robinson's "Handful of Pleasant Delights," a work containing "A new Sonnet of Pyramus and Thisbe," supposed to be ridiculed by Shakspere in his "Midsummer Night's Dream" (act v., scene 1st). Thomas Lodge, the poet and dramatist, is now an actor in London; John (afterwards Dr.) Donne goes to Oxford, a lad only in his eleventh year, but having already "a good command both of the French and Latin tongue," as his biographer, Izaak Walton tells us; and, in Spain, Cervantes publishes his pastoral novel of "Galatea." Thomas Vautrollier, a Frenchman engaged in printing in London, publishes a work called "Jordanus Brunus," for which he has to flee to Scotland.

Virginia, in America, is this year discovered by Sir Walter Raleigh's expedition, and so called in honour of Elizabeth, "the virgin queen." Raleigh is not with his expedition at the time of this discovery.

Amongst the deaths this year are those of Anthony Gilby, vicar of Ashby-de-la-Zouch, in Leicestershire, one

of the translators of the Genevan Bible; Count Carlo Borromeo, the good but superstitious cardinal archbishop of Milan, whom the Romish church has since canonized; and Lucas de Heere, the Flemish painter. Gilby had reached a good old age; Borromeo, who died on the third of November, had only reached the age of forty-six years, but was worn out by "mental sufferings, the accusations of his enemies, and his monastic penances;" and De Heere was fifty years old.

Amongst the births are those of John Seldon, a politician and author, whom Milton calls "the chief of learned men reputed in this land," and who was the friend of Browne, Camden, Sir Robert Cotton, Michael Drayton, Ben Jonson, Spelman, and other literary worthies; he was born at Sahington, in Sussex: Philip Massinger, the dramatist, born at Salisbury; Phineas Fletcher, the poet, brother to Giles, and cousin of John, the dramatist; John Hales, the theological writer; John Pym, the English patriot; Franc Hals, the Flemish painter, born at Mechlin; and Moll Cut-purse, the masculine English thief, merely mentioned here because Shakspere has alluded to her in his "Twelfth Night."

SHAKSPERE'S TWENTY-SECOND YEAR.

A.D. 1585. The prosperity or adversity of Master John Shakspere at this period has been a bone of contention among men of letters. According to Skottowe, a distress is issued for the seizure of his goods, but his poverty renders it nugatory, because he has no goods to seize. Charles Knight, on the other hand, contends that John Shakspere, whose goods cannot be seized because, like Rachel's children, "they are not," is not the father of our bard, but a shoemaker of the same name and place.

George Peel is busy writing the "London Pageants;" Richard Hooker is appointed Master of the Temple; Sir Philip Sidney is offered the crown of Poland, but Elizabeth will not part with him whom she considers "the jewel of her crown;" Thomas Bodley (who afterwards founds the Bodleian Library at Oxford) is made a gentleman-usher to the queen, and marries a wealthy widow of Bristol; Henry Wotton, who is four years younger than William Shakspere, removes from New College, Oxford, to Queen's College, in the same university, where he writes his tragedy of "Tancredo" for the college; Robert Bruce Cotton (col-

lector of the valuable manuscripts in the British Museum known as the Cottonian Library) goes to London, and becomes a member of the Society of Antiquaries, who merely meet for the mutual instruction of each other, not being yet formally enrolled; and James VI. of Scotland rushes into print with his "Essays of a Prentise in the Divine Art of Poesy." The city of London are about to furnish Elizabeth with four thousand men, and arms, and John Stow acts as one of the collectors of the charges. Philip Stubs publishes his "Anatomy of Abuses," to which we are indebted for the most graphic description of our old English May-games, which, to the puritanical mind of that writer, seem sins worthy of eternal damnation. His description of the May-games, as given below, is the only thing that will keep his name from oblivion. Little does he think that his description of the innocent hilarity that he is so unjustly attacking will alone "keep his memory green!" Whatever excesses the people might be guilty of at times in their pastimes, I do not believe with Philip Stubs, that wholesale prostitution was one of them. To my mind, the old English May-games stand out from amongst some others of the amusements of the people, like an Alfred the Great amongst our English monarchs. But let us hear friend Stubs:—

"Against May-day, Whit-Sunday, or some other time of the year, every parish, town, or village assemble themselves, both men, women, and children, and either altogether, or dividing themselves into companies, they go some to the woods and groves, some to the hills and mountains, some to one place, some to another, where they spend all the night in pleasant pastimes; and in the morning they return, bringing with them birch boughs and branches of trees to deck their assemblies withal. But their chiefest jewel they bring from thence is the May-pole, which they bring home with great veneration, as thus;—they have twenty or forty yoke of oxen, every ox having a sweet nosegay of flowers tied to the tip of his horns, and these oxen draw home the May-pole, their stinking idol rather, which they covered with flowers and herbs, bound round with strings from the top to the bottom, and sometimes it was painted with variable colours, having two or three hundred men, women, and children, following it with great devotion. And thus equipped, it was reared with handkerchiefs and flags streaming on the top; they straw the ground round about it; they bind green boughs about it; they set up Summer-halls, bowers, and arbours hard by it; and then fall they to banqueting and feasting, to leaping and dancing about it, as the heathen people did at the dedication of their idols. I have had it credibly reported, by men of great gravity, that of forty, threescore, or an hundred maids going to the wood, there have scarcely the third part of them returned home again as they went."

Such is the account of Stubs, as quoted by Strutt; who, however, gives the date of the publication as ten years later. I have, however, preferred the date given by a later writer, J. Ogden, in his notes to the "Midsummer Night's Dream," where a part of the above extract is given. As Timperley, in his useful but dreadfully defective "Dictionary of Printers and Printing," does not notice the work at all, I cannot tell in whom the error lies, but charitably suppose the more modern author to be right. Surely the editor of an expensively illustrated edition of Shakspere will not mislead me in such important things as dates! I think it but right to state, that the various dates of one event, given by different writers, have occasioned me more labour in the compilation of this little work, than the reader can well imagine. If, therefore, I am ever in error, once for all let it be my apology, that the fault is in my authorities rather than in myself.

There is an increase in the family of William and Anne Shakspere; a son and daughter of their's being, in the month of February, baptized at Stratford-upon-Avon, by the names of Hamnet and Judith. Of these twin children, Hamnet, Shakspere's only son, died when only twelve years old; and Judith was married only two months before her father's death, to a vintner at Stratford, named Thomas Quiney, by whom she had three children,—"Shakspere, who died an infant, and Richard and Thomas, both buried in 1638-9; the former in his twenty-first, the latter in the nineteenth year of his age, without leaving any issue," as Skottowe informs us; and he adds:—"Their mother, Judith, survived till February, 1661-2, when she had attained the advanced age of seventy-seven."

Robert Brown, the nonconformist, now returns to England, and is excommunicated by the bishop of Peterborough. Thomas Alfield, a Romish priest, and Thomas Webley, a dyer, after being tortured in prison, are executed at Tyburn, on the fifth of July, the former for introducing into the kingdom, some copies of a work by Dr. Allen, entitled, "A Modest Answer to the English Persecutors." Hugh Taylor, a native of Durham, made priest by the Romish college at Rheims, and Marmaduke Bewes, "a married gentleman of Angram Grange, near Appleton, in Cleveland," are also executed at York, on the twenty-sixth of November, for their religion. When will the nations of the world learn that religion is an affair between the soul of man and his Maker, over which penal laws have no power.

Sir Francis Drake, with twenty-one sail of men-of-war,

and land forces under the Earl of Carlisle, plunder St. Domingo, seize Carthagena, and arrive at the new colony of Virginia, in Florida, where Captain Lane and others sent out by Raleigh, being in great distress, are glad to be taken aboard the fleet, and return to England,—bringing, it is said, the tobacco-plant, for the first time, into England. Frobisher accompanies Drake in this expedition. John Davis finishes his third voyage in search of a north-west passage, but returns unsuccessful, after having sailed as far as 83 degrees of north latitude.

Peter Victorius, or Vettori, an eminent Italian scholar, who rendered good service to literature in his day, now dies at Florence, aged eighty-six years. Besides being author of several Latin poems, orations, and letters, he collated and corrected several various editions of Greek and Latin writers, and wrote notes and commentaries to the works of Aristotle, Cicero, Euripides, Plato, Porphyry, Sallusi, Terence, Varro, and Xenophon. For upwards of forty years he had been Greek and Latin professor in the university of his native city, a post which Cosmos II. had appointed him to for his great learning and industry. He is buried at the public cost, with great splendour, as a mark of high regard.

William Drummond, of Hawthornden, a famous fellow in his day, is born this year. His friendship with Ben Jonson and Michael Drayton has since become well known, and he has left us writings of his own, both in prose and verse.—The wily diplomatist, Cardinal Richlieu, is also born this year, in Paris, on the fifth of September.

William Hunnis, chapel-master to Elizabeth, now publishes his "Handful of Honeysuckles," and his "Poor Widow's Mite;" but voluminous writings oft fail to rescue a man's name from oblivion, whilst one true poem, however short, will succeed in doing so. Witness, for instance, Charles Wolfe's ode on the burial of Sir John Moore. Poor Hunnis seems indeed to have spent his midnight oil to little purpose, though rather happy in his titles.

Queen Elizabeth now licenses certain of the London merchants to trade to Barbary; the Earl of Northumberland, who has been committed to the Tower on a charge of treason, is shot in his dungeon; the young Duke of Guise revives the League in France, to keep a protestant from the throne, and Elizabeth grants the Prince of Conde ten ships and fifty thousand crowns, to assist the huguenots.

SHAKSPERE'S TWENTY-THIRD YEAR.

A.D. 1586. WILLIAM SHAKSPERE, who doubtless, as Aubrey tells us, was "naturally inclined to poetry and acting," goes to London, as is supposed, about this period. Those who suppose the John Shakspere, of Stratford-upon-Avon, whose goods are ordered to be seized in execution, but have been previously disposed off, to be John Shakspere the father of our bard, may see in the breaking up of his father's house, and in the poverty in which adverse circumstances had then steeped the family, a motive power to propel the poet from his native place. Tradition says, that William Shakspere, with some other devil-may-care young fellows, went to kill a deer in the grounds of a neighbouring justice-of-the-peace, Sir Thomas Lucy, of Charlecot, with as little ceremony as Robin Hood would have done, and that the unfortunate poet was caught in the act, and so sharply reprimanded that he affixed a pasquinade on the park gates, which irritated the knight so much that he ordered the law to be put in force against the young deer-stealer, and this occasioned him to flee to London. If so, Shakspere might think of this incident in his own experience, when, in after years he made Hamlet tell Horatio :—

> "And praised be rashness for it,—let us know,
> Our indiscretion sometimes serves us well,
> When our deep plots do pall; and that should teach us,
> There's a divinity that shapes our ends,
> Rough hew them how we will."
>
> Hamlet, act v., scene 2nd.

Charles Knight, whose judgment on everything relating to Shakspere is justly entitled to a careful consideration from every lover of the bard, would fain discountenance this tradition; but, for my part, I see no reason to doubt it. No man has done more to endear himself to every true votary of our English literature than Charles Knight; seeing that he has outdone all our other publishers put together (if we except the Messrs. Chambers) in opening the rich treasury of knowledge to the toiling millions of his countrymen. But he seems rather too squeamish in allowing to Skakspere any human failings at all: as though all our early dramatists were not a merry roystering crew; good fellows enough in the rough, but guilty of all manner of mad excesses. Shakspere, in all probability, was more spotless than any of them; but all the legends of him

point him out as a merry grig, who acted from impulse rather than from cool calculation. What, if it *be* true that Shakspere, when a young man, slept dead drunk one night under a crab-tree near Bidford, and went a deer-stealing for a spree another night; what, if it *be* true that he had some drinking-bouts in his latter years, and really shortened his days through taking intoxicating drinks to excess; if all this *be* as true as that he had his wife in the family-way before he married her; what does it all amount to? what does it prove? Simply this, that the greatest genius that ever spake our mother-tongue was only "a man of like passions as we are," and liable to equal follies, and that such is the deadly influence of the Circean cup, that the most gifted of our species cannot partake thereof without imminent danger. But that William Shakspere was ever an habitual drunkard, no man with common sense will for a moment suspect; for none but a sober brain could have given us such glorious revelations as his has done. But let us hear what Washington Irving has got to say about Charlecot and this deer-stealing business, in his genial "Sketch Book:"—

"I had now visited the usual objects of a pilgrim's devotion, but I had a desire to see the old family seat of the Lucys at Charlecot, and to ramble through the park where Shakspere, in company with some of the roysters of Stratford, committed his youthful offence of deer-stalking. In this hair-brained exploit, we are told that he was taken prisoner, and carried to the keeper's lodge, where he remained all night in doleful captivity. When brought into the presence of Sir Thomas Lucy, his treatment must have been galling and humiliating; for it so wrought upon his spirits as to produce a rough pasquinade, which was affixed to the park gate at Charlecot. The following is the only stanza extant of this lampoon:—

"'A parliament member, a justice of peace,
At home a poor scarecrow, at London an ass,
If lousy is Lucy, as some folk miscal it,
Then Lucy is lousy, whatever befal it.
He thinks himself great;
Yet an ass in his state,
We allow by his ears but with asses to mate.
If Lucy is lousy, as some folk miscal it,
Then sing lousy Lucy, whatever befal it.'

"This flagitious attack upon the dignity of the knight so incensed him, that he applied to a lawyer at Warwick, to put the severity of the law in force against the rhyming deer-stalker. Shakspere did not wait to brave the united puissance of a knight of the shire and a country attorney. He forthwith abandoned the pleasant banks of the Avon, and his paternal trade; wandered away to London; became a hanger-on to the theatres; then an actor; and, finally, wrote for the stage; and thus, through the persecution of Sir Thomas Lucy,

Stratford lost an indifferent wool-comber, and the world gained an immortal poet. He retained, however, for a long time, a sense of the harsh treatment of the lord of Charlecot, and revenged himself in his writings; but, in the sportive way of a good-natured mind. Sir Thomas is said to be the original of Justice Shallow, and the satire is slily fixed upon him by the justice's armorial bearings, which, like those of the knight, had *white luces** in the quarterings.

"Various attempts have been made by his biographers to soften and explain away this early transgression of the poet; but I look upon it as one of those thoughtless exploits natural to his situation and turn of mind. Shakspere, when young, had doubtless all the wildness and irregularity of an ardent, undisciplined, and undirected genius. The poetic temperament has naturally something in it of the vagabond. When left to itself, it runs loosely and wildly, and delights in everything eccentric and licentious. It is often a turn of a die, in the gambling freaks of fate, whether a natural genius shall turn out a great rogue or a great poet: and had not Shakspere's mind fortunately taken a literary bias, he might have as daringly transcended all civil, as he has all dramatic laws.

"I have little doubt that, in early life, when running, like an unbroken colt, about the neighbourhood of Stratford, he was to be found in the company of all kinds of odd anomalous characters; that he associated with all the mad-caps of the place, and was one of those urchins, at mention of whom old men shake their heads, and predict that they will one day come to the gallows. To him the poaching in Sir Thomas Lucy's park was doubtless like a foray to a Scottish knight, and struck his eager, and as yet untamed, imagination, as something delightfully adventurous.†

* "The *luce* is a pike or jack, and abounds in the Avon, about Charlecot."

† "A proof of Shakspere's random habits and associates in his youthful days may be found in a traditionary anecdote, picked up at Stratford by the elder Ireland, and mentioned in his 'Picturesque Views on the Avon.'

"About seven miles from Stratford lies the thirsty little market-town of Bidford, famous for its ale. Two societies of the village yeomanry used to meet, under the appellation of the Bidford topers, and to challenge the lovers of good ale of the neighbouring villages to a contest of drinking. Among others, the people of Stratford were called out to prove the strength of their heads; and in the number of the champions was Shakspere, who, in spite of the proverb, that 'they who drink beer will think beer,' was as true to his ale as Falstaff to his sack. The chivalry of Stratford was staggered at the first onset, and sounded a retreat, while they had yet legs to carry them off the field. They had scarcely marched a mile, when their legs failing them, they were forced to lie down under a crab tree, where they passed the night. It is still standing, and goes by the name of Shakspere's tree.

"In the morning his companions awaked the bard, and proposed returning to Bidford, but he declined, saying he had had enough, having drank with

"The old mansion of Charlecot and its surrounding park still remain in the possession of the Lucy family, and are peculiarly interesting from being connected with this whimsical but eventful circumstance in the scanty history of the bard. As the house stood at little more than three miles from Stratford, I resolved to pay it a pedestrian visit, that I might stroll leisurely through some of those scenes from which Shakspere must have derived his earliest ideas of rural imagery. . . . My route, for a part of the way, lay in sight of the Avon, which made a variety of the most fanciful doublings and windings through a wide and fertile valley; sometimes glittering from among willows, which fringed its borders: sometimes disappearing among groves, or beneath green banks; and sometimes rambling out into full view, and making an azure sweep round a slope of meadow land. This beautiful bosom of country is called the Vale of the Red Horse. A distant line of undulating blue hills seems to be its boundary, whilst all the soft intervening landscape lies in a manner enchained in the silver links of the Avon.

"After pursuing the road for about three miles, I turned off into a foot path, which led along the borders of fields, and under hedgerows, to a private gate of the park; there was a stile, however, for the benefit of the pedestrian; there being a right of way through the grounds. . . . I now found myself among noble avenues of oaks and elms, whose vast size bespoke the growth of centuries. The wind sounded solemnly among their branches, and the rooks cawed from their hereditary nests in the tree tops. The eye ranged through a long lessening vista, with nothing to interrupt the view but a distant statue, and a vagrant deer stalking like a shadow across the opening. . . . It was from wandering in early life among this rich scenery, and about the romantic solitudes of the adjoining park of Fullbroke, which then formed a part of the Lucy estate, that some of Shakspere's commentators have supposed he derived his noble forest meditations of Jaques, and the enchanting woodland pictures in 'As You Like It.' . . . I had now come in sight of the house. It is a large building of brick, with stone quoins, and is in the Gothic style of Queen Elizabeth's day, having been built in the first year of her reign. The exterior remains very nearly in its original state, and may be considered a fair specimen of the residence of a wealthy country gentleman of those days. A great gateway opens from the park into a kind of court-yard in front of the house, ornamented with a grass plot, shrubs, and flower-beds. The gateway is in imitation of the ancient barbican; being a kind of out-post, and flanked by towers; though evidently for mere ornament, instead of defence. The front of the house is completely in the old style; with stone-shafted casements, a great bow-window of heavy stone-work, and a

> "'Piping Pebworth, dancing Marston,
> Haunted Hillbro', hungry Grafton,
> Dudging Exhall, papist Wicksford,
> Beggarly Broom, and drunken Bidford.'

"'The villages here alluded to,' says Ireland, 'still bear the epithets thus given them: the people of Pebworth are still famed for their skill on the pipe and tabor, Hillborough is now called Haunted Hillborough, and Grafton is famous for the poverty of the soil.'"

portal with armorial bearings over it, carved in stone. At each corner of the building is an octagon tower, surmounted by a gilt ball and weathercock. The Avon, which winds through the park, makes a bend just at the foot of a gently-sloping bank, which sweeps down from the rear of the house. Large herds of deer were feeding or reposing upon its borders; and swans were sailing majestically upon its bosom. · · · I regretted to find that the ancient furniture of the hall had disappeared; for I had hoped to meet with the stately elbow-chair of carved oak, in which the country squire of former days was wont to sway the sceptre of empire over his rural domains; and in which it might be presumed the redoubted Sir Thomas sat enthroned in awful state, when the recreant Shakspere was brought before him. As I like to deck out pictures for my own entertainment, I pleased myself with the idea that this very hall had been the scene of the unlucky bard's examination, on the morning after his captivity in the lodge. I fancied to myself the rural potentate, surrounded by his body-guard of butlers, pages, and blue-coated serving-men with their badges; while the luckless culprit was brought in, forlorn and chapfallen, in the custody of gamekeepers, huntsmen, and whippers-in, and followed by a rabble rout of country clowns. I fancied bright faces of curious housemaids peeping from the half-opened doors; while from the gallery the fair daughters of the knight leaned gracefully forward, eyeing the youthful prisoner with the pity 'that dwells in womanhood.' Who would have thought that this poor varlet, thus trembling before the 'brief authority' of a country squire, and the sport of rustic boors, was soon to become the delight of princes; the theme of all tongues and ages; the dictator to the human mind; and was to confer immortality on his oppressor by a caricature and a lampoon!"

The first verse of this satire is given by both Capell and Oldys, from different sources, as Washington Irving has quoted it. "There was," says William Oldys, an antiquary and poet, who died in 1761, "a very aged gentleman, living in the neighbourhood of Stratford, (where he died fifty years since,) who had not only heard, from several old people in that town, of Shakspere's transgression, but could remember the first stanza of that bitter ballad, which repeating to one of his acquaintance, he preserved it in writing, and here it is, neither better nor worse, but faithfully transcribed from the copy, which his relation very courteously communicated to me." According to Malone, the entire ballad was "found in a chest of drawers that formerly belonged to Mrs. Dorothy Tyler, of Shottery, near Stratford, who died in 1778, at the age of eighty." I give the ballad entire, though the continuation is generally regarded as spurious, and Malone, De Quincey, and Knight, consider the whole a forgery. As it may interest the reader, however, here it is:—

"A parliament member, a justice of peace,
At home a poor scarecrow, at London an ass,

If lousy is Lucy, as some folks miscal it,
Then Lucy is lousy, whatever befal it:
He thinks himself great,
Yet an ass in his state
We allow by his ears but with asses to mate.
If Lucy is lousy, as some folks miscal it,
Then sing lousy Lucy, whatever befal it.

"He's a haughty, proud, insolent knight of the shire,
At home nobody loves, yet there's many him fear.
If Lucy, etc.

"To the sessions he went, and did sorely complain,
His park had been robb'd, and his deer they were slain.
If Lucy, etc

"He said 't was a riot, his men had been beat,
His venison was stole, and clandestinely eat.
If Lucy, etc,

"So haughty was he when the fact was confess'd,
He said 't was a crime that could not be redress'd.
If Lucy, etc.

"Though luces a dozen he paints in his coat
His name it shall Lousy for Lucy be wrote.
For Lucy, etc.

"If a juvenile frolic he cannot forgive,
We'll sing lousy Lucy as long as we live;
And Lucy the lousy a libel may call it;
We'll sing lousy Lucy whatever befal it."

Such is the lampoon ascribed to the youthful Shakspere. The first verse may be genuine, but the others are evidently by a later hand, who has been familiar with the tradition, and taken the circumstance of the ballad being deficient to commit another Shakspere forgery. There can be no doubt that a powerful enemy like Sir Thomas Lucy, would be a dreadful neighbour for the young bard; for doubtless by this time he had commenced "the sin of rhyme." We have seen that he was familiar from his cradle with theatrical exhibitions; we have seen that every day the demand for their services was increasing; and, we are told, that some of the principal players were from Shakspere's own neighbourhood. What so probable, then, that the stage should at once present itself to his "mind's eye" as a means whereby he might obtain bread? Whatever was the immediate cause, certain it is that his well-beloved Stratford was no longer the place where he could find bread. They who have felt the ruthless hatred of country squires in our own day, can form some idea what a blight to the prospects of Shakspere, in his own locality, the

enmity of a neighbouring justice would be, especially if, as Aubrey tells us, "he had been in his younger years a schoolmaster in the country." "How would it have cheered the spirit of the youthful bard," says Washington Irving, "when, wandering forth in disgrace upon a doubtful world, he cast back a heavy look upon his paternal home, could he have foreseen that, before many years, he should return to it covered with renown; that his name should become the boast and glory of his native place; that his ashes should be religiously guarded as its most precious treasure; and that its lessening spire, on which his eyes were fixed in tearful contemplation, should one day become the beacon, towering amidst the gentle landscape, to guide the literary pilgrim of every nation to his tomb!"

There is a tradition related by Pope, and recorded by Dr. Johnson, regarding Shakspere's first connection with the theatre, which I give below:—

"Coaches being yet uncommon, and hired coaches not at all in use, those who were too proud, too tender, or too idle to walk, went on horseback to any distant business or diversion. Many came on horseback to the play; and when Shakspere fled to London from the terror of a criminal prosecution, his first expedient was to wait at the door of the playhouse, and hold the horses of those that had no servants, that they might be ready again after the performance. In this office, he became so conspicuous for his care and readiness, that in a short time every man, as he alighted, called for Will Shakspere, and scarcely any other waiter was trusted with a horse, while Will Shakspere could be had. This was the first dawn of better fortune. Shakspere, finding more horses put into his hand than he could hold, hired boys to wait under his inspection, who, when Will Shakspere was called, were immediately to present themselves,—'I'm Shakspere's boy, sir.' In time, Shakspere found higher employment; but as long as the practice of riding continued, the waiters that held the horses retained the appellation of Shakspere's boys."

Master John Shakspere is about this time dismissed from the corporation of Stratford-upon-Avon, for neglect of attendance at the halls of the seven preceding years.—Tobacco is introduced into England by Master Ralph Lane, commander of Sir Walter Raleigh's Virginian colony, as noticed under the head of the preceding year. Thomas Cavendish, an eminent navigator, sails from Plymouth with three small vessels, but tarnishes his laurels by engaging in plundering the coasts of Chili, Peru, and New Spain. William Camden publishes his "History of the Ancient Inhabitants of Britain," in Latin; a valuable work on history and topography, since enlarged and translated into English, by the title of "Britannia." William Warner, an attorney of the Common Pleas, gives

the public a poem in thirteen books, entitled "Albion's England," in which some of the historical incidents and legendary stories afterwards so ably worked up by Shakspere in his dramas are to be found. William Webbe publishes "A Discourse of English Poetry." Edmund Spenser, in the month of June, receives a grant from government of three thousand and twenty-eight acres of land in the county of Cork, out of the confiscated estates of the Earl of Desmond (of which his friend, Sir Walter Raleigh, had also received twelve thousand acres some time before,) and is obliged to reside in the castle of Kilcolman, near Doneraile, one of the strongest fortresses of the rebel chief. Sir Philip Sidney, who had gone to the Netherlands in 1585, as governor of Flushing, and who is now assisting the persecuted protestants to resist the tyranny of the Spaniards, after showing great bravery in his capacity of general of the cavalry, and taking the town of Axel, encounters a detachment of the Spanish army at Zutphen, in the month of September, and receives a wound from which he expires on the nineteenth of October, in the thirty-third year of his age. It is here that an incident occurred which shows at once the true nobility of the man. As they were bearing him from the battle-field, parched with thirst from loss of blood and fatigue, he requested a drink of water, which was procured him. But as he was raising that best of all beverages to his lips, a poor mangled soldier was carried by, who fixed his glaring eyes with envy on the cup. "Take it," said the poet-general, who observed his anxious gaze; "thy necessity is yet greater than mine." The death of the truly-illustrious Sidney caused the harp of almost every poet to wail its threnody for his loss; and Elizabeth, who prized him much, causes his corpse to be removed to London, and honoured with a public funeral in St. Paul's cathedral. Sir Philip Sidney has left a name behind him, for every virtue and accomplishment, which will last as long as true manhood has an admirer on earth. William Howitt has depicted his character so ably in that delightful work of his called "Visits to Remarkable Places," that I must quote the passage, merely remarking that if this little volume should fall into the hands of any one who can spare the money, I would really advise them to procure the book from which I now make the extract:—

"The universal admiration that he won from his contemporaries is one of the most curious circumstances of the history of these times. The generous and affectionate enthusiasm with which he inspired both his own country and foreigners, has, perhaps, no parallel. The 'admirable Crichton' is the only person who occurs to our minds as

presenting anything like the same universality of talents and accomplishments; but Crichton was a meteor which blazed for a moment, and left only a name of wonder. Sir Philip still continues to be spoken of, by all genuine poets and men of high intellect, with much of the same affectionate honour that he received from his own age. 'He approaches,' says Dr Aikin, 'more nearly to the idea of a perfect knight, than any character of any age or nation.'

"This perfection of character is shown by these particulars: that from his boyhood he was eager for the acquisition of all possible knowledge,—language, philosophy, poetry, every species of art and science were devoured by him; yet he did not give himself up merely to the pursuit of knowledge; he never became a mere bookworm.—He was equally fond of field sports and manly exercises. He was looked up to as the perfect model of a courtier, without the courtier's baseness of adulation. Elizabeth pronounced him the brightest jewel of her crown. He was deemed the very mirror of knighthood. In the camp he was the ardent warrior; he was sent on foreign embassage of high importance, and proved himself a dexterous politician. There was a universality of talent and of taste about him that mark'd him as a most extraordinary man. His facility of amassing information, and putting on accomplishments, was marvellous. Yet he never seemed to have any mere worldly ambition. It was the pure love of glory that animated him; and, in striving for it, he never for a moment appeared capable of the common jealousies of emulation; on the contrary, he was the friend, and the warm and beloved friend, of every one who was himself most distinguished. Sir Fulk Greville, afterwards Lord Brooke, had it inscribed on his monument, as his peculiar glory, that he was THE FRIEND OF SIR PHILIP SIDNEY. He was the friend of Spenser, Dyer, Raleigh, Ben Jonson, Sir Henry and Sir Edward Wotton, the learned Herbert Languet, and indeed of all the finest spirits of his age; yet it was, after all, less by the brilliancy of his intellect than by the warmth of his heart, that he won so singularly on the admiration of all men. The grand secret of his unprecedented popularity lay in the nobility of his nature. Nothing could be more delightful than the high, unworldly, and incorruptible character of his mind. It was this ardent, sunny, and unselfish disposition, which was so beautiful in all his family relations. His father, Sir Henry Sidney, himself one of the noblest characters in history, says of him, in a letter to his second son, Robert Sidney, 'Follow the advice of your most loving brother, who in loving you is comparable with me, or exceedeth me. Imitate his virtues, exercises, studies, and actions. He is a rare ornament of his age; the very formula that all well disposed young gentlemen of our court do form their manners and life by. In truth, I speak it, without flattery of him or myself. HE HATH THE MOST VIRTUES THAT I EVER FOUND IN ANY MAN.'

"What a proud testimony from a father to a son! But the same admirable affection constantly displayed itself towards his brother and sister. His letters to his brother Robert are full of the most delightfully gay, yet loving and wise spirit. Writing to him while on his travels, he declared,—what he invariably proved by his conduct,—'There is nothing I spend so pleaseth me as that which is for you. If

ever I have ability, you will find it; if not, yet shall not any brother living be better beloved than you of me.'

"His tender attachment to his sister, the celebrated Countess of Pembroke, is known to all the world. It was to Wilton that he betook himself during his temporary absence from court, on account of his difference with the insolent Earl of Oxford, to write his 'Arcadia.' It was to her that he dedicated it, calling it 'Pembroke's Arcadia.' It was to her that he sent it, sheet by sheet, when he was not present with her to read it to her; living in her approbation of it, and seeking no other fame from it, for it was not published till after his death.

"Such were the noble and endearing qualities that made Sir Philip Sidney the idol of his times in foreign countries as well as in his own; that induced Poland to offer its crown; that covered his hearse with the laments of the poetical and learned amongst his cotemporaries—three volumes of such funeral tributes being published in various languages, on the occasion of his death; the two great universities striving which should outdo the other in the number and intensity of its 'melodious tears.'

. . . . . .

"The death of Sir Philip Sidney, from a wound received on the field of Zutphen, has become celebrated by the circumstance continually referred to as an example of the most heroic magnanimity—giving up the water, for which he had earnestly implored, to a dying soldier near—saying, 'He has more need of it than I.' But the whole of his behaviour, from that time to the hour of his death, twenty-five days afterwards, was equally characteristic,—being spent amongst his friends, in the exercise of the most exemplary patience and sweetness of temper, and in the discussion of such solemn topics as the near view of eternity naturally brings before the spirit of the dying Christian."

The stage progresses wonderfully. According to Secretary Walsingham, there are now two hundred players in and about London. Christopher Marlow has introduced blank-verse, for the first time, on the public stage, in his play of "Tamburlaine the Great;" Norton and Sackville having, as we have seen, previously used it in dramatic composition before the birth of Shakspere, and Gascoigne and Kinwelmarsh within two years after his birth; but the "Gorboduc" of the former was merely represented before Elizabeth and her court; and the "Jocasta" of the latter at Gray's Inn. So that it will be seen, whatever faults may belong to Marlow, he is nevertheless entitled to respect, as one of the earliest patriarchs of the English drama. Michael Drayton thus sings of him:—

"Next Marlow, bathed in the Thespian springs,
Had in him those brave translunary things
That the first poets had; his raptures were
All air and fire, which made his verses clear;
For that fine madness still he did retain,
Which rightly should possess a poet's brain."

The ill-treatment of the unfortunate Queen of Scots, who is still kept a close prisoner, moves a few chivalrous souls, urged on by crafty Jesuits, to engage in a conspiracy against the life of Elizabeth, and for the liberation of her victim. The wily Walsingham, however, would cheat the very devil, and has copies of all their letters before they reach the parties to whom they are dispatched. A picture made for Mary, to show her the features of her deliverers (for such they hope to be,) is copied before it reaches her, and shown by wily Walsingham to Elizabeth. Of course, the designs of the conspirators are frustrated, and the law takes its course upon them. And an awfully cruel course it is; one that makes ones flesh creep to hear of it. It is September, and fourteen men are to suffer, and truly they are "a romantic and chivalrous band of catholics." A priest, named Ballard, is the arch-conspirator, a brave fellow too, who under better circumstances would have been a better man. Anthony Babington, a wealthy, beautiful, and accomplished gentleman, is one of the victims; and Chidiock Titchbourne is another. I wish I had space here to give the reader the letter that this last-named victim wrote to his "most loving wife alive,"—his "sweet cheek," as he tenderly calls her,—the night previous to his execution; or the speech that he made to the crowd who had assembled to witness his inhuman sufferings; but the following "Verses made by Chidiock Tichbourne of himself, in the Tower, the night before he suffered death," are too good to be omitted:—

"My prime of youth is but a frost of cares,
My feast of joy is but a dish of pain,
My crop of corn is but a field of tares,
And all my goods is but vain hope of gain.
The day is fled, and yet I saw no sun,
And now I live, and now my life is done!

"My spring is past, and yet it hath not sprung,
The fruit is dead, and yet the leaves are green:
My youth is past, and yet I am but young,
I saw the world, and yet I have not seen;
My thread is cut, and yet it is not spun,
And now I live, and now my life is done!

"I sought for death, and found it in the womb,
I lookt for life, and yet it was a shade:
I trod the ground, and knew it was my tomb,
And now I die and now I am but made.
The glass is full, and yet my glass is run,
And now I live, and now my life is done!"

There is something very brave in this unfortunate young

man spending the last night of his life, on this nineteenth of September, in writing to her from whom he was now parted for ever, and in calmly writing verses like the foregoing. And his fate is the more pitiable from the fact, that though he was privy to the plot, he had always disapproved of the assassination of the queen, but he would not disclose it to ruin his dear friend. The whole history of the plot is a "romance of real life," as well as the fate of Tichbourne. But I must content myself with merely quoting the account of the execution, which I do from the Chronicle of Sir Richard Baxter:—

"The twentieth day of the month, the first seven in St. Giles Fields, where they were wont to meet, were hanged, cut down instantly, their privy members cut off, and themselves yet living and beholding it, were in cruel manner bowelled and quartered; namely, Ballard, Babington, Savage, who, the rope breaking, fell down from the gibbet, and was presently taken by the hangman, his privy members cut off, and bowelled, while he was perfectly living), Barnwell, Tichburn, Tilney, and Abbington. The next day, the other seven were drawn to the same place, and executed in the same fashion, but in a more gentle manner, by the queen's special charge, who detested the former cruelty; for they were to hang till they were quite dead, Salisbury first, then Dun, then Jones, Chernock, Traverse, Gage, and with them Hierome Bellamy, who had concealed Babington after he was proclaimed traitor (whose brother being guilty of the same fact, had strangled himself in prison)."

The Queen of Scots is now tried, on the 11th of October, as one of the conspirators, at Fotheringay Castle, in Northamptonshire, where she is prisoner. The court adjourns to the Star-chamber, at Westminster, and on the twenty-fifth of the same month she is condemned. Both houses of parliament petition that the sentence of death may be put in execution immediately. The judgment is proclaimed by sound of trumpet in the metropolis, the bells ring for four-and-twenty hours, bonfires blaze in the streets, and there is a scene of hellish joy; and all because the head of a fair and frail female, whose unlucky chance it is, by accident of birth, to be heir to the English crown, is shortly to roll on the scaffold. Taken on the whole, monarchy has been a most unhappy institution for those who were unfortunate enough to belong to the blood-royal.

On the twenty-third of June, the lords of the Star-chamber, that arbitrary court, confirm the former laws, authorising the minions of power to search booksellers' shops and printing-offices, to discover heretical books, and imprison the offenders. For our freedom of the press was not won in a day, but required the bravest efforts of the

most enlightened of mankind, foremost amongst whom is the hallowed name of John Milton. "Guard it, I beseech you," says a speaker at one of our mutual improvement societies, "from oppression on the one hand, and from ungovernable license on the other."

Sir Richard Maitland, a Scottish poet, who "relieved," says Robert Chambers, "the duties of his situation as a judge and statesman in advanced life, by composing some moral and conversational pieces, and collecting, into the well-known manuscript that bears his name, the best productions of his contemporaries," now dies at his elegant retirement of Lethington Castle, in East Lothian, at the good old age of ninety years.

This year was born, at Grace Dieu, in Leicestershire, Francis Beaumont, the dramatist, son of Judge Beaumont; John Ford, another dramatist, whose baptism is registered at Islington, in Devonshire, on the seventeenth of April; and Cornelius Poelemberg, a painter, at Utrecht.

Seven Romish priests are this year executed at Tyburn; two at the Isle of Wight; one at Gloucester; and two priests, two laymen, and a lady, at York. The lady having refused to plead, is crushed to death as the law in such cases directed. Her husband is banished; and her children being asked questions in theology, are brutally whipped for answering as they have been taught by their mother, and the eldest, who is only twelve years old, is sent to prison for the good of his soul. Pity that men will not think of that beautifnl passage in the writings of the old Hebrew prophet, Micah, (chap. vi., verse 8th,) "What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" and so leave off all persecution in the name of their Maker.

SHAKSPERE'S TWENTY-FOURTH YEAR.

A.D. 1587. On the eighth of February, Mary Queen of Scots mounts the scaffold, and stands beside the headsman's axe. Human nature, awfully belied as it is, is ever on the side of virtue, if it be but allowed fair-play; and the voice of mercy pleads loudly for the unfortunate captive Mary, in the breast of her cousin Elizabeth, "against the deep damnation of" her "taking off." But her ministers ply her with reasons of state policy; they work on her weaknesses until they obtain her reluctant consent; wily Walsingham and the rest tell her all manner

of lies, and persuade her that her life can never be safe whilst her cousin Mary lives; they swear that foreign troops are already landed in the kingdom to support the captive's claim to the throne; and Elizabeth "curdles up her blood," and signs the awful mandate for a cousin's murder. There is a poor player who would tell her the great truth, that

> "There is no sure foundation set on blood;
> No certain life achieved by other's death;"

but then Shakspere is not in her council, and all her statesmen thirst for the victim's blood. Well, Mary bows her aching head to the block; she sees, for the last time, the watchet sky, and feels the struggling beams of a February sun shine faintly upon her; the sinewy headsman swings the ponderous axe aloft; it descends upon a neck graceful enough for any goddesss in the mythology; and the lovely head of Mary rolls upon the scaffold, and the purple flood that so lately chased up and bown her veins, is crying to Heaven for vengeance.

Admiral Drake now burns a hundred ships at Cadiz; for such are the glories of war. Davis' Straits are discovered by the navigator whose name they bear. The puritans introduce a bill into parliament for church reform, which occasions Elizabeth to commit several of them to the Tower—quite a *sovereign* remedy for all reforms in the reign of Elizabeth. Seven Romish priests are executed in various parts of England—viz., three at York, one at Dorchester, another at Stafford, another at Gloucester, and another at Chard, in Somersetshire. One of these victims, Stephen Rousham (the one executed at Gloucester), who had been sent to the Tower by wily Walsingham, for "eighteen whole months and thirteen days" is said to have been kept in "that dungeon called Little Ease," a cell described as "of so small dimensions, and so constructed, that the prisoner could neither stand, walk, sit, or lie in it at full length," but was required to draw himself up in a "squatting posture," and so remain until it pleased the tormentors to liberate him.

Christopher Marlow now takes his degree of Master of Arts at Bene't College, Cambridge; John (afterwards Doctor) Donne leaves Oxford for Cambridge; Richard Hakluyt publishes a second volume of voyages to America; a second edition of Holingshed's "Chronicle" is printed, to which poor Stow, with his usual industry, contributes; William Camden issues a second edition of his Latin "History of Britain," which as yet only forms a 12mo

volume. The whole works of George Gascoigne are collected and published. Archbishop Whitgift is graciously pleased to permit the "Decameron" of Boccaccio to be printed; and the bishop of London allows the "Amarous Fiametta" of the same illustrious author to be published, along with other Italian books. Thomas Underdowne issues an English version of the "Ethiopics" of Heliodorus the sophist, to a story in which Shakspere has made the Duke allude in the "Twelfth Night," (act v., scene 1st).—

> "Why should I not, had I the heart to do it,
> Like the Egyptian thief, at point of death,
> Kill what I love?"

Adriana Saravia, D.D., a native of Artois, now comes to England, and is made master of the free school of Southampton, and will one day rise to preferment in the Church of England, and be chosen one of the translators of the authorised version of the Bible. The queen's players visit Stratford-upon-Avon; and two years later we find William Shakspere a salaried member of that company. Poor Tasso, after being cruelly confined for upwards of seven years as a lunatic in the Hospital of St. Ann, at Ferrarra, by the Duke Alphonso, is at last allowed his liberty, and resumes his literary labours.

Joost van der Vondel, who is often called the Dutch Shakspere, was this year born at Cologne, from whence his parents, who were anabaptists, removed to Holland in his childhood. As a poet, he produced metrical versions of the Psalms, as well as translations from Virgil and Ovid, and was the author of several satires and tragedies. Arthur Johnston, the Scottish poet, was also born this year, at Caskieben, near Aberdeen.

John Fox, the martyrologist, dies in London this year, and is interred in the church of St. Giles, Cripplegate, on the twentieth of April, having reached the age of "threescore years and ten." He was born at Boston, in Lincolnshire, in the year 1517, and educated at Brazen-nose College, Oxford, where he was chamber-fellow with Alexander Nowell, (afterwards dean of St. Paul's, who wrote the catechism now used by the Church of England); in 1545, he was expelled from the university on a charge of heresy. Deserted by his friends, he was reduced to great poverty, but found an asylum with Sir Thomas Lucy, of Charlecot, near Stratford-upon-Avon, as tutor to the knight's family, and whilst in that capacity, married a woman of Coventry, with whose family he for some time resided. Towards the reign of Harry VIII, he went

to London, where he was in great danger of being hungered to death, but was saved by some kind Samaritan, who had noticed his wretched look in St. Paul's cathedral, and could not pass him by as the priests and Levites did, without ministering to his necessities. The name of this good soul is not recorded, but "virtue is its own reward." Brave John Fox trusted in God and his own exertions, and by-and-bye obtained a situation as tutor in the family of the Duchess of Richmond, at Rye-gate, in Surrey; but the cruel and cowardly persecution in Mary's reign, drove him from his native land; through Antwerp and Strasburg he wandered with his wife, and obtained bread at Basle by correcting the press for the celebrated printer, John Oporinus. Elizabeth ascended the throne, and John Fox returned to England. Through the interest of Secretary Cecil, he obtained a stall in Durham Cathedral, which he did not long retain. The Duke of Norfolk, who had been his pupil at Rye-gate, obtained his reluctant consent to accept of a prebend at Salisbury Cathedral, but Fox, being of puritanical principles, refused any higher preferment in the church. In 1563, he published his celebrated "Acts and Monuments of the Church," on which he had spent eleven years' labour.

SHAKSPERE'S TWENTY-FIFTH YEAR.

A.D. 1588. It is a memorable year in English history; the year of the defeat of the Spanish Armada. For five years the king of Spain has been gathering all his strength for an attack upon England, which once subdued, would leave the Low Countries a prey to Spanish rapacity. In all the ports of Sicily, Naples, Spain, and Portugal, large vessels have been building for the expedition. In Spain, in Flanders, in Italy, and in some parts of Germany, troops are raised for the conquest of England. An army of thirty-four thousand men is assembled in the Netherlands, ready to be transported to England; and all the carpenters that can be found in Flanders, in Lower Germany, and the coasts of the Baltic, have been building flat-bottomed vessels to transport the troops, men, and horses. The nobility of Italy and Spain vie with each other to share the "honour" of crushing the rising liberties of the world, of which England seems destined to become the bulwark. Secret as their preparations has been, England is on the alert. But the historian Hume shall speak for me:—

"All the English sailors in England amounted, at that time, to about fourteen thousand men. The size of the English shipping was in general so small, that except a few of the queen's ships of war, there were not four vessels belonging to the merchants which exceeded four hundred tons. The royal navy consisted only of twenty-eight sail, many of which were of small size; none of them exceeded the bulk of our largest frigates, and most of them deserved rather the name of pinnaces than of ships. The only advantage of the English fleet consisted in the dexterity and courage of the seamen, who, being accustomed to sail in tempestuous seas, and expose themselves to all dangers, as much exceeded in this particular the Spanish mariners, as their vessels were inferior in size and force to those of that nation. All the commercial towns of England were required to furnish ships for reinforcing this small navy; and they discovered, on the present occasion, great alacrity in defending their liberty and religion against those imminent perils with which they were menaced. The citizens of London, in order to show their zeal in the common cause, instead of fifteen vessels, which they were commanded to equip, voluntarily fitted out double that number. The gentry and nobility hired, and armed, and manned, forty-three ships at their own charge; and all the loans which the queen demanded were frankly granted by the persons applied to. Lord Howard of Effingham, a man of courage and capacity, was admiral, and took on him the command of the navy; Drake, Hawkins, and Frobisher, the most renowned seaman in Europe, served under him. The principal fleet was stationed at Plymouth. A smaller squadron, consisting of forty vessels, English and Flemish, was commanded by Lord Seymour, second son of Protector Somerset; and lay off Dunkirk, in order to intercept the Duke of Parma.—The land forces of England, compared to those of Spain, possessed contrary qualities to its naval power; they were more numerous than the enemy, but much inferior in discipline, reputation, and experience. An army of twenty thousand men was disposed in different bodies along the south coast; and orders were given them, if they could not prevent the landing of the Spaniards, to retire backwards, to waste the country round, and to wait for reinforcements from the neighbouring counties, before they approached the enemy. A body of twenty-two thousand foot, and a thousand horse, under the command of the Earl of Leicester, was stationed at Tilbury, in order to defend the capital. The principal army consisted of thirty-four thousand foot, and was commanded by Lord Hunsdon. These forces were reserved for guarding the queen's person, and were appointed to march whithersoever the enemy should appear. The fate of England, if all the Spanish armies should be able to land, seemed to depend on the issue of a single battle; and men of reflection entertained the most dismal apprehensions, when they considered the force of fifty thousand veteran Spaniards, commanded by experienced officers, under the Duke of Parma, the most consumate general of the age; and compared this formidable armament with the military power which England, not enervated by peace, but long disused to war, could muster against it."

It is but fair to state, that though the pope, Sixtus V., "had fulminated a new bull of excommunication against

her, had deposed her, had absolved her subjects from their oaths of allegiance, had published a crusade against England, and had granted plenary indulgences to every one engaged in the present invasion," as Hume truly remarks, yet "some gentlemen of that sect, conscious that they could not expect any trust or authority, entered themselves as volunteers in the fleet or army: some equipped ships at their own charge, and gave the command of them to protestants; others were active in animating their tenants, and vassals, and neighbours, to the defence of their country: and every rank of men, burying for the present all party distinctions, seemed to prepare themselves, with order as well as vigour, to resist the violence of these invaders." We may imagine Shakspere, like the rest of his countrymen, burning with ardour to make good his martial name, and shake a spear in the fight for the liberty of his country. We may imagine him uttering, with all the eloquence of patriotic feeling, the noble sentiment he has put into the mouth of the Bastard, in "King John,"—and it is the very closing passage, the last sentence of the play:—

> "This England never did, nor never shall,
> Lie at the proud foot of a conqueror,
> But when it first did help to wound itself.
> . . . Nought shall make us rue,
> If England to itself do rest but true."

On the twenty-ninth of May, the so-called Invincible Armada sails from Lisbon, consisting of one hundred and thirty ships, whereof, as Sir Richard Baker informs us, seventy-two were galeasses and galleons, "goodly ships, like to floating towers; in which were soldiers nineteen thousand two hundred and ninety; mariners, eight thousand three hundred and fifty; galley-slaves, two thousand and eighty;" and having two thousand six hundred and thirty pieces of large brass ordnance. "It was victualled," says Hume, "for six months; and was attended by twenty lesser ships, called caravals, and ten salves with six oars a piece." They send to bid the Prince of Parma to be ready with his fifty thousand soldiers, to land them at the mouth of the Thames; and in their own expectations,

> "This royal throne of kings, this sceptered isle,
> This earth of majesty, this seat of Mars,
> This other Eden, demi-Paradise;
> This fortress, built by Nature for herself
> Against infection and the hand of War;
> This happy breed of men, this little world:
> This precious stone set in the silver sea

(Which serves it in the office of a wall,
Or as a moat defensive to a house,
Against the envy of less happier lands);
This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England;"

as Shakspere makes John of Gaunt call our native land in first scene of the second act of "King Richard II.";—

"This land of such dear souls, this dear dear land,
Dear for her reputation from the world,
Is now leased out . . .
Like to a tenement or pelting farm;
England, bound in with the triumphant sea,
Whose rocky shore beats back the envious siege
Of watery Neptune,"

they fondly imagine is already bowed down beneath the iron heel of a foreign tyrant. Sir Walter Raleigh is amongst the English gentlemen who have so bravely volunteered their services in defence of their homes and altars; and it is worthy of remark that Lope de Vega, the Shakspere of the Spanish stage, was amongst the volunteers on the other side. Every reader of English history is familiar with the fate of this boasted expedition; every child has heard, or should have done, from its parents and teachers, how the very elements fought against them, and how the very bulk of those ponderous war-vessels proved an advantage to the English, by rendering the vessels of the foe unmanageable. British valour finishes what the elements had begun, and the invaders of England are never permitted to land; or Elizabeth, who bravely addresses her troops at Tilbury, like another "British warrior-queen," would head her army with all the heroism of a Boadicea. The total number of vessels furnished for the defence of England amounts to a hundred and forty. By the end of September this "invincible" armament* is completely conquered. Every history of England records the various engagements, as of right they should; and therefore I will not further occupy the little space at my disposal with details, but conclude the subject by presenting to the reader a poem of Southey's thereon, not so generally known.

* "The Spanish priests, who had so often blessed this holy crusade," says Hume, "and foretold its infallible success, were somewhat at a loss to account for the victory gained over the catholic monarch by excommunicated heretics and an execrable usurper: but they at last discovered, that all the calamities of the Spaniards had proceeded from their allowing the infidel Moors to live among them!"

"Clear shone the morn, the gale was fair
When from Coruna's crowded port,
With many a cheerful shout and loud acclaim,
The huge Armada past.

"To England's shores their streamers point,
To England's shores their sails are spread,
They go to triumph o'er the sea-girt land,
And Rome hath blest their arms.

"Along the ocean's echoing verge,
Along the mountain range of rocks,
The clustering multitudes behold their pomp,
And raise the votive prayer

"Commingling with the ocean's roar,
Ceaseless and hoarse their murmurs rise;
And soon they trust to see the winged bark
That bears good tidings home.

"The watch-tower now in distance sinks,
And now Galicia's mountain rocks
Faint as the far-off clouds of evening lie,
And now they fade away.

"Each like some moving citadel,
On through the waves they sail sublime;
And how the Spaniards see the silvery cliffs
Behold the sea-girt land!

"Oh fools! to think that ever foe
Should triumph o'er that sea-girt land!
Oh fools! to think that ever Britain's sons
Should wear the stranger's yoke!

"For not in vain hath Nature rear'd
Around her coast those silvery cliffs;
For not in vain old Ocean spreads his waves
To guard his favourite isle!

"On come her gallant mariners!
What now avail Rome's boasted charms?
Where are the Spaniard's vaunts of eager wrath?
His hopes of conquest now?

"And hark! the angry Winds arise,
Old Ocean heaves his angry waves;
The Winds and Waves against the invaders fight
To guard the sea-girt land.

"Howling around his palace-towers
The Spanish despot hears the storm;
He thinks upon his navies far away,
And boding doubts arise.

"Long, over Biscay's boisterous surge
The watchman's aching eye shall strain!
Long shall he gaze, but never winged bark
Shall bear good tidings home"

The puritan party are now attacking episcopacy with all their vigour. As the press is trammeled, and a dissenter accounted a seditious person, their tracts for the most part are printed in secret. Under the name of Martin Marprelate, John Penry (or Ap Henry) Job Throckmorton, and John Udall, attack and satirise poor prelacy most awfully. Their press is removed from place to place, to evade the pursuivants who are hunting for it in all parts of the country. At first the fugitive press is set up at Moulsey, near Kingston, in Surrey; then it is removed to the seat of Sir Richard Knightley, at Fawsley, in Northamptonshire; from thence to Norton, near Daventry, in the same county; anon it is at Coventry; then at Sir — Wickstone's house, at Woolstan, in Warwickshire; from thence it is conveyed to Warrington, in Lancashire; and at last is seized at Manchester. On the thirty-first of February, of the present year, Sir Richard Knightley, Sir — Wickstone, Mrs. Wickstone, and Mr. Hales (cousin to Sir Richard Knightley,) are arraigned before the court of Star-Chamber, on a charge of maintaining seditious persons, harbouring an itinerant printing-press, issuing seditious books and libels, etc. Sir Richard Knightley is mulcted in the sum of two thousand pounds; Mr. Hales, one thousand pounds; Mrs. Wickstone, one thousand pounds; and Sir — Wickstone, for not betraying his wife, is fined five hundred marks: and the whole of them are to be imprisoned during her majesty's pleasure.—Some of these Marprelate pamphlets are curious: I give the title of one in full, printed this year, in forty-eight quarto pages, attacking Thomas Cooper, the bishop of Lincoln, who is married to a dissolute woman, from whom the University of Oxford would fain have divorced him, but he would not. The punning on the bishop's name is well kept up. "Hay any work for Cooper; or a brief pistle, directed by way of an hublication, to the reverend Bishops, counselling them, if they will needs be barrelled up, for fear of smelling in the nostrils of her Majesty and the state, that they would use the advice of reverend Martin, for the providing of their Cooper. Because the reverend T. C. (by which mystical letters is understood, either the bounsing Parson of Eastmeane, or Tom Coakes, his Chaplain,) to be an unskilful and deceitful tubtrimmer. Wherein worthy Martin quits himself like a man, I warrant you, in the modest defence

of his self and his learned pistles, and makes the Cooper's hoops to fly off, and the Bishop's tubs to leak out of all cry. Penned and Compiled by Martin the Metropolitan. Printed in Europe, not far from some of the bounsing Priests." Job Throckmorton is said to be the author of the attacks on Bishop Cooper.

Four puritans present a petition to the house of commons, with a book of devotions which they wish to adopt, but Elizabeth sends for the book, and commits the four members to prison for presenting the petition. Such is the liberty of the subject under the despotic Elizabeth, that even the right of petition is denied the people.—Thirty-three Roman catholics suffer death this year, for their religion, (without reckoning Mary Queen of Scots, who doubtless was a religious victim,) of which number twenty-two are priests, ten are laymen, and one a lady: and great numbers of the professors of that faith are confined in Wisbeach castle, and other prisons. One of the priests, named William Gunter, is "drawn on the twenty-eighth of August, from Newgate to the new pair of gallows set up at the Theatre, and there hanged, bowelled, and quartered," not being allowed to speak at the time of execution. William Hartley, another of the priests, is "executed near the Theatre," on the fifth of October. So that if the "gentle Shakspere" be too humane to go to see the revolting sight of ripping up his fellow-creatures, for believing what he holds to be untrue, the inhuman butcheries are brought under his very nose. It is gratifying to know, however, that the sceptic Shakspere was a decided enemy to all persecution for mere matters of opinion.

On the thirteenth of February, a proclamation is issued against seditious publications. "The English Mercury," (upon the credit of which the invention of newspapers is ascribed to Lord Burleigh,) three numbers of which are deposited in the British Museum, bears date this year; but as these prints are now looked upon as modern forgeries, I shall pass them by without further notice. Queen Elizabeth grants to her jeweller, (a German, named John Spilman,) a license to erect a paper-mill at Dartford, in Kent, which some regard as the first paper-mill erected in England. Spilman is also said to have brought over to this country two lime-trees, which he planted at Dartford, and that they were the first ever planted in the island. Thomas Cavendish returns to England, after having navigated the globe in two years and forty-nine days. Duelling with small swords, a practice "more honoured in the breach than in the observance," is now introduced into

England. If the reader really wishes for something more than mere "tombstone information" regarding Shakspere, he or she will be glad to learn that the great poet of humanity has spared duelling no more than usury, for in the fifth scene of the third act of "Timon of Athens" he has been equally severe on both; making the First Senator reply to Alcibiades, who begs the life of a friend who has murdered another in a duel:—

> "You undergo too strict a paradox,
> Striving to make an ugly deed look fair:
> Your words have took such pains, as if they labour'd
> To bring manslaughter into form, and set quarrelling
> Upon the head of valour, which, indeed,
> Is valour misbegot, and came into the world
> When sects and factions were newly born.
> He's truly valiant that can wisely suffer
> The worst that man can breathe;
> And make his wrongs his outsides,
> To wear them, like his raiment, carelessly;
> And ne'er prefer his injuries to his heart,
> To bring it into danger.
> If wrongs be evils, and enforce us kill,
> What folly it is to hazard life for ill!"

Thomas Kyd now produces his play of "Hieronimo;" Robert Greene prints his "Pandosta, the Triumph of Time," a tale from whence Shakspere is said to have derived the plot of his "Winter's Tale;" Sir David Lindsay's poems are reprinted in Scotland; Lope de Vega, on board the Armada, writes his historical poem of the "Beauty of Angelica;" and about this time, Henry Wotton takes the degree of Master of Arts, at Queen's College, Oxford, and reads three Latin lectures, of which his biographer, Izaak Walton, gives the following beautiful description:—

"About the twentieth year of his age, he proceeded master of arts, and at that time read in Latin three lectures De Oculo; wherein he having described the form, the motion, the curious composure of the eye, and demonstrated how of those very many, every humour and nerve performs its distinct office, so as the God of order hath appointed, without mixture or confusion; and all this to the advantage of man, to whom the eye is given, not only as the body's guide, but where all other of his senses require time to inform the soul, this in an instant apprehends and warns him of danger, teaching him in the very eyes of others to discover wit, folly, love, and hatred. After he had made these observations, he fell to dispute this optic question:—Whether we see by the emission of the beams from within, or reception of the species from without? And after that, and many other like learned disquisitions, he, in the conclusion of his lectures, took a fair occasion to beautify his discourse with a commendation of the

blessing and benefit of seeing; by which we not only discover Nature's secrets, but, with a continued content, (for the eye is never weary of seeing,) behold the great light of the world, and by it discover the heavens, and both the order and the motion of the celestial orbs; nay, that if the eye look but downward, it may rejoice to behold the bosom of the earth, our common mother, embroidered and adorned with numberless and various flowers, which man daily sees grow up to perfection, and then silently moralise his own condition, who, in a short time, like those very flowers, decays, withers, and quickly returns again to that earth from which both had their first birth."

On the seventh of May, we find the chancellor of Cambridge (Lord Burleigh,) issuing rules for regulating the dress of the scholars; and ordering "that the excess of coloured shirts and ruffs, exceeding one inch and a half, (saving for the sons of noblemen,) be avoided presently; and that no scholar do wear any long locks of hair upon his head, but that he be polled after the manner of the gravest scholars, under the pain of six shillings and eight-pence." For the reader must know that starch of almost all colours, even red not excepted, were used in Elizabeth's reign to stiffen the collars then so much in vogue.—A work issued this year, called "The English Ape, the Italian Imitation, the Foot-steps of France, wherein is explained the wilful Blindness of subtle Mischief, the striving of Stars, the catching of Moonshine, and the secret sound of many Hollow Hearts," the author of which only gives his initials, "W. R.", is thus severe on the false refinement of the ladies of Shakspere's day:—

"It is a wonder more than ordinary to behold their periwigs of sundry colours, their painting-pots of peerless perfumes, their boxes of slobber sauce, the fleaking of their faces, their strained modesty, and their counterfeit coyness. In so much that they rather seem courtesans of Venice, than matrons of England; monsters of Egypt, than modest maidens of Europe; enchanting syrens of Syrtes, than diligent searchers of virtue: these enchantments charm away their modesty, and entrap fools in folly. Bewitcheth themselves with wanton wiles, and besetteth other with these bitter smiles"

On the eighth of August, Edwyn Sandys, archbishop of York, dies at the age of sixty-nine years. He had been one of the commissioners for revising the Liturgy, and had a share in translating the Bishop's Bible, published in 1568. On the fourth of September, Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, (who is said to have poisoned his first wife as well as the former husband of his present one,) having attempted to take the life of his wife by poison, being jealous of Sir Christopher Blount, falls a victim to his own infernal arts. The lady being apprised of his design, gives him a cordial draught to cure a fit of indigestion brought

on by habitual gluttony, and he eats and drinks no more, —but she provides herself with another husband. I find the deaths of four painters recorded as having taken place in the present year,—viz., Paul Veronese (Paoli Cagliari), born at Verona, in 1532; Pulzone Scipio (called Gaetano), born at Gaeta, in 1550; Hans de Vriese, born in East Friesland, in 1527; and Bardone.

Thomas Hobbes, the author of "Leviathan," is born on the fifth of April, at Malmesbury; George Wither, the poet, on the eleventh of June, at Bentworth, in Hampshire; and Joseph Ribera, better known by the name of Spagnoletto, a Spanish painter, celebrated for his representation of terrible scenes, is also born this year, at Xativa, in Valencia.

SHAKSPERE'S TWENTY-SIXTH YEAR.

A.D. 1589. WILLIAM SHAKSPERE is now one of the fifteen shareholders in the Blackfriars theatre, his name, in the month of November, being the eleventh in the list, according to Robert Chambers. From the following extract, however, given by Charles Knight, from a valuable document discovered by the indefatigable Payne Collier at Bridgewater House, Shakspere's name appears to be the twelfth of sixteen. Several of the theatres having entered into the Martin Marprelate controversy, Lord Burleigh orders the Lord Mayor of London to inquire what companies have so offended, and also appoints a commission for the same purpose. Shakspere and his fellows, afraid of losing their license, petition the lords of the privy council as follows :—

"These are to certify your Right Honourable Lordships, that her Majesty's poor players, James Burbadge, Richard Burbadge, John Laneham, Thomas Greene, Robert Wilson, John Taylor, Anthony Wadeson, Thomas Pope, George Peele, Augustine Phillips, Nicholas Towley, William Shakespeare, William Kempe, William Johnson, Baptiste Goodale, and Robert Armyn, being all of them sharers in the Black Fryers playhouse, have never given cause of displeasure in that they have brought into their plays matters of state and religion, unfit to be handled by them, or to be presented before lewd spectators; neither hath any complaint in that kind ever been preferred against them or any of them. Wherefore they trust most humbly in your Lordships' consideration of their former good behaviour, being at all times ready and willing to yield obedience to any command whatsoever your Lordships in your wisdom may think in such case meet," etc.

"November, 1589."

Charles Knight supposes Shakspere by this time to have composed his "Hamlet" and some other plays; the "First Part of King Henry the Sixth" (which some critics, however, doubt the authorship of) being now in existence. George Peele, the dramatist, is one of Shakspere's partners in the theatre; and Thomas Greene, the fourth player on the list, is said to have been a native of Stratford-upon-Avon. Richard Burbage, the second name on the list—Burbage, the Roscius of his day—according to Lord Southampton, is of the same county as Shakspere,—"They are both of one county, and, indeed," says he, "almost of one town." Speaking of our dramatist at this period, Barry Cornwall remarks:—"His position at the theatre, as proprietor, in 1589, therefore, seems to indicate that he must have been, for a considerable time, a writer for the stage. What, in fact, could have renovated his fortunes, and raised him to the dignity of proprietor, but the aid that he had given to the drama?"

Robert Greene now issues a tract called "The Spanish Masquerado," in which he gives the following, "Twelve Articles of the Court of Spain:"—"The cardinals solicit all; the king grants all; the nobles confirm all; the pope determines all; the clergy disposeth all; the Duke of Medina hopes for all; Alonso receives all; the Indians minister all; the soldiers eat all; the people pay all; the monks and friars consume all; and the devil at length will carry away all." Thomas Nash publishes his "Anatomy of Absurdity," in which is an allusion, it is supposed, to the first sketch of Shakspere's "Hamlet." A dramatic piece, in five acts, which has been represented before Elizabeth, is now printed, entitled "The Triumphs of Love and Fortune," the author of which is unknown. Webster Puttenham publishes his "Art of English Poesy," which contains no notice of Shakspere, he having as yet sent nothing to the press. The Marprelate controversy is at its height; Martin, as he tells us in the title of his "Protestation," now issued, "notwithstanding the surprising of the printer, maketh it known unto the world, that he feareth neither proud priest, anti-Christian pope, tyrannous prelate, nor Godless cater-cap, but defieth all the race of them, by these presents, and offereth conditionally, as is farther expressed herein, by open disputation, to appear in the defence of his cause against them and theirs; which challenge, if they dare not maintain against him, then doth he also publish that he never meaneth, by the assistance of God, to leave the asylum of them and their generation, until they be utterly extinguished out of the church." Gabriel Harvey, the friend of Spenser, is on

the side of the puritans; and the two dramatists, Nash and Lyly, are on the government side. One of the most celebrated replies to the Marprelate tracts, "Pap with a Hatchet," printed this year, is from John Lyly's pen.

John Donne (not yet Doctor) now leaves the university of Cambridge, and is admitted into Lincoln's Inn, a young man in the seventeenth year of his age, now intending to study the law; for as yet he knows not that the church is to be his sphere of action: and his friend, Henry Wotton, commences his travels, laying aside his books, as Izaak Walton has it, and betaking "himself to the useful library of travel, and a more general conversation with mankind." Sir Walter Raleigh visits Edmund Spenser, at his romantic castle of Kilcolman, in Ireland, and the two poet-friends sit reading the manuscript of the "Faery Queen,"

> "Amongst the cooly shade,
> Of the green alders by the Mulla's shore,"

as Spenser has it; for the river Mulla runs through his estate, and the mountains of Waterford, Ballyhoura, Nagle, and Kerry, loom in the distance, and girdle in the daisy-decked plain. "The Shepherd of the Ocean," for so Spenser styles Raleigh, will have the beautiful poem instantly sent to the press, and for that purpose induces its author to accompany him to London, where he introduces him to the queen. Speaking of Raleigh listening to the reading of the "Faery Queen," at Kilcolman, a popular writer, Robert Chambers, very rationally observes:—"We may conceive the transports of delight with which Raleigh perused or listened to those strains of chivalry and gorgeous description, which revealed to him a land still brighter than any he had seen in his distant wanderings, or could have been present even to his romantic imagination!" Hugh Broughton, one of the best Hebrew scholars of his day, having dedicated his laborious work, "The Consent of Scripture," to Elizabeth, personally presents a copy to her majesty, on the seventeenth of November. Henry Barrowe, a nonconformist, publishes his "Brief Discovery of the False Church," and is soon afterwards thrown into prison, and executed.

Amongst the Roman catholics, who suffer for their religion this year, we find two priests and two laymen executed at York, and the same number of each at Oxford. At Norwich there is a change of performance in these cruel carnivals of the devil; Francis Kett, a member of one of the universities, being burnt for heresy,—I believe for

atheism. What the "gentle Shakspere" thought of these hellish exhibitions in the name of religion, may be gathered from a hard hit at religious persecution in the "Winter's Tale," (act ii., scene 3rd,) where Leontes, King of Sicilia, threatens Paulina :—

> "LEONTES. I'll have thee burned.
> PAULINA. I care not;
> It is an heretic that makes the fire,
> Not she which burns in 't."

The Earl of Arundel is convicted of high treason, but the sentence is not executed, and never will; for, eleven years hence, he will be released from his lingering imprisonment, by the friendly hand of Death. Saffron, for the first time, is planted in England. Admiral Drake and Sir John Norris fit out, at their own cost, an expedition against Spain—for buccaneering is the legitimate warfare—consisting of eleven thousand soldiers and fifteen hundred seamen, who sail from Plymouth on the fifth of April; Elizabeth assisting them merely with six ships and sixty thousand pounds. After plundering the country as far as they could, both in Spain and in Portugal, about one half of the plunderers return to England, leaving the mangled carcases of their fallen fellows to manure the pillaged lands. In the month of June, they seize, in the river Tagus, "threescore hulks of the Hanse towns of Germany, laden with corn, and all manner of munition," intended to equip the Spanish fleet.—On the first of August, Henry III., King of France, who had assassinated the Duke of Guise, is himself murdered by a monk named James Clement, and there is a commotion as to who must be his successor. Elizabeth supports the King of Navarre, a protestant, and a good man, whom she supplies with forty thousand pounds, and he takes the throne of France by the title of Henry IV.—An injunction from the Mexican council, prohibiting the clergy from any longer performing mysteries or miracle-plays, is now ratified at Rome.

On the ninth of April, dies, at Leicester, in the twenty-second year of his age, Thomas Sampson, one of the most learned and energetic of the puritan party. He was born at Playford, in Sussex, in the year 1517, and received a university education.

Thomas Carew, one of the best of our English conventional poets, is born this year, of an ancient Gloucestershire family, It is also the natal year of Fetti, the Roman painter: and of Henry Steenwick, the Flemish artist, who is born at Antwerp, and seven of whose pieces are at Hampton Court.

SHAKSPERE'S TWENTY-SEVENTH YEAR.

A.D. 1590. SHAKSPERE'S comedy of "Love's Labours Lost" belongs, it is supposed, to the present year, it being evidently one of the early productions of the great dramatic master.

Thomas Lodge, the dramatist, now publishes his edition of "Rosalind, or Euphue's Golden Legacy," which gives to Shakspere a plot for his beautiful sylvan comedy of of "As You Like It;" for Shakspere, instead of being "educated in a rude manner, without any instruction from men or books,"—a miracle which one would have thought Hume wise enough to know to be an impossibility—in addition to a good moral and mental training to begin with, knew all life to be an education, and wisely laid the world of "men" and that of "books" under constant contribution to his immense intellect. Edmund Spenser, whom we have seen last year accompany Sir Walter Raleigh to London, publishes the first three books of his "Faery Queen," and is introduced by his friend, "the Shepherd of the Ocean," to Elizabeth, who settles a yearly pension of fifty pounds upon him, previous to his return to his romantic, but ill-fated, Irish possessions. Lady Pembroke writes her tragedy of "Antony." Sir John Smythe publishes his "Certain Discourse," in which he complains that the "detestable vice" of drunkenness "has taken wonderful root in our English nation, that was wont to be, of all the nations in Christendom, one of the soberest;" and he blames the ill example of those soldiers of fortune who had served in the Flemish wars. Thus, in like manner, Mrs. Page, in the "Merry Wives of Windsor," (act ii., scene 1st,) when she receives that business-like love-letter from merry Sir John Falstaff, calls him "this Flemish drunkard." William Camden enlarges his "Britannia" to an octavo volume, and gives a third edition of it to the public. Francis Bacon (not yet made a peer, nor indeed knighted either,) is made counsel-extraordinary to the queen, and is willing to prostitute his glorious talents to the meanest purposes, and to be the servile slave of power, so that it but bring him wordly advancement: and yet is he destined to revolutionise science, and to become one of the greatest benefactors of the world! W. Vallans publishes his "Table of the Two Swans," in which he mentions the paper-mill at Dartford, in Kent, which many writers ignorantly imagine to have been the first paper-mill erected in England; whereas Bacon, in his "History

of King Henry the Seventh," mentions a "reward" of sixteen shillings and nine pence, "given at the paper-mill," on the 25th of May, 1498. Henry Ainsworth, the learned Brownist, is obliged to flee to Holland. Peter Bales, the finest penman of his day, issues his "Writing Schoolmaster." And Lope de Vega, being lucky enough to save himself from the destruction of the Spanish Armada, returns to Madrid, and employs himself in enriching literature with numerous dramatic pieces of a higher order than any Spain has hitherto possessed,—a better and much more glorious work to be engaged in than that of attempting to foist the greatest of all slavery, that of the mind, on a nation who has thrown off the yoke for ever.

Sailcloth is now first woven in England, for the navy; the band of pensioners is established by Elizabeth; Milford Haven, so familiar to every reader of Shakspere, is now fortified; and the customs duties of England, which previously had only been fourteen thousand pounds a year, are raised to fifty thousand pounds.

If poverty really came upon Master John Shakspere, as many writers contend, the reason is obvious; for a supplication now addressed from the bailiffs and burghers of Stratford-upon-Avon, to Lord Burleigh, "records," as Skottowe observes, "the hopeless depression of the once highly prosperous trade of a woolstapler;" the town having, as the supplication expresses it, "fallen into much decay for want of such trade as heretofore they had by clothing and making of yarn, employing and maintaining a number of poor people by the same, which now live in great penury and misery, by reason they are not set at work as before they have been."

Four Romanist priests are this year executed at Durham, two at Rochester, two in Fleet-street, London, one at Clerkenwell, a layman in Smithfield, and another in Gray's Inn Lane. Robert Brown, the nonconformist, having now renounced dissent, is presented to a living in Northamptonshire.

On the sixth of April, Sir Francis Walsingham, a statesman wily enough to have "set the murderous Machiavel to school," dies, at the age of eighty-nine years.

Wiliam Browne, one of the best pastoral poets of England, and the friend of John Seldon, Michael Drayton, George Wither, Ben Jonson, and many others of the wits and scholars of his day, is born at Tavistock, in Devonshire, about the present year. As the beautiful sylvan scenes which Browne has so happily portrayed are too little known, even amongst the lovers of English poetry, I quote the well-written criticism of one of the best rural

sketchers which our literature can boast of, Thomas Miller:—

"We understand no other language than that of our mother tongue,—and that, we fear, indifferently—therefore we are unable either to read Theocritus or Virgil, saving by translation; and if by this method the ideas of the authors can be faithfully given (for we care not for words alone), William Browne is as great a pastoral poet as either of the above-named authors. His mind is thoroughly English; he drank deeply from that well whence Chaucer and Spenser drew their inspirations—the ever-flowing fountain of nature. Nor need a stronger proof be brought of his good taste than that intense admiration which he had for the writings of Spenser—a poet whose works are the very touchstone of taste, and which none but a true lover of poetry can ever thoroughly relish. There is a green look about his pages; he carries with him the true aroma of old forests: his lines are mottled with rich mosses, and there is a gnarled ruggedness upon the stems of his trees. His waters have a wet look, and splashing sound about them, and you feel the fresh air play around you while you read. His birds are the free denizens of the fields, and they send their songs so life-like through the covert, that their music rings upon the ear, and you are carried away with his 'sweet pipings.' He heard the sky-lark sing in the blue dome of heaven before he transferred its warblings to his pages, and inhaled the perfume of the flowers he described; the roaring of the trees was to him an old familiar sound; his soul was a rich storehouse for all that is beautiful in nature. But he is dead, and needs not our praise! he has erected for himself a monument which will stand securely when we are forgotten. Nearly two centuries have already swept over his grave, and (so far as our limited research has been carried) no one has arisen to do his memory that justice which it deserves."

I find the births of four painters recorded as having taken place this year, viz.—Cornelius Janson, in Holland; Daniel Seghers, at Antwerp; Guercino, at Cento; and Gentileschi, at Rome.—It is also the natal year of Manuel Faria-y-Sousa, the Portuguese historian and lyric poet.

SHAKSPERE'S TWENTY-EIGHTH YEAR.

A.D. 1591. MALONE supposes Shakspere to have this year written his comedy of the "Two Gentlemen of Verona," and that it was his first production for the stage. Skottowe has assigned to it the same date. The probability, however is, that it was written some years before; for Shakspere has had better employment than merely leading the horses of gentlemen round the gibbet at the outside of the Blackfriars theatre. Charles Knight supposes Shakspere to have already written at least nine plays. "Romeo and Juliet" is supposed by

some writers to have been produced this year. What a pity that none of Shakspere's contemporaries thought him worth a biography. How nobly would an Izaak Walton have executed that task, and left the world so much the richer for his labour. But divines and anglers were more to Izaak's taste than players and deer-stealers. As Walton was twenty-three years old when Shakspere died, what a glorious collection of facts might the good old man have handed down to us!

Edmund Spenser, whose fame begins to peal throughout the land, now publishes his "Complaints," "containing sundry small poems of the world's vanity," in one of which, called "The Tears of the Muses," is an evident allusion to William Shakspere. The nine muses or fabled goddesses of poetry; that is, Clio, the muse of history; Melpomene, the muse of tragedy; Thalia, the muse of pastoral poetry and of comedy; Euterpe, the muse of music; Terpsichore, the muse of dancing; Erato, the muse of lyric and love poetry; Calliope, the muse of eloquence and heroic poetry; Urania, the muse of astronomy; and Polyhymnia, the muse of singing and rhetoric; all these nine fabled goddesses "rehearse" their "piteous plaints" in Spenser's verse, as they had lately poured them forth

"Beside the silver springs of Helicone."

The whole poem is worthy the attention of the reader; but I have only space here for the complaint of Thalia, which I give entire. We have seen how party polemics has seized the stage; and it appears from the extract from Spenser, given below, that Shakspere's immortal dramas were unheeded whilst the excitement lasted for those other ephemera.

"Where be the sweet delight of Learning's treasure,
That wont with comic sock to beautify
The painted theatres, and fill with pleasure
The list'ner's eyes, and ears with melody;
In which I late was wont to reign as queen,
And mask in mirth with graces well beseen?

"Oh! all is gone; and all that goodly glee
Which wont to be the glory of gay wits,
Is laid a-bed, and nowhere now to see;
And in her room unseemly Sorrow sits,
With hollow brows and grisly countenance,
Marring my joyous gentle dalliance.

"And him beside sits ugly Barbarism,
And brutish Ignorance, yclept of late
Out of dread darkness of the deep abysm
Where being bred, he light and heaven does hate

They in the minds of men now tyrannize,
And the fair scene with rudeness foul disguise.

"All places they with Folly have possest,
And with vain toys the vulgar entertain;
But me have banished, with all the rest
That whilom wont to wait upon my train —
Fine Counterfesance, and unhurtful Sport,
Delight and Laughter, deckt in seemly sort.

"All these, and all that else the comic stage
With season'd wit and goodly pleasance graced,
By which man's life in his likest image
Was limned forth, are wholly now defaced;
And those sweet wits, which wont the like to frame,
Are now despised, and made a laughing game.

"And he, the man whom Nature's self had made
To mock herself, and Truth to imitate,
With kindly counter, under mimic shade,
Our pleasant Willy, ah! is dead of late;
With whom all joy and pleasant merriment
Is also deaded, and in dolour drent.

"Instead thereof, scoffing Scurrility,
And scornful Folly, with Contempt, is crept,
Rolling in rhymes of shameless ribaldry,
Without regard, or due decorum kept:
Each idle wit at will presumes to make,
And doth the learned's task upon him take.

"But that same gentle spirit, from whose pen
Large streams of honey and sweet nectar flow,
Scorning the boldness of such base born men,
Which dare their follies forth so rashly throw,
Doth rather chuse to sit in idle cell,
Than so himself to mockery to sell.

"So I am made the servant of the many,
And laughing-stock of all that list to scorn;
Not honoured nor cared for of any;
But loath'd of losels as a thing forlorn:
Therefore I mourn and sorrow with the rest,
Until my cause of sorrow be redrest."

It is a pleasure to the true lover of English literature to find the divine Milton honouring the memory of "sweetest Shakspere, Fancy's child," with a sonnet, and appreciating his sweetness. But when John Milton—a young man of twenty-one years of age, finishing his education at Christ's College, Cambridge—wrote that noble and never-to-be-forgotten sonnet, Shakspere had been in his grave fourteen years; and his works collected into a folio volume, with the well-known portrait of the great dramatist, and Ben Jonson's lines, which I have quoted in the introduction of this volume, had been given to the public seven years.

It is, therefore a still greater pleasure—a pleasure that indeed warms the heart of the man of letters to think of—to know that Edmund Spenser was the first of all our English writers to do justice to the immortal Shakspere, and that, too, in the life-time of the dramatist, in the very infancy, it may be, of his literary career; at all events, when he was but in his twenty-eighth year, and could not have produced one-half, if one-third, of his plays. Nor was Shakspere unheedful of the merits of Spenser. I find a sonnet frequently quoted from his "Passionate Pilgrim" —(for I am sorry to observe the expensive edition of Shakspere's works, published by Tyas, in 1843, the only copy I possess, strange as it may seem, contains it not)—which does one's heart good to read. It is as follows:—

"If Music and sweet Poetry agree,
As they must needs, the sister and the brother,
Then must the love be great 'twixt thee and me,
Because thou lov'st the one, and I the other.
DOWLAND to thee is dear, whose heavenly touch,
Upon the lute doth ravish human sense;
SPENSER to me, whose deep conceit is such,
As, passing all conceit, needs no defence.
Thou lov'st to hear the sweet melodious sound
That Phœbus' lute, the queen of music, makes;
And I in deep delight am chiefly drown'd,
When as himself to singing he betakes.
One God is god of both, as poets feign;
One knight loves both, and both in thee remain."

Robert Greene's comedy of "Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay," generally considered the best of his pieces, is now brought out on the stage, and is supposed to be the last drama in which a devil appears. A play, in two parts, called "The Troublesome Reign of John, King of England," belongs to the present year, and is principally remarkable for being the foundation on which Shakspere built up the admirable superstructure of his own "King John." "Shakspere," says Waldo Emerson, "in common with his comrades, esteemed the mass of old plays, waste stock, in which any experiment could be freely tried. Had the prestige which hedges about a modern tragedy existed, nothing could have been done. The rude, warm blood of the living England circulated in the play, as in street ballads, and gave body which he wanted to his airy and majestic fancy." Sir John Harrington issues his "Apology for Poetry," but it contains no mention of Shakspere. "Tancred and Gismund" is acted before the court, by the gentlemen of the Inner Temple; and John Lyly's "Endymion, the Man in the Moon," is "played

before the queen's majesty at Greenwich, on Candlemas-day at night, by the children of Paul's," and then sent to the press. Charles Lamb praises highly some passages in the former piece, and William Hazlitt was a warm admirer of the latter. Giles Fletcher (father of the poets Giles and Phineas) who had been English ambassador in Russia, prints his treatise "Of the Russe Commonwealth;" but the Russian merchants in London complain of some passages therein, and Elizabeth, who never respected the freedom of the press, orders the book not to be issued. In Scotland, James VI., (afterwards James I., of England) publishes "His Majesty's Poetical Exercises at Vacant Hours;" but, judging from the specimens I have seen of this royal poet's productions, one verse by the plough-boy Burns, or of poor Robert Nicoll, is worth them all. Richard Hooker is presented by the archbishop of Canterbury to the rectory of Boscomb, in Wiltshire: he is also, on the seventeenth of July, made a minor prebendary of Salisbury; and is busy writing the "Ecclesiastical Polity" at his rectory this year. On the death of William Blitherman, John Bull, who had been his pupil, is appointed to his vacant place of organist of the chapel-royal; and to him it is that we owe the anthem of "God Save the King," as we shall see under the date of 1607.

On the thirteenth of March, the first stone of Dublin University is laid by Thomas Smyth, the mayor. Captains Lancaster and Rimer sail to the East Indies, to commence a trade there, little dreaming what an acquisition of territory in that part of the globe the East India trade will end in. Some vessels also sail to Cape Breton, and commence the first English whale fishery. The Newcastle coal-owners combine, and raise the price of coal in London, from four shillings to nine shillings a chaldron. Elizabeth sends four thousand men, under the command of the Earl of Essex, to assist Henry IV. of France; and it is to the war of the League against the Gallic monarch that Dromio of Syracuse alludes in Shakspere's "Comedy of Errors," act iii., scene 2nd. The Rev. William Lee, who had been expelled from St. John's College, Cambridge, about the year 1589, for the awful crime of marrying the girl of his choice; and who, being very poor, was obliged to depend partly on her labour as a knitter of stockings to keep the gaunt wolf of hunger from their cot, now invents the stocking-frame to emancipate female fingers from that monotonous toil. A. C. Elmore, A.R.A., has beautifully sketched the student ruminating the invention in his brain, his young wife following her occupation, with their infant sleeping on her knee, an engraving of which will be found

in the fifth volume of the "People's Journal." England, one regrets to learn, did not encourage her benefactor, but starved him out, and he was forced to seek an asylum in France, where the king, and Sully, his famous minister, gave him a good reception. But after all, he was a heretic in the eyes of the reason-surrendering papists, and shared the persecution of his brother protestants, after the death of his royal protector, and is said to have died in Paris, of grief and disappointment; whilst some of his workmen escaped to England, and re-established the stocking-frame in the land of its unfortunate inventor. Such, too often, is the fate of the greatest benefactors of the human race, who, thank God, are not to be daunted by poverty, persecution, contumely, or death. What are all grand discoveries, and all sublime original ideas, but so many revelations of the Infinite to man? And what are all true poets and discoverers of useful inventions but so many priests and prophets of progress, whose labours will one day fructify in that Millenium of happiness for mankind which good men in all ages have so faithfully believed and hoped will one day come for regenerated man?

But in this twenty-eighth year of Shakspere, we must leave poor William Lee starving with his wealth-producing machines, and look at society as it is; and well might the great dramatist tell his audiences that "the web of life is of a mingled yarn!"—not all good, nor yet all depravity, though "the trail of the serpent" might be easily perceived, without the aid of those telescopes T. Janson was then manufacturing at Middleburg, in Germany.—Fourteen popish priests and laymen are this year brutually slaughtered, and the scaffolds of Tyburn, Gray's Inn Fields, Fleet-street, York, Winchester, and Dorchester, are soaked in their reeking blood.—And on the twenty-eighth of July, a poor lunatic, named William Hackett, a native of Oundle, in Northamptonshire, is hanged, drawn, and quartered, for blasphemy, because he had fancied himself to be the Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten son of God, come to judge the world! According to Sir Richard Baker, this Hackett was "a mean fellow, of no learning, whose first prank was this; that when, in show of reconciliation to one with whom he had been at variance, he embraced him, he bit off his nose, and the man desiring to have his nose again, that it might be sewed on, while the wound was green, he most villanously eat it up, and swallowed it before his face," a statement which would not have been quoted here, for any other purpose than to show clearly that any one but religious bigots would have placed the unfortunate madman under wholesome restraint, and treated him as a patient

suffering from a severe attack of cerebral derangement, instead of brutally strangling and ripping him up! If this language seem coarse, it is adapted to the occasion; and to gloss over brutality, to use soft and gentle words to describe a hellish deed, is a sin that stinks in the nostrils of every right-thinking man.—Cartwright, and nine other nonconformists, are thrown into prison by the court of Star-Chamber, for merely exercising the common natural right of every one to worship God according to the dictates of his own conscience.

Sir Christopher Hatton, who had once taken the fancy of Elizabeth at a dance, and been by her promoted to be lord-chancellor, dies this year. It is to him that the poet Gray alludes in his "Long Story."

Henry King, afterwards bishop of Chichester, and a religious poet of no mean order, was born this year; as was also, in Cheapside, London, Robert Herrick, the great poet of our English festivals, a clergyman of the church of England, and the jovial friend of "rare Ben Jonson," and other wits, with whom he had often quaffed the foaming nut-brown October, or drained a cup of sack; and which merry meetings long lingered in his brain, as the following stanzas of his will prove:—

"Ah, Ben!
Say now or when
Shall we thy guests
Meet at those lyric feasts
Made at the Sun,
The Dog, the Triple Tun;
Where we such clusters had
As made us nobly wild, not mad?
And yet each verse of thine
Outdid the meat, outdid the frolic wine.

"My Ben!
Or come again,
Or send to us
Thy wit's great overplus,
But teach us yet,
Wisely to husband it;
Lest we that talent spend;
And having once brought to an end
That precious stock, the store
Of such a wit, the world should have no more."

SHAKSPERE'S TWENTY-NINTH YEAR.

A.D. 1592. Edward Alleyn, the friend of William Shakspere, (and, in after years, the founder of Dulwich College,) has already distinguished himself as an actor, though

he has only attained the age of twenty-six years, and he now changes his bachelor life for the more happy one of wedlock. Thomas Nash's comedy of "Summer's Last Will and Testament" is exhibited before the queen, and his "Supplication of Pierce Penniless to the Devil," is printed. Edmund Spenser publishes his "Daphnaida, an Elegy upon the Death of the noble and virtuous Douglas Howard, daughter and heir of Henry Lord Howard, Viscount Byndon, and wife of Arthur Gorges, Esquire." "Arden of Feversham," a "true and lamentable tragedy," the author of which is unknown, is now printed, and some modern critics have assigned it to Shakspere, whom it is said, was descended, by the mother's side, from the subject of the tragedy. I know the piece only by a selection from it, given by Charles Lamb in William Hone's "Table Book;" and I think the first folio, published by the fellow-actors of Shakspere, must be taken as the best standard to determine which plays are Shakspere's and which are not; but if we allow the critics to assign or reject whole plays, or even single scenes, according to what they fancy to be "internal evidence," we encourage a species of impudent pretension in the world of letters, which will one day end in universal arnachy and "confusion worse confounded." "The Jolly Beggars" and the "Cottar's Saturday Night" will be assigned to different hands; and the "Hebrew Melodies," it will be clearly shown, from "internal evidence," were never written by the author of "Cain" and "Don Juan." "Grant me patience, just Heaven!" exclaims Sterne, in his "Tristram Shandy"—"of all the cants which are canted in this canting world—though the cant of hypocrites may be the worst—the cant of criticism is the most tormenting!"

John Bull, the organist of the chapel-royal, is created doctor in the university of Cambridge. Sir Walter Raleigh sails in command of an expedition to attack Panama, a Spanish settlement in South America; and, though unsuccessful as to their main errand, they capture a large vessel at the Azores, on their return, murder nearly all her crew of six hundred men, and divide plunder to the amount of fifty thousand pounds. Robert Southwell, the jesuit and poet, is thrown into a horrid dungeon in the Tower, for merely performing mass in catholic families, though he has done nothing to cause a breach of the peace. The clothes of the poor poet are soon covered with vermin, and he is nearly eaten up by them, for they infest his dungeon by thousands; so that his father petitions the queen, "that if his son has committed anything for which, by the laws, he has deserved death, he may suffer death;

if not, as he is a gentleman, he hopes her majesty will be pleased to order him to be treated like a gentleman;"—for conventional pride speaks stronger in this poor father's petition than any idea of the rights of manhood, which no conventional compact can alienate. But the poor poet, "as he is a gentleman"—not because he is a man and a brother!—is afterwards better lodged, and we must leave him for three years in the Tower, to bear ten inflictions of that terrible rack, yet with a soul serene enough to write poetry as free from any anger or resentment as could have been expected from the Carpenter of Galilee himself. About the latter end of this year, John Udall, the learned non-conformist, dies in the Marshalsea, after a strict and unjust imprisonment; no crime having been proved against him, and witnesses not being allowed for him, upon the arbitrary principle that "witnesses for the prisoner are against the queen!" though Udall, who is in advance of his age, maintains that the queen ought to hear all things, when the life of any one of her subjects is in question—a rational idea, but one never acted upon in England until the Revolution placed the liberty of the subject on a safer basis.—And now, on the second of September, "life's fitful fever" is over for ever with poor Robert Greene, the dramatist; whose death, it is said, was occasioned by a surfeit of red herrings and Rhenish wine! and immediately after his demise appears a tract from his pen, entitled "A Groat's Worth of Wit, Bought with a Million of Repentance," which had been committed to the care of Henry Chettle, a brother dramatist; and in this tract Shakspere is denounced as "an upstart crow, beautified with our feathers, that with his tiger's heart wrapped in a player's hide, supposes he is as well able to bombast out a blank verse as the best of you;" for Greene is addressing himself to those gentlemen, his quondam acquaintance, that spend their wits in making plays," (Marlow, Lodge, and Peel, it is supposed), to whom he "wisheth a better exercise, and wisdom to prevent his extremities." The phrase, "his tiger's heart wrapped in a player's hide," is an evident parody on a line of Shakspere's "Henry the Sixth," part third, where the "she-wolf of France, but worse than wolves of France," Queen Margaret, exults over Richard Plantagenet, Duke of York, in that memorable scene (the fourth of the first act), where he is overpowered by numbers, and taken prisoner; when she cruelly mocks him, by presenting him a napkin, steeped in the blood of his murdered son, wherewith she bids him wipe off any tears from his cheeks that the boy's death may cause to flow; so that he truly enough addresses her with—

"O tiger's heart, wrapp'd in a woman's hide!"

So that Greene was applying to Shakspere a line of one of his own plays, by altering the word woman to player. And that the great dramatist might not escape being recognized as the object of poor Greene's hatred, he actually puns upon his name, calling him "an absolute Johannes Factotum," who "is, in his own conceit, the only *Shake-scene* in the country." One is glad to find Henry Chettle, in 1593, making a public apology to the "gentle Shakspere," in which he says:—"I am as sorry as if the original fault had been my fault, because myself have seen his demeanour no less civil than he excellent in the quality he professes. Besides, divers of worship have reported his uprightness of dealing, which argues his honesty, and his facetious grace in writing, that approves his art." Poor Greene had been only a loose liver, as himself confesses, and the widely-superior genius of Shakspere had eclipsed him quite. Possibly, too, he might have some just ground for complaint, as Shakspere might use up some play of Greene's, the property of the theatre, without meaning any plagiarism. Waldo Emerson, speaking of Shakspere, says:—

"At the time when he left Stratford, and went to London, a great body of stage-plays, of all dates and writers, existed in manuscript, and were in turn produced on the boards. Here is the 'Tale of Troy,' which the audience will bear hearing some part of every week; the 'Death of Julius Cæsar,' and other stories out of Plutarch, which they never tire of; a shelf full of English history, from the chronicles of Brut and Arthur, down to the royal Henries, which men hear eagerly; and a string of doleful tragedies, merry Italian tales, and Spanish voyages, which all the London 'prentices know. All the mass has been treated, with more or less skill, by every play-wright, and the prompter has the soiled and tattered manuscripts. It is now no longer possible to say who wrote them first. They have been the property of the theatre so long, and so many rising geniuses have enlarged or altered them, inserting a speech, or a whole scene, or adding a song, that no man can any longer claim copyright on this work of numbers. Happily, no man wishes to. They are not yet desired in that way. We have few readers, many spectators and hearers. They had best lie where they are."

Persecution is still as ripe as ever in the religious world,—may I not say the irreligious world, seeing that there is no religion in intolerance? A bill is now passed to compel attendance at church, at least once a month, under pain of banishment! And here it is interesting to see what are Shakspere's ideas on such a punishment. In "Romeo and Juliet"—not to quote what Juliet has to say on

"That 'banished,' that one word 'banished,'"

—when the good Friar Lawrence informs Romeo of his sentence of death being mitigated to banishment, we have this exclamation from the to-be-banished man :—

"Ha! banishment? Be merciful: say 'death:'
For exile hath more terror to his look,
Much more than death; do not say 'banishment.'
. . . .
Hence banished is banish'd from the world,
And world's exile is death. Then banishment
Is death misterm'd: calling death banishment,
Thou cutt'st my head off with a golden axe,
And smil'st upon the stroke that murders me.
. . . .
And sayest thou yet that exile is not death?
Hadst thou no poison mix'd, no sharp ground knife,
No sudden mean of death, tho' ne'er so mean,
But 'banished' to kill me? 'Banished!'
O friar, the damned use that word in Hell;
Howlings attend it."

Many a good man, whilst suffering under this law, doubtless, might exclaim with Alcibiades, in the fifth scene of the third act of "Timon of Athens:"—

"Banish me?
Banish your dotage; banish usury,
That makes the senate ugly!"

Or with Bolingbroke, in "King Richard the Second" (act i., scene 3rd) :—

"Then England's ground, farewell: sweet soil, adieu:
My mother and my nurse, that bears me yet!
Where'er I wander, boast of this I can,—
Though banish'd, yet a true-born Englishman."

Strange that the pure precepts of Jesus of Nazareth have ever been outraged by his professed disciples; and thousands have perished at the stake or on the scaffold, or have

"Sigh'd their English breath in foreign clouds,
Eating the bitter bread of banishment."

merely because their "modes of faith" were different to those of other "wrangling zealots."—And this year we find popish recusants confined to within five miles of their own houses; whilst parliament itself is forbid to meddle with matters of church or state!—On the twenty-second of January, a Romish priest is executed at Tyburn, with "more than ordinary cruelty," being "cut down immediately, and butchered whilst alive, and in his perfect senses." On the twentieth of February, another popish priest is executed in St. Paul's Church-yard, after being "severed

times cruelly racked" in the Tower, "to extort from him by force of torments the names of those who had harboured or relieved him. But," continues Bishop Challoner, from whom I quote, "his constancy was proof against all their torments, although, by the violence of them, his body was all disjointed, and his belly broken. So they proceeded to his trial, and condemned him to die, as in cases of high treason." And on the twenty-third of June, a gentleman is "executed at Tyburn, for procuring a dispensation from Rome to marry his second cousin." And during the whole "golden days of good Queen Bess," as they are called, we have such crammings of prisons, rackings, finings, public whippings, branding and boring of ears with red-hot irons, and all sorts of devilry in the name of religion, that it it is truly soul-sickening to think of it. The popish Mary's reign is not more stained with innocent blood than that of her protestant sister, Elizabeth.

As a curious illustration of the superstition of the age, I may mention that the second wife of Sir Henry Cromwell, of Hinchinbrooke, in the county of Huntingdon, grandfather to Oliver, whose father was one of the eleven children of Sir Henry's first wife, now dies of a lingering illness, and instead of looking for the cause of her long ill-health in some breach of nature's immutable laws, the foolish friends of the deceased fancy that she must have been bewitched! and three poor innocent persons, named Samwell, of Warboys, near St. Ives, in the same county, are committed to prison, tried, and executed, for causing her death by witchcraft. Their goods become forfeited to Sir Henry, as lord of the manor of Warboys, but he refuses to accept them himself, and gives them to the corporation of Huntingdon, on condition that they procure from Queen's College, Cambridge, a doctor or bachelor of divinity, to preach a sermon against witchcraft, on every Annunciation of the Blessed Virgin!

"Amadis de Gaul," a celebrated romance, is now delivered to John Woolfe, the printer, to be translated from the French, and to be printed; each volume being signed by John Aylmer, the bishop of London,—the same prelate who, when Elizabeth refused to have a decayed tooth drawn, sat down before her, and allowed one of his good teeth to be extracted, to encourage the wayward dame to submit to the like operation!—Torquato Tasso goes to Naples, and takes up his abode with his patron, the Duke of Conca, where he begins to complete his epic poem of "Jerusalem Conquered," being a re-composition of his "Jerusalem Delivered."—Elizabeth is sumptuously entertained at Oxford.—Edward Coke is chosen solicitor-

general.—And Sir John Perrot, lord-deputy of Ireland, is condemned for reflecting on the legitimacy of the queen.

Amongst the deaths this year are Michael de Montaigne,* the admirable French Essayist, who dies of a quinzy, on the thirteenth of September, in his sixteenth year; and Giacoma da Ponte, the Venetian painter, better known as Il Bassona, so called from the place of his nativity. There are twenty of his paintings at Hampton Court, and a portrait of a gentleman from his pencil was presented to the National Gallery, by Henry Gally Knight, Esq.

Amongst the births are those of Francis Quarles, the poet, born near Rumford, in Essex; George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham, born at Brookesby, in Leicestershire; Robert Devereux, the Earl of Essex, who commanded the parliamentary troops at the battle of Edgehill; and Gerard Honthorst, the Dutch painter, who was born at Utrecht.

SHAKSPERE'S THIRTIETH YEAR.

A.D. 1593. WILLIAM SHAKSPERE now publishes "the first heir of his invention," as he calls it, the poem of "Venus and Adonis," dedicated "to the Right Honourable Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton and Baron of Tichfield, a nobleman ot much literary taste, though only twenty years of age. "I know not how I shall offend," says the poet, "in dedicating my unpolished lines to your Lordship, nor how the world will censure me for chusing so strong a prop to support so weak a burthen: only, if your honour seemed but pleased, I account myself highly praised, and vow to take advantage of all idle hours, till I have honoured you with some graver labour. But if the first heir of my invention prove deformed, I shall be sorry it had so noble a godfather, and never after ear so barren a land, for fear it yield me still so bad a harvest. I leave it to your honourable survey, and your honour to your heart's content; which I wish may always answer

* "I heard with pleasure," says Waldo Emerson, "that one of the newly discovered autographs of William Shakspere was in a copy of Florio's translation of Montaigne. It is the only book which we certainly know to have been in the poet's library. And, oddly enough, the duplicate copy of Florio, which the British Museum purchased, with a view of protecting the Shakspere autograph (as I was informed in the Museum, turned out to have the autograph of Ben Jonson in the fly-leaf. Leigh Hunt relates of Lord Byron, that Montaigne was the only great writer of past times whom he read with avowed satisfaction. . . . . Montaigne is the frankest and honestest of all writers."

your own wish, and the world's hopeful expectation." There is something manly in this dedication,—it is courteous without being servile; and why it should be left out of the expensive edition of the works of the immortal bard published by Robert Tyas, I confess I cannot divine. Michael Drayton publishes his "Pastorals;" Thomas Nash, his "Christ's Tears over Jerusalem;" Christopher Marlowe, his poem of "Hero and Leander," to a line of which Shakspere has made Phebe allude in the last scene of the third act of "As You Like It:"—

> "Dead shepherd! now I find thy saw of might:
> 'Who ever loved, that loved not at first sight?'"

Dr. Reynolds publishes his "Overthrow of Stage Plays;" Henry Chettle, "A Groat's Worth of Wit," by Robert Greene, alluded to under the head of the former year; Abraham Fleming his translation of "Virgil's Eclogues" into English verse; and Eliot his "Orthoepia," in which, speaking of sack and Rhenish wine, he says, "The vintners of London put in lime, and thence proceed infinite maladies,"—so that the complaint of Falstaff to Francis, at the Boar's Head Tavern in Eastcheap, ("Henry IV." part first, act ii., scene 4th,)—"You rogue, there's lime in this sack too!" might not be a mere poetic vagary, but a truth of which Shakspere was well assured by the evidence of his own senses. George Peele, one of Shakspere's fellow-actors, and a shareholder of the Blackfriars theatre, now produces an historical play, called "Edward the First," in which are some passages worthy of Shakspere.

William Camden is now promoted to be the first or head master of Westminster school,—no mean honour. Sir Walter Raleigh, who has offended Elizabeth by an intrigue with the daughter of Sir Nicholas Throgmorton, is imprisoned for several months, as also the frail fair one; and though Raleigh afterwards marries the lady, as in justice bound, they are forbid the court, Elizabeth being a "fair vestal," a "virgin queen," etc., as it is said, though few believe it now. Robert Cromwell (Oliver's father) is elected member of parliament for Huntingdon; Edmund Coke (not yet Sir) one of the knights of the shire for Norfolk; and Sir Francis (afterwards Lord) Bacon, one of the members for Middlesex, in which capacity he moves for a reform in the law, and an abridgment of the statutes.—William Fleetwood, an eminent lawyer, who had been appointed recorder of London in the year 1569, "a good a good antiquary, but of a marvellous merry conceit," who had written a "Treatise on the Office of Justice of the Peace," and some other productions in the same line, dies

at his seat at Great Missenden, Buckinghamshire; and poor Kit Marlow, the dramatist, perishes in a quarrel about a woman, and is buried at Deptford, on the first of June. Marlow is supposed to have been born two years earlier than Shakspere.

On the twenty-ninth of July, the privy council address letters to the universities of Oxford and Cambridge, prohibiting the common players from performing there.—Whalebone is now first brought to England from Cape Breton; twenty-eight thousand people die in London of the plague; the islands of Scilly, Guernsey, and Jersey, are fortified by the queen; and Dublin university is opened for students. Henry IV., of France, having deserted the huguenots, and renounced protestantism, the famous war of the League is terminated.

On the twenty-ninth of May, John Penry, one of the bravest and wisest of the nonconformist leaders, is unjustly executed for treason, he having denied the queen's ABSOLUTE authority to make laws. His execution is first unexpectedly postponed; then he is suddenly hurried from his dinner to a temporary gallows, and there strangled and embowelled. For atheist, papist, and dissenter, are alike victims in this deeply blood-stained age of Elizabeth. Many other nonconformists perish in prison, or on the scaffold; and the dungeons of almost every jail are crammed with popish recusants, whilst the scaffolds of Newcastle-upon-Tyne, York, Winchester, and Beaumaris, are steaming with "the blood of the slain." The press is most miserably shackled,—and yet press, stage, pulpit, ay, and even the very hangman's cord and knife, are all working out the regeneration of man in their way. Every true thought is eternal: one just sentiment will animate the bosoms of many millions, and not die with them! but wickedness in the long run will extirpate itself.

George Herbert, the poet, is born on the third of April, at Montgomery Castle, in Wales; and some time in August, his biographer, Izaak Walton, is born at Stafford. Everybody has, or ought to have, read his charming "Complete Angler," in which are some such bucolic passages as no English writer has since been able to excel.

> "Thou meek old angler, knight of hook and line!
> What glorious reveries methinks were thine,
> As 'neath the spreading sycamore you sat,
> To find a shelter from the vernal showers;
> Or wander'd in green lanes, with cheerful chat
> Making dull days seem Pleasure's fleeting hours!
> Oh, how I love in 'fancy free' to roam

> By purling streams, in company with thee;
> Or, in some 'honest alehouse,' see the foam
> Of nut brown ale, a-mantling merrily
> Above the goblet's brim;—whilst thou dost sing
> A quaint old song, and all the rafters ring
> With merry laughter at each harmless jest,—
> For of all wit the innocent is best."
>
> PETER PROLETARIUS.

Gisbert Voet, the bigoted Dutch theologian, is this year born at Heusden; Peter Snayers, the Flemish artist, at Antwerp; and Thomas Strafford, (the tyrannical Earl of Wentworth, who lost his head a little before Charles I. lost his own,) is born in Chancery-lane, London, on the 13th of April.

The weather this year is described as very severe.

SHAKSPERE'S THIRTY-FIRST YEAR.

A.D. 1594. WILLIAM SHAKSPERE now publishes his "Rape of Lucrece," which he also dedicates to the Earl of Southampton, in the following terms:—

> "To the Right Honourable Henry Wriothesly, Earl of Southampton, and Baron Titchfield.
>
> "The love I dedicate to your Lordship is without end; whereof this pamphlet, without beginning, is but a superfluous moiety. The warrant I have of your honourable disposition, not the worth of my untutored lines, makes it assured of acceptance. What I have done is yours, what I have to do is yours; being part in all I have, devoted yours. Were my worth greater, my duty would show greater; meantime, as it is, it is bound to your Lordship, to whom I wish long life, still lengthened with all happiness.
>
> "Your Lordship's in all duty,
>
> "WILLIAM SHAKSPERE."

The first sketch of Shakspere's "Henry VI., Part Second," is also published this year, under the following title:—"The First Part of the Contention betwixt the Two Rival Houses of York and Lancaster, with the Death of the good Duke Humphrey, and the Banishment and Death of the Duke of Suffolk, and the Tragical End of the proud Cardinal of Winchester, with the notable Rebellion of Jack Cade, and the Duke of York's first Claim unto the Crown." There is no author's name on the title-page, and therefore Malone and other commentators suppose Shakspere to have borrowed hundreds of lines from some unknown author, when he recomposed the play,—as though the poet who had written the best description of that noble animal, the horse, that ever mortal penned, could

not as yet compose a drama at all! But sometime about now, Edmund Spenser writes his poem called "Colin Clout's Come Home Again," in which is the following evident allusion to Shakspere, under the feigned name of Action:—

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

Shepherd, the reader will be aware, is an old figurative name for a poet: thus, for instance, Spenser calls Raleigh "the shepherd of the ocean," Shakspere speaks of Marlow after his death as "dead shepherd;" and, in our own day, Walker Ord, in his "Epistle Dedicatory to the Editor of the Yorkshire Miscellany," thus sings:—

> "You bid me join your literary rout—
> Your band of bards—what shall I write about?
> There's not a mountain height, nor woodland nook,
> But boasts some shepherd-poet with his crook."

Spenser's allusion to the heroical sounding name of *Shake-Speare* and the comparison of it to the noble speeches in his dramas, is too evident to be doubted. Ben Jonson in his excellent lines, "To the Memory of my beloved Master, William Shakspere, and what he hath left us"—also evidently has the military name of the bard in view:—

> "Look how the father's face
> Lives in his issue, even so the race
> Of Shakspere's mind and manners brightly shines
> In his well-turned and true piled lines:
> In each of which he seems to shake a lance,
> As brandish'd at the eyes of Ignorance."

Ben Jonson, now twenty years of age only, is married, and an actor in London, just commencing to write for the stage; and yet he has already shown his prowess in arms, having enlisted as a soldier, and served in the Low Countries, to escape from his father-in-law's craft of a bricklayer. Thomas Lodge, the actor, writes his historical drama called "The Wounds of Civil War, lively set forth in the True Tragedies of Marius and Scylla;" Thomas Nash produces his play of "Selimus, Emperor of the Turks," and his "Life of Jack Wilton;" John Lyly, M. A., his comedy of "Love's Metamorphosis;" and I find three plays, by unknown authors, belonging to this year, quoted by Charles Lamb, in Hone's "Table Book," viz.,—the play of "The Cobbler's Prophecy," and the tragedies of "The Wars of Cyrus," and "The Battle of

Alcazar." Samuel Daniel, the son of a music-master in Somersetshire, and who is two years older than Shakspere, publishes his "Sonnets," in which branch of poetry he will be remembered when his tragedies and his tragical-comical-pastoral plays are forgotten; William Camden enlarges his "Britannia" to a quarto volume; Richard Hooker sends forth to the world, from his quiet Buckinghamshire rectory, the first four books of his treatise, "Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity;" Henry Constable publishes his "Diana;" and Vincentio Saviola, his book "Of Honour and Honourable Quarrels," which Shakspere, who saw into the folly of duelling, makes Touchstone refer to in "As You Like It," (act v., scene 4th,) in that admirable dialogue with Jaques, which makes the Duke Senior say of the clown Touchstone, as we may say of almost any of Shakspere's clowns,—"He uses his folly like a stalking-horse; and under presentation of that, he shoots his wit." Shakspere knew as well as any man how to save his living body from being hacked like carrion, to satisfy the hate of bigots.

Cervantes now retires from Madrid to Seville, where he will reside until 1599; the greater dramatic genius of Lope de Vega having completely eclipsed that of Don Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra. Poor Torquato Tasso, in November, arrives at Rome, at the urgent request of the new Pope, Clement VIII., and of his nephew, Cardinal Cintio Aldobrandini, to be crowned with laurel, amidst every description of public splendour and rejoicing: and, to give time for greater preparations being made for the ceremony, the event is postponed until Spring, when, alas! the burning brow of Tasso will be cold with the clammy touch of Death, and the laurel crown, if they will, may be wreathed around his head for a coffin ornament! Jacob Boehm, the celebrated German mystic, this year becomes a master cordwainer at Gorlitz, in Upper Lusatia.

On the third of June, dies at Fulham, John Aylmer, bishop of London, aged about seventy-three years. He was a native of Norfolk, was author of a reply to John Knox's "First Blast against the Monstrous Regiment and Empire of Women," and was a fierce enemy to all puritans, and not remarkable for learning, like Parker, though he had been educated at Oxford, and had been tutor to the unfortunate Lady Jane Grey.—On the twenty-sixth of October, Dr. William Allen dies at Rome, aged sixty-two years. He was a native of Rossal, in Lancashire; was educated at Oxford; and afterwards went abroad to plan the overthrow of protestantism in England, both by writing against it, and planning expeditions like the

Armada.—Also died, at Venice, Giacomo Robusti Tintaretto, the painter, aged eighty-two years. He was a pupil of Titian's. There is a St. George and the Dragon by him in the National Gallery, presented by W. H. Carr; and there are two pieces of his at Hampton Court.—Gerard Mercator, the famous geographer, also died this year, at the age of eighty-two.

This year is born, in London, John Hampden, the glorious English patriot; at Bradley, near Halifax, on the thirtieth of November, Sir Henry Savile, author of "Commentaries on Roman Warfare," and one of the translators of the present authorised version of the Bible; at Nancy, Jacques Callot, the eminent etcher; at Saville, Velasquez de Silva, the Spanish painter; at Andelay, in Normandy, Nicholas Poussin, the Roman painter; and at Rome, Andrea Sacchi, also a painter. Adolphus Gustavus, the greatest of the Swedish monarchs, and one of the heroes of the Thirty Years War, was also born this year.

The weather in England this year is described as very severe; assassins are said to be hired by the Spaniards to assassinate Elizabeth; Sir John Morris is sent to suppress a rebellion in that ever-unhappy Ireland; and water is conveyed in London in lead pipes, for the first time.

SHAKSPERE'S THIRTY-SECOND YEAR.

A.D. 1595. George Peele now publishes his "Old Wives' Tale," "a pleasant conceited comedy, played by the queen's majesty's players," and from which John Milton is thought to have derived the plot of his "Comus." George Chapman—the friend of Shakspere, Ben Jonson, Spenser, and others—commences his career as an author. Edmund Spenser issues from the press his "Amaretti" and "Epithalamion," the latter of which "is a strain redolent of a bridegroom's joy and a poet's fancy," says Hallam. "It is an intoxication of ecstacy, ardent, noble, and pure." And well it might, for it was written on his marriage with the lady of his love, and describes their courtship and marriage. Sir Philip Sidney has been in his grave some nine years, yet his noble "Defence of Poesy" against the attacks of the prejudiced puritans, "the unco guid" of the age, is only now printed for the first time. W. W., by which initials are understood William Warner, the author of "Albion's England," publishes a translation of the "Menæchmi," a comedy of Plautus, the Roman dramatist. Some critics have been puzzled to guess by what means

Shakspere got the plot of his "Comedy of Errors" from this play of Plautus, it being evident that Warner's translation could not aid him, for the English dramatist had finished his labours years before the translator. They forget Shakspere had a "little Latin," and probably sufficient to enable him to suck the honey from the Roman classics, without the aid of a translator. John Davis, the intrepid English seaman, who had sailed in quest of the north-west passage, and discovered Davis' Straits, publishes his "Seamen's Secrets," and a small work entitled "The World's Hydrographical Description," "wherein is proved," as the title-page has it, "not only by authority of writers, but also by late experience of travellers, and reasons of substantial probability, that the world in all his zones, climates, and places, is habitable and inhabited, and the seas likewise universally navigable, without any natural annoyance to hinder the same; whereby appears that from England there is a short and speedy passage into the South Seas to China, Malucca, Phillipina, and India, by northerly navigation, to the renown, honour, and benefit, of her majesty's state and communality." At a time when the attention of every true man and woman is directed to the missing expedition of Sir John Franklin, a reprint of this very rare tract, with notes by some competent hand, is desirable. Only two copies of the original are known to exist, one of which was sold in 1830, for seven pound ten shillings, though only consisting of twenty-four leaves, octavo. Amongst other emanations of the London press this year is, "The Statutes of the Street," in which are some amusing provisions, such as imprisonment for whistling in the streets after nine o'clock at night, and a fine of three shillings and fourpence for any man singing or revelling in his own house to the disturbance of a neighbour. So that the admirable scene between Dogberry, Verges, and the old Watchman in "Much Ado About Nothing," (act iii., scene 3rd,) is perhaps less of a caricature on the police of Shakspere's day than we are apt to think it. We also have "An Almanack and Prognostication made for the Year of Our Lord God, 1595,"—doubtless one of the prognostications Shakspere alludes to, when he makes Autolycus speak of "the hottest day prognostication claims" in the last scene of the fourth act of the "Winter's Tale."

Richard Hooker is now presented to the rectory of Bishop's-Bourne, in Kent; Dr. John Dee is made warden of Manchester College; Dr. William Morgan, editor of the Welsh translation of the Bible, is created Bishop of Llandaff; Richard Brett, D.D., (afterwards one of the

translators of the present version of the Bible,) obtains the rectory of Quainton, in Buckinghamshire; Sir Walter Raleigh, released from his imprisonment, but in disgrace at court, is off in quest of a gold mine in South America; and Peter Bales, author of the "Writing Schoolmaster" mentioned before, contends in skill at penmanship with one Daniel Jonson, and wins the prize, which is a golden pen, of twenty pounds value.

"The True Tragedy of Richard Duke of York, and the Death of good King Henry VI., with the whole Contention between the Two Houses of Lancaster and York, as it was sundry times acted by the Right Honourable the Earl of Pembroke, his Servants," printed this year, has been a bone of contention amongst the critics, for many years. It is the first draught of Shakspere's "Third Part of King Henry VI.," and, for my part, I think it unjust to deprive Shakspere of the paternity thereof, until we can prove that it was written by some other hand. Some day, perhaps, it will be doubted whether Skakspere ever wrote for the stage at all; and some clever fellows will be cracking their brains to prove that Shakspere was merely an indifferent player, who lent his name to certain pieces acted at his theatre, as Mirabaud lent his to the "System of Nature" written by the Baron de Holbach. Even Waldo Emerson seems completely misled by Malone, and actually swallows the statement of that indefatigable writer, that in the three parts of "King Henry VI.," "out of six thousand and forty-three lines, seventeen hundred and seventy-one were written by some author preceding Shakspere; two thousand, three hundred, and seventy-three by him, on the foundation laid by his predecessors; and eighteen hundred and ninety-nine were entirely his own." This is indeed stripping Shakspere of borrowed plumes with a vengeance, and would certainly soothe the soul of poor Robert Greene. I cannot here enter into this knotty question further, but may be allowed to record my own opinion that William Shakspere is author of the whole, having afterwards re-written his crude historical dramas, and impressed indelibly upon them the stamp of his well-matured intellect. This view, I am glad to learn, is that of Charles Knight,—a genial critic of Shakspere, worth a hundred mere drudging Malones, however thankful one may be for their labours.

On the twenty-first of February, Robert Southwell, the poet and jesuit, after an imprisonment of three years, in the Tower, and ten inflictions of the rack, is executed at Tyburn. For three days before his trial, which was the day previous to his execution, Southwell was confined in Limbo, a dark dungeon in Newgate. Cecil, in answer to

a petition from the poor prisoner, is said to have brutally remarked, that "if he was in so much haste to be hanged, he should quickly have his desire." Owing to the bungling of the hangman, poor Southwell's death-agony was protracted, and the bystanders were obliged to pull his legs to put him out of his misery; after which, the dreadfully-disgusting operation of embowelling and quartering was gone through, as usual. Two other priests are executed at York, and one at Warwick; but the sufferings at the scaffold are mercy itself compared with the cruelty practised on the prisoners in their cells, many of whom perish under torture, before their trials. The streets of London being infested with vagabonds, Elizabeth grants a commission to Sir Thomas Wilford, to receive them from the magistrates, and hang them on the gallows, according to martial law. Admiral Drake and Sir John Hawkins* die in an unsuccessful plundering expedition against the Spaniards; and the Spaniards destroy the town of Penzance, in Cornwall. The weather this year, like that of the preceding two, is very severe, and is thought to have been in the poet's mental sight when he wrote that beautiful speech of Titania, in the second scene of the second act of the "Midsummer Night's Dream."

On the twenty-fifth of April, Torquato Tasso, the celebrated Italian poet, died at Rome, whither he had gone to be publicly crowned with laurel, as we saw under the head of the previous year. Tasso, at the time of his death, had completed his fifty-first year, and the day of his death was the one fixed for his coronation! Jasper Heywood, the son of "Merry John Heywood," and translator of three of Seneca's tragedies, (Thyestes, Hercules Furens, and Troas,) also died this year

Thomas May, an English poet and historian, (who printed his Tragedy of "Julia Agrippina, Empress of Rome," in 1638, the same year as Phillip Massinger's play of "The King and the Subject," was licensed,) was born this year; as was also Lucas van Uden, the Flemish painter, at Antwerp; and Charles Drelincourt, the celebrated French calvinist clergyman, at Sedan.

* To Sir John Hawkins, I believe, belongs the unenviable distinction of being the first Englishman who trafficked in negroes, and laid the foundation of slavery in the British possessions in America. Let his name for ever be remembered with detestation, as one of the enemies of mankind. It is worthy of remark, that the penetrating mind of Shakspere clearly saw the injustice of slavery, as is proved by the keen but just retort on the nominal Christians, which he has put into the mouth of the Jew, Shylock, in the first scene of the fourth act of the "Merchant of Venice."

SHAKSPERE'S THIRTY-THIRD YEAR.

A.D. 1596. WILLIAM SHAKSPERE, whose name is now the fifth in a list of eight shareholders in the Blackfriars theatre, occupies a house near the Bear Garden, in Southwark; and his only son, Hamnet, of whom he had probably formed great hopes, is consigned to the tomb, on the eleventh of August, at the age of twelve years; doubtless a heavy trial to the "gentle Shakspere" and his beloved wife. Master John Shakspere, the father of our bard, receives a grant of arms from Robert Cooke, Clarencieux King-at-Arms, and "hath lands and tenements of good wealth and substance," which are valued at five hundred pounds; so that the John Shakspere upon whose unfortunate head Poverty had poured out her cold and filthy waters, it is evident must have been John Shakspere the poor shoemaker, and not the father of our dramatist. What could a starving man want with a grant of arms? or how obtain it, if he was fool enough to sigh in his misery for so trumpery a consolation?

Edmund Spenser again visits London, and reprints his first three books of the "Faery Queen," to which he now adds the fourth, fifth, and sixth books; which, alas! are all that we are ever to receive of the "twelve books fashioning twelve moral virtues." In three years longer, the troubled heart of this accomplished poet will have ceased to propel the life's-blood throughout his veins, and there will be "no speculation" in the poet's eyes. Ben Jonson, who has been imprisoned for slaying a man in a duel, and released without a trial, writes his comedy of "Every Man in his Humour," which is produced at the Rose theatre, on the twenty-sixth of November. Thomas Heywood, also an actor, has commenced writing for the stage, and will not leave off until he has had "an entire hand, or at least a main finger," in two hundred and twenty various dramas! Sir John Harrington, son of John Harrington, the poet, whose death the reader has seen chronicled in 1582, prints "A New Discourse of a Stale Subject, called the Metamorphosis of Ajax," which gives offence to Queen Elizabeth, the godmother of Sir John, so that the work is suppressed, and some of the courtiers would fain "make a Star-chamber matter of it." Sir Walter Raleigh publishes his "Discovery of the Large, Rich, and Beautiful Empire of Guinea;" and the lawyer, John Davies (afterwards knighted), his "Orchestra, or a

Poem on Dancing." Dr. John Bull, at the queen's recommendation, is appointed professor of music at Gresham College; Sir Henry Saville is chosen provost of Eton College, and encourages learning; Thomas Bilson, D.D., (one of the two scholars afterwards chosen by King James I. for the final examination of our present authorised translation of the Bible,) is made bishop of Worcester, and will next year be translated to the see of Winchester; William Lambarde, the antiquary, is made keeper of the rolls; John Donne (not yet Doctor) accompanies the Earl of Essex on an expedition to take Cadiz; and Tycho Brahe, the Danish astronomer, who has felt the want of a printing-press to make known his astronomical discoveries, has erected one of his own in his castle of Uranienburg, on the isle of Huren. John Lesley, the bishop of Ross so much attached to the unfortunate Queen of Scots, and author of several works on the history of Scotland, dies in a monastery in the Netherlands; Richard Fletcher, bishop of London, dies on the fifteenth of June,—his son, John, the future dramatist, being twenty years of age; Jean Bodin, the celebrated French political writer, dies of the plague, at Laon; and Amurath, Emperor of the Turks, also pays the debt of nature, and is succeeded by his second son, of the same name,—a cowardly scoundrel, who invites his brothers (who are ignorant of their father's death) to a feast, and there has them all treacherously strangled; in allusion to which event, Shakspere has made the newly-ascended monarch, Henry V., remark, in the second part of King Henry IV. (act v., scene 2nd):—

> "Brothers, you mix your sadness with some fear:
> This is the English, not the Turkish court;
> Not Amurath an Amurath succeeds,
> But Harry, Harry."

Robert Cecil, second son of Lord Burleigh, is made one of the secretaries of state; and four of the Roman catholic laity are executed at York, for merely explaining their church's dogmas to a protestant priest, who professed to be a convert to their views in order to entrap his victims. The puritans pretend to cast out devils. The country abounds with vagabonds and thieves, upwards of two hundred of whom are tried at the assizes in Somersetshire alone, and forty of them condemned for felony. The Spaniards capture Calais from the French, after twelve days' siege; and Elizabeth enters into an alliance with the King of France, for mutual defence. On the fifteenth of September, Admiral Howard and the Earl of Essex plunder the city of Cadiz, and destroy the shipping in the harbour,

doing damage to the Spaniards valued at twenty millions of ducats. Such are the glories of war!

Amongst the births this year, I may mention those of Arthur Wilson, historian and dramatist; James Shirley, the dramatist, born in London; James Howell, traveller and miscellaneous writer, born in Caermarthenshire; Rene Descartes, (the persecuted philosopher, whom the bigoted theologian Voetus, wished to burn alive for the glory of God, in a large fire on an eminence at Utrecht, which might be seen from the whole seven provinces,) born at La Haye, in Touraine; and the Roman painter, Cortona, so called from the place of his birth.

SHAKSPERE'S THIRTY-FOURTH YEAR.

A.D. 1597. WILLIAM SHAKSPERE is now in the very midst of his dramatic labours, and the press begins to seize upon them for the reading public. His "Romeo and Juliet" is now published, and his "King Richard the Second" and "King Richard the Third" are both printed this year; "but all that part of the fourth act" of "Richard the Second," "in which Richard is introduced to make the surrender of his crown, comprising one hundred and fifty-four lines, were never printed in the age of Elizabeth. The quarto of 1608 first gives this scene." Shakspere's comedy of "Love's Labour Lost"—certainly not his best, yet one on which the poet has not altogether wasted his midnight oil—is acted at Christmas before the queen. By-the-by, in the Crystal Palace, I observed a beautiful stained-glass window, in which Shakspere was represented reading his inimitable writings to Elizabeth, in a way which there is no reason to suppose he ever did. Act before her he has done, many a time and oft, just as the original Jim Crow in all probability may have gone through his performance before Victoria. Not that I would compare, even for a moment, the hideous distortions of "Jim Crow" with the divine conceptions of a Shakspere. That Elizabeth patronised the immortal bard's dramas is evident from Ben Jonson's lines; but that she ever opened her flinty heart to do him a generous deed, there is no evidence to show. Even uncertain tradition, which gives credit to Lord Southampton for the munificent gift of one thousand pounds to the bard, has never suspected the close fist of Elizabeth of parting with more than the usual player's fee.—Skottowe tells us, that in this year 1597, John Shakspere represents himself as of "very small

wealth and few friends." But a man who, only the year before, has received a grant of arms from the herald's college, and two years after this present one will have that grant confirmed, cannot be the same man who is steeped to the very lips in the muddy pool of poverty. Charles Knight, honour to his name—for to him and Payne Collier we are indebted for almost all we really know of the personal history of Shakspere—has shown clearly that this poor hard-up wretch, on whom the fates pressed so hardly, was another John Shakspere living in the same place. "In 1597," says Skottowe, "Shakspere bought New Place, one of the best houses in his native town, which he repaired and adorned. In the following year, apparently as a man of known property, he was applied to by a brother townsman for the loan of thirty pounds; and, about the same time, he expressed himself as not unwilling to advance, on adequate security, money for the use of the town of Stratford." Here then we have, according to those who take an opposite view to Charles Knight, John Shakspere in the lowest depth of poverty, yet repeatedly applying for and receiving a grant of arms; and William Shakspere, a wealthy man, able and willing to lend money to the corporation of the town in which his father is residing almost a beggar, and that too after buying the best house in the place, all of which is too ridiculous, without accepting Charles Knight's very rational and evidently-correct explanation.

There are now some ten or eleven companies of players in the metropolis; and it appears, from the diary of Henslowe, the manager of the Lord Admiral's theatre, that more than one hundred different plays were produced, from 1591 to the present year, by four of those companies alone. As a sample of the way in which old plays were patched up anew, and altered, in Elizabeth's day, I may mention, that Thomas Dekker now receives twenty shillings for making additions to Marlow's "Doctor Faustus,"—poor Kit having been dead four years, "and the prompter has the soiled and tattered manuscripts," to use Waldo Emerson's expression. "The price paid by the managers for a new play," says Skottowe, "was twenty nobles, or six pounds thirteen shillings and fourpence, for which consideration the author surrendered all property in the piece. If, as was sometimes the case, the play was not absolutely purchased by the theatre, the poet looked for remuneration from the profits of a third night's representation, the precarious produce of the sale of his play, published at sixpence a copy, and the hard-earned fee of forty shillings for an adulatory dedication to a patron."

But then the dramatic poets, like our own reporters for the press, had the right of free admission to the theatres!

Richard Hooker now publishes the fifth book of his "Ecclesiastical Polity;" Francis Bacon (not yet even knighted, but one day to be lord high chancellor of England, and a peer of the realm,) issues the first edition of his "Essays," which is merely a small work of eighteen leaves, containing ten essays, afterwards enlarged to sixty; Joseph Hall, now but twenty-three years old, sends out from the press his satire on the follies of mankind, under the title of "Virgidemiarum," being the most polished satire as yet in English literature,—and their author will one day gain the bishopric of Norwich, and the more glorious title of "the English Seneca;" Alexander Montgomery, the Scottish poet, prints his principal poem, "The Cherry and the Slae," written in a metre afterwards to be adopted and made known throughout the world, by the glory of his country, the plough-boy, Burns; William Camden publishes his "Greek Grammar," and resigns the mastership of Westminster School, being made Clariencieux king-at-arms; the works of good old Chaucer are reprinted, with notes by brave John Stow and Thomas Speght; John Lyly's play of "The Woman in the Moon," is printed "as it was performed before her royal highness;" an historical play, called "Edward the Third," by an author whose name is not given, also proceeds from the press; we have also, for the first time in our literature, a work on the cant language and tricks of the thieves and vagabonds, written by one Thomas Harman, printed "for the utility and profit of his natural country," and dedicated to the Countess of Shrewsbury; and Kit Marlow's poem of "Hero and Leander" is reprinted,—a subject since sung very prettily by Leigh Hunt.

Thomas Bodley returns to England, and will one day found the Bodleian library at Oxford; the Earl of Essex is created Earl Marshal of England; Richard Bancroft is made bishop of London, for his learning and anti-puritanism; Dr. Bilsdon is translated from the see of Worcester to that of Winchester; Walter Raleigh is a rear-admiral in the fleet, under Essex; Henry Wotton returns to England, after spending nearly nine years in travelling, and is made one of the secretaries to the Earl of Essex, Henry Cuffe being the other; and Tycho Brahe, the Danish astronomer, being invited by the emperor, Rodolph II., to his court at Prague, accepts the invitation.

Three Romanists, a priest and two gentlemen, are this year executed at York; parliament are forbid to meddle in ecclesiastical affairs; the plague in London sweeps off

seventeen thousand, eight hundred, and ninety souls; and a fleet is fitted out to intercept the Spanish galleons, Essex commanding the fleet, and Raleigh and Donne serve therein,—Raleigh, as we have seen, as rear-admiral.

On the nineteenth of February, dies Thomas Bentham, bishop of Lichfield and Coventry, celebrated for his knowledge of the Hebrew and Chaldee tongues. William Hunnis, author of "A Hive full of Honey," being the whole book of "Genesis" versified! and "A Handful of Honeysuckles," and some other books never read now-a-days, dies on the sixth of June. Petrus Canisius, the jesuit, (a wretch who instigated the emperor, Ferdinand I., to persecute the protestants,) dies at Friburg, in Switzerland, this year.

Sir William Waller, the parliamentarian leader; William Prynne, the great enemy of the stage,—an indefatigable author, suffering continually for his principles; and the Marquis of Worcester, said to be the first discoverer of that great revelation of God to man, the steam-engine; are three Englishmen whose births this year are worthy of the chronicling. Two Dutch painters, Soloman de Bray and John Parcelles, were also born this year, the former at Haerlem and the latter at Leyden.

SHAKSPERE'S THIRTY-FIFTH YEAR.

A.D. 1598. WILLIAM SHAKSPERE'S comedy of "Love's Labours Lost," the second and revised edition of his "Richard II.," and the original copy of the first part of "Henry IV.," are now printed; the last-named drama being entered on the books of the stationers' company on the twenty-fifth of February. Richard Quiney, a Stratford man, writes a letter to Shakspere, requesting the loan of thirty pounds. Ben Jonson is admitted to an intimacy with Shakspere; and Ben's comedy of "Every Man in his Humour," having been revised by the author, is performed at the Globe theatre, on which occasion Shakspere performs in the play. For Shakspere is a partner in both the Globe and the Blackfriars theatres, the former being the summer, and the latter the winter, theatre of the company to which he belongs. The "wit combats" between Shakspere and Ben Jonson are thus described by Fuller in his "Worthies of England," where, speaking of Shakspere, he says:—

"He was an eminent instance of the truth of that rule, *poeta non fit, sed nascitur*; 'one is not made but born a poet.' Many were the

wit combats betwixt him and Ben Jonson, which two I behold like a Spanish great galleon and an English man-of-war. Master Jonson, like the former, was built far higher in learning; solid, but slow in his performance. Shakspere, like an English man-of-war, lesser in bulk, but higher in sailing, could turn with all tides, tack about and take advantage of all winds, by the quickness of his wit and invention."

Francis Meres, M. A., now publishes his "noted school-book." called "Wit's Treasury," which is a collection of moral extracts from the ancients, to which is prefixed a short "Comparative Discourse of our English Poets, with the Greek, Latin, and Italian Poets," which shows the high rank to which the player, Shakspere, has attained in the republic of letters:—

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

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

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

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

"As these tragic poets flourished in Greece—Æschylus, Euripides, Sophocles, Alexander Ætolus, Achæus Erithriæus, Astydamus Atheniensis, Apollodorus Tarsensis, Nicomacus Phrygius, Thespis Atticus, and Timon Apolloniates; and these among the Latins—Accius, M. Attilius, Pomponius Secundus, and Seneca; so these are our best for tragedy—the Lord Buckhurst, Doctor Leg of Cambridge, Doctor Edes of Oxford, Master Edward Ferris, the author of the 'Mirror for Magistrates,' Marlow, Peele, Watson, Kid, Shakspere, Drayton, Chapman, Decker, and Benjamin Jonson.

"The best poets for comedy, among the Greeks, are these—Menander, Aristophanes, Eupolis Atheniensis, Alexis Terius, Nicostratus, Amipsias Atheniensis, Anaxandrides Rhodius, Aristonymus, Archippus Atheniensis, and Callias Atheniensis; and among the Latins, Plautus, Terence, Nævius, Sext. Turpilius, Lucinius Imbrex, and

Virgilius Romanus: so the best for comedy among us be—Edward Earl of Oxford, Doctor Gager of Oxford, Master Rowley (once a rare scholar of learned Pembroke Hall in Cambridge), Mr. Edwards (one of her majesty's chapel), eloquent and witty John Lilly, Lodge, Gascoyne, Greene, Shakspere, Thomas Nash, Thomas Heywood, Anthony Mundye (our best plotter, Chapman, Porter, Wilson, Hathway, and Henry Chettle."

The comedy here mentioned by Meres, as "Love's Labour Won," is supposed to be that since called "All's Well That Ends Well." The praise given to Shakspere in every passage of the above quotation, proves that the gigantic genius of the dramatist had already made itself worshippers among the literary men; and, we have seen before, that Edmund Spenser was amongst the number of his devotees.

A tragi-comedy, entitled "A Looking-Glass for England and London," the joint production of Thomas Lodge and Robert Greene, is now printed; as is also George Chapman's first play, "The Blind Beggar of Alexandria." Samuel Brandon produces his "Virtuous Octavia." Queen Elizabeth translates Horace, for her amusement, but no copy of her rendering reaches the public; and she quarrels with Essex at court, and boxes his ears, like an Amazon as she is, and bids him "Go to the Devil." John Stow publishes his valuable "Survey of London," without which little would have been known of the history of the mighty metropolis. Florio publishes his small Italian Dictionary, entitled "A World of Words," and some critics very foolishly fancy Florio to be satirised by Shakspere, as Holofernes, in the second scene of the fourth act of "Love's Labour Lost,"—as though Holofernes, like nearly all Shakspere's characters, was not the representative of a large class, instead of an individual. A translation of John Hugh van Linschoten's "Voyage to the East Indies," is this year published, containing the many-lined map affixed, which Shakspere makes Maria compare the face of the "gull Malvolio" to, in the second scene of the third act of "Twelfth Night," when he says—"He does smile his face into more lines than are in the new map, with the augmentation of the Indies."

The English begin a whale-fishery at Spitzbergen. Lord George Clifford and the Earl of Cumberland plunder Porto Rico. Thomas Bodley (afterwards knighted) rebuilds and furnishes with many valuable books and manuscripts, the public library at Oxford, since called the "Bodleian." A Romish priest is this year executed at Carlisle, another at St. Thomas's, Watering, and two priests and two laymen suffer at York. A disbanded soldier is executed in London,

for placing poison in the pommel of the queen's saddle, and, under the rack, owns to his guilt, but denies it again at the place of execution. Lord Burleigh, who for forty years has been a ruler in the land, now dies, in the seventy-eighth year of his age; and Phillip II., of Spain, after having spent six hundred millions of gold ducats, and sacrificed twenty millions of human beings, in the vain attempt to crush the rising liberties of the world, dies of a loathsome disease. Edmund Spenser, who holds the office of clerk of the council of Munster, and has been recommended by the queen for the shrievalty of Cork, is obliged to flee before the oppressed Irish, in October, who rise in insurrection, in Munster, and plunder and burn the castle of Kilcolman; and the poor poet and his wife, though they escape, are not able to save their infant child, which perishes in the flames. The heart-broken bard reaches London, a bankrupt man, where we must leave him, for three months, to sicken and die, in King-street, Westminster. Alas, for oppression! beneath its iron sceptre the tyrant and the oppressed are alike bruised and broken. It is only where constitutional freedom blesses the land that all classes of the community can be happy.—George Peele, the dramatist, player, and fellow-shareholder with Shakspere in the Globe theatre, having "strut and fret his hour upon the stage," lies still in death, and "is heard no more." James Amyot, bishop of Auxerre, and grand almoner of France, a scholar much esteemed for his translations of Plutarch and Diodorus, is also numbered with the dead, at the age of eighty-four years.

Dr. John Jartin, archdeacon of London, author of several theological works, and the friend of the poet Pope, is this year born in London; John Vesling, the natural historian, at Minden, in Germany; Voiture, the French wit, at Amiens; Bernini, the famous architect, sculptor, and painter, at Naples; Peter van Bronkhorst, the Dutch painter, at Delft; and Anthony Vandyke, the most celebrated of all portrait painters, at Antwerp.

SHAKSPERE'S THIRTY-SIXTH YEAR.

A.D. 1599. SHAKSPERE'S poem, or rather hodge-podge collection of poems, called "The Passionate Pilgrim," is now printed; as is also his second and improved copy of "Romeo and Juliet." John Shakspere obtains leave to quarter the arms of his wife, Mary Arden, with his own. Ben Jonson's play, "Every Man out of his Humour," is

performed at Shakspere's theatre, the Globe, for the first time; and his "Sejanus," "Alchemist," "Silent Woman," and "Volpone," are all four entered for publication, on the books of the stationers' company, on the third of October. Henry Porter's comedy, "The Two Angry Women of Abingdon;" Crompton's "Mansion of Magnamimity;" George Peele's sacred drama of "King David and Fair Bethsabe," and his tragedy of "Absalom," (written some years before his death); and George Chapman's play of "All Fools," are now printed. Alexander Hume publishes his "Hymns or Sacred Songs;" Sir John Hayward, "The First Part of the Life and Reign of Henry the Fourth," (for which the author is imprisoned); and Thomas Storer, a student of Christ's Church, Oxford, his poem on the "Life and Death of Thomas Wolsey, Cardinal." But in vain do we look for the other six books of the "Faery Queen!" for the broken-hearted Spenser dies in King-street, Westminster, in the forty-fourth year of his age, on the sixteenth of January, and is buried near to Chaucer, in the poet's corner of that venerable minster from which the city takes its name: the poets attending his obsequies, and throwing "mournful elegies" into his grave.

John Marston, the dramatist, in the tenth satire of his "Scourge of Villany," now published, has the following allusion to Shakspere's "Romeo and Juliet!"—

> "Luscus, what's play'd to-night?—I' faith, now I know:
> I see thy lips abroach, from whence doth flow
> Nought but pure 'Juliet and Romeo;'"

showing at once that that beautiful tragedy has ever been a favourite, at least with the young and pure of heart, whom the organised selfishness of the world has not yet changed from natural sympathy to cold conventional calculations of prudence. George Abbot, who is two years older than Shakspere, is creeping along, by a slimy path, to the archbishopric of Canterbury, having this year got as far on his journey as the deanery of Winchester; but, by maintaining the horrible doctrine that "tyranny is God's authority," this anti-christian man will one day become the unworthy primate of all England. The prelates, Whitgift and Bancroft, have now a crusade against the liberty of the press: Kit Marlow's "Ovid," Marstone's "Pygmalion," and "Scourge of Villany," Hall's "Virgidemiarum," Davis's "Epigrams," and other works, are seized in Stationers' Hall, and ordered to be burnt for heresy; all the works of Tom Nash and Gabriel Harvey (the friend of Spenser) are excommunicated, and to be taken into custody "where-

ever they are to be found:" and no plays, satires, epigrams, novels, romances, or indeed books of any sort, are to be allowed to circulate without the gracious permission of those pampered successors of the half-starved fishermen of Galilee, the archbishop of Canterbury and the bishop of London: all books that have already been sold without the gracious permission of those "most reverend fathers in God" being ordered for instant arrest, and safe detention in London House. I may mention, that there are only twenty-two master printers, and about sixty journeymen, in London, at this period, and few indeed in the provinces. Both the press and the stage, as this volume will prove, had many and mighty difficulties to contend with. The march of Progress is slow, but sure.

On the twenty-fifth of April, Oliver Cromwell is born at Huntingdon; Hugh Peters, afterwards to become his chaplain, and Robert Blake, afterwards to command his fleet, (for Cromwell, during the Protectorate, was the truest king of England since Alfred's day,) are also born this year.

SHAKSPERE'S THIRTY-SEVENTH YEAR.

A.D. 1600. THE press now teems with the dramas of Shakspere. The second part of "Henry the Fourth" is entered at Stationers' Hall; "Much Ado About Nothing" is entered and published; "Henry the Fifth," the second and third parts of "Henry the Sixth," "Titus Andronicus," "The Merchant of Venice," and two quarto editions of the "Midsummer Night's Dream," are printed this year; and "As You Like It" is entered on the books of the stationers' company, without date, about now. It is said that Shakspere never blotted a line; however that may be, the edition of "Henry the Fifth" printed this year only contains eighteen hundred lines, whilst the folio edition shows that Shakspere had revised it in numerous places, and extended it to three thousand five hundred, or seventeen hundred lines more than the first sketch. "Sir John Oldcastle," a drama by Anthony Mundal, Michael Drayton, etc., is now published by a knavish bookseller, with the name of Shakspere on the title-page. Some of the genuine productions of the great bard are supposed to have been surreptitiously obtained.

John Stow now publishes his "Annals of England;" William Camden now visits Carlisle, in company with his friend Robert Cotton, to examine the Picts' wall, and other antiquities, and publishes a fifth edition of his "Britannia,"

(being the second quarto one,) in which maps are given, for the first time, and he also publishes a "Catalogue of the Monuments in Westminster Abbey;" James VI. of Scotland sends forth to the world his trumpery "Treatise on Demonology," in which he maintains the "fearful abounding of those detestable slaves of the devil, witches or enchanters," that "they ought to be put to death, according the law of God, the imperial law, and the municipal law of of all Christian nations," but he cares not whether by fire or otherwise," so that "no sex, age, or rank, be excused;" Robert Allot publishes his "England's Parnassus;" John Bodenham, his "Belvidere, or the Garden of the Muses;" and Richard Hakluyt, in this and the two former years, his work in three volumes on "The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques, and Discoveries of the English Nation, made by Sea or Over Land, to the Remote and Farthest Distant Quarters of the Earth, within the compass of these Fifteen Hundred Years,"—so that he commences early enough with a vengeance!

On the twenty-second of June, an order of the privy council is issued, ordering that only two theatres shall be allowed about the city of London, of which Shakspere's theatre, the Globe, is one; for the age of Elizabeth was one of monopolies. Thomas Lodge, the actor and dramatist, has now quitted the stage, and commenced physician; and receives a pessport from the privy council, allowing him and his friend, "Henry Sawell, gent.," to go abroad with some servants to gather in some debts. John Lyly, who, since the year 1579, has produced nine dramas, dies at the age of forty-six years. Thomas Nash, who was born about the same time as Shakspere, also rests from his dramatic and controversial labours in the grave.

Besides the deaths of the dramatists, Nash and Lyly, mentioned above, and the philosopher Bruno, burnt by the Inquisition, we have those of Richard Hooker, author of the "Treatise on Ecclesiastical Polity," who died on the 2nd of November, in about his forty-seventh year; Thomas Cole, one of the translators of the "Genevan Bible," who had been an exile under Mary, and was made rector of High Angar, in Essex, on the accession of Elizabeth, as well as archdeacon of Essex; and Gerard van Harp, the Flemish artist.

Charles I. ("the only royal martyr in the calendar," as Dr. Hook has the unblushing front to call the tyrant) is this year born at Dunfermline; Brian Walton, the learned editor of the "Polyglot Bible," is born at Seamer, in Cleveland; Peter Heylin, an industrious author, but a twaddler to arbitrary power, is born near Oxford; and, if

Biographical Dictionaries and Memoirs mislead me not, the births of seven painters belong to this year,—viz., Claude Lorraine, and Battaglia, of the Roman school; Alessandro Veronese, of the Venetian; Cagnacci, of the Bolognese; and John Wynants, John Daniel de Heem, and John van Ness, of the Dutch school.

Executions of Romanists take place this year at York, Lincoln, Durham, Lancaster, and at Saint Thomas's, Watering.

SHAKSPERE'S THIRTY-EIGHTH YEAR.

A.D. 1601. THE rash insurrection of the Earl of Essex, which cost the life of himself and many of his followers, is familiar to the mind of every reader of English history. On the eighth of February, Essex, with the Earl of Southampton, and about three hundred noblemen and gentlemen, sally forth on their ill-fated attempt at rebellion, having the previous night been entertained with the *old* play of "Richard the Second," (although Shakspere's "Richard the Second" is already written) performed at Essex-house by the players of the Globe theatre, the company to which Shakspere belongs. The insurgents are soon put down, and their leaders arrested. On the nineteenth of February, Essex and Southampton are tried for high treason, with many of their followers, amongst whom is Henry Cuffe, Essex's secretary, the principal contriver of the mad enterprise. Southampton's life is spared, but he is kept in prison for the remainder of Elizabeth's reign. Essex is beheaded on the twenty-sixth of February, privately, in the Tower; his enemy, Sir Walter Raleigh basely degrading himself by witnessing the execution from a window in the armoury, it is to be feared with gloating eyes, rather than with generous pity for a rival's fall. Feast thy eyes, if thou chusest, oh Raleigh! with the reeking gore and headless trunk of thine adversary; but such malignity is beneath the dignity of manhood; and well it were if some sybil could but whisper in thy ear, that the fate of Essex will one day be thy own!

Shakspere's poem, commencing "Let the bird of loudest lay," is this year printed among the additional poems to Robert Chester's translation of "Love's Martyr," from the Italian of Torquato Cœliano. Master John Shakspere, the father of our bard, is consigned te the tomb, at Stratford-upon-Avon, on the seventh of September. At Christmas, that old English season of jollity, Shakspere's "Twelfth Night" is performed at the Middle Temple.

Ben Jonson's "Poetaster" is performed, in which he attacks his two brother dramatists, Marston and Dekker; to which Dekker afterwards replies in his "Satiromastix, or the Untrussing the Humorous Poet." Jonson's "Fountain of Self-love, or Cynthia's Revels" is now printed: and Kyd's play of "The Spanish Tragedy" is revived, with additions from the pen of Ben. Gabathiel Pavy, a boy-actor, who performed in "Cynthia's Revels," and other of Ben's pieces, is supposed to have died about now, and Ben has beautifully described the boy's personification of old men.

Amongst the plays now printed are, "The Death of Robert, Earl of Huntingdon," (the Robin Hood of traditions and romance), written by Thomas Heywood, according to Charles Lamb, but by Mundal and Chettle, according to Robert Chambers; Lyly's comedies of "Sapho and Phao," and "Love's Metamorphosis;" and "Jack Drum's Entertainment," by an unknown author, who complains, like Shakspere, of the rival acting of the children of St. Paul's.

William Laud and James Usher (both afterwards to become archbishops, but only one to lose his head), are now ordained ministers of the church of England; Dr. William Morgan, editor of the "Welsh Bible," is translated from the see of Llandaff to that of St. Asaph; Richard Hakluyt publishes his "Discoveries of the World;" and Henry Wotton, on the failure of Essex's insurrection, very prudently slipped over into France.

This year the famous poor-law of the forty-third of Elizabeth is enacted.

On the nineteenth of August, dies William Lambarde, the eminent lawyer and antiquary, in the sixty-fifth year of his age; author of "The Perambulation of Kent," a collection and Latin translation of the Saxon laws, discourses on English courts of justice, on the office of justice of the peace, etc. Tycho Brahe, the learned but superstitious Danish astronomer, also dies this year, at Prague, aged fifty-five years; and Agostino Carracci, the painter and engraver, at Parma.

This year are born, John Earle who afterwards becomes a bishop, and what is more, an admirable English essayist, born at York; William van Aelst, the Dutch painter, born at Delft; and, greatest name of all, Don Pedro Calderon de la Barca, born at Madrid, whom Augustus William Schlegel calls "a poet, if ever any man deserved that name," author of a hundred and eleven plays, and a great number of poems.

SHAKSPERE'S THIRTY-NINTH YEAR.

A.D. 1602. SHAKSPERE'S comedy, "The Merry Wives of Windsor"—said to have been written at the request of Elizabeth, to show Falstaff in love—is now first printed; and there is also a reprint of his poem of "Venus and Adonis." His tragedy of "Othello, the Moor of Venice," is performed in the month of August, at Harefield, the seat of Thomas Egerton (afterwards Lord Ellesmere), where the queen is entertained for three days; and the players are paid ten pounds for their services, as the valuable labours of Payne Collier have discovered—for he, certainly, has *not* wasted his oil. Honour to the man who discovers, by his industrious researches, one unknown fact so intimately connected with the history of our great bard. The name of Payne Collier, like that of Charles Knight, will ever be dear to the true lover of English literature.

"Will Shakspere" is now a prosperous man. We have seen him purchase the best house in his natal town, and he now purchases from William and John Combe, one hundred and seven acres of land, adjoining thereto, for the sum of three hundred and twenty pounds, and possession of the land is given to Gilbert Shakspere, to the use of his brother William. Of this John Combe, who was, what in all ages has been deservedly detested, a greedy usurer, some further notice will be found under the head of Shakspere's fifty-first year.

Thomas Dekker, in his "Satiromastix," retorts on Ben Jonson, whom he represents under the name of Horace,—the name Ben had given himself in the "Poetaster," in which Dekker was attacked under the name of Crispinus.—Ben Jonson, who is ever needy, like most of his contemporary dramatists, obtains ten pounds on the head of a play to be called "Richard Crookback," and some additions to "Jeronimo." William Birde and William Rowley, both actors as well as dramatic writers, receive four pounds for additions to Kit Marlow's tragedy of "Doctor Faustus." John Marston, who had written his "Malcontent" towards the close of the sixteenth century, now produces his play of "Antonio and Mellida." A piece called "England's Joy" is acted at the Rose theatre; and Thomas Middleton's comedy, "Blurt Master Constable," is now printed. Philip Massinger, now eighteen years of age, enters the university of Oxford, on the fourteenth of May, and becomes a commoner of St. Alban's Hall; and John Ford, now only six-

teen years old, enters the Middle Temple, under the immediate patronage of his great grandfather, Lord Chief Justice Popham: but Massinger will neglect his logic and philosophy, and Ford his study of the law, for the enchantments of poetry and romance, for they are both destined to become great dramatists. John Davies, the barrister, (not yet a knight, but soon to be,) publishes his long philosophical poem, "On the Soul of Man, and the Immortality thereof," supposed to have been written some years before. Thomas Campion publishes his "Art of English Poesy," in which he tells his readers that he has "studied to introduce a new form of versifying into our language, for the vulgar and unartificial custom of rhyming hath," he knows "detered many excellent wits from the exercise of English poesy." To this attack on rhyme, we shall find Sam Daniel replying next year. One is glad to find, throughout the whole of Shakspere's days, frequent editions of the poems of Chaucer called for: one in a folio volume being printed this year, and many others previously, which the limits of this volume prevents me from noticing.

SHAKSPERE'S FORTIETH YEAR.

A.D. 1603. THE long and eventful reign of Elizabeth is now closed; for she dies in the twenty-fourth of March, in the seventieth year of her age, and the forty-fifth of her reign.

James VI. of Scotland, who ascends the English throne, on the death of Elizabeth, by the title of James I., is a learned, but pedantic, monarch; dreadfully superstitious, and flatterers call him "the British Solomon." He is the son of Darnley and the unfortunate Mary Queen of Scots, and in his thirty-seventh year. With him commences a new dynasty—that of the Stuarts. We have already seen that James has appeared as an author, and a miserable figure he cuts in the republic of literature, where merit alone has claims on our reverence.

Shakspere's "Hamlet" is now first printed, and "Measure for Measure" is supposed to be written this year. The Earl of Southampton, no longer a prisoner, is a favourite with the new monarch; and a patent is easily obtained for the theatres in which Shakspere is a shareholder, the Globe and the Blackfriars. Of nine shareholders, the name of our dramatist stands the second, the list being as follows:—Lawrence Fletcher, William Shakspere, Richard Burbage, Augustine Phillips, John

Hemmings, Henry Condell, William Sly, Robert Armyn, and Richard Cowley. Two of the foregoing "fellows" of Shakspere will one day collect and publish the works of the great dramatist, when he himself is laid "in cold obstruction," in the chancel of his own parish church.

Ben Jonson now produces his tragedy of "Sejanus;" Lord Sterling, his tragedy of "Darius;" Samuel Daniel is appointed master of the revels, and inspector of plays,—a situation some think Shakspere wished for; Thomas Middleton assists Thomas Dekker in a court-pageant; and Henry Chettle, from the year 1597 to the present, has been engaged in the composition of at least thirty-eight different dramas.

Amongst the persons honoured, by James, with the ancient order of knighthood, I find Francis (afterwards Lord) Bacon, one day destined to revolutionise philosophy, and Richard Baker, one day to become an English historian. But how does "the British Solomon" honour poor old John Stow, the historian that already has enriched English literature so much? does he knight him! or allow him a pension, which he well deserves! Alas, no! Stow is in his seventy-eighth year, poor and infirm, and appears to have lost his best friend when Archbishop Parker died. Well, James allows the poor old man of letters a license "to repair to churches or other places, to receive the charitable benevolence of well-disposed people." God help him! Eight hundred vagrants—the outcasts of an impious state of society—are seized in London, in two nights, and sent on board the Dutch fleet; but the aged historian need not fear their fate, for he is privileged—to beg!!! Robert Cecil, for running into Scotland with the, to James, glorious news of Elizabeth's death, is created a baron; and the title of Earl of Essex is restored to the son of the attainted and decapitated one.

And now, whilst all seems tranquil, a plot is discovered to remove the "British Solomon," and place the Lady Arabella Stuart on the throne. The parties implicated are, two Romish priests, named Watson and Clarke; Lord Grey, a puritan; Lord Cobham, "a thoughtless man of no fixed principle;" Sir Walter Raleigh, supposed to be a free-thinker; Mr. Broke, brother to Lord Cobham; Sir Griffin Markham, Sir Edward Parham, and Mr. Copeley. Broke and the two priests are executed; Lord Cobham, Lord Grey, and Sir Griffin Markham, are pardoned, after they have laid their heads upon the block; and Sir Walter Raleigh is reprieved, and kept in the Tower. Sir Edward Coke, the attorney-general, "managed the cause for the crown, and threw out on Raleigh such gross abuse," says

Hume, "as may be deemed a great reflection, not only on his own memory, but even, in some degree, on the manners of the age. Traitor, monster, viper, and spider of hell, are the terms which he employs against one of the most illustrious men of the kingdom, who was under trial for life and fortune, and who defended himself with temper, eloquence, and courage." The Lady Arabella Stuart is also imprisoned.

Samuel Daniel now replies to Thomas Campion's "Art of English Poesy," with his "Defence of Rhyme," "wherein is demonstratively proved," says the author on his title-page, "that rhyme is the fittest harmony of words that comports with our language."

SHAKSPERE'S FORTY-FIRST YEAR.

A.L. 1604. THE latest entry of Shakspere's name amongst the king's players occurs this year. A second edition of his tragedy of "Hamlet, Prince of Denmark," is now published, "enlarged to almost as much again as it was;" and his comedy of "Measure for Measure" is acted before the court, by the king's players, the company to which Shakspere belongs. In what character, I wonder, did Shakspere appear? It is evident that he can please "the British Solomon" as well as he pleased Elizabeth; that he is popular with the Stuart as well as the Tudor:—

> "Sweet Swan of Avon! what a sight it were
> To see thee in our water yet appear,
> And make those flights upon the banks of Thames,
> That so did take Eliza and our James!"
>
> BEN JONSON.

"The Yorkshire Tragedy," and "The Merry Devil of Edmonton," two pieces that many critics have assigned to Shakspere, are in existence, and on the stage. Philip Massinger is supposed to commence his dramatic labours; Michael Drayton publishes his poem of "The Owl;" William Camden, his "Remains concerning Britain," in a quarto volume; and Elizabeth Grymeston, her "Miscellanea," at the end of which are some excellent "Memoratives," in that style since rendered familiar to English readers by Eliza Cook in her excellent "Journal," under the head of "Diamond Dust." An entry is made on the books at Stationers' Hall, of "A strange Report of a monstrous Fish, that appeared in the form of a Woman, from her Waist upwards, seen in the Sea," which is pro-

bably enough one of those ballads of miracles which Shakspere has so admirably ridiculed in the dialogue between the pedlar, Antolycus, and the unsuspecting shepherdesses, Mopsa and Dorcas, and the clowns, in the third scene of the fourth act of his "Winter's Tale."

SHAKSPERE'S FORTY-SECOND YEAR.

A.D. 1605. WILLIAM SHAKSPERE now pays the sum of four hundred and forty pounds for a lease of the tithes of his native Stratford-upon-Avon. The first edition of his "Merchant of Venice" is printed this year, and there is a reprint of the enlarged edition of "Hamlet." "The London Prodigal," a piece which some have ascribed to Shakspere, but which is not generally received as his, is now on the stage. George Chapman's comedy of "All Fools," written in 1599, is now printed, after having been performed at the Blackfriars theatre; Ben Jonson's "Queen's Masque" is now performed; and a comedy called "Eastward Hoe," is also printed, "as it was played in the Blackfriars, by the children of her majesty's revels, made by George Chapman, Ben Jonson, and John Marston," who narrowly escape being thrown into prison by King James, for their satire on the Scotch. Sir Francis (afterwards Lord) Bacon publishes his work, "Of the Proficience and Advancement of Learning, Human and Divine;" John Cowell writes his "Institutes of the Laws of England;" and the literary veteran, John Stow, issues the fourth edition of his "Annals," continued down to the twenty-sixth of March,—only ten days before his death! Brave old Stow! Literature has too few sons like thee. This year, Cervantes publishes the first part of his world-renowned "Don Quixote,"—the most admirable ridicule on false chivalry ever conceived by the brain of man.

This year is memorable in English history as that of the terrible Gunpowder Plot.

This year are born, Sir William Davenant, the poet, to whom Shakspere stands godfather, at the Crown Inn, Oxford; Sir William Dugdale, the famous antiquary, at Shustoke, near Coleshill, in Warwickshire; Sir Thomas Browne, the celebrated prose writer, in London; Edmund Waller, the polished poet, at Coleshill, in Hertfordshire; Thomas Randolph, poet and dramatist, at Newnham, near Daventry, in Northamptonshire; William Habington, a conventional, but not licentious poet; William Killigrew, author of four plays, born at Hanworth in Middlesex;

François Vavasseur, the French critic and poet, born at Paray; and Sassofarrato, the Roman painter.

SHAKSPERE'S FORTY-THIRD YEAR.

A.D. 1606. WILLIAM SHAKSPERE now stands sponsor to the son of John Davenant, of the Crown Inn, Oxford; and the boy (afterwards Sir William Davenant) is christened by the same Christian name as his godfather. Betterton, the player, picked up a scandalous story relating to Shakspere and Mrs. Davenant; he told it to Pope, and it is thus given by Skottowe:—

"I may mention the story of Shakspere's gallantry at Oxford, which has been transmitted to us by authority as respectable as any that can be quoted for the traditionary part of the poet's history. In his journeys to and from Stratford to London, the dramatist often baited at the Crown Inn, in Oxford. Mine hostess was beautiful and witty; her husband a grave and discreet citizen, of a melancholy disposition, but a lover of plays and play-makers, especially of Shakspere. The frequent visits of the bard, and the charms of the landlady, gave birth to the surmises which the succeeding anecdote embodies. Young William Davenant, afterwards Sir William, was then a little school boy in the town, of about seven or eight years old, and so fond also of Shakspere, that whenever he heard of his arrival, he would fly from school to see him. One day an old townsman observing the boy running homeward almost out of breath, asked him whither he was posting in that heat and hurry. He answered, 'to see his God-father Shakspere.' 'There's a good boy,' said the other, 'but have a care you don't take God's name in vain.'"

Verily, "the traditionary part of the poet's history" is a profane one! and, in my opinion, like most other traditions, contains much more myth than truth. It is generally supposed that Shakspere's wife never altogether left Stratford-upon-Avon, and the above anecdote is valuable as proving something different to what Oldys, the antiquary, imagined when he first placed it upon record. Learned men, who often blunder dreadfully about very simple things, have puzzled their brains cruelly to make out a case of family misery between Shakspere and his wife; and Charles Knight, to whom the honour of the bard seems as dear as his own, has manfully rushed to the rescue, like a true literary *Knight* as he is. But the idea presents itself to my mind, that if the "gentle Shakspere" and his wife hated instead of loved each other, why these frequent "journeys to and from Stratford and London?" The fact is, that there is not the least tittle of good evidence to prove "the surmises" true; and I, for one,

would prefer even dry "tombstone information" (which is generally all correct but the epitaph, and that one allows for,) to such paltry legends. And even if they were true, what would they prove, but the truth of such passages as the following, in the immortal dramatist's own writing?—

> "The evil that men do lives after them;
> The good is often interred with their bones."
> "Julius Cæsar," act iii., scene 2nd.

> "Men's evil manners live in brass: their virtues
> We write in water."
> "Henry VIII.," act iv., scene 2nd.

He who really wishes to know something of the inner life of Shakspere, must not expect to find it in lying legends, but in "his book" of world-wide maxims and ever-truthful delineations.

Shakspere is supposed this year to have written his noble tragedy of "Macbeth;" the Earl of Stirling publishes *his* tragedy of "Julius Cæsar;" George Chapman, his comedy of "The Gentleman Usher;" John Marston, his comedy of "The Fawn;" a comedy entitled "Sir Giles Goosecap," by an unknown author, is also printed; and "The Return from Parnassus" is acted by the students of St John's College, Cambridge. John Ford now publishes his "Fame's Memorial," an elegiac poem; Jervas Markham, his "English Arcadia," John Speed, his "Maps of Great Britain and Ireland;" and George Chapman completes and publishes Kit Marlow's poem of "Hero and Leander." Sir Edward Coke is made chief-justice of the court of Common Pleas. James Usher—one day to be archbishop of Armagh—comes over from Ireland on a visit to England, and becomes intimate with Sir Robert Cotton, William Camden, and other men of learning, foremost amongst whom stands John Seldon, "the chief of learned men reputed in this land," as Milton has it; and Usher, now but twenty-five years old, gives Camden some very important antiquarian information on the ancient state of Ireland, to be inserted in his "Britannia," whilst Selden, though but twenty-two years of age, has already commenced his literary labours,—labours that gain him the friendship of such men as William Camden, Sir Robert Cotton, Sir Henry Spelman, Michael Drayton, William Browne, and Ben Jonson!—a glorious galaxy of themselves. Philip Massinger arrives in London, to commence his dramatic labours, a young man of some twenty-two years; nor will he desist before he has composed thirty-seven dramas, in the midst of poverty and distress.

At the opening of the year, the Gunpowder Plot conspirators are tried and condemned; Sir Everard Digby, Robert Winter, Grant, and Bates, being drawn, hanged, and quartered, on Thursday, the thirtieth of January, at the west end of St. Paul's Cathedral; and Guy Fawkes, Thomas Winter, Keys, and Rookwood, the day following, "in the parliament-yard at Westminster." Lord Mordaunt is fined ten thousand marks, and Lord Stourton six thousand marks, for not attending parliament; and the Earl of Northumberland, whom the Star-chamber would fain implicate in the Gunpowder Plot affair, but against whom there is no evidence whatever, is sentenced to pay a fine to the king of thirty thousand pounds, to forfeit all his offices, and to be imprisoned during the king's pleasure. An act is passed to punish with perpetual imprisonment those who refuse to take the oath of allegiance; and another act is passed, for cutting the channel of the new river to London, to supply the inhabitants with purer water. There are great complaints of the sensuality of "the British Solomon," who twice a week is a frequenter of the cockpit, and allows his master of the cocks as large a salary as those of his secretaries of state; at other times, spends his days in hunting, and his nights in riotous excess, to the great neglect of the business of the realm; and when his ministers complain, he answers them that his health is the health and welfare of them all, and it requires relaxation: and some begin to think, that as far as James is individually concerned, it is a pity but Guy Fawkes had succeeded. Christiern IV., King of Denmark, now visits his brother-in-law, James of England, bringing with him Inigo Jones, the architect, who, being a native of London, is easily induced to remain, and revive classical architecture in England. Robert Cecil, who has been created Earl of Salisbury, gives a grand entertainment to his Danish majesty at Theobolds; and the following extract from a letter written by one of the guests, which I find quoted from Lingard, will show that drunkenness in Shakspere's day was a vice very prevalent amongst the highest orders of society.

"Those whom I never could get to taste good liquor, now follow the fashion, and wallow in beastly delights. The ladies abandon sobriety, and are seen to roll about in intoxication. After dinner, the representation of Solomon, his temple, and the coming of the queen of Sheba, was made, or (as I may better say) was meant to have been made. . . . The lady who did play the queen's part, did carry most precious gifts to both their majesties; but forgetting a rising to the canopy, overset her caskets into his Danish majesty's lap, and fell at his feet, though I rather think it was in his face.

Much was the hurry and confusion; cloths and napkins were at hand to make all clean. His majesty then got up, and would dance with the queen of Sheba; but he fell down and humbled himself before her, and was carried to an inner chamber, and laid on a bed of state, which was not a little defiled with the presents of the queen. . . . The entertainment and show went forward, and most of the presenters went backward, or fell down; wine did so occupy their upper chambers. Now did appear in rich dress, Hope, Faith, and Charity. Hope did assay to speak, but wine did render her endeavours so feeble that she withdrew. Faith was then all alone, for I am certain she was was not joined with good works, and left the court in a staggering condition. Charity came to the king's feet, and seemed to cover the multitude of sins her sisters had committed; in some sort she made obeisance, and brought gifts. . . . She then returned to Hope and Faith, who were both sick and spewing in the hall."

Well might Shakspere make Cassio exclaim, in the third scene of the second act of "Othello:"—

"I have very poor and unhappy brains for drinking. I could well wish courtesy would invent some other custom for entertainment. . . . O thou invisible spirit of wine, if thou hast no name to be known by, let us call thee devil! . . . O that men should put an enemy in their mouths to steal away their brains! that we should, with joy, revel, pleasure, and applause, transform ourselves into beasts! . . . O strange!—Every inordinate cup is unblessed, and the ingredient is a devil."

SHAKSPERE'S FORTY-FOURTH YEAR.

A.D. 1607. SUSANNAH, the eldest daughter of William Shakspere, now in her twenty-fifth year, is united in the holy bonds of wedlock, to Dr. John Hall, a physician settled at Stratford-upon-Avon; and the season chosen for their nuptials is that of "jovial June,"—as Scott, in his "Marmion" terms it. Edmund Shakspere, the younger brother of our dramatist, and one of his fellow-players at the Globe theatre, now dies in London, in his twenty-eighth year, and is buried, on the thirty-first of December, in the church of St. Mary Overies, in Southwark, (sometimes called St. Saviour's, Southwark) the same church in which the "moral Gower," the friend and brother-bard of Chaucer, had been interred some two hundred years before.* An edition of Shakspere's "Venus and Adonis" is this year printed at Edinburgh.

* The dramatists, Fletcher and Massinger, are interred in the same church.

SHAKSPERE'S FORTY-FIFTH YEAR.

A.D. 1608. WILLIAM SHAKSPERE'S four shares in the Blackfriar's theatre are now valued at the sum of nine hundred and thirty-three pounds, six shillings, and eightpence, and his "wardrobe and properties of the same playhouse," five hundred pounds more, making a total of fourteen hundred and thirty-three pounds, six shillings, and eightpence; that being the amount which the dramatist offers to sell his share in the theatre for, to the corporation of the city of London, for the Aldermen Cutes of the day, finding they cannot "put down" the players by force, are now for negotiating with them: thanks to the labourious Payne Collier for discovering the document, as well as a letter from the Earl of Southampton to Lord Chancellor Ellesmere, truly styled by Charles Knight "the most interesting paper ever published relating to Shakspere," in which occurs the following passage:—

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

Three editions of Shakspere's "King Lear" are printed this year; and an enlarged copy of his "King Richard II." in which "all that part of the fourth act in which Richard is introduced to make the surrender of his crown, comprising one hundred and fifty-four lines," is first given.

Such a recommendation has the name of Shakspere become to the English reader, that a knavish bookseller prints "The Yorkshire Tragedy" with the name of Shakspere as author on the title-page. Mary Shakspere, the venerable mother of our bard, is committed to the tomb on the ninth of September, having lived to see her son attain to immortal fame; and Elizabeth Hall, the grand-daughter of Shakspere, is born this year. "The Merry Devil of Edmonton," one of the spurious plays attributed to Shakspere, is now printed; as is also Thomas Dekker's "Bellman of London."

Thomas Coryate, a native of Odcombe, in Somersetshire, now in about his thirtieth year, commences a pedestrian tour through various parts of Europe, and will one day print an account of his adventures; Dr. William Barlow, one of the Bible translators, is translated from the see of Rochester to that of Lincoln; and Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury, is created lord high-treasurer on the death of the Earl of Dorset.

On the nineteenth of April, dies Thomas Sackville (Lord Buckhurst,) Earl of Dorset, one of the authors of "The Mirror for Magistrates," and also one of the writers of the tragedy of "Gorboduc," previously mentioned as the first regular play in blank verse in our English literature. Dr. John Dee, an astrologer, whom monarchs were superstitious enough to consult, and who had even been called upon to fix the "lucky day" for Elizabeth's coronation, now dies at Mortlake, in Surrey, at the age of eighty-one years. "That learned Italian, Albericus Gentilis," as Izaak Walton calls him, dies in London this year, in his fifty-ninth year. It is also the death-year of Guy Ubaldo Bonarelli, a nobleman in the service of the Duke of Ferrara, and author of a pastoral called "Filis de Sciro," which is said to be sadly too artificial,—the fault of most pastorals.

This is the natal year of some of the most illustrious contributors to our English literature, foremost amongst whom stands the angelic poet and patriot, John Milton, born in London, on the ninth of December,—a writer, as Walker Ord sings of Campbell, "In prose or honey'd verse alike a king."

Edward Hyde, Lord Clarendon, the historian of the great Rebellion, (falsely so called,) born at Dinton, in Wiltshire; the Rev. Thomas Fuller, author of "The Worthies of England," and other works, born at Aldwinkle, in Northamptonshire; and Sir John Suckling, a poet and dramatist, born at Witham, in Middlesex, are also worthy of mention. Sir John Vaughan, a learned chief-justice of

the court of Common Pleas, and the friend of John Selden, is also born this year, in Cardiganshire.

SHAKSPERE'S FORTY-SIXTH YEAR.

A.D. 1609. WILLIAM SHAKSPERE is yet a resident in London, where he "occupies a good house within the liberty of the Clink." His "Sonnets" are now first published; as is also his tragedy of "Troilus and Cressida," "the only play of Shakspere," says A. W. Schlegel, "which he allowed to be printed without being previously represented." "The late and much admired play, called 'Pericles, Prince of Tyre;' with the true relation of the whole history, adventures, and fortunes, of the said Prince; as also the no less strange and worthy accidents in the birth and life of his daughter Marianna," is likewise printed for the first time, "as it hath been divers and sundry times acted by his majesty's servants at the Globe on the Bankside; and the author, we are told on the title, is William Shakspere. There are also reprints of "Romeo and Juliet," and of the enlarged copy of "Hamlet."

Cyril Tourner's "Revenger's Tragedy" and Thomas Dekker's "Gull's Hornbook," are now printed; and Nathaniel Field is just commencing to write for the stage. The silenced ministers publish an humble supplication for toleration; and that too, good God! in a country calling itself Christian. Joseph Hall (one day to be bishop of Norwich) now preaches his sermon, "It is Finished," at St. Paul's Cross, in London. Robert Carr, a worthy Scot, becomes a favourite with "the British Solomon." "The Book of Common Prayer" is printed in Irish, for William Daniel, (or O'Donnell) the new archbishop of Tuam. Lancelot Andrews, one of the translators of the Bible, a scholar acquainted with fifteen languages, is translated from the see of Chichester to that of Ely; another of them, Dr. Samuel Ward, is chosen master of Sydney Sussex College, Cambridge; and a third, George Abbott, (of "tyranny is God's authority" notoriety,) is made bishop of Lichfield and Coventry; whilst a fourth, Dr. Thomas Ravis, bishop of Gloucester, rests for ever from his labours on the fourteenth day of December.

The New River from Amwell, in Hertfordshire, to London, is now commenced; and a proclamation is issued against building houses on new foundations within two miles of the metropolis, and the fronts are henceforth to

be of stone or brick. Silk worms and mulberry trees are introduced into England; so that one may imagine the interest which the great bard would take in watching the growth of the one planted by his own hands at Stratford-upon-Avon, and the hearty curse he would have uttered on the "churlish priest," if he could have anticipated the tasteless wretch destroying it out of spite,—merely to annoy the inhabitants and visitors of the birth-place and death-place of the greatest of our English poets. Copper coin is now legally coined in England, to supplant the leaden tokens used up to this period; and the manufacture of alum—a branch of commerce which has hitherto helped to enrich the papal see—is brought to perfection in England—alum works being established at Gisborough, in Cleveland, by Sir Thomas Chaloner the younger.

William Warner, author of "Albion's England;" the Rev. Alexander Hume, the Scottish sacred poet; James Arminius, founder of the sect of Arminians; Caravaggio and Zucchero, the Roman painters; and Annibale Carracci, the Bolognese painter, are amongst the illustrious men who this year finish their mortal career,—poor Carracci dying of grief at the infamous ingratitude of Cardinal Farnese, who paid him with five hundred gold scudi, for the labour of twenty years! The reader will find several of the paintings of this unfortunate artist—principally religious pieces and landscapes—in our own National Gallery. Why cannot we have museums, and picture galleries, and good libraries, free to all classes of the people, in every locality?

Sir Matthew Hale, the eminent English judge, is this year born at Alderley, in Gloucestershire; and Pietro Francesco Mola, the Roman painter, at Lugano, in Switzerland.

SHAKSPERE'S FORTY-SEVENTH YEAR.

A.D. 1610. MALONE supposes Shakspere's "Timon of Athens" to belong to this year. Samuel Daniel publishes his drama called "Tethy's Festival." Camden's "Britannia"—which, being published by its learned author in Latin "is caviare to the general," though it this year reaches a tenth edition—is now translated into English for the general reader, by Philemon Holland. The Rev. Giles Fletcher publishes his poem of "Christ's Victory;" Sir Francis Bacon, his treatise "Of the Wisdom of the Ancients;" and John Heath, B.A., a fellow of New

College, Oxford, his "Epigrams," in which is the following one on Tobacco:—

> "We buy the driest wood that we can find,
> And willingly would leave the smoke behind;
> But in tobacco a thwart course we take,
> Buying the herb only for the smoke's sake."

Silvester Jourdan now pubilshes an account of the discovery of the Bermudas, giving a narrative of the shipwreck of Sir George Somers, on his voyage to Virginia, which R. H. Horne supposes to have furnished Shakspere with his plot of that delightful comedy, "The Tempest."

Thomas Hobbes, now a young man of two-and-twenty years of age, the last five of which have been spent in study at Oxford, is appointed tutor to Lord Cavendish, (afterwards Earl of Devonshire,) in which capacity he accompanies him through France, Italy, and Germany.—Isaac Casaubon, "that man of rare learning and ingenuity," as Izaak Walton has it, having lost his protector in France, by the assassination of Henry IV., (murdered, on the fourteenth of May, by the fanatical friar, Francis Ravaillac,) accompanies Sir Henry Wotton to England, in the month of October, and is presented with a pension of three hundred pounds by the king, and two prebends, one at Canterbury, and another at Westminster. George Abbot—one of those political reptiles who crawl into the church, and entwine themselves around the pillars of the state, defiling everything with their slime, and poisoning every good thing within the reach of their venomous influence—is now made bishop of London, and will soon gain the archbishopric of Canterbury. Henry Hudson, one of that hardy band of navigators, who are, like her poets, the glory of England, sails from London on the seventeenth of April, in a vessel called the Discovery, discovers the bay known by his name, and is there turned adrift in an open boat, with his son and seven infirm seamen, by a cruel and mutinous crew, and are never heard of more. The foundation-stone of a proper building for the Bodleian library is laid at Oxford, on the nineteenth of July. A Roman catholic translation of the Bible into English is this year printed at Douay, in the north of France. The English house of commons now begins to feel more independent than in the days of Elizabeth, and complains of the profusion of the "British Solomon," who lavishes large sums on his Scottish favourites.

Thermometers are said to be invented about this period, by a Dutchman.

SHAKSPERE'S FORTY-EIGHTH YEAR.

A.D. 1611. WILLIAM SHAKSPERE'S beautiful comedy of "The Tempest," which many critics suppose to be the last written of all the dramas of our immortal bard, is now printed. "How beautiful the thought," says R. H. Horne, "that after his hard struggle with the common world, and the licentious society into which he had been so much thrown, he should yet have preserved the freshness of the heart, the youth of mind, the purity of affection, and the magnanimity of soul, which pervade this 'enchanted' drama." A third reprint of the enlarged copy of Shakspere's tragedy of "Hamlet" is now sent forth from the London press, from which demand for the drama one may see that it is not looked upon by English readers as "The work of a drunken savage." There is also a second quarto edition of his "Pericles." This, it is supposed, is the last year spent by the great dramatist in the metropolis. He longs for the rural scenes of his boyhood; to end his days where they began: to lay his ashes beside those of his beloved parents, when his gentle spirit shall have gone to join the shades of the wise and good of every clime in "the mansions of the blest."

Ben Jonson's tragedy of "Cataline," Ludwick Barry's comedy of "Ram Alley," and Thomas Heywood's historical play of "The Golden Age," are amongst the plays printed this year; and Middleton and Dekker, ministering to the morbid appetite of the vulgar of all classes, have founded a comedy on the lawless deeds of an unwomanly woman called Mary Frith, (a female highway robber, known by the cognomen of Moll Cutpurse, English Moll, etc.) which is now printed with the title of "The Roaring Girl," and "adorned" with a full-length portrait of the heroine, dressed in man's apparel, with a drawn sword in her right hand, and a tobacco-pipe in her left! She is the Mistress Moll whose picture is alluded to by Sir Toby Belch, in the third scene of the first act of Shakspere's "Twelfth Night," and is frequenlly alluded to by the English poets and dramatists.

SHAKSPEARE'S FORTY-NINTH YEAR.

A.D. 1612. WILLIAM SHAKSPERE, who seems to have constantly visited his native Stratford-upon-Avon, during the intervals of his London labours as a player and dramatist, is now once more a resident of that ancient town. In the month of March, the dramatist purchases a house in Blackfriars, from one Henry Walker, and is described in the title-deeds as "of Stratford-upon-Avon, gentleman." A knavish bookseller publishes a third edition of Shakspere's "Passionate Pilgrim," a pirated publication, in which he has the unblushing impudence to give Heywood's translation of two of Ovid's "Epistles" as Shakspere's. A "Gilbert Shakspere, adolescens," is this year buried at Stratford-upon-Avon, but in what degree he was related to the poet is unknown.

Nathaniel Field (a celebrated actor of female parts, for as yet women have not appeared on the stage as players) now produces his comedy of "Woman's a Weathercock," and the Rev. Robert Daborne, a play called "The Christian turned Turk." Thomas Heywood, the laborious author and actor, publishes his "Apology for Actors," in which he says, truly enough, that "plays have taught the unlearned the knowledge of many famous histories, instructed such as cannot read, in the discovery of our English chronicles; and," he asks, "what man have you now of that weak capacity, that being possest of their true use, cannot discourse of any notable thing recorded even from William the Conqueror until this day?" And yet the day is fast approaching, in which the English drama, despite the labours in her behalf of Shakspere and his brother Titans in the literary world—for there are "giants in the earth in those days"—must be trampled, for a time, under the rude heels of sour-souled Puritanism, and then be liberated only to be debauched by the French-polished Heartlessness introduced with the unfortunate "restoration" of the second Charles. Michael Drayton sends forth to the world the first part of his "Polyolbion," an antiquarian poem, as it may be called, which will ever immortalise its author. John Hales is appointed professor of Greek at Oxford. William Baffin, the English navigator, visits West Greenland; George Calixtus, a celebrated theologian of the Lutheran church, visits the English universities; and Dr. Miles Smith, one of the translators of the authorised version of the Bible, and author of the

translators' preface thereto, is consecrated bishop of Gloucester, on the twentieth of September.

King James now removes the corpse of his murdered mother, Mary Queen of Scots, from Peterborough Cathedral to Westminster Abbey; Lord Sanquir, a Scottish nobleman, is executed for murdering his fencing-master; Sir Robert Shirley, after a ten years' residence at the Persian court, arrives in England as ambassador from the Sophy of Persia, bringing with him a Persian princess as his wife, and offers of a free trade to the country he is authorised to represent; a malignant fever prevails greatly in England, carrying off great numbers of the people; Hicks's Hall is finished, for the use of the Middlesex magistrates; and Sir Pecksael Brocas does penance, on the twenty-fourth of October, for the adulteries he has committed, by standing in a white sheet at St. Paul's Cross, and holding a stick in his hand—the meaning of which stick one might have understood better if it had been in the hand of one of the injured husbands, and laid briskly over Sir Pecksael's shoulders. But I suppose we must rather look for a better world by cultivating and developing the spiritual nature of mankind, than from any outward coercion.

On the twenty-fourth of May, Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury, dies at Marlborough, and is succeeded in his office of lord-treasurer by the Earl of Suffolk. On the sixth of November, Prince Henry dies of a fever, in the twentieth year of his age, and is buried in Westminster Abbey, at a cost of more than fifteen thousand pounds, whilst great numbers of the people are hungering for want of even the coarsest food: and Prince Charles (afterwards to be Charles I. for a time, and then lose his head for his treason against the liberties of the people) is created Prince of Wales in his stead. Sir Thomas Bodley, founder of the famous Bodleian Library at Oxford, dies in London, on the twenty-eighth of January; Thomas Holland, D.D., one of the Bible translators, dies on the seventeenth of March; Dr. Giles Thompson, bishop of Gloucester, another of the Bible translators, also dies this year; as also John Bond, author of "Notes on Horace," etc., aged sixty-two years; Sir John Harrington, the first translator of Ariosto into English; Hugh Broughton, an eminent biblical scholar, on the fourth of August, aged sixty-three years; and the Roman painter, Boroccio.

This year are born the following remarkable men:—Samuel Butler, author of the well-known poem of "Hudibras," at Strensham, in Worcestershire; Lord George Digby, author of the comedy of "Elvira;" Henry Killi-

grew, author of a tragedy called "The Conspiracy;" Sir Henry Vane, the eminent English republican; and Antony Arnauld, the French theologian, born at Paris, on the sixth of February.

SHAKSPERE'S FIFTIETH YEAR.

A.D. 1613. ONCE more the heart of the mighty dramatist is troubled with sorrow, for Richard Shakspere, a second of the three brothers whom he was fortunate enough to possess, is "gathered to his fathers," in the "God's Acre," as our German brothers would call it, of his native Stratford-upon-Avon. I cannot help picturing to myself, as I record his bereavement, the manly form of the poet, clad in sable garments, standing at the grave side of his beloved brother, gazing with tearful eyes upon the coffin of him who "sleeps the sleep that knows no waking." Anne Hathaway, that once was —but now, for some one and thirty years, the wife of his bosom—leans on his left arm, and his daughter Judith on the right. His sister Jane fellows after, leaning on the arm of her husband, William Hart. The poet's eldest daughter, Susannah, with her husband, Dr. Hall, the physician, are also amongst the mourners, and their little daughter, Elizabeth—the first grandchild of the poet, and his especial favourite—now a child of some five years old, watches the whole proceeding "with wonder-waiting eyes," for she cannot conceive what they are going to do with "uncle Richard,"—for, doubtless, she calls him by that endearing term, which she has so often heard from the lips of her mother. There is a subdued feeling of pleasure to the imagination in thus depicting the sorrows of the greatest of all poets—for he who can depict every passion so well must be capable of feeling them too;—the same subdued pleasure as that which one feels in gazing on a "Dead Christ" or a "Crucifixion" by some great master of the art of painting.

An accident now occurs, by which Shakspere must have been a considerable loser; I allude to the burning of the Globe theatre, in the month of June, whilst representing a piece called "All is True," which play it is evident, from the following extract from a letter addressed by Sir Henry Wotton to his nephew, on the sixth of June, was but another title for Shakspere's historical drama of "King Henry the Eighth," and that the scene in which "certain cannons" were "shot off" at the king's entry, is none other

than the fourth scene of the first act of that play, as the reader can easily satisfy himself, if he will but take the trouble to refer to it. Altogether the extract is interesting, for it proves that Shakspere's theatre was not so totally deficient in scenery as certain writers would fain persuade us :—

"Now, to let matters of state sleep, I will entertain you at the present with what has happened this week at the Bankside. The king's players had a new play, called 'All is True,' representing some principal pieces of the reign of Henry VIII., which was set forth with many extraordinary circumstances of pomp and majesty, even to the matting of the stage; the Knights of the order with their Georges and Garter; the guards with their embroidered coats, and the like:—sufficient, in truth, within a while, to make greatness very familiar, if not ridiculous. Now, King Henry making a mask at the Cardinal's house, and certain cannons being shot off at his entry, some of the paper or other stuff wherewith one of them was stopped did light on the thatch: where, being thought at first but an idle smoke, and their eyes being more attentive to the show, it kindled inwardly, and ran round like a train, consuming, within less than an hour, the whole house to the very ground."

Thomas Campion produces a masque for St. Stephen's night,—that species of amusement being now in the zenith of its glory at court, at Gray's Inn, and amongst the higher classes of society generally.

John Ford's comedy, "An Ill Beginning has a Good End" (since lost), is now acted. Thomas Heywood, whose "Golden Age" has already been mentioned, now produces two other plays, "The Silver Age," and "The Brazen Age," as companions to the other. George Chapman has a tragedy, "Bussy D'Ambois, his Revenge." Ben Jonson is on a tour through France. William Alexander, Earl of Stirling, produces a poem called "Doomsday, or the Great Day of Judgment." Sir Henry Savile publishes a beautiful Greek edition of Chrysostom's works, in eight folio volumes, printed at Eton College, (of which Sir Henry is provost,) at a cost of eight thousand pounds. Dr. John Bull, author of the national anthem, "God Save the Queen," now quits England, and enters the service of the archduke, in the Netherlands. William Browne, now twenty-three years of age, publishes the first part of his "Britannia's Pastorals;" the Rev. Samuel Purchas, his "Pilgrimage," being a collection of voyages; Samuel Daniel sends forth the first part of his "History of England;" Sir John Hayward, his "Lives of the Three Norman Kings of England;" and brave George Wither, his "Abuses Strip and Whipt," for which he must lay in the Marshalsea, with the Muses for his constant companions, to wile away the heavy hours of

his imprisonment, and make his dungeon a Parnassus. Sir Edward Coke is made chief justice of the court of King's Bench. Hugo Grotius, the eminent Dutch scholar and statesman, is made syndic, or pensioner, of Rotterdam, and gives the support of his powerful pen to the ever-blessed cause of liberty, by espousing the cause of Barneveldt, for which he will one day be thrown into prison. Cervantes, who has been silent, but not idle, since the publication of the first part of his famous "Don Quixote," again appears before the Spanish public, with twelve novels and "A Journey to Parnassus;" but poverty is his fate,—for it is curious how complacently people can enjoy the writings of a man of genius, and at the same time allow him to starve!

Sir Thomas Overbury, the admirable prose sketcher, is poisoned in the Tower, on the thirteenth of September; and three of the learned divines chosen by James to translate the Bible, Dr. Adriana Saravia, Dr. John Harmer, and Dr. William Barlow, bishop of Lincoln, having lived to see the fruit of their labours given to the world, now pay the debt of nature.

The poetical theologian and good bishop of Down and Connor, Jeremy Taylor; and Dr. John Pearson, bishop of Chester, and author of "An Exposition of the Creed," are born this year. It is also said to be the natal year of Rochefoucauld, author of the celebrated French "Maxims;" and of the following Dutch painters,—Gerard Douw, born at Leyden; Vander Helst Bartholomew, at Haerlem; and Peter van Laer Bamboccio, at Laeren. The famous Spanish painter, Bartholomew Esteban Murillo is now born at Seville; and Gaspar Poussin, at Rome.

The town of Dorchester is this year destroyed by a fire, which begun at a tallow chandler's.

SHAKSPERE'S FIFTY-FIRST YEAR.

A.D. 1614. THE town of Stratford-upon-Avon is burnt this year,—the most of the houses being composed of mud, wood, and thatch. New Place, the residence of Shakspere, escapes the ravages of the flames; and a neater and more substantial town will arise, like the fabled phœnix, from the ashes of its parent. The sea-coast of Norfolk and Lincolnshire is flooded for twelve miles inland.

Persecution, even to the death, is continued by the "British Solomon," who will allow no man to think

different to himself. On the thirteenth of March, Bartholomew Legat, an Arian, is burnt alive, for heresy, in Smithfield, which is this year paved, for the first time, at a cost of sixteen hundred pounds. Edward Whiteman, another heretic, is burnt alive at Burton-upon-Trent, in Staffordshire.

A play of a popish tendency is acted at Christmas, at the house of Sir John Yorke, for which he and his lady are fined a thousand pounds a piece, and thrown into the Tower for a year; two or more of his brothers are fined five hundred pounds each, and other parties in other sums. Titles are sold by the king, to all who will purchase the trumpery wares; the dignity of baron bringing ten thousand pounds; that of viscount, fifteen thousand; and an earldom double the price of a baronage. By such, and similar, means have the hereditary legislators of mankind acquired their irresponsive power: created sometimes for real services rendered to the state, but too oft contrariwise.

Sir Walter Raleigh now publishes the first part of his "History of the World," written in the Tower, where he has been a prisoner for the last eleven years, and is yet detained without just cause, but will this year be liberated, to enrich the "British Solomon,"—failing in which endeavour, men shall behold the courtly Raleigh brutally decapitated, as he himself has beheld Essex.—John Selden publishes his "Treatise on Titles of Honour;" John Speed, another literary tailor like Stow, issues a "History of Great Britain," towards which Sir Robert Cotton and Sir Henry Spelman are said to have contributed; John Donne enters into holy orders, and is made doctor of divinity, at Cambridge; Oliver Cromwell leaves Huntingdon School for Sydney Sussex College, Cambridge; Edward Alleyn, the actor and friend of Shakspere, is engaged with his charitable establishment of the "College of God's Gift," at Dulwich. Wentworth, (the unfortunate Earl of Strafford that is to be,) now inherits a large fortune on the death of his father, a Yorkshire baronet; and Lord Napier is inventing logarithms. In Spain an impudent impostor publishes a spurious continuation of "Don Quixote," before Cervantes gets his out, and not content with the scurvy trick he has played the unfortunate fictionist, the impostor actually calumniates the man he has injured, and upbraids him with his poverty.

> "Fortune her fickle blessings sometimes sheds
> Upon a zany's head. 'Tis kindly done,
> And saveth many men from feeling pains
> Their worthier brethren oftimes must endure."
>
> PETER PROLETARIUS.

Dr. John Wilkins, bishop of Chester, well-known for his curious conjecture that the moon is inhabited, and that mankind will one day find out a method of going thither, also well-known by his marriage with the sister of the famous Oliver Cromwell, was born this year. Theodore Russell, an English painter, was this year born in London: one of his pieces, "The Head of Cyrus received by Queen Thomyris of the Massagetæ," is in the collection at Hampton Court.

SHAKSPERE'S FIFTY-SECOND YEAR.

A.D. 1615. THE mortal life of the immortal Shakspere draws fast to a close. He looks upon the wildflowers he has loved from childhood, and the beautiful foliage of the woodlands around Stratford; he listens to the sweet murmur of the silvery Avon and the warbling of birds; every sight and sound of nature, from the flowers of day to the stars of night, delight him; he loves alike the snowflakes and icicles of Winter, the early flowers and buds and blossoms of Spring, the gorgeous profusion of Summer, and the sober beauty and substantial wealth of Autumn. All the Seasons dance gaily around him now, but his mortal life will have terminated ere he can gaze upon them all again: for we shall see him perish in the ensuing Spring. Thank God, his works will not perish with him! they will remain for ever a blessing to a half-savage world.

Sir Walter Raleigh, having bribed the king's new favourite, Villiers, with a good sum, is now liberated from his long confinement in the Tower; and "the British Solomon" is in hopes that his chivalrous prisoner will enrich him with gold plundered from the Spaniards, who have obtained it by plundering the poor natives of the New World. William Camden publishes his "Annals of Queen Elizabeth," but neither his learning nor his integrity can save his work from the mutilation which every book is subject to where the press is not free. So true is the remark of Junius:—"Liberty of the press is the palladium of all the civil, political, and religious rights of an Englishman."

SHAKSPERE'S FIFTY-THIRD, AND LAST, YEAR.

A.D. 1616. THERE is joy in the house of William Shakspere on the tenth of February, for his youngest daughter, Judith, now thirty-one years old, is married to Thomas Quiney, a vintner of Stratford-upon-Avon, there is "a sound of revelry," and all goes "merry as a marriage-bell." But soon a cloud will lower over those now brightly-shining faces; the cheeks now dimpled with merry laughter will be saddened with briny tears. On the twenty-fifth of March, William Shakspere makes his "last will and testament," being then "in perfect health and memory;" and on the twenty-fifth of April, he is buried in the chancel of the church of his native place. The only account we have of the cause of his death, is that contained in the gossip recorded by the Rev. John Ward, who was vicar of Stratford-upon-Avon after the death of the dramatist, and whose diary extends from 1648 to 1679:—

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

If there be truth in the above extract, and no one can disprove it, what a lesson should it teach mankind! Shakspere—who is, as Barry Cornwall remarks, "the greatest genius, beyond doubt or cavil, that ever the world produced"—like the rest of his brother-dramatists, was liable to be overcome by the Syren smiles, the Circean witcheries of the intoxicating cup. It was not a vice peculiar to the dramatists alone, but to poets in common with other men; for hard drinking was the vice of the age. Ale or beer was the common, every-day beverage of the people; for as yet tea and coffee had not come into use amongst the English people, as, happily for the cause of temperance, they have since done. I would advise every man, but especially every literary man, to ponder well the above extract; for one often hears men boasting over their potations that there is no danger of them ever becoming drunkards; that they have sufficient dependence upon their own good conduct to know that they will never indulge to excess. "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!" One Shakspere was worth them all;

and, if the vicar do not err, his days are suddenly shortened by what he has truly enough called, in his own "Hamlet," (act i., scene 4th,)

> "A custom
> More honour'd in the breach than the observance."

On the same day that William Shakspere is said to have died at Stratford-upon-Avon, the twenty-third of April, Cervantes also yielded up the ghost, at Madrid, aged sixty-eight years. Francis Beaumont, the dramatist, died on the ninth of March, in the thirty-second year of his age. John Pits, a theological and biographical writer; Richard Hakluyt, one of the "laborious compilers of this period, to whom the world is indebted for the preservation, in an accessible form," as Robert Chambers has it, "of narratives which would otherwise, in all probability, have fallen into oblivion;" Thomas Bilson, bishop of Winchester, one of the two final correctors of the present translation of the Bible;" Dr. Robert Teigh, or Tighe, archdeacon of Middlesex, another of the Bible translators; and Schidone, a painter, born at Modena, in 1560, are this year numbered with the dead. Archbisop Abbot *prevents* the "Decameron" of Boccaccio from being printed. Ben Jonson—who is pensioned by King James on the third of February—collects his writings, both plays and poems, and publishes them under the title of his "Works," which occasions him to be needlessly laughed at by some of his contemporaries, one of whom address to him the epigram:—

> "Pray tell us, Ben, where does the mystery lurk,
> What others call a *play*, you call a *work*?"

To whom some friend of Ben replies:—

> "The author's friend thus for the author says—
> Ben's plays are works, while others' works are plays."

William Browne issues the second part of his "Britannia's Pastorals;" and Robert Greene's "Never too Late" is printed. Lord Herbert, or Cherbury, is ambassador at Paris. And the following persons, amongst others, are born this year:—Nicholas Culpeper, author of the well-known "Herbal;" Dr. John Wallis, a distinguished mathematician, born at Ashford, in Kent; Sir Roger L'Estrange, a low writer, with more humour than honesty, son of Sir Hammond L'Estrange, of Hunstanton Hall, in Norfolk; Antoinette Bourignon, a religious fanatic, daughter of a merchant at Lille; Sebastian Bourdon, the French painter, born at Montpelier; Castiglione, the Venetian

painter, born at Genoa; and Carlo Dolci, a painter, born at Florence.

The following list of remarkable persons living at the time of Shakspere's death, with their ages at the time of that event, may be interesting to the reader:—

Aarsens, Francis, Dutch diplomatist, forty-four years old.
Ablancourt, Nicholas, translator, ten ditto.
Albano, Francesco, Bolognese painter, twenty-eight do.
Alberoni, Giulio, a cardinal of Spain, and politician, fifty-two do.
Alleyn, Edward, actor and founder of Dulwich College, thirty-eight do.
Ancrum, Earl of, Scottish poet, thirty-eight do.
Arnauld, Antony, French theologian, four do.
Asselyn, John, Dutch painter, six do.
Ayton, Sir Robert, Scottish poet, forty-six do.
Bacon, Lord, philosopher, fifty-five do.
Bainbridge, John, mathematician, thirty-four do.
Baker, Sir Richard, historian, forty-eight do.
Barneveldt, John van Olden, Dutch patriot, sixty-seven do.
Baxter, Richard, theologian, five months old.
Beaumont, Sir John, poet, thirty-four years old.
Bella, Stefano de la, Florentine engraver, six do.
Bellarmin, Robert, popish theologian, seventy-four do.
Bellenden, William, learned author, age unknown.
Bentivoglio, Guido, cardinal and historian, twenty-seven years old.
Bernard (Duke of Weimar,) general in the Thirty Years' War, twelve do.
Bernini, Giovanni Lorenzo, painter, architect, etc., eighteen do.
Biddle, John, celebrated Socinian writer, eleven do.
Blake, Robert, English admiral, seventeen do.
Bloemart, Abraham, Dutch painter, fifty-one do.
Bloemart, Cornelius, Dutch engraver, (son of the above,) eleven do.
Boehm, Jacob, German mystic, forty-one do.
Both, John and Andrew, Flemish painters, ten do.
Brauwer, Adrian, Dutch painter, eight do.
Breton, Nicholas, poet, sixty-one do.
Bronkhorst, Peter van, Dutch painter, twenty-eight do.
Browne, Sir Thomas, English author, eleven do.
Browne, William, pastoral poet, twenty-six do.
Bull, Dr. John, musician, fifty-three do.
Butler, Samuel, poet, four do.
Calixtus, George, Lutheran theologian, thirty do.

Callot, Jacques, a celebrated etcher at Nancy, twenty-two years old.
Calvert, Dionysius, Bolognese painter, sixty-one do.
Camden, William, historian and topographer, sixty-five do.
Carew, Lady Elizabeth, (author of the tragedy of "Mariam,") age unknown.
——— Thomas, poet, twenty-seven years do.
Cartwright, William, poet, five do.
Chapman, George, poet, and dramatist, fifty-nine do.
Cherbury, Lord (or Herbert), celebrated deist and historian, thirty-five do.
Chillingworth, William, theologian, fourteen do.
Clarendon, Lord, historian, eight do.
Coke, Sir Edward, lawyer, sixty-six do.
Corbert, Bishop, poet, thirty-four, do.
Cotton, Sir Robert Bruce, founder Cottonian library, forty-six do.
Cromwell, Oliver, protector of England, near seventeen do.
Cutpurse, Moll, (Mary Frith,) a thief mentioned by Shakspere and several of the poets, thirty-two do.
Daniel, Samuel, poet, dramatist, and historian, fifty-four do.
Davenant, Sir Wm. (Shakspere's godson,) poet, eleven do.
Davies, Sir John, poet, forty-six do.
Dekker, Thomas, dramatist, age unknown.
Denham, Sir John, poet, one year old.
Donne, Dr. John, poet and theologian, forty-three do.
Drayton, Michael, poet, fifty-three do.
Drummond, William, (of Hawthornden,) poet, thirty-one do.
Fairfax, Edward, poet, (translator of Tasso,) age unknown.
———, Lord, parliamentarian general, five years old.
Fanshawe, Sir Richard, poet, nine do.
Field, Nathaniel, dramatist, age unknown.
Fletcher, Rev. Giles, poet, do
———, John, dramatist, forty years old.
———, Rev. Phineas, poet, thirty-two do.
Ford, John, dramatist, thirty do.
Fuller, Rev. Thomas, historian, eight do.
Galilei, Galileo, the persecuted Italian philosopher, fifty-three do.
Gorgora, Louis, Spanish lyric poet, fifty-five do.
Habington, William, poet, eleven do.
Hall, Bishop, poet and theologian, forty-two do.
Hale, Sir Matthew, upright judge and a prose writer, seven do.
Hales, Rev. John, theologian, thirty-two do.

Hampden, John, the memorable English patriot, twenty-two years old.
Harrington, James, author of the "Oceana," five do.
Harvey, William, discoverer of the circulation of the blood, thirty-eight do.
Haywood, Sir John, historian, age unknown.
Herbert, Rev. George, (brother of Lord Herbert,) poet, twenty-three years old.
———, Lord, (or Cherbury,) celebrated deistical writer and historian, thirty-five do.
Herrick, Robert, the well-known poet of our English festivals, twenty-five do.
Heywood, Thomas, dramatist, age unknown.
Hobbes, Thomas, philosopher, twenty-eight years old.
Hooker, Rev. Richard, author of "Ecclesiastical Polity," sixty-eight do.
Howell, James, traveller, age unknown.
Jones, Inigo, classical architect, forty-four years old.
Johnstone, Arthur, Scottish poet, twenty-nine do.
Jonson, Ben, poet and dramatist, forty-two do.
Jortin, Dr. John, theologian, eighteen do.
Juxon, William, the prelate who attended Charles I. to the block, thirty-four do.
King, Dr. Henry, poet and prelate, twenty-five do.
Laud, William, the tyrannical archbishop of Canterbury, forty-three do.
Lodge, Thomas, dramatist, age unknown.
Lope de Vega, Spanish dramatist, fifty-four years old.
Marston, John, dramatist, age unknown.
Massinger, Philip, dramatist, about thirty-two years old.
May, Thomas, poet and historian, twenty-one do.
Middleton, Thomas, dramatist, age unknown.
Milton, John, poet and patriot, seven years old.
Pearson, Bishop, theologian, three do.
Prynne, William, a controversial writer of more zeal and industry than judgment, sixteen do.
Pym, John, the parliamentarian, thirty-two do.
Quarles, Francis, poet, twenty-four do.
Quevedo-Villegas, Don Francisco de, Spanish poet, thirty-six do.
Raleigh, Sir Walter, historian and poet, sixty-five do.
Randolph, Thomas, poet and dramatist, eleven do.
Rembrandt, Paul, celebrated Dutch painter, ten do.
Rochefacould, François, Duke de la, author of the well-known "Maxims," about three do.
Rosa, Salvator, Roman painter, one yrar.
Ruebens, Peter Paul, Flemish painter, thirty-nine years old.

Rushworth, John, historian, nine years old.
Sandys, George, traveller and translator, age unknown.
Savile, Sir Henry, the learned provost of Eton, sixty-six years old.
Selden, John, a learned historical and legal writer, thirty-two do.
Shakspere, Anne, the poet's widow, sixty do.
Shirley, James, dramatist, twenty do.
Southampton, Earl of, Shakspere's patron, forty-two do.
Speed, John, topographer, sixty-four do.
Spelman, Sir Henry, legal antiquary, fifty-five do.
Spotiswood, Archbp., ecclesiastical historian, fifty-two do.
Sterling, Earl of, Scottish poet, thirty-six do.
Strafford, Earl of, an unfortunate, truckling politician, twenty-three do.
Suckling, Sir John, poet, eight do.
Sully, Duke de, French statesman, fifty-seven do.
Sylvester Joshua, poet, fifty-three do.
Taylor, Jeremy, pious prelate and theologian, three do.
Teniers, David, the elder, Flemish painter, thirty-four do.
———, David, the younger, do. six do.
Tromp, Martin Harpertzoon, Dutch admi. thirty-seven do.
Usher, Archbishop, theologian, thirty-five do.
Vandyke, Sir Anthony, Flemish painter, eighteen do.
Vane, Sir Henry, patriot, four do.
Vaughan, Sir John, learned judge, eight do.
Vavasseur, François, French poet and critic, nine do.
Velasquez de Silva, Spanish painter, seventeen do.
Vesling, John, German natural historian, eighteen do.
Villegas, Estevan Manuel de, Spanish poet, twenty-one do.
Villiers, George, (Duke of Buckingham,) James's favourite, twenty-four do.
Voet, Gisbert, bigoted Dutch theologian, twenty-three do.
Voiture, Vincent, French wit and poet, eighteen do.
Vondel, Joost vander, Dutch poet and dramatist, twenty-nine do.
Vorstius, Conrad, persecuted Dutch theologian, forty-seven do.
Vossius, Gerard John, Dutch critic, thirty-nine do.
Youet, Simon, French painter, thirty-four do.
Wallenstein, Albert, generalissimo of the Austrian army in the Thirty Years' War, thirty-three do.
Waller, Edmund, poet, eleven do.
———, Sir William, parliamentarian leader, nineteen do.
Walton, Brian, editor of the Polyglot Bible, sixteen do,
———, Izaak, biographer and writer on angling, twenty-three do.
Webster John, dramatist, age unknown.

Wilkins, Bishop, miscellaneous prose-writer, two years old.
Wilson, Arthur, historian and dramatist, twenty do.
Wither, George, poet, twenty-eight do.
Worcester, Marquis of, inventor of the steam-engine, nineteen do.
Wotton, Sir Henry, miscellaneous writer, forty-eight do.

The poet's widow survived him seven years, and was buried beside her husband. She died on the sixth of August, 1623, in her sixty-eighth year. We have seen that Hamnet, the only son of Shakspere, died in 1596, at the age of twelve years. Susanna, the eldest daughter of the bard, (married to Dr. Hall,) died in July, 1649, leaving an only daughter, Elizabeth, who was married to Thomas Nash, and he dying in April, 1647, she was married to Sir John Barnard, of Abington, in Northamptonshire, and was buried there in 1670, leaving no issue.—Judith, the younger daughter of the poet, and twin-child with Hamnet, whom we have just seen married to Thomas Quiney, died in February, 1662. She had three sons, but none of them survived her. It will therefore be seen by the reader, at a glance, that at the death of Lady Barnard, Shakspere no longer had a living descendant. The family of Hart, still resident at Stratford-upon-Avon, descended from the poet's sister, Jone, are the nearest relatives that remain of the most highly gifted of all writers. But thanks to his "pious fellows," Henry Condell and John Heminge—who collected his dramas into a folio volume, and published it in 1623, with a portrait of the bard engraved by Martin Droeshout—his glorious works still remain to us; and whilst mortal descendants would most probably have disgraced him, these immortal children of his brain will remain to honour his memory "to the last moment of recorded time." For, as "rare Tom Miller, basket-maker" truly sings:—

> "Shakspere unlock'd man's heart, laid bare a world,
> Distill'd its crimes and beauties, and then flew
> To his own mighty mind, and from it hurl'd
> A new creation: forms that never grew
> Beneath a mother's eye, before him moved,
> And, as he chose, they lived, and wept, and laugh'd, and loved."

Such, at a rapid, bird's-eye glance, were the Times and Contemporaries of the mighty Shakspere; times whose civilization has been generally *over*-rated, and contemporaries who have been equally *under*-rated. "Shakspere's rivals in the dramatic art," as Charles Knight justly

remarks, "were almost as wonderful for their number as for their respective excellences. The imagination, indeed, recoils from the attempt to weigh and estimate the amount of intellectual wealth that was then devoted to the service of the stage. Put Shakspere aside—forget him, if that be possible—and we should only be a little less filled with wonder and admiration at the power of such men as would still remain,—Marlow, Ben Jonson, Beaumont and Fletcher, and Massinger; or, could they be also put aside, and their very existence ignored, still a fresh host of men, each a giant, would step forth to challenge our respect and admiration:—A Dekker, a Chapman, a Ford, a Webster, a Field, and others of almost equal mental calibre." And of all the epitaphs for Shakspere, that written by the divine Milton, in 1630, is the best, and must conclude this little volume:—

"What needs my Shakspere, for his honour'd bones,
The labour of an age in piled stones,
Or that his hallow'd relics should be hid
Under a star-ypointed pyramid?
Dear son of memory, great heir of fame,
What need'st thou such weak witness of thy name?
Thou in our wonder and astonishment
Hast built thyself a live-long monument.
For whilst to the shame of low-endeavouring art
Thy easy numbers flow, and that each heart
Hath from the leaves of thy unvalued book,
Those Delphic lines with deep impression took,
Then thou our fancy of itself bereaving,
Dost make us marble with too much conceiving;
And so sepulchred in such pomp dost lie,
That kings for such a tomb would wish to die."

FINIS.

J. S. Pratt, Stokesley, Yorkshire.