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# SHAKSPERE Personal Recollections

BY

COLONEL JOHN A. JOYCE

*Author of "Checkered Life," "Peculiar Poems," "Zig-Zag," "Jewels of Memory,"  
"Complete Poems," "Oliver Goldsmith," "Edgar Allan Poe,"  
"Brick-bats and Bouquets," "Beautiful  
Washington," "Songs," etc.*

*Nations unborn, adown the tides of time  
Shall keep thy name and fame and thought sublime,  
And o'er the rolling world from age to age  
Thy characters shall thrill the mimic stage!*

—JOYCE.



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BY

COLONEL JOHN A. JOYCE

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Your Friend.  
William Shakespeare.

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### **DEDICATION.**

*I dedicate this book to the reader who has energy enough to borrow it, bullion enough to buy it, and brains enough to understand its philosophy, with the fervent hope that posterity may reap, thresh and consume the golden grain of my literary harvest.*

J. A. J.

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### **PREFACE.**

It would be a flagrant presumption and a specimen of magnificent audacity for any man, but myself, to attempt, to give anything new about the personal and literary character of William Shakspeare!

I speak of William as I knew him, child, boy and man, from a spiritual standpoint, living with him in soul-lit love for three hundred and forty years!

Those who doubt my dates, facts and veracity are to be pitied, and have little appreciation of romantic poetry, comedy, tragedy and history!

It is well known among my intimate friends, that I sprang from the race of Strulbugs, who live forever, originating on the island of Immortality, on the coast of Japan—more than a million years ago.

I do not give the name of the play, act or scene, in head or foot lines, in my numerous quotations from Shakspeare, designedly leaving the reader to trace and find for himself a liberal education by studying the wisdom of the Divine Bard.

There are many things in this volume that the ordinary mind will not understand, yet I only contract with the present and future generations to give rare and rich food for thought, and cannot undertake to furnish the reader brains with each book!

J. A. J.

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## SWEEPSTAKES.

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Shakspeare was the greatest delver into the mysterious mind of man and Nature, and sunk his intellectual plummet deeper into the ocean of thought than any mortal that ever lived, before or after his glorious advent upon the earth. He was a universal ocean of knowledge, and the ebb and flow of his thoughts pulsated on the shores of every human passion.

He was a mountain range of ideals, and has been a quarry of love, logic and liberty for all

writers and actors since his day and age, out of which they have built fabrics of fame.

No matter how often and numerous have been the "blasts" set off in his rocky foundations, the driller, stone mason and builder of books have failed to lessen his mammoth resources, and every succeeding age has borrowed rough ashlers, blocks of logic and pillars of philosophy from the inexhaustible mine of his divine understanding.

He was an exemplification and consolidation of his own definition of greatness:

*"Some are born great, some achieve greatness and some have greatness thrust upon them."*

The poet finds in Shakspeare a blooming garden of perennial roses, the painter finds colors of heavenly hues, the musician finds seraphic songs and celestial aspirations, the sculptor finds models of beauty and truth, the doctor finds pills and powders of Providence, the lawyer finds suits and briefs of right and reason, the preacher finds prophecies superior to Isaiah or Jeremiah, the historian finds lofty romance more interesting than facts and the actor "struts and frets" in the Shaksperian looking-glass of to-day, in the mad whirl of the mimic stage, with all the pomp and glory of departed warriors, statesmen, fools, princes and kings. [xi]

Shakspeare was grand master of history, poetry and philosophy—tripartite principles of memory, imagination and reason. He is credited with composing thirty-seven plays, comedies, tragedies and histories, as well as Venus and Adonis, The Rape of Lucrece, The Lovers' Complaint, The Passionate Pilgrim and one hundred and fifty-four classical sonnets, all poems of unrivaled elegance.

What a royal troop of various and universal characters leaped from the portals of his burning brain, to stalk forever down the center of the stage of life, exemplifying every human passion!

Shakspeare never composed a play or poem without a purpose, to satirize an evil, correct a wrong or elevate the human soul into the lofty atmosphere of the good and great. His villains and heroes are of royal mold, and while he lashes with whips of scorn the sin of cupidity, hypocrisy and ingratitude, he never forgets to glorify love, truth and patriotism.

Virtue and vice are exhibited in daily, homespun dress, and stalking abroad through the centuries, the generous and brave nobility of King Lear, Cæsar, Othello, and Hamlet, will be seen in marked contrast to Shylock, Brutus, Cassius, Iago, Gloster and Macbeth. His fools and wits were philosophers, while many of his kings, queens, dukes, lords and ladies were sneaks, frauds and murderers. [xii]

Vice in velvet, gold and diamonds, suffered under the X-rays of his divine phrases, while virtue was winged with celestial plumes, soaring away into the heaven of peace and bliss. He was the matchless champion of stern morality, and the interpreter of universal reason.

Shakspeare was a multifarious man, and every glinting passion of his soul found rapid and eloquent expression in words that beam and burn with eternal light. The stream of time washes away the fabrics of other poets, but leaves the adamantine structure of Shakspeare erect and uninjured.

Being surcharged, for three hundred and forty years, with the spirit and imagination of Shakspeare, I shall tell the world about his personal and literary life, and although some curious and unreasonable people may not entirely believe everything I relate in this volume, I can only excuse and pity their judgment, for they must know that the *Ideal* is the *Real*!

The intellectual pyramids of his thought still rise out of the desert wastes of literary scavengers and loom above the horizon of all the great writers and philosophers that preceded his advent on the globe.

The blunt, licentious Saxon words and sentences in the first text of Shakspeare, have been ruthlessly expurgated by his editorial commentators, adding, no doubt, to the beauty and decency of the plays, but sadly detracting from their original strength. [xiii]

Pope, Jonson, Steevens and even Malone have made so many minute, technical changes in the Folio Plays of 1623, printed seven years after the death of Shakspeare, that their presumptive elucidation often drivels into obscurity.

Editorial critics, with the best intention, have frequently edited the blood, bone and sinews of the original thought out of the works of the greatest authors. While attempting to simplify the text for common, rough readers, they mystify the matter by their egotistical explanation, and while showing their superior research and classical learning, they eliminate the chunk logic force of the real author.

For thirty years Shakspeare studied the variegated book of London life, with all the human oddities, and when spring and summer covered the earth with primroses, flowers and hawthorn blossoms, he rambled over domestic and foreign lands, through fields, forests, mountains and stormy seas.

With the fun of Falstaff, the firmness of Cæsar, the generosity of King Lear and the imagination of Hamlet, Shakspeare also possessed the love-lit delicacy of Ophelia, Portia and Juliet, reveling familiarly with the spirits of water, earth and air, in his kingdom of living ghosts. He borrowed words and ideas from all the ancient philosophers, poets and story tellers, and shoveling them,

pell-mell, into the furnace fires of his mammoth brain, fused their crude ore, by the forced draught of his fancy, into the laminated steel of enduring form and household utility.

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The rough and uncouth corn of others passed through the hoppers of Shakspeare's brain and came out fine flour, ready for use by the theatrical bakers. With the pen of pleasure and brush of fancy he painted human life in everlasting colors, that will not fade or tarnish with age or wither with the winds of adversity. The celestial sunlight of his genius permeated every object he touched and lifted even the vulgar vices of earth into the realms of virtue and beauty.

Shakspeare was an intellectual atmosphere that permeated and enlivened the world of thought. His genius was as universal as the air, where zephyr and storm moved at the imperial will of this Grand Master of human passions.

Principles, not people, absorbed the mammoth mind of Shakspeare, who paid little attention to the princes and philosophers of his day. Schools, universities, monks, priests and popes were rungs in the ladder of his mind, and only noticed to scar and satirize their hypocrisy, bigotry and tyranny with his javelins of matchless wit. The flower and fruit of thought sprang spontaneously from his seraphic soul.

He flung his phrases into the intellectual ocean of thought, and they still shine and shower down the ages like meteors in a midnight sky. Like the busy bee, he banqueted on all the blossoms of the globe and stored the honey of his genius in the lofty crags of Parnassus.

Shakspeare and Nature were confidential friends, and, while she gave a few sheaves of knowledge to her other children, the old Dame bestowed upon the "Divine" William the harvest of all the ages.

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Shakspeare's equipoise of mind, placidity of conduct and control of passion rendered him invulnerable to the shafts of envy, malice and tyranny, making him always master of the human midgets or vultures that circled about his pathway.

One touch from the brush of his imagination on the rudest dramatic canvas illuminated the murky scene and flashed on the eye of the beholder the rainbow colors of his matchless genius.

Ben Jonson, Greene, Marlowe, Fletcher and Burbage gazed with astonishment at the versatility of his poetic and dramatic creations, and while pangs of jealousy shot athwart their envious souls, they knew that the Divine Bard was soaring above the alpine crags of thought, leaving them at the foothills of dramatic venture.

He played the rôle of policy before peasant, lord and king, and used the applause and brain of each for his personal advancement, and yet he never sacrificed principle for pelf or bedraggled the skirts of virtue in the gutter of vice.

The Divine William knew more about everything than any other man knew about anything! He had a carnivorous and omnivorous mind, with a judicial soul, and controlled his temper with the same inflexible rule that Nature uses when murmuring in zephyrs or shrieking in storms, receding or advancing in dramatic thought, as peace or passion demanded.

He seemed at times to be a medley of contradictions, and while playing virtue against vice, the reader and beholder are often left in doubt as to the guilt or glory of the contending actors. He puts words of wisdom in the mouth of a fool, and foolish phrases in the mouth of the wise, and shuttlecocked integrity in the loom of imagination.

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William was the only poet who ever had any money sense, and understood the real value of copper, silver, gold, jewels and land. His early trials and poverty at Stratford, with the example of his bankrupt father was always in view, convincing him early in life that ready money was all-powerful, purchasing rank, comfort and even so-called love.

Yet he only valued riches as a means of doing good, puncturing the bladder of bloated wealth with this pin of thought:

*"If thou art rich, thou art poor;  
For, like an ass whose back with ingots bows,  
Thou bearest thy heavy riches but a journey,  
And Death unloads thee!"*

He noticed wherever he traveled that successful stupidity, although secretly despised, was often the master of the people, while a genius with the wisdom of the ages, starved at the castle gate, and like Mozart and Otway, found rest in the Potter's field.

No Indian juggler could mystify the ear and eye and mind of an audience like Shakspeare, for, over the crude thoughts of other dramatic writers he threw the glamour of his divine imagination, making the shrubs, vines and briers of life bloom into perpetual flowers of pleasure and beauty.

*With his mystic wand he mesmerized all,  
And peasants transformed to kings;  
While age after age in cottage and hall,  
He soars with imperial wings.*

No one mind ever comprehended Shakspeare, and even all the authors and readers that

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sauntered over his wonderful garden of literary flowers and fruits have but barely clipped at the hedge-rows of his philosophy, culling a few fragmentary mementos from his immortal productions.

Shakspeare's chirography was almost as variable as his mind, and when he sat down to compose plays for the Globe and Blackfriars theatres, in his room adjacent to the Miter Tavern, he dashed off chunks of thought for pressing and waiting actors and managers, piecing them together like a cabinet joiner or machinist.

In all his compositions he used, designedly, a pale blue ink that evaporated in the course of a year, and the cunning actors and publishers, who knew his secret, copied and memorized and printed his immortal thoughts. He kept a small bottle of indelible ink for ideals on parchment for posterity.

I have often found his room littered and covered with numbered sheets of scenes and acts, ready for delivery to actors for recital, and many times the sunset over London would run its round to sunrise and find William at his desk in the rookery, hammering away on the anvil of thought, fusing into shape his divine masterpieces.

Shakspeare's bohemian life was but an enlarged edition of his rural vagabond career through the fields and alehouses of Warwickshire. He only needed about four hours' sleep in twenty-four, but when composition on occasion demanded rapidity, he could work two days and rise from his labor as fresh as a lark from the flowery bank of Avon.

Most of the great writers of antiquity patterned after greater than themselves, but Shakspeare evolved from the illuminated palace of his soul the songs and sentiments that move the ages and make him the colossal champion of beauty, mercy, charity, purity, courage, love and truth.

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There are more numerous nuggets of thought in the works of Shakspeare than in all the combined mass of ancient and modern literature.

The various bibles, composed and manufactured by man, cannot compare in variety, common sense and eloquence, with the productions of the Immortal Bard.

All the preachers, bishops, popes, kings, and emperors that have ever conjured up texts and creeds for dupes, devotees and designers to swallow without question, have never yet sunk the plummet of reason so deep in the human heart as the butcher boy of Stratford!

Shakspeare was the most industrious literary prospector and miner of any land or time, throwing his searchlight of reason into the crude mass of Indian, Assyrian, Persian, Egyptian, Greek, Roman, Frank, German, Russian and Briton lore, and forthwith appropriated the golden beauties of each nation, leaving behind the dross of vice and vulgarity.

Marlowe, Burbage, Peele, Chapman, Greene and Jonson composed many fine physical and licentious dramas, pandering to the London groundlings, bloated wealth and accidental power; but Shakspeare threw a spiritual radiance over their brutal, sordid phrases and elevated stage characters into the realm of romantic thought, pinioned with hope, love and truth. His sublime imagination soared away into the flowery uplands of Divinity, and plucked from the azure wings of angels brilliant feathers of fancy that shall shine and flutter down the ages.

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He flung his javelin of wit through the buckler of ignorance, bigotry and tyranny, exposing their rotten bodies to the ridicule and hate of mankind.

In lordly language he swept over the harp strings of the heart with infinite expression and comprehension of words, leaving in his intellectual wake a multifarious heritage of brain jewels. He flew over the world like a swarm of bees, robbing all the fields of literature of their secret sweets, storing the rich booty of Nature in the honeycomb of his philosophic hive.

Through his brain the variegated paraphernalia of Nature, in field, forest, vale, mount, river, sea and sky were illuminated with a divine radiance that shall shine forever and grow greater as mankind grows wiser.

Shakspeare has paid the greatest tribute of respect of any writer to women. While he gives us a few scolding, licentious, cruel, criminal women, like Dame Quickly, Katharina, Tamora, Gertrude and Lady Macbeth, he gives us the beautiful, faithful, loving characters of Isabella, Juliet, Desdemona, Perdita, Helena, Miranda, Imogen, Ophelia and Cordelia, whose love-lit words and phrases shine out in the firmament of purity and devotion like morning stars in tropic skies.

Shakspeare studied all trades and professions he encountered in daily contact with mankind. He thought what he was and was what he thought! To him a sermon was a preacher, a writ a lawyer, a pill a doctor, a sail a sailor, a sword a soldier, a button a tailor, a nail a carpenter, a hammer a blacksmith, a trowel a stone mason, a pebble a geologist, a flower a botanist, a ray of light an astronomer, and even a *word* gave him ample suggestion to build up an empire of thought.

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He sailed upon the tides and currents of the human heart, and steered through the cliffs and caverns of the brain with greater glory than those who sought the golden "fleece" among the enchanting waters of Ionian isles.

Shakspeare conjured the characters of his plays from elemental principles, measures not men, breathing and acting in his divine atmosphere. It is strange and marvelous that he never wrote a line about the great men that lived and wrote in his day and age, although Cervantes, Rubens,

Camoens, Bruno, Drake, Raleigh, Calderon, Corneille, Rembrandt, Kepler, Galileo, Montaigne, Beaumont and Fletcher, Sidney, Marlowe, Bacon and Ben Jonson were contemporaneous authors, poets, dramatists, navigators, soldiers, astronomers and philosophers.

Licentious phrases and actions were universal in Shakspeare's time, and from the corrupt courts of King Henry the Eighth, Elizabeth and King James, to the cot of the peasant and trail of the tavern, morality hid her modest head and only flourished among the puritans and philosophers who kept alive the flame of love and liberty.

Dryden, Spenser, Sidney, Marlowe and Jonson infected literature with a species of eloquent vulgarity, and Shakspeare, willing to please, readily infused into his various plays sensuous phrases to catch the rabble cheers and purpled applause. While he worshiped nature, he never failed to bend the knee for ready cash, and often paid fulsome tribute to lords and ladies, who flattered his vanity and ministered to his "itching palm."

[xxi]

Physical passion, mental license and social tyranny ruled in home, church and state, where Rome and Reformation struggled viciously for the mastery.

There are nuggets of golden thought still scattered through the plays of Shakspeare that no author or actor has ever discovered, and although they have read and repeated his lines, for more than three hundred years, there has been no brain able and brilliant enough to delve into or explain the secret caves of Shaksperian wit. Human sparrows cannot know the eagle flights of divine philosophy.

The golden gilt of imagination decorated his phrases and the lambent light of his philosophy shone like the rosy dawn upon a field of variegated wild flowers. The hut and the cottage were transformed into lordly castles while the rocks and the hills became ranges of mountain, whose icy pinnacles reflected back the shimmering light of suns and stars.

Shakspeare was a man of universal moods and like a chameleon took color and force from every object he touched. The draughts he took from the deep flowing wells of nature made no diminution in the volume of his thought, that rushed through his seething brain like an underground cataract filled from eternal springs.

Fresh from the mint of his mind fell the clinking, golden coin of universal value, bearing the glowing stamp of his genius, unrivaled in the annals of time. Since he wrote and acted, no man ever understood the depths of his wit and logic, or the height of his imagination and philosophy. The human mackerel cannot know the human whale.

[xxii]

Shallow, presumptive college bookworms, arrogant librarians and classical compilers, have attempted to explain his plays and sonnets, in footnotes, but they have only been entangled in the briars and flowers of his fancy, finding themselves suffocated at last, in the luxurious fields of his eloquent rhetoric and universal wisdom.

School-teachers, professors, priests, preachers, popes, and princes are brushed aside by the cutting phrases of Shakspeare and go down to earth like grass before the scythe of this rustic reaper. They are dumfounded by his matchless mysterious logic. Religion, law and medicine are pitchforked about by the Divine William on the threshing floor of his literary granary, where he separates wheat from chaff, instanter, leaving the beholder mystified by the splendid result.

Viewing the great minds of the world from Homer to Humboldt, Shakspeare never had an equal or superior, standing on the pinnacle of the pyramid of human renown, and lifting his mammoth mental form above the other philosophers of the earth as Mount St. Elias soars above its brother peaks.

Distance lends a wizard enchantment to his lofty form and down the rolling ages his glory will grow greater until the whole universe is luminous with the dazzling lights of his eternal fame.

*Such god-like men shall never die;  
They shine as suns in tropic sky,  
And thrill the world with truth and love  
Derived from nature far above.*

[xxiii]

Shakspeare's mind was pinioned with celestial imagination, and his rushing flight circled the shores of omnipotence. He taught us that ignorance was a crime, a murky night without a single star to light the traveler on his weary way.

Those who have attempted to fathom the depths of the Shaksperian ocean of thought, have only rounded the rim or skimmed over the surface of its illimitable magnificence. Tossed about by the billows of Shakspeare's brain, for three hundred and forty years mankind like a ship in a storm, still wonders and runs on the reefs of his understanding, to be wrecked in their vain calculation of his divine wisdom.

Leaving the beaten paths of oriental and middle age writers, he dashed deep into the forest of nature and surveyed for himself a new dominion of thought, that has never been occupied before or since his birth. Like a comet of universal light, he shines over the world with the warm glow of celestial knowledge.

With the tuning key of his matchless genius he struck the chords of sorrow to their inmost tone and played on the heart strings of joy with the tender vibrations of an æolian harp, trembling

with melodious echoes among the wild flowers of ecstatic passion.

And to clap the climax and fathom the logic of love, he eloquently exclaims:

"Love is not love that alters when it alteration finds!"

J. A. J.

[xxiii]

Stratford. April 1st. 1616.  
 My dear Shool mate and  
 soul friend.  
 It is my will &  
 testification that after  
 three hundred & forty  
 years from my birth  
 you shall tell the world  
 the true history of my  
 personal & literary life.  
 Above all men I have  
 met, you have the most true  
 faith, bravery & imagination.  
 We part - far not!  
 So soon  
 Yours  
 William Shakspeare.

## Shakspeare: Personal Recollections

[1]

### CHAPTER I.

#### BIRTH. SCHOOL DAYS. SHOWS.

*"One touch of Nature makes the whole world kin."*

William Shakspeare was born on the 23d of April, 1564, at the town of Stratford, on the river Avon, Warwickshire County, England; and died in the same town on the 23d of April, 1616, exactly fifty-two years of age, the date of his birth being the date of his death, a remarkable coincidence of spiritual assimilation.

For several centuries, his ancestors served their king and crown in war and peace; and were noted in their day and age as country "gentlemen," a term much more significant then than now, when even dressed up "dandy" frauds may lay claim to this much-abused title.

The grandfather of Shakspeare fought on Bosworth Field with King Henry the Seventh, and was rewarded for his military service, leaving to his son John, the father of the "Divine" William, influence enough to secure the position of a country squire and made him bailiff and mayor of the town of Stratford.

[2]

John Shakspeare, in addition to his judicial duties, dabbled in trade as a wool dealer and glove maker, and when he lost influence and office he resorted to the business of a butcher to secure bread, meat and shelter for his large family.

He married the youngest daughter of Robert Arden, a very beautiful girl of Wilmcote, a small village three miles from Stratford. When Arden died, Mary, his favorite daughter, was bequeathed thirty-six dollars, and a small farm of fifty acres, near the town of Snitterfield. Good inheritance for that age.

The Arden family were strict Roman Catholics; and Edward Arden, high sheriff of Warwickshire, was executed in 1583, for plotting against her majesty, Queen Elizabeth. Those were lively days, when the followers of the Pope and King Henry the Eighth, banished, burned and hung presumptive heretics for opinion's sake! The lechery and greed of King Hal was the primary cause of his separation from papal authority, augmenting the Reformation by licentious royalty.

John Shakspeare and Mary, his good wife, did not seem to have much of an education, for in signing deeds of conveyance, they only made their mark like thousands of the yeomanry of England.



Shakspere was a very common name in Warwickshire and the surrounding counties, and while the "Divine" William glorified the whole race, there were others of his name who fought for king and crown.

John Shakspere had ten children, with the affectionate assistance of Mary Arden. Seven daughters and three boys, William being the third child and the most active and robust. Several of the flock died, thereby reducing the trials and expenses of the household; the "old man" seeming to be one of those ancient "Mulberry Sellers," that was forever making "millions" in his mind, and chasing gold bags at the west end of rainbows!

[3]

For many years he persistently applied to the College of Heralds for a "coat of arms;" and finally in the year of 1599, a picture of a "shield" with a "spear" and "falcon," rampant, was awarded to the Shakspere family, all through the growing influence of the actor and author William, who had become famous and wealthy. John Shakspere did not enjoy the glory of his "coat of arms" very long, for we find that he died in September, 1601, and was buried on the 8th of that month, at the old church in Stratford, and his brave old wife, the mother of William Shakspere, followed him to the tomb on the 9th of September, 1608.

I first met Will Shakspere on the 23d of April, 1571, at the old log and board schoolhouse at the head of Henley street, Stratford, on the river Avon. It was a bright, sunny day, and Mr. Walter Roche, the Latin master, was the autocrat of the scholastic institution, afterwards succeeded by Thomas Hunt.

Will Shakspere and myself happened to be born on the same day, and our first entrance at the temple of knowledge marked exactly the seventh milestone of our fleeting years.

Will was a very lusty, rollicking boy and was as full of innocent mischief as a pomegranate is of seeds. He was handsome and bright, wearing a thick suit of auburn curls, that rippled over his shoulders like a waterfall in the sunshine. His eyes were very large, a light hazel hue, that glistened into blue when his soul was stirred by passion. His forehead was broad and high, even as a boy, rounding off into that "dome of thought" that in later years, when a six-foot specimen of splendid manhood caused him to conjure up such a universal group of immortal characters.

[4]

His nose was long and high, but symmetrical, and his distended nostrils, when excited at play, would remind you of a Kentucky racehorse in motion. His voice was sonorous and musical, and when stirred by passion or pleasure it rose and fell like the sound of waves upon a stormy or summer sea. His lips were red and full, marked by Nature, with the "bow of beauty," and when his luminous countenance was flushed with celestial light, he shot the arrows of love-lit glances around the schoolroom and fairly magnetized the boys, and particularly the girls, with the radiant influence of his unconscious genius.

Will was a constant source of anxiety and wonder to the teacher, who often marked him as the scapegoat to carry off the surface sins of sneaking and cowardly pupils. Corporal punishment was part of school discipline, and William and myself got our share of the rule and rod.

Through all the centuries, in youth and age, private and public, the scapegoat has been the real hero in all troubles and misfortunes. He seems to be a necessary mortal, but while persecution relentlessly pursues him, he almost invariably triumphs over his enemies, and when even devoted to the prison, the stake or the scaffold, as a martyr, he triumphs over the grave and is monumented in the memory of mankind for his bravery and silent self-sacrifice!

[5]

For seven school years Will and myself were daily companions. Spring, with its cowslips and primroses, and hawthorn blossoms, found us rambling through the woods and fields, and angling for the finny tribe disporting in the purling waters of the crystal Avon.

Summer brought its grain and fruits, with boys and girls scrambling over hedges, fences, stiles and brooks, in search of berries and ripe apples; autumn with its nuts, birds and hares, invited us to hunting grounds, along the rolling ridges and the dense forest of Arden, even poaching on the domain of Sir Thomas Lucy and the royal reaches of Warwick Castle, and old winter with his snowy locks and whistling airs brought the roses to our young cheeks, skipping and sporting through his fantastic realm like the snow birds whirling in clumps of clouds across the withered world.

Looking back over the fields, forests and waters of the past through the variegated realms of celestial imagination, I behold after the lapse of more than three centuries of human wrecks, the brilliant boys and glorious girls I played with in childhood years—still shining as bright and fresh as the flowers and fruits of yesterday!

*"For we are the same our fathers have been,  
We see the same sights our fathers have seen,  
We drink the same streams and view the same sun,  
And run the same course our fathers have run!"*

[6]

I remember well the first time Will and myself attended a theatrical performance. It was on the first of April, 1573, when we were about nine years of age.

A strolling band of comic, and Punch and Judy players had made a sudden invasion of Stratford and established themselves in the big barn of the old Bear Tavern on Bridge street.

The town was alive with expectation and the school children were wild to behold the great play

of "The Scolding Wife," which was advertised through the streets, in the daytime, by a cartload of bedizened harlequins, belaboring each other with words and gestures, the wife with bare arms, short dress and a bundle of rods, standing rampant over the prostrate form of a drunken husband.

Fifes, drums and timbrels kept up a frantic noise, filling the bylanes and streets of Stratford with astonished country louts and tradesmen, until the fantastic parade ended in the wagon yard of the tavern.

The old barn had been rigged up as a rustic playhouse, the stage covering one end, elevated about three feet from the threshing floor. Curtains with daub pictures were strung across the stage, separated in the center and shifted backward and forward, as the varying scenes of the family play were presented for the hisses or cheers of the variegated audience.

The play consisted of three acts, showing the progress of courtship and marriage at the altar, country and town life with growing children, work, poverty, and final windup of the husband driven from home by the scolding wife, bruised in an alehouse, dead and followed to the graveyard by the Beadle, undertaker and a brindle dog.

The climax scene of the play exhibited the wife with a bundle of rods, surrounded by ragged children, driving out into a midnight storm the husband of her bosom, while peals of thunder and flashes of lightning brought goose pimples and shivers to the frightened audience.

The impression made upon the mind of William and myself did not give us a very hopeful view of married life, and while the haphazard working, drinking habits of the husband seemed to deserve all the punishment he received, the modesty, benevolence and beauty of woman was shattered in our young souls.

On our way home from the country-tragedy performance we were gladdened by the thought, that although the rude, vulgar, criminal passions of mankind were portrayed and enacted day by day all over the globe, we could look up into the star-lit heavens and see those glittering lamps of night shining with reflected light on the murmuring bosom of the Avon, as it flowed in peaceful ripples to the Severn and from the Severn to the sea. Nature soothed our young hearts, and soon, in the mysterious realms of sleep, we forgot the sorrows and poverty of earth, tripping away with angelic companions through the golden fields of celestial dreams.

*"There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,  
Than are dreamt of in our philosophy."*

I shall never forget the great shows and pageants that took place in Warwickshire County, in July, 1575. All England was alive to the grand entrance of Queen Elizabeth to Kenilworth Castle, as the royal guest of her favorite, Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester. Proclamation had gone forth that all work be suspended, while yeoman, trader, merchant, doctor, lawyer, minister, lords and earls should pay a pilgrimage to Kenilworth and pay tribute to the Virgin Queen.

Stratford and the surrounding villages were aflame with enthusiasm, and as John Shakspeare, the alderman and mayor, took great interest in theatricals and particularly those festivities inaugurated for the entertainment of royalty, he led a great concourse of devoted patriots through the forests of Arden, blooming parks of Warwick Castle on to the grand surroundings of Kenilworth, where the people *en masse* camped, sang, danced, took part in country plays, feasted and went wild for eighteen days, over the illustrious daughter of Henry the Eighth.

William and myself were among the enthusiastic revelers, and for boys of twelve years of age, we felt more cheer than any of the lads and lasses from Stratford, because our parents furnished us with milk white ponies, to pay tribute, and typify the virtue and chastity of the "Virgin Queen!" We did not particularly care about virtue or virginity, so we shared in the cakes and ale that were lavished in profusion to the rural multitude.

A high grand throne made out of evergreens and wild flowers was erected in the central park of Kenilworth, rimmed in by lofty elms, oaks and sycamores.

There, through the fleeting days and nights, the Queen and her royal suite of a thousand purpled cavaliers and bejeweled maids of honor, held court and viewed the ever-changing, living panorama evolved for their entertainment. The Queen looked like a wilderness of lace and variegated velvet, irrigated with a shower of diamonds.

On the 9th of July Queen "Bess" and her illuminated suite entered the Castle of Kenilworth, and the hands of the clock in the great tower pointed to the hour of two, where they remained until her departure, as invitation to a continual banquet.

The Earl expended a thousand pounds a day for the fluid and food entertainment of his guests, while woodland bowers and innumerable tents were scattered through the royal domain generously donated to man and maid by night and day. We boys and girls seldom went to bed.

Companies of circus performers, and theatrical artists, from London and other towns were brought down to the heart of Old Albion to swell the pleasure of the reigning Queen. Continual plays were going on, while horn, fife, bugle and drum lent music to the kaleidoscopic revel.

Dancing, hunting, hawking and archery parties, through the day, lent their antics to the scene, and when night came with bright Luna showing her mystic face, forest fires, rockets and

[7]

[8]

[9]

illuminated balloons filled the air with celestial wonder, vieing with the stars in an effort to do universal honor to the "Virgin Queen!" That's what they called "Bess."

[10]

William and myself took part in several of the joint circus and theatrical performances, and at the conclusion of one of the plays—"Virtue Victorious," Queen Elizabeth called up William and a purple page named Francis Bacon, patted them on the head with her royal digits, and said they would soon be great men!

I must acknowledge that I felt a little envious at the encomium, not so much to William, as to the proud peacock, Bacon, who came in the train of the Queen.

At sunrise of the 27th of July, 1575, the festivities closed, and the royal cavalcade with a following of ten thousand loyal subjects, accompanied the ruling monarch to the borders of Warwickshire, with universal shouts and ovations on her triumphal march to London.

*"I would applaud thee to the very echo,  
That should applaud again."*

*"All that glitters is not gold,  
Often you have heard that told;  
Many a man his life hath sold  
But my outside to behold!"*

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## CHAPTER II.

[11]

### LAUNCHED. APPRENTICE BOY. AMBITION.

*"The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our Stars,  
But in ourselves that we are underlings."*

Will Shakspeare and myself left school when we were fourteen years of age. Our parents being reduced in worldly circumstances, needed the financial fruits of our labor.

Shakspeare was bound to a butcher named John Bull, for a term of three years, while I was put at the trade of stone-cutting with Sam Granite for the same period.

Will was one of the finest looking boys in the town of Stratford, aristocratic by nature, large and noble in appearance, and the pride of all the girls in the county of Warwick; for his fame as a runner, boxer, drinker, dancer, reciter, speaker, hunter, swimmer and singer was well known in the surrounding farms and villages, where he had occasion to drive, purchase and sell meat animals for his butcher boss, John Bull. Shakspeare's father assisted Bull in selling hides and buying wool.

In the winter of 1580, Will and myself joined a new thespian society, organized by the boys and girls of Stratford, with a contingent of theatrical talent from Shottery, Snitterfield, Leicester, Kenilworth and Coventry.

[12]

Strolling players, chartered by Queen Elizabeth and the Earl of Leicester, often visited Stratford and the surrounding towns, infusing into the young, and even the old, a desire for that innocent fun of tragic or comic philosophy that wandering minstrels and circus exhibitions generate in the human heart.

Plays of Roman, Spanish and German origin, as well as those of Old Albion, were enacted on our rural stage, and although we had not the paraphernalia and scenery of the London actors, we made up in frantic enthusiasm what we lacked in artistic finish, and often in our amateur exhibitions at balls, fairs, races and May Day Morris dances, we "astonished the natives," who paid from a penny to sixpence to see and hear the "Stratford Oriental Theatrical Company."

Shakspeare always took a leading part in every play, poem and declamation, but when an encore was given and a demand for a recitation on love, Will was in his natural element and gave the eager audience dashes from Ovid's Metamorphoses or Petrarch's Sonnets.

The local company had a large assortment of poetic and theatrical translations, and many of the boys and girls who had passed through the Latin school, could "spout" the rhythmic lines of Ovid, Virgil, Horace or Petrarch in the original language. And strange to say, the Warwickshire audience would cheer the Latin more than the English rendition, on the principle that the least you know about a thing the more you enjoy it! Thus pretense and ignorance make a stagger at information, and while fooling themselves, imagine that they fool their elbow neighbor!

[13]

Shakspeare had a most marvelous memory, and his sense of taste, smell, feeling, hearing and particularly seeing was abnormally developed, and constant practice in talking and copying verses and philosophic sentences made him almost perfect in his deductions and conclusions. He was a natural orator, and impressed the beholder with his superiority.

He had a habit of copying the best verses, dramatic phrases and orations of ancient authors, and then to show his superiority of epigrammatic, incisive style, he could paraphrase the poems

of other writers into his own divine sentences, using the crude ore of Homeric and Platonic philosophy, resolving their thoughts into the best form of classic English, lucid, brave and blunt!

I have often tested his powers of lightning observation with each of us running by shop windows in Stratford, Oxford or London, and betting a dinner as to who could name the greatest number of objects, and he invariably could name correctly three to my one. In visiting country farmers in search of cattle, sheep or pigs he could mount a stone fence or climb a hedge row gate, and by a glance over the field or meadow, give the correct number of animals in sight.

He was a wonder to the yeomanry of Warwickshire and the surrounding counties, and when he had occasion to rest for the night at farm houses or taverns, he was the prime favorite of the rural flames or bouncing, beaming barmaid. The girls went wild about him. The physical development of Shakspeare was as noticeable as his mental superiority. Often when he ploughed the placid waters of the Avon, or buffeted the breakers of the moaning sea, have I gazed in rapture at his manly, Adonis form, standing on the sands, like a Grecian wrestler, waiting for the laurel crown of the Olympic games.

[14]

*Great Shakspeare was endowed with heavenly light;  
He read the book of Nature day and night,  
And delving through the strata of mankind  
Divined the thoughts that thrilled the mystic mind,  
And felt the pulse of all the human race,  
While from their beating heart could surely trace  
The various passions that inspire the soul  
Around this breathing world from pole to pole!*

My family and the Hathaway household were on familiar terms, for my father at times worked an adjoining estate at the edge of the village of Shottery, a stragglng community of farmers and tradesmen, with the usual wheelwright, blacksmith shop, corn and meat store and alehouse attachments.

William, in his rural perambulations, often put up for the night at our cottage, and as there was generally some fun going on in the neighborhood after dark, I led him into many frolics with the boys and girls; and I can assure you he was a rusher with the fair sex, capturing the plums that fell from the tree of beauty and passion.

On a certain moonlight night, in the month of May, 1581, a large concourse of rural belles and beaux assembled at the home of John Dryden, washed by the waters of the Avon, and thrilled by the songs of the nightingales, thrushes and larks lending enchantment to the flitting hours.

[15]

Stratford, Snitterfield, Wilmcote and Shottery sent their contingent of roistering boys and girls to enjoy the moonlight lawn dance and rural feast set out under flowery bowers by the generous Dryden.

It would have done your heart good to see the variegated dresses, antics and faces of the happy rural belles. I see them as plain as ever in the looking-glass of memory. There is Laura Combs, plump and intelligent, Mary Scott, willowy and keen, Jennie Field, sedate and sterling, Mary Hall, musical and handsome, Annie Condell, modest and benevolent, Joyce Acton, witty and aristocratic, Lizzie Heminge, bouncing and beaming, Fannie Hunt, stately and kind, while Anne Hathaway, the big girl of the party, seemed to be the leader in all the innocent mischief of the evening.

William took a particular liking to the push and go of Anne, and she seemed to concentrate her gaze on his robust form at first sight. William asked me, as the friend of the family, to introduce him to Miss Hathaway, which I did in my best words, and away they went, on a hop, step and a jump through the Morris dance that was just then being enacted on the lawn.

The clarion notes of the farm cocks were saluting the rosy footsteps of the dawn when the various parties dispersed for home.

The last I saw of William he was helping Miss Hathaway over the rustic stile and hedge row that rimmed the old thatched cottage home of his new found flame.

[16]

It was a frigid day or night when William could not find something fresh and new among the fair sex, and like a king bee in a field of wild flowers, he sipped the nectar of love and beauty, and tossed carking care to the vagrant winds.

It was soon after this moonlight party that a picnic revel was given in the domain of Sir Hugh Clopton, near the old mill and stone bridge erected by that generous public benefactor.

The boys and girls of the town turned out *en masse*, and enjoyed the hawking, hunting, swimming, dancing, archery and boating that prevailed that day.

In the midst of the festivities, while a long line of rural beauties and beaux were prancing and rollicking on the bridge, a scream, and a flash of Dolly Varden dress in the river showed the struggling efforts of Anne Hathaway to keep her head above water.

One glance at the pride of his heart struggling for her life determined the soul of the athlete, when he plunged into the running stream, caught the arm of his adored as she was going down for the third time, and then with a few mighty sweeps of his brawny arm, he reached the shore

and heaved her on the sands in an almost lifeless condition. She was soon restored, however, by her numerous companions, with only the loss of a few ribbons and bunches of hawthorn blossoms that William had tied in her golden hair that morning.

William was the hero of the day, and his fame for bravery rung on the lips of the Warwickshire yeomanry, while in the heart of Anne Hathaway devotion reigned supreme. [17]

*"There is no love broker in the world can more prevail in man's commendation with woman than report of valor."*

The courtship of William and Anne was rapid, and although her father died only a few months before the 27th of November, 1582, license to marry was suddenly obtained through the insistence of the yeoman friends of the Hathaway family, Fulke-Sandells and John Richardson, who convinced the Lord Bishop of Worcester that one calling of the banns of matrimony was only necessary.

William left his home in Stratford immediately and took charge of Anne's cottage and farm, settling down as soon as one of his rollicking nature could realize that he had been virtually forced into marrying a buxom girl, eight years older than himself, and a woman of hot temper. Six months after marriage Susanna, his daughter was born, and about two years after, February 2d, 1585, his twin children Hammet and Judith were ushered into his cottage home, as new pledges of matrimonial felicity.

Things did not move on with William as happily after marriage as before, and while his wife did most of the work, the Bard of Nature preferred to shirk hard labor in field and wood, longing constantly to meet the "boys" at the tavern, or fish, sing, hunt and poach along the Avon.

Yoking Pegasus to a Flanders mare would be about as reasonable as joining a practical, honest woman with a poet! [18]

Water and hot oil will not mix, and the fires of genius cannot be curbed or subdued by material surroundings. Beef cannot appreciate brains!

Anne was constantly sand papering William about his vagabond life, and holding up the picture of ruin for her ancestral estate, by his thoughtless extravagance and determination to attend to other people's business instead of his own. As the wife was senior and business boss, the Bard endured these curtain lectures with meekness and surface sorrow and promises of reformation, but, when out of her sight continued in the same old rut of playing the clown and philosopher for the public amusement.

*"How hard it is to hide the spark of Nature!"*

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## CHAPTER III.

 [19]

### FARM LIFE. SPORTING. POACHING ON LUCY.

*"Hanging and wiving go by destiny!"*

The drudgery of farm work was not relished by Shakspeare, and the spring of 1586 found the man of destiny more engaged in the sports of Stratford and surrounding villages than in the production of corn, cabbage, turnips and potatoes. Where fun was to be found William raised the auction and the highest bidder at the booths of vanity fair. He was athletic in mind and body, and forever like a cribbed lion or caged eagle, struggled to shake off his rural environments and dash away into the world of thought and action.

Home, with its practical, daily gad grind morality and responsibility, had no charm for William, and his stalwart wife made matters worse by her continual importunities to her vagabond husband to settle down with the muttonhead clodhoppers and tradesmen of Warwickshire. He was not built that way!

Her farm logic fell upon deaf ears, for while she was preaching hard work he was reading the love-lit flights of Ovid and pondering over the sugared sonnets of Petrarch and Sir Philip Sidney, living in the realms of Clio, Euterpe and Terpsichore, preparing even then his pathway to the great poems of Venus and Adonis, Lucrece, the sonnets and the immortal plays that were incubating in the procreant soul of the Divine Bard. He was his own schoolmaster, drawing daily draughts from the universal fountains of Nature. [20]

And what a blessing it is to the public to have even a social scapegrace hatch out golden ideas for their education and amusement, notwithstanding the neglect of farm and family!

The greatest good to the greatest number is best for all time.

*"God moves in a mysterious way,  
His wonders to perform,  
He plants His footsteps in the sea  
And rides upon the storm."*

On the first of September, 1586, the lord high sheriff of Coventry invited the people to an archery and drinking contest.

Representatives from twenty-five villages and towns were selected, from the various working guilds and professions, to conquer or die (drunk) in the Queen's name for the honor of Old Albion.

Ceres, the Goddess of Harvest, had showered her riches on the fields and forests of Warwickshire, and to glorify her abundance, a great athletic and semimilitary carnival was thus given by the authorities to test the bravery, endurance and greatness of the sons of Saint George and the Dragon.

The beautiful, broad, undulating, winding highways, leading from Stratford, Warwick, Kenilworth and Birmingham to the ancient town of Coventry were filled with jolly pilgrims to pay devotion at the shrine of Hercules and Bacchus, with the influence of Venus as an ever-present incentive to passionate pleasure.

[21]

That bright September morning I well remember! Dame Nature was just donning her variegated gown of rustic-brown, while fitful airs from the realms of Jack Frost were painting the wild roses and forest leaves in cardinal hue, and the blackbird, thrush and musical nightingale flew low and sang hoarse, but continually, in their assemblages for migration to lands of sun and flowers.

From Kenilworth to Coventry the rural scenery is as various and beautiful as visions of a dream, and the undulating landscape by hill and dale, field and forest, river, marge, cottage, hall, church and castle, grouping themselves in shifting pictures of beauty and grandeur, where lofty elms and sycamores rise and bend their willowy arms to the passing breeze, indelibly impresses the beholder with a splendid kaleidoscopic view of English hospitality and agricultural cultivation.

The tall turrets of monasteries, castles and soaring church spires of Coventry looked luminous in the morning sunshine, while the brazen tongues of century bells rolled their mellifluous matin tones in voluminous welcome to the great multitude of revelers within her embattled walls and hospitable homes.

Promptly at nine o'clock in the morning, in the Leicester Park, twenty-five accoutered long bow men, in archery uniform, took their stand before the bull's eye targets two hundred yards away.

At the words "draw," "aim" and "fly" the whizzing arrows centered and shivered in the oak targets, and none hit the bull's but Will Shakspere of Stratford, who was proclaimed winner of the first prize, an ox, a barrel of sack and butt of wine, with the privilege of kissing every girl in the county.

[22]

The entire day was spent in all kinds of sports, and with roasts, joints, bread, pudding, sack, ale, gin, brandy and whiskey, the revelers did not break up until daylight, when all were laid under the table but William and his friends Burbage, Condell and Dick Field, who had come away from his printing house in London to witness one of the greatest rural sports of England.

Although Stratford was not a day's walk from Coventry, William and his friends did not succeed in getting back for three days, and often they traveled by the light of the moon believing it was the sun in midday splendor.

Anne Hathaway heard of William's official and social victory, not in the proud light of his Stratford and Shottery alehouse companions, but with a tongue like a gad, she proposed to lash him into shame as a husband or drive him from his cottage home to earn a living for his infant children.

William was a little dubious as to his reception, and in order to temper the storm to the "ambling lamb," he earnestly requested me to accompany him home, as a buffer to his contemplated reception, believing that Anne would mellow her words and actions in the presence of an old friend.

I respectfully declined his pressing invitation and twitted him on being afraid of a woman, when he plaintively exclaimed:

[23]

*Anne Hath-a-way that gives me pain,  
She scolds both day and night;  
Her tongue goes pattering like the rain  
And speeds my outward flight;  
I'll soon be gone to London town  
And leave her house and land  
Where I will gain some great renown  
That she may understand.*

I met William the next morning on his way to the Crown Tavern in search of a "Martini Cocktail," a new drink that an Indian from America had invented for Admiral Drake and Sir Walter Raleigh.

William bore the appearance of a man who had slept by a smoky chimney, or encountered the butt end of a threshing flail. He seemed sombre and muttered to himself:

*"When sorrows come they come not single  
But in battalions!"*

I joined him in liquidation at the tavern, for, to tell the truth, my throat felt like the rough edge of a buffalo robe, and my nerves trembled like aspen leaves in July.

When our usual village sports filed around the table, and glee and song once more prevailed, William began to soften in his statuesque attitude, and laughingly proposed that we "go a poaching" on the imprisoned animals and birds that Squire Lucy corraled for his special delectation, to the detriment of honest apprentices and pure-minded yeomanry.

His proposition was agreed to unanimously, and just as the sun tipped the treetops of the Charlecote domain, we had scared up a couple of fat deer, and sent our arrows through their trembling anatomy, and the number of hares, grouse and pigeons we slaughtered that evening kept the landlord of the Crown Tavern busy for two days to dish up to his jolly revelers. [24]

In this escapade we only imitated the aristocratic students of Oxford College, who frequently made inroads into lordly domains and took some of the treasures that God and Nature intended for all men, instead of being hatched, bred and watched by impudent and cruel gamekeepers, employed by tyrannical landlords, in defiance of the natural rights of the people.

Even the fish in the Avon, Severn and Bay were registered and claimed by scrubs of royalty for their exclusive use, fine and imprisonment being imposed for hunting on the land and fishing in the streams that God made for all men.

These parliamentary laws should be voted or bulletted out of the statute books, and the people again inherit their inalienable rights.

My friend William was arrested by the malicious Lucy, and the gamekeeper, Tom Snap, swore to enough facts to exile, hang and quarter the Bard.

Through the influence of his father and John A. Combe, William, the chief culprit, was not imprisoned, but compelled to pay a fine of one pound ten.

He did not have but three shillings, yet the boys secretly passed the hat around in the court yard and tavern, and soon extricated our chum from the toils of Sir Thomas Lucy. [25]

William did not have the courage to face his wife after a week's absence, and told me privately that he was going off instanter by the way of Oxford to London and seek his fortune.

I applauded his spunk and determination, and, at his solicitation willingly joined him in his eloquent rambles. My parents were both dead, and being of a bohemian tendency, my home has ever been on any spot of the earth where the sun rose or set. Pot luck suits me.

Natural freedom of body and mind has ever been my greatest delight and the artificial fashions and tyrannical laws of society I despise and defy, and shall to my dying day. My mind is my master.

Right is my religion and God is my instructor!

*"I must have liberty  
Withal, as large a charter as the wind  
To blow on whom I please."*

The evening before we left Stratford William wrote a short note to his wife and said that he would take her advice, leave the town, and seek his fortune in the whirlpool of grand old London.

I imagine that Anne was delighted to receive his impromptu note, for it left her one less mouth to feed; and William was equally satisfied to be relieved of the rôle of playing husband without any of the practical moral adjuncts.

In passing by the entrance gate to the lordly estate of Sir Thomas Lucy, or Justice Shallow, William nailed up the following poetic shot to the hot-headed old squire, which was read and copied the next morning, by all the market men going to town, and the tavern lads going to their country ploughs: [26]

*"The tyrant Thomas Lucy  
Lets no one go to mass,  
He's a squire for Queen Bess,  
And in Parliament an ass;  
Fair Charlecote is ruined  
By this bluffer of the state,  
And only his dependents  
Will dare to call him great.  
The deer and hares and pigeons  
Are imprisoned for his use,  
Yet, poaching lads from Stratford  
Pluck this strutting, feathered goose."*

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## CHAPTER IV.

### IN SEARCH OF PEACE AND FORTUNE.

*"Blessed are those whose blood  
And judgment are so commingled,  
That they are not a pipe for Fortune's finger  
'To sound what stop she pleases.'  
'Give me that man that is not passion's slave,'  
And I will wear him in my heart's core,  
Ay, in my heart of heart as I do thee."*

Early on the morning of the 9th of September, 1586, William and myself took our departure from the Crown Tavern. The landlord, Tom Gill, gave us a bottle of his best gin and brandy to cheer us on our way to fame and fortune. Fannie Hill, the barmaid, threw kisses at us until we rounded the corner of the street leading to the old Grammar School. We carried blackthorn cudgels to protect us from gamekeepers, lords and dogs.

As we passed the modest cottage where William's parents resided, he impulsively broke away from my presence to bid a long farewell to his angelic mother, and soon again he was at my side, flushed with pride and tears, exclaiming in undertone:

*A mother's love and fervent hope  
Are coined into our horoscope,  
And to our latest dying breath  
Her heart and soul are ours to death!*

[28]

In his clutched hand he held four gold "sovereigns" that his fond mother had given him at parting to help him in the daily trials of life, when no other friend could be so true and powerful. Gold gilds success.

"Here, Jack, keep two of these for yourself, and if I should ever be penniless, and you have gold, I know you will aid me in a pinch. The wine nature of your soul needs no bush."

*"We still have slept together,  
Rose at an instant, learned, played, eat together,  
And wherever we went like Juno's swans,  
Still we went coupled, and inseparable."*

"William," said I, "memory with her indelible signet shall long imprint this generous act of yours upon my soul, and when hundreds of years have passed, I shall tell of the undying friendship of two bohemians, who, day and night, set their own fashion, created a world of their own, and lived ecstatically, oscillating between the blunders of Bacchus and the vanity of Venus!"

William's heart was heavy when turning his back on father, mother, brother, sister, wife and children, at the age of twenty-two.

We passed along the Clopton stone bridge, and as we tramped over Primrose Hill looking back at the roofs and spires of Stratford, glinting in the morning light, the Bard uttered this impulsive dash of eloquence:

[29]

*Farewell, farewell! a sad farewell  
To glowing scenes of boyhood.  
Ye rocks, and rills and forests primeval  
List to my sighing soul, trembling on the tongue  
To vent its echoes in ambient air.  
No more shall wild eyed deer,  
Fretful hares, hawks and hounds  
Entrance mine ear and vision,  
Or frantically depart when  
Stealthy footsteps disturb the lark,  
Ere Phœbus' golden light  
Illuminates the dawn.  
Memory, many hued maiden,  
Oft in midnight hours  
Shall picture these eternal hills,  
And purling streams, rimmed by  
Vernal meadows;  
And pillowed even in the lap of misery  
Fantastic visions of thee  
Shall lull deepest woe to repose.  
And banqueting at yon alehouse,  
Nestling near blooming hedge and snowy  
Hawthorn, I shall live again  
In blissful dreams among the enchanting*



*Precincts of the silver, serpentine Avon.  
To thee I lift my hands in prayer  
Disappearing, and pinioned with Hope;  
Daughter of Love and sunrise—  
Go forth to multitudinous London,  
And, "buckle fortune on my back"  
"To bear her burden," to successful,  
Lofty heights of mind illimitable.*

With this apostrophe, we took a last look at the glinting gables and sparkling spires of Stratford, disappearing over the hill, our steps and faces turned to London town, that seething whirlpool of human woe and pleasure. [30]

The air was cold and the country roads were rutty and muddy, but the autumn landscape was beautiful, in its gray and purple garb, while the notes of flitting wild birds chirped and sang from bush, hedge, field and forest, in a mournful monotone to the fading glory of the year.

The various birds chattered in clumps along the highway, and then would rise over our heads in flitting flocks, steering their course to the south and seemingly accompanying us on our wandering way to the great metropolis.

In our zigzag course we passed through the towns of Ettington, Oxhill, Wroxton, Woodstock, Eversham and Oxford.

It was near sunset when the lofty towers and steeples of ancient Oxford, the great site of classic lore, met our view. In our haste to enter the city before dark, we jumped a hedge fence, and stone wall, making a short cross-cut over the lordly domain of the Earl of Norfolk, and just as we were again emerging into the great road, a gamekeeper was seen approaching with a huge mastiff, who rushed upon us like a lion.

We were near a rough wall, and it appeared to both of us that unless we stood for immediate fight the dog would tear us to pieces.

The gamekeeper urged the dog in his barking, mad career, but just as he made a grand leap at William's throat, his blackthorn cudgel came down with a whirl and broke the forelegs of the mastiff, sending him to earth with a growl and roar that could be heard over the castle walls that loomed up in the evening gray. The gamekeeper aimed a blunderbuss at the Bard, but ere he could fire the deadly weapon, I jumped on the petty tyrant whelp, and cudgeled his face into a macerated beefsteak. [31]

We then leaped the garden wall and rushed into the city crowd where the curtains of night screened us from dogs and licentious lords.

We found our way to the Crown Tavern, kept by Richard Devanant and his buxom black-eyed wife.

The old Boniface was jolly, but was in his physical and spiritual dotage, yet "Nell," his second wife, was the life of the place, being immensely popular with the Oxford students, who circled about the "Crown" in midnight hours, with hilarious independence, that defied the raids of beadles, watchmen and armed constabulary.

Those were gay and roystering days and nights when the greatest yeoman, tradesman, student, or lord, was the one who "drank his comrade under the table" and went away at sunrise like a lark, fluttering with dew from his downy wing, and soaring into the sky of beauty and action.

It was Saturday night when we pulled up at the old tavern, and there seemed to be a great crowd of town people celebrating some local event.

We soon found that the senior class of Oxonian students had conquered the senior class of Cambridge at a great game of inter-college football and the cheers and yells of Oxford bloods permeated the atmosphere until midnight.

A round table spread in the tavern hall was loaded with food and liquors, while songs and speeches were given with a vim, all boasting of the prowess and patriotism of Oxford. [32]

A number of strolling players and boxers were introduced during the evening.

A young lord named Bob Burleigh, was president of the club, while Mat Monmouth was the spokesman, who called on the various students and actors to entertain the town roysters who dropped in to see the free and easy celebration of the football victory.

While drowning our grief and loneliness in pewter pots of ale at a side table, in a snug corner, who should slap William on the shoulder but Ned Sadler, our old schoolmate from Stratford. Ned was a jolly rake, and had been in London sporting with theatrical companies, and, as a citizen of the world, was perfectly at home wherever night overtook him.

At the height of the college banquet Mat Monmouth announced that the president of the Cambridge Boxing Club had just challenged the president of the Oxford Club to fight, under the King's rule, for a purse of twenty guineas.

A wild cheer rent the room, and instanter the chairs and tables were pushed aside, when Dick

Milton and Jack Norfolk stepped into the improvised prize ring, made by the circling arms of the students.

Five rounds with gloves were to be fought, and the champion who knocked out his opponent three times, should be the victor.

Dick Milton, the Cambridge athlete, when "time" was called, rushed on Jack Norfolk, the Oxford man, with a blow that sent him over the circling arms and into the chairs. [33]

Score one for Dick.

Time was called, and Jack, although a little dazed, leaped at his opponent, who dodged the rush, and with a quick turn got in a left-hander on Jack's neck, and pastured him again among the yelling bloods.

Score two for Dick.

When time was called for the third round, the Oxford man looked bleary and tremulous, but with that bull-dog courage that never deserts an Englishman, he threw himself on the Cambridge man with great force and both went down with a crash.

Dick shook his opponent off like a terrier would a rat, and standing erect at the end of the room, waited for the call of time.

Jack Norfolk did not respond to the call.

Score three for Dick. Victory!

Then the yell of the Cambridge students could be heard among the turrets and gables of classic Oxford, a recompense for their defeat at the afternoon football game.

Dick Milton, flushed with wine and victory, held aloft the purse of guineas, and challenged any man in the room to fight him three rounds.

There seemed to be no immediate response, but I noticed a flush in the face of William, who modestly rose in his six-foot form and asked if the challenge included outside citizens?

Dick immediately replied, "You, or anybody in England." William said he did not know much about fighting with gloves, but if the gentleman would consent to three rounds with bare knuckles he would be pleased to accommodate him at once. [34]

"All right, toe the mark!"

Mat Monmouth called time.

Dick Milton made a tiger leap at William, and landed with his right eye on the right knuckles of the Stratford citizen. The quickness and science of the Bard was a great surprise to the Cambridge athlete, and when time was called he came up groggy with a funeral eye, on the defense, and not on the tiger attack.

Considerable sparring for place, and dodging about the human ring, was indulged in by Dick, but William foiled each blow, and as the Cambridge man inadvertently rubbed his swollen eye, the Bard landed a stinging blow on the left optic of Milton and sent him into the arms of the landlord.

When time was called, no response from the Cambridge champion was heard, and Mat Monmouth handed over the prize purse to William, when the Oxford lads cheered the Stratford stranger to the echo, and made him an honorary member of their athletic club.

*"Screw your courage to the sticking place,  
And we will not fail."*

At the second crow of the cock William and myself bid good-bye to the jolly Boniface and his fantastic spouse, who made a deep impression on the Bard. In fact, he was easily impressed when youth, beauty and pleasure reigned around, and had he been born in Kentucky, no blue ribbon stallion in the commonwealth could match his form, spirit or gait. [35]

Apollo with his rosy footsteps lit up hill, meadow and lawn, and kissed away the sparkling dewdrops of bush and hedge, cheering us on our way through the towns of Thane, over the Chilton Hills, on to Great Marlow, Maidenhead and renowned Windsor, where forest and castle thrilled the beholder with admiration for the works of Nature and Art.

It was late in the afternoon when we entered the broad highway to Windsor, passing numerous yeomen and tradespeople on their way to and from the royal domain of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth.

In striding along, with hearts light and airy, we were suddenly startled by cries of frantic yells coming from the rear, and looking around beheld a wild, runaway horse, and an open wagon with two young girls screaming for help.

To see, think and act was always the way of William, and as the horse rushed by with wagon and girls, nearly clipping our legs off, the Bard made a leap for the tail board of the vehicle and landed in the midst of the frightened girls. He then, as if inspired with the impulse of a tiger,

jumped on the back of the rushing animal, grabbed the trailing lines, and neck of the horse, and steered him into a huge box hedge row that skirted the castle walls of Windsor.

Every one went after the runaway to see the fate of the party; but strange to say, the horse was lodged high and dry in the hedge row, while William and the girls crawled out of the wreck without a scratch, soon recovering from the fear, trepidation and danger that but a moment before reigned supreme.

[36]

We put up for the night at the Red Lion Tavern, and you may be sure that William was the hero of the town.

Rose and Bess Montagle were the young ladies whose lives had been providentially saved, and their father was the head gamekeeper of Windsor.

William was invited for breakfast the next morning at the stone lodge to receive hearty thanks and reward for his heroic action in risking his life for the salvation of others; but the Bard excused himself, saying that he must start by daylight for his last stretch to London, and only asked from the young ladies a sprig of boxwood and lock of their golden hair.

At parting the father threw William a bag of gold, and the girls presented him with the tokens desired, in addition to impulsive bashful kisses.

We were off promptly by sunrise, and steering our course to Hounslow, Brentford, Kensington, and to the top of Primrose Hill, we first caught sight of the spires, domes, turrets, temples and palaces of multitudinous, universal London.

*"London, the needy villain's general home,  
The common sewer of Paris and of Rome;  
With eager thirst by folly or by fate,  
Sucks in the dregs of each corrupted state."*

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## CHAPTER V.

[37]

### LONDON. ITS GUILT AND GLORY.

*"They say, best men are molded out of faults;  
And for the most, become much more the better  
For being a little bad."*

It was on the 13th of September, 1586, that William and myself first feasted our eyes on the variegated wilderness of wood, mortar, stone and tile of wonderful London.

The evening was bright and clear, while a north-west wind blew away the smoky clouds that hovered over the city like a funeral pall, displaying to our view the silver sinuosities of old Father Thames, as he moved in sluggish grandeur by Westminster, Blackfriars Bridge, the Tower, and to Gravesend, on his way to the channel and the sea.

To get a grand view of the town, an old sexton advised us to climb the steeple steps of crumbling Saint Mary's, that once felt the tread of the Crusaders, and heard the chanting hymn of monks, nuns and friars five hundred years before.

Standing on a broken column of the old steeple, three hundred feet above Primrose Hill, William struck an attitude of theatrical fashion and uttered the following oratorical flight:

[38]

*Glorious London! Leviathan of human greed;  
Palpitating hot-bed of iniquity and joy,  
Greek, Roman, Spanish, Saxon, Kelt, Scot,  
Pict, Norman and Dane  
Have swept over thee like winter storms;  
And the mighty Cæsar, Julius of old,  
With a myriad of bucklered warriors  
And one hundred galleons of sailors  
Triple-oared mariners, defying wave and fate,  
Have ploughed the placid face of Father Thames,  
Startling the loud cry of hawk and bittern  
As his royal prows grated on thy strand,  
Or skimmed over the marshes of thy infancy.  
Yet, amid all the wrecks of human ambition  
Where Pagan, Jew, Buddhist, Turk and Christian  
Struggled for the mastery of gold and power,  
You still march forward, giant-like and brave,  
Facing the morning of progress and liberty,  
Carrying thy cross and crown to all lands—  
And with thy grand flotilla, chartered by Neptune*

*Remain mistress of all the seas, defiant—  
The roar of thy cannon and drum beats  
Heard with pride and glory around the world!  
Sad, how sad, to think that the day will come  
When not a vestige of this wonderful mass  
Of human energy shall remain;  
Where the cry of the wolf, bat and bittern  
Shall only be heard, and Nature again  
Resume her rustic, splendid desolation!  
Cities older and far greater than this,  
Dreaming of everlasting endurance,  
Have been long since buried in desert sands,  
Or engulfed in the pitiless waves of ocean,  
Lost forever from the rusty records  
Of Time, the tyrant and tomb builder  
Of man, vain insect of a moment,  
Who promises himself immortality,  
And then disappears like the mist of mountains,  
Or wandering meteors that sparkle and darkle  
In the midnight of oblivion!*

[39]

We quickly descended from the steeple, passed by Buckingham Palace, Regent Park, British Museum, through Chancery Lane into Fleet street, by Ludgate Hill, under the shadow of old battered Saint Paul's Church on to the Devil's Tavern, near Blackfriars Bridge, where we found gay and comfortable lodgings for the night, it being twelve o'clock when we shook hands with Meg Mullen, the rubicund landlady.

The Devil's Tavern was a resort for actors, authors, bohemians, lords and ladies, who did not retire early to their downy couches.

The night we arrived the tavern was crowded, as the Actors' Annual Ball was in progress, and many fair women and brave men belated by Bacchus could not find their way home, and were compelled to remain all night and be cared for by the host of the Devil.

I told "Meg" we were Stratford boys, come up to London to seek our fortune, and set the Thames afire with our genius.

Plucking the "rosy" dame aside, I informed her that William Shakspeare was a poet, author, actor and philosopher; and, while he was posing over the counter, smiling at a blooming barmaid, he looked the picture of his own immortal Romeo. Meg told me in a quizzical tone that the town was full of poets and actors, and that the surrounding playhouses could hire them for ten shillings a week, with sack and bread and cheese thrown in every Saturday night.

[40]

After a hasty supper, I tossed Meg a golden guinea to pay score, as if it were a shilling, to convince her that we were of the upper crust of bohemians, not strollers from the Strand, or penny puppets from Eastcheap or Smithfield.

After passing back the change, Meg sent a gay and festive porter to light us to the top cock-loft of the tavern, five stairs up, among the windows and angled gables of the tile roof.

A tallow dip and coach candle lit up the room, which was large, containing two Roman couches with quilts, robes and blankets, a stout table, two oak chairs, a pewter basin, and a large stone jug filled with water.

The tavern seemed to be on the banks of the Thames, for we could see through the two large windows, flitting lights as if boats and ships were moving on the water, while across the bridge old Southwark could be seen in the midnight glare as if it were a field of Jack-o'-lanterns moving in mystic parade.

William and myself soon found rest in deep slumber, and wafted away into a dreamless realm, our tired bodies lay in the enfolding arms of Morpheus until the porter knocked at our door the next morning as the clock of the tower struck the hour of nine.

Our first sight of sunrise in London gave us great expectations of fame and fortune—for surely all we had was glowing expectations.

[41]

*"Oft expectation fails, and most oft there  
Where most it promises; and oft it hits  
Where hope is coldest and despair most fits."*

While William stood gazing out of the roof windows of the Devil's Tavern on the moving, meandering population of London as they passed below on lane, street and stream, by foot, car or boat, he heaved a long drawn sigh, turned to me and said, "Jack, what do you think of London?"

"I like its whirl, dash and roar, far better than mingling with the rural milk-sops and innocent maidens of Warwick. Here we can work and climb to the top of the ladder of fame, while you, dear Will, will not be battered in ear by crying kids and tongue-lashing spouse."

Brushing away a tear of sorrow, no doubt for the absence of loved ones at Stratford, he dashed

down the stairs, and was soon in the jolly whirlpool of tavern loungers, where beaming Meg greeted us with a smiling face, having prepared in advance a fine breakfast, smoking hot from the busy kitchen of the Devil.

In passing out of the dining room, Meg led us through a back hall into a low, long room, where a number of "ladies" and "gentlemen" were assembled about a round table, playing "cut the card," "spring the top" and "throw the dice;" small piles of silver and gold stacked in front of each player, while the "King's Dealer," or fat Jack Stafford, lost or paid all bets on "call."

William and myself were incidentally introduced to the motley gang as young "bloods" from Warwick, who had just entered London for fame and fortune. The conclave rose with extreme politeness, and Jack as spokesman welcomed us to their bosoms (so to speak), and asked if we would not "sit up and take a hand."

I respectfully declined, but William, surcharged with sorrow or flushed with ambition, bethought of the guineas in his pocket and belt, and called for the "dice box." "Deuces" won double and "sixes" treble coin.

William, to the great amazement of the dealer, flung a guinea in the center pot, which was immediately tapped by Jack, while the others looked on in silent expectation.

Grasping the dice box, he whirled it in his grasp, rattling the "bones" in triumphant glee and threw on the table three "sixes," thus abstracting from the inside pocket of the "Gentleman" at the head of the table, twenty-seven guineas.

Pushing back the coin and dice box, William proposed another throw, which was smilingly consented to by the "child of Fortune," and grasping the box, the Bard clicked the "ivories" and flung on the table three aces, which by the rule of the game, gave all the coin to the "Royal" dealer.

William never winced or hesitated, but pulling from his waist a buckskin belt, threw it on the table, exclaiming, "There's fifteen guineas I wager on the next throw."

The polite Jack replied, "All right, sir, take your word for it."

William frantically said:

*"I have set my life upon a cast,  
And will stand the hazard of the die!"*

Then, with a round whirl, he threw three "aces" again, rose from the table and bolted out of the room like a shot from a blunderbuss.

I immediately followed in his footsteps and found him joking with the landlady about a couple of infant bull pups she was fondling in her capacious lap.

At this juncture, who should appear on the scene but Dick Field, the first cousin of William, who had been in London a few years engaged in the printing and publishing business.

If he had dropped out of the clouds William could not have been more pleased or surprised, and the feeling was reciprocal.

The printing shop of Field was only a short distance from the Devil's Tavern, and we were invited to visit the establishment. On our way we passed by the Blackfriars, Curtain, In Yard, Paris and Devil theatres, interspersed with hurdy-gurdy concert hall, sailor and soldier, gin and sack vaults, where blear-eyed belles and battered beaux vied with each other in fantastic intoxication.

Field did a lot of rough printing for the various theatres, issuing bill posters, announcing plays, and setting up type sheets for actors and managers, in their daily concerts and dramas for the public amusement.

As luck would have it, old James Burbage and his son Dick were waiting for Field, with a lot of dramatic manuscript that must be put in print at once.

We were casually introduced to the great theatrical magnate Burbage, as relatives from Stratford who were just then in search of work.

James Burbage gazed for a moment on the manly form of William and blurted out in his bluff manner, "What do you know?"

Quick as a flash William replied: "I know more than those who know less, and know less than those who know more."

"Sharp answer, 'boy.' See me to-morrow at the Blackfriars at noon."

We turned aside and left Field and Burbage to their business; while Dick Burbage, the gay theatrical rake, invited us across the way to the Bull's Head, where we irrigated our anatomy, and then returned to the printing shop.

Field informed me that he had given us a great setting up with old Burbage; and would see his partner Greene, the playwright, and add to our recommendation for energy and learning.

[42]

[43]

[44]

We were invited to dine with Field that evening at eight o'clock at the Boar's Head Tavern, where Dame Quickly dispensed the best food and fluid of the lower town, and where the wags and wits of all lands congregated in security.

*"At the very witching time of night  
When church yards yawn and hell itself  
Breathes out contagion to this world."*

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## CHAPTER VI.

[45]

### TAVERNS. THEATRES. VARIEGATED SOCIETY.

*"Man's evil manners live in brass;  
Their virtues we write in water."*

The Boar's Head Tavern in Eastcheap was one of the oldest and best inns in London for free and easy rollicking mood, where prince and peasant, king or clown, papist or puritan were welcome night and day, provided they intended no wrong and kept good nature aglow even in their cups. Magistrate and convent prior would sometimes raid the tavern until their physical and financial wants were satisfied.

Dame Quickly, with ruffled collar, was the master spirit of the house, and had been its light and glory for thirty years. Her round, full face, fat neck and robust form was a constant invitation for good cheer, and her matchless wit was a marvel to the guests that nightly congregated through her three-story gabled stone monastery.

A tavern is the best picture of human folly, nature wearing no garb of hypocrisy.

You must know that the Boar's Head had once been the home of the "Blackfriars," then a residence of a bishop, a convent, a brewery, and finally fell into the hands of the grandfather of Dame Quickly, who bequeathed it to his posterity and the public as a depot for plum pudding, roast beef, lamb, birds, fish, ale, wine, brandy and universal pleasure. A boar's head, with a red light in its mouth was kept constantly burning from sunset to sunrise, where wandering humanity found welcome and rest.

[46]

Supper parties from the adjacent theatres filled the tavern in midnight hours, where actors, authors, politicians, statesmen and ladies of all hue, reveled in jolly, generous freedom, beneath the ever-present superintendence of buxom Dame Quickly.

*"The gods are just, and oft our pleasant vices  
Make instruments to scourge us.  
Boys, immature in knowledge,  
Pawn their experience to their present pleasure."*

The main bar, decorated with variegated lights and shining blue bottles and glasses, with pewter and silver mugs in theatrical rows, lent a kind of enchantment to the nightly scene. Round, square and octagonal oak tables were scattered through the various rooms, and rough leather lounges skirted the walls.

Promptly at eight o'clock William and myself passed the stony portals of the Boar's Head, and were ushered into the back ground floor dining room where we met our friend Field and a playwright named Christopher Marlowe, standing before a great open chimney, with a blazing fire and a splendid supper.

Field seemed to take great pride in making us acquainted with Marlowe, the greatest actor and dramatist of his day, whose plays were even then the talk and delight of London.

[47]

"Tamberlaine the Great" and "Dr. Faustus" had been successfully launched at the Blackfriars, and young Marlowe was in his glory, the wit and toast of the town. He was but twenty-five years of age, finely formed, a voluptuary, high jutting forehead, dark hazel eye, and a typical image of a bohemian poet. It was a toss up as to who was the handsomest man, William or Marlowe, yet a stranger, on close inspection could see glinting out of William's eye a divine light and flashing expression that ever commanded respect and admiration. He was unlike any other mortal.

I, alone at that period, knew the bursting ability of William; and that his granary of knowledge was full to the brim, needing only an opportunity to flood the world with immortal sonnets, Venus and Adonis, and the incubating passion plays that lay struggling in his burning brain for universal recognition.

During the evening young actors, politicians, college students and roystering lords, filled the house and by twelve o'clock Bacchanalian folly ruled the madcaps of the town, while battered Venus with bedraggled hair and skirts languished in sensuous display.

Field requested his friend Marlowe to recite a few lines from "Dr. Faustus" for our instruction and pleasure, and forthwith he gave the soliloquy of Faust, waiting at midnight for Lucifer to

*"Oh mercy! heaven, look not so fierce on me,  
Adders and serpents, let me breathe awhile;  
Ugly hell gape not; come not, Lucifer;  
I'll burn my books; oh! Mephistopheles!"*

And then mellowing his sonorous voice, gives thus his classical apostrophe to Helen of Greece:

*"Was this the face that launched a thousand ships  
And burned the topless towers of Ilium?  
Sweet Helen, make me immortal with a kiss!  
Her lips suck forth my soul—see where it flies;  
Come, Helen, come, give me my soul again;  
Here will I dwell, for heaven is in these lips,  
And all is dross that is not Helena.  
O, thou art fairer than the evening air,  
Clad in the beauty of a thousand stars!  
Brighter art thou than flaming Jupiter,  
When he appeared to hapless Semele;  
More lovely than the monarch of the sky  
In wanton Arethusa's azure arms;  
And none but thou shalt be my paramour!"*

A loud round of applause greeted the rendition of the classical poem, not only at our own table, but through the entire hall and adjacent rooms.

At a table not far away sat a number of illustrious gentlemen, favorites of Queen Elizabeth and greatly admired by the people.

There sat Sir Walter Raleigh, lately returned from discoveries in America; Francis Bacon, Attorney-General to the Crown; Earl Essex, the court favorite; Lord Southampton, the gayest in the realm; with young Burleigh, Cecil and Leicester, making night melodious with their songs, speeches and tinkling silver wine cups.

[49]

The young lords insisted that we give another recitation, pictorial of love and passion. Marlowe declined to say more, but knowing that William had hatched out his crude verses of Venus and Adonis, I insisted that he deliver a few stanzas for the enthusiastic audience, particularly describing the passionate pleadings of Venus to the stallion Adonis.

Without hesitation, trepidation or excuse, William arose in manly attitude and drew a picture of beautiful Venus:

*"Sometimes she shakes her head and then his hand,  
Now gazeth she on him, now on the ground;  
Sometimes her arms infold him like a band;  
She would, he will not in her arms be bound;  
And when from thence he struggles to be gone  
She locks her lily fingers one in one!"*

*"'Fondling,' she saith, 'since I have hemmed thee here,  
Within the circuit of this ivory pale,  
I'll be a park, and thou shalt be my deer;  
Feed where thou wilt on mountain or in dale;  
Graze on my lips; and if those hills be dry,  
Stray lower where the pleasant fountains lie."*

*"'Within this limit is relief enough,  
Sweet bottom grass and high delightful plain,  
Round rising hillocks, brake obscure and rough  
To shelter thee from tempest and from rain;  
Then be my deer since I am such a park—  
No dog shall rouse thee though a thousand bark!'"*

[50]

When he dropped in his chair the revelers went wild with enthusiasm, and Marlowe and Southampton wished to know where the "Stratford Boy" got the poem!

William smiled, tapped his forehead and tossed off a bumper of brandy to the cheers that still demanded more mental food.

But as it was two by the clock, our friend Field suggested that we retire, when Marlowe and himself took us in a carriage to the Devil Tavern, where we slept off our first spree in London.

*"O thou invisible spirit of wine,  
If thou hast no name to be known by,  
Let us call thee Devil!"*

We arose the next morning a little groggy, and William had a shade of melancholy remorse

flash over his usually bright countenance.

He abstractedly remarked: "Well, Jack, we are making a fine start for fame and fortune. The stride we took last night, at the Boar's Head, will soon land us in Newgate or Parliament!"

I replied that it made little difference to intellectual artists whether they served their country in prison or in Parliament, for many a man was in Newgate who might honor Parliament, and many secret scoundrels who had not been caught should be inmates of Newgate, or, if equal justice prevailed, their bodies be dangling on the heights of Tyburn!

*"A Daniel come to judgment; yea, a Daniel!  
O wise young judge, how I do honor thee!"*

*Poise the cause in justice' equal scales,  
Whose beam stands sure?*

[51]

It was ten o'clock when we stretched our weary legs under the breakfast table of Meg Mullen, who had prepared for us a quartette of fat mutton chops, with salt pork, baked potatoes, a huge omelet and a boiling pot of black tea, sent, as she said, by the Emperor of China for the guests of the Boar's Head Tavern!

Meg was a jolly wench, and garnished her food with pleasant words and witty quips, believing that love and laughter aided digestion and cheered the traveler in his journey of life.

I reminded William that he had a business engagement with the great theatrical monarch, Richard Burbage, at noon at the Blackfriars.

The Bard was ready for a stroll, and after brushing our clothes and smiling at the variegated guests, we sauntered into the street toward the Thames, and soon found the entrance to the renowned Blackfriars Theatre.

A call-boy ushered us into the presence of the great actor and manager, who greeted us with a snappish "Good morning!"

A number of authors and actors were waiting their turn to see the prince of players, whose signet of approval or disapproval finished their expectations. It was Saturday and pay day.

Turning abruptly to William, the proprietor said: "I understand you know something about theatres and acting?"

"Try me; you shall be my judge."

"Then, sir, from this hour you are appointed assistant property man and assistant prompter for the Blackfriars, at sixteen shillings a week, with chance of promotion, if you deserve it!

[52]

"Your business hours shall be from noon, every week day, until five o'clock; and from eight o'clock in the night until eleven o'clock, when you are at liberty until the next day!

"Do you accept the work?"

William promptly replied:

"I accept with immeasurable thanks, and like Cæsar of old, I cross the dramatic Rubicon."

The Bard was then introduced to Bull Billings, the chief property man and prompter, who at once initiated William into the machinery secrets of the stage, with its scenes, ropes, chains, masks, moons, gods, swords, bucklers, guns, pikes, torches, wheels, chairs, thrones, giants, wigs, hats, bonnets, robes, brass jewels, kings, queens, dukes, lords, and all the other paraphernalia of dramatic exhibition.

William was now launched upon the ocean of theatrical suns and storms, with Nature for his guide and everlasting glory for his name.

*"Lowliness is young ambition's ladder,  
Whereto the climber turns his face;  
But when he once attains the utmost round,  
He then unto the ladder turns his back,  
Looks in the clouds, scorning the base degrees  
By which he did ascend!"*

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## CHAPTER VII.

[53]

### THEATRICAL DRUDGERY. COMPOSITIONS.

*"Sweet are the uses of adversity,  
Which, like the toad, ugly and venomous,  
Wears yet a precious jewel in its head."*



Shakspeare had now his foot firmly planted on the lower round of the ladder of fame, whose top leaned against the skies of immortality!

The fermentation of composition began again to work within his seething brain, and the daily demands of the Blackfriars spurred him on to emulate if not surpass Kyd, Lodge, Greene and Marlowe.

During the time Shakspeare had been a strolling player through the middle towns of England he had studied the works of Ovid and Petrarch, and read with pleasure the sonnets and Arcadia of Sir Philip Sidney.

While playing at Kenilworth, the Lady Anne Manners, young and beautiful cousin to the Earl of Leicester, honored the young actor with great praise for his part in playing the Lover in "Love's Conquest." She presented the Bard with a bunch of immortelles, that even when withered, he always kept in an inside pocket, and at various times composed sonnets to his absent admirer, playing Petrarch to another Laura. [54]

The languishing, luscious, lascivious poem of "Venus and Adonis" was really inspired by the remembrance of Miss Manners, and imagination pictured himself and the lady as the principals in the sensuous situation!

William, like Dame Nature, was full of life-sap, that circled through his body and brain with constant motion and sought an outlet for the surplus volume of ideal knowledge, in theatrical action, teaching lessons of right and wrong, with vice and virtue struggling forever for the mastery of mankind.

The Bard worked night and day in his duties as theatrical drudge for the Blackfriars, and made himself valuable and solid with old Burbage, who saw in the young actor a marvelous development of new thought and force, that had never before been seen on the British stage.

In a few weeks Bull Billings was discharged for tyranny and drunkenness, and my friend William was given the place of chief property man and prompter.

Various plays were put on and off the Blackfriars stage, through the hisses or cheers of the motley audience, the autocrats of the "pit" seeming to be the real umpires of the cessation or continuance of the most noted plays.

The last week in October, 1586, was a mournful time for London, as the greatest favorite of Queen Elizabeth, Sir Philip Sidney, was to receive a State funeral at Saint Paul's. [55]

All England went in mourning for the handsome cavalier and poet, who lost his life at the siege of Axel, in the Netherlands, while serving as chief of cavalry under his uncle, the Earl of Leicester.

All business closed in honor of the young hero, and the celebrated military organization, the "Ancient and Honorable Artillery," led more than thirty thousand of the "train bands," who followed in the great procession to Saint Paul's Church.

The sacerdotal service began at noon, and Queen Elizabeth rode in a golden car on a dark purple throne to witness the last rites in honor of her court favorite.

The bells of London churches, temples, turrets, and towers rang continually until sundown, filling the air with a universal requiem of grief, while the black clouds hanging over the metropolis shed showers of tears for the untimely loss of a patriot and a poet.

William and myself saw the funeral car from the steps of St Paul, and as the coffin was carried in on the shoulders of eight stalwart soldiers, dressed in the golden garb of the Horse Battalions, we bowed our heads in holy adoration to the memory and valor of the sonnet-maker—lost in eternal sleep.

*"Come, sleep, O sleep, the certain knot of peace,  
The baiting place of wit, the balm of woe,  
The poor man's wealth, the prisoner's release—  
The indifferent judge between the high and low!"*

How truthful this extract from one of Sidney's sonnets! [56]

He was a synonym of bravery and politeness; for being carried from the field of battle, thirsty and bleeding, he called for a cup of water, and just as he was lifting it to his lips a fatally wounded soldier was being carried by who fixed his longing eyes eagerly on the cup—and instanter, the gay and gallant Sidney delivered the drink to the poor soldier, saying: "Thy necessity is greater than mine!"

Noble self-sacrifice, elemental generosity, imperial nature, sublime and benevolent in thought and act!

On our return to the Devil Tavern for supper we found Manager Burbage, of Blackfriars, awaiting us. He was in great haste and desired William to look over a play that had been submitted by Greene and Lodge, who composed it jointly.

It was a comedy-tragedy, entitled "Looking Glass of London," in three rambling acts, and while Burbage was disposed to take the play and pay for it, he desired that Shakspeare should give it

such ripping corrections as he thought best.

This was surely showing great confidence in a young actor and author—to criticise the play of acknowledged dramatists who had been the talk of the town.

Shakspeare modestly remarked: "I fear, sir, your friends, Lodge and Greene, will not like or tolerate my cutting of their play."

"Care not for their opinion! Do as I say, and have the play ready for staging Monday afternoon at two o'clock."

"Your command is law, and I obey," said the Bard—and out rushed the bluffing, busy Burbage. [57]

The constant circulation of bohemian customers, day and night about the Devil's Tavern, was not conducive to careful composition of plays, and William and myself moved to modest quarters near Paris Garden, kept by a Miss Maggie Mellow, a blonde maiden of uncertain age.

William continued to perform his theatrical duties diligently, while I was engaged at the printing shop of Field, translating historic, dramatic and poetic works from Latin authors, thus piecing out the price of food, clothes and shelter in the whirlpool of London joy and misery.

During my apprenticeship with Sam Granite, as a marble cutter, I spent my nights with Master Hunt studying the intricate windings of the Latin language, and became proficient in the translation of ancient authors, delving also into the philosophy of Greek roots, with its Attic phrases and Athenian eloquence.

My parents desired me to leave off the trade of stone cutting and prepare for the priesthood, where I could make an easier living, working on the fears, egotism and hopes of mankind.

I was always too blunt to play the velvet philosopher and saint-like character of a sacerdotal vicaro of any church or creed, feeling full well that the so-called divine teacher and pupil know just as much about the "hereafter" as I do—and that's nothing! Put not thy faith in wind, variable and inconstant.

So, a life of bohemian hack-work for printers, publishers and theatrical managers seemed best suited to my nature, giving me perfect freedom of thought and a disposition to express my honest opinion to prince or peasant, in home, church or state. [58]

God is God, and Nature is His representative!

*While man, vain creature of an hour,  
Depressed by grief or blessed by power  
Is but a shadow and a name—  
A flash of evanescent fame!*

Most of the dramatic writers during the reigns of Henry the Eighth, Elizabeth, James the First, and Charles the Second, were graduates of Oxford, Cambridge or other classical halls of learning. They borrowed their plots and characters from ancient history and endeavored to galvanize them into English subjects, tickling the ears of the groundlings, as well as their royal patrons with Grecian and Roman translations of lofty allegorical and mythological conceptions.

Æschylus, Euripides, Sophocles and Homer, with Terence, Tacitus, Virgil, Horace and Ovid, were constantly pillaged for thoughts to piece out the theatrical robes and blank verse eloquence of playwrights who only received for their best accepted works from five to twenty pounds; proprietors and stage managers driving hard bargains with these brilliant, bacchanalian and impecunious bohemians.

The winter and spring of 1587-8 was a busy time for William. In addition to his prompting and casting the various plays for Burbage, he was engaged in collecting his sonnets, putting finishing touches on "Venus and Adonis," as well as composing the "Rape of Lucrece," a Roman epic, based on historic truth. [59]

He had also planned and mapped out the English play of "Henry the Fourth," taken from an old historical play, and was figuring on two comedies—"Midsummer Night's Dream" and the "Merry Wives of Windsor."

Often when entering his workroom at twelve o'clock at night, or six o'clock in the morning, I found him scratching, cutting, and delving away at his literary bench and oak chest.

He could work at three or four plays alternately, and, from crude plots taken out of ancient history, novels, religious or mythological tableaux, devised his characters and put words in their mouths that burned in the ears of British yeomen, tradesmen, professional sharpers and lords and ladies who crowded the benches and boxes of the Blackfriars.

He reminded me of an expert cabinet-maker, who had piled up in a corner of his shop a variety lot of rough timber, from which he fashioned and manufactured the most exquisite dressers, sofas and bureaus, dovetailing each piece of oak, rosewood or mahogany, with exact workmanship, and then with the silken varnish of his genius, sending his wares out to the rushing world to be admired, and transmitted to posterity, with perfect faith in the endurance of his creations!

In putting the finishing touches on the fifth act of a play he would quickly change to the

composition of the first act of another, and, with lightning rapidity embellish the characters in the third act of some comedy, tragedy or history, that constantly occupied his multifarious brain.

[60]

His working den at the Blackfriars was crowded with a mass of theatrical literary productions, ancient and modern, while our lodging rooms were piled up with Latin, Greek, Spanish and French translations.

Manager Burbage, Dick Field and even Chris Marlowe were constantly patronizing the wonderful William, and supplied him with the iron ore products of the ancient and middle ages, which he quickly fashioned into the laminated steel of dramatic excellence.

*"Why, man, he doth bestride the narrow world  
Like a Colossus; and we petty men  
Walk under his huge legs and peep about  
To find ourselves dishonorable graves."*

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## CHAPTER VIII.

[61]

### GROWING LITERARY RENOWN. ROYAL PATRONS.

*"Follow your envious courses, men of malice;  
You have Christian warrant for them, and, no doubt,  
In time will find their fit rewards."*

*"O beware, my lord, of jealousy;  
It is the green-eyed monster, which doth mock  
The meat it feeds on."*

The literary and dramatic world of London in the years 1589 to 1592 was stirred with pride and astonishment at the productions of William Shakspeare, and from the tavern and guilds of tradesmen to the crack clubs of authors, lords and royalty itself, the Dramatic Magician of the Blackfriars was praised to the skies and sought for by even Queen Elizabeth, who saw more than another Edmund Spenser to glorify her reign and flash her name down the ages with even finer, luminous colors than bedecked the sylvan pathway of the Faerie Queen!

The Earl of Leicester was one of the first great men of England to recognize the divine accomplishments of the Warwickshire boy who had made his first theatrical adventures through the domain of the old Earl, and who was ever the friend of old John Shakspeare, the impecunious and agnostic father of our brilliant Bard.

[62]

On the death of the old Earl in the autumn of 1588, his domain reverted to his stepson, the young Earl of Essex, who continued to be the patron of letters and often attended the Blackfriars, with his friend, the handsome and intellectual Earl of Southampton, Henry Wriothesley, who took the greatest interest in the plays of "Love's Labor's Lost," "Two Gentlemen of Verona," "King John," "Henry the Fourth," "Henry the Fifth," and "Henry the Sixth," that were then fermenting in the brain of William.

He had ransacked the history of Hollingshead and others to illustrate on the stage the civil wars between the houses of York and Lancaster, known as the war of the Red and White Roses, with canker and thorn to pester each royal clan and bring misery on the British people because of a family quarrel!

*"Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown."*

*"What have Kings that privates have not too,  
Save ceremony?"*

The jealousy of Kyd, Lodge and Greene continued to secretly knife the Stratford butcher boy, but the more they tried to cough him down the more he rose in public estimation, until finally these little vipers of spite and spleen gave up their secret scandal chase, when, like a roebuck from the forest of Arden or Caledonian heather crags, he flashed out of sight of all the dramatic and poetic hounds who pursued him, and ever after looked down from the imperial heights of Parnassus at the dummies of theatrical pretense.

[63]

They accused him of wholesale plagiarism and of robbing the archives of every land for raw material to build up his comedies, tragedies and histories.

He laughed and worked on, night and day, acknowledging the "soft impeachment" of his literary integrity, but at the same time defied them to equal or surpass the marvelous characters he created for the edification and glory of mankind!

Yet, while he had a few envious literary, political and religious detractors, he was building up constantly a bulwark of sentimental and material friends in London that kept his name on the tongue of thinkers in home, tavern, club and palace.

The keen and generous Burbage knew the intrinsic value of Shakspeare, and to tie him to the interest of the Blackfriars, he gradually increased the Bard's salary and gave him an interest in the stock company. Yet, other theatres staged his plays.

Edmund Spenser, the greatest rhythmic poet of his day, author of the "Faerie Queen," and prime favorite of Sidney and Queen Elizabeth, was lavish in his praise of the rising dramatist, while Michael Drayton and Christopher Marlowe vied with each other in admiration of the newly discovered star of intellectual brilliancy that glittered unceasingly in the sky of poetic and philosophic letters.

Essex, Southampton, Raleigh, Bacon, Monmouth, Derby, Norfolk, Northumberland, Percy, Burleigh, Cecil, Montague, and many other lords of London club life, gave a ready adherence to Shakspeare, and after his mighty acting on the Blackfriars and other stages, struggled with each other as to who should have the honor of entertaining him at the gay midnight suppers that delighted the amusement world of London. [64]

One of the most valuable friends William encountered in London was John Florio, a Florentine, the greatest linguist of his day, who had traveled in all lands and gathered nuggets of thought in every clime. He spoke Spanish, Italian, French, German and Greek, with the accent of a native, and had but recently translated the works of Montaigne, the great French philosopher. The Herbert-Southampton family patronized him.

When not employed at the various theatres, the Stratford miracle could be found at the rooms of his friend Florio, at the "Red Lion," across the street from Temple Bar, where law students, bailiffs and barristers made day and night merry with their professional antics.

William employed Florio to teach him the technical and philosophic merits of the Greek and Latin languages, and at the same time furnish him with ancient stories that he might dramatize into English classics, and astonish the native writers by dressing up old subjects in new frocks, cloaks, robes and crowns.

Florio would often read by the hour, gems of Latin, Greek and French philosophy, and explain to us the intricate phrases of Virgil, Ovid, Terence, Homer, Æschylus, Plutarch, Demosthenes, Plato, Petrarch and Dante, while William drank up his imparted knowledge as freely and quickly as the sun in his course inhales the sparkling dewdrops from garden, vale and mountain. [65]

In the spring of 1591 William and myself paid a flying visit to Stratford, the Bard to pay up some family debts and bury a brother who had recently migrated to the land of imagination.

The mother and father of William were delighted at the London success of their son, and Anne Hathaway seemed to be mellowed and mollified by the guineas William emptied into her lap, while Hammet and Judith, the rollicking children, were rampant with delight at the toys, sweetmeats and dresses presented as Easter offerings.

No matter what the incompatibility of temper between William and Anne, he never forgot to send part of his wages for the support of herself and children, and although he was a "free lance" among the ladies of London, he maintained the "higher law" of family purity and morality.

When he violated any of the ten commandments, he did it with his eyes open, and took the consequent mental or physical punishment with stoic indifference. He never called on others to shoulder his sins, but on the contrary he often bore the burden of cowardly "friends," who made him the "scapegoat" for their own iniquity—a common class of scoundrels.

He never bothered himself about the religion manufacturers of mankind, knowing that the whole scheme, from the Oriental sunworshippers to the quarreling crowd of Pagans, Hebrews, Christians and Moslems, was nothing but a keen financial syndicate or trust to keep sacerdotal sharpers in place and power at the expense of plodding ignorance, hope and bigotry! [66]

The night we started back for London, by jaunting car, on the road to Oxford, the Bard was in a mood of lofty contemplation. He had stowed away in the bottom of the car, a mass of school-day and strolling-player compositions, evolved in the rush of vanished years.

"William," said I, "can you tell me anything about the silence of those sparkling, eternal stars and planets?"

He instantly replied:

*I question the infinite silence,  
And endeavor to fathom the deep  
That rests in the ocean of knowledge  
And dreams in the heaven of sleep;  
And I soar with the wing of science,  
Its mysterious realm to explore,  
But the wail of the wild sea breakers  
Drowns my soul in the Nevermore;  
For the answer of finite wisdom  
Is as fickle as ambient air,  
And my wreckage of hopes are scattered  
On the rocks and shores of despair!*

Arriving at the Crown Tavern, in Oxford, we were, as usual, received by the old Boniface Devanant and his handsome wife, with warm words and luxurious table cheer. After a day and night of reasonable revelry, we proceeded on our way to London, and in due course found our sunny lodgings at the home of Maggie Mellow.

[67]

The night after our arrival Sir Walter Raleigh gave a grand banquet at the Mermaid Club to the principal wits of London.

Burbage, Florio, Field, William and myself were invited as special guests, in honor of the poetic and dramatic association.

Representative authors and actors of the various theatrical companies were present at the festive war of wits.

The Queen's men, and those who played under the patronage of Leicester, Pembroke, Burleigh, and the Lord Admiral were there, while Henslowe, the owner of the Rose Theatre on Bankside, with his son-in-law, Edward Alleyn, the noted actor, shone in all their borrowed glory.

Spenser, Drayton, Marlowe, Kyd, Nash, Chettle, Peele, Greene, and a young author, Ben Jonson, were a few of the literary luminaries present.

A contingent of London lords, patrons of authors and actors graced the scene. Essex, Southampton, Pembroke, Cecil, Mortimer, Burleigh and Lord Bacon occupied prominent places at the angle table of the club, where Raleigh sat as master of ceremonies.

Promptly at eleven o'clock, the great courtier, sailor and discoverer arose from his elevated chair and proposed a toast to the Virgin and Fairy Queen!

All stood to their tankards and drank unanimously to the Virgin Queen.

I thought I observed a flash of secret smiles pictured on the lips of Essex, Spenser, Bacon and Raleigh when Elizabeth was toasted as the *Virgin Queen*; and William whispered in my ear:

[68]

*"Her virtues graced with eternal gifts,  
Do breed love's settled passions in my heart!"*

After tremendous cheers were given for the Queen, Sir Walter, in his blandest mood said: "We are glorified by having with us to-night the greatest poet in the realm, and I trust Sir Edmund Spenser will be gracious enough to give us a few lines from the 'Faerie Queen.'"

Sir Edmund arose in his place and said:

"In Una, the Fairy Queen, I beheld the purity and innocence of Elizabeth, and in the lion of passion, hungry from the forest, I saw her conquer even in her naked habiliments."

*"One day, nigh weary of the irksome way  
From her unhasty beast she did alight;  
And on the grass her dainty limbs did lay,  
In secret shadow, far from all men's sight,  
From her fair head her fillet she undight,  
And laid her stole aside, her angel's face,  
As the great Eye of Heaven, shone bright  
And made a sunshine in the shady place—  
Did never mortal eye behold such grace!  
It fortune'd, out of the thickest wood  
A ramping Lion rushed suddenly,  
Hunting full greedy after savage blood;  
Soon as the Royal Virgin he did spy,  
With gaping month at her ran greedily,  
To have at once devoured her tender corse;  
But to the prey when as he drew more nigh—  
His bloody rage assuaged with remorse,  
And with the sight amazed, forgot his furious force!"*

[69]

Spenser resumed his seat, while a whirl of echoing applause waved from floor to rafter.

Then Sir Walter remarked:

"We are honored to-night by the presence of the counsel extraordinary of Queen Elizabeth, the orator and philosopher, Sir Francis Bacon, who will, I trust, give us a sentiment in honor of Her Majesty, the patron of art, literature and liberty!"

Bacon, handsome, proud, but obsequious, then arose and addressed the jolly banqueters as follows:

"Gentlemen: The toast of the evening to her gracious Majesty, Elizabeth, the Virgin Queen, meets my soul-lit approval, and had I the wings of fancy, instead of the plodding pedals of practical administration, I should raise her virtuous statue to the skies until its pinnacle shone above the uplands of omnipotence!

"Philosophy teaches us that vice and virtue are at eternal war, and that whether married or

single, the happiest state of man or woman is personal independence!

*"Domestic cares afflict the husband's bed,  
Or pain his head;  
Those that live single, take it for a curse,  
Or do things worse;  
Some would have children, those that have them mourn,  
Or wish they were gone;  
What is it then, to have or have no wife,  
But single thralldom, or a double strife!"*

"My friends: The ocean is the solitary handmaid of eternity. Cold and salt cure alike!

[70]

"Men are like ants, crawling up and down.

"Some carry corn, some carry their young, and all go to and fro—at last a little heap of dust!"

The states' attorney took his seat, with frantic applause rattling in his ears.

Although the sentiments of Bacon were variable, mixed, foreign and epigrammatic, they received great attention; for no matter who may be the speaker at a banquet where royalty and power are the subjects at issue, there will be great and tremendous cheering by little sycophants who expect reward, and of course, by those patriots who have already received favors from the administration pie counter.

Sir Walter at last arose and said "that although the hour was late, or, more properly speaking, early, he earnestly desired the noble gentlemen present to hear one whose fame, in the world of dramatic letters, like the morning sun, had already flashed upon the horizon and rapidly approached the high noon of earthly immortality—William Shakspeare, of Stratford-on-Avon!"

Then could be heard roof-lifting cheers by all present, who had often heard the Bard in his lofty language and kingly strides at the Blackfriars.

William, in the flush of self-conscious, imperial, splendid manhood exclaimed:

"Gentlemen:

*Your toast of glory to The Virgin Queen  
Cracks high heaven with reverberation,  
And through the ambient air, sonorous,  
The echoing muses mingle the  
Harmony of the spheres with celestial repetition!  
Elizabeth, I lift my song to thee,  
In holy adoration  
To echo down the flowing tide of ages!*

[71]

*Within the chronicle of wasted time  
I see descriptions of the fairest wights,  
And beauty making beautiful old rhyme  
In praise of ladies dead and gallant knights,  
Then in the blazon of sweet beauty's best  
Of hand, of foot, of lip, of eye, of brow,  
I know their antique pen would have expressed  
Even such a beauty as you master now.  
So all their praises are but prophecies  
Of this our time, all you prefiguring;  
And, for they looked, but with divining eyes,  
They had not skill enough your worth to sing;  
For me, which now behold these present days  
Have eyes to wonder, but lack tongues to praise.*

*Not mine own fears, nor the prophetic soul  
Of the wide world dreaming on things to come,  
Can yet the lease of my true love control,  
Supposed as forfeit to a confined doom.  
The mortal moon hath her eclipse endured,  
And the sad augurs mark their own presage;  
Incertainties now crown themselves assured,  
And peace proclaims olives of endless age.  
Now with the drops of the most balmy time,  
My love looks fresh, and Death to me subscribes,  
Since spite of him I'll live in the poor rhyme  
While he sweeps over dull and speechless tribes.  
And thou, in this shall find thy monument,  
When tyrant crests and tombs of brass are spent!"*

[72]

Rapturous and universal praise and applause greeted William and his immortal sonnets; and if any critical reader or author will take pains to delve into and scan the poetry and philosophy of

Spenser and Bacon with that of Shakspeare, they will quickly and honestly come to the conclusion that the former writers are merely rushlights to the flashing electric lights of the Divine Bard!

To paraphrase the encomium of Shakspeare to Cleopatra would fit the greatness of himself:

*"Age cannot wither him, nor custom stale  
His infinite variety; other men cloy  
The appetites they feed; but he makes hungry  
Where most he satisfies!"*

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## CHAPTER IX.

[73]

### BOHEMIAN HOURS. WESTMINSTER ABBEY. "LOVE'S LABOR'S LOST."

*"I have ventured  
Like little wanton boys that swim on bladders  
This many summers in a sea of glory."*

The literary bohemians of London three hundred years ago were an impecunious and jealous lot of human pismires, who built their dens, carried their loads, and were filled with vaulting ambition just the same as we see them to-day.

The hack-writer for publishers, the actor for theatrical managers and the author of growing renown belonged to clubs and tavern coteries, pushing their way up the rocky heights of fame, and struggling, as now, for bread, clothes and shelter, many of the Bacchanalian creatures dying from hunger at the foothills of their ambition; and instead of winning a niche in the columned aisles of Westminster Abbey, dropped dead in some back alley or gloomy garret, to be carted away by the Beadle to the voracious Potter's field.

They often courted Dame Suicide, who never fails to relieve the wicked, wretched, insane or desperate from their intolerable situation.

[74]

*"Art thou so bare and full of wretchedness,  
And fear'st to die? Famine is in thy cheeks,  
Need and oppression starveth in thy eyes,  
Content and beggary hang upon thy back;  
The world is not thy friend, nor the world's law!"*

How often at the Miter or Falcon taverns have I seen these little great literary men swell like a toad or puff like a pigeon at the flattery bestowed on them by fawning bohemians, meaner than themselves, who sought a midnight snack and a tankard of foaming ale.

Of all the despicable and miserable creatures I have ever known it is the poor starving devil, with latent genius, who attempts to pay court to a cad, snob, or drunken lord around the refuse of literary or sporting clubs in midnight hours.

William was always very kind to these threadbare wanderers, and although they often gave him pen prods behind his back, he never betrayed any recognition of their envious stings, but like the lion in his jungle, brushed these busy bees away by the underbrush of his philosophy.

He mildly rebuked their pretense, but relieved their immediate wants, impressing upon them the study of Nature and not the blandishments of art, having the appearance of Oriental porcelain or Phœnician glass, when it was really crude crockery painted to deceive the sight and auctioned off to the unwary purchaser as genuine material.

How many authors, artists and actors of to-day follow in the path of their London ancestors who blow, and brag, and strut in midnight clubs and taverns to the pity and disgust of their table tooters.

[75]

Speaking one evening at the Red Lion, in the rooms of Florio, I asked William how it was that his plays were so successful, while those of other authors had almost been banished from the dramatic boards. He at once replied:

*I draw my plots from Nature's law  
To sound the depths of human life,  
And through her realm I find no flaw  
In all her seeming, varied strife;  
The good and bad are near allied;  
With sweet and sour forever blent,  
While vice and virtue side by side  
Exist in every continent.  
The poison vine that climbs the tree,  
Is just as great in Nature's plan  
As every mount and every sea*

*Displayed below for little man.  
And every ant and busy bee  
Shall teach us how to build and toil  
If we would mingle with the free,  
Who plough the seas or till the soil.*

I shall never forget the visit Shakspeare and myself paid to the cloistered, columned, pinnacled proportions of Westminster Abbey.

It was three o'clock in the afternoon of the 24th of December, 1592.

The living London world was rushing in great multitudes by alley, lane, street and park preparing for the celebration of Christmas Eve. [76]

Vanity Fair was decked off with palm, spruce, pine, myrtle, ivy and holly to garnish home, hall and shop in honor of Jesus, who had been crucified nearly sixteen hundred years before for telling the truth and tearing down the vested arrogance of religious tyranny.

A bright winter sun was gilding the tall towers of the Abbey with golden light, and the mullioned windows were blazing over the surrounding buildings like flashes of fire.

We entered the court of Westminster through the old school by way of a long, low passage, dimly lighted corridors, with glinting figures of old teachers in black gowns, moving like specters from the neighboring tombs.

As we passed along by cloistered walls and mural monuments to vanished glory, we were soon within the interior of the grand old Abbey.

Clustered columns of gigantic dimensions, with lofty arches springing from wall to nave met the eye of the beholder, and stunned by the solemn surroundings, vain man wonders at his own handiwork, trembling with doubt amid the monumental glory of Old Albion.

The Abbey clock struck the hour of five as William and myself stood in deep contemplation at Poets' corner.

The reverberating tones of time echoed from nave to floor, through cloistered walls and columned aisles, noting the passing hour and ages, like billows of sound rolling over the graves of vanished splendor.

Here crumble the dust and effigies of courtiers, warriors, statesmen, lords, dukes, kings, queens and authors; and yet, there is no spot in the Abbey that holds such an abiding interest for mankind as the modest corner where lie the dust of noted poets and philosophers. [77]

The great and the heroic of the world may be bravely admired in lofty contemplation of nationality, but a feeling of fondness creeps over the traveler or reader when he bows at the grave of buried genius, while tears of remembrance even wash away the sensuous Bacchanalian escapades of impulsive, poetic revelers.

The author, touched by the insanity of genius, must ever live in the mind of the reader, and while posterity shall forget even warriors, kings and queens, it never fails to preserve in marble, granite, bronze and song the name and fame of great poets.

David, Solomon, Job, Homer, Horace, Angelo, Dante and Plutarch are deeply imbedded in the memory of mankind, and although great kingdoms, empires and dynasties, have passed away to the rubbish heap of oblivion, the poet, musician, painter, and sculptor still remain to thrill and beautify life, and teach hope of immortality beyond the grave.

After gazing on the statues of abbots, Knights Templar, Knights of the Bath, bishops, statesmen, kings and queens, many mutilated by time and profane hands, William stood by the coffin of Edward the Confessor and mournfully soliloquized:

*Westminster! lofty heir of Pagan Temple;  
Imperial in stone; a thousand years  
Crowns the record of thy inheritance,  
Gilding the glory of thy ancient fame,  
With imperishable deeds—  
Liberty of thought and action, shall  
Forever cluster about thy classic form;  
While new men with new creeds, and reason,  
Shall overturn the religions of to-day,  
As thou hast invaded and destroyed  
The Pagan, Roman rules of antiquity.  
These marble hands and faces appealing  
For remembrance, to animated dust  
Appeal in vain, for we, whose footfalls  
Only sound in marble ears, cold and listless,  
Shall ourselves follow where they led, dying  
Not knowing the mysterious secrets of the grave.  
Here the victor and vanquished, side by side,  
Sleep in dreamless rest, Kings and Queens in life,*



*Battling for power, all conquered by tyrant Death,  
 Whose universal edict, irrevocable,  
 Levels Prince and Peasant, in impalpable dust.  
 Crowns to-day, coffins to-morrow, with monuments  
 Mossed over, letter-cracked, undecipherable  
 As the mummied remains of Egyptian Kings.  
 Vain, vain, are all the monuments of man,  
 The greatest only live a little span;  
 We strut and shine our passing day, and then—  
 Depart from all the haunts of living men,  
 With only Hope to light us on the way  
 Where billions passed beneath the silent clay;  
 And, none have yet returned to tell us where  
 We'll bivouac beyond this world of care;  
 And these dumb mouths, with ghostly spirits near  
 Will not express a word into mine ear,  
 Or tell me when I leave this sinning sod  
 If I shall be transfigured with my God!*

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In September, 1592, the second play of Shakspeare, "Love's Labor's Lost," was given at the Blackfriars, to a fine audience.

He took the characters of the play from a French novel, based on an Italian plot, and wove around the story a lot of glittering talk to please the lords and ladies who listened to the silly gabble of their prototypes.

Ferdinand, King of Navarre, and his attendant lords are a set of silly beaux who propose to retire from the world and leave women alone for the space of three years.

The Princess of France and her ladies in waiting, with the assistance of a gay lord named Boyet, made an incursion into the Kingdom of Navarre and break into the solitude of the students.

Nathaniel, a parson, and Holofernes, a pedant schoolmaster, are introduced into the play by William to illustrate the asinine pretensions of ministers and pedagogues, who are constantly introducing Latin or French words in their daily conversation, for the purpose of impressing common people with their great learning, when, in fact, they only show ridiculous pretense and expose themselves to the contempt of mankind.

There are very few noted philosophic sentiments in the play, and the attempt at wit, of the clown, the constable and Holofernes, the schoolmaster, fall very flat on the ear of an audience, while the rhymes put in the mouth of the various characters are unworthy of a boy fourteen years of age.

I remonstrated with William about injecting his alleged poetry into the love letters sent by the lords and ladies, but he replied that young love was such a fool that any kind of rhyme would suit passionate parties who were playing "Jacks and straws" with each other.

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Ferdinand, the King, opens up the play with a grand dash of thought:

*"Let fame that all hunt after in their lives,  
 Live registered upon our brazen tombs,  
 And then grace us in the disgrace of death,  
 When, spite of cormorant devouring time,  
 The endeavor of this present breach may buy  
 That honor, which shall bait his scythe's keen edge  
 To make us heirs of all eternity."*

Lord Biron, who imagines himself in love with the beautiful Rosaline, soliloquizes in this fashion:

*"What? I! I love! I sue! I seek a wife!  
 A woman that is like a German clock,  
 Still a repairing; ever out of frame.  
 And never going aright, being a watch,  
 But being watched that it may still go right!  
 Is not Love a Hercules  
 Still climbing trees in the Hesperides?  
 Subtle as a sphinx; as sweet and musical  
 As bright Apollo's lute, strung with his hair  
 And when Love speaks, the voice of all the gods  
 Makes heaven drowsy with the harmony!"*

Holofernes, the Latin pedagogue, criticising Armado, exclaims:

*Novi hominem tanquam te.* His humor is lofty, his discourse peremptory. He draweth out the thread of his verbosity finer than the staple of his argument.

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And then Holofernes winds up the play with the Owl and Cuckoo song, a rambling verse,



The birds of the air, animals of the land and fishes of the sea, fight and devour each other for food, while man, the great robber and murderer of all, delights in destruction, and from his first appearance on earth to the present day, has been earnestly engaged in emigrating from land to land, seeking whom he may rob and kill for personal wealth and power! Doing it to-day more than ever.

Civilization is only refined barbarism; and this very hour the unions of the world are inventing and manufacturing powder, guns and terrible battle ships for the purpose of robbing and killing each other in the next war, nearly at hand. Japan and Russia will tear each other to pieces.

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Peace is only a slight resting spell for the nations to trade with each other and make secret preparations to finally kill and secure increased dominion.

The minions of monarchy and lovers of liberty have invariably despised each other, and waited only favorable opportunity to rob and murder. Even now, they crouch like lions at bay, and fight to the death.

Liberty is forging ahead with ten league boots and monarchy is silently, but surely being relegated to the tomb of defeat.

Of course, right is right in the abstract, but might is the winning card in the lottery of Fate, and that nation having the most brave men, money and guns will come out victorious!

Strong nations have become stronger by robbing and killing weaker nations, and the British Government for a thousand years—particularly from the bloody reigns of Elizabeth and Oliver Cromwell—can boast that it has never failed to rob and kill the weak, while truckling and fawning at the feet of Russia and the Republic of the United States, which will soon extend from Bering Sea and Baffin's Bay to the Isthmus of Panama—absorbing Canada, Cuba, Mexico and Central America within its imperial jurisdiction. We intend to, and shall rule the world!

Then, this vast Republic, looking over the globe from the dome of our national Capitol, at Washington, can invite all lands to banquet at the table of the Goddess of Liberty, and in mercy to the blind tyranny of monarchy we may lay a wreath of myrtle on the graves of lords, earls, dukes, kings, queens and emperors, to be only remembered as the nightmare of tyranny, extirpated from the earth forever. God grant their speedy official destruction!

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The gentle reader (of course) will excuse this enthusiastic digression from the story of Queen Bess and my soul friend William Shakspeare.

If they were present at this moment, they would not dare deny the truth of this memory narrative.

In the summer of 1595, the periodical plague of London was thinning out the inhabitants of that dirty city. In the lower part of the city skirting the Thames, the sewerage was very bad and but the poorest sanitary rules existed. After a hard rain, the lanes, alleys and streets ran with a stream of putrefaction, as the offal from many tenement houses was thrown in the public highway, where the rays from the hot sun created malarial fever or the black plague.

At such times the theatres and churches were closed, and those who could get out of London, by land or water, fled to the inland shires of England, the mountains of Scotland or to the heather hills of Ireland.

Edmund Spenser, the poet and Secretary of Lord Gray for Ireland, invited William and myself to visit his Irish estate near the city of Cork.

One bright morning in May, we boarded the good ship Elizabeth, near the Tower, passed out of Gravesend, then into the channel and steered our way to Bantry Bay, until we landed in the cove of Cork, as the church bells were ringing devotees to early mass.

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The green fields and hills of Ireland were blooming in rustic beauty, the thrush sang from every hawthorn bush, the blackbird was busy in the fields filching grain from the ploughman, the lark, in his skyward flight poured a stream of melody on the air, and all Nature seemed happy, but man.

He it is who makes the blooming productive earth miserable, with his voracious greed for gold and power.

Elizabeth was then waging war with the various Irish chieftains, importing cunning Scotchmen and brutal Englishmen as soldiers and traders to colonize the lands and destroy the homes of what she was pleased to call "Barbarous, rebellious, wild Irish."

Whenever any strong power invades a weaker one for the purpose of robbery and official murder (war), the tyrant labels his victim—a "Rebel!"

That is, the original owner of the land destined to be robbed is regarded as bigoted, barbarous and rebellious, unless he submits to be robbed, banished and murdered for the edification and glory of freebooters, thieves, tyrants, assassins and foreign man hunters.

Leinster, Munster, Ulster and Connaught, the four provinces of Ireland, had been marked out for settlement by Henry the Eighth and Queen Elizabeth, and hordes of English "carpetbaggers" and soldiers were turned loose on the island to rob, burn and destroy the natives.

As soon as counties and provinces were conquered, the military and lordly pets of the various monarchs were given large grants of the lands stolen from the people.

O'Neil, O'Brien, Desmond, O'Donnell, O'Connor, Burke, Clanrickard and Tyrone disputed every inch of ground with Pellam, Mountjoy, Gray, Essex, Raleigh and Cromwell; and, although the original commanders and owners of the soil have been virtually banished or killed, their posterity has the proud satisfaction of knowing that more than a million of Englishmen and Scotchmen have been killed by the "Wild Irish," and the battle for liberty shall still go on till the Saxon robber relinquishes his blood sucking tentacles on the Emerald Isle.

Poet Spenser and Sir Walter Raleigh were rewarded by Queen Elizabeth with thousands of acres, confiscated from the great estate of the Earl of Desmond, who lived at the castle of Kilcolman, near the town of Doneraile.

Spenser paid for his stolen land by writing a dissertation on the way to conquer and kill off the Irish race, regarding them no more than the wild beasts of the forest. He also flattered Queen Bess by composing a lot of flattering verse, called the "Faerie Queen," and made her believe she was the beautiful, sweet, mild, chaste, angelic individual that had thrilled his imagination in the royal realms of dreamland.

What infernal lies political courtiers, religious ministers and even poets have told to flatter the vanity of governors, presidents, kings, queens, popes and emperors!

Yet in all the grand sentiments Shakspeare evolved out of his volcanic brain, he never bent the knee to absolute vice, but pictured the horrors of royalty in its most devilish attitudes. His pen was never purchased against truth.

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We remained at Kilcolman Castle with Spenser for about ten days riding and sporting, and then with an escort of soldiers, were piloted through the "Rebel" counties on to Dublin, where the head of O'Neil graced one of the "Red" walls of that unlucky city.

On our route from Cork to Dublin we beheld misery and ruin in every form, burned cabins, churches, monasteries and bridges, and starving women and children on the roadside, crouching under bushes, straw stacks and leaking sheds, with smouldering turf fires crackling on the ashes of despair!

We took shipping the next morning for Liverpool, as William was very anxious to get away from the land of funeral wails, where the cry of the "wake" over some dead peasant or defiant "Rebel" echoed on the air continually.

*Where sorrow in her weeping form,  
Shed tears in sunshine, and in storm,  
While o'er the land, a reign of blood  
Was running like a mountain flood!*

As we pushed away from the sight of the Irish hills, Shakspeare, leaning against the foremast, in pathetic tone exclaimed:

*Farewell, old Erin, land of nameless sorrow,  
Albion crushes thee for opinion's sake;  
'Twi'x the Bulls of Rome and Laws of England  
Thy children are robbed, banished and murdered.  
And cast away from native land, like leaves  
Bestrewing forest wilds, bleak and lone.  
Merged in lands of Liberty, thy children  
Shall rise again, a new born glorious race—  
Triumphant in home, church and State, honored,  
Masters of War, Wit, Eloquence and Poetry.  
Move out and move on, like the rising sun  
Whose face so oft is clouded with shadows,  
Yet, shall burst forth again in noonday splendor—  
Irradiating a bleak and cruel world!*

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## CHAPTER XI.

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### RURAL ENGLAND. "ROMEO AND JULIET"

*"I know a bank where the wild thyme blows;  
Where ox-lips and the nodding violet grows;  
Quite over-canopied with luscious woodbine,  
With sweet musk roses and the eglantine."*

*"Stony limits cannot hold love out;  
And what love can do, that dares love attempt."*

We remained in Liverpool three days, and then determined to return to London by land, crossing through the inland shires, taking in Manchester, Sheffield, Derby, Birmingham, Coventry, Warwick, and on to Stratford, where clustered the dearest objects of our affection.

We were ten days walking, riding and resting at taverns, in our rural tour of Old Albion. The fields were furrowed for the grain, the birds sang from every hedge and forest domain, the cattle, sheep and swine grazed in lowing, bleating, grunting security along winding streams, public fields or on the velvet meadows of rich yeoman or lordly estates, while the men, women, boys and girls that we encountered seemed to be infused with the delights of May blossoms, forest wild flowers and refreshing showers, all noting the practical prosperity of England.

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How different these rural scenes to those we had recently encountered in poor down-trodden Ireland, the Niobe of nations, besprinkled with the tears of centuries for the loss of her crushed and exiled children.

*Yet, the world is moving upward  
To the heights where Freedom reigns;  
Where the sunshine of redemption  
Shall give joy for all our pains,  
When the cruel hands of tyrants  
Shall be banished from the land  
With our God the only Master  
Of Dame Nature true and grand!*

We arrived in sight of Stratford as the sun set over the hills of Arden, and as the pigeons and rooks sought their nests for the night, a golden glow flashed over the evening landscape.

The last rays of Sol shone in dazzling splendor upon the pinnacle of old Trinity Church as we gazed with ravished eyes on the winding, glistening Avon, meandering through emerald meadows and whispering wild flowers to the silvery Severn.

The old tavern was still there, but the old host slept in God's acre near by, while the lads we knew ten years before, had, like ourselves, gone out into the world for fame and fortune.

William sought out his father and mother, and then Anne Hathaway and the children, who still resided at the old Hathaway cottage at Shottery. I remained at the tavern for contemplation.

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Time and age mellow the most violent spirits; and the temper of Anne had become modified by family troubles, inducing an inward survey of self, which brings a reasonable person to the realization of the fact that he or she is not the only stubborn oak in the forest of humanity.

A practical stubborn wife and a lofty poet never can assimilate.

Shakspeare had no equals or superiors. Shakspeare was simply SHAKSPERE.

*At home he found a scolding wife,  
Abroad he felt the joys of life,  
While all his glory and renown  
Were reaped at last in London town.  
He looked for truth in crowds of men,  
In field, in street, in tavern,  
And mingled with the moving throng  
To hear their story and their song,  
He pictured life in colors true,  
As brilliant as the rainbow hue,  
And all his characters display  
The pride and passion of to-day.  
He cared not for the crowds of men—  
As fierce as beasts within a den,  
And looked alone to Nature's God  
Displayed in heaven, in sea and sod,  
And held the scales of justice high-  
Uplifted to the sunlit sky,  
Weighing the passions of mankind  
With lofty and imperial mind.  
The Puritan and Pope to him  
Were overflowing to the brim  
With bigotry and cruel spleen  
That desolated every scene.  
The midget minds of men in power  
He satirized from hour to hour,  
And on the stage portrayed the greed  
Of those who live by crime and creed.  
He tore the masks from royal brows  
And showed their guilt and broken vows,  
Exposing to the laughing throng  
The horrid face of vice and wrong.  
In every land and every clime,*

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*He honored truth and punctured crime,  
And down the years his god-like rhyme  
Shall be synonymous with Time!*

We remained among relatives and friends in Warwickshire until the middle of September, when we heard that the London plague had abated and the theatrical profession were busy preparing for a winter campaign of dramatic glory. Shakspeare had several plays partly or nearly finished, and, as Burbage and Henslowe desired our immediate services, we took our departure from Stratford, with the friendship of the town echoing in our ears.

The flowers and growing fields, the leafy forests and circling and singing birds seemed to say good-bye, good luck and God bless you!

We felt happy and hopeful ourselves, and consequently Dame Nature echoed the feeling of our souls. All was joy, song, feasting and laughter.

William, on our way to Oxford, in one of his original flights taken from an ode of Horace, impulsively exclaimed:

*Laugh and the world laughs with you;  
Weep and you weep alone,  
This grand old earth must borrow its mirth,  
It has troubles enough of its own.  
Sing and the hills will answer,  
Sigh, it is lost on the air,  
The echoes bound to a joyful sound,  
But shrink from voicing care.*

*Be glad and your friends are many;  
Be sad and you lose them all;  
There are none to decline your nectared wine,  
But alone we must drink life's gall.  
There's room in the halls of pleasure,  
For a long and lordly train,  
But one by one we must all file on;  
Through the narrow aisles of pain.*

*Feast, and your halls are crowded,  
Fast, and the world goes by,  
Succeed and give, 'twill help you live;  
But no one can help you die!  
Rejoice, and men will seek you,  
Grieve, and they turn and go,  
They want full measure of all your pleasure  
But they do not want your woe!*

These lines impressed me very much at the time and from that day to this I have never ceased to act on the philosophy of the poem.

It has been part of my nature, and during my wanderings for the past three hundred and twenty years I have never failed to carry in my train of thought and action—sunshine, beauty, song, love and laughter—advance agents to secure welcome in all hearts and homes throughout the world.

We were beautifully entertained by Mrs. Daisy Davenant at the Crown Tavern in Oxford, and many of the college "boys," who heard of our arrival in the city, hurried to pay their classic friendship to the "Divine" William.

We arrived in London on the 20th of September, and found that our old maid landlady had died of the plague, but had kindly sent all our literary and wardrobe effects to Florio, who was still alive and well at the Red Lion.

In a couple of days William was up to his head and ears in theatrical composition and stage structure.

A few years before the Bard had "dashed off" a love tragedy entitled "Romeo and Juliet," taken from an Italian novel of the thirteenth century, and a translation of the old family feud in poetry, by Walter Brooke, who had but recently delighted London with the story.

Shakspeare never hesitated to take crude ore and rough ashler from any quarry of thought; and out of the dull, leaden material of others, produced characters in living form to walk the stage of life forever, teaching the lesson of virtue triumphant over vice.

The exemplification of true love, as pictured in the pure affection of Juliet and the intense, heroic devotion of Romeo, have never been equaled or surpassed by any other dramatic characters.

The lordly and wealthy gentry of Italy have been noted for their family feuds for the past three thousand years, and the party followers of these blood-stained rivals have desolated many happy

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homes in Rome, Florence, Milan, Naples, Venice and Verona.

Shakspeare showed the finished play of "Romeo and Juliet" to Burbage, and the old manager fairly jumped with joy and astonishment at the eloquence of the love and ruin drama.

The families of Capulet and Montague of Verona, stuffed with foolish pride about the matrimonial choice of their daughters and sons, can be found in every city in the world where a tyrant father or purse-proud mother insist on selecting life partners for their children.

The story of Romeo and Juliet shows the utter failure of such parental folly.

The play was largely advertised among the lights of London and announced to come off in all its glory at the Blackfriars on the last Saturday of December, 1595.

Queen Elizabeth, in a special box, was there incog, with a royal train of lords and ladies; and such another audience for dress and stunning show was never seen in London.

Burleigh, Bacon, Essex, Southampton, Derby, Raleigh, Spenser, Warwick, Gray, Montague, Lancaster, Mountjoy, Blake, and all the great soldiers and sailors of the realm then in London were boxed for a sight of the greatest love tragedy ever enacted on the dramatic stage. All the dramatic authors were present.

William himself took the part of Romeo, for he was a perfect exemplification of the hero of the play. Jo Taylor took the part of Juliet, and I can assure you that his makeup, in the form and dress of the fourteen-year-old Italian beauty, was a great success.

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Dick Burbage took the part of Friar Laurence, Condell played Mercutio, Arnim the part of Paris, Field played old Capulet, and Florio played Montague, Hemmings played Benvolio, and John Underwood played the part of Tybalt, and Escalus, the Prince, was played by Phillips.

The curtain went up on a street scene in Verona, where the partisans of the houses of Capulet and Montague quarreled, while Paris, Mercutio, Romeo and Tybalt worked up their hot blood and came to blows.

Romeo and his friends, in mask, attended a ball at the home of Juliet, in a clandestine fashion, and on first sight of this immaculate beauty Romeo exclaims:

*"O, she doth teach the torches to burn bright!  
Her beauty hangs upon the cheek of night  
Like a rich jewel in an Ethiop's ear;  
Beauty too rich for use, for earth too dear!  
So shows a snowy dove trooping with crows,  
As yonder lady o'er her fellows shows.  
The dancing done, I'll watch her place of stand,  
And, touching hers, make happy my rude hand,  
Did my heart love till now? Forswear it, sight,  
For I ne'er saw true beauty till to-night!"*

The poetic apostrophe of Romeo to his new discovered beauty elicited universal applause, led by the "Virgin Queen," who imagined, no doubt, that his tribute to beauty was intended for herself. She never lost an opportunity to appropriate anything that came her way. An epigram of strenuous audacity. A winner!

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In the second act Romeo climbs the wall, hemming in his beautiful Juliet, and in defiance of the family feud, locks and bars of old man Capulet, and seeks a clandestine interview with his true love, although at the risk of his life.

It was the evening of the twenty-first birthday of Romeo, and with love as his guide and subject, he felt strong enough to attack a warring world.

Beneath the window of the fair Juliet, Romeo soliloquizes:

*"He jests at scars, that never felt a wound—  
(Juliet appears at an upper window.)  
But, soft! what light through yonder window breaks!  
It is the East, and Juliet is the sun!  
Arise, fair sun, and kill the envious moon,  
Who is already sick and pale with grief,  
That thou, her maid, art far more fair than she;  
Be not her maid since she is envious;  
Her vestal livery is but sick and green,  
And none but fools do wear it; cast it off—  
It is my lady; O, it is my love;  
O, that she knew she were!—  
She speaks, yet she says nothing: What of that:  
Her eye discourses, I will answer it.  
I am too bold, 'tis not to me she speaks;  
Two of the fairest stars in all the heaven,  
Having some business, do entreat her eyes  
To twinkle in their spheres till they return.*

*What if her eyes were there, they in her head?  
The brightness of her cheek would shame those stars.  
As daylight doth a lamp; her eye in heaven  
Would through the airy region stream so bright  
That birds would sing, and think it were not night.  
See how she leans her cheek upon her hand!  
O, that I were a glove upon that hand,  
That I might touch that cheek!"*

Juliet speaks, and finally out of her fevered, love-lit mind says:

*"O, Romeo, Romeo! wherefore art thou Romeo?  
Deny thy father and refuse thy name;  
Or, if thou wilt not, be but sworn my love,  
And I'll no longer be a Capulet!"*

Romeo replies:

*"I take thee at thy word;  
Call me but love, and I'll be new baptized,  
Henceforth I never will be Romeo."*

She says:

*"How cam'st thou hither?  
The orchard walls are too high and hard to climb;  
And the place death, considering who thou art."*

Romeo quickly responds:

*"With love's light wings did I o'erperch these walls;  
For stony limits cannot hold love out;  
And what love can do, that dares love attempt,  
Therefore thy kinsmen are no hindrance to me!  
I am no pilot, yet wert thou as far  
As that vast shore washed with the further sea  
I would adventure for such merchandise!"*

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Then Juliet, with her fine Italian cunning makes the following declaration of her love; and considering that she is only fourteen years of age, yet in the hands of a house nurse, older and wiser girls could not give a better gush of affectionate eloquence:

*"Thou know'st the mask of night is on my face,  
Else would a maiden blush bepaint my cheek,  
For that which thou hast heard me speak to-night.  
Fain would I dwell on form, fain, fain, fain, deny  
What I have spoke; But, farewell compliment!  
Dost thou love me? I know thou wilt say, Ay;  
And I will take thy word, yet if thou swear'st,  
Thou may'st prove false; at lover's perjuries  
They say Jove laughs. O, gentle Romeo,  
If thou dost love, pronounce it faithfully;  
Or, if thou think'st I am too quickly won,  
I'll frown and be perverse, and say thee nay,  
So thou wilt woo; but else, not for the world,  
In truth, fair Montague, I am too fond;  
And therefore thou may'st think my conduct light;  
But, trust me, gentleman, I'll prove more true  
Than those that have more cunning to be strange.  
I should have been more shy, I must confess,  
But that thou overheard'st, ere I was aware,  
My true love's passion; therefore, pardon me;  
And not impute this yielding to light love,  
Which the dark night hath so discovered,  
My bounty is as boundless as the sea,  
My love as deep; the more I give to thee,  
The more I have, for both are infinite!"*

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The lovers part, promising eternal love and marriage "to-morrow" at the cell of good Friar Laurence, the confessor of the fair Juliet.

The friar, priest, preacher and bishop have ever been great matrimonial matchmakers, and when "Love's young dream" is foiled or withered by parental tyranny, these velvet-handed philosophers find a way to tie the hymeneal knot, even in personal and legal defiance of cruel, social dictation.

Friar Laurence, in contemplation of tying love-knots soliloquizes in the following lofty lines:



*"The gray-eyed morn smiles on the frowning night,  
Checkering the eastern clouds with streaks of light;  
And flecked darkness like a drunkard reels  
From forth day's pathway, made by Titan's wheels.  
Now ere the sun advance his burning eye,  
The day to cheer, and night's dark dew to try,  
I must fill up this osier cage of ours  
With baleful needs and precious-juiced flowers.  
The earth that's Nature's mother, is her tomb;  
What is her burying grave, that is her womb;  
And from her womb children of divers kind  
We sucking on her natural bosom find,  
Many for many virtues excellent,  
None, but for some, and yet all different;  
O, mickle is the powerful grace that lies  
In herbs, plants, stones and their true qualities;  
For naught so vile that on the earth doth live,  
But to the earth some special good doth give;  
Nor aught so good, but strained from that fair use,  
Revolts from true birth, stumbling on abuse.  
Virtue itself turns vice, being misapplied  
And vice sometimes by action dignified.  
Within the infant rind of this small flower,  
Poison hath residence and medicine power,  
For, this being smelt, with that part cheers each part,  
Being tasted, slays all senses with the heart.  
Two such opposed foes encamp them still  
In man as well as herbs, grace and rude will,  
And where the worser is predominant,  
Full soon the canker death eats up that plant!"*

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Romeo implores the holy Friar:

*"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!"*

Juliet addressing Romeo in the Friar's cell exclaims:

*"Imagination more rich in matter than in words,  
Braggs of his substance, not of ornament;  
They are but beggars that can count their worth;  
But my true love is grown to such excess,  
I cannot sum up half my sum of wealth."*

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The good old Friar then says:

*"Come, come with me and we will make short work;  
For, by your leaves, you shall not stay alone  
Till holy church incorporate two in one!"*

Mercutio and Tybalt fight, in faction of the Capulet and Montague houses. Mercutio is killed, and then Romeo kills Tybalt and is banished from the State by Prince Escalus.

Juliet awaits Romeo in her room the night after marriage, and with passionate, impatient longing exclaims:

*"Give me my Romeo; and when he shall die  
Take him and cut him out in little stars,  
And he will make the face of heaven so bright  
That all the world will be in love with night,  
And pay no worship to the garish sun.  
O, I have bought the mansion of a love,  
But not possessed it; and, though I am sold;  
Not yet enjoyed; so tedious is this day,  
As is the night before some festival  
To an impatient child that hath new robes,  
And may not wear them!"*

Although the verdict of banishment was pronounced against Romeo to go to Mantua instantler, he found means through the old nurse and good Friar Laurence to visit his new-made bride the night before his forced departure; and in spite of locks, bars, law, parents and princes, plucked the ripe fruit from the tree of virginity.

Romeo must be gone before the first crowing of the cock and ere the rosy fingers of the dawn light up the bridal chamber, else death would be his portion.

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Juliet importunes him to stay, and says:

*"Wilt thou be gone? It is not yet near day;  
It was the nightingale, and not the lark,  
That pierced the fearful hollow of thine ear;  
Nightly she sings on yon pomegranate tree;  
Believe me, love, it was the nightingale."*

Romeo replies:

*"It was the lark, the herald of the morn,  
No nightingale; look, love, what envious streaks  
Do lace the severing clouds in yonder East;  
Night's candles are burnt, and jocund day,  
Stands tiptoe on the misty mountain tops;  
I must be gone and live, or stay and die!"*

Juliet further implores him to stay:

*"Yon light is not daylight, I know it;  
It is some meteor that the sun exhales;  
To be to thee this night a torch bearer,  
And light thee on thy way to Mantua;  
Therefore stay yet, thou need'st not be gone."*

Romeo willingly consents:

*"Let me be taken, let me be put to death;  
I am content so thou wilt have it so;  
I'll say yon gray is not the morning's eye,  
'Tis but the pale reflex of Cynthia's brow!  
Nor that it is not the lark, whose notes do beat  
The vaulty heaven so high above our heads;  
I have more care to stay than will to go;—  
Come, death, and welcome! Juliet wills it so—  
How is it, my soul? Let's talk, it is not day!"*

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Juliet alarmed exclaims:

*"It is, it is, hie hence, begone away;  
It is the lark that sings so out of tune,  
Straining harsh discords and unpleasing sharps.  
Some say the lark makes sweet division;  
This doth not so, for she divideth us;  
Some say, the lark and loathed toad change eyes;  
O, now I would they had changed voices too;  
Since arm from arm that voice doth us affray,  
Hunting thee hence with hunts up to the day.  
O, now begone; more light and light it grows."*

Romeo descends the ladder, saying his last words to the beautiful Juliet:

*"And trust me, love, in mine eye so do you,  
Dry sorrow drinks our blood. Adieu! Adieu!"*

After the banishment of Romeo, old Capulet and his wife insisted that Juliet marry young Paris, a kinsman of Prince Escalus, and sorrows unnumbered crowded on the new-made secret bride.

To escape marriage with Paris, Juliet consulted Friar Laurence, who gives her a drug to be taken the night before the prearranged marriage, that will dull all life and the body remain as dead for forty-two hours. This scheme of the Friar works out favorably until Juliet is laid away with her ancestors in the grand tomb of the Capulets.

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But Romeo hears of the whole trouble and hurries back from banishment, dashing his way through all impediments until he kills Paris, grieving at midnight by the grave of Juliet.

Then, tearing his way into the tomb of Juliet throws himself upon the gorgeous bier and exclaims:

*"Oh, my love! my wife!  
Death that hath sucked the honey of thy breath,  
Hath had no power yet upon thy beauty;  
Thou art not conquered; beauty's ensign yet  
Is crimson on thy lips, and in thy cheeks,  
And death's pale flag is not advanced there;  
Tybalt, liest thou there in thy bloody sheet?  
O, what more favor can I do thee,  
Than with that hand that cut thy youth in twain,*

*To sunder his that was thine enemy!  
 Forgive me, cousin! Ah, dear Juliet,  
 Why art thou yet so fair? Shall I believe  
 That unsubstantial death is amorous;  
 And that the lean abhorred monster keeps  
 Thee here in dark to be his paramour?  
 For fear of that I will still stay with thee;  
 And never from this palace of dim night  
 Depart again; here, here will I remain  
 With worms that are thy chambermaids; O, here  
 Will I set up my everlasting rest;  
 And shake the yoke of inauspicious stars  
 From this world-wearied flesh; eyes, look your last!  
 Arms, take your last embrace! and lips, O, you,  
 The doors of breath, seal with a righteous kiss  
 A dateless bargain to engrossing death!  
 Come, bitter conductor, come, unsavory guide!  
 Thou desperate pilot, now and at once run on  
 The dashing rocks thy sea-sick, weary bark!  
 Here's to my love! (Drinks poison.) O, true apothecary!  
 Thy drugs are quick; thus with a kiss I die!"*

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Friar Laurence and Balthazar with dark lantern, at this moment approach the tomb to extricate and save Juliet from the sleeping drug. She awakes with the noise in the tomb and views the deadly situation.

The Friar implores her to come, depart at once, as the night watch approach. She says:

*"Go, get thee hence, for I will not away;  
 What's here? a cup close in my true love's hand;  
 Poison, I see, hath been his timeless end;  
 O churl! drink all; and leave me no friendly drop  
 To help me after? I will kiss thy lips;  
 Haply, some poison yet doth hang on them,  
 To make me die with a restorative.  
 Thy lips are warm!  
 Yea, noise? Then I'll be brief. O happy dagger!  
 (Snatches Romeo's dagger.)  
 This is thy sheath, there rust and let me die!"*  
 (Stabs herself through the heart.)

The Prince, Capulet and Montague family soon discover all, and Friar Laurence tells the true story, punishment follows, and the two contending houses of Verona clasp hands over the ruin they have wrought, while the Prince exclaims:

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*"For, never was a story of more woe,  
 Than this of Juliet and her Romeo!"*

The drop curtain was rung down and up three times, and the storm of applause that greeted Shakspeare and Taylor, as the representatives of Romeo and Juliet, was never equaled before at the Blackfriars.

The Queen called William and Jo to the royal box and by her own firm hand presented a signet ring to Romeo and a lace handkerchief to Juliet!

*"What fates impose, that men must needs abide;  
 It boots not to resist both wind and tide!"*

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## CHAPTER XII.

[110]

### "JULIUS CÆSAR."

*"O mighty Cæsar! Dost thou lie so low?  
 Are all thy conquests, glories, triumphs, spoils  
 Shrunk to this little measure?"*

The assassination of Julius Cæsar by Brutus, Cassius, Casca and twenty other Roman Senators, in the capital of the Empire in broad daylight, was one of the most cowardly and infamous crimes recorded in the annals of time.

The historical and philosophical friends of Brutus and Cassius have tried to justify the conspiracy and assassination by imputing the deep design of tyranny to Cæsar, who was bent on trampling down the rights of the people and securing for himself a kingly crown.

They say the motive of the conspirators in the deep damnation of Cæsar's "taking off" was purely patriotism. Many murderers have used the same argument.

The facts do not justify the excuse. For more than thirty years Julius Cæsar had been a star performer on the boards of the Roman Empire, and his family had been illustrious for five hundred years. Sylla, Marius, Cicero, Cato, Brutus and Pompey had crossed lances with this civil and military genius, and had all become very jealous of his increasing fame. [111]

From boyhood Cæsar had been a mixer with the common people, and in midnight hours in Rome, among tradesmen, merchants, students, authors, sailors and soldiers, he became imbued with their wants and impulsive nature. He had no reason to doubt or oppress the people.

As commander of invincible troops in Spain, Gaul, Germany and Britain, Cæsar had secured a world-wide reputation, for the eagles of his victorious legions had swept across the mountains and seas to the shore end of Europe and screamed in triumph among the palms and sands of Africa and Asia!

Cæsar was a poet, orator, historian, warrior and statesman, and the imperial families and politicians of Rome, who were forced to sit in the shade of his triumphs and glory, felt a secret pang of jealousy at the stride of this colossal character.

He was the pride and idol of his soldiers, and whether in the forests of Gaul and Germany, the swamps of Britain, mountains of Spain, or among Ionian isles, his presence was ever worth a thousand men in battle action.

His plans were mathematical, his soul sublime and his purpose eternal victory!

Bravery and Cæsar were synonymous terms, and the little, mean, pismire ambitions of Roman politicians he despised, striding over their corrupt schemes for pelf and office like a winter whirlwind.

Brutus, while professing horror at the contemplated assassination of his friend and natural father Cæsar, lent a willing ear and sympathetic voice to the prime conspirator—Cassius; and although seemingly dragged into the murderous plot, he was in heart the grand villain of the conspiracy, believing he might rise to supreme control of the Roman Empire when Julius the Great lay weltering in his heroic blood. [112]

Brutus was a dastard, an ingrate, a coward and a murderer, and no pretense of patriotism can save him from the contempt and condemnation of mankind. There is no justification for assassination!

The death of Cæsar was the first great blow in the final destruction of the Roman Empire, for up to this time the people had a voice in electing their tribunes, consuls and governors, and were consulted as to the burden of taxation, although many of their previous rulers had been terrible tyrants.

Brutus and Cassius, and their coconspirators, city senators, who dipped their hands in Cæsar's sacred blood, were finally driven from all political power, their estates confiscated, fleeing like frightened wolves to foreign fields and forests and perishing in battle as enemies to their country.

When brought to bay at Philippi, Brutus and Cassius mustered up enough courage to commit suicide, which is confession of guilt.

In the winter of 1597 William was deeply studying the new translation of Petrarch, and Florio was nightly teaching us the lofty philosophy of Grecian and Roman classics. The lives of noted ancient poets, orators, warriors, statesmen, governors, kings and philosophers, as written or compiled by the great Plutarch has furnished a mine of historic thought for the dramatic artist, and Shakspeare, above all the men who ever thought, wrote or talked on the stage, took most advantage of the lines of Plutarch. [113]

The British people were clamoring for grand historical plays, not only for the actions of their own kings and queens, but demanded the enactment of the reigns of great, ancient warriors and kings who had given glory to Greece and Rome and left imperishable memories for posterity to avoid or emulate.

Burbage, Henslowe and other theatrical managers, were ever on the lookout for plays to suit cash customers, and of course, the Bard of Avon had first call, because his plays went on the various stages like a torchlight procession, while those of his so-called compeers, struggled through the acts and scenes with only the flicker and sputter of tallow dips of dramatic thought.

He knew, and I knew, that his plays would be enacted down the circling centuries as long as vice and virtue, hate and love, cowardice and bravery, fun, folly, wit and wisdom characterized humanity.

William told Essex and Southampton that he had just composed a play with Julius Cæsar as the central figure, and wished an opportunity to test its merits before a private party of authors, students and lords at the Holborn House, the grand castle of Southampton.

These noblemen were delighted with the suggestion, and on the night of the first of March, 1597, Burbage, with his whole tribe of theatrical "rounders," appeared in the grand banquet room of Southampton, and, under the guidance of Shakspeare, rendered for the first time "Julius [114]

Cæsar."

Jo Taylor took the part of Cæsar, Dick Burbage acted Brutus, Condell represented Cassius and Shakspeare played Marcus Antonius, while the other characters were distributed among the "stock" as their various talents justified.

Calphurnia, wife to Cæsar, and Portia, wife to Brutus, were represented respectively by Hemmings and Arnim.

The play opens with a street scene in Rome filled with working, rabble citizens who have turned out to give Cæsar a great triumph on his return from successful war.

Flavius and Marullus, tribunes, enter and rebuke the people for greeting Cæsar.

Flavius twits the turncoat rabble in this style:

*"O you hard hearts, you cruel men of Rome,  
Knew ye not Pompey? Many a time and oft  
Have you climbed up to walls and battlements,  
To towers and windows, yea, to chimney-tops,  
Your infants in your arms, and there have sat  
The livelong day, with patient expectation,  
To see great Pompey pass the streets of Rome;  
And when you saw his chariot but appear,  
Have you not made a universal shout,  
That Tiber trembled underneath her banks,  
To hear the replication of your sounds,  
Made in her concave shores?  
And do you now put on your best attire?  
And do you now cull out a holiday?  
And do you now strew flowers in his way,  
That comes in triumph over Pompey's blood?"*

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Brutus and Cassius witness the triumphal march of Cæsar with jealous, vengeful and dagger hearts, and Cassius, the old, desperate soldier, first hints at blood conspiracy.

Brutus asks:

*"What is it that you would impart to me?  
If it be aught toward the general good,  
Set honor in eye and death in the other,  
And I will look on both indifferently."*

Fine talk! Brutus is not the only political murderer that talks of "honor" through the centuries, a cloak for devils in human shape to work a personal purpose and not "the general good."

Cassius delivers this eloquent indictment against Cæsar, the grandest of its kind in all history:

*"Well, Honor is the subject of my story—  
I cannot tell what you and other men  
Think of this life; but, for my single self,  
I had as lief not to be, as live to be  
In awe of such a thing as I, myself.  
I was born free as Cæsar; so were you.  
We both have fed as well; and we can both  
Endure the winter's cold as well as he.  
For once, upon a raw and gusty day,  
The troubled Tiber chafing with her shores,  
Cæsar said to me, 'Dar'st thou, Cassius, now  
Leap in with me, into this angry flood  
And swim to yonder point?' Upon the word,  
Accoutered as I was, I plunged in  
And bade him follow; so, indeed, he did.  
The torrent roared and we did buffet it  
With lusty sinews; throwing it aside  
And stemming it with hearts of controversy.  
But ere we could arrive at the point proposed,  
Cæsar cried, 'Help me, Cassius, or I sink!'  
I, as Aeneas, our great ancestor,  
Did from the flames of Troy upon his shoulders  
The old Anchisas bear, so, from the waves of Tiber  
Did I the tired Cæsar; and this man  
Is now become a god, and Cassius is  
A wretched creature, and must bend his body,  
If Cæsar carelessly but nod on him.  
He had a fever, when he was in Spain,  
And when the fit was on him, I did mark  
How he did shake; 'tis true, this god did shake,*

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*His coward lips did from their color fly;  
 And that same eye, whose bend doth awe the world  
 Did lose his lustre; I did hear him groan;  
 Ay, and that tongue of his, that bade the Romans  
 Mark him, and write his speeches in their books;  
 Alas! it cried, 'Give me some drink, Titinius,'  
 As a sick girl. Ye gods, it doth amaze me,  
 A man of such a feeble temper should  
 So get the start of the majestic world  
 And bear the palm alone!  
 Why, man, he doth bestride the narrow world  
 Like a Colossus; and we petty men  
 Walk under his huge legs, and peep about  
 To find ourselves dishonorable graves.  
 Men at some time are masters of their fates.  
 The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars,  
 But in ourselves, that we are underlings.  
 Brutus and Cæsar; what should be in that Cæsar?  
 Why should that name be sounded more than yours?  
 Write them together, yours is as fair a name;  
 Sound them, it doth become the mouth as well;  
 Weigh them, it is as heavy; conjure with them  
 Brutus will start a spirit as soon as Cæsar.  
 Now in the name of all the gods at once,  
 Upon what meat doth this our Cæsar feed  
 That he is grown so great?"*

[117]

Unanimous applause followed this cunning conspiracy speech, and Jonson, Lodge and Drayton gave loud exclamations of approval.

Cæsar, with his staff, returning from the games in his honor, sees Cassius and remarks to Antonius:

*"Let me have men about me that are fat;  
 Sleek-headed men and such as sleep of nights;  
 Yonder Cassius has a lean and hungry look;  
 He thinks too much; such men are dangerous;  
 And are never at heart's ease  
 Whiles they behold a greater than themselves!"*

Casca, one of the senatorial conspirators, tells Cassius that Cæsar is to be crowned king, and he replies thus, contemplating suicide:

*"I know where I will wear this dagger then;  
 Cassius from bondage will deliver Cassius;  
 Therein, ye gods, you make the weak most strong;  
 Therein, ye gods, you tyrants do defeat;  
 Nor stony tower, nor walls of beaten brass,  
 Nor airless dungeon, nor strong links of iron  
 Can be retentive to the strength of spirit;  
 But life being weary of these worldly bars,  
 Never lacks power to dismiss itself;  
 That part of tyranny that I do bear  
 I can shake off at pleasure!"*

[118]

Brutus, contemplating assassination, says in soliloquy:

*"To speak the truth of Cæsar,  
 I have not known when his affections swayed  
 More than his reason. But 'tis a common proof,  
 That lowliness is young ambition's ladder,  
 Whereto the climber upward turns his face;  
 But when he once attains the upmost round,  
 He then unto the ladder turns his back,  
 Looks in the clouds, scorning the base degrees  
 By which he did ascend!"*

This ingratitude of the great to the people is often recompensed by defeat and death.

After the senatorial conspirators decided that Cæsar should die, Cassius insisted wisely that Marcus Antonius should not outlive the great Julius, and said:

"Let Antony and Cæsar fall together!"

But Brutus would not consent to the death of Antony, believing that he was not dangerous to their future, yet insisting that "Cæsar must bleed for it."

*"Let's kill him bodily, but not wrathfully;  
Let's carve him as a dish fit for the gods,  
Not hew him as a carcass fit for hounds;  
And let our hearts as subtle masters do,  
Stir up their servants to an act of rage,  
And after seem to chide them!"*

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And yet this is the sweet-scented assassin who prates of "honor," and is sometimes known as "the noblest Roman of them all!"

Portia, the wife of Brutus, felt a strange alarm at his recent conduct, and Calphurnia, the wife of Cæsar, implored him not to attend the session of the senate, reminding him of the soothsayer's warning—"Beware the ides of March."

Yet, Cæsar threw off all fear and suspicion and said:

*"What can be avoided,  
Whose end is purposed by the mighty gods?  
Yet Cæsar shall go forth, for these predictions  
Are to the world in general, not to Cæsar!  
Cowards die many times before their deaths;  
The valiant never taste of death but once!"*

The hour of assassination has arrived, and Cæsar, seated in the chair of state, says:

*"What is now amiss  
That Cæsar and his senate must redress?"*

Senator Metellus, one of the chief conspirators, throws himself at the feet of Cæsar and implores pardon for his traitor brother.

Cæsar says:

*"Be not fond,  
To think that Cæsar bears such rebel blood,  
That will be thawed from the true quality,  
With that which meeteth fools; I mean, sweet words,  
Low, crooked courtesies, and base, spaniel fawning;  
Thy brother by decree is banished;  
If thou dost bend, and pray and fawn for him,  
I spurn thee like a cur out of my way.  
Know, Cæsar doth not wrong; nor without cause  
Will he be satisfied!  
But I am constant as the northern star,  
Of whose true fixed and resting quality  
There is no fellow in the firmament!"*

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The conspirators at this moment crowd around the doomed hero with pretended petitions—and, instanter, Casca stabs Cæsar in the neck, while several other murdering senators stab him through the body, and last Marcus Brutus plunges a dagger in the heart of his benefactor and father, when with glaring eyes and dying breath, the noble Cæsar exclaims:

*"Et tu, Brute?"* (And thou, Brutus?)

Thus tumbled down at the base of Pompey's statue the greatest man the world has ever known!

Then the citizens of Rome—royal, rabble and conspirators, were filled with consternation, while Brutus tried to stem the rising flood of indignation.

Mark Antony was allowed to weep and speak over the pulseless clay of his official partner and friend.

Gazing on the cold, bloody form of the amazing Julius, he utters these pathetic phrases:

[121]

*"O mighty Cæsar! Dost thou lie so low?  
Are all thy conquests, glories, triumphs, spoils,  
Shrunk to this little measure? Fare thee well—  
I know not, gentlemen, what you intend,  
Who else must be let blood, who else is rank;  
If I myself, there is no hour so fit  
As Cæsar's death-hour; nor no instrument  
Of half that worth, as those your swords, made rich  
With the most noble blood of all this world.  
I do beseech ye, if you bear me hard,  
Now, while your purpled hands do reek and smoke,  
Fulfill your pleasure. Live a thousand years,  
I shall not find myself so apt to die;  
No place will please me so, no mean of death*

*As here by Cæsar, and by you cut off,  
The choice and master spirit of this age!"*

Brutus gave orders for a grand funeral, turning the body of the dead lion over to Antony, who might make the funeral oration to the people within such bounds of discretion as the conspirators dictated.

Standing alone, by the dead body of Cæsar in the Senate, Antony pours out thus, the overflowing vengeance of his soul:

*"O pardon me, thou bleeding piece of earth,  
That I am meek and gentle with these butchers;  
Thou art the ruins of the noblest man  
That ever lived in the tide of times.  
Woe to the hand that shed this costly blood!  
Over thy wounds now do I prophesy—  
Which like dumb mouths, do ope their ruby lips  
To beg the voice and utterance of my tongue;  
A curse shall light upon the limbs of men;  
Domestic fury and fierce civil strife  
Shall cumber all the parts of Italy;  
Blood and destruction shall be so in use,  
And dreadful objects so familiar,  
That mothers shall but smile when they behold  
Their infants quartered with the hands of war;  
All pity choked with custom of fell deeds;  
And Cæsar's spirit, ranging for revenge,  
With Até by his side, come hot from hell,  
Shall in these confines, with a monarch's voice,  
Cry, 'Havoc!' and let slip the dogs of war!"*

[122]

The wild citizens of Rome clamored for the reason of Cæsar's death, and Brutus mounted the rostrum in the Forum and delivered this cunning and bold oration in defense of the conspirators:

"Romans, countrymen and lovers, hear me for my cause, and be silent that ye may hear; believe me for mine honor, and have respect to mine honor, that you may believe; censure me in your wisdom, and awake your senses that you may the better judge.

"If there be any in this assembly, any dear friend of Cæsar's, to him I say that Brutus' love to Cæsar was no less than his.

"If then that friend demand why Brutus rose against Cæsar, this is my answer. Not that I loved Cæsar less; but that I loved Rome more!

"Had you rather Cæsar were living, and die all slaves, than Cæsar were dead, to live all free men?

"As Cæsar loved me, I weep for him; as he was fortunate, I rejoice at it; as he was valiant, I honor him, but as he was ambitious I slew him!

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"There is tears for his love; joy for his fortune; honor for his valor, and death for his ambition!

"Who is here so base that would be a bondman? If any, speak; for him have I offended. Who is here so rude that would be a Roman? If any, speak; for him have I offended. Who is here so vile that will not love his country? If any, speak; for him have I offended.

"I pause for a reply."

And then the rabble, vacillating, fool citizens said, "None, Brutus, none," and continue to yell, "Live, Brutus, live! live!"

Brutus leaves the Forum and requests the human cattle to remain and hear Antony relate the glories of Cæsar!

Finally Antony is persuaded to take the rostrum, and delivers this greatest funeral oration of all the ages:

*"Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears;  
I come to bury Cæsar, not to praise him;  
The evil that men do live after them;  
The good is oft interred with their bones;  
So let it be with Cæsar. The noble Brutus  
Hath told you Cæsar was ambitious;  
If it were so it was a grievous fault;  
And grievously hath Cæsar answered it.  
Here, under leave of Brutus and the rest,  
(For Brutus is an honorable man,  
So are they all, all honorable men);  
Come I to speak in Cæsar's funeral.  
He was my friend, faithful and just to me;*

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*But Brutus says he was ambitious;  
 And Brutus is an honorable man.  
 He hath brought many captives home to Rome,  
 Whose ransoms did the general coffers fill;  
 Did this in Cæsar seem ambitious?  
 When that the poor hath cried, Cæsar hath wept;  
 Ambition should be made of sterner stuff;  
 Yet Brutus says he was ambitious;  
 And Brutus is an honorable man.  
 You all did see, that on the Lupercal  
 I thrice presented him a kingly crown  
 Which he did thrice refuse. Was this ambition?  
 Yet Brutus says he was ambitious;  
 And, sure, he is an honorable man.  
 I speak not to disprove what Brutus spoke,  
 But here I am to speak what I know.  
 You all did love him once, not without cause;  
 What cause withholds you, then, to mourn for him?  
 O judgment, thou art fled to brutish beasts,  
 And men have lost their reason! Bear with me;  
 My heart is in the coffin there with Cæsar,  
 And I must pause until it come back to me.  
 But, yesterday the word of Cæsar might  
 Have stood against the world, now lies he there,  
 And none so poor to do him reverence.  
 O, Masters! If I were disposed to stir  
 Your hearts and minds to mutiny and rage,  
 I should do Brutus wrong, and Cassius wrong,  
 Who, you all know, are honorable men.  
 I will not do them wrong; I rather choose  
 To wrong the dead, to wrong myself and you  
 Than I will wrong such honorable men.  
 But here's a parchment with the seal of Cæsar;  
 I found it in his closet, 'tis his will;  
 Let but the commons hear this statement,  
 (Which pardon me, I do not mean to read),  
 And they would go and kiss dead Cæsar's wounds;  
 And dip their napkins in his sacred blood;  
 Yea, beg a hair of him for memory,  
 And dying, mention it within their wills,  
 Bequeathing it as a rich legacy  
 Unto their issue.  
 If you have tears prepare to shed them now,  
 You all do know this mantle; I remember  
 The first time ever Cæsar put it on;  
 'Twas on a summer's evening in his tent;  
 That day he overcame the Nervii;  
 Look! in this place ran Cassius dagger through;  
 See what a rent the envious Casca made;  
 Through this the well beloved Brutus stabbed;  
 And as he plucked his cursed steel away,  
 Mark how the blood of Cæsar followed it;  
 As rushing out of doors to be resolved  
 If Brutus so unkindly knocked, or no;  
 For Brutus, as you know, was Cæsar's angel:  
 Judge, O ye gods, how Cæsar loved him!  
 This was the most unkindest cut of all;  
 For when the noble Cæsar saw him stab,  
 Ingratitude, more strong than traitors' arms  
 Quite vanquished him, then burst his mighty heart;  
 And in his mantle muffling up his face,  
 Even at the base of Pompey's statue,  
 Which all the while ran blood, great Cæsar fell.  
 O, what a fall was there, my countrymen!  
 Then I and you and all of us fell down  
 Whilst bloody treason flourished over us.  
 O, now you weep; and I perceive you feel  
 The impression of pity; these are gracious drops.  
 Kind souls, what, weep you, when you but behold  
 Our Cæsar's vesture wounded? Look you here,  
 Here is himself marred, as you see, with traitors!  
 Good friends, sweet friends, let me not stir you up  
 To such a sudden flood of mutiny;  
 They that have done this deed are honorable;  
 What private griefs they have, alas, I know not*

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*That made them do it; they are wise and honorable  
 And will no doubt with reasons answer you.  
 I come not, friends, to steal away your hearts;  
 I am no orator, as Brutus is:  
 But as you know me all, a plain, blunt man,  
 That love my friends, and that they know full well,  
 That gave me public leave to speak of him.  
 For I have neither wit, nor words, nor worth,  
 Action, nor utterance, nor the power of speech  
 To stir men's blood, I only speak right on;  
 I tell you that, which you yourselves do know;  
 Show you sweet Cæsar's wounds, poor, poor dumb  
 mouths,  
 And bid them speak for me; but were I Brutus,  
 And Brutus Antony, there were an Antony  
 Would ruffle up your spirits, and put a tongue  
 In every wound of Cæsar, that should move  
 The stones of Rome to rise and mutiny!"*

This oration fired the Roman people to mutiny, and Brutus and Cassius with their followers fled from the city and prepared for war with Antony and Octavius, who had suddenly returned to Rome. [127]

The passionate quarrel between Brutus and Cassius in their military camp at Sardis was a natural outcome of conspirators.

Cassius accused Brutus of having wronged him, and Brutus twitted his brother assassin thus:

*"Let me tell you, Cassius, you yourself  
 Are much condemned to have an itching palm,  
 To sell and mart your offices for gold  
 To undeservers!"*

Cassius fires back this reply:

*"I an itching palm?  
 You know that you are Brutus that speak this,  
 Or by the gods this speech were else your last!"*

The night before the battle of Philippi the spirit of Cæsar appeared in the tent of Brutus, who startles from a slumbering trance and exclaims:

*"Ha! who comes here?  
 I think it is the weakness of mine eyes,  
 That shapes this monstrous apparition.  
 It comes upon me! Art thou anything?  
 Art thou some god, some angel or some devil,  
 That makest my blood cold, and my hair to stare?  
 Speak to me, what thou art."*

The Ghost replies:

*"Thy evil spirit, Brutus!"*  
*Brutus: Why comest thou?*  
*Ghost: To tell thee thou shalt see me at Philippi.*  
*Brutus: Well, then I shall see thee again?*  
*Ghost: Ay, at Philippi!"*

The armies of Antony and Octavius and Brutus and Cassius meet in crash of battle.

Cassius is hotly pursued by the enemy, and to prevent capture and exhibition at Rome, craves the service of Pindrus to run him through with his sword. He says:

*"Now be a freeman, and with this good sword  
 That ran through Cæsar's bowels, search this bosom.  
 Stand not to answer; here, take thou the hilt;  
 And when my face is covered, as 'tis now,  
 Guide thou the sword; Cæsar, thou art revenged,  
 Even with the sword that killed thee!" (Dies.)*

Brutus is run to earth, and most of his generals dead or fled. He implores Strato to assist him to suicide, and says:

*"I pray thee, Strato, stay thou by thy lord;  
 Thou art a fellow of good respect;  
 Thy life hath had some smack of honor in it;  
 Hold then my sword, and turn away thy face,*

*While I do run upon it!  
Farewell, good Strato; Cæsar now be still,  
I killed not thee with half so good a will!"*  
(Runs on his sword and dies.)

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Antony and Octavius and his army soon find Brutus slain by his own sword, and with a most magnificent and undeserved generosity Antony pronounces this benediction over the dead body of the vilest and most intelligent conspirator who ever lived!

*"This was the noblest Roman of them all;  
All the conspirators, save only he  
Did that they did in envy of great Cæsar;  
He only in a general honest thought,  
And common good to all made one of them.  
His life was gentle, and the elements  
So mixed in him that Nature might stand up,  
And say to all the world, This was a man!"*

The whole audience, led by Southampton, Essex, Bacon and Drayton gave three cheers and a lion roar for "Julius Cæsar," the greatest historical and classical play ever composed, and destined to run down the ages for a million years!

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## CHAPTER XIII.

[130]

### TWO TRAMPS. BY LAND AND SEA.

*"Travelers must be content."*

*"Out of this nettle, danger, we pluck this flower, safety."*

The translation of Petrarch, Plutarch, Tacitus, Terence, and particularly Homer, by Chapman, gave a great impulse to dramatic writers, and inspired a feverish desire to travel through classic lands where classic authors lived and died.

Shakspeare was a natural bohemian, and while he could conform to the conventionalities of society, he was never more pleased than when mixing with the variegated mass of mankind, where vice and virtue predominated without the guilt of hypocrisy to blur and blast the principles of sincerity.

Art, fashion and human laws he knew to be often only blinds for the concealment of plastic iniquity, and were secretly purchased by the few who had the gold to buy.

By sinking the grappling iron of independent investigation into every form and phase of human life, he plucked from the deepest ocean of adversity the rarest shells, weeds and flowers of thought, and spread them before the world as a new revelation.

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By mingling with and knowing the good and bad, he solved the riddle of human passions, and with mind, tongue and pen unpurchased, he flashed his matchless philosophy on an admiring world, lifting the curtain of deceit and obscurity from the stage of falsehood, giving to the beholder a sight of Nature in her unexpurgated nakedness!

On the first of May, 1598, William and myself determined to travel into and around continental and oriental lands, and view some of the noted monuments, cities, seas, plains and mountains, where ancient warriors and philosophers had left their imperishable records.

Sailing through the Strait of Dover into the English Channel, our good ship Albion landed us in three days at Havre, the port town at the mouth of the river Seine, leading on to Rouen and up to the ancient city of Paris.

Our good ship Albion was to remain a week trading between Havre and Cherbourg, when we were to be again on board for a lengthy trip to the various ports of the Mediterranean.

Our first night in Paris was spent at the Hotel Reims, a jolly headquarters for students, painters, authors and actors.

LeMour was the blooming host, with his daughter Nannette as the coquettish "roper in." Father and daughter spoke English about as well as William and myself spoke French; and what was not understood by our mutual words and phrases was explained by our gesticulation of hand, shoulder, foot, eye, and clinking "francs" and "sovereigns."

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Cash speaks all languages, and it is a very ignorant mortal who can't understand the voice of gold and silver.

"Francs," "pounds" and "dollars" are the real monarchs of mankind! William in a prophetic mood recited these few lines to the "boys" at the bar:

*With circumspect steps as we pick our way through  
This intricate world, as all prudent folks do,  
May we still on our journey be able to view  
The benevolent face of a dollar or two.  
For an excellent thing is a dollar or two;  
No friend is so true as a dollar or two;  
In country or town, as we pass up and down,  
We are cock of the walk with a dollar or two!*

*Do you wish that the press should the decent thing do,  
And give your reception a gushing review,  
Describing the dresses by stuff, style and hue,  
On the quiet, hand "Jenkins" a dollar or two;  
For the pen sells its praise for a dollar or two;  
And flings its abuse for a dollar or two;  
And you'll find that it's easy to manage the crew  
When you put up the shape of a dollar or two!*

*Do you wish your existence with Faith to imbue,  
And so become one of the sanctified few;  
Who enjoy a good name and a well cushioned pew  
You must freely come down with a dollar or two.  
For the gospel is preached for a dollar or two,  
Salvation is reached for a dollar or two;  
Sins are pardoned, sometimes, but the worst of all crimes  
Is to find yourself short of a dollar or two!*

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Although the Bard delivered this truthful poem off hand, so to speak, in "broken" French, the cosmopolitan, polyglot audience "caught on" and "shipped" the Stratford "poacher" a wave of tumultuous cheers!

That very night at the Theatre Saint Germain the new play of Garnier, "Juives," was to be enacted before Henry the Fourth and a brilliant audience.

William and myself were invited by a band of rollicking students to join them in a front bench "clapping" committee, as Garnier himself was to take the part of Old King Nebuchadnezzar in the great play, illustrating the siege and capture of Jerusalem.

The curtain went up at eight o'clock, and the French actors began their mimic contortions of face, lips, legs and shoulders for three mortal hours, and while there was a constant shifting of scenes, citizens, soldiers, Jews and battering rams, yells, groans and cheers, it looked as if the audience, including King Henry, was doing the most of the acting, and all the cheering! A maniac would be thoroughly at home in a French theatre!

The play had neither head, tail nor body, but it was sufficient for the excitable, revolutionary Frenchman to see that the Jews were being robbed, banished and slaughtered in the interest of Christianity and the late Jesus, who is reported as having taught the lessons of "love," "charity" and "mercy!"

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The "Son of God," it seems, had been crucified more than fifteen hundred years before the audience had been created; and although "Old Neb" of Babylon had destroyed a million of Hebrews several hundred years previous to the birth of the Bethlehem "Savior of Mankind," the "frog" and "snail" eaters of France were still breaking their lungs and throats in cheering for the destruction of anybody!

It was one o'clock in the morning when we got back to the hotel; and with the Bacchanalian racket made by the "students" and fantastic "grisettes" it must have been nearly daylight before William and myself fell into the arms of sleep.

Sliding into the realm of dreams I heard the "mammoth man" murmur:

*"Sleep, that knits up the raveled sleeve of care,  
The death of each day's life, sore labor's bath,  
Balm of hurt minds, great nature's second course,  
Chief nourisher in life's feast!"*

Jodelle, Lariney, Corneille, Moliere, Racine, La Fontaine, Rousseau, Voltaire, Balzac, or even Hugo, never uttered such masterly philosophy.

After partaking of a French breakfast, smothered with herbs and mystery, we hired a fancy phaeton and voluble driver to whirr us around the principal streets, parks and buildings of the rushing, brilliant city, everything moving as if the devil were out with a search warrant for some of the stray citizens of his imperial dominions.

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The driver spoke English very well, and with a telephone voice, surcharged with monkey gestures, we listened to and saw the history of Paris from the advent of Cæsar, Clovis, Charlemagne to Louis and Henry. A city directory would have been a surplusage, and we flattered the "garçon" by seeming to believe everything he said, exclaiming "Oh my!" "Do tell!" "Gee whizz!" "Did you ever!" "Wonderful!" and "Never saw the like!"

As our mentor and nester pulled up at noted wine cafés to water his horse, we contributed to his own irrigation and our champagne thirst. Be good to yourself.

It was sundown when we nestled in the Hotel Reims, but had been richly repaid in our visit to the king's palace, the great Louvre, St. Denis, Notre Dame and the great cathedrals, picture galleries, cemeteries and monuments that decorated imperial Paris.

The evening before we left Paris we accepted the invitation of Garnier to visit the Latin Quarter. The playwright did not know William or myself, except as young English lords—"Buckingham" and "Bacon," traveling for information and pleasure, sowing "wild," financial "oats" with the liberality of princes.

A well dressed, polite man, with lots of money, and a "spender" from "way back" is a welcome guest in home, church and state; and when it comes to the "ladies," he is, of course, "a jewel," "a trump" and "darling." They know a "soft snap" when they see it.

Some of us have been there.

While basking under the light of flashing eyes and sparkling wine at the Royal Café, surrounded by a dozen of the artistic "friends" of the "toast of the town," Garnier said he noticed us in the front bench the night before, and knowing us to be Englishmen, was desirous to know how his play, depicting the siege of Jerusalem compared with the new man Shakspere, who had recently loomed up into the dramatic sky. [136]

William winked at me in a kind of *sotto voce* way, and with that natural exuberance or intellectual "gall" that never fails to strike the "bull's eye," I bluntly said that Garnier's philosophy and composition were as different from Shakspere's as the earth from the heaven!

The Frenchman arose and made an extended bow when his "girl" friends yelled like the "rebels" at Shiloh and kicked off the tall hat of the noted French dramatist! Great sport!

Extra wine was ordered, and then an improvised ballet girl jumped into the middle of the wine room, with circus antics, champagne glasses in hand, singing the praises of the great and only Garnier! Poor devil, he did not know that my criticism was a double ender. Just as well.

I cannot exactly remember how I got to the hotel, but when William aroused my latent energies the next morning, I felt as if I had been put through a Kentucky corn sheller, or caught up in a Texas blizzard and blown into the middle of Kansas.

William was, as usual, calm, polite, sober and dignified, and while he touched the wine cup for sociability, in search of human hearts, I never saw him intoxicated. He had a marvelous capacity of body and brain, and like an earthly Jupiter he shone over the variegated satellites around him with the force and brilliancy of the morning sun. He was so far above other thinkers and writers that no one who knew him felt a pang of jealousy, for they saw it was impossible to even twinkle in the heaven of his philosophy. [137]

The day before leaving Paris we visited Versailles and wandered through its pictured palaces, drinking in the historical milestones of the past. Here lords, kings, queens, farmers, mechanics, shop keepers, sailors, soldiers, robbers, murderers and beggars had appropriated in turn these royal halls and stately gardens.

Riot and revolution swept over these memorials like a winter storm, and the thunder and lightning strokes of civil and foreign troops had desolated the works of art, genius and royalty.

Nations rise and fall like individuals, and a thousand or ten thousand years of time are only a "tick" in the clock of destiny.

Early on the morning of the seventh of May, 1598, we went on board a light double-oared galley, swung into the sparkling waters of the Seine, and proceeded on our way to Rouen and Havre.

The morning sun sparkling on the tall spires and towers, the songs of the watermen and gardeners, whirring ropes, flashing flags, blooming flowers, green parks, forest vistas, shining cottages, grand mansions and lofty castles, in the shimmering distance gave the suburbs of Paris a phase of enchantment that lifted the soul of the beholder into the fairy realm of dreamland; and as our jolly crew rowed away with rhythmic sweep we lay under a purple awning, sheltered from the midday sun, gazing out on the works of Dame Nature with entranced amazement. [138]

William, in one of his periodical bursts of impromptu poetry, uttered these lines on

*CREATION.*

*The smallest grain of ocean sand,  
Or continent of mountain land,  
With all the stars and suns we see  
Are emblems of eternity.*

*God reigns in everything he made—  
In man, in beast, in hill and glade;  
In sum and substance of all birth;  
Component parts of Heaven and Earth.*

*The moving, ceaseless vital air  
Is managed by Almighty care,  
And from the center to the rim,  
All creatures live and die in Him.*

*We know not why we come and go  
Into this world of joy and woe,  
But this we know that every hour  
Is clipping off our pride and power.*

*The links of life that make our chain  
Of golden joy and passing pain,  
Are broken rudely day by day,  
And like the mists we melt away.*

*The voice of Nature never lies,  
Presents to all her varied skies,  
And wraps within her vernal breast  
The dust of man in pulseless rest.*

*A billion years of life and death  
Are but a moment or a breath  
To one unknown Immortal Force  
Who guides the planets in their course!*

As the stars began to peep through the gathering curtains of night, and the young moon like a broken circle of silver split the evening sky, we came in sight of the busy town of Rouen, with its embattled walls and iron gates still bidding defiance to British invasion.

After a night's slumber and a speedy passage our galley drew up against the side of our stout ship Albion, when gallant Captain Jack O'Neil greeted us on board, and refreshed our manhood with a fine breakfast, interspersed with brandy and champagne.

The next morning, with all sails filled, we wafted away into the open waters of the rolling Atlantic Ocean, touching at the town of Brest, land's end port of France, and then away to Corunna in Spain, and on to Lisbon, Portugal, where we remained three days viewing the architectural and natural sights of the great commercial and shipping city of the Tagus.

About the middle of May we swung out again into the breakers of old ocean, and held our course to the wonderful "Strait of Gibraltar," separating Europe from Africa, whose inland, classic shores are bathed by the emerald waters of the romantic Mediterranean Sea.

We remained for a day at the rocky, stormy town of Gibraltar, meeting variegated men of all lands, who spoke all dialects, and preached and practiced all religions.

The pagan, the Moslem, the Buddhist, the Jew and the Christian dressed in the garb of their respective nationalities, were wrangling, trading, praying and swearing in all languages, every one grasping for the "almighty dollar."

As the sun went down over the shining shoulders of the Western Atlantic, flashing its golden rays over the moving, liquid floor of the heaving ocean and Mediterranean Sea, William and myself stood on the topmost crag of giant Gibraltar, and the Bard sent forth this impulsive sigh from his romantic soul:

*How I long to roam o'er the bounding sea,  
Where the waters and winds are fierce and free,  
Where the wild bird sails in his tireless flight,  
As the sunrise scatters the shades of night;  
Where the porpoise and dolphin sport at play  
In their liquid realm of green and gray.  
Ah, me! It is there I would love to be  
Engulfed in the tomb of eternity!*

*In the midnight hour when the moon hangs low  
And the stars beam forth with a mystic glow;  
When the mermaids float on the rolling tide  
And Neptune entangles his beaming bride,—  
It is there in that phosphorescent wave  
I would gladly sink in an ocean grave—  
To rise and fall with the songs of the sea  
And live in the chant of its memory.*

*Around the world my form should sweep—  
Part of the glorious, limitless deep;  
Enmeshed by fate in some coral cave,  
And rising again to the topmost wave,  
That curls in beauty its snowy spray  
And kisses the light of the garish day;*

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*Ah! there let me drift when this life is o'er,  
To be tossed and tumbled from shore to shore!*

I clapped my hands intensely at the rendition of the poem, and echo from her rocky caves sent back the applause, while the sea gulls in their circling flight, screamed in chorus to the voice of echo and the eternal roar of old ocean.

At sunrise we sailed away into the land-locked waters of the Mediterranean Sea, where man for a million years has loved, lived, fought and died among beautiful, blooming islands that nestle on its bosom like emeralds in the crown of immortality.

We passed along the coast of Spain to Cape Nao, in sight of the Balearic Islands, on to Barcelona, to the mouth of the river Rhone, and up to the ancient city of Avignon.

In and around this city popes, princes and international warriors lived in royal style; but they are virtually forgotten, while Petrarch, the poetic saint and laureate of Italy, is as fresh in the memory of man as the day he died—July 18th, 1374, at the age of seventy.

William and myself remained all night in the Lodge House of the Gardens of "Vacluse," the hermit home of the sighing, soaring poet, who pined his life away in platonic love for "Laura," who married Hugh de Sade, when she was only seventeen years of age, and presented the nobleman ten children as pledges of her homespun affection. [142]

And this is the married lady who Petrarch, the poet, wasted his sonnets upon, and was treated in fact as we were told by the "oldest inhabitant" of Avignon, with supercilious contempt.

Boccaccio and Petrarch were intimate friends, and both of these passionate poets lavished their love on "married flirts," who give promise to the ear and disappointment to the heart.

I could see that while Shakspeare reveled deep in the mental philosophy of Petrarch, and even plucked a flower from his rustic bower, he had no sympathy with lovesick swains, and as we signed our names in the Lodge House book, he wrote this:

*Petrarch, grand, immortal in thy sonnets;  
Sugared by the eloquence of philosophy—  
Destined to shine through the rolling ages;  
Emulating, competing with the stars.  
Thy love for Laura, pure, unreciprocated;  
Yet, thou, foolish man, passion dazed and sad,  
Like many of the greatest of mankind  
Lie dashed in the vale of disappointment;  
And flowers of hope, given by woman,  
Have crowned thy brows with nettles of despair!*

Next day the Albion sailed into the Mediterranean, passed by the island of Corsica (cradle of one of the greatest soldiers of the world), through the Strait of Bonifacio, and in due course kept on to the flourishing city of Naples. [143]

It was dark twilight when we came to peer into the surrounding hills and mountains of classic Italy.

To the wonder and amazement of every passenger on board, Mount Vesuvius was in brilliant action, and the flash of sparks and blazing lights from this huge chimney top of Nature dazzled the beholder, and produced a fearful sensation in the soul.

As the great jaws of the mountain opened its fiery lips and belched forth molten streams of lava, shooting a million red hot meteors into the caves of night, the earth and ocean seemed to tremble with the sound and birds and beasts of prey rushed screaming and howling to their nightly homes.

Shakspeare entranced stood on the bow of the ship and soliloquized:

*Great God! Almighty in thy templed realm;  
And mysterious in thy matchless might;  
Suns, moons, planets, stars, ocean, earth and air  
Move in harmony at thy supreme will;  
And yonder torch light of eternity,  
Blazing into heaven, candle of omnipotence—  
Lights thy poor, wandering human midgets—  
An hundred miles at sea, with lofty hope—  
That nothing exists or dies in vain;  
But changed into another form lives on  
Through countless, boundless, blazing, brilliant worlds  
Beyond this transient, seething, suffering sod!*

At this moment the vessel struck the dock and lurched William out of his reverie, coming "within an ace" of pitching the poet into the harbor of Naples. [144]

Captain O'Neil informed us that he would be engaged unloading and loading his ship for a week or ten days at Naples, before he started for Sicily, Greece and Egypt.

William and myself concluded to hire a guide and ride and tramp by land to Rome, and view the ancient capital and test the hospitality of the Italians.

Early the next morning we set out for the Imperial City, perched on her seven hills, and enlightening the world with the radiance of her classic memorials.

Our guide, Petro, was a villainous looking fellow, yet the landlord of the Hotel Columbo told us he was well acquainted with the mountain bypaths and open roads, and could, in the event of meeting robbers, be of great service to us.

Petro wanted ten "florins" in advance, and wine and bread on the road; and as we could not do any better, the bargain was made, and off we tramped through the great city of Milan, scaling the surrounding hills and pulling up as the sun went down at the town of Terracino.

After a good night's rest and hot breakfast, we started on horseback through a mountain trail for the banks of the Tiber, but when within three miles of the Capitoline hills Petro seemed to lose his way and rode off into the underbrush to find it.

We stopped in the trail, and in less than five minutes after the disappearance of our faithful guide we were captured by a gang of bandits, whose garb and countenance convinced us that robbery or murder or both would be our fate.

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We were dragged off our horses, hustled into the forest gloom, through briars, over streams and rocks, until finally pitched into the tiptop mountain lair of Roderick, the Terrible.

The evening camp fire was lit, and Tamora, the queen of the robbers, with a couple of robber cooks, was preparing supper for the whole band when they returned from their daily avocations.

They seemed to be a jolly set, and with joke, laughter and song, these chivalric sons of sunny Italy were relating their various exploits, and laughing at the trepidation and futile resistance of their former victims.

Just before the band sat around on the ferny, pine clad rocks for supper, Roderick addressed William, and asked him if he had anything to say why he should not be robbed and murdered.

William said he was perfectly indifferent; for, being only a writer of plays and an actor, working for the amusement of mankind, he led a kind of dog's life anyhow, and didn't give a damn what they did with him.

The Robber Chief gave a yell and a roar that could be heard for three miles among the columned pines and oaks of the Apennines, and yelled, "Bully for you! Shake!"

Roderick then turned to me and said, "Who are you?"

I replied at once, "I am a fool and a poet."

He grasped my hand intensely and yelled, "I'm another." That sealed our friendship.

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Then these gay and festive robbers invited us to partake of the best in the mountain wilds, with the request that after the evening feast was over we should give samples of our trade.

With the blazing light of a mountain fire, hemmed in by inaccessible rocks and gulches, from a tablerock overhanging a roaring, dashing stream, five thousand feet below, William stood and was requested to give a sample of his dramatic poetry for the edification of the beautiful cut-throat audience! And this, as I well remember, was his encomium in Latin to the "Gentlemen" and "Queen" of independent, gold-getting, robbing, murdering, fantastic Italian "society."

*When first I beheld your noble band  
Pounce from rock and lairs vernal,  
My soul and hair were lifted  
With admiration and amazement.  
Free as air, ye sons of immortal sires,  
Hold these crags, defiant still,  
As eagles in their onward sweep—  
Citizens of destiny,  
Entertainment awaits your advent,  
Even beneath yon columned capitol!  
The emperors, pampered in power  
Were subject to some human laws,  
But you, great, wonderful chief,  
Roderick, the Terrible, and fierce  
Soar superior over all, bloody villain,  
Force with gold and silver alone—  
Dictating thy generous onslaughts!  
Cæsar, Pompey and Scipio  
Could not compete with thy valor;  
Only Nero, paragon of infamy,  
Could match the renown of Roderick,  
Thy fame, great chief, boundless as the globe!  
Italy, Spain, France and England  
Pay constant tribute to thy purse,*

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*Travelers and pilgrims, seeking glory  
By kissing the pope's big toe  
Drop their golden coin and jewels  
Into thy pockets capacious,  
Hear me, ye sprites of Apennine,  
And the ghouls of murdered travelers  
Let the circumambient air  
Ring with universal cheers  
For Roderick, the glory of Robbers,  
And the terror of mankind.*

(Whirlwind of cheers.)

At the conclusion of William's apostrophe to the prince of robbers, Tamora, the fair queen, jabbed me with a poniard and ordered me to sing.

I mounted the platform rock, overlooking the horrible vale below, and sang in my sweetest strain "Black Eyed Susan," gesticulating at the conclusion of each verse in the direction of the queen, who seemed to be charmed with my voice and audacity.

An encore was demanded with a yell of delight, and I forthwith sang the new song "America," which was cheered to the echo—and as they still insisted that I "go on," "go on," I rendered in my best voice the recent composition of "Hiawatha."

The robber band yelled like wild Indians, and the fair queen took me to her pine bower and fondled me into the realm of dreams, although I could see that Roderick was disposed to throw me on the rocks below—but, the "madam" was "boss" of that mountain ranch and gave orders with her poniard.

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As the earliest beams of morning lit up the crests of the Apennines we fed on a roast of roe buck and quail, and barley bread washed down by goblets of Falernian wine that had been captured the day before from a pleasure party from Brindisi.

The goblets we drank from were skulls of former citizens of the world, who attempted to dally with the dictates of Roderick.

The noble chief Roderick and his imperial queen, Tamora, who seemed to rule her terrible husband, with one hundred of the most villainous cut-throats it had ever been my misfortune to behold, gave us a "great send off" from their inaccessible mountain lair.

Roderick gave William a talismanic ring that shown to any of his brother robbers on the globe would at once secure safety and hospitality.

Tamora in her sweetest mountain manner gave me a diamond hilted poniard, and then with a Fra Diavolo chorus, we were waved off down the precipitous crags with a special guide on the main road leading to imperial Rome.

William and myself drew long breaths after we had passed the Horatio Bridge, and planted our feet firmly on the Appian Way, leading direct to the precincts of Saint Peter's, with its lofty dome shining in the morning sun.

Gentle reader, if you have never been in battle or captured by robbers, you needn't "hanker" for the experience, but take it as you would your clothing, "second hand."

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At the "Hotel Cæsar" we brushed the dust from our anatomy, and ordered dinner, which was served in fine style by a lineal descendant of the great Julius, who wore a spreading mustache, a purple smile and an abbreviated white apron.

In the afternoon we called on Pope Clement, who had heard of our experience with the robbers, and seemed very much interested in our narration of the details of our capture and entertainment.

Clement seemed to be a nice, smooth man, setting on a purple chair with a purple skull cap on his head, and a purple robe on his fat form.

His big toe was presented to us for adoration, but as we did not seem to "ad," he withdrew his pedal attachment and talked about the "relics" and the "weather."

We did not purchase any "relics," and as to the Roman "weather," no mortal who tries it in summer desires a second dose.

There seemed to be a continuous smell of something dead in the atmosphere of Rome, while the droves of virgins, monks, priests, bishops and cardinals seemed to be pressing through the streets, night and day, begging, singing, riding, and like ants, coming and going out of the churches continually.

Selling "relics," psalm singing and preaching was about all the business we could see in the Imperial City.

It is very funny how a fool habit will cling to the century pismires of humanity, and actually blind the elements of common sense and patent truth.

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We were offered a job lot of "relics" for five florins, which included a piece of the true cross, a

bit of the rope that hung Judas, a couple of hairs from the head of the Virgin Mary, a peeling from the apple of Mother Eve, a part of the toe nail of Saint Thomas, a finger of Saint John, a thigh bone of Saint Paul, a tooth of Saint Antony, and a feather of the cock of Saint Peter, but we persistently declined the proffered honors and true "relics of antiquity," spending the five florins for a "night liner" to wheel us about the grand architectural sights of the city of the Cæsars.

The night before leaving Rome William and myself climbed upon the topmost rim of the crumbling Coliseum and gazed down upon the sleeping moonlit capital with entranced admiration.

The night was almost as bright as day, and the mystic rays from the realm of Luna, shining on gate, arch, column, spire, tower, temple and dome, revealed to us the ghosts of vanished centuries, and from the depths of the Coliseum there seemed to rise the shouts of a hundred thousand voices, cheering the gladiator from Gaul, who had just slain a Numidian lion in the arena, when, with "thumbs up," he was proclaimed the victor, decorated with a crown of laurel and given his freedom forever.

Shakspeare could not resist his natural gift of exuberant poetry to sound these chunks of eloquence to the midnight air, while I listened with enraptured enthusiasm to the elocution of the Bard:

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*Hark! Saint Peter, with his brazen tongue  
Voices the hour of twelve;  
The wizard tones of tireless Time  
Thrills the silvery air;  
The multitudinous world sleeps,  
Pope and beggar alike—  
In the land of lingering dreams—  
Oblivious of glory,  
Poverty, or war, destructive;  
Sleep, the daily death of all  
Throws her mesmeric mantle  
Over prince and pauper;  
And care, vulture of fleeting life  
Folds her bedraggled wings  
To rest a space, 'till first cock crow  
Hails the glimmering dawn  
With piercing tones triumphant;  
Father Tiber, roaring, moves along  
Under rude stony arches  
And chafes the wrinkled, rocky shores  
As when Romulus and Remus  
Suckled wolf of Apennines!  
Vain are all the triumphs of man.  
These temples and palaces,  
Reaching up to the brilliant stars  
In soaring grandeur, vast—  
Shall pass away like morning mist,  
Leaving a wilderness of ruins.  
And, where now sits pride, wealth and fraud  
Pampered in purpled power—  
The lizard, the bat and the wolf  
Shall hold their habitation;  
And the vine and the rag-weed  
Swaying in the whistling winds  
Shall sing their mournful requiem.  
The silence of dark Babylon  
Shall brood where millions struggled,  
And naught shall be heard in cruel Rome,  
But the wail of the midnight storm,  
Echoing among the broken columns  
Of its lofty, vanished glory—  
Where vain, presumptive, midget man  
Promised himself Immortality!*

[152]

After five days of sightseeing we took the public stage for Milan, guarded by soldiers, and arrived safely on board the Albion, which sailed away, through the Strait of Messina, around classic Greece to Negropont and on to Alexandria, Egypt, where we anchored for a load of dates, figs and Persian spices.

William and myself took a boat up the Nile to Cairo, and hired a guide to steer us over the desert to the far-famed Pyramids.

There in the wild waste of desert sands these monuments to forgotten kings and queens lift their giant peaks, appealing to the centuries for recognition, but although the great granite stone memorials still remain as a wonder to mankind, the dark, silent mummies that sleep within and around these funereal emblems give back no sure voice as to when and where they lived, rose

and fell in the long night of Egyptian darkness.

Remains of vast buried cities are occasionally exposed by the shifting, searching storm winds of the desert, and many a modern Arab has cooked his frugal breakfast by splinters picked up from the bones of his ancestors.

[153]

It was night when we got to the Pyramids, and we concluded to camp with an Arab and his family at the base of the great Cheops until next morning, and then before sunrise scale its steep steps and lofty crest.

A few silver coins insured us a warm greeting from the "Arab family," who seemed to vie with each other in preparing a hot supper and clean couches.

They sang their desert songs until nearly midnight, the daughter Cleo playing on the harp with dextrous fingers, and throwing a soft soprano voice upon the air, like the tones of an angel, echoing over a bank of wild flowers.

Standing on the pinnacle of the Pyramid William again struck one of his theatrical attitudes, and with outstretched hands exclaimed:

*Immortal Sol! Image of Omnipotence!  
To thee lift I my soul in pure devotion;  
Out of desert wilds, in golden splendor,  
Rise and flash thy crimson face, eternal—  
Across the wastes of shifting, century sands;  
Again is mirrored in my sighing soul  
The lofty temples and bastioned walls  
Of Memphis, Balback, Nineveh, Babylon—  
Gone from the earth like vapor from old Nile,  
When thy noonday beams lick up its waters!  
Hark! I hear again the vanished voices  
Of lofty Memnon, where proud pagan priests  
Syllable the matin hour, uttering  
Prophecies from Jupiter and Apollo—  
To devotees deluded, then as now,  
By astronomical, selfish fakirs,  
Who pretend claim to heavenly agency  
And power over human souls divine.  
Poor bamboozled man; know God never yet  
Empowered any one of his truant tribe  
To ride with a creed rod, image of Himself;  
And thou, oh Sol, giver of light and heat,  
Speed the hour when man, out of superstition  
Shall leap into the light of pure reason,  
Only believing in everlasting Truth!*

[154]

In a short time we crossed the sands of the desert and interviewed the Sphynx, but with that battered, solemn countenance, wrinkled by the winds and sands of ages, those granite lips still refused to give up the secrets of its stony heart, or tell us the mysteries of buried antiquity.

We were soon again in the cabin of the Albion, sailing away to Athens, where we anchored for two days.

William and myself ran hourly risk of breaking our legs and necks among the classic ruins of Athenian genius, where Plato, Socrates, Aristotle, Sophocles, Euripides, Pericles, Alcibiades, Demosthenes, Zeno, Solon, Themestocles, Leonidas, Philip and Alexander had lived and loved in their glorious, imperishable careers.

We went on top of Mars Hill, and climbed to the top of the ruined Acropolis, disturbing a few lizards, spiders, bats, rooks and pigeons that made their homes where the eloquence of Greece once ruled the world.

William made a move to strike one of his accustomed dramatic attitudes, but I "pulled him off," remarking that he could not, in an impromptu way, do justice to the occasion, and intimated that when he arrived at the Red Lion in London, he could write up Cleopatra and Antony, and the ten-years' siege of Troy, with Helen, Agamemnon, Ulysses, Achilles, Pandarus, Paris, Troilus, Cressida and Hector as star performers in the plays.

[155]

It was not very often that I interfered with William in his personal movements and aspirations, but as he had given so much of his poetry in illustration of our recent travels, and knowing that I was in honor bound to report to posterity all he said and did as his mental stenographer, I begged him to "give us a rest," and "let it go at that."

The next day the Albion bore away for the Strait of Gibraltar, rounding Portugal, Spain and France, sailing into the Strait of Dover, passed Gravesend, until we anchored in safety under the shadow of the Blackfriars Theatre, where a jolly crowd of bohemians greeted our rapid and successful tour of continental and classic lands.

*"This accident and flood of Fortune*

*So far exceed all instance, all discourse,  
That I am ready to distrust mine eyes  
And wrangle with my reason that  
Persuades me to any other trust."*

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## CHAPTER XIV.

[156]

### WINDSOR PARK. "MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM."

*"This is the fairy land; O spite of spites  
We talk with goblins, owls, and elfish sprites.*

*'Tis still a dream, or else such stuff as  
Madmen tongue and brain!"*

*"If music be the food of love, play on;  
Give me excess of it."*

Shakspeare had blocked out the play of "Midsummer Night's Dream" in the year 1593, and completed it in the summer of 1599.

The story of Palamon and Arcite by Chaucer, and the love of Athenian Theseus for the Amazonian Queen Hippolyta, as told by Plutarch, gave William his first idea of composing a play where the acts of fairies and human beings would assimilate in their loves and jealousies.

One evening while seated at the Falcon Tavern, in company with the Earl of Southampton, Essex, Florio, Bacon, Cecil, Warwick, Burbage, Drayton and Jonson, William read the main points of the play, which was lauded to the skies by all present.

[157]

Burbage, the manager of the Globe, suggested to Essex and Southampton that it would be a grand idea to have the "Dream" enacted in the park and woods of Windsor!

It was a novel idea, and one sure to catch the romantic sentiments of Queen Elizabeth, as old Duke Theseus, the cross-purposed lovers, Bottom and his rude theatrical troop, and the fairies, led by Oberon, Titania and Puck could have full swing in the forest, sporting in their natural elements.

In reading or viewing the play, the mind wanders in a mystic grove by moonlight and breathes at every step odors of sweet flowers, while listening to the musical murmurings of fantastic fairies and echoing hounds in forest glens.

Theseus was the first and greatest Grecian in strength of body, second only to his cousin Hercules, each reveling in the god-like antics of seduction, incest, rape, robbery and murder!

The Persian, Egyptian, Grecian and Roman gods commingled with the heroes and heroines of mankind and committed unheard of crimes with impunity, the most outrageous villain seeming to be honored as the greatest god!

The amphitheater grove in front of Windsor Castle, overlooking the Thames, was the place selected for the exhibition of the "Dream." Natural circular terraces for the spectators.

The Virgin Queen had sent out five thousand invitations to her wealthy and intellectual subjects to attend the new and romantic play of Shakspeare, "Midsummer Night's Dream," on the 4th of July, 1599.

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Everything had been prepared in the way of natural and artificial scenery by the direction of William, while the Queen sat on a sylvan throne, embowered in vines and roses, surrounded by all her courtiers, ladies and lords, in grand, golden array.

The night was calm, bright and warm, while the young moon and twinkling stars, shining over Windsor, lent a celestial radiance to the scene, where lovers and fairies mingled in the meshes of affection. Candles, torches, chimes, lanterns and stationary fire balloons were interspersed through the royal domain in brilliant profusion.

Essex and Southampton were, unfortunately, absent in Ireland putting down a rebellion.

William took the part of Theseus, Field played Hippolyta, Burbage played Puck, Heminge represented Lysander, and Condell Demetrius, while Phillips and Cooke played respectively Hermia and Helen, Jo Taylor played Oberon and Robert Benfield acted Titania, the fairy queen.

The characters Pyramus and Thisbe were played by Peele and Crosse.

The play opens with a grand scene in the palace of Theseus, who thus addresses the Amazonian Queen Hippolyta:

*"Now, fair Hippolyta, our mutual hour  
Draws on apace, four happy days bring in,*

*Another moon; but, O, methinks, how slow  
This old moon wanes! She lingers my desires,  
Like to a step-dame, or a dowager,  
Long withering out a young man's revenue!"*

[159]

Hippolyta:

*"Four days will quickly steep themselves in nights;  
And then, the moon shall behold the night  
Of our solemnities."*

Egeus, a wealthy Athenian complains to Duke Theseus that his daughter Hermia will not consent to marry Demetrius, but disobedient, insists on wedding with Lysander.

Theseus decides that she must obey her father or suffer death, or enter a convent, excluded from the world forever.

Theseus reasons with Hermia thus:

*"If you yield not to your father's choice,  
Whether you can endure the livery of a nun;  
For aye to be in shady cloister mewed,  
To live a barren sister all your life;  
Chanting fair hymns to the cold, fruitless moon.  
Thrice blessed they that master so their blood,  
To undergo such maiden pilgrimage;  
But earthlier happy is the rose distilled,  
Than that, which withering on the virgin thorn  
Grows, lives, and dies in single blessedness!"*

This sentiment was cheered heartily by the great forest audience, and "Queen Bess" led the applause!

Lysander pleaded his own case for the heart of Hermia, and sighing, says:

*"Ah, me! for aught that I could ever read,  
Could ever hear by tale or history,  
The course of true love never did run smooth!"*

[160]

Hermia and Helena compare notes and wonder at the perversity of their respective lovers.

Hermia says:

*"The more I hate Demetrius, the more he follows  
me;"*

And Helena says:

*"The more I love him, the more he hateth me!"*

Hermia still sighing for Lysander says:

*"Before the time I did Lysander see,  
Seemed Athens as a paradise to me;  
O then, what graces in my love do dwell  
That he hath turned a heaven unto hell."*

Helena soliloquizes regarding the inconsistency of Demetrius since he saw Hermia:

*"Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind,  
And, therefore, is winged cupid painted blind;  
I will go tell him of fair Hermia's flight;  
Then to the wood, will he, to-morrow night,  
Pursue her; and for this intelligence  
If I have thanks, it is a dear expense;  
But herein mean I to enrich my pain  
To have his sight thither and back again."*

A number of rude workingmen of Athens propose to give an impromptu play in the Duke's palace in honor of his wedding.

[161]

It is a burlesque on all plays, and being so very crude and bad, is good by contrast!

Pyramus and Thisby are the prince and princess, who die for love.

Bottom is to play the big blower in the improvised drama and the Jackass among the fairies. He says:

*"I could play a part to tear a cat in, to make all  
split"—*

*"Tho raging rocks,  
With shivering shocks,  
Shall break the locks  
Of prison gates;  
And Phœbus' car  
Shall shine from far  
And make and mar  
The foolish fates!"*

Puck, the mischievous Robin Goodfellow, who is ever playing pranks among his fairy tribe and human lovers, enters the forest scene and addresses one of the fairies thus:

*"How now, spirit, whither wander you?"*

Fairy says:

*"Over hill, over dale,  
Through bush, through brier,  
Over park, over pale,  
Through flood, through fire,  
Farewell, thou wit of spirits, I'll be gone;  
Our queen and all her elves come here anon."*

Puck, the funny tattler, tells of the jealousy of King Oberon, because Titania has adopted a lovely boy:

*"For Oberon is passing fell and wrath,  
Because that she as her attendant hath  
A lovely boy stolen from an Indian king,  
She never had so sweet a changeling!"*

This sly cut at Queen Elizabeth, who had recently adopted a young American Indian as her parlor page, elicited applause among the courtiers, yet "Lizzie" did not seem to join in the cheers!

Oberon and Titania meet and quarrel, just as natural as if they belonged to earthly passion people.

*"Ill met by moonlight, proud Titania!  
What, jealous Oberon? Fairy, skip hence;  
I have forsworn his bed and company."*

Oberon:

*"Tarry, rash woman; am I not thy lord?"*

Titania:

*"Then I must be thy lady?"*

Oberon accuses Titania with being in love with Theseus and assisting him in the ravishment of antique beauties.

She replies:

*"These are the forgeries of jealousy;  
Never met we on hill, dale, forest or mead;  
Or on the beached margent of the sea  
To dance our ringlets to the whistling wind,  
But with thy brawls thou hast disturbed our sport!"*

After the departure of Queen Titania and her fairy train, King Oberon calls in Puck to aid in punishing her imagined infidelity.

*"My gentle Puck, come hither; thou remember'st  
Since once I sat upon a promontory,  
And heard a mermaid on a dolphin's back  
Uttering such dulcet and harmonious breath,  
The rude sea grew civil at her song;  
And certain stars shot madly from their spheres  
To hear the sea maid's music?"*

Puck replies:

*"I remember."*

Oberon continues:

*"That very time I saw, but thou could'st not,*

*Flying between the cold moon and the earth  
Cupid all armed; a certain aim he took  
At a fair Vestal, throned by the West;  
And loosed his shaft smartly from his bow,  
As it should pierce a hundred thousand hearts;  
But I might see young Cupid's fiery shaft  
Quenched in the chaste beams of the watery moon;  
And the Imperial Voteress passed on  
In maiden meditation, fancy free!  
Yet marked I where the bolt of Cupid fell;  
It fell upon a little Western flower—  
Before milk white; now purple with love's wound—  
And maidens call it 'love in idleness.'  
Fetch me that flower; the herb I showed thee once,  
The juice of it on sleeping eyelids laid,  
Will make, or man or woman madly dote  
Upon the next live creature that it sees.  
Fetch me this herb; and be thou here again  
Ere the Leviathan can swim a league."*

[164]

Puck replies:

*"I'll put a girdle round about the earth in forty  
minutes!"*

The audience saw by this time that the "Vestal" and "Imperial Voteress" in "maiden meditation, fancy free" was none other than Queen Elizabeth, and therefore three cheers and a roaring lion were given for the delicate and eloquent compliment of Shakspeare to her Virgin Majesty!

Tributes to the powerful, though undeserved, are received with spontaneous applause, while just praise for the poor receive no echo from the jealous throng. Poor, toadying humanity!

The infatuated Helena follows Demetrius into the dark forest, and though he tells her that he does not and cannot love her, she says:

*"And even for that, do I love you the more;  
I am your spaniel; and Demetrius  
The more you beat me, I will fawn on you,  
And to be used, as you use your dog!"*

[165]

I have seen fool women and fool men act just that way, and the more they were spurned, the more they clung to their infatuation.

Puck returns with the flower containing the juice that will make wanton women and licentious men return to their just lovers.

Oberon grasping the herb says:

*"I know a bank whereon the wild thyme blows  
Where ox-lips and the nodding violet grows;  
Quite over-canopied with blooming woodbine,  
With sweet musk-roses, and with eglantine;  
There sleeps Titania, sometime of the night  
Lulled in these flowers with dances and delight,  
And with this juice I'll streak her eyes  
To make her full of hateful fantasies.  
And take thou some of it, and seek through this grove;  
A sweet Athenian lady is in love  
With a disdainful youth; anoint his eyes;  
But do it, when the next thing he espies  
May be the lady."*

Titania enters with her fairy train and orders them to sing her to sleep, and be gone.

Oberon finds his queen sleeping and squeezes some of the love juice on her eyelids, saying:

*"What thou see'st when thou dost awake  
Do it for thy true love take;  
Love and languish for his sake;  
When thou makest, it is thy dear,  
Wake when some vile thing is near."*

[166]

Lysander and Hermia wander in the woods, lost and tired, and sink down to rest. He says:

*"One turf shall serve as pillow for us both,  
One heart, one bed, two bosoms and one troth!"*

Puck finds the lovers asleep, and says to Lysander:

*"Churl, upon thy eyes I throw,  
All the power that this charm doth owe,  
When thou wakest, let love forbid  
Sleep his seat on thy eyelid."*

Puck finds Bottom in the woods, rehearsing the play for the marriage of Theseus, and translates the weaver into an ass, with a desire for love. He wanders near the flowery bed where Queen Titania sleeps.

She hears him sing, and opening her eyes, says:

*"What angel wakes me from my flowery bed?  
Thy fair virtue's force perforce doth move me,  
On the first view, to say, to swear, I love thee!"*

Bottom says:

*"Methinks, mistress, you should have little reason for that;  
Reason and love keep little company now-a-days!"*

Oberon relents and releases his Fairy Queen from her dream of infatuation with Bottom disguised as an ass, and says:

*"But first, I will release the fairy queen,  
Be as thou wast wont to be;  
(Touching her eyes with the herb.)  
See as thou wast wont to see;  
Dian's bud o'er Cupid's flower,  
Hath such force and blessed power,  
Now, my Titania; wake you, my sweet queen."*

Titania awakes and exclaims:

*"My Oberon, what visions have I seen!  
Methought I was enamored of an ass!"*

Titania is not the only woman who is enamored by an Ass; in fact the mismatched, cross-purposed, twisted, infatuated affections of the sordid, deceitful earth are as thick as blackberries in July, while pretense and pampered power greatly prevail around the globe.

Theseus and his train wander through the woods in preparation for the grand hunt and find Lysander, Demetrius, Hermia and Helena still asleep under the magic influence of Puck.

Theseus wonders how the lovers came to the wood, and says to the father of Hermia:

*"But speak, Egeus; is not this the day  
That Helena should give answer of her choice?"*

Egeus:

*"It is, my lord."*

Theseus:

*"Go bid the huntsmen wake them with their horns.  
(Expresses surprise at their situation.)  
How comes this gentle concord in the world,  
That hatred is so far from jealousy,  
To sleep by hate, and fear no enmity."*

The lovers are reconciled to their natural choice, and Theseus decides against the father:

*"Egeus, I will overbear your will,  
For in the temple by and by, with us  
These couples shall eternally be knit."*

Bottom wakes and tells his theatrical partners:

*"I have had a dream, past the wit of man to say  
what dream it was.  
Man is but an ass, a patched fool.  
Eye of man hath not heard, the ear of man hath  
not seen, man's hand is not able to taste, his  
tongue to conceive, nor his heart to report,  
what my dream was!"*

The vast audience laughed heartily at the befuddled language of Bottom, the weaver, and imagined themselves under the like spell of fantastic fairies.



The fifth and last act opens up with Theseus and his Amazonian Queen in the palace, prepared for the nuptial rites, and also the marriage of Lysander and Demetrius to their choice.

[170]

The lunatic, the lover and the poet,  
Are of imagination all compact;  
The poet's eye, in fine frenzy rolling,  
Doth glance from heaven to earth,  
From earth to heaven,  
And as imagination bodies forth  
The form of things unknown,  
The poet's pen turns them to shapes,  
And gives to airy nothing  
A local habitation and a name,  
William Shakespeare  
Stratford, 1616.

Theseus speaking of the strange conduct of lovers, delivers this great bit of philosophy:

[171]

*"More strange than true, I never may believe  
These antique fables, nor these fairy toys.  
Lovers and madmen have such seething brains—  
Such shaping fantasies, that apprehend  
More than cool reason ever comprehends.  
The lunatic, the lover and the poet,  
Are of imagination all compact;  
One sees more devils than vast hell can hold;  
That is the madman; the lover all as frantic,  
Sees Helen's beauty in a brow of Egypt;  
The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,  
Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven,  
And as imagination bodies forth  
The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen  
Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing  
A local habitation and a name!"*

The play of Pyramus and Thisby is then introduced to the palace audience, when Bottom and his Athenian mechanics amuse Theseus and Hippolyta with their crude, rustic conception of love-making.

As the play proceeds Hippolyta remarks:

*"This is the silliest stuff that I ever heard."*

And Theseus says:

*"The best in this kind are but shadows;  
And the worst are no worse, if imagination amend them!"*

[172]

Pyramus appeals to the moon thus:

*"Sweet moon, I thank thee for thy sunny beams,  
I thank thee, moon, for shining now so bright,  
I trust to taste of truest Thisby's sight!"*

Pyramus and Thisby commit suicide, for disappointment in love, in the climax scene, and waking again Bottom wishes to know if the Duke wants any more of the burlesque play.

Theseus replies:

*"Your play needs no excuse; for when the players are all  
dead,  
There need none to be blamed!"*

*The iron tongue of midnight hath told twelve.  
Lovers to bed; 'tis almost fairy time,  
I fear we shall outsleep the coming morn,  
As much as we this night have overwatched.  
This palpable, gross play hath well beguiled*

*The heavy gait of night—sweet friends, to bed;  
A fortnight hold we this solemnity  
In nightly revels and new jollity!"*

The forest scene is filled with fairies, led by Puck, Oberon and Titania, all fantastically dressed, rehearsing and singing in their mystic revels.

Puck leading, says:

*"Now the hungry lion roars,  
And the wolf beholds the moon.  
Whilst the heavy ploughman snores  
All with weary task foredone;  
And we fairies, that do run  
By the triple of Hecate's team,  
From the presence of the sun  
Following darkness like a dream."*

[173]

Oberon orders:

*"Through this house give glimmering light,  
By the dead and drowsy fire;  
Every elf and fairy sprite  
Hop as light as bird from brier;  
And his ditty, after me,  
Sing and dance it trippingly."*

Titania speaks:

*"First rehearse this song by rote;  
To each word a warbling note,  
Hand in hand with fairy grace  
Will we sing and bless this place."*

Then all the fairies, joining hands at the command of Oberon, dance and sing:

*"Every fairy take his gait,  
And each several chamber bless;  
Through this palace with sweet peace,  
All shall here in safety rest  
And the owner of it blest,  
Trip away, make no stay;  
Meet me all by break of day!"*

[174]

Then mischievous little Puck flies to the front, makes his final bow and speech, concluding the play of "Midsummer Night's Dream":

*"If we shadows have offended,  
Think but this, and all is mended—  
That you have but slumbered here,  
While these visions did appear;  
And this weak and idle theme  
No more yielding but a dream;  
Gentles, do not reprehend;  
If you pardon we will mend.  
And, as I am honest Puck,  
If we have unearned luck,  
How to escape the serpent's tongue,  
We will make amends ere long;  
Else the Puck a liar call,  
So good night unto you all,  
Give me your hands if we be friends,  
And Robin shall restore amends!"*

Unanimous cheers rang through Windsor forest at the conclusion of this mystic play, and Queen Elizabeth called up Theseus (William), Hippolyta, Oberon, Titania and Puck, presenting to each a five-carat solitaire diamond—a slight token of Her Majesty's appreciation of dramatic genius.

It was after two o'clock in the morning when a thousand sky rockets filled the heavens with variegated colors, indicating for fifty miles around, that "Midsummer Night's Dream" had been successfully launched on the ocean of dramatic imagination!

## THE JEW. SHYLOCK. "MERCHANT OF VENICE."

*"O, it is excellent  
To have a giant's strength, but it is tyrannous  
To use it like a giant."*

*"Had I power, I should  
Pour the sweet milk of concord into hell,  
Uproar the universal peace, confound  
All Unity on earth."*

In my peregrinations and bohemian investigations I have met on several occasions, and in strange lands, Mr. Ahasuerus, the Jerusalem shoemaker, who is reported to have jeered and scoffed at Christ as he passed his shop, bearing the heavy cross up the rugged heights of Calvary.

That was a terrible day for Jesus of Nazareth (dying for the sins of others), but worse for his foolish brother, the Jew shoemaker; for as punishment to the scoffing and heartless Ishmaelite, the "Son of God," bending under the weight of the cross, exclaimed to the "Son of Saint Crispin": "Tarry thou 'till I come! Move on!"

And from that hour to this the "Wandering Jew" has been traveling and seeking for peace and death, but has never found surcease from everlasting sorrow and misery. [176]

I have often met his business partners, Solomon Isaacs and David Levy; and while these gentlemen are compelled by nations to "move on," they have the great gift of loading up their pack with the rarest jewels—silver, gold and diamonds being their great specialty—with ready made clothing, pawnshops and banks as convenient adjuncts.

Their three golden balls, worn in front of their establishments, they say, represent energy, economy and wealth; while their victims insist that they represent passion, poverty and suicide.

And yet these wandering Jews of all lands and climes, having no home or country anywhere, have the best of homes, churches, banks and temples everywhere.

War and peace they often hold in their financial power, and therefore become the arbitrators and umpires of national fate.

When my friend William was working on the rough sketch of the "Merchant of Venice," in the years 1598 and 1599, there was a great hate manifested against the London Jews, Dr. Lopez, the physician of Queen Elizabeth, having been recently tried and hung for the design of poisoning Her Majesty.

The Jews were accused of clipping the coins of the realm, demanding one hundred per cent. usury, bewitching the people, sacrificing Christian boys on the altar of religious fanaticism and setting fire to the warehouses and shipping along the Thames.

These outrageous stories were believed by many people, and Shakspeare, being infected by the hate of the multitude (for the first time in his intellectual career), fashioned the repulsive character of Shylock, who walks the world as a synonym of greed, hate and vengeance. [177]

Several Jew plays had been put on the London boards, like the "Venetian Comedy" and the "Jew of Malta," but none had the lofty pitch of Shakspeare's, who derived his main idea of the play from the Italian story of "Pecorone," by Florentina, and Silvayn's "Orator."

Yet, with William's imagination, a hint was sufficient, the rose and acorn giving him scope enough to create flower gardens and forest ranges.

The Jew has always been a great subject for the world's contention and condemnation, particularly since the crucifixion of Jesus of Nazareth. If Christ, the Jew, suffered for others, his own race for nearly two thousand years have been "scapegoats" for private and public villains.

From the days of Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain, Louis the Fourteenth of France, Henry the Eighth and Elizabeth of England, Emperor William of Germany and the Czars Nicholas and Alexander of Russia, the Jews have been robbed, exiled and murdered by Christian rulers, presumptively for their rebellion against the State, but really as an excuse to rob them of their jewels and gold. The Caucasian Christian has never hesitated to rob and murder anybody anywhere for cash and country!

Look over the world to-day, and you behold nothing but diplomatic cheating, domestic and foreign robbery and international murder for individual ambition and national territorial expansion! The official hypocrite is the greatest liar of the century! [178]

England, Germany, France, Russia and the United States are this very day competing with each other in the race for universal empire! Considering that "Uncle Sam" has had only one hundred and twenty-six years of national life, he has forged to the front amazingly, and has become the grandest "General" on the globe! He does things!

The "gentle reader" (confidentially speaking) may think this a slight digression from the "Merchant of Venice," which was enacted at the Globe Theatre, London, on the first Saturday in December, 1599. The "gentle reader" may also have found out by this time that the "subscriber" pays little attention to the "unities of time and place," as a thousand years are but short milestones in the life of the "Strulbug" family!

What the "gentle reader" needs more than anything else is *knowledge and truth*; and he observes, if he observes at all, that I give bits of the most eloquent and philosophic speeches in all the plays of Shakspeare, besides the true personal transactions and escapades of the Bard of Avon!

The enactment of the various scenes of the "Merchant of Venice" takes place in the great water city—Venice, "Queen of the Adriatic," that ruled the commercial world two thousand years ago.

Antonio, the Christian merchant, and Shylock, the usurious Jew, are the principal characters of the play, while Portia, the wealthy heiress, and Jessica, the daughter of Shylock, with Bassanio and Lorenzo carry the thread of Shakspeare's argument trying to prove that it is Christian justice to steal an old man's money and daughter, and punish him for demanding his legal rights!

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In speaking privately to William I tried to have him change the logic and morals of the play, but his curt answer was:

"Jack, the dramatic demand and tyrant public must be satisfied."

Burbage took the part of Antonio, Jo Taylor played Shylock, William played Portia, Condell acted Bassanio, Heming represented Lorenzo and Field played Jessica, Poole played Gratiano, Slye played the Duke.

The Globe Theatre was packed from pit to loft by the greatest variety audience I had ever seen; lords, ladies, lawyers, doctors, merchants, mechanics, soldiers, sailors, and street riff-raff—all assembled to see and hear how the Jew, Shylock, was to be roasted by the greatest dramatist of the ages.

Antonio in a street scene in Venice opens up the play thus:

*"In sooth, I know not why I am so sad;  
That I am much ado to know myself."*

Salarino replies to the ship merchant:

*"Your mind is tossing on the ocean;  
There, where your argosies, with portly sail—  
Like signiors and rich burghers of the flood,  
Or, as it were, the pageants of the sea  
As they fly to traffickers with their woven wings."*

[180]

Antonio says to his friend Gratiano:

*"I hold the world but as the world, Gratiano;  
A stage where every man must play a part,  
And mine a sad one."*

But the light and airy Gratiano utters this philosophic speech, which the "gentle reader" should cut out and paste in his hat:

*"Let me play the Fool;  
With mirth and laughter, let old wrinkles come;  
And let my liver rather heat with wine,  
Than my heart cool with mortifying groans.  
Why should a man whose blood is warm within,  
Sit like his grandsire cut in alabaster?  
Sleep when he wakes? and creep into the jaundice,  
By being peevish? I tell thee what, Antonio,—  
I love thee, and it is my love that speaks;  
There are a sort of men, whose visages  
Do cream and mantle, like a standing pond;  
And do a wilful stillness entertain,  
With purpose to be dressed in an opinion  
Of wisdom, gravity, profound conceit;  
As who should say, I am Sir Oracle,  
And, when I ope my lips, let no dog bark!  
O, my Antonio, I do know of these,  
That therefore only are reputed wise,  
For saying nothing; who I am very sure,  
If they should speak, would almost damn those ears  
Which, hearing them, would call their brothers fools!"*

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Bassanio, in love with the rich heiress, Portia, tries to borrow three thousand ducats from Shylock, and Antonio, his friend, is willing to give bond for the loan.

The Jew and the Christian hate each other; and Shylock vents his opinion:

*"How like a fawning publican he looks!  
I hate him, for he is a Christian;  
Antonio lends out money gratis and brings down—  
The rate of usury here with us in Venice.  
If I can catch him once upon the hip,  
I will feed fat the ancient grudge I bear him.  
He hates our sacred nation; and he rails,  
Even there where merchants most do congregate,  
On me, my bargains, and my well worn thrift,  
Which he calls interest; cursed be my tribe  
If I forgive him!"*

Antonio finally asks for the three thousand ducats, and says:

*"Well, Shylock, shall we be beholden to you?"*

Then in a speech of brave defiance, Shylock humiliates the Gentile merchant in this manner:

*"Signior Antonio, many a time and oft  
In the Rialto you have rated me  
About my monies, and my usury;  
Still have I borne it with a patient shrug;  
For sufferance is the badge of all our tribe;  
You call me misbeliever, cut-throat, dog,  
And spit upon my Jewish gaberdine,  
And all for use of that which is mine own.  
Well, then, it now appears you need my help;  
Go to, then; you come to me and you say:  
Shylock, we would have monies; you say so;  
You, that did void your rheum upon my beard,  
And foot me as you spurn a stranger cur—  
Over your threshold; monies is your suit.  
What should I say to you? Should I not say;  
Hath a dog money? Is it possible  
A cur can lend three thousand ducats? Or  
Shall I bend low, and in a bondsman's key,  
With bated breath and whispering humbleness say this—  
Fair sir, you spit on me on Wednesday last;  
You spurned me such a day; another time  
You called me—dog, and for these courtesies  
I'll lend you thus much monies!"*

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Antonio, not any way abashed at the scolding of the money lender, says:

*"I am as like to call thee dog again,  
And spit on thee again, to spurn thee, too!"*

Shylock then agrees to lend the three thousand ducats if Antonio will give bond and penalty to pay the money back with interest in three months.

Shylock says:

*"Let the forfeit of the bond  
Be nominated for an equal pound  
Of your fair flesh, to be cut off, and taken  
In what part of your body pleaseth me!"*

[183]

The second act opens with Portia in her grand home at "Belmont," awaiting suitors for her wealth, beauty and brains.

Her father dying, left three locked chests, gold, silver, and lead, one of them containing the picture of Portia; and the fortunate suitor who picked out that rich casket, was to be the husband of the brilliant Portia.

The Prince of Morocco and Prince of Arragon, with Bassanio, were the suitors.

Portia says to Morocco:

*"In terms of choice I am not solely led  
By nice direction of a maiden's eyes;  
Besides, the lottery of my destiny  
Bars me the right of voluntary choosing."*

Launcelot, the foolish serving man for Shylock, says to old Gobbo, his blind father:

*"Do you not know me, father?"*

Gobbo replies:

*"Alack, sir. I am sand-blind. I know you not."*

Launcelot makes this wise statement:

*"Nay, indeed, if you had your eyes,  
You might fail of the knowing of me:  
It is a wise father that knows his own child!"*

Shylock discharges Launcelot, and Jessica, the beautiful daughter of the money lender, parts with him regretfully—she gives him a secret letter to deliver to her Christian lover, Lorenzo, and then says:

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*"Farewell, good Launcelot—  
Alack, what heinous sin it is in me  
To be ashamed to be my father's child!  
But though I am a daughter to his blood,  
I am not to his manners; O Lorenzo,  
If thou keep promise, I shall end this strife;  
Become a Christian, and thy loving wife!"*

This beautiful Jewess forswears her birth and religion for infatuated love, and throws to the winds all duty and honor as a daughter; a renegade of matchless quality, stealing her father's money and jewels to elope with the fascinating Christian Lorenzo.

The Hebrew race has not produced many Jessicas; and the morality taught by Shakspeare of a daughter "fooling her father" is base and rotten in principle.

Shylock says to his daughter:

*"Well, Jessica, go in to the house,  
Perhaps I will return immediately;  
Do as I bid you;  
Shut doors after you; fast bind, fast find,  
A proverb never stale in thrifty mind."*

Then at the turn of his back the beautiful fraud Jessica says:

*"Farewell, and if my fortune be not crost,  
I have a father, you a daughter, lost!"*

[185]

Lorenzo with his friends appear under the window of Shylock's house to steal away Jessica, and she appears above in boy's clothes, and asks:

*"Who are you? Tell me for more certainty,  
Albeit, I'll swear that I do know your tongue."*

He responds:

*"Lorenzo and thy love."*

Jessica before leaving her home spouts the following stuff to her lover:

*"Here, catch this casket, it is worth the pains;  
I am glad 'tis night, you do not look on me;  
For I am much ashamed of my exchange;  
But love is blind, and lovers cannot see  
The pretty follies that themselves commit;  
For if they could, Cupid himself would blush  
To see me thus transformed to a boy.  
I will make fast the doors, and gild myself  
With some more ducats, and be with you straight!"*

Nice specimen of a dutiful daughter.

Contrast the conduct of the Christian Portia with the Hebrew Jessica, and the latter's action is thoroughly reprehensible.

Portia obeys the injunction and will of a dead father, while Jessica violates criminally the duty she owes a live father, who is in the toils of personal and official swindlers.

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Portia in her palace awaits foreign and domestic suitors for her hand, heart and wealth.

The Prince of Morocco and his train first appear.

Portia in her splendid drawing room receives the Prince, and says to her waiting maid:

*"Go draw aside the curtains, and discover  
The several caskets to this noble prince;—*

*Now make your choice!"*

The Prince reads the inscriptions on the three caskets, gold, silver and lead:

"Who chooseth me, shall gain what many men desire."

"Who chooseth me, shall get as much as he deserves."

"Who chooseth me, must give and hazard all he hath."

The Prince asks:

*"How shall I know if I do choose the right?"*

Portia replies:

*"The one of them contains my picture, Prince;  
If you choose that then I am yours withal."*

The Prince of Morocco makes a long speech on the beauty and glory of Portia, and then decides to open the golden casket. Portia hands him the key, and when the contents come to view he exclaims:

*"O hell! what have we here!"*

*"A carrion death, within whose empty eye  
There is a written scroll? I'll read the writing."*

[187]

*'All that glitters is not gold,  
Often have you heard that told;  
Many a man his life hath sold,  
But my outside to behold;  
Gilded tombs do worms infold.  
Had you been as wise as bold,  
Young in limbs, in judgment old  
Your answer had not been enscrolled,  
Fare you well, your suit is cold.'*

The disappointed black prince says:

*"Portia, adieu! I have too grieved a heart  
To take a tedious leave; thus lovers part."*

Portia exclaims after his exit:

*"A gentle riddance; draw the curtains, go  
Let all of his complexion choose me so!"*

When Shylock returned home, found his house deserted and robbed, he rushed into the street, and cried:

*"My daughter! O my ducats! O my daughter!  
Fled with a Christian? O my Christian ducats!  
Justice! the law! my ducats and my daughter!  
A sealed bag, two sealed bags of ducats,  
Of double ducats, stolen from me by my daughter!  
And jewels, two stones, two rich and precious stones  
Stolen by my daughter! Justice! Find the girl!  
She hath the stones upon her and the ducats!"*

[188]

The frantic raging of the old broken down, soul lacerated Jew, only brought from that Christian audience, laughter, yells, and howling jeers. The mob spirit was there, and the appeal for justice by Shylock fell upon deaf ears and stony hearts.

Portia still holds court for her hand and heart at beautiful "Belmont," setting like an Egyptian Queen in the circling, blooming hills of the blue Adriatic.

The Prince of Arragon comes to the choice of caskets, and with lofty words in praise of virtue, says:

*"Let none presume to wear an undeserved dignity.  
O, that estates, degrees, and offices,  
Were not obtained corruptly! and that clear honor  
Were purchased by the merit of the wearer!  
How many then should cover, that stand bare!  
How many be commanded that command!  
How much low corruption would then be gleaned  
From the true seed of honor! and how much honor  
Picked from the chaff and ruin of the times!"*

The Globe Theatre shook with applause at this fine political speech of the Prince, and may be well contemplated in the State transactions of to-day.

The Prince unlocks the silver casket, and finds a portrait of a blinking idiot; and departing exclaims:

*"Some there be that shadows kiss,  
Such have but a shadow's bliss;  
There be fools alive I wis—  
Silvered o'er, and so was this!"*

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Portia soliloquizes:

*"Thus hath the candle singed the moth  
Of these deliberate fools, when they do choose,  
They bare their wisdom by their wit to lose."*

And Nerissa, the bright waiting maid, says:

*"The ancient saying is no heresy;—  
Hanging and wiving go by destiny!"*

The third act opens with a street in Venice, and friends of Antonio bemoan the reported loss of several of his ships at sea, which will cause his default and ruin, by the demands of Shylock.

Salarino says to the Jew:

*"Why, I am sure if he forfeit, thou wilt not  
Take his flesh; what's that good for?"*

Shylock now begins to gloat over his prospect of a dire vengeance upon the Christian Antonio, and replies to Salarino:

*"To bait fish withal; if it will feed nothing else,  
It will feed my revenge!  
Antonio hates me because I'm a Jew;  
Hath not a Jew eyes? Hath not a Jew hands;  
Organs, dimensions, senses, affections, passions?  
Fed with the same food, hurt with the same weapons,  
Subject to the same diseases, healed by the same means,  
Warmed and cooled by the same summer and winter,  
As a Christian is? If you prick us, do we not bleed?  
If you tickle us do we not laugh? if you poison us  
Do we not die? and if you wrong us shall we not revenge?  
The villainy you teach me, I will execute!"*

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Tubal, the Hebrew friend of Shylock, says:

*"But Antonio is certainly undone."*

Shylock delighted says:

*"That's true, that's very true.  
Tubal, fee me an officer; bespeak him a fortnight before.  
I will have the heart of Antonio if he forfeit the bond.  
Go, Tubal, meet me at our synagogue."*

Portia again appears for the third time to undergo matrimonial choice.

Bassanio, the particular friend of Antonio, is the real love suitor for the hand and heart of the beautiful Portia, and appears at her palace, attended by his faithful Venetian friends. He is a high-toned, but impecunious Italian gentleman, whose heart and soul are ninety per cent. larger than his pockets.

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Portia seems to be fascinated with Bassanio, and wishes him to remain at her home and take time in choosing the right casket, but he wants to act instantly, confessing his love.

Portia says:

*"Let music sound while he doth make his choice;  
Now he goes,  
With no less dignity, but with much more love  
Than young Alcides, when he did redeem  
The virgin tribute paid by howling Troy  
To the sea monster!"*

Bassanio, standing before the leaden casket, utters this high sounding, moral, truthful speech:

*"The world is still deceived with ornament."*



*In law, what plea so tainted and corrupt,  
 But, being seasoned with a gracious voice  
 Obscures the show of evil? In religion,  
 What damned error, but some sober brow  
 Will bless it, and approve it with a text,  
 Hiding the grossness with fair ornament?  
 There is no vice so simple, but assumes  
 Some mark of virtue on his outward parts!  
 How many cowards whose hearts are all as false  
 As stairs of sand, wear yet upon their chins  
 The beard of Hercules, and frowning Mars;  
 Who, inward searched, have livers white as milk?  
 And these assume but valor's excrement,  
 To render them redoubted. Look on beauty  
 And you shall see 'tis purchased by the weight;  
 Which therein works a miracle in nature,  
 Making them lightest that wear most of it;  
 So are those curled, snaky golden locks,  
 Which make such wanton gambols with the wind  
 Upon supposed fairness, often known  
 To be the dowers of a second head;  
 The scull that bred them in the sepulchre.  
 Thus ornament is but the treacherous shore  
 To a most dangerous sea!  
 Thou meagre lead casket,  
 Which rather rebuffs than dost promise aught,  
 Thy plainness moves me more than eloquence,  
 And here choose I; joy the consequence!"*

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Opening the leaden casket, Bassanio exclaims:

*"What find I here?  
 Fair Portia's counterfeit. What demigod  
 Hath come so near creation;  
 Here's the scroll,  
 The continent and summary of my fortune—  
 If you be well pleased with this,  
 And hold your fortune for your bliss,  
 Turn you where your lady is  
 And claim her with a loving kiss!"*

Bassanio kisses Portia, and she makes this womanly speech:

*"You see me, Lord Bassanio, where I stand  
 Such as I am; though for myself alone  
 I would not be ambitious in my wish  
 To wish myself much better; yet, for you  
 I would be trebled twenty times myself;  
 A thousand times more fair, ten thousand times more rich.  
 Happiest of all is that my fond spirit  
 Commits itself to yours to be directed,  
 As from her Lord, her Governor, her King!  
 Myself and what is mine, to you and yours  
 Is now converted; but now I was the Lord  
 Of this fair mansion, master of my servants,  
 Queen o'er myself; and even now, but now,  
 This house, these servants, and this same myself,  
 Are yours, my Lord, I give them with this ring;  
 Which when you part from, lose, or give away,  
 Let it presage the ruin of your love,  
 And be my vantage to exclaim to you!"*

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Bassanio tells Portia that he is not a freeman, that Antonio borrowed three thousand ducats for him from Shylock, and that now he is miserable because Antonio may lose his life by the Jew claiming a pound of flesh in forfeit of the bonded debt.

Portia proposes to pay six thousand ducats rather than Antonio suffer, and says to Bassanio:

*"First go with me to church and call me wife,  
 Then away to Venice to your friend.  
 You shall have gold  
 To pay the petty debt twenty times over!"*

Shylock swears out a writ and puts Antonio in jail, and demands trial before the Grand Duke of Venice.

The Duke in open court, with all the witnesses and lawyers and people present, implores Shylock not to insist to cut a pound of flesh from the body of Antonio, and argues for mercy.

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But, Shylock, impenetrable to the cries of mercy, says to the judge:

*"I have told your grace of what I purpose;  
And by our holy Sabbath have I sworn,  
To have the due and forfeit of my bond.  
The pound of flesh which I demand of him  
Is dearly bought, is mine, and I will have it;  
If you deny me, fye upon your law!  
I stand for judgment; shall I have it?"*

A learned doctor of laws, Bellario, is expected to appear as the advocate for Antonio, and the Duke awaits him; but receives a letter saying that a young lawyer named Balthazar will represent him, as sickness prevents his presence.

Portia disguised like a doctor of laws appears in court.

The Duke asks: "Come you from old Bellario?"

Portia replies: "I did, my lord."

Antonio and Shylock stand up in court, and Portia, after surveying each, inquires:

"Is your name Shylock?"

He replies: "Shylock is my name."

She says to Antonio: "You stand within Shylock's control, do you not?"

He responds: "Ay, so he says."

Portia asks: "Do you confess the bond?"

Antonio replies: "I do."

Portia: "Then must the Jew be merciful?"

Shylock asks: "On what compulsion must I? Tell me that?"

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Then Portia rises in court and makes this lofty, never to be forgotten speech:

*"The quality of mercy is not strained;  
It droppeth, as the gentle rain from heaven,  
Upon the place beneath; it is twice blessed;  
It blesseth him that gives, and him that takes;  
'Tis mightiest in the mightiest; it becomes  
The throned monarch better than his crown;  
His sceptre shows the force of temporal power,  
The attribute to awe and majesty:  
Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings;  
But mercy is above his sceptred sway,  
It is enthroned in the hearts of kings,  
It is an attribute to God himself,  
And earthly power doth then show likest God's  
When mercy seasons justice. Therefore, Jew,  
Though justice be thy plea, consider this,—  
That in the course of justice, none of us  
Should see salvation; we do pray for mercy;  
And that same prayer doth teach us all to render  
The deeds of mercy, I have spoke this much  
To mitigate the justice of thy plea;  
Which, if thou follow, this strict court of Venice  
Must needs give sentence against the merchant there."*

Shylock, with unforgiving spirit, replies:

*"My deeds upon my head! I crave the law,  
The penalty and forfeit of my bond!"*

Portia asks:

*"Is not Antonio able to discharge the money?"*

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Bassanio replies:

*"Yes; here I tender it for him in the court;  
Yea, twice the sum,"*

and still appealing to the Duke, says:

*"To do a great right, do a little wrong,  
And curb this cruel devil of his will!"*

Portia says:

*"There is no power in Venice can altar a decree  
established."*

And Shylock, lighting up with joy, replies:

*"A Daniel come to judgment! yea, a Daniel!"*

Preparation is made to cut the pound of flesh from the breast of Antonio; and this brave old Christian merchant says to his dearest friend, Bassanio:

*"Fare you well!  
Grieve not that I am fallen to this for you;  
For herein fortune shows herself more kind  
Than is her custom; it is still her use  
To let the wretched man outlive his wealth,  
To view with hollow eye and wrinkled brow,  
An age of poverty."*

Portia, speaking to Shylock, says:

*"Take thou thy pound of flesh;  
But, in the cutting, if thou dost shed  
One drop of Christian blood, thy lands and goods  
Are, by the laws of Venice, confiscated  
Unto the State of Venice!"*

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The Jew finding himself absolutely blocked consents to take the money offered.

Yet, Portia tells him that his property and life are now at the mercy of the Duke because he has conspired against the life of a citizen of Venice, and bids him:

*"Down, therefore, and beg mercy of the Duke!"*

Then the great Duke, judge of the court, speaks to Shylock:

*"That thou shalt see the difference of our spirit,  
I pardon thee thy life before thou ask it;  
For half thy wealth, it is Antonio's,  
The other half comes to the general state!"*

Shylock bravely replies:

*"Take my life and all, pardon not that;  
You take my house, when you do take the prop  
That doth sustain my house; you take my life  
When you do take the means whereby I live!"*

Then Antonio says if the Jew will give up all his property to Lorenzo and his daughter Jessica, and become a Christian, he the "Merchant of Venice," will be content.

Portia then triumphantly asks:

*"Art thou content, Jew, what dost thou say?"*

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And poor old Shylock gasps:

*"I am content."*

Thus ends one of the most barefaced swindles of the ages; and my friend William is responsible for the nefarious and systematic machinery of roguery and persecution injected into the play to satisfy Christian hate against the wandering Jew.

In looking around the world even to-day, we might truthfully exclaim:

"O, Christianity! Christianity! how many crimes are committed in thy name!"

The fifth act of the "Merchant of Venice" winds up with harmonious love and prosperity for all concerned.

At the beautiful home of "Belmont," Bassanio, Portia, Lorenzo and Jessica, as well as Gratiano and Nerissa are married and living in blissful association.

In the moonlit, lovelit conversation between Lorenzo and his Jewish wife, Jessica, Shakspeare wings in some of his finest classical allusions, a word banquet for all passion struck lovers.

Lorenzo seated amid waving trees, trailing vines and perfumed flowers illuminated by the

mystic rays of Luna, says to Jessica:

*"The moon shines bright; in such a night as this,  
When the sweet wind did gently kiss the trees,  
And they did make no noise; in such a night,  
Troilus, methinks, mounted the Trojan walls,  
And sighed his soul towards the Grecian tents  
Where Cressid lay that night."*

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Jessica replies:

*"In such a night  
Did Thisbe fearfully o'ertrip the dew;  
And saw the lion's shadow ere himself,  
And ran dismayed away."*

Then Lorenzo talks:

*"In such a night  
Stood Dido with a willow in her hand  
Upon the wild sea banks, and waved her love  
To come again to Carthage."*

And Jessica:

*"In such a night  
Medea gathered the enchanted herbs  
That did renew old Aeson."*

Lorenzo then triumphant speaks:

*"In such a night  
Did Jessica steal from the wealthy Jew;  
And with an unthrifty love did run from Venice,  
As far as Belmont."*

Jessica satirically replies:

*"In such a night  
Did young Lorenzo swear he loved her well;  
Stealing her soul with many vows of faith,  
And ne'er a true one."*

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Lorenzo fires back this answer:

*"And in such a night  
Did pretty Jessica, like a little shrew  
Slander her love, and he forgave it her."*

Jessica gets in the last word, and says:

*"I would outnight you, did nobody come;  
But hark, I hear the footing of a man."*

Lorenzo declines to enter the house for rest or sleep, but still discourses of love and music:

*"How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank!  
Here will we sit and let the sounds of music  
Creep in our ears; soft stillness, and the night,  
Become the touches of sweet harmony.  
Sit, Jessica; look, how the floor of heaven  
Is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold;  
There's not the smallest orb, which thou beholdest  
But in his motion like an angel sings.  
Still quiring to the young-ey'd cherubins;  
Such harmony is in immortal souls;  
But, whil'st this muddy vesture of decay  
Doth grossly close it in, we cannot have it!  
By the sweet power of music; therefore, the poet  
Did feign that Orpheus drew trees, stones and floods.  
Since naught so stockish, hard and full of rage  
But music for the time doth change his nature,  
The man that hath no music in himself  
Nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds,  
Is fit for treasons, stratagems and spoils;  
The motions of his spirit are dull as night  
And his affections dark as Erebus;*

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*Let no such man be trusted."*

Portia, Bassanio and friends arrive from the trial of Antonio at Venice, and at the brilliant home of Belmont all is peace and love.

Bassanio discovers that the young lawyer in disguise was Portia, and she twits him for giving away his ring to the young advocate, as a recompense for clearing Antonio from the toils of Shylock; and then she discourses to her friends about music by night:

*"Methinks it sounds much sweeter than by day;  
The crow doth sing as sweetly as the lark,  
When neither is attuned; and I think  
The nightingale, if she should sing by day  
When every goose is cackling, would be thought  
No better a musician than the wren.  
How many things by season, seasoned are  
To their right praise and true perfection!  
Peace, there, the moon sleeps with Endymion  
And would not be awaked."*

(Music ceases and all retire.)

*Music murmurs through the soul  
Hopes of a sweet heavenly goal,  
And enchants from pole to pole  
While the planets round us roll!*

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## CHAPTER XVI.

[202]

### THE SUPERNATURAL. "HAMLET."

*"The time is out of joint; O cursed spite,  
That ever I was born to set it right."*

*"Had all his hairs been lives, my great revenge  
Had stomach for them all."*

Shakspeare, in January, 1600, was at the height of his dramatic renown, and at the age of thirty-six was the ripest philosopher in the world, knowing more about the secret impulses of the human heart than any other man.

I could see a great change in his life and thought; for a shade of settled melancholy characterized his action, since the death and burial of Spenser, and the downfall of Essex and Southampton, through the vengeance of Cecil and Bacon, jealous courtiers, who poisoned Queen Elizabeth against the most noted Lords of her court.

Shakspeare's theatrical company became involved in the conspiracy of Essex, and an edict was issued against the Blackfriars and Globe playhouses performing their dramatic satires. Children players took their places.

Through the particular vengeance of Lord Bacon, charges of treason were trumped up against Essex, the former benefactor of Bacon, and in due course the head of Essex went to the block in February, 1601.

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Thus perished one of the brightest, bravest and loftiest peers of England, a victim to the spleen, hate and tyranny of the ugly Elizabeth, a woman without conscience or morality, when her personal interest was involved. She shines out as one of the greatest and most infamous queens of history, and so long as lofty crime is remembered she will remain on the top pedestal of royal iniquity.

In the course of our classical and historical readings, William had become very much interested in the tragic story of Amleth or Hamlet as told by the Danish writer, *Saxo*—and *Seneca*, the great Roman, in his story of *Cornelia* gives the same tragic tale, while Garnier, the French dramatist, as well as Kyd, the friend of Shakspeare, made plays out of the tragic history of the Prince of Denmark.

But it was left for my friend William to gather up the historical bones of the ancient story, and articulate them into a breathing, living, passionate, divine being, whose lofty words and phrases should go sounding down the centuries, thrilling and reverberating in the soul-lit memory of mankind.

The supernatural or spiritual part of creation had ever a fascinating influence upon the Bard of Avon, and all the outward manifestations of nature were infallible hints to him of the inward sources of the Divine, and an absolute belief in the immortality of the soul! His own mind was the best evidence of divinity!

Night after night in the winter of 1600, William would read over, and ponder upon "scraps of thought," that he had at various times put into the mouth of Hamlet, and in our new quarters, near Temple Bar, I assisted him in composing the dramatic story of the melancholy Dane.

That is, I blew the bellows, and when his thought was heated to a red rose hue he hammered out the play on the anvil of his genius, and made the sparks fly in a shower of pristine glory.

His literary blacksmith shop was richly furnished with all the rough iron bars and crude ingots of vanished centuries; and all the best dramatic writers of London filled his thought factory with contributions of their inventions. He worked many of their rough pieces of thought into his dramatic plots; but when the phrase, scene and act were finished and placed before the footlights for rendition, it sailed away, a full rigged ship of dramatic grandeur, showing nothing but the royal workmanship of a master builder, the Homer, Phidias and Angelo of artistic perfection.

Mankind cares but little for the various kinds of wheat that compose the loaf, the wool or cotton that's in the garment, the timber or stone in the house, or the kind of steel in the battleship or guns; all they look for is the perfect structure, as they may see to-day in Shakspeare's greatest play—"Hamlet."

While Hamlet is the central figure of the play, old Polonius, the diplomatic double dealer, Laertes, his son, and Ophelia, his daughter, act prominently, while Horatio and the ghost of Hamlet's father express words of lasting remembrance.

Cruel Claudius, the king who murdered Hamlet's father, stole his throne and seduced his wife, is shown up as a first-class criminal villain, while Gertrude, the mother of the young prince, is one of the most sneaking, mild, incestuous queens in history. Such she devils, with heaven in their eyes and face, honeyed words on their lips, and gall and hell in their hearts, are the real seducers of infatuated, willing, ambitious man; and each should dangle at the end of the same rope or hemlock together!

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Contrast Gertrude with Ophelia, and you have a fiend of chicanery and crime, with a sweet angel of innocence: "Too good, too fair to be cast among the briers of this working day world and fall and bleed upon the thorns of life. Like a strain of sad, sweet music which comes floating by us on the wings of night and silence, like the exhalation of the violet dying even upon the sense it charms, like the snowflake dissolved in air before it has caught a stain of earth; like the light surf, severed from the billow, which a breath disperses, such is the character of the delicate and sanctified Ophelia."

In December, 1601, the ban of disgrace was taken from the Globe Theatre, and Burbage and William were permitted to continue their dramatic exhibitions.

"Hamlet" was played the night before Christmas. The house was packed closer than grass on an English lawn, and the applause was almost continuous, like the moan or roar of a distant sea.

Shakspeare played the Ghost, Burbage acted Hamlet, Jo Taylor played Horatio, Heminge played Ophelia, Peele played Polonius, Condell acted Claudius, Kempt played Gertrude, Cooke acted Laertes, and the other parts were taken by the best stock actors.

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The play opens up on a platform before the castle at "Elsinore," Copenhagen, Denmark.

Bernardo and Francisco are soldiers on night duty. Bernardo says: "Who's there?" Francisco says: "Nay, answer me; stand and unfold yourself."

The ghost of Hamlet's father appears to the night officers, and also to Horatio and Marcellus, but will not speak. They reveal the wonderful story to Hamlet, who makes ready to see and talk to the Ghost the next night at twelve o'clock.

In the meantime, the king, queen and courtiers gather at the grand throne of the castle and talk of the late king.

Hamlet is moody and sad, and will not be comforted, although persuaded by King Claudius and his mother.

Claudius addressing Hamlet, says:

*"But, now my nephew Hamlet, and my son  
How is it that the clouds still hang on you?"*

Hamlet says (aside):

*"A little more than kin and less than kind.  
Not so, my lord; I am too much in the sun."*

Hamlet's mother rebukes him about grieving for his father, and says:

*"Do not forever with thy veiled lids  
Seek for thy noble father in the dust;  
Thou knowest 'tis common, all that live must die,  
Passing through nature to eternity!"*

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Hamlet says:

*"Ay, madam, it is common."*

Queen says:

*"If it be,  
Why seems it so particular with thee?"*

And then surcharged with suspicion of her secret villainy Hamlet exclaims:

*"Seems, madam! Nay it is; I know not 'seems;'  
'Tis not alone my inky cloak, good mother,  
Nor customary suits of solemn black,  
Nor windy suspiration of forced breath,  
No, nor the fruitful river in the eye,  
Nor the dejected haviour of the visage,  
Together with all forms, moods, shapes of grief  
That can denote me truly; these indeed seem,  
For they are actions that a man might play;  
But I have that within which passeth show,  
These but the trappings and the suits of woe."*

Then, after the exit of the old murder-king and his *particeps criminis* queen—Hamlet ponders to himself on life and death in these lofty lines:

*"O, that this too, too solid flesh would melt,  
Thaw and resolve itself into a dew!  
Or that the Everlasting had not fixed  
His canon against self slaughter! O God! O God!  
How weary, stale, flat and unprofitable  
Seem to me all the uses of this world!  
Fye on't! O Fye! 'tis an unweeded garden,  
That grows to seed; things rank and gross in nature  
Possess it merely. That it should come to this!  
But two months dead! nay, not so much, not two;  
So excellent a King, that was, to this  
Hyperion to a satyr; so loving to my mother,  
That he might not beteem the wind of heaven  
Visit her face too roughly. Heaven and earth!  
Must I remember? Why, she would hang on him,  
As if increase of appetite had grown  
By what it fed on; and yet, within a month—  
Let me not think on it—frailty, thy name is woman!  
A little month, or ere those shoes were old  
With which she followed my poor father's body,  
Like Niobe all tears; why, she, even she—  
O God! a beast that wants discourse of reason  
Would have mourned longer,—married with my uncle,  
My father's brother, but no more like my father  
Than I to Hercules; within a month;  
Ere yet the salt of most unrighteous tears  
Had left the flushing of her galled eyes,  
She married. O, most wicked speed to post  
With such dexterity to incestuous sheets!  
It is not, nor can it come to good;  
But break, my heart, for I must hold my tongue!"*

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Laertes before his departure for France gives his sister Ophelia some advice and warns her against the blandishments of Hamlet. He says:

*"Fear it, Ophelia, fear it, my dear sister,  
And keep you in the rear of your affection,  
Out of the shot and danger of desire;  
Be wary then; best safety lies in fear,  
Youth to itself rebels, though none else near."*

This innocent, beautiful girl gave this wise reply to her brother:

*"I shall the effect of this good lesson keep,  
As watchman to my heart. But, good my brother  
Do not as some ungracious pastors do,  
Show me the steep and thorny way to heaven,  
Whilst, like a puffed and wreckless libertine,  
Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads  
And recks not his own read!"*

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Then Polonius, the wise old father, comes in to hasten Laertes off to France, with this great

advice:

*"There, my blessing with thee!  
And these few precepts in thy memory  
Look thou character. Give thy thoughts no tongue.  
Nor any unproportioned thought his act.  
Be thou familiar, but by no means vulgar.  
Those friends thou hast and their adoption tried,  
Grapple them to thy soul with hoops of steel.  
But do not dull thy palm with entertainment  
Of each new hatched, unfledged comrade. Beware  
Of entrance to a quarrel; but being in,  
Bear it that the opposed may beware of thee.  
Give every man thy ear, but few thy voice;  
Take each man's censure, but reserve thy judgment.  
Costly thy habit as thy purse can buy,  
But not expressed in fancy; rich, not gaudy;  
For the apparel oft proclaims the man.  
And they in France of the best rank and station  
Are of a most select and generous chief in that.  
Neither a borrower nor a lender be;  
For loan oft loses both itself and friend,  
And borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry.  
This above all; to thine own self be true,  
And it must follow, as the night the day,  
Thou canst not then be false to any man!"*

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*Good advice is very fine,  
From those who think and make it;  
Only one in ninety-nine  
Will ever stop to take it!*

Hamlet and his friends, Horatio and Marcellus, go to the passing place of the Ghost at midnight, and there, to the amazement of Hamlet, he sees the apparition of his father, and exclaims:

*"Angels and ministers of grace defend us!  
Be thou a spirit of health or goblin damned,  
Bring with thee airs from heaven or blasts from hell,  
Be thy intents wicked or charitable,  
Thou comest in such a questionable shape  
That I will speak to thee. I'll call thee Hamlet,  
King, father, royal Dane; O, answer me!  
Let me not burst in ignorance; but tell  
Why thy canonized bones, hearsed in death,  
Have burst their cerements; why thy sepulchre,  
Wherein we saw thee quietly inurned  
Hath opened his ponderous and marble jaws,  
To cast thee up again. What may this mean,  
That thou, dead corse, again, in complete steel,  
Revisit thus the glimpses of the moon,  
Making night hideous; and we fools of nature  
So horridly to shake our disposition  
With thoughts beyond the reaches of our souls?  
Say, why is this? Wherefore? What should we do?"*

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The Ghost passes across the stage and beckons Hamlet to follow, who frantically rushes after the apparition and says:

*"Whither wilt thou lead me? Speak, I'll go no farther."*

Ghost utters in sepulchral voice:

*"Mark me!  
I am thy father's spirit;  
Doomed for a certain term to walk the night,  
And for the day confined to fast in fires  
Till the foul crimes done in my days of nature  
Are burnt and purged away. But that I am forbid  
To tell the secrets of my prison house,  
I could a tale unfold whose lightest words  
Would harrow up thy soul, freeze thy young blood,  
Make thy two eyes, like stars, start from their spheres,  
Thy knotted and confined locks to part  
And each particular hair to stand on end  
Like quills upon the fretful porcupine.*

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*But this eternal blazon must not be  
To ears of flesh and blood. List! list, O list!  
If thou did'st ever thy dear father love,—  
'Tis given out that sleeping in my orchard  
A serpent stung me. So the whole ear of Denmark  
Is by a forged process of my death  
Rankly abused; but know thou, noble youth,  
The serpent that did sting thy father's life  
Now wears his crown!"*

Hamlet exclaims:

*"O my prophetic soul! My uncle!"*

The Ghost then makes this remarkable speech:

*"Ay, that incestuous, that adulterate beast,  
With witchcraft of his wit, with traitorous gifts,  
O wicked wit and gifts, that have the power  
So to seduce! won to his shameful lust  
The will of my most seeming-virtuous queen;  
O, Hamlet, what a falling off was there!  
From me, whose love was of that dignity  
That it went hand in hand even with the vow  
I made to her in marriage; and to decline  
Upon a wretch, whose natural gifts were poor  
To those of mine!  
But virtue, as it never will be moved,  
Though lewdness court it in a shape of heaven,  
So lust, though to a radiant angel linked  
Will sate itself in a celestial bed  
And prey on garbage.  
But, soft! methinks I scent the morning air;  
Brief let me be. Sleeping within my orchard,  
My custom always of the afternoon,  
Upon my secure hour thy uncle stole,  
With juice of cursed hebenon in a vial,  
And in the porches on my ears did pour  
The leperous distilment; whose effect  
Holds such an enmity with blood of man,  
That quick as quicksilver it courses through  
The natural gates and alleys of the body;  
And with a sudden vigour, it doth posset  
And curd, like eager droppings into milk,  
The thin and wholesome blood: So did it mine;  
And a most instant tetter barked about,  
Most lazar-like, with vile and loathsome crust,  
All my smooth body.  
Thus was I sleeping, by a brother's hand,  
Of life, of crown, of queen, at once dispatched;  
Cut off even in the blossoms of my sin,  
Unhoused, disappointed, unaneled;  
No reckoning made, but sent to my account  
With all my imperfections on my head;  
O, horrible! most horrible!  
If thou hast nature in thee, bear it not;  
Let not the royal bed of Denmark be  
A couch for luxury and damned incest.  
But, howsoever, thou pursuest this act,  
Taint not thy mind, nor let thy soul contrive  
Against thy mother aught; leave her to heaven,  
And to those thorns that in her bosom lodge,  
To prick and sting her. Fare thee well at once!  
The glow-worm shows the matin to be near,  
And begins to pale his ineffectual fire!  
Adieu! adieu! adieu! remember me!"*

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As the Ghost ceased and passed off the stage a peculiar shivering cheer passed over the great audience, and revealed for the first time in London dramatic art, a supernatural being seemingly clothed in the habiliments of flesh, blood and bones, resurrected from the tomb.

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*Do spirits revisit this world again  
When they're released from this body of pain,  
And do they inhabit a realm afar  
Beyond the bright sun and sparkling star?*

King Claudius, his queen and Polonius were anxious to get at the real cause of Hamlet's lunacy, and send him away from the castle to prevent future trouble. The guilty conscience of the king daily feared detection.

Hamlet brooded so intently upon the cruel murder of his father that he was constantly on the verge of insanity, devising plans to either slaughter himself or wreak a terrible vengeance upon his uncle and mother.

Treading the halls of his ancestral palace he uttered this transcendent soliloquy that has puzzled the ages:

*"To be or not to be; that is the question;  
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer  
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,  
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,  
And by opposing end them. To die, to sleep;  
No more; and by a sleep to say we end  
The heart-ache, and the thousand natural shocks  
That flesh is heir to, 'tis a consummation  
Devoutly to be wished. To die, to sleep;  
To sleep, perchance to dream; ay, there's the rub;  
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come,  
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,  
Must give us pause; there's the respect  
That makes calamity of so long life;  
For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,  
The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,  
The pangs of despised love, the law's delay,  
The insolence of office, and the spurns—  
That patient merit of the unworthy takes,  
When he himself might his quietus make  
With a bare bodkin? Who would fardels bear,  
To grunt and sweat under a weary life,  
But the dread of something after death  
The undiscovered country from whose bourn  
No traveler returns, puzzles the will,  
And makes us rather bear those ills we have  
Than fly to others that we know not of?  
Thus conscience does make cowards of us all,  
And thus the native hue of resolution  
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,  
And enterprises of great pitch and moment  
With this regard their currents turns awry  
And lose the name of action!"*

[215]

Ophelia at the suggestion of her father and the other conspirators, comes in at this juncture and sounds Hamlet as to plighted love and gives back the gifts he gave her.

Hamlet pretending to madness still talks double and asks Ophelia if she be honest, fair and beautiful.

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She says: "Could beauty, my lord, have better commerce than with honesty?"

Hamlet replies: "Ay, truly, for the power of beauty will sooner transform honesty from what it is to a bawd, than the force of honesty can translate beauty into his likeness; this was sometime a paradox, but now the time gives it proof. I did love you once."

Ophelia says: "Indeed, my lord, you made me believe so."

And then the fickle Hamlet says: "I loved you not," and with supercilious advice, exclaims:

*"Get thee to a nunnery!  
Why would'st thou be a breeder of sinners?  
I am myself indifferent honest;  
But yet I could accuse me of such things  
That it were better my mother had not borne me.  
I am very proud, revengeful, ambitious;  
With more offenses at my back  
Than I have thoughts to put them in;  
Imagination to give them shape,  
Or time to act them in.  
What should such fellows as I do  
Crawling between heaven and earth?  
We are arrant knaves all, believe none of us—  
Go thy ways to a nunnery!  
If thou dost marry, I'll give thee this plague for thy dowry.  
—  
Be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow!*

*Thou shall not escape calumny!  
If thou wilt needs marry, marry a fool;  
For wise men know well enough what monsters women  
make of them!  
Go! get thee to a nunnery!"*

[217]

Hamlet thus plays the madman to the eye and mind of Ophelia, that she may report his lunacy; and believing her former lover deranged, after his exit utters this wail of grief:

*"O, what a noble mind is here o'erthrown!  
The courtier's, soldier's, scholar's eye, tongue, sword;  
The expectancy and rose of the fair state,  
The glass of fashion and the mould of form,  
The observed of all observers, quite, quite down!  
And I, of ladies most deject and wretched,  
That sucked the honey of his music vows,  
Now see that noble and most sovereign reason,  
Like sweet bells jangled, out of tune and harsh;  
That unmatched form and feature of blown youth,  
Blasted with ecstasy: O, woe is me,  
To have seen what I have seen, see what I see."*

The instruction of Hamlet to the players is the most conclusive evidence that William Shakspeare was not only the greatest dramatic author, but an actor and orator of matchless mould.

There was no character that his soul conceived in any of his plays, fool or philosopher, that he could not act better than any man in his company.

In the first rehearsal of his plays he usually read the lines to his men and gave them the cue and philosophy of the character to be enacted.

A few days before the play of Hamlet I heard him deliver this speech for the edification of the whole troupe, that they might know how to render their lines in an effective and oratorical manner:

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*"Speak the speech, I pray you, as I pronounced  
It to you, trippingly on the tongue;  
But if you mouth it, as many of your  
Players do, I had as lief the town-crier,  
Spoke my lines. Now do not saw the air too  
Much with your hand, thus; but use all gently;  
For in the very torrent, tempest, and,  
As I may say, whirlwind of your passion,  
You must acquire and beget a temperance,  
That may give it smoothness. O, it offends  
Me to the soul to hear a robustious  
Periwig-pated fellow, tear a passion  
To tatters, to very rags, to split the  
Ears of the groundlings, who for the most part  
Are capable of nothing, but inexplicable  
Dumb-shows and noise, I would have such a fellow  
Whipped for overdoing Termagant;  
It out-herods Herod; pray you avoid it.  
Be not too tame neither, but let your own  
Discretion be your tutor: suit the action  
To the word, the word to the action;  
With this special observance, that you o'erstep  
Not the modesty of nature; for anything  
So overdone is from the purpose of playing,  
Whose end, both at the first and now, was and is,  
To hold, as 'twere, the mirror up to nature;  
To show virtue her own feature, scorn her  
Own image, and the very age and body  
Of the time his form and pressure.  
Now this, overdone, or come tardy off,  
Though it make the unskilled laugh, cannot but  
Make the judicious grieve; the censure of  
The which one must in your allowance  
Overweigh a whole theatre of others.  
O, there be players that I have seen play,  
And heard others praise, and that highly,  
Not to speak it profanely, that neither  
Having the accent of Christians nor the  
Gait of Christian, pagan, nor man, have so  
Strutted and bellowed, that I have thought*

[219]

*Some of nature's journeymen had made men,  
And not made them well, they imitated  
Humanity so abominably!"*

In all the troubles and vicissitudes of Hamlet's life, young Lord Horatio remained his unfaltering friend; and this tribute to friendship is one of the best in Shakspeare. Hamlet says:

*"Horatio, thou art even as just a man  
As e'er my conversation coped withal,  
Nay, do not think I flatter;  
For what advancement may I hope from thee,  
That no revenue hast but thy good spirits,  
To feed and clothe thee? Why should the poor be  
flattered?  
No, let the candied tongue lick absurd pomp,  
And crook the pregnant hinges of the knee  
Where thrift may follow fawning. Dost thou hear?  
Since my dear soul was mistress of its choice  
And could of men distinguish, her election  
Hath sealed thee for herself; for thou hast been  
As one, in suffering all, that suffers nothing;  
A man that fortune's buffets and rewards  
Hast taken with equal composure; and blest are those  
Whose blood and judgment are so well commingled  
That they are not a pipe for fortune's finger  
To sound what stop she pleases. Give me that man  
That is not passion's slave, and I will wear him  
In my heart's core, ay, in my heart of heart  
As I do thee!"*

[220]

In the dumb show murder play, before the King and Queen Shakspeare puts these phrases in the mouths of the players and Hamlet:

*"The great man down, you mark his favorite flies;  
The poor advanced makes friends of enemies;  
And hitherto doth love on fortune tend;  
For who not needs, shall never lack a friend."*

*"But what's that, your Majesty;  
And we that have free souls, it touches us not;  
Let the galled jade wince, our withers are unwrung!"*

King Claudius frightened at the mock play runs away, and Hamlet says to Horatio:

*"Why let the stricken deer go weep,  
The hart ungalled play;  
For some must watch, while some must sleep  
Thus runs the world away."*

*"'Tis now the very witching time of night,  
When churchyards yawn, and hell itself breathes out  
Contagion to this world; now could I drink hot blood,  
And do such bitter business as the day  
Would quake to look on. Soft, now to my mother;  
I will speak daggers to her, but use none!"*

[221]

King Claudius the night before his death, after conspiring with Polonius for the exile of Hamlet utters this self-accusing, remorseful soliloquy:

*"O, my offense is rank, it smells to heaven;  
It hath the primal, eldest curse upon it—  
A brother's murder. Pray can I not,  
Though inclination be as sharp as will;  
My stronger guilt defeats my strong intent,  
And like a man to double business bound,  
I stand in pause where I shall first begin,  
And both neglect. What if this cursed hand  
Were thicker than itself with brother's blood?  
Is there not rain enough in the sweet heavens  
To wash it white as snow? Whereto serves mercy  
But to confront the visage of offense?  
And what's in prayer but this twofold force,  
To be forestalled ere we come to fall,  
Or pardoned being down? Then I'll look up;  
My fault is past. But O, what form of prayer  
Can serve my turn? Forgive me my foul murder?"*

*That cannot be, since I am still possessed  
Of those effects for which I did the murder,  
My crown, mine own ambition and my queen,  
May one be pardoned and retain the offense?  
In the corrupted currents of this world  
Offense's gilded hand may shove by justice,  
And oft 'tis seen the wicked prize itself  
Buys out the law; but 'tis not so above;  
There, is no shuffling, there, the action lies  
In his true nature, and we ourselves compelled  
Even to the teeth and forehead of our faults  
To give in evidence!"*

[222]

In the midnight interview of Hamlet with his mother, Polonius hides behind a curtain to spy upon the words of the "melancholy Dane," and is killed by a sword thrust of Hamlet, who exclaims:

*"How now! a rat, dead for a ducat."*

Then Hamlet holds his mother to the talk and pours these lines of liquid gall into her trembling ear and frightened heart:

*"Look here, upon this picture, and on this,  
The counterfeit presentment of two brothers.  
See what a grace was seated on this brow;  
Hyperion's curls, the front of Jove himself,  
An eye like Mars, to threaten and command;  
A station like the herald Mercury  
New-lighted on a heaven-kissing hill;  
A combination and a form indeed,  
Where every god did seem to set his seal  
To give the world assurance of a man;  
This was your husband. Look you now,  
What follows:  
Here is your husband: like a mildewed ear,  
Blasting his wholesome brother. Have you eyes?  
Could you on this fair mountain leave to feed,  
And batten on this foul moor?  
Your husband; a murderer and a villain;  
A slave that is not twentieth part the tithe  
Of your precedent lord; a vice of kings;  
A cutpurse of the empire and the rule,  
That from a shelf the precious diadem stole  
And put it in his pocket!  
A king of shreds and patches!"*

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King Claudius, alarmed at the death of Polonius and his own guilty state, conspires with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to take Hamlet to England and get rid of him, saying:

*"Follow him at foot; tempt him with speed abroad,  
Delay it not; I'll have him hence to-night;  
Away! for everything is sealed and done  
That else leans on the affair; pray you, make haste!"*

Hamlet before retiring thus bemoans his slowness in wreaking a just vengeance upon his murderer uncle:

*"How all occasions do inform against me,  
And spur my dull revenge! What is a man,  
If his chief good and market of his time  
Be but to sleep and feed? a beast, no more.  
Sure, he that made us with such large discourse  
Looking before and after, gave us not  
That capability and god-like reason  
To rot in us unused.  
Rightly to be great  
Is not to stir without great argument;  
But greatly to find quarrel in a straw  
When honor's at the stake. How stand I then,  
That have a father killed, a mother stained,  
Excitements of my reason and my blood,  
And let all sleep, while to my shame I see  
The imminent death of twenty thousand men,  
That for a fantasy and trick of fame  
Go to their graves like beds, fight for a plot  
Whereon the numbers cannot try the cause,*

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*Which is not tomb enough and continent  
To hide the slain? O, from this time forth,  
My thoughts be bloody or nothing worth!"*

The beautiful Ophelia becomes insane after her father's death, and wanders about the castle singing disjointed love songs and uttering musings.

Queen Gertrude says:

*"How now, Ophelia?"*

She sings:

*"How should I your true love know  
From another one?  
By his cockle hat and staff  
And his sandal shoon."*

The king asks:

*"How do you do, pretty lady?"*

She replies:

*"They say the owl was a banker's daughter;  
Lord, we know what we are, but know not what we may  
be."*

Laertes returns from France and finds his sister insane from grief over the loss of her father, and viewing this innocent wreck parading palace halls, exclaims:

*"Dear maid, kind sister, sweet Ophelia!  
O heavens! is it possible a young maid's wits  
Should be as mortal as an old man's life?"*

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Ophelia unconsciously sings:

*"They bore him barefaced on the bier;  
Hey no nonny, nonny hey nonny;  
And in his grave rained many a tear—  
Fare you well, my dove!"*

Holding a spray of flowers in her hands she fitfully plucks them and murmurs:

*"There's rosemary, that's for remembrance;  
Pray you, love, remember;  
And there is pansies, that's for thoughts;  
There's fennel for you, and columbines;  
There's rue for you, and here's some for me;  
We may call it herb of grace on Sunday;  
O, you must wear your rue with a difference.  
There's a daisy; I would give you some violets—  
But they withered all when my father died!"*

Hamlet and his party in sailing for England encounter a war-like pirate ship, and in the fight and grapple Hamlet alone is taken prisoner and his keepers go to destruction.

He suddenly appears at Elsinore, and goes to the churchyard, where a grave is being prepared for Ophelia, who was drowned in a garden stream in her mad ramblings.

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Hamlet converses philosophically with the grave diggers about the bones, skulls and greatness of a politician, courtier, lady, lawyer, tanner; and when the skull of the old king's jester is thrown out of the grave after a sleep of twenty-three years, Hamlet, speaking to Horatio, says:

*"Alas, poor Yorick, I knew him, Horatio;  
A fellow of infinite jest, of most  
Excellent fancy, he hath borne me  
On his back a thousand times, and now  
How abhorred in my imagination  
It is! my gorge rises at it. Here hung  
Those lips that I have kissed, I know not  
How oft. Where be your gibes now, your gambols?  
Your songs? Your flashes of merriment,  
That were wont to set the table in a roar?  
Not one now, to mock your own grinning!  
Quite chop-fallen? Now get you to my lady's chamber,  
And tell her, let her paint an inch thick,  
To this favor she must come;*

*Make her laugh at that!"*

The funeral procession with the corpse of Ophelia now appears, Laertes, King, Queen, train, and priests attending.

The priests tell Laertes that were it not for "great command" his sister's body "should in ground unsanctified have lodged till the last trumpet," because of alleged suicide.

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Laertes peremptorily says:

*"Lay her in the earth  
And from her fair and unpolluted flesh  
May violets spring! I tell thee, churlish priest,  
A ministering angel shall my sister be  
When thou liest howling in perdition."*

Laertes and Hamlet, both overpowered with frantic grief, leap into the new-made grave and struggle for precedence of affection, the former exclaiming:

*"Now pile your dust upon the quick and dead,  
Till of this flat a mountain you have made  
To o'ertop old Pelion or the skyish head  
Of blue Olympus!"*

Hamlet, replying to the King, Queen and Laertes, says:

*"I loved Ophelia; forty thousand brothers,  
Could not, with all their quantity of love  
Make up my sum:  
And, if thou prate of mountains, let them throw  
Millions of acres on us, till our ground  
Singeing his pate against the burning zone  
Make Ossa like a wart!"*

Hamlet tells his friend, Horatio, how on his voyage to England he discovered that King Claudius gave commission to his enemies to send his head to the block. Hamlet says:

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*"Our indiscretion sometimes serves us well,  
When our deep plots do pall; and that should teach us  
There's a Divinity that shapes our ends,  
Rough-hew them how we will."*

King Claudius seeing no other way to get rid of Hamlet, consults his secret courtiers and brews up the passion existing between Laertes and himself, proposing that they fence with rapiers for a great prize, the King betting that in twelve passes of swords Laertes makes not three hits on Hamlet.

The grand contest for excellence in sword-play comes off in the main hall of the palace, while the King, Queen, lords and courtiers await the entrance of Hamlet.

The rapier point handed by the King to Laertes, was dipped in deadly poison, so that it but touch the flesh of Hamlet certain death prevailed, and even of the wine cups set on the table to quench the thirst of the artistic fencers, one was poisoned and intended for Hamlet's dissolution.

Laertes was in the poison plot, and Hamlet felt in his soul that foul play was intended, but in the general scramble and conclusion he hoped to wipe off the score of his vengeance from the slate of royal iniquity and slaughter.

Trumpet and cannon sound for beginning the sword contest.

First passes favored Hamlet, and the King, grasping the poison wine cup, says:

*"Hamlet, this pearl is thine;  
Here's to thy health!"* (Offering him the cup.)

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Hamlet replies:

*"Give Laertes the cup,  
I'll play this bout first; set it by a while."*

Hamlet makes another pass and touches Laertes, and the Queen grasps the poison cup in her excitement and drinks to her son.

The King impulsively says:

*"Gertrude, do not drink!"* (Aside) *"It is the  
poisoned cup!"*

The Queen, as God and Fate would have it, says stubbornly:

*"I will, my lord, I pray you pardon me!"*

In the third round Laertes wounds Hamlet with the poisoned-pointed rapier, and in the struggle Hamlet grasps Laertes' rapier and in turn wounds his antagonist.

At this moment the Queen falls off her throne, and dying, says to Hamlet:

*"O, my dear Hamlet; the drink, the drink; I  
am poisoned!"*

Laertes then falls, and Hamlet, seeing through the plot, exclaims:

*"O, villainy! Ho! let the door be locked;  
Treachery! seek it out!"*

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Laertes makes the dying confession of his treachery:

*"It is here, Hamlet; Hamlet, thou art slain;  
No medicine in the world can do thee good,  
In thee there is not half an hour of life;  
The treacherous instrument is in thy hand,  
Unbated and envenomed; the foul practice  
Hath turned itself on me, lo, here I lie,  
Never to rise again; thy mother's poisoned;  
I can no more; the King, the King is to blame!"*

Then Hamlet, as a lion rushing on his prey, exclaims:

*"The point envenomed too,  
Then, venom, to thy work."  
(Stabs the King.)*

The King falls and says: "I am but hurt"; while Hamlet grasps the poisoned cup of wine and dashes it down the throat of the guilty monster, exclaiming:

*"Here, thou incestuous, murderous, damned Dane,  
Drink off this potion: is thy union here?—  
Follow my mother!" (King dies.)*

Laertes' last words:

*"The King is justly served;  
Exchange forgiveness with me, noble Hamlet."*

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Hamlet replies:

*"Heaven make thee free of it! I follow thee.  
I am dead, Horatio. Wretched Queen, adieu!  
You that look pale and tremble at this chance,  
That are but mutes or audience to this act,  
Had I but time,—as this fell sergeant—Death,  
Is strict in his arrest—O, I could tell you—  
But let it be. Horatio, I am dead!  
Thou livest; report me and my cause aright  
To the unsatisfied.  
O, I die, Horatio;  
The potent poison quite o'ercrows my spirit,  
I cannot live to hear the news from England;  
But I do prophesy the election lights  
On Fortinbras; he has my dying voice;  
So tell him, with the occurrents, more and less,  
Which have solicited. The rest is silence!" (Dies.)*

And then to close the scene of slaughter, the noble and faithful Horatio, bending over the body of his princely friend, exclaims:

*"Now cracks a noble heart; Good night, sweet prince,  
And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest!"*

Such tumultuous applause I never heard in a theatre, and shouts for "The Ghost" and "Hamlet" prevailed until William and Burbage came from behind the curtain and made a triple bow to the audience as the clock in the tower of Saint Paul struck the midnight hour.

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*The lesson in great Hamlet taught,  
Is that a throne is dearly bought  
By lawless love and bloody deeds,  
Which fester like corrupted weeds,  
And smell to heaven with poison breath*



*Involving all in certain death.  
For fraud and murder can't be hid  
Since Eve and Cain did what they did  
And left us naked through the world,  
Like meteors in midnight hurled,  
To darkle in this trackless sphere,  
Not knowing what we're doing here!*

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## CHAPTER XVII.

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### DEATH OF QUEEN ELIZABETH. CORONATION OF KING JAMES.

*"All that lives must die,  
Passing through nature to eternity."*

*"Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown."*

*"What have kings that privates have not too,  
Save ceremony?"*

The New Year of sixteen hundred and three brought no consolation or happiness to Queen Elizabeth. Her reign of forty-four years had been bloody, but patriotic; and while she had long since passed the noonday of her glory, her sunset of life hastened to its setting with a fevered brain and tortured heart, to think that she had not one real friend living, but surrounded by cunning courtiers, who were already manipulating for the favor and patronage of King James.

*Like a blasted pine on a mountain peak,  
She moaned and sighed every day and week;  
Awaiting the deadly, stormy gust  
That laid her low in the crumbling dust.*

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To amuse her lingering hours of grief Lord Cecil desired the Shakspeare Company to give its new version of "Love's Labor's Lost" before the Queen in the grand reception hall at Richmond.

Burbage went to the castle and made all the preliminary preparations for the play, and on the night of the second of February, 1603, the fantastic love play was given for the amusement of the Virgin Queen. She sat in regal solitude, and with mock laughter tried to enjoy the mimic show.

The royal audience was great in rank, beauty, wealth and intellect, yet through the various scenes of the light-hearted drama, Elizabeth only swung her head, muttered and sighed, while her courtiers evinced great amusement at the predicament of the various lovers in the play. Nothing can minister to a mind diseased.

The Queen professed great disappointment at the absence of Shakspeare from the performance—"on account of sickness," as Burbage told her Royal Highness. But William and myself remained at our rooms at Temple Bar that evening working on the first draughts of "Macbeth" to catch the praise and patronage of King James, the Scotch-Englishman.

Since the execution of Essex and imprisonment of Southampton Shakspeare never said a word in praise of Elizabeth, and when he heard of her death on the 26th of March, 1603, he betrayed no feeling of grief, but on the contrary, expressed delight that the way was now clear for the release of Southampton and other victims of Elizabeth from the Tower.

Several weeks before her death Elizabeth was afflicted with a choking sensation, and the ghosts of her murdered sister—Mary, Queen of Scots, and her former lover, the beheaded Earl of Essex, appeared nightly.

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Cecil asked her a few days before she died how she felt, when she muttered, "My lord, I am tied with a chain of iron about my neck."

Thus a cruel, bloody conscience sat like a fiend over her dying sighs and groans, and though surrounded with the wealth and glory of the world, the Virgin Queen stepped into eternity with only the memory of a successful tyrant to light her to the Pluto realms of her father, King Henry the Eighth!

Her funeral procession and burial in Westminster Abbey was the grandest exhibition of royal pomp and magnificence. The whole population seemed to fill all the alleys, streets and parks of the great city, with the army and navy leading the funeral cortege, while the great bells from steeple, tower and temple rang out their periodical wail of sonorous sounds for twenty-four hours.

The body of Elizabeth had been scarcely cold in death when Lord Cecil and the Royal Council proclaimed James of Scotland, King of England, Ireland, Scotland and France, tumbling over each other in a mad race to throw themselves prostrate before the rising sun, forgetting in a day the honors and benefactions showered upon them for forty years by their late mistress.

*And thus we see from age to age,  
The greed of man on every page;  
No matter whether young or old,  
His strife in life is search for gold!*

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King James left Edinburgh on the 5th of April with a royal escort for London, and by easy stage from town to town and castle to castle, made a triumphal march to London, where he arrived on the 7th of May, 1603, putting up at the Whitehall Palace. The lords of the realm and millions of faithful subjects gave James their loyal adhesion and support, lauding him to the skies as monarch of the realm and defender of the Faith. Hope had no thorns in her crown.

Protestants and Catholics alike, on their first rush of spontaneous patriotism, made a bid for the patronage of the new king, who, although reared a Protestant, was known to have sympathy for certain Catholic lords, who tried to save his mother—Mary, Queen of Scots, from the fatal block. James never forgave Elizabeth for the murder of his mother, and in his inmost heart despised his predecessor.

King James after his coronation and triumphal entry into London on the 15th of March, 1604, ordered a partial jail delivery, releasing hundreds of prisoners in Scotland, Ireland and England, exempting only highway and house robbers, murderers, and those who had committed overt acts of treason against the crown.

Many political prisoners had been immured in the Tower and other state prisons on trivial or trumped up charges, preferred by jealous courtiers on personal or religious grounds.

James was very friendly to the dramatic profession, and granted a charter to the Shakspeare Company to play at the Blackfriars, Globe, Prince, Fortune and Curtain theatres.

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In the coronation procession nine of the "Kings Company" appeared dressed out in fantastic array, wearing four yards and a half each of silk-scarlet cloth.

The nine chief actors thus honored by the King were William Shakspeare, Augustine Phillips, Laurence Fletcher, John Hemmings, William Sley, Robert Armin, Henry Condell, Richard Cowley and Richard Burbage.

King James sent for Shakspeare and Burbage and told them to be ever in readiness as the King's servants to perform at any of the palaces that he might entertain domestic or foreign guests, and assured them that the puritanical policy that had hounded them in the past should not prevail during his reign, believing that the stage, properly managed, was as great an educator for the people as the church.

When William told me of this interview with the King I expressed great delight, with the other literary bohemians that now there sat on the throne of old Albion, a patron of poetry, painting, music and sculpture.

The Church of Rome and the Church of England had been battling for nearly a hundred years in Britain for the mastery; and although the devotees of Luther's Reformation had cracked the creed of popes and princes, there was a general demand for a new version and translation of the Bible, cutting out the Catholicism of the old book and expurgating the vulgarity and superstition engrafted on the "Word of God" by the apostles and bishops of the first, second and third centuries, after Christ had been crucified for the sins of all mankind.

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Curious kind of celestial justice, to kill any man for my sins and crimes? I prefer to suffer for my own sins and not fall back on a "scapegoat" to carry them off into the wilderness.

On the first of September, 1604, a great religious conclave was held at Hampton Court by the established church and the Puritans, and there it was determined to make a new, revised and complete edition of the Bible, by the royal authority of King James.

On the first of May, 1607, forty-seven of the most learned men of the British realm assembled in three parties at Oxford, Cambridge and Westminster to make a new Bible for the guidance of mankind. Hebrew, Greek and Latin scholars made up the great conclave; and after four years of detailed labor the King James edition of the Bible was published to the world, cutting loose forever from the power of Rome.

Although the "Word of God" has been revised several times since by man there are yet a large number of sentences and verses in the Old and New Testament that might be expurgated in the interest of decency, reason and science.

This electric age is too rapid and wise to gulp down the obsolete doctrine of ancient fanaticism, and the preachers of to-day are painfully alarmed at the decreasing number of pewholders and patrons, who once listened to their rigmarole platitudes or eloquent dissertations on the power and locution of an unknown God.

On Christmas Eve, 1607, the "King's Players," with Shakspeare and Burbage in the respective rôles of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, produced that great historical play at the grand reception room of Whitehall, in the presence of King James and the nobles of his court, surrounded by the ministers and diplomats from all the civilized nations of the world.

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I never saw a grander audience, interspersed with the most beautiful ladies of the world, who shone in their jewels and diamonds like a field of variegated wild flowers, besprinkled with the

morning dew.

The witches in the play seemed to startle the King, and more than ever convince him that these inhabitants of earth and air were all of a reality, and should be destroyed wherever found, believing that they held the destiny of man in the caldron of their incantations.

*"Come, come, you spirits  
That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here;  
And fill me from the crown to the toe, top full  
Of direst cruelty! Make thick my blood,  
Stop up the access and passage to remorse;  
That no compunctious visitings of nature  
Shake my fell purpose, nor keep peace between  
The effect and it! Come to my woman's breasts,  
And take my milk for gall, you murdering ministers,  
Wherever in your sightless substances  
You wait on nature's mischief; come, thick night,  
And pall thee in the dunnest smoke of hell!  
That my keen knife see not the wound it makes;  
Nor heaven peep through the blanket of the dark!"*

This speech of the devilish Lady Macbeth made a deep impression on the audience, and caused the King to squirm in his throne chair at the contemplation of the murder of Duncan, but when William entered as Macbeth and rendered the following speech James wished himself a million miles away, and yet applauded to the echo the murdering thoughts of the Scottish chieftain:

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*"If it were done, when 'tis done, then 'twere well  
It were done quickly. If the assassination  
Could trammel up the consequence, and catch,  
With his surcease, success; that but this blow  
Might be the be-all and the end-all here,  
But here, upon this bank and shoal of time,—  
We'd jump the life to come; but, in these cases  
We still have judgment here; that we but teach  
Bloody instructions, which being taught, return  
To plague the inventor. This evenhanded justice  
Commends the ingredients of our poisoned chalice,  
To our own lips. He's here in double trust;  
First as I am his kinsman and his subject,  
Strong both against the deed; then, as his host,  
Who should against his murderer shut the door,  
Not bear the knife himself. Besides, this Duncan  
Hath born his faculties so meek, hath been  
So clear in his great office, that his virtues  
Will plead like angels, trumpet-tongued, against  
The deep damnation of his taking off;  
And pity, like a naked new-born babe,  
Striding the blast, or heaven's cherubim, horsed  
Upon the sightless coursers of the air,  
Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye,  
That tears shall drown the wind; I have no spur  
To prick the sides of my intent, but only  
Vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself,  
And falls on the other!"*

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Still brooding on the murder of Duncan, Macbeth says:

*"Is this a dagger which I see before me,  
The handle towards my hand? Come, let me clutch thee;  
I have thee not, and yet I see thee still,  
Art thou not, fatal vision, sensible  
To feeling as to sight? Or art thou but  
A dagger of the mind; a false creation,  
Proceeding from the heat oppressed brain?  
I see thee yet in form as palpable  
As this which now I draw.  
Thou marshal'st me the way that I was going;  
And such an instrument I was to use.  
Mine eyes are made the fools of the other senses,  
Or else worth all the rest; I see thee still;  
And on thy blade and handle, gouts of blood,  
Which was not so before, there's no such thing;  
It is the bloody business, which informs  
Thus to mine eyes, now o'er the one-half world  
Nature seems dead, and wicked dreams abuse  
The curtained sleeper; now witchcraft celebrates*

*Pale Hecate's offerings, and withered murder  
Alarmed by his sentinel, the wolf,  
Whose howl's his watch, thus with his stealthy pace  
With Tarquin's ravishing strides, towards his design  
Moves like a ghost. Thou sure and firm-set earth  
Hear not my steps, which way they walk, for fear  
The very stones prate of my whereabouts,  
And take the present horror from the time,  
Which now suits with it. While I threat, he lives,  
Words to the heat of deeds too cold breath gives;  
I go and it is done; the bell invites me.  
Hear it not, Duncan; for it is a knell  
That summons thee to heaven or to hell!"*

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After the murder of Duncan, Lady Macbeth is constantly haunted with the ghost of her victim, and in midnight hours, sick at soul, walks in her sleep, talking of her bloody deed:

*"Out damned spot! out I say!  
Here's the smell of the blood still;  
All the perfumes of Arabia  
Will not sweeten this little hand!"*

And then retiring to her purple couch, amidst the cries of her waiting woman, she dies with insane groans echoing through her castle halls.

Macbeth, the pliant, cowardly, ambitious tool of his wicked wife, is at last surrounded by Macduff and his soldiers, and informed that his lady is dead.

And then soliloquizing on time and life, he utters these philosophic phrases:

*"She should have died hereafter;  
There would have been a time for such a word;  
To-morrow; and to-morrow, and to-morrow  
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,  
To the last syllable of recorded time;  
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools  
The way to dusty death. Out, out brief candle!  
Life's but a walking shadow; a poor player,  
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,  
And then is heard no more. It is a tale,  
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury—  
Signifying nothing!"*

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And then, in the forest in front of the castle Macbeth is at last brought to bay and killed by Macduff; but the murderer of Duncan, brave to the last, exclaims:

*"Yet I will try the last; before my body  
I throw my warlike shield; lay on Macduff,  
And damned be him that first cries, Hold, enough!"*

A whirlwind of applause echoed through the royal halls at the conclusion of the great Scotch historical drama, and Shakspeare was loudly called before the footlights, making a general bow to the audience, and paying deep, low courtesy to the King, who beckoned him to the throne chair, and placed about his neck a heavy golden chain with a miniature of His Majesty attached. William was glorified.

*"Murder, though it have no tongue, will speak  
With most miraculous organ!"*

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## CHAPTER XVIII.

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### SHAKSPERE AS MONOLOGIST. KING JAMES.

*"He lives in fame that died in virtue's cause."*

*"The king-becoming graces  
Are justice, verity, temperance, stableness,  
Bounty, perseverance, mercy, lowliness,  
Devotion, patience, courage, fortitude."*

Shakspeare became a prime favorite of King James, and occasionally he entertained the Bard at Whitehall Palace, introducing him to the bishops, cardinals and lords, who were interested in the revision of the Bible. They were astonished at the detailed knowledge of Shakspeare, touching the

"Word of God;" and when he entered into a dissertation of the Hebrew, Greek and Latin philosophers and "divines" who concocted the history of the ancients, they marveled at his native erudition.

These modern preachers had been educated and empurpled in the classical ruts of ancient superstitious divinity, while William communed with immediate nature, and taught lessons of virtue and vice on the dramatic stage that impresses the rushing world, far more than dictatorial dogmas or pulpit platitudes.

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Shakspeare was a constant searcher of all religious bibles, and particularly pondered on the Christian story of the creation, prophecies, crucifixion and revelation. Paganism was the advanced guard of Christianity!

Monks, priests, preachers, bishops, cardinals, popes, princes, kings, emperors and czars had exercised their minds and hands as commentators on the old philosophy of an unknown God; and William saw no reason why he should not extract from or paraphrase the best logical phrases and sentences of the Bible.

His sonnets and plays are filled with the hidden meaning of the scriptures, and those who read closely and delve deeply into the works of the Bard of Avon will need no better moral teacher. His axioms and epigrams are used to-day as the proverbial philosophy of practical life, and the whole world is indebted to the sons of a carpenter and a butcher for the greatest pleasure and philosophy that has ever been enunciated on the globe!

The years 1611, 1612 and 1613 found William at the pinnacle of his dramatic glory, and like a ripe philosopher he finished his most thoughtful plays, "Timon of Athens," "A Winter's Tale," "Antony and Cleopatra," "Pericles," "Cymbeline," "Henry the Eighth," and his cap sheaf in the grain field of thought, "The Tempest."

The constant intellectual labor of Shakspeare began to tell on his body, but his mind like a slumbering volcano, emitted flashes of heat and light, irradiating the midnight of literary mediocrity and gilding his declining days with golden flashes of fame and fortune.

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He sold his interest in the Blackfriars and Globe theatres, and purchased property in London and Stratford, making every preparation as a wise and thrifty man for himself and his children and family. William ever kept an eye on the glint and glory of gold, and while his bohemian theatrical companions were squandering their shillings at midnight taverns with "belles and beaux" he "put money in his purse," and kept it there.

*Gold is power everywhere;  
Best of friends in toil and care;  
And it surely will outwear  
Royal purple here or there!*

King James, in searching for an alliance to strengthen his throne by a marriage with his beautiful and brainy daughter, Elizabeth, finally hit upon the Elector Frederick, Count Palatine of Germany, and in the spring of 1613 all the loyal nobility of England were delighted that a matrimonial alliance had been made with a Protestant prince.

While King James lent his official power to the Protestant religion and aided the Reformation in its rapid encroachments upon the papal power of Rome, he socially and clandestinely gave ear to the priests, bishops and cardinals of the Catholic church.

The ceremonials incident to the marriage of Frederick and Elizabeth were splendid in the songs, dances, masques, parades, fireworks, and dramatic entertainments at Whitehall.

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Whitehall.  
Feb 14, 1613.  
To Wm. Shakspeare.  
Our Royal Orkinatic Post.  
Great Sir;  
You will appear this evening  
at seven oclock, at Whitehall,  
to entertain, by monologue, at  
nuptial banquet, three thousand  
guests.  
James By.

A dozen of the most appropriate plays of Shakspeare were enacted before the nobility of the realm; and the diplomatic corps from foreign lands were greatly charmed by the magnificence of the theatrical displays.

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The King spent one hundred thousand dollars in the palace and London festivities of the

marriage of his beautiful daughter, and he secretly pawned his word and jewels to secure the ready cash.

As an intellectual climax to the splendid, royal nuptials, King James invited to the wedding banquet three thousand of the most noted men and women of the world and informed his guests that at the conclusion of the feast the most wonderful dramatic artist of the age—William Shakspeare, would recite in monologue from his own plays rare bits of philosophic eloquence.

The benevolent reader will be glad to know and see that I have carefully preserved the following autographic note of His Majesty King James, inviting William to the wedding banquet:

"WHITEHALL, Feb. 14th, 1613.

"To WILLIAM SHAKSPERE,  
"Our Royal Dramatic Poet.

"GREAT SIR: You will appear this evening at seven o'clock,  
at Whitehall, to entertain by monologue, at nuptial  
banquet, three thousand guests.

"JAMES, Rex."

The Archbishop of Canterbury tied the nuptial knot. The bride and groom, arrayed in white satin and German purple, respectively, looked magnificent as they knelt at the palace altar to receive the final blessing of the Episcopal Church amid the glorious greetings of wealth and power.

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Fourteen salutes from the royal artillery in honor of Frederick and Elizabeth and St. Valentine's Day, echoed from the heights of Whitehall, and carrier pigeons with love notes were sent flying over the temples, churches and towers of London to notify all loyal subjects that the throne of old Albion had been strengthened by an infusion of Germanic blood.

Promptly at seven o'clock St. Valentine's evening, Richard Burbage, Ben Jonson, Shakspeare and myself drove up in our festooned carriage to the palace portals of Whitehall, and were ushered into the presence of the great assembly doing honor to the royal bride and groom, Frederick and Elizabeth.

The King sat on a throne chair at the head of the banquet board, with his daughter and son-in-law on his left, while the Queen sat on his right.

The other royal guests were seated according to their ancestral rank, while our dramatic quartette occupied a special table, William at the head on the right of the King and Queen, elevated as an improvised stage, with Shakspeare, the most intellectual man of the world, "the observed of all observers!"

The play of knife and fork, laugh and jest, toast and talk lasted for two hours, and then as the foam on the brim of the beakers began to sparkle, the King, in his royal robes arose, and said:

"My loyal subjects, health and prosperity to Great Britain and Germany, and love and truth for Frederick and Elizabeth."

The three thousand guests standing responded with a storm of cheers, and then the King remarked:

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"We are honored to-night by the presence of William Shakspeare, our most loyal and intellectual subject, who will now address you in logic and philosophy from his own matchless plays."

(Lord Bacon looked as if he wanted to crawl under the table at the King's compliment to the Bard of Avon.)

Shakspeare arose, dressed in a dark purple suit, knee breeches and short sword by his side, bowed majestically, and for two hours entranced the royal assembly with these eloquent pen pictures of humanity:

*My good friends;  
I'll skip across the fields of thought  
And pluck for you the sweetest flowers,  
That I have from Dame Nature caught  
To cheer the lingering, leaden hours.  
While vice and virtue side by side  
Go hand in hand adown the years,  
Virtue alone, remains the bride  
To banish all our falling tears;  
And here to-night like stars above  
These flowers of beauty blush and bloom—  
Commanding honest human love,—  
Immortal o'er the voiceless tomb!*

Othello thus defends himself against the charge of bewitching Desdemona:

*"Most potent, grave and reverend signiors,  
My very noble and approved good masters,*

*That I have taken away this old man's daughter,  
It is most true; true, I have married her;  
The very head and front of my offending  
Hath this extent, no more. Rude am I in speech,  
And little blessed with the set phrase of peace;  
For since these arms of mine had seven years' pith,  
Till now some nine moons wasted, they have used  
Their dearest action in the tented field;  
And little of this great world can I speak,  
More than pertains to feats of broil and battle;  
And therefore, little shall I grace my cause  
In speaking for myself; yet, by your gracious patience  
I will a round unvarnished tale deliver  
Of my whole course of love; what drugs, what charms,  
What conjuration, and what mighty magic,  
(For such proceeding I am charged withal)  
I won his daughter with!"*

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*"Her father loved me, oft invited me;  
Still questioned me the story of my life,  
From year to year; the battles, sieges, fortunes  
That I have passed.  
I ran it through, even from my boyish days,  
To the very moment that he bade me tell it.  
Wherein I spoke of most disastrous chances  
Of moving accidents, by food and field;  
Of hair-breadth 'scapes, the imminent deadly breach;  
Of being taken by the insolent foe,  
And sold to slavery; of my redemption thence  
And demeanor in my travel's history;  
Wherein of caverns vast and deserts idle,  
Rough quarries, rocks and hills whose heads touch  
heaven,*

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*It was my hint to speak, such was the process  
And of the cannibals that each other eat,  
The anthropophagi, and men whose heads  
Do grow beneath their shoulders. These things to hear  
Would Desdemona seriously incline;  
But still the house affairs would draw her thence;  
Which ever as she could with haste despatch,  
She'd come again, and with a greedy ear  
Devour up my discourse; which I observing  
Took once a pliant hour; and found good means  
To draw from her a prayer of earnest heart,  
That I would all my pilgrimage dilate  
Whereof by parcels she had something heard,  
But not intentively; I did consent;  
And often did beguile her of her tears,  
When I did speak of some distressful stroke  
That my youth suffered. My story being done  
She gave me for my pains a world of sighs;  
She swore—in faith, 'twas strange, 'twas passing strange;  
'Twas pitiful; 'twas wondrous pitiful;  
She wished she had not heard it; yet she wished,  
That heaven had made her such a man, she thanked me,  
And bade me, if I had a friend that loved her,  
I should but teach him how to tell my story,  
And that would woo her. Upon this hint, I spake;  
She loved me for the dangers I had passed;  
And I loved her that she did pity them.  
This only is the witchcraft I have used,  
Here comes the lady, let her witness it!"*

[254]

Timon of Athens, a wealthy, spendthrift lord, becomes bankrupt by his generous entertainment of friends, but maddened by their ingratitude, retires to a forest cave by the sea, giving this parting curse to the people of Athens, and later scattering gold among a band of thieves. Hear the self-ruined epicure:

*"Let me look back upon thee, O thou wall  
That girdlest in those wolves! Dive in the earth,  
And fence not Athens! Matrons turn incontinent!  
Obedience fail in children! Slaves and fools,  
Pluck the grave, wrinkled senate from the bench  
And minister in their steads! To general filths  
Convert of the instant, green virginity!"*

*Do it in your parents' eyes! Bankrupts, hold fast;  
 Rather than render back, out with your knives,  
 And cut your trusters' throats! bound servants steal!  
 Large-handed robbers your grave masters are;  
 And kill by law! maid, to thy master's bed;  
 Thy mistress is of the brothel! son of sixteen,  
 Pluck the lined crutch from the old, limping sire;  
 With it beat out his brains! piety, and fear  
 Religion to the Gods, peace, justice, truth,  
 Domestic awe, night-rest, and neighborhood,  
 Instruction, manners, mysteries, and trades,  
 Decrees, observances, customs and laws,  
 Decline to your confounding contraries,  
 And yet confusion live! Plagues incident to men,  
 Your potent and infectious fevers heap  
 On Athens, ripe for stroke! thou cold sciatica,  
 Cripple our senators, that their limbs may halt  
 As lamely as their manners! lust and liberty  
 Creep in the minds and marrows of your youth;  
 That 'gainst the stream of virtue they may strive,  
 And drown themselves in riot! itches, blains,  
 Sow all the Athenian blossoms; and their crop  
 Be general leprosy! Breath infect breath;  
 That their society, as their friendship, may  
 Be merely poison! Nothing I'll bear from thee,  
 But nakedness, thou detestable town!*

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*You must eat men. Yet thanks I must you con,  
 That you are thieves professed; that you work not  
 In holier shapes; for there is boundless theft  
 In legal professions. Rascal thieves;  
 Here's gold; go, suck the subtle blood of the grape,  
 Till the high fever seethe your blood to froth  
 And so 'scape hanging; trust not the physician;  
 His antidotes are poison, and he slays  
 More than you rob; take wealth and lives together;  
 Do villainy, do, since you profess to do it,  
 Like workmen. I'll example you with thievery;  
 The sun's a thief, and with his great attraction  
 Robs the vast sea; the moon's an arrant thief,  
 And her pale fire she snatches from the sun;  
 The sea's a thief, whose liquid surges resolves  
 The moon into salt tears; the earth's a thief,  
 That feeds and breeds by a composture stolen  
 From general excrement; each thing's a thief;  
 The laws, your curb and whip, in their rough power  
 Have unchecked theft! Love not yourselves; away—  
 Rob one another! There's more gold; cut-throats;  
 All that you meet are thieves! To Athens, go,  
 Break open shops! Nothing can you steal  
 But thieves do lose it!"*

[256]

Jaques, in the forest of Arden, discourses to the exiled Duke of the fools of fortune, and the nature of man.

*"A fool, a fool!—I met a fool in the forest  
 A motley fool;—a miserable world!  
 As I do live by food, I met a fool;  
 Who laid him down and basked him in the sun,  
 And railed on Lady Fortune in good terms.  
 In good set terms,—and yet a motley fool.  
 Good morrow, fool, quoth I. No, sir, quoth he,  
 Call me not fool, till heaven hath sent me fortune;  
 And then he drew a dial from his poke;  
 And looking on it with lack-luster eye  
 Says very wisely: It is ten o'clock;  
 Thus may we see, quoth he, how the world wags;  
 'Tis but an hour ago since it was nine;  
 And after an hour more, 'twill be eleven;  
 And so from hour to hour, we ripe and ripe,  
 And then from hour to hour, we rot and rot,  
 And thereby hangs a tale! When I did hear  
 The motley fool thus moral on the time,  
 My lungs began to crow like chanticleer,  
 That fools should be so deep contemplative;*



*And I did laugh sans intermission,  
An hour by his dial. O noble fool!  
A worthy fool! Motley is the only wear!"*

*"All the world's a stage,  
And all the men and women merely players;  
They have their exits, and their entrances;  
And one man in his time plays many parts,  
His acts being seven ages. At first, the infant,  
Mewling and pewking in the nurse's arms;  
And then the whining school boy, with his satchel,  
And shining, morning face, creeping like a snail  
Unwilling to school; and then the lover,  
Sighing like furnace, with a woeful ballad  
Made to his mistress' eyebrow; then a soldier;  
Full of strange oaths and bearded like the pard,  
Jealous in honor, sudden and quick in quarrel,  
Seeking the bubble reputation  
Even in the cannon's mouth; and then the justice;  
In fair, round belly, with good capon lined,  
With eyes severe and beard of formal cut,  
Full of wise saws and modern instances,  
And so, he plays his part. The sixth age shifts  
Into the lean and slippered pantaloon;  
With spectacles on nose, and pouch on side;  
His youthful hose well saved, a world too wide  
For his shrunk shank; and his big, manly voice,  
Turning again toward childish treble, pipes  
And whistles in his sound; Last scene of all  
That ends this strange, eventful history  
In second childishness, and mere oblivion;  
Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything!"*

[258]

In "Measure for Measure" the brave Duke, the pure Isabella and cowardly Claudio discourse thus on death:

*"Be absolute for death; either death or life,  
Shall thereby be sweeter. Reason thus with life,—  
If I do lose thee, I do lose a thing  
But none but fools would keep; a breath thou art,  
(Servile to all the skiey influences)  
That dost this habitation, where thou keepest,  
Hourly afflict; merely, thou art death's fool;  
For him thou laborest by thy flight to shun,  
And yet run'st toward him still; Thou art not noble;  
For all the accommodations that thou bear'st  
Are nursed by baseness: Thou art by no means valiant:  
For thou dost fear the soft and tender fork  
Of a poor worm! Thy best of rest is sleep,  
And that thou oft provok'st; yet grossly fear'st  
Thy death, which is no more. Thou art not thyself;  
For thou exist'st on many thousand grains  
That issue out of dust. Happy thou art not;  
For what thou hast not, still thou striv'st to get;  
And what thou hast forgett'st; Thou art not certain  
For thy complexion shifts to strange effects,  
After the moon. If thou art rich, thou art poor;  
For, like an ass, whose back with ingots bows,  
Thou bear'st thy heavy riches but a journey,  
And Death unloads thee! Friend hast thou none;  
For thine own bowels, which do call thee sire  
The mere effusion of thy proper loins,  
Do curse the gout, leprosy, and the rheum  
For ending thee no sooner; Thou hast nor youth, nor age,  
But, as it were, an after-dinner's sleep,  
Dreaming on both; For all thy blessed youth  
Becomes as aged, and doth beg the alms  
Of palsied eld; and when thou art old and rich  
Thou hast neither heat, affection, limb, nor beauty  
To make thy riches pleasant!"*

[259]

*"O, I do fear thy courage, Claudio; and I quake  
Lest thou a feverous life should'st entertain,  
And six or seven winters more respect  
Than a perpetual honor. Dar'st thou die?"*

*The sense of death is most in apprehension;  
 And the poor beetle that we tread upon,  
 In corporal sufferance finds a pang as great  
 As when a giant dies!  
 Ay, Isabella, but to die, and go we know not where;  
 To lie in cold obstruction and to rot;  
 This sensible, warm motion to become  
 A kneaded clod; and the delighted spirit  
 To bathe in fiery floods, or to reside  
 In thrilling regions of thick-ribbed ice;  
 To be imprisoned in the viewless winds,  
 And blown with restless violence round about  
 The pendant world; or to be worse than worst  
 Of those, that lawless and uncertain thoughts  
 Imagine howling! 'Tis too horrible!  
 The weariest and most loathed worldly life  
 That age, ache, penury and imprisonment  
 Can lay on nature, is a paradise  
 To what we fear of death!"*

[260]

King Henry the Fourth, on his deathbed thus bitterly rebukes Prince Hal for his heartless haste in taking the crown before the last breath leaves his father:

*"Thy wish was father, Harry, to that thought;  
 I stay too long by thee, I weary thee.  
 Dost thou so hunger for my empty chair,  
 That thou wilt needs invest thee with mine honors  
 Before thy hour be ripe? O, foolish youth!  
 Thou seek'st the greatness that will overwhelm thee.  
 Stay but a little; for my cloud of dignity  
 Is held from falling with so weak a mind  
 That it will quickly drop; my day is dim.  
 Thou hast stolen that, which after some few hours,  
 Were thine without offense; and at my death,  
 Thou hast sealed up my expectation;  
 Thou life did manifest, thou lov'st me not,  
 And thou wilt have me die assured of it.  
 Thou hid'st a thousand daggers in thy thoughts;  
 Which thou hast whetted on thy stony heart,  
 To stab at half an hour of my life.  
 What! can'st thou not forbear me half an hour?  
 Then get thee gone; and dig my grave thyself;  
 And bid the merry bells ring to thine ear;  
 That thou art crowned, not that I am dead,  
 Let all the tears that should bedew my hearse  
 Be drops of balm, to sanctify thy head;  
 Only compound me with begotten dust;  
 Give that which gave thee life, unto the worms;  
 Pluck down my officers, break my decrees;  
 For now a time is come to mock at form.  
 Harry the Fifth is crowned; up, vanity!  
 Down royal state! all you sage counsellors, hence!  
 And to the English Court assemble now,  
 From every region, apes of idleness!  
 Now, neighbor confines, purge you of your scum;  
 Have you a ruffian, that will swear, drink, dance,  
 Revel the night; rob, murder and commit  
 The oldest sins, the newest kind of ways!  
 Be happy, he will trouble you no more;  
 England shall double gild his treble guilt;  
 For the Fifth Harry from curbed license plucks  
 The muzzle of restraint, and the wild dog  
 Shall flesh his tooth in every innocent.  
 O, poor Kingdom, sick with civil blows!  
 When that my care could not withhold thy riots  
 What wilt thou do, when riot is thy care?  
 O, thou wilt be a wilderness again,  
 Peopled with wolves, thy old inhabitants!"*

[261]

King Lear, the generous old monarch of Britain, in a spasm of parental love, bequeathes his dominion to his two daughters, Goneril and Regan, and gave nothing to the beautiful Cordelia. Hear the old man rave at his ungrateful daughters and the corrupt world:

*"Ingratitude! thou marble-hearted fiend,  
 More hideous, when thou show'st in a child,*

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

*Blow, wind, and crack your cheeks! rage! blow!  
You cataracts, and hurricanes, spout  
Till you have drenched our steeples, drowned the cocks!  
You sulphurous and thought-executing fires,  
Vaunt-couriers to oak-cleaving thunderbolts,  
Singe my white head! And thou, all-shaking thunder,  
Strike flat the thick rotundity of the world!  
Crack nature's molds, all germens spill at once,  
That make ingrateful men!  
Rumble thy belly full! Spit fire! Spout rain!  
Nor rain, wind, thunder, fire, are my daughters;  
I tax not you, you elements, with unkindness,  
I never gave you kingdom, called you children,  
You owe me no obedience; why then let fall  
Your horrible pleasure; here I stand your slave,  
A poor, infirm, weak and despised old man;  
But yet I call you servile ministers,  
That have with two pernicious daughters joined  
Your high-engendered battles 'gainst a head  
So old as this! I am a man more sinned against  
Than sinning,...*

[263]

*Ay, every inch a King!  
When I do stare, see, how the subject quakes!  
I pardon that man's life; what was thy cause?*

*Adultery;—  
Thou shalt not die; die for adultery! No!  
The wren goes to it; and the small gilded fly  
Does lecher in my sight.  
Let copulation thrive, for Gloster's bastard son  
Was kinder to his father than my daughters  
Got between the lawful sheets;  
To it luxury, pell-mell, for I lack soldiers.—  
Behold yon simpering dame,  
Whose face between her forks presageth snow;  
That minceth virtue, and does shake the head  
To hear of pleasure's name;  
The fitchew, nor the soiled horse, goes to it  
With more riotous appetite.  
Down from the waist they are centaurs,  
Though women all above;  
But to the girdle do the gods inherit,  
Beneath is all the fiends.*

*Through tattered clothes small vices do appear  
Robes and furred gowns hide all. Plate sin with gold  
And the strong lance of justice breaks;  
Arm it in rags, a pigmy's straw doth pierce it!"*

[264]

Prospero, the Duke philosopher and magician of the "Tempest," is my greatest conception, where I command invisible spirits to work out the fate of man, and show that love and forgiveness are the greatest attributes. Prospero is blessed with a pure and faithful daughter—Miranda, and an honorable son-in-law—Ferdinand.

*"If I have too austere punished you,  
Your compensation makes amends; for I  
Have given you here a thread of mine own life,  
Or that for which I live; whom once again*

*I tender to thy hand; all thy vexations  
were but my trials of thy love, and thou  
Hast strangely stood the test; here afore heaven  
I ratify this my rich gift. O, Ferdinand,  
Do not smile at me, that I boost her off,  
For thou shall find she will outstrip all praise,  
And make it halt behind her.  
Then, as my gift, and thine own acquisition,  
Worthily purchased, take my daughter; But  
If thou dost break her virgin knot before  
All sanctimonious ceremonies may  
With full and holy rites be ministered,  
No sweet sprinkling shall the heavens let fall  
To make this contract grow; but barren hate,  
Sour-eyed disdain, and discord, shall beshrew  
The union of your bed with weeds so loathly  
That you shall hate it both; therefore, take heed  
As Hymen's lamps shall light you!*

*You do look, my son, in a moved sort  
As if you were dismayed; be cheerful, Sir;  
Our revels now are ended; these our actors,  
As I foretold you, were all spirits, and are  
Melted into air, into thin air;  
And, like the baseless fabrick of this vision  
The clod-capped towers, the gorgeous palaces,  
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,  
Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve;  
And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,  
Leave not a rock behind; We are such stuff  
As dreams are made of, and our little life  
Is rounded with a sleep!*

[265]

*Ye elves of hills, brooks, standing lakes and groves;  
And ye, that on the sands with fruitless feet  
Do chase the ebbing Neptune, and do fly him  
When he comes back; you demi-puppets, that  
By moonshine do the green-sour ringlets make,  
Whereof the ewe not bites; and you, whose pastime  
Is to make midnight mushrooms; that rejoice  
To hear the solemn curfew; by whose aid  
(Weak masters though you be), I have bedimmed  
The noontide sun, called forth the mutinous winds,  
And 'twixt the green sea and the azured vault  
Set roaring war; to the dread rattling thunder  
Have I given fire, and rifted Jove's stout oak  
With his own bolt; the strong based promontory  
Have I made shake; and by the spurs plucked up  
The pine and cedar; graves, at my command,  
Have waked their sleepers; gaped, and let them forth,  
By my so potent art; But this rough magic  
I here abjure; and when I have required  
Some heavenly music (which even now I do)  
To work mine end upon their senses, that  
This airy charm is for—I'll break my staff,  
Bury it certain fathoms in the earth,  
And deeper than did ever plummet sound  
I'll drown my books!"*

[266]

The fall of Cardinal Wolsey from the pinnacle of earthly power was the work of his own duplicity, greed and fraud, and all ministers of state may take warning from this great wreck of unholy ambition! King Henry the Eighth sacrificed everything for his physical and religious ambition. Listen and profit by the last words of the old, ruined Cardinal:

*"O, Father Abbot,  
An old man, broken with the storms of state,  
Is come to lay his weary bones among ye;  
Give him a little earth for charity!  
I have touched the highest point of all my greatness  
And, from that full meridian of my glory,  
I haste now to my setting; I shall fall  
Like a bright exhalation in the evening,  
And no man see me more!*

*"Farewell, a long farewell, to all my greatness!*

*This is the state of man; to-day he puts forth  
The tender leaves of hope, to-morrow blossoms,  
And bears his blushing honors thick upon him;  
The third day, comes a frost, a killing frost;  
And, when he thinks, good, easy man, full surely  
His greatness is a ripening—nips his root,  
And then he falls as I do. I have ventured  
Like little wanton boys that swim on bladders  
This many summers in a sea of glory;  
But far beyond my depth; my high blown pride  
At length broke under me; and now has left me  
Weary, and old with service, to the mercy  
Of a rude stream that must forever hide me.  
Vain pomp and glory of this world, I hate ye;  
I feel my heart new opened; O, how wretched  
Is that poor man that hangs on princes' favors!  
There is betwixt that smile he would aspire to,  
That sweet aspect of princes, and their ruin,  
More pangs and fears than wars or women have;  
And when he falls he falls like Lucifer,  
Never to hope again!*

*The King has gone beyond me, all my glories  
In that one woman (Anne) I have lost forever;  
No sun shall ever usher forth mine honors,  
Or gild again the noble troops that waited  
Upon my smiles. Go, get thee from me, Cromwell,  
I am a poor fallen man, unworthy now  
To be thy lord and master; seek the King;  
That sun, I pray, may never set! I have told him  
What and how true thou art; he will advance thee;  
Some little memory of me will stir him  
(I know his noble nature) not to let  
Thy hopeful service perish too. Good Cromwell,  
Neglect him not, make use now, and provide  
For thine own future safety.*

*Cromwell, I did not think to shed a tear  
In all my miseries; but thou hast forced me  
Out of thy honest truth to play the woman.  
Let's dry our eyes; and thus far hear me, Cromwell;  
And when I am forgotten, as I shall be  
And sleep in dull cold marble, where no mention  
Of me more must be heard of, say, I taught thee;  
Say, Wolsey, that once trod the ways of glory,  
And sounded all the depths and shoals of honor  
Found thee a way out of his wreck to rise in;  
A sure and safe one, though thy master missed it!  
Mark but my fall, and that that ruined me,  
Cromwell, I charge thee fling away ambition,  
By that sin fell the angels; how can man then,  
The image of his own maker hope to win by it?  
Love thyself least; cherish those hearts that hate thee;  
Corruption wins not more than honesty!  
Still in thy right hand carry gentle place  
To silence envious tongues. Be just and fear not!  
Let all the aims thou aim'st at be thy country's;  
Thy God's and Truth's; then if thou fall'st, O, Cromwell,  
Thou fall'st a blessed martyr; serve the King;  
And, pray thee, lead me in;  
There take an inventory of all I have  
To the last penny; 'tis the King's; my robe  
And my integrity to heaven, is all  
I dare now call my own. O, Cromwell, Cromwell,  
Had I but served my God with half the zeal  
I served my King, he would not in mine age  
Have left me naked to mine enemies!"*

At the conclusion of this greatest of monologues King James arose at the head of the royal banquet board, and lifting a glass of sparkling champagne, proposed three cheers for Shakspeare, which were given with intense feeling, echoed and re-echoed through those royal halls like thunder music from the realms of Jupiter.

The King beckoned William to approach the throne chair, and there, in the presence of the nobility of the realm, placed upon his lofty brow a wreath of oak leaves, with a monogram crown ring to decorate the digit finger of the brilliant Bard.

It was worth the gold and glory of all the ages to have heard the "Divine" William scatter his nuggets of eloquence; and until my pilgrimage of a thousand years reincarnates me again into the "Island of Immortality," I shall cherish that banquet night as the greatest milestone in the memory of my ruminating rambles.

*Glory, like the sun on rushing river,  
Shines down the years, forever, and forever!*

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## CHAPTER XIX.

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### STRATFORD. SHAKSPERE'S DEATH. PATRIOTISM DOWN THE AGES.

*"The sands are numbered that make up my life;  
Here must I stay, and here my life must end."*

*"Time is the King of man,  
For he is their parent, and he is their grave,  
And gives them what he will, not what they crave."*

During the years 1614, 1615 and 1616 Shakspeare sauntered about for pleasure and business among the bohemians and nobility of London, Oxford and Stratford, piecing and renewing his personal and real estate for the benefit of his two daughters, Susannah and Judith, and thus making every preparation for that eternal sleep that never fails to shut down the pale and bloodless eyelids of meandering, melancholy man.

The spectacular play of "King Henry the Eighth" was given at the Globe Theatre on the evening of the 29th of June, 1613.

It had been largely advertised as a royal historical dramatic treat, and the nobility were there in great force.

William and myself before leaving London occupied a private box as spectators on the left of the great stage. The audience numbered nearly two thousand, pit, gallery and cockloft being filled to overflowing.

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During the third act of the play a cannon was fired, giving a grand salute to the mimic King Henry and his royal train as they appeared before the assembled multitude.

Part of the gun wadding fired by the mock cannon was thrown on the open roof of the Globe, and immediately ignited the thatch, spreading flames around the top rim of the great octagonal playhouse.

Shakspeare saw at once the danger of stampeding the audience through the two great, high doors, and with his natural calmness and imperial courage rushed in front of the footlights and said:

"Ladies and gentlemen, there is no danger if you be calm and brave, and file out of the building in good order."

"Those near the right and left doors will please go out slowly, and all the actors will remain on the stage until the people disappear." At this juncture, at the suggestion of William, the actors were ordered to sing "God Save the King," and every mortal escaped unhurt from the building. Yet two hours after it was a mass of blazing cinders and ashes.

Burbage, Jonson, Fletcher, Drayton, Condell, Heming and Peele continued to furnish rare sports and masks for theatrical and court edification, but the brilliant star that had shone with undimmed luster for thirty years on the dramatic stage of London was only glowing with a lambent light, throwing its last rays over the world as it went down in crimson glory over the western hills of Warwickshire.

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Yet, while the great poet and dramatist himself would never again tread the play platform, or throw his sonorous, magic voice over a London audience, the great children and characters of his matchless brain would hold the dramatic boards and thrill the heart and soul of mankind as long as human nature laughed and suffered on the globe.

Shakspeare had more self-control than any man I ever met, and his reason was ever holding court in his conscience.

*He, who reigns within himself, and rules  
His passions, desires and fears, is ever King!*

After thirty years of a wandering battle with Dame Fortune, testing her griefs and glories, it was a sweet consolation for William and myself to drift back to the scenes of childhood and tread again the streets, roads, fields and hills that blessed our boyhood hours.

In the spring of 1614 William and myself wandered over the fields and ridges to Coventry, and

visited Warwick Castle. The young Earl of Leicester gave us a hearty welcome; for the praise that William had received at court and the light that dazzled from his lamp of literary fame made him an honored guest in cot or palace, strewing about his pathway the flowers of faith and affection.

Returning to Stratford one evening in May we stood on the same old hill top beyond the Clopton Bridge, looking at the sparkling spires and steeples of the town; and all seemed as natural as when we left them in the morning of life.

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The hills and fields were blooming as of old, the Avon wound its serpentine course to the sea, the song of the ploughman and shepherd swelled from the vale, the lowing of cattle, strolling homeward for the night echoed among the hills, the blackbird, thrush and vagrant crow sang and croaked as they hastened with their mates to their feathered families, and the daisies, wild roses, hedge rows, hawthorn bushes, and grand old elms and oaks bloomed in their everlasting garments of variegated beauty.

As the cardinal colors of the dying day threw their last rays over the placid bosom of the Avon, and the murmur of laughing voices floated up from the town to mingle, as it were, with the curling smoke from glistening chimney tops, William and I scampered down the hill, over the bridge, on by the old mill, and entered the open gate of "New Place," as Judith, his intellectual daughter, welcomed her famous father with exuberant affection.

Here was rest indeed. For like weather-beaten mariners or soldiers of fortune, each of us had been buffeted by the billows of Fate; and yet with all the scars she gave, we never knew a day, though cloudy and stormy, that we could not see rifts of sunshine breaking through the entanglements of adversity.

*Our mind, a kingdom was, in every clime,  
With souls triumphant over tide and time;  
And though the world might frown upon our way  
We believed in God and sunshine every day!*

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The strolling players, literary guild and traveling nobles never failed in passing through Stratford to visit Shakspeare at his beautiful and comfortable home at "New Place." It was Liberty Hall to every guest that passed the threshold of the retired Bard, where like a full-rigged ship on a summer sea, he moved down in peace, through the sunset beams of a brilliant life, accompanied by his friends and affectionate daughters into the harbor of rest beneath the walls of old Trinity Church.

Susannah, the oldest daughter, had married Dr. John Hall several years before the poet's death, and occupied the old Shakspeare house on Henley street, and her mother lived with the family, a solace to her daughter and beautiful granddaughter, Elizabeth Hall.

Mrs. Shakspeare, the buxom Anne Hathaway of vanished years, was entirely subdued and found consolation in her devoted daughters and religious duties. She could be found at every prayer meeting and Sunday sermon in the Shakspeare pew of Trinity Church.

William seldom attended Puritan meetings, Episcopal conclaves, or Papist masses. He paid formal respect, at long range, to all sacerdotal ceremonies, not bothering himself about dogmas, creeds and bulls, put forth by little, cunning man for earthly power and financial benefit.

*He believed in God and in himself,  
Ignoring those who lived for pelf,  
And through his age and verdant youth  
He ever worshiped naked Truth!*

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Judith, the beautiful and intellectual daughter, kept house for her illustrious father, and entered heartily into all his social and business schemes for the improvement of the town of Stratford.

Thus days, weeks, months and years were passed in pleasant conclave with literary and neighboring friends, until the winter of 1615 and 1616, when a severe throat trouble afflicted the Bard, in conjunction with acute pains in the head, that prevented the solace of sleep, and which turned into chronic insomnia.

In January, Shakspeare, in anticipation of his temporary exit from this world, determined to make his will and bequeath his property in detail to his daughter, relatives and friends. He called in Francis Collins, a solicitor of Warwick, who drew the important document, but it was not finally signed and witnessed until the 25th of March, 1616.

William, knowing that his wife would inherit legal dower, one-third of his real property, and being cared for by her daughter Susannah, only bequeathed to the "former Anne Hathaway," the personal gift of his "second best bed."

I asked Shakspeare one evening about a month before his death if he intended the piece of bed furniture for his wife as a rebuke or a compliment.

He replied: "Jack, if you were not so inquisitive you would not have so much knowledge!"

I thanked him for his lucid explanation, and let the incident go at that remark.

As he was in a good-natured, facetious mood, I asked him why it was that in all his dramatic plays of forty years composition he had never placed on the boards a great Irish character, although he had created Egyptian, Grecian, Italian, French, German, Danish, Scotch and English representatives that would go down the ages in eloquent glory.

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I said, "William, you only formulated in Henry the Fifth Captain MacMorris, a Scotch-Irish bastard-renegade character, who bears about as much relation to a true Irish gentleman as does a shark to a whale, a hawk to an eagle, or a lynx to a lion."

"Well, Jack, you know as well as I do that the 'eloquent,' 'brave,' 'Irish rebel,' against monarchy and tyrannical power has been the sharpest thorn in the sides of English royalty, and that with the enmity of Henry the Eighth, Queen Elizabeth, King James, and the London Protestants, a great, lofty Irish Catholic character would not have been popular, and ministered to our daily desire for pence, shillings and pounds!

"Yet posterity will notice the brave wit and greatness of the Irish race by their absence from my business plays."

*While writing for the sake of Truth,  
From my wild, daring, earliest youth,  
You knew I never acted rash  
Or failed to fill my purse with cash;*

*For, after all is past and told  
Among the foolish, wise and old—  
The plot of life is to enfold  
Within your grasp, Imperial Gold!*

On the 10th of January, 1616, Judith impulsively married Thomas Quincy, without the publication of the church banns, to the scandal of the community, but love cared naught for rules or creeds when Nature stood as monitor.

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Seated one April morning in his private apartment, looking over his beautiful garden of vegetables, fruit, flowers, vines and waving elms, margined by the murmuring waters of the silver Avon, I asked him if he had any special message before leaving life to communicate to the ages.

"Yes, my dear Jack, you, by nature's law must, like the Wandering Jew, fulfill your destiny, and 'tramp' out your thousand years ere you join me on the 'Island of Immortality.' These precepts I enjoin:

*The Love and Truth that in my plays abide  
Shall teach the lesson of equal justice;  
Nothing that's wrong can prosper on this earth,  
And though your crime-secret be hid in mounts  
Of adamant, kissing, loftiest sky,  
The worm of detection and exposure  
Shall gnaw its way through rugged, granite ribs  
And blow your foul wickedness around the world.  
Men, states and empires, rise and flash like bubbles  
On the rolling ocean of existence,  
And then like the false, shimmering vision  
Of a dream, pass into nameless oblivion.  
The hours, days, years and ages, lost and gone  
Are only a moment from the ticking clock  
Of eternity. And all future time,  
Incalculable as drops of ocean  
Or leaves of grass, come and go incessant,  
Like the balmy airs; or whistling winds  
That blow o'er tropic or arctic lands.  
I know and feel that myriad spirits  
People the vast, circumambient air,—  
And as my soul within knocks at heart and lips  
For exit from this crumbling house of corruption,  
Methinks I see and hear a chorus of  
Angel spirits beckoning my tired soul  
Onward and upward to omnipotence.  
Every blade of grass and flower beautiful;  
Every star that twinkles in the moonlit sky;  
Every white-crested billow of the sea;  
Every child that dreams, laughs and sings in glee;  
Every thought, pinioned with eternal Hope—  
Guarantees assurance of Immortality!"*

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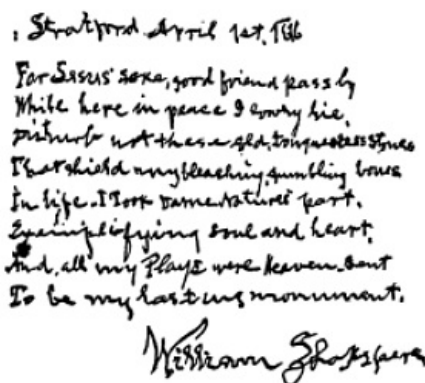
On the 13th of April, 1616, ten days before the death of Shakspeare, Burbage, Jonson, Drayton, Florio, Field, Condell, Heming and Jo Taylor came down from London by special invitation to enjoy the hospitality of the Bard.



Judith made every preparation for their social entertainment, and the "New Place" was ablaze with hospitality and dramatic glory for a week.

I shall not enter into the pleasant and eccentric details of these authors and actors, but leave it to the imagination of the intelligent reader to know what a crowd of brilliant bohemians might do in the evening of life talking, laughing and drinking to the memory of friends and days that are no more!

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Stratford April 1st 1616  
For Jesus' sake, good friends pass by  
While here in peace I lowly lie,  
Disturb not these cold, tongueless stones  
That shield my bleaching, crumbling bones  
In life I took Dame Nature's part  
Exemplifying soul and heart,  
And all my plays were heaven sent  
To be my lasting monument.

William Shakespeare

Three days before the death of the great luminary of dramatic and poetic letters, he called me into his bedroom. He was resting in a reclining chair by an oaken desk, looking out on his garden, while the birds of spring were chirping, singing and courting among the blooming bushes and trees of his beautiful home.

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Addressing me in the old familiar way, he said: "Jack, my throat and head give me great pain. I long to rest beneath the walls of Old Trinity Church, never again to gaze upon its glinting spire through sunrise or sunset beams.

"You know I feel a horror at the thought of having my poor old bones tumbled out of their grave in future years by vulgar sextons, and to prevent disturbance I scribbled off a few weeks ago these poetic lines, that I wish you would place above my remains. Promise me this last request, and I'll die in the hope of Immortality!"

Gazing intently on the melancholy, dying man, my eyes filled with tears, I made the sacred promise, and more than that, I here give the manuscript imprint of the original epitaph:

STRATFORD, APRIL 1st, 1616.

*For Jesus' sake, good friends, pass by,  
While here in peace I lowly lie;  
Disturb not these cold, tongueless stones  
That shield my bleaching, crumbling bones,  
In life I took Dame Nature's part  
Exemplifying soul and heart,  
And all my plays were heaven sent  
To be my lasting monument!*

On the morning of the 23d of April, at six o'clock, Judith came rushing into my room, and said that her father was dying. I jumped into my clothes and quickly knelt by his bedside, where I found Dr. Hall, Susannah, Mr. Quincy, Mrs. Hart, Ben Jonson, and Michael Drayton.

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I grasped his hand as he made dying lurches, and asked him how he felt, and then opening his great bluish gray eyes for the last time on earth, I could hear only his death gurgle expression: "God, Truth and Country!"

Thus passed away the noblest and greatest man that ever graced this earthly globe.

The news of his death spread like a prairie fire among the people of Stratford and the surrounding villages, and on to Oxford and London, where the melancholy wail of his obsequies resounded in the halls of the highest court circles, and found the deepest sorrow and regret in the heart of King James.

At twelve o'clock on the 25th of April the remains of the Bard were followed to Trinity Church by an immense concourse of mourning humanity; and there, under the north wall of the old cathedral he was buried, seventeen feet below the surface, and left forever with his earthly glory and his God.

That very night, as the sun went down, Drayton, Jonson, Burbage and myself bade farewell to the daughters and personal friends of the Bard, going by fast mail car to Oxford and London.

It was one of the saddest nights I had ever experienced, for my dearest friend and lofty teacher would no more humor my lunatic impulses, or guide me in the even, broad road of universal truth. With his voice and form forever gone, there was nothing left to me but to wander over the

cheerless, mighty world as a literary pioneer and soldier of fortune, using my pen and sword wherever Love and Liberty displayed their banners.

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In the great literary whirlpool of London life I drowned for a season my soul-felt sorrow in the enchanting fumes of the wine cup, and its consequent allurements of variegated, fantastic society.

My destiny of a thousand years of life from birth, looked alternately, bleak and glorious, yet Fate being my master, and being endowed with an irrepressible, forgiving, laughing and progressive disposition, I called up the spirits of the air one midnight hour at the Boar's Head Tavern, and exacted from them a promise that wherever I wandered over the earth to witness the rise and fall of men and nations, like bubbles on a stormy sea, they would strictly obey my command.

*Ariel, Puck and Oberon  
Lent me their wings to sail upon  
Over the land and stormy sea  
To aid the cause of Liberty.  
A thousand years from date of birth,  
Destined to wander over the earth,  
I'll roll with the ages brave and free,  
Till I round the capes of eternity!*

I have witnessed the greatest events of the centuries in Europe, Asia and Africa, and on the spiritual wings of Truth, rapid as the lightning flash, I have sailed; and fought the battles of the people in every land and clime, being the compeer and critic of the most illustrious poets, philosophers, statesmen and warriors for the past three hundred years. I move forward for the liberty of man!

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Before leaving old Albion for my investigating flight of centuries, I was a painful witness to the decapitation of my great friend, Sir Walter Raleigh, whose heroic conduct at the block melted the spectators into tears, and brought down loud maledictions on the corrupt head of Lord Bacon, who was the principal villain in the final destruction of the great navigator, warrior and philosopher.

I listened to the great Raleigh on the 29th of October, 1618, standing by the block, addressing the executioner and the multitude, when handling the shining axe: "This is a sharp medicine, but a sound cure for all diseases!" Lying down and fitting himself to the block, the executioner asked him to alter the position of his head, when he replied: "It is no matter which way the head lies, so the heart be right! Why dost thou not strike? Strike, man!" And, then, quick as a flash the glittering axe split the head from the shoulders of one of the noblest men of England.

I turned away from the gloomy precincts of the terrible Tower, and cursed the falsehood and iniquity of Elizabeth, James and Lord Bacon, jealous plotters against growing, illustrious men.

Raleigh in his poem "The Soul's Errand," pictures thus this lying world:

*"Go, soul, the body's guest,  
Upon a thankless arrant;  
Fear not to touch the best,  
The truth shall be thy warrant;  
Go, since I needs must die,  
And give the world the lie!*

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*"Go, tell the court it glows  
And shines like rotten wood;  
Go tell the church it shows  
What's good, and doth no good.  
If church and court reply,  
Then give them both the lie!*

*"Tell men of high condition  
That manage home and state,  
Their purpose is ambition,  
Their practice only hate;  
And if they once reply  
Then give them all the lie!"*

Disgusted with the growing cruelties of monarchy and state "reformers," I joined a band of Puritans who proposed to leave old Albion, and find in North America a home and country where they could worship God in their own way, and secure freedom for themselves and children for a thousand years to come.

I stood on the prow of the Mayflower as the sun rose over the harbor of Plymouth on the 17th of September, 1620, as the good ship sailed away from England to the west, with one hundred and one passengers, filled with the great spirit of religious and material liberty.

After a very stormy passage of sixty-three days, touching at Cape Cod, we made final anchor at

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Plymouth Rock, on the evening of the 16th of December, 1620.

That rock-bound, stormy, snowy, forest coast, filled with fierce animals and fiercer red men, gave the lonely emigrants a cold and terrible winter reception.

*"The breaking waves dashed high  
On a stern and rock bound coast,  
And the woods against a stormy sky  
Their giant branches tossed.  
And the heavy night hung dark,  
The hills and waters o'er  
When a band of exiles moored their bark  
On the wild New England shore.  
Amidst the storm they sang,  
And the stars heard, and the sea;—  
And the sounding aisles of the dim woods rang  
To the anthem of the free!"*

I stood behind the screens of the royal palace on the 30th of January, 1649, in the presence of the cruel Cromwell, Ireton, Bradshaw, and the fanatical Milton, and saw their glee when the axe of the executioner severed the head of King Charles the First, for the delectation of the beastly and vulgar multitude that howled approbation of the bloody scene; and yet, only twelve years after, I saw the crumbling, dead, naked bodies of Oliver Cromwell, his son, Ireton and Bradshaw, trundled along the streets of London, grappled by Parliamentary order from their graves, and hung on the gallows of Tyburn, their broken bones buried at the foot of the scaffold, while their withered, rotten heads were placed on the southern coping of Westminster Hall.

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Thus, the compensating balances of life and death, right and wrong, forever tip the beam of justice.

*The prince and the pauper,  
The serf and the slave,  
Are equal at last—  
In the dust of the grave!*

I saw the wonderful Muscovite monarch,

PETER THE GREAT,

as he rose out of the huge, brutal giant of Russian force, flash on the world like a zigzag meteor, lighting up his imperial dominions with barbaric splendor.

At the age of twenty-six, 1698, I saw him working with hammer, chisel, saw and axe as a common ship carpenter at Amsterdam and Deptford, entertaining ambassadors and kings, while he sat on the crosstrees of a new built ship. I met him again on the barren swamps of the Neva and icy shores of the Baltic, giving orders for the building of his new capital, St. Petersburg, in May, 1703, and in June, 1708, watched the compact columns of the great Czar rush down upon Charles the Twelfth of Sweden, and on the plains of Pultowa, scatter forever the hitherto unconquerable hosts of Scandinavia; and then after a great reign he crowned the peasant girl, Catherine of Livonia, Empress of all the Russias, the most energetic and remarkable female ruler since the days of Semiramis, Isabella and Elizabeth.

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I watched the star of

NAPOLEON

as it first flickered over the rock-rimmed island of Corsica, foam fringed by the green waters of the Mediterranean. I saw it glitter over the mathematical charity scholar of France, the "puss in boots" at royal receptions, the artillery officer at the Bridge of Lodi, the general of the French-Italian army, scaling the cloud-kissing Alps in mid winter, bearing the eagles of liberty over the plains of Lombardy, on to Milan and Rome, until the tramp of the unconquerable Frank echoed through the streets and halls of the Cæsars, and re-echoed in the lofty aisles and arches of the Vatican!

I beheld again the star of this "man of destiny" shine in glorious splendor at Maringo, Wagram, Austerlitz, Jena, Leipsic and Ulm, and then as First Consul and Emperor, sweeping with his unconquerable columns over the sands of Egypt and snows of Russia, until at last the fires and smoke of Moscow bedimmed the horizon of his glory, and lit up the funeral pyre of five hundred thousand of the best soldiers of France, led to their doom by the crazy ambition of a selfish tyrant!

Again I saw him escape from Elba, bare his breast to the guns of his former legions and rout royalty from its palace portals, and sweeping for a hundred days over the vineclad hills of France, he finally on the 18th of June, 1815, marshaled his magnificent army around the plains and hills of Waterloo, defying the Austrian, Prussian, Russian and British allied armies to the death grapple of the century, and went down to irretrievable defeat.

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And then after five long years of an exile imprisonment on the barren isle of St. Helena, I heard

his last gasp, "Head of the Army!"

"With no friend but his sword and no fortune but his talents, he rushed in the lists, where rank and wealth and genius had arrayed themselves; and competition fled from him as from the glance of destiny.

"A professed Catholic, he imprisoned the Pope; a pretended patriot, he impoverished the country; and in the name of Brutus, he grasped without remorse and wore without shame the diadem of the Cæsars!

"Such a medley of contradictions, and at the same time such an individual consistency were never united in the same character; a Royalist, a Republican and an Emperor; a Mahometan, a Catholic, and a patron of the synagogue, a subaltern and a sovereign, a traitor and a tyrant, a Christian and infidel, he was through all his vicissitudes, the same stern, impatient, inflexible original, the same mysterious, incomprehensible self—the man without a model and without a shadow!"

*A wreck of ambition, deserted, alone,  
He rode o'er the bones of mankind to a throne;  
The star of his destiny sunk out of view,  
Eclipsed in the blood of the famed Waterloo.  
A marvelous meteor that flashed o'er the wave,  
To darkle at last in the gloom of the grave.  
Vain, vain all the pomp of Napoleon's pride,  
Broken-hearted, alone, disappointed he died,  
And left to the world but the sound of his name—  
The fool of ambition, the football of fame!*

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I sat at the second story corner window of a wine house in Paris on the 14th of July, 1789, and gazed on the infuriated, surging mob of a hundred thousand Frenchmen, as they stormed the

#### BASTILE,

and struck a grand and lasting blow against the cruel minions of monarchy, raising the banner of equal right, and God-given liberty for all mankind.

Five hundred years of royal wrong and imperial lordly wickedness were avenged in an hour, and the liberty cap of the people thrown high in the air of freedom to bid defiance to government by tyranny.

Then for four bloody years the surging sea of wealth and power against the common people, muscle and manhood, defying royalty, I saw thousands of heads go to the block, the executioner of to-day being the executed of to-morrow, until a river of blood drenched the gutters of Paris, with the people at last on top and triumphant as they shall ever be adown the circling ages!

I stood near the guillotine of

#### LOUIS THE SIXTEENTH

as his head went off on the 31st of January, 1793, and then alternately, royalist and commoner were imprisoned and killed by the "committee of safety!"

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Marie Antoinette, Charlotte Corday, Marat, Madame Roland, Danton, Robespierre and one hundred thousand other mortals, rich and poor, went down in the insane, frantic effort for equal rights and eternal justice.

The French Revolution following so soon upon the great American Revolution, shouldered the people's cause ahead more than a thousand years, and was worth every drop of blood spilled in the triumphal march of freedom!

The blood of the martyr has always watered the roots of the tree of Liberty; and in a few more years the devilish hoards of "Divine Right" robbers and murderers will be swept into the rubbish heaps of oblivion. God grant their speedy destruction! Wolves devouring the provender of the people!

On the 22d of February, 1732, I saw rise out of the rolling hills of Virginia, a glowing light that sparkled and spread, as it shone in the heaven of Colonial advancement.

#### WASHINGTON,

"first in war, first in peace and in the hearts of his countrymen," was the God-given vidette of American freedom; and from the time he took command of the Continental Army at Boston on the 3d of July, 1775, until he laid down his commission, after nine years of trial and blood, with Cornwallis and King George defeated forever, he was the same great and good man and President, without a stain on his sword or character.

Standing by his bedside at Mount Vernon, on the 31st of December, 1799, I watched his great soul as it took flight for heaven, and heard his last words on earth, "'Tis well!"

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*Like some grand mountain shining from afar,*

*Or like the radiance of the morning star,  
 Spreading its silver light throughout the gloom,  
 That gilds the glory of his classic tomb;  
 Mount Vernon keeps his loved and sacred dust—  
 An urn of grief that holds a nation's trust,  
 Where pilgrims bend along the waning years,  
 To gaze upon his grave through pearly tears.  
 His monument in coming years shall stand  
 A Mecca for the brave of every land,  
 And while Potomac waters flash and flow,  
 The fame of Washington shall gain and grow,  
 Adown the ages through the aisles of time—  
 A patriot forever in his prime!  
 Age after age will sweep its course away  
 The work of man will crumble and decay;  
 Yet, on the tide of time from sun to sun,  
 Shall shine the glory of our Washington;  
 And all the stars that in their orbit roll,  
 Around the world from pole to pole,  
 Shall keep his name and fame as true and bright,  
 As yonder sparkling jewels of the night!*

The greatest pioneer of Colonial patriotism and independence, the Demosthenes of the American Continent, was the eloquent orator,

PATRICK HENRY,

whose meteors of thought dazzled the nations and made tyrants tremble on their thrones.

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How well I remember that March morning in 1775, as he rose in the legislative halls of Virginia, and uttered that impassioned oration against tyranny and the minions of King George.

Even now those eloquent phrases sound in mine ears, and waft me back to the scenes and men that made the Republic:

"I have but one lamp by which my feet are guided, and that is the lamp of experience. I know of no way of judging of the future but by the past, and judging by the past, I wish to know what there has been in the conduct of the brutal British ministry for the past ten years to justify the hopes with which gentlemen have been pleased to solace themselves and the house.

"Our petitions have been slighted; our remonstrances have produced violence and insult; our supplications have been disregarded, and we have been spurned with contempt from the foot of the throne.

"The battle, sir, is not to the strong alone, it is to the vigilant, the active, the brave. Our chains are forged; their clanking may be heard on the plains of Boston. The war is inevitable; and let it come. I repeat it, let it come.

"Our brethren are already in the field; why stand we here idle? What is it that gentlemen wish? What would they have? Is life so dear, or peace so sweet, as to be purchased by the price of chains and slavery?

"Forbid it, Almighty God!

"I know not what course others may take, but as for me, give me Liberty or give me Death!"

The patriotism of the cavaliers of Virginia was fermenting to overflowing, while that of the Puritans of Massachusetts was boiling with intense heat as the stamp-stampers and tea-tossers of Boston prepared for a deadly reception to the robbers and murders of King George on the plains of Lexington and Concord on the 19th of April, 1775.

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Never can I forget the midnight ride I took with

PAUL REVERE,

on beholding the two lanterns displayed on the belfry of the "Old North Church"; I told the tale to Mr. Longfellow, and he forthwith immortalized the heroic Paul:

*"A hurry of hoofs in a village street,  
 A shape in the moonlight, a bulk in the dark,  
 And beneath from the pebbles, in passing, a spark  
 Struck out by a steed flying fearless and fleet;  
 That was all! And yet, through the gloom and the light  
 The fate of a nation was riding that night,  
 And the spark struck out by that steed in his flight  
 Kindled the land into flame with its heat.*

*"You know the rest, in the books you have read,  
How the British regulars fired and fled—  
How the farmers gave them ball for ball,  
From behind each fence and farm yard wall,  
Chasing the 'Red Coats' down the lane,  
Then crossing the fields to emerge again,  
Under the trees at the turn of the road,  
And only pausing to fire and load.*

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*"So through the night rode Paul Revere;  
And so through the night went his cry of alarm  
To every Middlesex village and farm;  
A cry of defiance, and not of fear,  
A voice in the darkness, a knock at the door  
And a word that shall echo forevermore!  
For born on the night wind of the past,  
Through all our history to the last,  
In the hour of darkness and peril and need,  
The people will waken and listen to hear  
The hurrying hoof beats of that steed,  
And the midnight message of Paul Revere."*

How my soul thrills with recollection when I think where I stood in Carpenters Hall, Philadelphia, on the 4th of July, 1776, among the signers of the Declaration of Independence, and heard that grandest of human productions proclaimed to the world.

Each of the fifty-six signers was a modern Moses in himself, and to-day their heroic statues, in imperishable bronze, should stand aloft on the shining marble copings of the National Capitol.

The glowing features and earnest, eloquent tones of

#### HANCOCK, JEFFERSON, FRANKLIN, AND ADAMS

come back to me now, in the sunlight and zenith of republican glory; and as the old bell in the tower rang out Liberty to all the people of the land, the city of Brotherly Love took up the acclaim, while on the wings of the wind it echoed and reached from the St. Lawrence to the Mississippi, and from the Lakes to the Gulf of Mexico, sounding across the seas, and reverberating among the sparkling halls of royalty, shivering the idols of "Divine Right," and forcing the plain, common people of the world into their long-neglected heritage of Freedom!

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And there, side by side with Franklin and Jefferson, sat one of the Secretaries of the Continental Congress,

#### TOM PAINE,

the great deist, patriot and philosopher; whose elementary proclamations, "The Crisis," "Rights of Man," "Common Sense," and "Age of Reason," did more for the promulgation of freedom during and after the American and French revolutions than any other utterance of man.

The logic and philosophy of the great deist and agnostic was worth more to the Colonies, and did more injury to King George and his murdering minions, than all the purblind, bigoted, saphead pulpit thumpers who ever preached for ready cash.

The seventeenth and eighteenth centuries produced no nobler or better man than the brave Tom Paine, the personal and political compeer and friend of Washington, Jefferson, Franklin and Adams.

The

#### DECLARATION OF AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

was the greatest event in the history of mankind since the creation of Adam and the birth of Christ.

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It was a lofty and true indictment against the crimes of monarchy, and was the entering wedge in splitting the rotten log of robber royalty.

These words and phrases keep ever sounding in my soaring soul:

"We hold these truths to be self-evident; that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness!"

"The history of the King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over these States."

"The King has plundered our seas, ravaged our coasts, burned our towns and destroyed the lives of our people."

"The road to happiness and glory is open to us; we will climb it apart from the British Government, and acquiesce our eternal separation, and hold them as we hold the rest of mankind, enemies in war, in peace friends."

"And for the support of this Declaration, with reliance in Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes and our sacred honor!"

Moving along with the martyrs who have died for progress and liberty:

I stood in the English Court September 20th, 1803, beside the heroic

ROBERT EMMET,

and heard him hurl these javelins of defiant patriotic eloquence against the brazen brutality of British judicial tyranny:

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"When my spirit shall be wafted to a more friendly port; when my shade shall have joined the bands of those martyred heroes who have shed their blood on the scaffold and in the field, in defense of their country and virtue, this is my hope: I wish that my memory and name may animate those who survive me, while I look down with complacency on the destruction of this perfidious Government, which upholds its dominion by blasphemy of the Most High.

"The blood which you seek is not congealed by the artificial terrors which surround your victim; it circulates warmly and unruffled through the channels which God created for noble purposes, but which you are bent to destroy for purposes so grievous that they cry to Heaven!

"Let no man write my epitaph; for, as no one who knows my motives dares now vindicate them, let not prejudice or ignorance asperse them. Let them and me repose in obscurity and peace, and my tomb remain uninscribed until other times and other men can do justice to my character and memory. When my country shall take her place among the nations of the earth, then, and not till then, let my epitaph be written."

Again, in my peripatetic tour of nations, seeking and aiding the hosts of Liberty, I stood with

GENERAL ANDREW JACKSON,

the greatest Irish-American citizen, soldier and President, behind the cotton bales and swamps of New Orleans, and on the 8th of January, 1815, I saw him hurl more than two thousand "Red Coats" into eternity, with only a loss of seven men, three killed and four wounded.

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Kentucky and Tennessee "Bushwhackers," with a lot of New Orleans shopkeepers, armed with squirrel rifles, killed and defeated General Pakenham, and the veteran troops of John Bull, in their raids over the globe for land, loot and human blood.

And still moving across the Gulf of Mexico, to Vera Cruz; and by land to Buena Vista, with

SCOTT AND TAYLOR,

I heard the scream of the American eagle as it swooped down on the tyrant troops of Santa Ana, and with the Stars and Stripes waving in the breeze, beheld the United States soldiers charge the castellated heights of Chapultepec, and the next day, the 14th of September, 1847, saw General Scott plant his colors over the "National Palace," with his conquering army marching in glory through the city and halls of the Montezumas.

Yet, with all the woes of Mexico, I saw it in after years, rise out of the toils of foreign monarchy, when General Juarez, the native liberator, captured and killed the Archduke Maximilian, the representative of the Little Napoleon of France.

The "Monroe Doctrine" triumphed in the death gurgle of Maximilian.

*Sic semper tyrannis!*

Treason to tyrants is truth to the people!

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Off with the heads of Charles the First, Louis the Sixteenth and Robespierre!

I stood by the side of

GENERAL BEAUREGARD

on the 12th of April, 1861, at the city of Charleston, South Carolina, and heard him give the order to "fire" on the flag at Fort Sumter.

Slavery and "State Rights" threw down the gauntlet to Freedom and "National Rights!" A million of men were destroyed in the great American Rebellion, and after four years of the bloodiest civil war in history, the Stars and Stripes arose in all its glory at Appomattox, and fluttered again over the fort in Charleston Harbor, so nobly defended by the illustrious Major Anderson.

Alternate success and defeat came to the Union army and the Confederate forces. Bull Run, Donelson, Shiloh, Antietam, Stone River, Vicksburg, Chickamauga, Missionary Ridge, Spottsylvania, Fredericksburg, the Wilderness, and Gettysburg, are battle milestones of the Republic that shall never be forgotten so long as valor and manhood find a lodgment in the human heart.

Gettysburg is the mausoleum of the American Marathon and the Thermopylæ of Liberty. The grandest heroes of the world died here.

*"They fell, devoted, but undying;  
The very gales their names seem sighing;  
The waters murmur of their name;  
The woods are peopled with their fame;  
The silent pillars, lone and gray,  
Claim kindred with their silent clay;  
Their spirits wrap the dusky mountain,  
Their memory sparkles o'er the fountain;  
The meanest rill, the mightiest river  
Rolls mingling with their fame forever!"*

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What soldier at Gettysburg will ever forget the terrible battles of the 1st, 2d and 3d of July, 1863, when

GENERAL MEAD AND GENERAL LEE,

with two hundred thousand Americans met in deadly conflict for the salvation or destruction of the Great Republic?

The vales and rills and rocks and hills for twenty miles around trembled with the onslaught of the contending hosts, and from Culp's Hill to Cemetery Heights and Round Top the smoke and blaze of the rifle and the cannon lit up the bloody scene with the concussion of an earthquake and volcano, and the climax charge of Pickett's Division punctured the bravest and most unavailing assault ever made by heroic soldiers; and although these warriors in "gray" were doomed to defeat by the defenders of the Union, they deserve a crown of unfading glory for imperishable American valor.

Standing by the side of

PRESIDENT ABRAHAM LINCOLN

on the heights of Gettysburg, on the 19th of November, 1863, I heard him deliver before a multitude of people the following eloquent and philosophic address in dedicating the great National Cemetery:

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"Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

"Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that the nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this.

"But, in a larger sense we cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow this ground. The brave men living and dead, who struggled here have consecrated it far above our poor power to add or detract.

"The world will little note nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us, the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have so far nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be dedicated to the great task remaining before us that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion; that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain: and that this nation under God shall have a new birth of freedom; and that government of the people, by the people and for the people shall not perish from the earth."

I saw

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GENERAL GRANT

at Appomattox on the 9th of April, 1865, I hear again these phrases of the silent soldier to General Lee:

"I am equally anxious for peace with yourself and the whole North entertains the same feeling. The terms upon which peace can be had are well understood. By the South laying down their arms they will hasten that most desirable event, save thousands of human lives, and hundreds of millions of property not yet destroyed."



"The officers to give their individual paroles not to take up arms against the Government of the United States until properly exchanged, and each company or regimental commander sign a like parole for the men of their commands.

"The surrender of all munitions of war will not embrace the side arms of the officers, nor their private horses or baggage. Each officer and man will be allowed to return to their homes, not to be disturbed by the United States authorities so long as they observe their paroles and the laws in force where they may reside."

Still marching onward in my mission of my love for freedom and keeping close and quick step to the music of the Great Republic, I rose again in soul, heart and pride, as I stood on the deck of the Olympia, fronting Manila and the Spanish navy, and heard the great

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#### ADMIRAL GEORGE DEWEY

say: "When you are ready, fire, Gridley!"

In an hour the royal navy of Spain was at the bottom of the sea, and over the citadel of Manila waved the Stars and Stripes, a hope and a blessing to the Philippine Islands.

I stood on the turrets of Morro Castle, Havana, as the devilish Weyler sailed away from the beautiful "Queen of the Antilles," and wondered that the cruel, infernal, tyrannical wretch was not ignominiously slaughtered by some of the victims of his starvation reign. A rattlesnake-cobra-tarantula human deformity!

It is not the plutocracy of wealth, or the aristocracy of learning, but the democracy of the heart that makes the world better and greater.

Selfishness, cupidity and greed lead to tyranny, and tyranny finally destroys itself.

Down with the villains who would enslave the people!

*Dose them, quick, with leaden pills—  
Only cure for tyrant ills!*

And on the heights of San Juan I beheld the American troops, white and black, shoot the cruel Spaniard into defeat, and last, but not least, I stood on the prow of the Oregon and beheld the most destructive naval engagement of the century.

"Santiago was a captains' fight," and, as Admiral Schley said: "There is glory enough for all."

Schley, Sampson, Cook, Clarke, Evans, Taylor and Wainwright shall be remembered down the ages with Paul Jones, Decatur, Porter and Farragut; and with them the great Arctic hero, Admiral George W. Melville.

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The monarchy of Spain that once ruled the western world has been swept off the seas, and does not own an inch of land on the American Continent.

I personally participated, with my soldier comrades, in the inauguration ceremonies of the lofty Lincoln, the glorious Garfield and the magnanimous McKinley, and heard their burning words of patriotism delivered from the east front of the National Capitol.

And again it was my melancholy duty to march with the Grand Army of the Republic in the funeral train that took their assassinated remains to lie in state under the dome of the Capitol for the last view of the people upon the calm countenance of these illustrious Americans.

The greatest characters of earth vanish away and are forgotten like the mists of the morning.

*"The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,  
And all that beauty, all that wealth ere gave,  
Await alike the inevitable hour—  
The paths of glory lead but to the grave."*

And now bestriding the Isthmus beneath the Stars and Stripes, with my right foot at Colon and left foot at Panama, I watch the digging of the interocean canal, with the High Priest Roosevelt joining the Atlantic and Pacific oceans in eternal wedlock, where the commerce of the globe shall float equal and free forever!

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Congregated at the World's Fair at St. Louis, the grandest exposition of the globe, I see passing in review the men and women of all nations, where art, science, letters, manufacture, commerce and government power reveal the wonders of man's handiwork.

And now, navigating the circumambient air in an electric ship, I'll sail away to the "Island of Immortality," and dream a season from my multifarious labors.

*I'll go swinging round the circle  
Through six hundred future years,  
With the roses and the myrtle  
Growing in celestial spheres;  
And sweet Freedom, heaven slated*

*Round my footsteps, night and day,  
When I am incarnated—  
Shall still hold its deathless sway!  
And great Shakspeare then shall meet me  
To renew our former youth,  
And exclaim with honest fervor—  
"Jack, you always told the truth!"*

THE END.

### TRANSCRIBER'S NOTES

Please hover your mouse over the words with a thin dotted grey line underneath them for seeing what the original reads.

The original varied spelling has been retained.

#### Fixed issues

- p. *xvi*—typo fixed, changed "Blackfriars" into "Blackfriars"
- p. 062—inserted missing closing quote after "Henry the Fourth"
- p. 067—typo fixed, changed "Southhampton" to "Southampton"
- p. 077—typo fixed, changed period after Ovid into comma
- p. 078—removed extra comma after "action, shall"
- p. 082—typo fixed, changed "O'Neill" to "O'Neil"
- p. 099—typo fixed, changed "fued" into "feud"
- p. 114—typo fixed, changed "Arnum" to "Arnim"
- p. 122—inserted missing closing quote after "the dogs of war"
- p. 150—typo fixed, changed "exurberant" to "exuberant"
- p. 160—typo fixed, changed "hatheth" to "hateth"
- p. 163—inserted missing closing quote after "the sea maid's music?"
- p. 190—typo fixed, changed "pick" into "prick"
- p. 196—typo fixed, removed an extra word "PAGE"
- p. 203—inserted a missing period after "the Prince of Denmark"
- p. 209—typo fixed, changed "my" into "by"
- p. 216—typo fixed, changed "beauty" into "honesty"
- p. 218—typo fixed, changed "Dump" into "Dumb"
- p. 224—typo fixed, changed "Margaret" into "Gertrude"
- p. 232—typo fixed, changed "deeds" to "weeds"
- p. 237—typo fixed, changed "Armyrn" to "Armin"
- p. 252—typo fixed, changed "speech" to "peace"
- p. 253—typo fixed, changed a closing single quote to a double quote
- p. 254—typo fixed, changed "parent's yes" to "parents' eyes"
- p. 254—inserted a missing comma after "and trades"
- p. 256—inserted a missing period after "quoth I"
- p. 297—typo fixed, changed "mutally" into "mutually"

\*\*\* END OF THE PROJECT GUTENBERG EBOOK SHAKSPERE, PERSONAL RECOLLECTIONS

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