sought-for resemblance in the words, as, for instance, in the third line of the play,—

> And then grace us in the disgrace of death ;—

this being a figure often having its force and propriety, as justified by the law of passion, which, inducing in the mind an unusual activity, seeks for means to waste its superfluity,—when in the highest degree—in lyric repetitions and sublime tautology—(*at her feet he bowed, he fell, he lay down ; at her feet he bowed, he fell ; where he bowed, there he fell down dead*),—and, in lower degrees, in making the words themselves the subjects and materials of that surplus action, and for the same cause that agitates our limbs, and forces our very gestures into a tempest in states of high excitement.

The mere style of narration in Love's Labour's Lost, like that of Ægeon in the first scene of the Comedy of Errors, and of the Captain in the second scene of Macbeth, seems imitated with its defects and its beauties from Sir Philip Sidney ; whose Arcadia, though not then published, was already well-known in manuscript copies, and could hardly have escaped the notice and admiration of Shakspeare as the friend and client of the Earl of Southampton. The chief defect consists in the parentheses and parenthetic thoughts and descriptions, suited neither to the passion of the speaker, nor the purpose of the person to whom the information is to be given, but manifestly betraying the author himself,—not by way of continuous undersong, but—palpably, and so as to show themselves addressed to the general reader. However, it is not unimportant to notice how strong a presumption the diction and allusions of this play afford, that, though Shakspeare's acquirements in the dead languages might not be such as we suppose in a learned education, his habits had, nevertheless, been scholastic, and those of a student. For a young author's first work almost always bespeaks his recent pursuits, and his first observations of life are either drawn from the immediate employments of his youth, and from the characters and images most deeply impressed on his mind in the situations in which those employments had placed him ;—or else they are fixed on such objects and occurrences in the world, as are easily connected with, and seem to bear upon, his studies and the hitherto exclusive subjects

of his meditation. Just as Ben Jonson, who applied himself to the drama after having served in Flanders, fills his earliest plays with true or pretended soldiers, the wrongs and neglects of the former, and the absurd boasts and knavery of their counterfeits. So Lessing's first comedies are placed in the universities, and consist of events and characters conceivable in an academic life.

I will only further remark the sweet and tempered gravity, with which Shakspeare in the end draws the only fitting moral which such a drama afforded. Here Rosaline rises up to the full height of Beatrice :—

Ros. Oft have I heard of you, my lord Biron
Before I saw you, and the world's large tongue
Proclaims you for a man replete with mocks ;
Full of comparisons, and wounding flouts,
Which you on all estates will execute
That lie within the mercy of your wit :
To weed this wormwood from your fruitful brain,
And therewithal, to win me, if you please,
(Without the which I am not to be won,)
You shall this twelvemonth term from day to day
Visit the speechless sick, and still converse
With groaning wretches ; and your talk shall be,
With all the fierce endeavour of your wit,
To enforce the pained impotent to smile.
Biron. To move wild laughter in the throat of death ?
It cannot be ; it is impossible ;
Mirth cannot move a soul in agony.
Ros. Why, that's the way to choke a gibing spirit,
Whose influence is begot of that loose grace,
Which shallow laughing hearers give to fools :
A jest's prosperity lies in the ear
Of him that hears it, never in the tongue
Of him that makes it : then, if sickly ears,
Deaf'd with the clamours of their own dear groans,
Will hear your idle scorns, continue then,
And I will have you, and that fault withal ;
But, if they will not, throw away that spirit,
And I shall find you empty of that fault,
Right joyful of your reformation.

Act v. sc. 2. In Biron's speech to the Princess :

—and, therefore, like the eye,
Full of *straying* shapes, of habits, and of forms—

Either read *stray*, which I prefer ; or throw *full* back to the preceding lines,—

like the eye, full
Of straying shapes, &c.

In the same scene :

> *Biron.* And what to me, my love ? and what to me ?
> *Ros.* You must be purged too, your sins are rank ;
> You are attaint with fault and perjury :
> Therefore, if you my favour mean to get,
> A twelvemonth shall you spend, and never rest,
> But seek the weary beds of people sick.

There can be no doubt, indeed, about the propriety of expunging this speech of Rosaline's ; it soils the very page that retains it. But I do not agree with Warburton and others in striking out the preceding line also. It is quite in Biron's character ; and Rosaline not answering it immediately, Dumain takes up the question for him, and, after he and Longaville are answered, Biron, with evident propriety, says ;—

> *Studies* my mistress ? &c.

MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM.

Act i. sc. i.

> *Her.* O cross ! too high to be enthrall'd to low—
> *Lys.* Or else misgrafted, in respect of years ;
> *Her.* O spite ! too old to be engag'd to young—
> *Lys.* Or else it stood upon the choice of friends
> *Her.* O hell ! to chuse love by another's eye !

THERE is no authority for any alteration ;—but I never can help feeling how great an improvement it would be, if the two former of Hermia's exclamations were omitted ; —the third and only appropriate one would then become a beauty, and most natural.

Ib. Helena's speech :—

> I will go tell him of fair Hermia's flight, &c.

I am convinced that Shakspeare availed himself of the title of this play in his own mind, and worked upon it as a dream throughout, but especially, and, perhaps, unpleasingly, in this broad determination of ungrateful treachery in Helena, so undisguisedly avowed to herself, and this, too, after the witty cool philosophizing that precedes. The act itself is natural, and the resolve so to act is, I fear, likewise too true a picture of the lax hold which principles

have on a woman's heart, when opposed to, or even separated from, passion and inclination. For women are less hypocrites to their own minds than men are, because in general they feel less proportionate abhorrence of moral evil in and for itself, and more of its outward consequences, as detection, and loss of character than men,—their natures being almost wholly extroitive. Still, however just in itself, the representation of this is not poetical; we shrink from it, and cannot harmonize it with the ideal.

Act ii. sc. 1. Theobald's edition.

Through bush, *through* briar—
* * * * *
Through flood, *through* fire—

What a noble pair of ears this worthy Theobald must have had! The eight amphimacers or cretics,—

Ovĕr hīll, ōvĕr dāle,
Thōrŏ' būsh, thōrŏ' brīar,
Ovĕr pārk, ōvĕr pāle.
Thōrŏ' flo͞od, thōrŏ' fīre—

have a delightful effect on the ear in their sweet transition to the trochaic,—

Ī dŏ wāndĕr ēv'ry whērĕ
Swīftĕr thān thĕ mo͞onĕs sphērĕ, &c.—

The last words as sustaining the rhyme, must be considered, as in fact they are, trochees in time.

It may be worth while to give some correct examples in English of the principal metrical feet:—

Pyrrhic or Dibrach, ∪ ∪ = *bŏdў, spĭrĭt.*
Tribrach, ∪ ∪ ∪ = *nŏbŏdў*, hastily pronounced.
Iambus, ∪ — = *dĕlīght.*
Trochee, — ∪ = *līghtlў.*
Spondee, — — = *Gōd spāke.*

The paucity of spondees in single words in English and, indeed, in the modern languages in general, makes, perhaps, the greatest distinction, metrically considered, between them and the Greek and Latin.

Dactyl, — ∪ ∪ = *mērrĭlў.*
Anapæst, ∪ ∪ — = *ă prŏpōs*, or the first three syllables of *cĕrĕmōny.*[1]

1 Written probably by mistake for "cĕrĕmōnious."

Amphibrachys, ∪ — ∪ = *dēlīghtfŭl.*
Amphimacer, — ∪ — = *ōvĕr hīll.*
Antibacchius, ∪ — — = *thĕ Lōrd Gōd.*
Bacchius — — ∪ = *Hēlvēllўn.*
Molossus, — — — = *John James Jones.*

These simple feet may suffice for understanding the metres of Shakspeare, for the greater part at least ;—but Milton cannot be made harmoniously intelligible without the composite feet, the Ionics, Pæons, and Epitrites.

Ib. sc. 2. Titania's speech :—(Theobald adopting Warburton's reading.)

> Which she, with pretty and with swimming gate
> *Follying* (her womb then rich with my young squire)
> Would imitate, &c.

Oh ! oh ! Heaven have mercy on poor Shakspeare, and also on Mr. Warburton's mind's eye !

Act v. sc. 1. Theseus' speech :—(Theobald.)

> And what poor [*willing*] duty cannot do,
> Noble respect takes it in might, not merit.

To my ears it would read far more Shakspearian thus :—

> And what poor duty cannot do, *yet would,*
> Noble respect, &c.

Ib. sc. 2.

> *Puck.* Now the hungry lion roars,
> And the wolf behowls the moon ;
> Whilst the heavy ploughman snores
> All with weary task foredone, &c.

Very Anacreon in perfectness, proportion, grace, and spontaneity ! So far it is Greek ;—but then add, O ! what wealth, what wild ranging, and yet what compression and condensation of, English fancy ! In truth, there is nothing in Anacreon more perfect than these thirty lines, or half so rich and imaginative. They form a speckless diamond.

COMEDY OF ERRORS.

The myriad-minded man, our, and all men's, Shakspeare, has in this piece presented us with a legitimate farce in exactest consonance with the philosophical principles and character of farce, as distinguished from comedy and from

entertainments. A proper farce is mainly distinguished from comedy by the license allowed, and even required, in the fable, in order to produce strange and laughable situations. The story need not be probable, it is enough that it is possible. A comedy would scarcely allow even the two Antipholuses ; because, although there have been instances of almost indistinguishable likeness in two persons, yet these are mere individual accidents, *casus ludentis naturæ*, and the *verum* will not excuse the *inverisimile*. But farce dares add the two Dromios, and is justified in so doing by the laws of its end and constitution. In a word, farces commence in a postulate, which must be granted.

AS YOU LIKE IT.

Act i. sc. 1.

Oli. What, boy !
Orla. Come, come, elder brother, you are too young in this.
Oli. Wilt thou lay hands on me, villain ?

THERE is a beauty here. The word 'boy' naturally provokes and awakens in Orlando the sense of his manly powers ; and with the retort of 'elder brother,' he grasps him with firm hands, and makes him feel he is no boy.

Ib. *Oli.* Farewell, good Charles.—Now will I stir this gamester : I hope, I shall see an end of him ; for my soul, yet I know not why, hates nothing more than him. Yet he's gentle ; never school'd, and yet learn'd ; full of noble device ; of all sorts enchantingly beloved ! and, indeed, so much in the heart of the world, and especially of my own people, who best know him, that I am altogether misprized : but it shall not be so long ; this wrestler shall clear all.

This has always appeared to me one of the most un-Shakspearian speeches in all the genuine works of our poet ; yet I should be nothing surprized, and greatly pleased, to find it hereafter a fresh beauty, as has so often happened to me with other supposed defects of great men. 1810.

It is too venturous to charge a passage in Shakspeare with want of truth to nature ; and yet at first sight this speech of Oliver's expresses truths, which it seems almost impossible that any mind should so distinctly, so livelily, and so voluntarily, have presented to itself, in connection with feelings and intentions so malignant, and so contrary

to those which the qualities expressed would naturally have called forth. But I dare not say that this seeming unnaturalness is not in the nature of an abused wilfulness, when united with a strong intellect. In such characters there is sometimes a gloomy self-gratification in making the absoluteness of the will (*sit pro ratione voluntas !*) evident to themselves by setting the reason and the conscience in full array against it. 1818.

Ib. sc. 2.

Celia. If you saw yourself with *your* eyes, or knew yourself with *your* judgment, the fear of your adventure would counsel you to a more equal enterprize.

Surely it should be '*our* eyes' and '*our* judgment.'

Ib. sc. 3.

Cel. But is all this for your father ?
Ros. No, some of it is for *my child's father.*

Theobald restores this as the reading of the older editions. It may be so : but who can doubt that it is a mistake for 'my father's child,' meaning herself ? According to Theobald's note, a most indelicate anticipation is put into the mouth of Rosalind without reason ;—and besides what a strange thought, and how out of place, and unintelligible !

Act. iv. sc. 2.

Take thou no scorn
To wear the horn, the lusty horn ;
It was a crest ere thou wast born.

I question whether there exists a parallel instance of a phrase, that like this of 'horns' is universal in all languages, and yet for which no one has discovered even a plausible origin.

TWELFTH NIGHT.

Act i. sc. 1. Duke's speech :—

—so full of shapes is fancy,
That it alone is high fantastical.

WARBURTON'S alteration of *is* into *in* is needless. 'Fancy' may very well be interpreted 'exclusive affection,' or 'passionate preference.' Thus, bird-fanciers, gentlemen of the fancy, that is, amateurs of boxing, &c. The play of

assimilation,—the meaning one sense chiefly, and yet keeping both senses in view, is perfectly Shakspearian.

Act. ii. sc. 3. Sir Andrew's speech :—

An explanatory note on *Pigrogromitus* would have been more acceptable than Theobald's grand discovery that 'lemon' ought to be 'leman.'

Ib. Sir Toby's speech: (Warburton's note on the Peripatetic philosophy.)

> Shall we rouse the night-owl in a catch, that will draw three souls out of one weaver ?

O genuine, and inimitable (at least I hope so) Warburton! This note of thine, if but one in five millions, would be half a one too much.

Ib. sc. 4.

> *Duke.* My life upon't, young though thou art, thine eye
> Hath stay'd upon some favour that it loves ;
> Hath it not, boy ?
> *Vio.* A little, by your favour.
> *Duke.* What kind of woman is't ?

And yet Viola was to have been presented to Orsino as a eunuch !—Act i. sc. 2. Viola's speech. Either she forgot this, or else she had altered her plan.

Ib.

> *Vio.* A blank, my lord : she never told her love !—
> But let concealment, &c.

After the first line, (of which the last five words should be spoken with, and drop down in, a deep sigh) the actress ought to make a pause ; and then start afresh, from the activity of thought, born of suppressed feelings, and which thought had accumulated during the brief interval, as vital heat under the skin during a dip in cold water.

Ib. sc. 5.

> *Fabian.* Though our silence be drawn from us by *cars*, yet peace.

Perhaps, 'cables.'

Act iii. sc. 1.

> *Clown.* A sentence is but a *cheveril* glove to a good wit. (Theobald's note.)

Theobald's etymology of 'cheveril' is, of course, quite right ;—but he is mistaken in supposing that there were no

such things as gloves of chicken-skin. They were at one time a main article in chirocosmetics.

Act v. sc. 1. Clown's speech :—

So that, *conclusions to be as kisses*, if your four negatives make your two affirmatives, why, then, the worse for my friends, and the better for my foes.

(Warburton reads 'conclusion to be asked, is.')

Surely Warburton could never have wooed by kisses and won, or he would not have flounder-flatted so just and humorous, nor less pleasing than humorous, an image into so profound a nihility. In the name of love and wonder, do not four kisses make a double affirmative ? The humour lies in the whispered 'No !' and the inviting 'Don't !' with which the maiden's kisses are accompanied, and thence compared to negatives, which by repetition constitute an affirmative.

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL.

Act i. sc. 1.

Count. If the living be enemy to the grief, the excess makes it soon mortal.

Bert. Madam, I desire your holy wishes.
Laf. How understand we that ?

BERTRAM and Lafeu, I imagine, both speak together,—Lafeu referring to the Countess's rather obscure remark.

Act ii. sc. 1. (Warburton's note.)

King. —let *higher* Italy
(Those *'bated*, that inherit but the fall
Of the last monarchy) see, that you come
Not to woo honour, but to wed it.

It would be, I own, an audacious and unjustifiable change of the text ; but yet, as a mere conjecture, I venture to suggest 'bastards,' for ''bated.' As it stands, in spite of Warburton's note, I can make little or nothing of it. Why should the king except the then most illustrious states, which, as being republics, were the more truly inheritors of the Roman grandeur ?—With my conjecture, the sense would be ;—'let higher, or the more northern part of Italy—(unless 'higher' be a corruption

for 'hir'd,'—the metre seeming to demand a monosyllable) (those bastards that inherit the infamy only of their fathers) see, &c.' The following 'woo' and 'wed' are so far confirmative as they indicate Shakspeare's manner of connexion by unmarked influences of association from some preceding metaphor. This it is which makes his style so peculiarly vital and organic. Likewise 'those girls of Italy' strengthen the guess. The absurdity of Warburton's gloss, which represents the king calling Italy superior, and then excepting the only part the lords were going to visit, must strike every one.

Ib. sc. 3.

Laf. They say, miracles are past ; and we have our philosophical persons to make modern and familiar, things supernatural and *causeless.*

Shakspeare, inspired, as it might seem, with all knowledge, here uses the word 'causeless' in its strict philosophical sense ;—cause being truly predicable only of *phenomena*, that is, things natural, and not of *noumena*, or things supernatural.

Act iii. sc. 5.

Dia. The Count Rousillon :—know you such a one ?
Hel. But by the ear that hears most nobly of him ;
His face I know not.

Shall we say here, that Shakspeare has unnecessarily made his loveliest character utter a lie ?—Or shall we dare think that, where to deceive was necessary, he thought a pretended verbal verity a double crime, equally with the other a lie to the hearer, and at the same time an attempt to lie to one's own conscience ?

MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR.

Act i. sc. 1.

Shal. The luce is the fresh fish, the salt fish is an old coat.

I CANNOT understand this. Perhaps there is a corruption both of words and speakers. Shallow no sooner corrects one mistake of Sir Hugh's, namely, 'louse' for 'luce,' a pike, but the honest Welchman falls into another, namely, 'cod' (*baccalà*), *Cambrice* 'cot' for coat.

Shal. The luce is the fresh fish—
Evans. The salt fish is an old cot.

'Luce is a fresh fish, and not a louse;' says Shallow. 'Aye, aye,' quoth Sir Hugh; 'the *fresh* fish is the luce; it is an old cod that is the salt fish.' At all events, as the text stands, there is no sense at all in the words.

Ib. sc. 3.

Fal. Now, the report goes, she has all the rule of her husband's purse; she hath a legion of angels.
Pist. As many devils entertain; and *To her, boy*, say I.

Perhaps it is—

As many devils enter (or enter'd) swine; and *to her, boy*, say I:—

a somewhat profane, but not un-Shakspearian, allusion to the 'legion' in St. Luke's 'gospel.'

MEASURE FOR MEASURE.

This play, which is Shakspeare's throughout, is to me the most painful—say rather, the only painful—part of his genuine works. The comic and tragic parts equally border on the μισητὸν, — the one being disgusting, the other horrible; and the pardon and marriage of Angelo not merely baffles the strong indignant claim of justice—(for cruelty, with lust and damnable baseness, cannot be forgiven, because we cannot conceive them as being morally repented of;) but it is likewise degrading to the character of woman. Beaumont and Fletcher, who can follow Shakspeare in his errors only, have presented a still worse, because more loathsome and contradictory, instance of the same kind in the Night-Walker, in the marriage of Alathe to Algripe. Of the counter-balancing beauties of Measure for Measure, I need say nothing; for I have already remarked that the play is Shakspeare's throughout.

Act iii. sc. 1.

Ay, but to die, and go we know not where, &c.

This natural fear of Claudio, from the antipathy we have to death, seems very little varied from that infamous wish of Mæcenas, recorded in the 101st epistle of Seneca:

Debilem facito manu,
Debilem pede, coxa, &c. Warburton's note.

I cannot but think this rather an heroic resolve, than

an infamous wish. It appears to me to be the grandest symptom of an immortal spirit, when even that bedimmed and overwhelmed spirit recked not of its own immortality, still to seek to be,—to be a mind, a will.

As fame is to reputation, so heaven is to an estate, or immediate advantage. The difference is, that the self-love of the former cannot exist but by a complete suppression and habitual supplantation of immediate selfishness. In one point of view, the miser is more estimable than the spendthrift;—only that the miser's present feelings are as much of the present as the spendthrift's. But *cæteris paribus*, that is, upon the supposition that whatever is good or lovely in the one coexists equally in the other, then, doubtless, the master of the present is less a selfish being, an animal, than he who lives for the moment with no inheritance in the future. Whatever can degrade man, is supposed in the latter case, whatever can elevate him, in the former. And as to self;—strange and generous self! that can only be such a self by a complete divestment of all that men call self,—of all that can make it either practically to others, or consciously to the individual himself, different from the human race in its ideal. Such self is but a perpetual religion, an inalienable acknowledgment of God, the sole basis and ground of being. In this sense, how can I love God, and not love myself, as far as it is of God?

Ib. sc. 2.

> Pattern in himself to know,
> Grace to stand, and virtue go.

Worse metre, indeed, but better English would be,—

> Grace to stand, virtue to go.

CYMBELINE.

Act i. sc. 1.

> You do not meet a man, but frowns: our bloods
> No more obey the heavens, than our courtiers'
> Still seem, as does the king's.

There can be little doubt of Mr. Tyrwhitt's emendations of 'courtiers' and 'king,' as to the sense;—only it is not impossible that Shakspeare's dramatic language may allow of the word, 'brows' or 'faces' being understood after the

word 'courtiers,' which might then remain in the genitive case plural. But the nominative plural makes excellent sense, and is sufficiently elegant, and sounds to my ear Shakspearian. What, however, is meant by 'our bloods no more obey the heavens ?'—Dr. Johnson's assertion that 'bloods' signify 'countenances,' is, I think, mistaken both in the thought conveyed—(for it was never a popular belief that the stars governed men's countenances,) and in the usage, which requires an antithesis of the blood,—or the temperament of the four humours, choler, melancholy, phlegm, and the red globules, or the sanguine portion, which was supposed not to be in our own power, but, to be dependent on the influences of the heavenly bodies,—and the countenances which are in our power really, though from flattery we bring them into a no less apparent dependence on the sovereign, than the former are in actual dependence on the constellations.

I have sometimes thought that the word 'courtiers' was a misprint for 'countenances,' arising from an anticipation, by foreglance of the compositor's eye, of the word 'courtier' a few lines below. The written *r* is easily and often confounded with the written *n*. The compositor read the first syllable *court*, and—his eye at the same time catching the word 'courtier' lower down—he completed the word without reconsulting the copy. It is not unlikely that Shakspeare intended first to express, generally the same thought, which a little afterwards he repeats with a particular application to the persons meant ;—a common usage of the pronominal 'our,' where the speaker does not really mean to include himself ; and the word 'you' is an additional confirmation of the 'our,' being used in this place, for 'men' generally and indefinitely, just as 'you do not meet,' is the same as, 'one does not meet.'

Act i. sc. 2. Imogen's speech :—

> —My dearest husband,
> I something fear my father's wrath ; but nothing
> (Always reserv'd my holy duty) what
> His rage can do on me.

Place the emphasis on 'me ;' for 'rage' is a mere repetition of 'wrath.'

> *Cym.* O disloyal thing,
> That should'st repair my youth, thou heapest
> A year's age on me !

How is it that the commentators take no notice of the un-Shakspearian defect in the metre of the second line, and what in Shakspeare is the same, in the harmony with the sense and feeling? Some word or words must have slipped out after 'youth,'—possibly 'and see:'—

That should'st repair my youth!—and see, thou heap'st, &c.

Ib. sc. 4. Pisanio's speech:—

—For so long
As he could make me with *this* eye or ear
Distinguish him from others, &c.

But '*this* eye,' in spite of the supposition of its being used δειχτιχῶς is very awkward. I should think that either 'or'—or 'the' was Shakspeare's word;—

As he could make me or with eye or ear.

Ib. sc. 7. Iachimo's speech:—

Hath nature given them eyes
To see this vaulted arch, and the rich crop
Of sea and land, which can distinguish 'twixt
The fiery orbs above, and the twinn'd stones
Upon the number'd beach.

I would suggest 'cope' for 'crop.' As to 'twinn'd stones'—may it not be a bold *catachresis* for muscles, cockles, and other empty shells with hinges, which are truly twinned? I would take Dr. Farmer's 'umber'd,' which I had proposed before I ever heard of its having been already offered by him: but I do not adopt his interpretation of the word, which I think is not derived from *umbra*, a shade, but from *umber*, a dingy yellow-brown soil, which most commonly forms the mass of the sludge on the sea shore, and on the banks of tide-rivers at low water. One other possible interpretation of this sentence has occurred to me, just barely worth mentioning;—that the 'twinn'd stones' are the *augrim* stones upon the number'd beech, that is, the astronomical tables of beech-wood.

Act v. sc. 5.

Sooth. When as a lion's whelp, &c.

It is not easy to conjecture why Shakspeare should have introduced this ludicrous scroll, which answers no one purpose, either propulsive, or explicatory, unless as a joke on etymology.

TITUS ANDRONICUS.

Act i. sc. 1. Theobald's note.

I never heard it so much as intimated, that he (Shakspeare) had turned his genius to stage-writing, before he associated with the players, and became one of their body.

That Shakspeare never 'turned his genius to stage-writing,' as Theobald most *Theobaldice* phrases it, before he became an actor, is an assertion of about as much authority, as the precious story that he left Stratford for deer-stealing, and that he lived by holding gentlemen's horses at the doors of the theatre, and other trash of that arch-gossip, old Aubrey. The metre is an argument against Titus Andronicus being Shakspeare's, worth a score such chronological surmises. Yet I incline to think that both in this play and in Jeronymo, Shakspeare wrote some passages, and that they are the earliest of his compositions.

Act v. sc. 2.

I think it not improbable that the lines from—

I am not mad; I know thee well enough;
* * * * * * *
So thou destroy Rapine, and Murder there,

were written by Shakspeare in his earliest period. But instead of the text—

Revenge, *which makes the foul offender quake.*
Tit. Art thou Revenge? and art thou sent to me?—

the words in italics ought to be omitted.

TROILUS AND CRESSIDA.

Mr. Pope (after Dryden) informs us, that the story of Troilus and Cressida was originally the work of one Lollius, a Lombard: but Dryden goes yet further; he declares it to have been written in Latin verse, and that Chaucer translated it.—*Lollius was a historiographer of Urbino in Italy.* Note in Stockdale's edition, 1807.

'Lollius was a historiographer of Urbino in Italy.' So affirms the notary, to whom the Sieur Stockdale committed the *disfacimento* of Ayscough's excellent edition of Shakspeare. Pity that the researchful notary has not either

told us in what century, and of what history, he was a writer, or been simply content to depose, that Lollius, if a writer of that name existed at all, was a somewhat somewhere. The notary speaks of the *Troy Boke* of Lydgate, printed in 1513. I have never seen it ; but I deeply regret that Chalmers did not substitute the whole of Lydgate's works from the MSS. extant, for the almost worthless Gower.

The Troilus and Cressida of Shakspeare can scarcely be classed with his dramas of Greek and Roman history ; but it forms an intermediate link between the fictitious Greek and Roman histories, which we may call legendary dramas, and the proper ancient histories ; that is, between the Pericles or Titus Andronicus, and the Coriolanus, or Julius Cæsar. Cymbeline is a *congener* with Pericles, and distinguished from Lear by not having any declared prominent object. But where shall we class the Timon of Athens ? Perhaps immediately below Lear. It is a Lear of the satirical drama ; a Lear of domestic or ordinary life ;—a local eddy of passion on the high road of society, while all around is the week-day goings on of wind and weather ; a Lear, therefore, without its soul-searching flashes, its ear-cleaving thunder-claps, its meteoric splendours,—without the contagion and the fearful sympathies of nature, the fates, the furies, the frenzied elements, dancing in and out, now breaking through, and scattering, —now hand in hand with,—the fierce or fantastic group of human passions, crimes, and anguishes, reeling on the unsteady ground, in a wild harmony to the shock and the swell of an earthquake. But my present subject was Troilus and Cressida ; and I suppose that, scarcely knowing what to say of it, I by a cunning of instinct ran off to subjects on which I should find it difficult not to say too much, though certain after all that I should still leave the better part unsaid, and the gleaning for others richer than my own harvest.

Indeed, there is no one of Shakspeare's plays harder to characterize. The name and the remembrances connected with it, prepare us for the representation of attachment no less faithful than fervent on the side of the youth, and of sudden and shameless inconstancy on the part of the lady. And this is, indeed, as the gold thread on which the scenes are strung, though often kept out of sight and out of mind

by gems of greater value than itself. But as Shakspeare calls forth nothing from the mausoleum of history, or the catacombs of tradition, without giving, or eliciting, some permanent and general interest, and brings forward no subject which he does not moralize or intellectualize,—so here he has drawn in Cressida the portrait of a vehement passion, that, having its true origin and proper cause in warmth of temperament, fastens on, rather than fixes to, some one object by liking and temporary preference.

> There's language in her eye, her cheek, her lip,
> Nay, her foot speaks ; her wanton spirits look out
> At every joint and motive of her body.

This Shakspeare has contrasted with the profound affection represented in Troilus, and alone worthy the name of love ;—affection, passionate indeed,—swoln with the confluence of youthful instincts and youthful fancy, and growing in the radiance of hope newly risen, in short enlarged by the collective sympathies of nature ;—but still having a depth of calmer element in a will stronger than desire, more entire than choice, and which gives permanence to its own act by converting it into faith and duty. Hence with excellent judgment, and with an excellence higher than mere judgment can give, at the close of the play, when Cressida has sunk into infamy below retrieval and beneath hope, the same will, which had been the substance and the basis of his love, while the restless pleasures and passionate longings, like sea-waves, had tossed but on its surface,—this same moral energy is represented as snatching him aloof from all neighbourhood with her dishonour, from all lingering fondness and languishing regrets, whilst it rushes with him into other and nobler duties, and deepens the channel, which his heroic brother's death had left empty for its collected flood. Yet another secondary and subordinate purpose Shakspeare has inwoven with his delineation of these two characters,—that of opposing the inferior civilization, but purer morals, of the Trojans to the refinements, deep policy, but duplicity and sensual corruptions of the Greeks.

To all this, however, so little comparative projection is given,—nay, the masterly group of Agamemnon, Nestor, and Ulysses, and, still more in advance, that of Achilles, Ajax, and Thersites, so manifestly occupy the fore-ground,

that the subservience and vassalage of strength and animal courage to intellect and policy seems to be the lesson most often in our poet's view, and which he has taken little pains to connect with the former more interesting moral impersonated in the titular hero and heroine of the drama. But I am half inclined to believe, that Shakspeare's main object, or shall I rather say, his ruling impulse, was to translate the poetic heroes of paganism into the not less rude, but more intellectually vigorous, and more *featurely*, warriors of Christian chivalry,—and to substantiate the distinct and graceful profiles or outlines of the Homeric epic into the flesh and blood of the romantic drama,—in short, to give a grand history-piece in the robust style of Albert Durer.

The character of Thersites, in particular, well deserves a more careful examination, as the Caliban of demagogic life ;—the admirable portrait of intellectual power deserted by all grace, all moral principle, all not momentary impulse ;—just wise enough to detect the weak head, and fool enough to provoke the armed fist of his betters ;—one whom malcontent Achilles can inveigle from malcontent Ajax, under the one condition, that he shall be called on to do nothing but abuse and slander, and that he shall be allowed to abuse as much and as purulently as he likes, that is, as he can ;—in short, a mule,—quarrelsome by the original discord of his nature,—a slave by tenure of his own baseness,—made to bray and be brayed at, to despise and be despicable. 'Aye, Sir, but say what you will, he is a very clever fellow, though the best friends will fall out. There was a time when Ajax thought he deserved to have a statue of gold erected to him, and handsome Achilles, at the head of the Myrmidons, gave no little credit to his *friend Thersites !*'

Act iv. sc. 5. Speech of Ulysses :

> O, these encounterers, so glib of tongue,
> That give a *coasting* welcome ere it comes—

Should it be 'accosting ?' 'Accost her, knight, accost !' in the Twelfth Night. Yet there sounds a something so Shakspearian in the phrase—'give a coasting welcome,' ('coasting' being taken as the epithet and adjective of 'welcome,') that had the following words been, 'ere *they land*,' instead of 'ere it comes,' I should have preferred

the interpretation. The sense now is, 'that give welcome to a salute ere it comes.'

CORIOLANUS.

This play illustrates the wonderfully philosophic impartiality of Shakspeare's politics. His own country's history furnished him with no matter, but what was too recent to be devoted to patriotism. Besides, he knew that the instruction of ancient history would seem more dispassionate. In Coriolanus and Julius Cæsar, you see Shakspeare's good-natured laugh at mobs. Compare this with Sir Thomas Brown's aristocracy of spirit.

Act i. sc. 1. Coriolanus' speech :—

> He that depends
> Upon your favours, swims with fins of lead,
> And hews down oaks with rushes. Hang ye! Trust ye?

I suspect that Shakspeare wrote it transposed;

> Trust ye? Hang ye!

Ib. sc. 10. Speech of Aufidius :—

> Mine emulation
> Hath not that honour in't, it had; for where
> I thought to crush him in an equal force,
> True sword to sword; I'll potch at him some way,
> Or wrath, or craft may get him.—
> My valour's poison'd
> With only suffering stain by him for him
> Shall fly out of itself: nor sleep, nor sanctuary,
> Being naked, sick, nor fane, nor capitol,
> The prayers of priests, nor times of sacrifices,
> Embarquements all of fury, shall lift up
> Their rotten privilege and custom 'gainst
> My hate to Marcius.

I have such deep faith in Shakspeare's heart-lore, that I take for granted that this is in nature, and not as a mere anomaly; although I cannot in myself discover any germ of possible feeling, which could wax and unfold itself into such sentiment as this. However, I perceive that in this speech is meant to be contained a prevention of shock at the after-change in Aufidius' character.

Act. ii. sc. 1. Speech of Menenius :—

The most sovereign prescription in *Galen*, &c.

Was it without, or in contempt of, historical information that Shakspeare made the contemporaries of Coriolanus quote Cato and Galen? I cannot decide to my own satisfaction.

Ib. sc. 3. Speech of Coriolanus :—

Why in this wolvish gown should I stand here—

That the gown of the candidate was of whitened wool, we know. Does 'wolvish' or 'woolvish' mean 'made of wool'? If it means 'wolfish,' what is the sense?

Act. iv. sc. 7. Speech of Aufidius :

All places yield to him ere he sits down, &c.

I have always thought this, in itself so beautiful speech, the least explicable from the mood and full intention of the speaker of any in the whole works of Shakspeare. I cherish the hope that I am mistaken, and that, becoming wiser, I shall discover some profound excellence in that, in which I now appear to detect an imperfection.

JULIUS CÆSAR.

Act i. sc. 1.

Mar. What meanest *thou* by that? Mend me, thou saucy fellow!

THE speeches of Flavius and Marullus are in blank verse. Wherever regular metre can be rendered truly imitative of character, passion, or personal rank, Shakspeare seldom, if ever, neglects it. Hence this line should be read :—

What mean'st by that? mend me, thou saucy fellow!

I say regular metre: for even the prose has in the highest and lowest dramatic personage, a Cobbler or a Hamlet, a rhythm so felicitous and so severally appropriate, as to be a virtual metre.

Ib. sc. 2.

Bru. A soothsayer bids you beware the Ides of March.

If my ear does not deceive me, the metre of this line was

meant to express that sort of mild philosophic contempt, characterizing Brutus even in his first casual speech. The line is a trimeter,—each *dipobia* containing two accented and two unaccented syllables, but variously arranged, as thus ;—

A soothsayer | bids you beware | the Ides of March.

Ib. Speech of Brutus :

> Set honour in one eye, and death i' the other,
> And I will look on *both* indifferently.

Warburton would read 'death' for 'both' ; but I prefer the old text. There are here three things, the public good, the individual Brutus' honour, and his death. The latter two so balanced each other, that he could decide for the first by equipoise ; nay—the thought growing—that honour had more weight than death. That Cassius understood it as Warburton, is the beauty of Cassius as contrasted with Brutus.

Ib. Cæsar's speech :—

> He loves no plays,
> As thou dost, Antony ; he hears no music, &c.

This is not a trivial observation, nor does our poet mean barely by it, that Cassius was not a merry, sprightly man ; but that he had not a due temperament of harmony in his disposition. Theobald's Note.

O Theobald ! what a commentator wast thou, when thou would'st affect to understand Shakspeare, instead of contenting thyself with collating the text ! The meaning here is too deep for a line ten-fold the length of thine to fathom.

Ib. sc. 3. Casca's speech :—

> Be *factious* for redress of all these griefs ;
> And I will set this foot of mine as far,
> As who goes farthest.

I understand it thus : 'You have spoken as a conspirator ; be so in *fact*, and I will join you. Act on your principles, and realize them in a fact.'

Act ii. sc. 1. Speech of Brutus :—

> It must be by his death ; and, for my part,
> I know no personal cause to spurn at him,
> But for the general. He would be crown'd :
> How that might change his nature, there's the question.

——————And, to speak truth of Cæsar,
I have not known when his affections sway'd
More than his reason.
——————So Cæsar may ;
Then, lest he may, prevent.

This speech is singular ;—at least, I do not at present see into Shakspeare's motive, his *rationale*, or in what point of view he meant Brutus' character to appear. For surely—(this, I mean, is what I say to myself, with my present *quantum* of insight, only modified by my experience in how many instances I have ripened into a perception of beauties, where I had before descried faults ;) surely, nothing can seem more discordant with our historical preconceptions of Brutus, or more lowering to the intellect of the Stoico-Platonic tyrannicide, than the tenets here attributed to him—to him, the stern Roman republican ; namely,—that he would have no objection to a king, or to Cæsar, a monarch in Rome, would Cæsar but be as good a monarch as he now seems disposed to be ! How, too, could Brutus say that he found no personal cause—none in Cæsar's past conduct as a man ? Had he not passed the Rubicon ? Had he not entered Rome as a conqueror ? Had he not placed his Gauls in the Senate ?—Shakspeare, it may be said, has not brought these things forwards—True ;—and this is just the ground of my perplexity. What character did Shakspeare mean his Brutus to be ?

Ib. Speech of Brutus :—

For if thou *path*, thy native semblance on—

Surely, there need be no scruple in treating this 'path' as a mere misprint or mis-script for 'put.' In what place does Shakspeare,—where does any other writer of the same age—use 'path' as a verb for 'walk ?'

Ib. sc. 2. Cæsar's speech :—

She dreamt last night, she saw my *statue*—

No doubt, it should be *statua*, as in the same age, they more often pronounced 'heroes' as a trisyllable than dissyllable. A modern tragic poet would have written,—

Last night she dreamt, that she my statue saw—

But Shakspeare never avails himself of the supposed license of transposition, merely for the metre. There is always some logic either of thought or passion to justify it.

Act iii. sc. 1. Antony's speech :—

> Pardon me, Julius—here wast thou bay'd, brave hart;
> Here didst thou fall; and here thy hunters stand
> Sign'd in thy spoil, and crimson'd in thy death.
> *O world! thou wast the forest to this hart,*
> *And this, indeed, O world! the heart of thee.*

I doubt the genuineness of the last two lines ;—not because they are vile ; but first, on account of the rhythm, which is not Shakspearian, but just the very tune of some old play, from which the actor might have interpolated them ;—and secondly, because they interrupt, not only the sense and connection, but likewise the flow both of the passion, and, (what is with me still more decisive) of the Shakspearian link of association. As with many another parenthesis or gloss slipt into the text, we have only to read the passage without it, to see that it never was in it. I venture to say there is no instance in Shakspeare fairly like this. Conceits he has ; but they not only rise out of some word in the lines before, but also lead to the thought in the lines following. Here the conceit is a mere alien : Antony forgets an image, when he is even touching it, and then recollects it, when the thought last in his mind must have led him away from it.

Act iv. sc. 3. Speech of Brutus :—

> ——What, shall one of us,
> That struck the foremost man of all this world,
> But for *supporting robbers.*

This seemingly strange assertion of Brutus is unhappily verified in the present day. What is an immense army, in which the lust of plunder has quenched all the duties of the citizen, other than a horde of robbers, or differenced only as fiends are from ordinarily reprobate men ? Cæsar supported, and was supported by, such as these ;—and even so Buonaparte in our days.

I know no part of Shakspeare that more impresses on me the belief of his genius being superhuman, than this scene between Brutus and Cassius. In the Gnostic heresy it might have been credited with less absurdity than most of their dogmas, that the Supreme had employed him to create, previously to his function of representing, characters.

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA.

SHAKSPEARE can be complimented only by comparison with himself: all other eulogies are either heterogeneous, as when they are in reference to Spenser or Milton; or they are flat truisms, as when he is gravely preferred to Corneille, Racine, or even his own immediate successors, Beaumont and Fletcher, Massinger and the rest. The highest praise, or rather form of praise, of this play, which I can offer in my own mind, is the doubt which the perusal always occasions in me, whether the Antony and Cleopatra is not, in all exhibitions of a giant power in its strength and vigour of maturity, a formidable rival of Macbeth, Lear, Hamlet, and Othello. *Feliciter audax* is the motto for its style comparatively with that of Shakspeare's other works, even as it is the general motto of all his works compared with those of other poets. Be it remembered, too, that this happy valiancy of style is but the representative and result of all the material excellencies so expressed.

This play should be perused in mental contrast with Romeo and Juliet;—as the love of passion and appetite opposed to the love of affection and instinct. But the art displayed in the character of Cleopatra is profound; in this, especially, that the sense of criminality in her passion is lessened by our insight into its depth and energy, at the very moment that we cannot but perceive that the passion itself springs out of the habitual craving of a licentious nature, and that it is supported and reinforced by voluntary stimulus and sought-for associations, instead of blossoming out of spontaneous emotion.

Of all Shakspeare's historical plays, Antony and Cleopatra is by far the most wonderful. There is not one in which he has followed history so minutely, and yet there are few in which he impresses the notion of angelic strength so much;—perhaps none in which he impresses it more strongly. This is greatly owing to the manner in which the fiery force is sustained throughout, and to the numerous momentary flashes of nature counteracting the historic abstraction. As a wonderful specimen of the way in which Shakspeare lives up to the very end of this play, read the last part of the concluding scene. And if you would feel the judgment as well as the genius of Shakspeare in your

heart's core, compare this astonishing drama with Dryden's All For Love.

Act i. sc. 1. Philo's speech :

> His captain's heart
> Which in the scuffles of great fights hath burst
> The buckles on his breast, *reneges* all temper—

It should be 'reneagues,' or 'reniegues,' as 'fatigues,' &c.

Ib.

> Take but good note, and you shall see in him
> The triple pillar of the world transform'd
> Into a strumpet's *fool*.

Warburton's conjecture of 'stool' is ingenious, and would be a probable reading, if the scene opening had discovered Antony with Cleopatra on his lap. But, represented as he is walking and jesting with her, 'fool' must be the word. Warburton's objection is shallow, and implies that he confounded the dramatic with the epic style. The 'pillar' of a state is so common a metaphor as to have lost the image in the thing meant to be imaged.

Ib. sc. 2.

> Much is breeding ;
> Which, like the courser's hair, hath yet but life,
> And not a serpent's poison.

This is so far true to appearance, that a horse-hair, 'laid,' as Hollinshed says, 'in a pail of water,' will become the supporter of seemingly one worm, though probably of an immense number of small slimy water-lice. The hair will twirl round a finger, and sensibly compress it. It is a common experiment with school boys in Cumberland and Westmorland.

Act. ii. sc. 2. Speech of Enobarbus :—

> Her gentlewomen, like the Nereids,
> So many *mermaids*, tended her i' th' eyes,
> And made their bends adornings. At the helm
> A seeming mermaid steers.

I have the greatest difficulty in believing that Shakspeare wrote the first 'mermaids.' He never, I think, would have so weakened by useless anticipation the fine image immediately following. The epithet 'seeming' becomes so extremely improper after the whole number had been positively called 'so many mermaids.'

TIMON OF ATHENS.

Act i. sc. 1.

Tim. The man is honest.
Old Ath. *Therefore he will be,* Timon.
His honesty rewards him in itself

WARBURTON'S comment—'If the man be honest, for that reason he will be so in this, and not endeavour at the injustice of gaining my daughter without my consent'—is, like almost all his comments, ingenious in blunder; he can never see any other writer's thoughts for the mist-working swarm of his own. The meaning of the first line the poet himself explains, or rather unfolds, in the second. 'The man is honest!'—'True;—and for that very cause, and with no additional or extrinsic motive, he will be so. No man can be justly called honest, who is not so for honesty's sake, itself including its own reward.' Note, that 'honesty' in Shakspeare's age retained much of its old dignity, and that contradistinction of the *honestum* from the *utile*, in which its very essence and definition consists. If it be *honestum*, it cannot depend on the *utile*.

Ib. Speech of Apemantus, printed as prose in Theobald's edition:—

So, so! aches contract, and starve your supple joints!

I may remark here the fineness of Shakspeare's sense of musical period, which would almost by itself have suggested (if the hundred positive proofs had not been extant,) that the word 'aches' was then *ad libitum*, a dissyllable—*aitches*. For read it, 'aches,' in this sentence, and I would challenge you to find any period in Shakspeare's writings with the same musical or, rather dissonant, notation. Try the one, and then the other, by your ear, reading the sentence aloud, first with the word as a dissyllable and then as a monosyllable, and you will feel what I mean.[1]

[1] It is, of course, a verse,—

Achès contract, and starve your supple joints,—

and is so printed in all later editions. But Mr. C. was reading it in prose in Theobald; and it is curious to see how his ear detected the rhythmical necessity for pronouncing 'aches' as a dissyllable, although the metrical necessity seems for the moment to have escaped him. *Ed.*

Ib. sc. 2. Cupid's speech: Warburton's correction of—

> There taste, touch, all pleas'd from thy table rise—

into

> Th' ear, taste, touch, smell, &c.

This is indeed an excellent emendation.

Act. ii. sc. 1. Senator's speech:—

> —nor then silenc'd when
> 'Commend me to your master'—*and the cap*
> *Plays in the right hand, thus*:—

Either, methinks, 'plays' should be 'play'd,' or 'and' should be changed to 'while.' I can certainly understand it as a parenthesis, an interadditive of scorn; but it does not sound to my ear as in Shakspeare's manner.

Ib. sc. 2. Timon's speech: (Theobald.)

> And that unaptness made *you* minister,
> Thus to excuse yourself.

Read *your*;—at least I cannot otherwise understand the line. You made my chance indisposition and occasional unaptness your minister—that is, the ground on which you now excuse yourself. Or, perhaps, no correction is necessary, if we construe 'made you' as 'did you make;' 'and that unaptness did you make help you thus to excuse yourself.' But the former seems more in Shakspeare's manner, and is less liable to be misunderstood.[1]

Act iii. sc. 3. Servant's speech:—

> How fairly this lord strives to appear foul!—takes virtuous copies to be wicked; *like those that under hot, ardent, zeal would set whole realms on fire. Of such a nature is his politic love.*

This latter clause I grievously suspect to have been an addition of the players, which had hit, and, being constantly applauded, procured a settled occupancy in the prompter's copy. Not that Shakspeare does not elsewhere sneer at the Puritans; but here it is introduced so *nolenter volenter* (excuse the phrase) by the head and shoulders!—and is besides so much more likely to have been conceived in the age of Charles I.

Act iv. sc. 2. Timon's speech:—

> Raise me this beggar, and *deny't* that lord.—

Warburton reads 'denude.'

[1] 'Your' is the received reading now. *Ed.*

I cannot see the necessity of this alteration. The editors and commentators are, all of them, ready enough to cry out against Shakspeare's laxities and licenses of style, forgetting that he is not merely a poet, but a dramatic poet; that, when the head and the heart are swelling with fulness, a man does not ask himself whether he has grammatically arranged, but only whether (the context taken in) he has conveyed, his meaning. 'Deny' is here clearly equal to 'withhold;' and the 'it,' quite in the genius of vehement conversation, which a syntaxist explains by ellipses and *subauditurs* in a Greek or Latin classic, yet triumphs over as ignorances in a contemporary, refers to accidental and artificial rank or elevation, implied in the verb 'raise.' Besides, does the word 'denude' occur in any writer before, or of, Shakspeare's age?

ROMEO AND JULIET.

I HAVE previously had occasion to speak at large on the subject of the three unities of time, place, and action, as applied to the drama in the abstract, and to the particular stage for which Shakspeare wrote, as far as he can be said to have written for any stage but that of the universal mind. I hope I have in some measure succeeded in demonstrating that the former two, instead of being rules, were mere inconveniences attached to the local peculiarities of the Athenian drama; that the last alone deserved the name of a principle, and that in the preservation of this unity Shakspeare stood pre-eminent. Yet, instead of unity of action, I should greatly prefer the more appropriate, though scholastic and uncouth, words homogeneity, proportionateness, and totality of interest,—expressions, which involve the distinction, or rather the essential difference, betwixt the shaping skill of mechanical talent, and the creative, productive, life-power of inspired genius. In the former each part is separately conceived, and then by a succeeding act put together;—not as watches are made for wholesale—(for there each part supposes a preconception of the whole in some mind)—but more like pictures on a motley screen. Whence arises the harmony that strikes us in the wildest natural landscapes,—in the relative shapes of rocks, the harmony of colours

in the heaths, ferns, and lichens, the leaves of the beech and the oak, the stems and rich brown branches of the birch and other mountain trees, varying from verging autumn to returning spring,—compared with the visual effect from the greater number of artificial plantations? —From this, that the natural landscape is effected, as it were, by a single energy modified *ab intra* in each component part. And as this is the particular excellence of the Shakspearian drama generally, so is it especially characteristic of the Romeo and Juliet.

The groundwork of the tale is altogether in family life, and the events of the play have their first origin in family feuds. Filmy as are the eyes of party-spirit, at once dim and truculent, still there is commonly some real or supposed object in view, or principle to be maintained; and though but the twisted wires on the plate of rosin in the preparation for electrical pictures, it is still a guide in some degree, an assimilation to an outline. But in family quarrels, which have proved scarcely less injurious to states, wilfulness, and precipitancy, and passion from mere habit and custom, can alone be expected. With his accustomed judgment, Shakspeare has begun by placing before us a lively picture of all the impulses of the play; and, as nature ever presents two sides, one for Heraclitus, and one for Democritus, he has, by way of prelude, shown the laughable absurdity of the evil by the contagion of it reaching the servants, who have so little to do with it, but who are under the necessity of letting the superfluity of sensoreal power fly off through the escape-valve of wit-combats, and of quarrelling with weapons of sharper edge, all in humble imitation of their masters. Yet there is a sort of unhired fidelity, an *ourishness* about all this that makes it rest pleasant on one's feelings. All the first scene, down to the conclusion of the Prince's speech, is a motley dance of all ranks and ages to one tune, as if the horn of Huon had been playing behind the scenes.

Benvolio's speech—

> Madam, an hour before the worshipp'd sun
> Peer'd forth the golden window of the east—

and, far more strikingly, the following speech of old Montague—

> Many a morning hath he there been seen
> With tears augmenting the fresh morning's dew–

prove that Shakspeare meant the Romeo and Juliet to approach to a poem, which, and indeed its early date, may be also inferred from the multitude of rhyming couplets throughout. And if we are right, from the internal evidence, in pronouncing this one of Shakspeare's early dramas, it affords a strong instance of the fineness of his insight into the nature of the passions, that Romeo is introduced already love-bewildered. The necessity of loving creates an object for itself in man and woman ; and yet there is a difference in this respect between the sexes, though only to be known by a perception of it. It would have displeased us if Juliet had been represented as already in love, or as fancying herself so ;—but no one, I believe, ever experiences any shock at Romeo's forgetting his Rosaline, who had been a mere name for the yearning of his youthful imagination, and rushing into his passion for Juliet. Rosaline was a mere creation of his fancy ; and we should remark the boastful positiveness of Romeo in a love of his own making, which is never shown where love is really near the heart.

When the devout religion of mine eye
Maintains such falsehood, then turn tears to fires !

* * * *

One fairer than my love ! the all-seeing sun
Ne'er saw her match, since first the world begun.

The character of the Nurse is the nearest of any thing in Shakspeare to a direct borrowing from mere observation ; and the reason is, that as in infancy and childhood the individual in nature is a representative of a class,—just as in describing one larch tree, you generalize a grove of them, —so it is nearly as much so in old age. The generalization is done to the poet's hand. Here you have the garrulity of age strengthened by the feelings of a long-trusted servant, whose sympathy with the mother's affections gives her privileges and rank in the household ; and observe the mode of connection by accidents of time and place, and the childlike fondness of repetition in a second childhood, and also that happy, humble, ducking under, yet constant resurgence against, the check of her superiors !—

Yes, madam !—Yet I cannot choose but laugh, &c.

In the fourth scene we have Mercutio introduced to us. O ! how shall I describe that exquisite ebullience and

overflow of youthful life, wafted on over the laughing waves of pleasure and prosperity, as a wanton beauty that distorts the face on which she knows her lover is gazing enraptured, and wrinkles her forehead in the triumph of its smoothness! Wit ever wakeful, fancy busy and procreative as an insect, courage, an easy mind that, without cares of its own, is at once disposed to laugh away those of others, and yet to be interested in them,—these and all congenial qualities, melting into the common *copula* of them all, the man of rank and the gentleman, with all its excellences and all its weaknesses, constitute the character of Mercutio!

Act i. sc. 5.

Tyb. It fits when such a villain is a guest;
I'll not endure him.
Cap. He shall be endur'd.
What, goodman boy!—I say, he shall:—Go to;—
Am I the master here, or you?—Go to.
You'll not endure him!—God shall mend my soul—
You'll make a mutiny among my guests!
You will set cock-a-hoop! you'll be the man!
Tyb. Why, uncle, 'tis a shame.
Cap. Go to, go to,
You are a saucy boy! &c.—

How admirable is the old man's impetuosity at once contrasting, yet harmonized, with young Tybalt's quarrelsome violence! But it would be endless to repeat observations of this sort. Every leaf is different on an oak tree; but still we can only say—our tongues defrauding our eyes—'This is another oak-leaf!'

Act ii. sc. 2. The garden scene:

Take notice in this enchanting scene of the contrast of Romeo's love with his former fancy; and weigh the skill shown in justifying him from his inconstancy by making us feel the difference of his passion. Yet this, too, is a love in, although not merely of, the imagination.

Ib.

Jul. Well, do not swear; although I joy in thee,
I have no joy of this contract to-night:
It is too rash, too unadvis'd, too sudden, &c.

With love, pure love, there is always an anxiety for the safety of the object, a disinterestedness, by which it is distinguished from the counterfeits of its name. Compare

this scene with Act iii. sc. 1. of the Tempest. I do not know a more wonderful instance of Shakspeare's mastery in playing a distinctly rememberable variety on the same remembered air, than in the transporting love confessions of Romeo and Juliet and Ferdinand and Miranda. There seems more passion in the one, and more dignity in the other ; yet you feel that the sweet girlish lingering and busy movement of Juliet, and the calmer and more maidenly fondness of Miranda, might easily pass into each other.

Ib. sc. 3. The Friar's speech :—

The reverend character of the Friar, like all Shakspeare's representations of the great professions, is very delightful and tranquillizing, yet it is no digression, but immediately necessary to the carrying on of the plot.

Ib. sc. 4.

Rom. Good morrow to you both. What counterfeit did I give you ? &c.

Compare again, Romeo's half-exerted, and half-real, ease of mind with his first manner when in love with Rosaline ! His will had come to the clenching point.

Ib. sc. 6.

Rom. Do thou but close our hands with holy words,
Then love-devouring death do what he dare,
It is enough I may but call her mine.

The precipitancy, which is the character of the play, is well marked in this short scene of waiting for Juliet's arrival.

Act iii. sc. 1.

Mer. No, 'tis not so deep as a well, nor so wide as a church door ; but 'tis enough : 'twill serve : ask for me to-morrow, and you shall find me a grave man, &c.

How fine an effect the wit and raillery habitual to Mercutio, even struggling with his pain, give to Romeo's following speech, and at the same time so completely justifying his passionate revenge on Tybalt !

Ib. Benvolio's speech :

But that he tilts
With piercing steel at bold Mercutio's breast.

This small portion of untruth in Benvolio's narrative is finely conceived.

Ib. sc. 2. Juliet's speech :

> For thou wilt lie upon the wings of night
> Whiter than new snow on a raven's back.—

Indeed the whole of this speech is imagination strained to the highest ; and observe the blessed effect on the purity of the mind. What would Dryden have made of it ?—

Ib.

> *Nurse.* Shame come to Romeo.
> *Jul.* Blister'd be thy tongue
> For such a wish !

Note the Nurse's mistake of the mind's audible struggles with itself for its decision *in toto*.

Ib. sc. 3. Romeo's speech :—

> 'Tis torture, and not mercy : heaven is here,
> Where Juliet lives, &c.

All deep passions are a sort of atheists, that believe no future.

Ib. sc. 5.

> *Cap.* Soft, take me with you, take me with you, wife—
> How ! will she none ? &c.

A noble scene ! Don't I see it with my own eyes ?—Yes ! but not with Juliet's. And observe in Capulet's last speech in this scene his mistake, as if love's causes were capable of being generalized.

Act iv. sc. 3. Juliet's speech :—

> O, look ! methinks I see my cousin's ghost
> Seeking out Romeo, that did spit his body
> Upon a rapier's point :—Stay, Tybalt, stay !—
> Romeo, I come ! this do I drink to thee.

Shakspeare provides for the finest decencies. It would have been too bold a thing for a girl of fifteen ;—but she swallows the draught in a fit of fright.

Ib. sc. 5.

As the audience know that Juliet is not dead, this scene is, perhaps, excusable. But it is a strong warning to minor dramatists not to introduce at one time many separate characters agitated by one and the same circumstance. It is difficult to understand what effect, whether that of pity or of laughter, Shakspeare meant to produce ; —the occasion and the characteristic speeches are so

little in harmony! For example, what the Nurse says is excellently suited to the Nurse's character, but grotesquely unsuited to the occasion.

Act v. sc. 1. Romeo's speech :—

> O mischief! thou art swift
> To enter in the thoughts of desperate men!
> I do remember an apothecary, &c.

This famous passage is so beautiful as to be self-justified; yet, in addition, what a fine preparation it is for the tomb scene!

Ib. sc. 3. Romeo's speech :—

> Good gentle youth, tempt not a desperate man,
> Fly hence and leave me.

The gentleness of Romeo was shown before, as softened by love; and now it is doubled by love and sorrow and awe of the place where he is.

Ib. Romeo's speech :—

> How oft when men are at the point of death
> Have they been merry! which their keepers call
> A lightning before death. O, how may I
> Call this a lightning?—O, my love, my wife! &c.

Here, here, is the master example how beauty can at once increase and modify passion!

Ib. Last scene.

How beautiful is the close! The spring and the winter meet;—winter assumes the character of spring, and spring the sadness of winter.

SHAKSPEARE'S ENGLISH HISTORICAL PLAYS.

The first form of poetry is the epic, the essence of which may be stated as the successive in events and characters. This must be distinguished from narration, in which there must always be a narrator, from whom the objects represented receive a colouring and a manner;—whereas in the epic, as in the so called poems of Homer, the whole is completely objective, and the representation is a pure reflection. The next form into which poetry passed was

the dramatic ;—both forms having a common basis with a certain difference, and that difference not consisting in the dialogue alone. Both are founded on the relation of providence to the human will ; and this relation is the universal element, expressed under different points of view according to the difference of religion, and the moral and intellectual cultivation of different nations. In the epic poem fate is represented as overruling the will, and making it instrumental to the accomplishment of its designs :—

——— Διὸς δὲ τελείετο βουλή.

In the drama, the will is exhibited as struggling with fate, a great and beautiful instance and illustration of which is the Prometheus of Æschylus ; and the deepest effect is produced, when the fate is represented as a higher and intelligent will, and the opposition of the individual as springing from a defect.

In order that a drama may be properly historical, it is necessary that it should be the history of the people to whom it is addressed. In the composition, care must be taken that there appear no dramatic improbability, as the reality is taken for granted. It must, likewise, be poetical ;—that only, I mean, must be taken which is the permanent in our nature, which is common, and therefore deeply interesting to all ages. The events themselves are immaterial, otherwise than as the clothing and manifestation of the spirit that is working within. In this mode, the unity resulting from succession is destroyed, but is supplied by a unity of a higher order, which connects the events by reference to the workers, gives a reason for them in the motives, and presents men in their causative character. It takes, therefore, that part of real history which is the least known, and infuses a principle of life and organization into the naked facts, and makes them all the framework of an animated whole.

In my happier days, while I had yet hope and onward-looking thoughts, I planned an historical drama of King Stephen, in the manner of Shakspeare. Indeed it would be desirable that some man of dramatic genius should dramatize all those omitted by Shakspeare, as far down as Henry VII. Perkin Warbeck would make a most interesting drama. A few scenes of Marlow's Edward II. might be preserved. After Henry VIII., the events are too well

and distinctly known, to be, without plump inverisimilitude, crowded together in one night's exhibition. Whereas, the history of our ancient kings—the events of their reigns, I mean,—are like stars in the sky ;—whatever the real interspaces may be, and however great, they seem close to each other. The stars—the events—strike us and remain in our eye, little modified by the difference of dates. An historic drama is, therefore, a collection of events borrowed from history, but connected together in respect of cause and time, poetically and by dramatic fiction. It would be a fine national custom to act such a series of dramatic histories in orderly succession, in the yearly Christmas holidays, and could not but tend to counteract that mock cosmopolitism, which under a positive term really implies nothing but a negation of, or indifference to, the particular love of our country. By its nationality must every nation retain its independence ;—I mean a nationality *quoad* the nation. Better thus ;—nationality in each individual, *quoad* his country, is equal to the sense of individuality *quoad* himself ; but himself as subsensuous, and central. Patriotism is equal to the sense of individuality reflected from every other individual. There may come a higher virtue in both—just cosmopolitism. But this latter is not possible but by antecedence of the former.

Shakspeare has included the most important part of nine reigns in his historical dramas—namely—King John, Richard II.—Henry IV. (two)—Henry V.—Henry VI. (three) including Edward V. and Henry VIII., in all ten plays. There remain, therefore, to be done, with the exception of a single scene or two that should be adopted from Marlow—eleven reigns—of which the first two appear the only unpromising subjects ;—and those two dramas must be formed wholly or mainly of invented private stories, which, however, could not have happened except in consequence of the events and measures of these reigns, and which should furnish opportunity both of exhibiting the manners and oppressions of the times, and of narrating dramatically the great events ;—if possible, the death of the two sovereigns, at least of the latter, should be made to have some influence on the finale of the story. All the rest are glorious subjects ; especially Henry Ist. (being the struggle between the men of arms and of letters, in the

persons of Henry and Becket,) Stephen, Richard I., Edward II., and Henry VII.

KING JOHN.

Act i. sc. 1.

Bast. James Gurney, wilt thou give us leave awhile?
Gur. Good leave, good Philip.
Bast. Philip? *sparrow!* James, &c.

THEOBALD adopts Warburton's conjecture of '*spare me.*'

O true Warburton! and the *sancta simplicitas* of honest dull Theobald's faith in him! Nothing can be more lively or characteristic than 'Philip? Sparrow!' Had Warburton read old Skelton's 'Philip Sparrow,' an exquisite and original poem, and, no doubt, popular in Shakspeare's time, even Warburton would scarcely have made so deep a plunge into the *bathetic* as to have deathified 'sparrow' into 'spare me!'

Act iii. sc. 2. Speech of Faulconbridge:—

Now, by my life, this day grows wondrous hot;
Some *airy* devil hovers in the sky, &c.

Theobald adopts Warburton's conjecture of 'fiery.'

I prefer the old text: the word 'devil' implies 'fiery.' You need only read the line, laying a full and strong emphasis on 'devil,' to perceive the uselessness and tastelessness of Warburton's alteration.

RICHARD II.

I HAVE stated that the transitional link between the epic poem and the drama is the historic drama; that in the epic poem a pre-announced fate gradually adjusts and employs the will and the events as its instruments, whilst the drama, on the other hand, places fate and will in opposition to each other, and is then most perfect, when the victory of fate is obtained in consequence of imperfections in the opposing will, so as to leave a final impression that the fate itself is but a higher and a more intelligent will.

From the length of the speeches, and the circumstance that, with one exception, the events are all historical, and presented in their results, not produced by acts seen by, or taking place before, the audience, this tragedy is ill suited to our present large theatres. But in itself, and for the closet, I feel no hesitation in placing it as the first and most admirable of all Shakspeare's purely historical plays. For the two parts of Henry IV. form a species of themselves, which may be named the mixed drama. The distinction does not depend on the mere quantity of historical events in the play compared with the fictions; for there is as much history in Macbeth as in Richard, but in the relation of the history to the plot. In the purely historical plays, the history forms the plot; in the mixed, it directs it; in the rest, as Macbeth, Hamlet, Cymbeline, Lear, it subserves it. But, however unsuited to the stage this drama may be, God forbid that even there it should fall dead on the hearts of jacobinized Englishmen! Then, indeed, we might say—*præteriit gloria mundi!* For the spirit of patriotic reminiscence is the all-permeating soul of this noble work. It is, perhaps, the most purely historical of Shakspeare's dramas. There are not in it, as in the others, characters introduced merely for the purpose of giving a greater individuality and realness, as in the comic parts of Henry IV., by presenting, as it were, our very selves. Shakspeare avails himself of every opportunity to effect the great object of the historic drama, that, namely, of familiarizing the people to the great names of their country, and thereby of exciting a steady patriotism, a love of just liberty, and a respect for all those fundamental institutions of social life, which bind men together:—

> This royal throne of kings, this scepter'd 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 home,
> Against the envy of less happier lands;
> This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England,
> This nurse, this teeming womb of royal kings,
> Fear'd by their breed, and famous by their birth, &c.

Add the famous passage in King John :—

> This England never did, nor ever shall,
> Lie at the proud foot of a conqueror,
> But when it first did help to wound itself.
> Now these her princes are come home again,
> Come the three corners of the world in arms,
> And we shall shock them : nought shall make us rue,
> If England to itself do rest but true.

And it certainly seems that Shakspeare's historic dramas produced a very deep effect on the minds of the English people, and in earlier times they were familiar even to the least informed of all ranks, according to the relation of Bishop Corbett. Marlborough, we know, was not ashamed to confess that his principal acquaintance with English history was derived from them ; and I believe that a large part of the information as to our old names and achievements even now abroad is due, directly or indirectly, to Shakspeare.

Admirable is the judgment with which Shakspeare always in the first scenes prepares, yet how naturally, and with what concealment of art, for the catastrophe. Observe how he here presents the germ of all the after events in Richard's insincerity, partiality, arbitrariness, and favoritism, and in the proud, tempestuous, temperament of his barons. In the very beginning, also, is displayed that feature in Richard's character, which is never forgotten throughout the play—his attention to decorum, and high feeling of the kingly dignity. These anticipations show with what judgment Shakspeare wrote, and illustrate his care to connect the past and future, and unify them with the present by forecast and reminiscence.

It is interesting to a critical ear to compare the six opening lines of the play—

> Old John of Gaunt, time-honour'd Lancaster,
> Hast thou, according to thy oath and band, &c.

each closing at the tenth syllable, with the rhythmless metre of the verse in Henry VI. and Titus Andronicus, in order that the difference, indeed, the heterogeneity, of the two may be felt *etiam in simillimis prima superficie*. Here the weight of the single words supplies all the relief afforded by intercurrent verse, while the whole represents the mood.

And compare the apparently defective metre of Bolingbroke's first line,—

Many years of happy days befall—

with Prospero's,

Twelve years since, Miranda! twelve years since—

The actor should supply the time by emphasis, and pause on the first syllable of each of these verses.

Act i. sc. 1. Bolingbroke's speech :—

First, (heaven be the record to my speech!)
In the devotion of a subject's love, &c.

I remember in the Sophoclean drama no more striking example of the τὸ πρέπον καὶ σεμνὸν than this speech; and the rhymes in the last six lines well express the preconcertedness of Bolingbroke's scheme so beautifully contrasted with the vehemence and sincere irritation of Mowbray.

Ib. Bolingbroke's speech :—

Which blood, like sacrificing Abel's, cries,
Even from the tongueless caverns of the earth,
To *me*, for justice and rough chastisement.

Note the δεινὸν of this 'to me,' which is evidently felt by Richard :—

How high a pitch his resolution soars!

and the affected depreciation afterwards ;—

As he is but my father's brother's son.

Ib. Mowbray's speech :—

In haste whereof, most heartily I pray
Your highness to assign our trial day.

The occasional interspersion of rhymes, and the more frequent winding up of a speech therewith—what purpose was this designed to answer? In the earnest drama, I mean. Deliberateness? An attempt, as in Mowbray, to collect himself and be cool at the close?—I can see that in the following speeches the rhyme answers the end of the Greek chorus, and distinguishes the general truths from the passions of the dialogue; but this does not exactly justify the practice, which is unfrequent in proportion to the excellence of Shakspeare's plays. One thing, however,

is to be observed,—that the speakers are historical, known, and so far formal, characters, and their reality is already a fact. This should be borne in mind. The whole of this scene of the quarrel between Mowbray and Bolingbroke seems introduced for the purpose of showing by anticipation the characters of Richard and Bolingbroke. In the latter there is observable a decorous and courtly checking of his anger in subservience to a predetermined plan, especially in his calm speech after receiving sentence of banishment compared with Mowbray's unaffected lamentation. In the one, all is ambitious hope of something yet to come; in the other it is desolation and a looking backward of the heart.

Ib. sc. 2.

> *Gaunt.* Heaven's is the quarrel; for heaven's substitute,
> His deputy anointed in his right,
> Hath caus'd his death: the which, if wrongfully,
> Let heaven revenge; for I may never lift
> An angry arm against his minister.

Without the hollow extravagance of Beaumont and Fletcher's ultra-royalism, how carefully does Shakspeare acknowledge and reverence the eternal distinction between the mere individual, and the symbolic or representative, on which all genial law, no less than patriotism, depends. The whole of this second scene commences, and is anticipative of, the tone and character of the play at large.

Ib. sc. 3. In none of Shakspeare's fictitious dramas, or in those founded on a history as unknown to his auditors generally as fiction, is this violent rupture of the succession of time found:—a proof, I think, that the pure historic drama, like Richard II. and King John, had its own laws.

Ib. Mowbray's speech:—

> A dearer *merit*
> Have I deserved at your highness' hands.

O, the instinctive propriety of Shakspeare in the choice of words!

Ib. Richard's speech:

> Nor never by advised purpose meet,
> To plot, contrive, or complot any ill,
> 'Gainst us, our state, our subjects, or our land.

Already the selfish weakness of Richard's character

opens. Nothing will such minds so readily embrace, as indirect ways softened down to their *quasi*-consciences by policy, expedience, &c.

Ib. Mowbray's speech :—

'. . . . . All the world's my way.'

'The world was all before him.'—*Milt.*

Ib.

Boling. How long a time lies in our little word!
Four lagging winters, and four wanton springs,
End in a word: such is the breath of kings.

Admirable anticipation!

Ib. sc. 4. This is a striking conclusion of a first act,—letting the reader into the secret ;—having before impressed us with the dignified and kingly manners of Richard, yet by well managed anticipations leading us on to the full gratification of pleasure in our own penetration. In this scene a new light is thrown on Richard's character. Until now he has appeared in all the beauty of royalty ; but here, as soon as he is left to himself, the inherent weakness of his character is immediately shown. It is a weakness, however, of a peculiar kind, not arising from want of personal courage, or any specific defect of faculty, but rather an intellectual femininess, which feels a necessity of ever leaning on the breasts of others, and of reclining on those who are all the while known to be inferiors. To this must be attributed as its consequences all Richard's vices, his tendency to concealment, and his cunning, the whole operation of which is directed to the getting rid of present difficulties. Richard is not meant to be a debauchee ; but we see in him that sophistry which is common to man, by which we can deceive our own hearts, and at one and the same time apologize for, and yet commit, the error. Shakspeare has represented this character in a very peculiar manner. He has not made him amiable with counterbalancing faults ; but has openly and broadly drawn those faults without reserve, relying on Richard's disproportionate sufferings and gradually emergent good qualities for our sympathy ; and this was possible, because his faults are not positive vices, but spring entirely from defect of character.

Act ii. sc. 1.

K. Rich. Can sick men play so nicely with their names?

Yes! on a death-bed there is a feeling which may make all things appear but as puns and equivocations. And a passion there is that carries off its own excess by plays on words as naturally, and, therefore, as appropriately to drama, as by gesticulations, looks, or tones. This belongs to human nature as such, independently of associations and habits from any particular rank of life or mode of employment; and in this consists Shakspeare's vulgarisms, as in Macbeth's—

The devil damn thee black, thou cream-fac'd loon! &c.

This is (to equivocate on Dante's words) in truth the *nobile volgare eloquenza*. Indeed it is profoundly true that there is a natural, an almost irresistible, tendency in the mind, when immersed in one strong feeling, to connect that feeling with every sight and object around it; especially if there be opposition, and the words addressed to it are in any way repugnant to the feeling itself, as here in the instance of Richard's unkind language:

Misery makes sport to mock itself.

No doubt, something of Shakspeare's punning must be attributed to his age, in which direct and formal combats of wit were a favourite pastime of the courtly and accomplished. It was an age more favourable, upon the whole, to vigour of intellect than the present, in which a dread of being thought pedantic dispirits and flattens the energies of original minds. But independently of this, I have no hesitation in saying that a pun, if it be congruous with the feeling of the scene, is not only allowable in the dramatic dialogue, but oftentimes one of the most effectual intensives of passion.

K. Rich. Right; you say true: as Hereford's love, so his;
As theirs, so mine; and all be as it is.

The depth of this compared with the first scene:—

How high a pitch, &c.

There is scarcely anything in Shakspeare in its degree, more admirably drawn than York's character; his religious loyalty struggling with a deep grief and indignation at the king's follies; his adherence to his word and faith, once given in spite of all, even the most natural, feelings. You see in him the weakness of old age, and the overwhelming-

ness of circumstances, for a time surmounting his sense of duty,—the junction of both exhibited in his boldness in words and feebleness in immediate act; and then again his effort to retrieve himself in abstract loyalty, even at the heavy price of the loss of his son. This species of accidental and adventitious weakness is brought into parallel with Richard's continually increasing energy of thought, and as constantly diminishing power of acting;—and thus it is Richard that breathes a harmony and a relation into all the characters of the play.

Ib. sc. 2.

Queen. To please the king I did; to please myself
I cannot do it; yet I know no cause
Why I should welcome such a guest as grief,
Save bidding farewell to so sweet a guest
As my sweet Richard: yet again, methinks,
Some unborn sorrow, ripe in sorrow's womb,
Is coming toward me; and my inward soul
With nothing trembles: at something it grieves,
More than with parting from my lord the king.

It is clear that Shakspeare never meant to represent Richard as a vulgar debauchee, but a man with a wantonness of spirit in external show, a feminine *friendism*, an intensity of woman-like love of those immediately about him, and a mistaking of the delight of being loved by him for a love of him. And mark in this scene Shakspeare's gentleness in touching the tender superstitions, the *terræ incognitæ* of presentiments, in the human mind; and how sharp a line of distinction he commonly draws between these obscure forecastings of general experience in each individual, and the vulgar errors of mere tradition. Indeed it may be taken once for all as the truth, that Shakspeare, in the absolute universality of his genius, always reverences whatever arises out of our moral nature; he never profanes his muse with a contemptuous reasoning away of the genuine and general, however unaccountable, feelings of mankind.

The amiable part of Richard's character is brought full upon us by his queen's few words—

. . . . so sweet a guest
As my sweet Richard;—

and Shakspeare has carefully shown in him an intense love of his country, well-knowing how that feeling would, in a pure

historic drama, redeem him in the hearts of the audience. Yet even in this love there is something feminine and personal :—

> Dear earth, I do salute thee with my hand,—
> As a long parted mother with her child
> Plays fondly with her tears, and smiles in meeting ;
> So weeping, smiling, greet I thee, my earth,
> And do thee favour with my royal hands.

With this is combined a constant overflow of emotions from a total incapability of controlling them, and thence a waste of that energy, which should have been reserved for actions, in the passion and effort of mere resolves and menaces. The consequence is moral exhaustion, and rapid alternations of unmanly despair and ungrounded hope,—every feeling being abandoned for its direct opposite upon the pressure of external accident. And yet when Richard's inward weakness appears to seek refuge in his despair, and his exhaustion counterfeits repose, the old habit of kingliness, the effect of flatterers from his infancy, is ever and anon producing in him a sort of wordy courage which only serves to betray more clearly his internal impotence. The second and third scenes of the third act combine and illustrate all this :—

Aumerle. He means, my lord, that we are too remiss ;
Whilst Bolingbroke, through our security,
Grows strong and great, in substance, and in friends.
K. Rich. Discomfortable cousin ! know'st thou not,
That when the searching eye of heaven is hid
Behind the globe, and lights the lower world,
Then thieves and robbers range abroad unseen,
In murders and in outrage, boldly here ;
But when, from under this terrestrial ball,
He fires the proud tops of the eastern pines,
And darts his light through every guilty hole,
Then murders, treasons, and detested sins,
The cloke of night being pluck'd from off their backs,
Stand bare and naked, trembling at themselves ?
So when this thief, this traitor, Bolingbroke, &c.

* * * *

Aumerle. Where is the Duke my father with his power ?
K. Rich. No matter where ; of comfort no man speak :
Let's talk of graves, of worms, and epitaphs,
Make dust our paper, and with rainy eyes
Write sorrow on the bosom of the earth, &c.

* * * *

Aumerle. My father hath a power, enquire of him ;
And learn to make a body of a limb.

K. Rich. Thou chid'st me well: proud Bolingbroke, I come
To change blows with thee for our day of doom.
This ague-fit of fear is over-blown;
An easy task it is to win our own.
* * * *

Scroop. Your uncle York is join'd with Bolingbroke.—
* * * *

K. Rich. Thou hast said enough,
Beshrew thee, cousin, which didst lead me forth
Of that sweet way I was in to despair!
What say you now? what comfort have we now?
By heaven, I'll hate him everlastingly,
That bids me be of comfort any more.
* * * *

Act iii. sc. 3. Bolingbroke's speech:

> Noble lord,
> Go to the rude ribs of that ancient castle, &c.

Observe the fine struggle of a haughty sense of power and ambition in Bolingbroke with the necessity for dissimulation.

Ib. sc. 4. See here the skill and judgment of our poet in giving reality and individual life, by the introduction of accidents in his historic plays, and thereby making them dramas, and not histories. How beautiful an islet of repose—a melancholy repose, indeed—is this scene with the Gardener and his Servant. And how truly affecting and realizing is the incident of the very horse Barbary, in the scene with the Groom in the last act!—

Groom. I was a poor groom of thy stable, King,
When thou wert King; who, travelling towards York,
With much ado, at length have gotten leave
To look upon my sometimes master's face.
O, how it yearn'd my heart, when I beheld,
In London streets, that coronation day,
When Bolingbroke rode on roan Barbary!
That horse, that thou so often hast bestrid;
That horse, that I so carefully have dress'd!

K. Rich. Rode he on Barbary?

Bolingbroke's character, in general, is an instance how Shakspeare makes one play introductory to another; for it is evidently a preparation for Henry IV., as Gloster in the third part of Henry VI. is for Richard III.

I would once more remark upon the exalted idea of the only true loyalty developed in this noble and impressive play. We have neither the rants of Beaumont and

Fletcher, nor the sneers of Massinger ;—the vast importance of the personal character of the sovereign is distinctly enounced, whilst, at the same time, the genuine sanctity which surrounds him is attributed to, and grounded on, the position in which he stands as the convergence and exponent of the life and power of the state.

The great end of the body politic appears to be to humanize, and assist in the progressiveness of, the animal man ;—but the problem is so complicated with contingencies as to render it nearly impossible to lay down rules for the formation of a state. And should we be able to form a system of government, which should so balance its different powers as to form a check upon each, and so continually remedy and correct itself, it would, nevertheless, defeat its own aim ;—for man is destined to be guided by higher principles, by universal views, which can never be fulfilled in this state of existence,—by a spirit of progressiveness which can never be accomplished, for then it would cease to be. Plato's Republic is like Bunyan's Town of Man-Soul,—a description of an individual, all of whose faculties are in their proper subordination and interdependence ; and this it is assumed may be the prototype of the state as one great individual. But there is this sophism in it, that it is forgotten that the human faculties, indeed, are parts and not separate things ; but that you could never get chiefs who were wholly reason, ministers who were wholly understanding, soldiers all wrath, labourers all concupiscence, and so on through the rest. Each of these partakes of, and interferes with, all the others.

HENRY IV. PART I.

Act i. sc. 1. King Henry's speech :

> No more the thirsty entrance of this soil
> Shall daub her lips with her own children's blood.

A MOST obscure passage : but I think Theobald's interpretation right, namely, that 'thirsty entrance' means the dry penetrability, or bibulous drought, of the soil. The obscurity of this passage is of the Shakspearian sort.

Ib. sc. 2. In this, the first introduction of Falstaff,

observe the consciousness and the intentionality of his wit, so that when it does not flow of its own accord, its absence is felt, and an effort visibly made to recall it. Note also throughout how Falstaff's pride is gratified in the power of influencing a prince of the blood, the heir apparent, by means of it. Hence his dislike to Prince John of Lancaster, and his mortification when he finds his wit fail on him :—

P. John. Fare you well, Falstaff : I, in my condition,
Shall better speak of you than you deserve.

Fal. I would you had but the wit ; 'twere better than your dukedom.—Good faith, this same young sober-blooded boy doth not love me ;—nor a man cannot make him laugh.

Act ii. sc. 1. Second Carrier's speech :—

. . . . breeds fleas like a *loach.*

Perhaps it is a misprint, or a provincial pronunciation, for 'leach,' that is, blood-suckers. Had it been gnats, instead of fleas, there might have been some sense, though small probability, in Warburton's suggestion of the Scottish 'loch.' Possibly 'loach,' or 'lutch,' may be some lost word for dovecote, or poultry-lodge, notorious for breeding fleas. In Stevens's or my reading, it should properly be 'loaches,' or 'leeches,' in the plural ; except that I think I have heard anglers speak of trouts like *a* salmon.

Act iii. sc. 1.

Glend. Nay, if you melt, then will she run mad.

This 'nay' so to be dwelt on in speaking, as to be equivalent to a dissyllable –ᴗ, is characteristic of the solemn Glendower ; but the imperfect line

She bids you
On the wanton rushes lay you down, &c.

is one of those fine hair-strokes of exquisite judgment peculiar to Shakspeare ; — thus detaching the Lady's speech, and giving it the individuality and entireness of a little poem, while he draws attention to it.