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The Greatest Englishman of History

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If one can find in the speeches of D'Arcy McGee a portrayal of any great figure, it is certain to be striking and impressive. Seventy-two years ago on the occasion of the three hundredth anniversary of Shakespeare's birth this great Canadian said:

"I come as a debtor to acknowledge his accounts to his creditor, as a pupil to pay homage to his master, as a poor relation to celebrate the birthday of the founder of his house, as a good citizen to confess his indebtedness to a great public benefactor, as an hear-at-law to repay, in ever so imperfect a manner, his obligations to a wealthy testator who has left him riches he could never hope to acquire by any labor or exertions of his own."

In such a spirit does every student of Shakespeare approach his shrine. Students he has had, and many, all through his long stretch of time and in every land on earth, but to the rank of student in its proper sense I do not dare to aspire. For half a century I have read his works with the ardor of a devotee, and it is the testimony of a lover rather than the learning of a critic which I desire to bring to you today.

My life, like that of most of you here, has been spent in the busy battlefield of affairs. In literature I am only a layman and it is to laymen alone that I have right to speak. But for years I wanted, and opportunity finally came, to satisfy what seemed a sense of obligation, to reach back among giants of long ago and put my hand in gratitude on the man, who, more than any other of all the bounteous

past, has contributed to make my own life worth while to myself, to bring light and warmth and joy to those pilgrimages of the mind which fill one's quiet hours. What I seek to do is to pay tribute in my own way to him who appears to me to have quaffed most deeply and passed around most generously the very wine of life and to have left to us of later times the richest legacy of all the dead.

This is an age of cinemas and sport. Those diversions on which our fathers thrived are not at all in general acceptance now. It is well to remember that there is no law of inevitable betterment applicable to our races. It should be our constant endeavor to get the most out of our time, for the road downward is easier than the road upward. After all accumulations of wealth and harvests of science, good literature is still our finest possession and reading it vastly the most profitable occupation of our leisure. My hope is to do something, be it ever so little, to re-awaken interest in the very best of its treasures, the writings of William Shakespeare.

It may as well be said quite frankly now that I am not going to moderate my language below the level of unparalleled veneration which I feel for the memory of this man. There are those who say that enthusiasts of Shakespeare are always searching for superlatives and leave their senses by the wayside. Maybe so. Ben Johnson* who lived with him said that he loved him to the very borders of idolatry. I join with hosts of others, who know him only from his works, in the same paean of affection.

Admittedly there are imperfections in his writings; sometimes he was hasty or careless, inartistic in his puns and quibbles, even once in a while inconsistent. But these things are only spots on the sun. They are merely incident to the glorious freedom with which he traversed our world of fact and fancy. He swung through his work with a joyous strength and did not always stop to complete the finishing and polishing.

Let us look first at the biggest fact of all about him. By common consent of leading critics of many nations, by an

*The spelling with "h" is Elizabethan and wholly in keeping with the tone of this marvellous address.

acclaim which can now be said to approach the universal, Shakespeare stands as the greatest intellect of whom we have record in the literature of the world. That I know is an assertion sweeping and challenging, but in support of it one can call an array of witnesses more formidable than was ever gathered to endorse any other verdict given on this earth as to the comparative achievements of men,—Carlyle, Macaulay, Emerson, Browning, Dumas, Goethe, Ruskin, Oliver Wendell Holmes, and behind these the chorus of an unnumbered throng of lovers of literature of any land. No one is loved though just because he is a genius, and we don't read men long unless we like them. We have to look at the elements and attributes of his genius and through both to the man himself.

When we speak of great intellect we at once enquire—Well, what doctrine did he preach? What were his views on religion, or the principles of Government? What light was he able to throw on the overwhelming mystery of existence? I have read and revelled in everything Shakespeare wrote, and I have not found any doctrine that he preached or tried to preach. No man ever known was farther from bondage to theology or dogma or slogan. He had a definite mission. What he lived for was to reveal human life as it is, ourselves, our friends, the high, the low, the great, the little, on fortune's tide, in sorrow's plight, conduct character, and their changes under the buffetings of fate; and this he did with an understanding so luminous, so powerful that it passes the mortal frontiers of admiration, and with a sympathy as boundless as the globe. What makes it of value to us, besides the rich enjoyment we get from it, is this:—We find our interest in our fellow beings quickened, we find it growing broader and deeper and more wholesome. Out of it all we emerge without any particular explanations advanced or special ideas established, but we do feel surer than we ever did it is worth while to live, that there is always at hand an eternal common sense ready for the using which will see us through, and that everywhere there is a right and a wrong, a good and a bad, and that the good is to be loved and the bad to be avoided and deplored.

I do not appeal to busy folks to study Shakespeare. I

just say to you—Read him and enjoy him; read his works over; read the best of, them, or those you like the best, and then read them over again, and keep on. You will discover that each time you like them better, that each time you get more out of them. There is nourishment for mind and soul rich and various all along his shores. You will find yourself gaining possession of a storehouse which is adding light and charm to your every day existence. You will find yourself thinking more of your species, more of your friends and more of your enemies. You will realize that this man understood all of them; that he saw to the very depths of all of them; that he did not hate them but loved them, and that he loved them, if for no other reason, just because they were part of the great panorama and that every one of them added something to the astounding spectacle of creation. There never has been anything in all history more engaging than the fathomless sympathy of Shakespeare.

If he does not come to you with a solution of the riddle of existence, you will never conclude that he has not explored and wrested with this problem, as, of course, everyone has. No mind ever travelled farther than his into the darkness. He sailed all the seas of human thought and encountered all the storms, and saw the great miracle more closely than did any man of whom we have record. So truly splendid and majestic is his vision that he seems at times to be expressing an inner and infinite harmony of the Universe itself. But whatever his subject, whatever stage he mounts, he is immediately master of the scene. As soon as he enters an arena his mind sets everything in order and it is not the order of the trim garden or the carefully elaborated show, it is the order of Nature herself.

What I want earnestly to impress is this: that in Shakespeare sheer intellect is the essence, but only the essence of his genius. It is adorned by a generosity of character, by a magnanimity which makes his mind a very heaven of hospitality. You like to go with him on his excursions. You know that you will have lots of joy and lots of tears and though you may come back a mystic, you certainly will not come back a cynic.

The rest of what I have to say will be less general and

less analytical. Its purpose will be to have you enjoy some of the more obvious values of this man's productions, some things nearer the surface and to be found on any one of hundreds out of thousands of his pages.

It is a wonderful thing just to watch in operation his powers of expression. In doing so never forget that while language is the vehicle of thought it is a great deal more. It is part of the texture: It is inseparable from thought itself. Nobody says things in the Shakespearian way, because nobody thinks in quite the Shakespearian way. Similes come trooping to his pen because his mind sees myriads of objects in their relations and in their unity.

All of us have felt at times the sting of ingratitude, a sense of despair over love's labors lost. But who ever expressed such a feeling in terms so arresting and with an appeal so memorable as did Cardinal Wolsey in his famous monologue in Henry VIII. The Cardinal, after long years of service, had been abandoned by his King:

"Farewell! a long farewell, to all my greatness!
This is the state of man: today he puts forth
The tender leaves of hope, tomorrow blossoms,
And bears his blushing honors thick upon him;
The third day comes a frost, a killing frost;

. . . .

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, at the mercy
Of a rude stream, that must forever hide me.
Vain pomp and glory of this world, I hate ye:
O how wretched
Is that poor man who hangs on princes' favors!

. . . .

And when he falls, he falls like Lucifer,
Never to hope again."

H. viii, iii, Sc.2.

Some people question the authorship of parts of "King Henry VIII." I cannot believe that anyone but Shakespeare ever wrote those lines. Think of that comparison to a boy swimming on a bladder. One of the things that has always amazed me in his power to take a commonplace incident like that and weave it into the fabric of the finest poetry.

You and I have mused a hundred times on a tendency of the masses to turn on their heroes, to cheer for the latest victor just because he is a victor. There is no better told story anywhere to illustrate this frailty than one given in "Julius Cæsar." Pompey, a popular idol, has been crushed and Caesar returns to Rome a conquerer to receive what they called a triumph. This is how a tribune addressed those Roman crowds:

"Oh you hard hearts, you cruel men of Rome,
Knew you 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 an 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 call out a holiday?
And do you now strew flowers in his way,
That comes in triumph over Pompey's blood?"

J. C. I. Sc.1

A poet's great gifts, of course, must be creative. Shakespeare created by delineation until his dramas seemed to reproduce every possible experience. This was his incomparable power, but in the execution of his task what a master he was of the choice of words! There are some so precious just where they are placed that they are simply unforget-

able. Macbeth, conscious stricken, after a murder, sees the blood of Duncan on his hands:

"Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood
Clean from my hand? No; this my hand will rather
The multitudinous seas incarnadine,
Making the green—one red."
Macbeth, II, Sc.2

One of the best speakers who ever addressed this Club described that word "incarnadine" as nothing less than a triumph. The adjective "multitudinous" as applied to the ocean is even more conspicuously right.

Some years ago I found it impossible for weeks to recall in exact terms a sentence of Cleopatra which had struck me on reading as peculiarly perfect and worth remembering. The Egyptian Queen had put into a terse phrase her determination to be constant, unshakeable of purpose, and said the moon was no model for her because it moved and was not a fixed star. I tried off and on for days to express her idea, the substance of which I remembered perfectly, but all my efforts produced only a puny second best. At last the Shakespearian original returned and this is it:

" —from head to foot
I am marble-constant; now the fleeting moon
No planet is of mine."
A. & C. V. Sc.2, 241.

Speaking of Cleopatra, will anyone ever again dash off an apostrophe to a conquerer like the one she spoke over the dead body of Anthony?

"His legs bestrid the ocean: his rear'd arm
Crested the world; his voice was propertied
As all the tuned spheres."
A. & C. V, Sc.2.

Even this did not mean as much to Shakespeare as the tribute he had Antony lay on the tomb of Brutus. In it

Brutus was proclaimed a gentleman, the highest praise an Englishman can bestow:

His life was gentle; and the elements
So mixt in him, that Nature might stand up
And say to all the world, "This was a man!"
J. C. V., Sc.5 (*ad fin.*)

Simple and beautiful! It has been on the lips of orators since the days of Addison. Where it should be is engraved on the tomb of the poet himself.

There was no aspiration of the human spirit that he did not understand and share. He knew the longing of every natural man, especially every stricken man, to be kindly remembered after death. This is from the last dying words of Hamlet, spoken to his friend Horatio:

"If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart,
Absent thee from felicity awhile,
And in this harsh world draw thy breath in pain,
To tell my story."
Ham., V., Sc.5 (*ad fin.*)

There is a glorious abundance in his powers of definition and description. Analogies roll into his mind from everywhere like rivers into an ocean. He may come to the same subject over and over again but his treatment will always be fresh and different. It will be the same topic but gleaming and glowing in a new attire. We all remember his encomium of sleep:

"Sleep that knits up the ravell'd sleave 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."
Macb. ii, Sc.2.

What a princely procession of similes!

At another place King Henry V. complains that the poorest slave gets more of this blessing than he does:

"—thou proud dream,
That plays so subtly with a king's repose:
I am a king that find thee; and I know
'Tis not the balm, the sceptre, and the ball,
The sword, the mace, the crown imperial,
The intertissued robe of gold and pearl,
The farced title running 'fore the king,
The throne he sits on, nor the tide of pomp
That beats upon the high shore of this world,—
No, not all these, thrice-gorgeous ceremony,
Not all these, laid in bed majestical,
Can sleep so soundly as the wretched slave."

H. 5, Act IV, Sc.1.

On still another occasion King Henry IV. finds himself in the same predicament. He discovers that a sailor boy even outside in a thunderstorm sleeps perfectly well while he, the King, wanders around torn with care. We marvel at the versatility with which the dramatist swings off into another sector and drives home the same truth again. The quotation I give you now has always impressed me as one of the noblest flights of poetry.

"How many thousand of my poorest subjects
Are at this hour asleep! O sleep; O gentle sleep!
Nature's soft nurse, how have I frightened thee,
That thou no more wilt weigh mine eyelids down,
And steep my senses in forgetfulness?
Why rather, sleep, liest thou in smoky cribs, ,
Upon uneasy pallets stretching thee,
And husht with buzzing night-flies to thy slumber,
Than in the perfumed chambers of the great,
Under the canopies of costly state,
And lulled with sounds of sweetest melody?
Wilt thou upon the high and giddy mast
Seal up the ship-boy's eyes, and rock his brains
In cradle of the rude imperious surge,
And in the visitation of the winds,

. . . .

Canst thou, O partial sleep, give thy repose
To the wet sea-boy in an hour so rude;
And in the calmest and most stillest night

. . . .

Deny it to a king? Then, happy low, lie down!
Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown."

1 H. 4, III. 1.

A famous American has made this fine observation:—After finishing a play, he says, one would think all subjects, cogitations, by-paths of mortal interest had been exhausted, but the next play opens like the dewy gates of another day.

The rapturous strength of the man imports to his readers an exhilaration. There is no straining, no tiring. In method he is always distinctive, invigorating, resourceful.

Owen Glendower was boasting that earthquakes and other prodigies accompanied his birth; the front of heaven, he said, was filled with fiery shapes, and argued from this that he was a person extraordinary—not in the roll of common men. Hot-spur sets out to explain that earthquakes are natural events—and this is how he does it:

"Diseased Nature oftentimes breaks forth
In strange eruptions; oft the teeming earth
Is with a kind of colic pincht and vext
By the imprisoning of unruly wind
Within her womb; which, for enlargement striving,
Shakes the old beldam earth, and topples down
Steeples and moss-grown towers. At your birth
Old grandam earth, having this distemperature,
In passion shook."

1 H. 4, III. 1.

If ever there was a passage definitely Shakespearian, it is that.

With him Comedy and Tragedy walk hand in hand just as they do in life, and of both he is a consummate master. He has created as much human interest in Falstaff as in Caesar—Falstaff, a corpulent, sunny-souled mountebank who trifles with truth, who exudes wit as he drips with perspiration and "lards the lean earth as he walks along."

His characters are faithfully men and women, not caricatures; so their views and moralizings change under pressure of events. Richard II. was quite emphatic about the divine right of Kings as long as he was a King:

"Not all the waters of the rough rude sea
Can wash the balm from an anointed king;
The breath of worldly men cannot depose
The deputy elected by the Lord."

Rich. 2, III.2.

But when Bolingbroke defeated him his philosophy took another color:

" —of comfort no man speak:
Let's talk of graves, of worms, and epitaphs;
for
—nothing can we call our own but death."

ibid.

The poor dejected King then comes to that superb soliloquy which most of you, I fancy, are anticipating right now. I will give it in a moment. Abraham Lincoln used to read these plays in bed at night. Once he got up, wandered through the White House corridors in his long nightdress, book in hand, woke up his secretary, John Hay, and read him these lines:

" —let us sit down upon the ground,
And tell sad stories of the death of kings:—
How some have been deposed; some slain in war;
Some haunted by the ghosts they have deposed;
Some poison'd by their wives; some sleeping kill'd,
All murder'd:—for within the hollow crown
That rounds the mortal temples of a king
Keeps Death his court; and there the antick sits,
Scoffing his state, and grinning at his pomp;
Allowing him a breath, a little scene,
To monarchize, be fear'd, and kill with looks;

. . . .

As if this flesh, which walls about our life,
Were brass impregnable; and humor'd thus,
Comes at the last, and with a little pin
Bores through his castle wall, and—farewell king!"

R. 2, III. ii. 155 ff.

An American critic has expressed the opinion that there is more meaning wrapt up in the short proverb I shall give you now than in any other single sentence:

"Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds."
And yet how simple!

Sonnet 116.

There is another so pregnant and inspiring that we shall keep it ringing in our ears for life:

" Yield not thy neck
To fortune's yoke, but let the dauntless mind
Still ride in triumph over all mischance."

In "Measure for Measure" Claudio is being put to the test as to whether he will give up his life to save the honor of his sister. Skilful arguments are advanced to persuade him. Claudio is impressed, but ventures to put forward a view against embracing death. At this point Shakespeare comes right to the verge of the unknown and looks down into its darkness. He does not know what is there and his mind plays in fancy's field with an exuberance which is all his own:

"Ay, 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 region of thick-ribbed ice ;
To be imprison'd in the viewless winds,
And blown with restless violence round about
The pendent world;

'T'is 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.'" '

M. for M. III, ii.

No one should close an appreciation of Shakespeare without giving his hearers those truly magnificent outbursts of poetic fervor—two of them in number—in which this great Elizabethan seer has reached by unanimous acclaim the very loftiest heights. The first is from "The Merchant of Venice," where Lorenzo is interpreting to Jessica the oneness of our life on earth with the eternal scheme of things, the universal concord of creation:

"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 behold'st
But in his motion like an angel sings,
Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubins,—
Such harmony is in immortal souls
But whilst this muddy vesture of decay
Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it."

Poetry sublime!

The other is from almost the last and perhaps the most perfect of his plays, "The Tempest." What I shall quote you now was never intended as a scientific hypothesis but is strangely in accord with beliefs of scholars in this twentieth century. Its closing lines clung to the rugged intellect of Carlyle and were many times repeated by him in the last years of his life. I found them about a year ago, inscribed on a plaster scroll, held by the hand of Shakespeare in a statue of the poet at Melbourne.

"The cloud capp'd 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 rack behind. We are such stuff
As dreams are made on; and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep."

Tempest. IV. i.

Twice I have mentioned Carlyle. The nineteenth century produced no mind more searching or realistic. His life was devoted to study. Once when past the three score years and ten, a Miss Bacon was at his home—probably a far down relative of the great Sir Francis. She intimated in conversation that perhaps after all Bacon had written these Shakesperian plays. "It would have been just as easy," said Carlyle, "for Francis Bacon to have created this planet as to have written 'Hamlet'." Later on the old sage of Chelsea said something more:—"This man Shakespeare," he said, "knew more about animals, plants and all the visible world a hundred times over than I do. How—how did he learn it?" When Carlyle said that, he was seventy-seven. Shakespeare died at fifty-two.

Who was this man?—this man acknowledged now by two hundred million people as the architect of their language, who at any rate shares that honor with the translators of the Bible: this man who became, says De Quincey, the glory of the human intellect: this man on whose forehead, says Elizabeth Barrett Browning, there climbed the crowns of all the world: this man who in the concept of D'Arcy McGee, planted his compasses in his own age and with them swept the circumference of time. Who was this man? He was the son of a Warwickshire peasant. He has told us much of others, but very little of himself. He kept no diary, did not live for his biography, did not even think it worth while to record the date of his birth. Born of old England's middle class he took his place in youth among the myriads of her children, no favorite of fortune except in his brain and gladsome heart. Back from the ancestors of his father and of his mother of the lovely name,—Mary

Arden—there came, there must have come to him the richest strains of English blood, for never was man born in that Island more truly an Englishman than he. Confident he was of fame as shown by his sonnets, and zealous to deserve it, but unbelievably careless in making certain that the foundations of that fame were preserved. He took no pains to publish his writings, did not even collect them, was content with a misprinted "Hamlet" and an interpolated "Othello," but strained every effort to secure for his family a coat of arms, that he might enjoy in law, as he merited in nature, the coveted title of gentleman. Years after his death, two others under no obligation took it upon themselves to gather the scattered and deserted children of his brain, and thus saved for the healing of the nations the finest flower and fruit of the human mind. After having earned by long years of toil a place on the highest mountain of remembrance he neglected to confirm his seat and muddled through to immortality.

Tolerant to a fault of others, an admirer of other nations—and in these respects again exhibiting qualities characteristic of his people—he was none the less splendidly English in his patriotism, and never did his verse ring with a deeper sincerity than when he sang of

> "This precious stone set in the silver sea,
>
> . . . .
>
> This land of such dear souls, this dear, dear land,—"

or of her soldiers

> "Whose arms were moulded in their mother's womb"

and

> "—whose limbs were made in England."

True to the genious of his race, Shakespeare was a chivalrous and consistent champion of the Reign of Law. Read the oration of Ulysses on this subject in "Troilus and Cressida." Opinions, of course, imparted to his characters cannot be attributed to himself, but nevertheless his own principles shine through. He believed in respect for authority and a just seniority of station as essential to the whole plan of civilized society.

Like his people also, he knew no vindictiveness; his soul was aglow with a happy perennial humor, and he faithfully portrayed his countrymen as fortified with this unconquerable grace against all vicissitudes and saved by it even in their blunders.

He was English too in the reverence of his reaction to the profundities and mysteries of life, and in the attraction these subjects had for his mind. And just as surely he was English in his practical commonsense views on the day to day problems of living, in his distrust of theories and the exactions of logic, in his conviction that it was actions and not axioms that counted and in his enthronement of conduct as above all else, above ideas and above beliefs.

Then again, he had no freak habits, no eccentricities such as are usually attributed to genius. He was jovial, even convivial, joyous in company, contemplative even to sadness in solitude, and would have liked himself to be described as he described another—a plain blunt man who loved his friend. He paid his way, depended on no one but himself, insisted on his legal rights, made money because he produced best sellers, provided well for his family and retired in comparative wealth to his country home at Stratford to spend the evening of his days. In all this there is something that smacks of England. Yes, English were the traits he possessed and he possessed them in super-quality and superabundance. True enough, as if so often said, Shakespeare belongs to the world, but it was England that gave him to the world and it was no exotic that she gave; it was an English product through and through. This is not to say that geography has special significance. He is the pride, in just right, of the entire Celtic Anglo-Saxon race. But if it be true, and it is, that what really makes a nation is a heritage of common memories, common exploits, common sufferings, then surely he is the peculiar and immortal pride of that great country, of whose children he is the all-expressive voice, in the book and volume of whose memories, achievements, traditions, he takes the noblest and the sovereign role.

His name is honored now in every quarter of the globe. It is written first on the scroll of fame in country after

country that he never saw, in nations which in his day were still unborn, and in continents which were then unknown. Pilgrims in tens of thousands journey yearly to his tomb.

It is said that as a young fellow on the streets of London, to earn an honest shilling it was his custom to hold horses outside a theatre for patrons who were listening to plays. Many a grateful admirer, in the generations who since then have come and gone, has tried to look back across the centuries to that figure in the dark lonely lane, to picture the well-knit form, the kindly face, eloquent with intelligence, and behind, the brain rejoicing in the morning of its promise, and then to think that there was the lad whose name and fame would one day be more precious to England than all her other possessions. Is there a privilege in the realm of fancy which any of us would more dearly prize than to be allowed to transpose himself on time's dial plate back to those distant and now hallowed years, to take his place on a London thoroughfare and watch the approach of this man of destiny, or at a by-path on the Thames where he sometimes tramped to attend a play called "Hamblet," to see him walking by, buoyant, reflective, benign, the pointed beard, the classic brow, showing equal courtesy to high and low, and to realize that there was passing there the intellectual monarch of his era, the King of England's Kings?

These delights cannot unfortunately be ours, save in a land of dreams—but into that land how many have wandered just to indulge such visions. With a reality, though, with a fulness of reality which commands a gratitude more than we can utter. Shakespeare is with us still. The bounty of his overflowing mind is open to us all. It has spread to the alcoves of every library and reposes, let us hope, on the mantel-piece of every home. "God forbid," said Coleridge, "that these plays will ever fall dead on human hearts," and may the time never come, especially to us his heirs in direct descent, when lighter preoccupations and alluring diversions of fleeting value will lead us into habits of neglect unworthy the priceless treasure which this the greatest of Englishmen has bequeathed to the sons of men.