

LITERATURE.

SONNET

To the Rev. B. Quaipe, on reading his Lectures and Letters on (against) the "Moral Lawfulness of Capital Punishments."*

THE lack of hope hath left me oft supine—

Gloomed round with ignorance and selfishness,
That, as twin destinies, would fain possess
My native land;—when with a sudden shine

Rousing me into sympathy divine,
The light of some clear spirit hath gloried out
And made a mental sunrise round about—

Of some clear spirit, instinct with thought, like thine!
Thus one beholds, when 'nighted on his way,
Suddenly, over the drear woods, afar,

Some friendly beacon's salutary ray
Yearn through the dark, like a new-kindled star.—
Long from the paths where Truth and Mercy are
The genius of my country cannot stray.

CHARLES HARPUR.

* Starting from the admission of God's moral government of the world, the right of society to punish criminals is merely a secondary or relative one, arising out of its temporal necessities and obligations, the whole scope and tendency—the "moral lawfulness" of which is strictly limited and determined by the corrective applicability of its punishments thereto. With the temporal or adventitious end of correction otherwise answered, society would have no right to coerce at all:—for "vengeance is mine, saith the Lord; I will repay."

Thus stands, or should stand, the principle of social right, with regard to the entire scale of legal inflictions, up to capital punishment: and here (admitting a future state of rewards and penalties) the question appears to be simply this. Has society, upon any plea whatever, a judicial right to amerce the individual member of aught that is clearly out of its own gift, or that has not directly resulted from its paternal conservation? Whatever else we may be said to owe to society, in no rational sense surely can its creditorship be held to extend to *life itself*, which is primordially the gift of God. And therefore, by deliberately slaying even the murderer, a repetition of whose offence, in his particular case, it can otherwise prevent, it becomes likewise a fratricide:—it participates with him in the blood-guilty example of Cain! It does more;—it deliberately perpetuates it. A brother's blood is upon his hands; but the shedder of his blood must be also a brother. He has justly forfeited his social liberty; but as God only could bestow the life he has destroyed, let God only dispose of his. *In thus referring the matter to Him who cannot err, HOW CAN WE ERR?*

"But it is politically expedient to exact life for life," say the old moralists; and "whatever is expedient is right." And does society still play the part of echo to this heartless logic? Does it still prefer the cold cunning of the past, to the earnest wisdom of the present—to the moral glory of the future? That this doctrine of mere expediency, however dispassionately restricted, has yet an inveterate determination towards the tyrant-plea of necessity, is evinced by the painful fact, that it led even Paley into moral and political justifications of the Draco-code at that time obtaining in England; when the life of a man in the scale with that of a sheep—*kicked the beam!* Nay, it absolutely led him into the sophism, that he who was hanged by a mistaken sentence, might be heroically considered as "*falling for his country!*" And he could write this too, without (it would seem) even one dawning thought of how tremendously fearful a thing it was, thus to immolate an innocent man upon the altar of political selfishness! It behoves us then, the men of the present, to look forth from higher ground.

Let it be admitted that the requirements of society may judicially commission it to take away, under circumstances of extremity, and according to the perceptible degrees of their offences, any and everything short of life;—but *not of life itself*: for it is the sole hinge upon which depend the God-arrangements, not only of the existing, but of the to-be. It is the one frail but faithful reflector between time and eternity of all our primary and final accountabilities—that is, to the unerring eye of God, which can alone perceive all their relations and extent. True, the murderer has impiously violated this order or condition of Providence; but can it therefore be morally lawful for society, by deliberately slaying him, to climax the example? It cannot. The power of civil government to punish capitally, even in his case, to be morally lawful, should premise in its behalf, a judicial paternity over its individual subjects, amounting in comprehension to a full knowledge, both as to kind and degree, of all their liabilities in the life to come, as the *ultimatum* of the present one; or else ground its warrant for so doing upon the open denial of there being any liabilities at all beyond the condition of the death which it *dares to inflict*. Having the capacity to view the question thus in its true light, can society longer arrogate to itself, *in fact*, whatever it may admit *in theory*, a governmental equality with God—and yet be held morally guiltless?

In cases of mortal emergency, springing out of national and social convulsions, of course the "powers that be" may and *will* take away life; being then in a like predicament to that of the individual who is constrained to slay in simple self-defence;—that is, in the mere conservation of *his own existence*, his own *right of being*. Here morality is out of the question; it is displaced by instinct: and which, during the emergency, is legitimately paramount, is sufficiently authorised by the natural necessity, to anticipate and prevent which, God has expressly designed it.

My ideas on this subject may differ somewhat from Mr. Quaipe's, but that does not a whit prevent my admiration for him, nor my sympathy with him: because I believe, that to be an advocate for the abolition of capital punishments, *upon any ground*, is one of the highest proofs a man could possibly give of his being in full fellowship with the better spirit of the age.

Poor Laughton! But, as Dogberry says of Verges, "*he will be talking!*" Yet mark the consequence. "*An two men ride of a horse, one must RIDE BEHIND.*" Alas, good neighbour!"
Jerry's Plains, Nov. 1848.

C. H.

THE FITZ ROY DOWNS.

The following Letter, from the pen of Mr. Bunce, one of the enterprising travellers who accompanied Dr. Leichhardt on his first expedition, we copy from the *Melbourne Daily News*, which we have no doubt will be read with much interest by many of our readers:—

Beyanbah, Castlereagh River.

Since writing you last, I have had three months hard tra-

velling, and as I intend spending a short time at this place, I am not aware that I can do better than devote an hour or two to your service in giving you a short account of another excursion which I have made to the Fitz Roy Downs of Sir Thomas Mitchell, and as in my last perambulation I have succeeded (with the assistance of my friends Messrs. Sheridan and M'Crae, who accompanied me, and at whose station I am at present staying) in what Dr. Leichhardt failed to effect at the time I accompanied him, from his keeping too much to the southward, namely, finding and making a good and practicable road from the Darling Downs or Lower Condamine, to the Grafton Range. I beg the favor of your giving publicity to the circumstance through the columns of the *Daily News*.

Nothing need be said of the country above Warra Warra, Mr. Colin M'Kenzie's, as that part of this noble river has been long known and occupied, and is in fact the north-western boundary of the deservedly celebrated district of Darling Downs, probably one of the finest in the Australian colonies. From Warra Warra to Wambo, Mr. Ewer's is a distance of 35 miles. The country here is rather confined and broken by the water courses near the banks of the river; the road is tolerably well defined, and passes through groves of weeping myall, (*acacia pendula*) and box, (*eucalyptus*). It is not a little remarkable that at this place the marsh or swamp oak, (*casuarina paludosa*) is not merely confined as is generally the case to the bed of the river, but grows in clumps on the ridges adjacent. This circumstance appears not to have been overlooked by the aborigines, as they call the place Wombo, this being their name for the tree. The next station is 20 miles distant, belonging to Mr. R. Birrell, there is a track of his drays to that establishment; midway between the two places is a low sandstone range, and the country is consequently indifferently, although, as is the case with all poor soils, it is rich in *epacrida cevas* aromatic, and *rutaceous* plants.

To make the station you have to re-cross the river about half a mile above the house. The river is here called Balonne, but higher up it is known by the blacks as Yandukal. The station is called by the blacks Terreboo, their name for a very beautiful wattle, or *acacia*, which grows here in great abundance on the banks of the rivers, creeks, and back waters. Four miles from Terreboo, on the opposite side of the river, is a large and magnificent sheet of water, called by the natives Collignal, from Cullee water—which is literally correct—with a very handsome species of blue waterlily, called by the blacks mica. This root is about the size of a large potatoe, which they root up and eat, and it appears to furnish them with their principal supply of food for the greater part of the season. It is in fact to them what the bunya bunya (*arucaria bidwilliana*) is to those of the Dorooda district, on the coast range. The Balonne is here anything but the low fever and ague country that it has been frequently represented.

From this place to Mr. T. N. Isaacs', is the track of four drays only, the distance to his place is 35 miles. After leaving Terreboo, the road takes a westerly direction for 8 miles, which brings you to the Dogwood Creek of Dr. Leichhardt, but which the blacks call Hare or Haghy. Three miles further on the same track, you come upon Emu Creek of Leichhardt's, but Dulacca of the natives, so called from the elactres of weeping myalls growing on the banks of the creek and the adjoining ranges. This westerly course is necessary as it enables you to avoid a large mass of scrub which extends from the Emu to the Boohill Creeks in a westerly, and to within three miles of Dogwood Creek in a southerly direction. The track then follows up this creek for twenty miles, which brings you to Mr. Isaacs' station, which is situated in the centre of some fine open ridges, relieved by clumps of weeping myall and box. From this place to the Grafton range there is no further track, but by following in a W. N. W. course for ten miles, we made the Sandy Creek of Leichhardt (Channing of the blacks). The soil from Isaacs' to this place is sandy, puffy and partly scrubby, but Mr. John Dangar, who has been up at its head, reports favorably of the country in that direction. In twelve miles from Channing we crossed the Horse Track River of Dr. Leichhardt, but which the blacks called the Uhlba. With the exception of an iron-bark ridge which divides the waters of the two creeks, this country is good, with firm box and myall ridges and the creeks well supplied with water. The country as far as the eye could reach, presented the appearance of a continuation of gently undulating ridges over which was scattered small broken pieces of quartz fortification and other agates. The soil was a rich red oily decomposed ironstone. The herbage was luxuriant, the principal grasses being the *panicum* *sacvistode*, (millet grass of Liverpool plains) *anthisteria Australis* (kangaroo grass), barley grass, &c. Among the herbs was one which we had not before seen and apparently peculiar to this district, with treplicate spear-shaped verdant leaves and clusters of rich blue papilionaceous blossoms, probably a species of *glycine*. After crossing the creek the country still continued good. We had travelled about fifteen miles when we had to ascend a scrubby range which divided the waters of the Uhlba from those of the next creek, which the blacks called Odooka-dooka.

This range presented an interesting field to the botanist from the numerous variety of aromatic and other shrubs, few of which were however unfortunately in flower; among them I distinguished several species of *acacia*, *bacokia* (native thyme), *hakea*, (native walnut), *grevillea mimosoides*. The magnificent arborescent, *hakea*, *sowria*, and the remarkable bottle tree (*steroulia*) *findersice*, *notoleer*—several species—*boronia*, the latter plant of such exceeding beauty that the aborigines unpoetical as they are supposed to be in their composition, name their gins or women after it in the same manner as we (their more cultivated brethren) do our wives and daughters from the rose and other favourite plants. But among all these natural beauties the one which more particularly attracted our attention was the *fusanus* of Sir Thomas Mitchell, with its pretty pendulous and — looking fruit, and deep green dense primatid foliage. From the highest part of this range we had a fine view of the surrounding country. We could see the eastern portion of the Fitzroy Downs and Grafton Range, the distance was probably 25 to 30 miles; the Grafton Range bearing N.W. and by W. Looking in a north-easterly direction we could perceive fine open downs in the direction of the Horsetrack River or Uhlba, which appeared to come a long way from the westward to the foot or base of the Coast Range, where the river appeared to take a sudden turn to the southward. After descending the

range for the distance of five miles we found the country to continue good, and to open into rich and luxuriant Downs, exactly as they have been so ably described by their indefatigable discoverer Sir Thomas Mitchell.

The object of our journey having been attained, we returned upon our former track. The blacks who had accompanied us from Mr. Birrell's station, at the instance of Mr. John Danger, one of the gentlemen of our party, marking a line of trees as we returned homewards, and which will, I trust, be the means of opening an easy communication between the Fitz Roy and Darling Downs. This road is completely void of scrub, and every other impediment for the transit of drays, sheep or cattle.

I regret, however, to add, that Messrs. Chanbel and Blyth, who had established themselves on a portion of these Downs on what Leichhardt called Frederick's or Bunce's Creek, but which I take to be Odookadooka, of the blacks, and which names I should prefer being adopted in preference to the English, as much prettier in sound, and certainly more expressive. These gentlemen had scarcely been on their run a month when the blacks became troublesome, taking away between three and four hundred sheep, killing a shepherd, and spearing Mr. Blyth himself; after which they were compelled to return, and thought themselves fortunate in getting back safely with the remainder of their stock. The blacks, after eating the sheep they had already taken, followed upon their track, but, fortunately for Mr. Blyth, he had got too far a-head, and too near to Mr. Birrell's station, where he could obtain assistance, for them to attempt a second attack. But Mr. Blyth's good fortune was obtained at the expense of Mr. Isaac, who, after Blyth's retreat, was now the furthest advanced squatter, and having missed Blyth, the wretches entered into an arrangement or conspiracy with the Dulveen tribes, and attacked Mr. Isaac's hut and were with much difficulty driven off, and not then until they had killed one shepherd, dangerously wounded a second, and driven and taken with them 1200 sheep. A party of us, however, went in pursuit, and fortunately succeeded in capturing nearly 900, after their being in possession of the blacks for six days.

Nothing could more fully show how useful these people might become if they could be induced to adopt the industrious habits of the whites there. The careful manner which they appeared to manage their sheep—making very neat and substantial bough yards; they also appeared to have allowed them to feed night and morning when not in the yards.

In both these cases, excessive travelling was apparent on the part of the blacks, as at either place they were allowed to visit the stations, where they received tobacco, bread, and other things, which are always very liberally distributed to them by the squatters generally. In the case of Mr. Isaacs, (who has been long proverbial for his kind treatment of, and the interest he has always taken in, the well-being of the blacks of Darling Downs), the leader of the party against the station was attached to his establishment, and was sent early the morning the thing occurred, to fetch the horses, instead of which he appeared to take part against Mr. Isaac, and as the horses were not found for a fortnight after the attack, it is very natural to suppose, that instead of fetching the horses in, he had driven them away, or *planted* them, which left Mr. Isaac completely powerless, until assisted by his neighbours.

I fancy what I have now written is a sufficient infliction for one sitting, but if I find that an account of my wanderings in future are likely to afford you the slightest interest, you shall have more, as much more as you please.

The above intelligence I take to be of considerable importance to the squatters at least, as there is an immense track of good country, and a knowledge of the road we have marked may lead to its immediate occupation, which will tend to increase the revenue of her Majesty, and the pockets of the graziers.

On our return from Darling down to this place, nothing was heard but the most distressing accounts of the savage conduct of the blacks on the Mackintyre and Big River or Namoy districts, and apparently not without reason, as no less than five stations were deserted, and the cattle and huts, and all they contained, left to their mercy, and in one instance a dray, which had been engaged in removing the stores, &c., prior to deserting the station, had been stopped by them, the bullock driver was killed, and the contents of the dray taken. They have been so long threatened about the native police from time to time, but never having seen them brought into the field against them, they begin to imagine it to be all a hoax, and that a native police does not really exist.

From what I have seen, and I have had many opportunities of judging, these people are treated with uniform kindness by the squatters to a man. On passing over those large and extensive plains known as Ballynan Plains, but which the residents called Hillee, I was very much struck by a circumstance which, as far as I am aware, has never been noticed by any of the writers in this colony. These very extensive plains were literally covered with huge flocks of a kind of pigeon. Millions of these birds were to be seen flying in bodies covering, in some instances, a space of a mile and a half, in dense clouds, darkening the air as they flitted across the plains. The blacks informed me that they made their appearance once every sixth or seventh year, although a stockkeeper of Mr. Brown's, who has lived on these plains for the last three years, says that he has occasionally seen a few stragglers during that period. These birds are considerably larger than the bronze-wing, plump, of a dark nankeen colour, with a white spot on either side the head, above the bill, and under the throat. There are also four white spots on each wing, which are slightly bronzed in the under side. They are called by the blacks Yammayahmarra.

The British Quarterly Review. No. XIV. May 1848. Jackson and Walford.

THIS Review has passed the first half of the fourth year of its existence, with very considerable signs of health and efficiency. A fellow-labourer in the field of independent criticism and healthy liberal principles, at once so young and able, deserves to be greeted by old reformers with cordial respect and good wishes.

The British Quarterly is the organ of the Protestant Dissenters, but without the narrow, exclusive tone, which dissent permits itself too often to assume. Its recognised conductor,

Doctor Vaughan, was Mr. Baines' most formidable adversary within the pale of his own class; and we anticipate the best effects to the great body of dissenters themselves from a review devoted to their interests which is both so ably written and informed with so Catholic a spirit. They have an undoubted interest in its continuance and success. They can never hope to communicate with their fellow-citizens by means more likely to win respect or propitiate attention.

The present number is an admirable one, with a great variety of articles, in which the writing is excellent, the subjects opportune and well chosen, and the opinions generally sound and just. We should be disposed to single out an article on "Italy, its State and Prospects," as pre-eminently deserving mention. We cannot tell how it is, but while Italy is a theme for everybody to be eloquent about, we find the proper amount of practical knowledge brought to it very rarely; here on the other hand is a paper, eloquent as befits the earnestness of the writer, but chiefly remarkable for the closeness of its reasoning and the unpretending fulness of its information. It is a sketch of the political condition of Italy before and after the first French revolution, with a view to the better elucidation of the state in which the last French revolution found her, and of the prospects of self-government which the writer believes to be awaiting her. It is remarkable for the decision and the moderation of its tone, and we will quote the closing paragraph to show the spirit of hopeful anticipation in which a writer so thoroughly well informed does not hesitate to indulge.

Such a nation as the Italians, so inextinguishably vital under the crush of despotism, so matured and self-possessed in revolution and victory, cannot be once more replaced in the world without having marvellous effects on the future career of mankind. In the past, no country has done so much as Italy. Out of the few sets of poets towards which other countries boast each of contributing one, Italy has produced two sets. The race is the same as ever: it is once more set free in all its energies: and we have yet to see what effect will be produced upon the institutions, the knowledge, the thought, the opinion, of the nineteenth century, when Italy is brought into the counsel with its high intellect, its extraordinary powers of research, its union of irrefragable faith and audacious inquiry, its tender affections and powerful passions, and, above all, its high artistic sense of the beautiful. In many political, economical, and social questions, the rest of the world has been going on without Italy, and none the better we suspect for the absence. The share which Italy will have in developing the opinion and directing the action of the world belongs to the future—a future foreshadowed by auguries so great as those which we have drawn from the mirror of the past and the living signs of the present.

While we write, we receive two additional contributions to our knowledge of Italian affairs, in a new pamphlet by the Marquis d'Azeglio, and a conversation by Mr. Landor. The latter purports to be a dialogue between Charles Albert and the Milanese Duchess who has taken so prominent a part on the patriotic side. It is full of the ardent original thoughts which distinguish Mr. Landor on this and every other subject, and is written in his usual noble English. The King asks the Duchess to compose a manifesto for the Austrians and Hungarians in appeal against their rulers; and the dialogue is thus brought to a close:—

King. Give us a specimen of appeal.

Princess. It would be like this: "Austrians and Hungarians! why do you wish to impose on others a yoke which you yourselves have shaken off? If they whom you persist in your endeavours of reducing to servitude, had attempted the same against you, then indeed resentment might warrant you, and retributive justice would be certainly on your side. It may gratify the vanity of a family to exercise dominion over distant states: and the directors of court-pageants may be loth to drop the fruits of patronage. These fruits are paid for with your blood. Of what advantage is it to any citizen of Buda or Vienna to equip an archduke and trumpet him forth to Milan? Extent of territory never made a nation the happier, unless on its own natal soil, giving it room for enterprise and industry. On the contrary, it always hath helped its ruler to become too arbitrary. Supposing you were governed by the wisest, instead of the weakest, in the universe, could he render you more prosperous by sending you from your peaceful homes to scare away others? Hungarians! is not Hungary wide enough for you? Austrians! hath Heaven appointed you to control much greater, much more numerous, much more warlike nations than you ever were; Hungary for instance, and Lombardy? Be contented to enjoy a closer union with Moravia and (if she will listen to it) with Bohemia. Leave to Hungary what she will take, whether you will or no, Stiria, Illyria, and Croatia. You are not a maritime power, and you never can be, for you are without a sea-board; but Hungarian generosity will open to you the Adriatic as freely as the Danube. Be moderate while moderation can profit you, and you will soon cease to smart under the wounds of war, and to struggle under the burden of debt.

King. This appeal is very impressive, because it terminates at the proper place. Taxation is more intolerable than cruelty and injustice. The purse is a nation's panoply; and when you strike through it, you wound a vital part. Refusal to reduce it will, within another year, shake the broad and solid edifice of the English constitution, which the socialist and the chartist have assailed in vain. The debts of Italy are light.

Princess. The lands and palaces of the king of Naples would pay off the heaviest; the remainder is barely sufficient to serve as a keystone to consolidate our interests. There are far-sighted men in England who would not gladly see the great debt of that country very much diminished.

King. Part of ours will disappear now we are no longer to give out rations to the hordes of Austria. I hope they may be convinced that they can be happier and safer in their own houses than in the houses of other men.

Princess. If they believe, as it seems they do, that they are incapable of governing themselves, and that an idiot is their proper head, let them continue to enjoy the poppy crown, but leave the iron one behind at Manza. Nothing more will be required of them than co-operation with the other states of Germany against Russia. A force no greater than the peace establishment will secure the independence and integrity of Poland. Nay, if Germany sends only 150,000 men, Hungary 40,000, Italy 40,000, France 40,000, Russia will break down under them, and Moscow be again her capital. Great states are great curses, both to others and to themselves. One such, however, is necessary to the equipage of the political world. Poland is the natural barrier of civilisation against barbarism, of freedom against despotism. No potentate able to coerce the progress of nations must anywhere exist. All that ever was Poland must again be Poland, and much more. Power, predominant power, is necessary to her for the advantage of Europe. She must be looked up to as an impregnable outwork protecting the nascent liberties of the world.

King. Russia is rich and warlike and hard to manage.

Princess. Her Cossacks might nearly all be detached from her by other means than arms. Her empire will split and splinter into the infinitesimals of which its vast shapeless body is composed. The south breathes against it and it dissolves.

The Marquis d'Azeglio's pamphlet is an indignant and impassioned protest against recent Austrian atrocities in Lombardy, a narrative of the frivolous pretences that were held to have justified the massacres and bloodshed in Milan, and a deliberate assertion on behalf of the patriotic Italian party that nothing but the recognition of their nationality and the independence of the Lombardo Venetian provinces will now save the Austrian empire from dissolution. The change in M. d'Azeglio's tone since he last wrote is significant intimation of the altered condition of affairs. It is to be ascribed says M. Prandi, "to the outrageous proceedings whereby, during the interval between the two publications, Austria contrived to fire every Italian bosom with irrepressible indignation." M. Prandi dedicates the pamphlet to Lord Brougham in his character of eulogist of the Austrian police; prefixing a spirited preface which is not less worthy of attention than the narrative and comment of d'Azeglio.

Select plays of Shakspeare, with notes, and an introduction to each play, and a Life of Shakspeare.

This is an additional volume to the many choice selections from our standard literature, issued from the miscellaneous press of Mr. Burns. It contains five plays,—*Macbeth*, "King John," "Henry the Fifth," "Richard the Third," and "Julius Cæsar." The edition, as stated in the preface, has been put forth in the hope that it may make the writings of England's immortal poet familiar to young persons, and those who have not the opportunity of consulting a complete copy of all his works. Those have been selected which, whilst they yield to none in beauty and sublimity of writing, seem to be the most instructive, and likely to prove the most popular with the readers for whom this edition is extended. The prefaces affixed to each Play, and the Notes, do not lay claim to much originality; they have been, for the most part, carefully selected and adapted from the most approved works which have treated of Shakspeare, his life, genius, and writings. The life is tastefully written, but can scarcely be said to contain anything new, though there is some conjecture hazarded which it is pleasant to read.

Of Shakspeare's First Employment in London, we have the following:—

Shakspeare's departure from Stratford, whether caused by the prosecution of Sir Thomas Lucy, or by his debts, or by both, was so sudden that he was not able to take his family with him, but left them in his native place, where they continued to live during his life, and where he managed to visit them once a-year. As to his original employment at the theatre there is much doubt and discussion. One author asserts that he was received into the company in a very mean rank, that his situation was that of a *call-boy*, and that his business was to tell the different actors when their presence on the stage was required. Another places him still lower, and informs us that, since many persons in those days, when coaches were very uncommon, were wont to come to the theatre on horseback, and whilst there, if they did not bring their own servants, needed some one to hold their horses in readiness against their coming out again, for which they bestowed a trifling reward.—Shakspeare's first expedient to support himself on his arrival in London was to wait at the entrance of the playhouse, and by such an employment to endeavour to earn a livelihood. Another account, and a more probable one, is, that from being a fellow-countryman of some well-known actors of that period, he was immediately introduced to the stage and employed as a player, though not at first in any but mean and insignificant parts. He seems, indeed, never to have aspired to the highest characters, but to have contented himself with second-rate personations at the utmost; and the part of the Ghost, in his own play of "Hamlet," was, according to one of his own biographers, "the top of his performance." The characters, however, which he did sustain, were ably performed, as we may gather from what we are told of his performance of "Adam" in "As You Like It." One who frequently saw him in that character describes him as admirably performing "the decrepit old man who wore a long beard, and appeared so weak and drooping, and unable to walk, that he was forced to be supported and carried by another person to a table, at which he was seated among some company who were eating, and one of them sung a song." The representation of aged characters seems to have been his forte, for there is reason to suppose that in the play of "Every Man in his Humour," by Ben Jonson, he took the part of Old Knowell. The "kingly parts," too, according to an old poem, by John Davies, dedicated to our English Terence, Mr. William Shakspeare, were favourites with our poet, as an actor; part of the dedication runs thus:—

Some say, good Will, which I in sport do sing,
Hadst thou not played some kingly parts in sport,
Thou hadst been a companion for a king,
And been a king among the meaner sort;

from which we may not be far wrong if we infer that many of the personations of kings in his own plays, such as the parts of Henry the Fourth, Henry the Sixth, and Henry the Eighth, were considered by himself and others as not badly adapted to his powers; an inference which is quite compatible with the opinion that second-rate characters were preferred by him, and that he performed the part of the Ghost, in "Hamlet."

The theatre at Blackfriars—a famous one at that time—was the scene of Shakspeare's early performances; and no sooner did he consider himself established there than he commenced the work of a dramatic writer. Before this, most likely previous to his flight from Stratford, he had tried his skill as a poet in writing, as we before remarked, his "Venus and Adonis." The publication of even his earliest plays attracted some attention, but not of the most pleasant kind, for in 1592, only one year after his first production, Chettle and Greene, minor poets of the period, both mention him, but not without some acrimony and jealousy; one speaking of his "facetious grace in writing," and the other calling him "an upstart crow beautified with our feathers;" and after parodying a line from the third part of Henry the Sixth, he concludes by telling us that he is "an absolute Johannes Factotum, and in his own conceit the only SHAKS-SCENE in the country."

Shakspeare's favour at Court is thus noticed:—

In 1601, the same year in which he lost his father, Shakspeare, by his wonderful compositions, drew upon himself the observations and applause of the Court. Queen Elizabeth was so delighted with his "Two Parts of Henry the Fourth," that she honoured him with a command to produce Falstaff, which character especially pleased her, in another play. This was done in a fortnight, as we are told, and her Majesty was completely satisfied with the performance. Indeed, both Elizabeth and James were not backward

in their patronage of our immortal bard, both of whom "were taken with his fights," to use the language of Ben Jonson. Shakspeare's difficulties and hardships were now past, and he became year by year more possessed of that fortune which his talents and virtues deserved; and this increase in his means enabled him the year following to buy for £320 (a much larger sum than now) upwards of one hundred acres of land at Stratford, which he annexed to his previous purchase of New-place.

Shakspeare's property, it is clear, was considerable:—

Shakspeare was now rapidly increasing in wealth, which enabled him to add to his former purchases at Stratford the lease of the moiety of the great and small tithes of that place, which he bought for £440. In 1607, (the same year in which he lost his brother Edmond, who is buried at St. Saviour's, Southwark, and registered as a *player*;) he married his eldest and favourite daughter, Susanna, to Dr. John Hall, a physician of some note, residing at Stratford. About this time, too, he bought for the sum of £140 a tenement in Blackfriars, near the Wardrobe.

For several years after this we hear nothing of him; yet we have every reason to believe that though he had withdrawn from the stage as an actor, he still continued to write for the theatre; and that as long as he remained in London he retained his share in the property of the "Globe," which, however, he must have disposed of previous to his death, since we find no mention of it in his will.

In 1613, and most likely during the summer, he quitted London, purposing to end the remainder of his days, which, judging from his age, might in all human probability have been many, in ease, retirement, and the conversation of his friends at his native town, having realised an income of between £200 and £300 a-year, which is nearly equivalent to £1000 of our present money. For three years he enjoyed on the banks of his native stream the friendship of the gentlemen of the neighbourhood, whose acquaintance his pleasurable wit and good nature secured him. Early in 1616 he married his youngest daughter, Judith, to Thomas Quiney, a vintner at Stratford; and very shortly afterwards he made his last will, bequeathing the greater part of his property (for his wife he had already provided,) to his eldest daughter, Susanna, the wife of Dr. Hall. When Shakspeare made his will, in the preface to it he declares himself to be in perfect health and memory, and yet in less than a month from that time he had departed this life; we have good reason therefore to suppose that the disease which thus early, when he had just completed his fifty-second year, deprived England of her brightest ornament, must have been sudden in its attack, and most rapid in its progress; but we are nowhere told of what nature it was.

Thus, on the 23rd of April, 1616, which was his birthday, William Shakspeare took his leave of this world, upon the affairs of which, by his immortal writings, he cast a brighter light than any uninspired writer that ever lived. It is remarkable, as a coincidence, that on this very same day died, in Spain, Miguel de Cervantes; and the human race was nearly at the same hour deprived of the two most original writers which Europe has ever produced.

The notes and introductions to the several plays are full of research and elegant criticism; as an instance, we select the remarks on Shakspeare's Violation of the Unities:—

It is well known that Shakspeare has been censured most gravely for neglecting what critics call "the unity of time." In none of his dramas does he offend, if it be an offence, on this head more than he does in *Macbeth*; for no less than seventeen years are taken up with the action of the drama, from its first scene to its close. And yet it is herein that he has shown his consummate skill, and proved that true genius will not be shackled by any obsolete rules, which, however they may have been needed in the classical theatre, are not required in the modern. Wonderful, indeed, is the tact with which he has condensed into one representation the extensive series of events of which this tragedy is composed. One of the greatest of the Greek dramatists, and the boldest, has taken three plays wherein to describe a chain of facts similar to that which Shakspeare has done in one. The trilogy of *Æschylus*, comprising his *Agamemnon*, *Choephora*, and *Eumenides*, has often been compared with the *Macbeth* of our poet, but to the manifest advantage of the latter. But we will let the eloquent words of the modern Aristotle, the German critic Schlegel, vindicate the cause of our drama: "This drama, it is true," he remarks, "comprehends a considerable period of time: but, in the rapidity of its progress, have we leisure to calculate this? We see, as it were, the Fates weaving their dark web on the bosom of time; and the storm and whirlwind of events, which impel the hero to the first daring attempt, which afterwards lead him to commit innumerable crimes to secure the fruit of it, and drive him at last, amidst numerous perils, to his destruction in the heroic combat, draw us irresistibly along with them. Such a tragical exhibition resembles the course of a planet, which, hardly visible at first, and only important to the astronomical eye when appearing in the heaven in a nebulous distance, soon soars with an unheard-of and perpetually increasing rapidity towards the central point of our system, spreading dismay along the nations of the earth, till in a moment, with its portentous tail, it overspreads the half of the firmament with flaming fire."

The supernatural machinery of the Play is ably treated:—

One thing in this tragedy we must not neglect to notice; it is the "supernatural machinery," as it has been called, upon which it turns in almost all its parts. At the time that Shakspeare lived, there was a general belief prevalent in England, not then so sceptical as now, in the existence of witchcraft. Whether he himself was a profound believer in it or not, cannot perhaps be known, nor is it worth while to inquire. It is not likely, however, that he would let slip such means of engaging his reader's attention, with which the universal opinion supplied him. With his peculiar characteristic, he seized upon that which the age in which he lived presented to him, and worked it into his drama, to serve the one great end of his writing, namely, that of describing men as they are, and agitated with their natural passions. Had Shakspeare lived in our own time, he might have hesitated before he adopted in his plays that belief, which, whatever might be his opinion, the majority of his readers would jeer at. But, in his day, the contrary was the case; the introduction of spirits of the air into "The Tempest," the description of the gambols of the fairy elves in "The Midsummer Night's Dream," the terrific picture of the incantations, and the forebodings of the witches in "Macbeth;" all this would excite no sceptical criticism amongst those who were not unused to be told, even from the pulpit, that "witches and sorcerers within these last few years were marvellously increased within the Queen's realm;" and when no less than seventeen or eighteen persons were condemned for witchcraft in one small parish in Essex at one time. It should be remembered, too, that "Macbeth" was written during the reign of King James I., and that it is not unlikely that it suggested itself to the writer as being a subject, from its Scotch origin, that would commend itself to the royal taste. There are not wanting proofs that such was the case;