

void. These materials being denied, there is nothing to fall back upon but his incomparable genius, marvellous conception, mimetic power and wonderful invention, which are foolishness and a stumbling-block to the "Baconian Theorists," who consider it simply preposterous and absurd that the matchless works known by his name, plays the most philosophical in the English language, should have been written by a man whose life is so obscure, and who was so utterly negligent of his writings that he neither collected nor edited them! Granted—the fact is melancholic—never mind. What knowledge have we of Homer's life? None! Some placing him either in David or Solomon's reign—others affirming that he was begot of a Genius in the isle of Io, and born of a virgin, who died upon giving birth to the child, who was brought up by Mæon, King of the Lydians. His obscured life has not obscured his writings. The *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* have outlived the walls of Troy. Not one word of his everlasting writings has been lost since the days of Pisistratus, though they were not collected and published during the author's life, but were merely sung and retained by memory. The writings of both Homer and Shakspeare, "like a mighty ship, have passed over the sea of time, not leaving a mere ideal track, which soon altogether disappears, but leaving a train of glory in its wake, present and enduring, daily acting upon our minds, and ennobling us by grand thoughts and images."

I conjure my readers not to let "Shakspeare be hurled from his throne, and made to abdicate or give up the sceptre of that glorious kingdom of English letters over which he has for nearly three hundred years ruled supreme," by a free-thinking scoffer like Nathaniel Holmes, without carefully examining into the qualifications of the "usurper Bacon."

Many other points are touched on in the course of the book which will be found of real interest by all lovers of Shakspeare. We will, however, give but one more quotation, showing a few of the Warwickshire provincialisms which are to be found in the play.

"My blood," says Othello, "begins my safer guide to rule, and passion *obscures* my best judgment;" and I feel similarly oppressed in having to write so very much to prove what scarcely demands proof for those who have impartially and carefully read and reflected on the writings of these two great men. I feel a sort of ill humour rising up within me at the "monstrous labor" I have given myself, and the waste of time it will be to my readers in pursuing the subject any further—yet there may be some who may want to make "assurance doubly sure," and to whom other arguments might not be amiss.

The first translation of the Bible into the vernacular was that by William Tyndale, a Gloucestershire man, who considered his native vocabulary

more significant and equally as elegant as those polysyllabic expressions derived from the language of ancient Rome. The Tyndale and Coverdale Bible of 1535, which our forefathers welcomed so warmly, and suffered so much for, is the basis of the 1611 edition now in common use. The vernacular dialect of the Cotswold district of Gloucestershire and that of the Stratford district of Warwickshire is very similar. Any one familiar with it, and with his Bible and his Shakspeare, must have noticed how many words and expressions used by Tyndale in his translation, and by our poet in his plays, are to this day commonly used by the peasantry of Gloucester and Warwick shires, some of whom have never read a line of Shakspeare, and are only familiar with the Bible through the services of that Church where the daily lessons and the psalms are read in pure English. This I can testify from having been partially educated in the village upon whose "knowl" stands a monument, erected since my school days, to the memory of the martyr who, on the 6th day of October, 1536, perished at the stake for translating that edition of the New Testament which he had promised to give to the ploughboys of Gloucestershire.

From a most delightful book, which ought to be in the library of every lover of Shakspeare, written by James Walter, and entitled "*Shakspeare's Home and Rural Life*," with illustrations of localities and scenes around Stratford-on-Avon by the heliotype process, I have taken the following excerpts because they are so apt and conclusive for my argument, and better express what I know and feel on the subject than any words of mine could:

"John R. Wise, who has discoursed sweetly, and with profound knowledge and appreciation of the great poet, has carefully noted his use of Warwickshire provincialisms and allusions to his native county; as also the more striking phrases found in his plays, and which are still to be heard in the mouths of the Warwickshire peasantry, who now, more than anybody else

"Speak the tongue
That Shakspeare spake."

"If Shakspeare's own style and manner, which is undoubtedly the case, has had a marked influence on subsequent writers, and even on the English language itself, still his native county left some traces of its dialect even upon him.

"Johnson, himself born in a neighbouring county, first pointed out that the expression 'a mankind witch,' in the 'Winter's Tale,' (Act II., scene 3) was a phrase in the midland counties for a violent woman. And Malone, too, showed that the singular expression in the 'Tempest' (Act I. scene 2), 'we cannot miss him,' was a provincialism of the same district. It is not asserted that certain phrases and expressions are to be found nowhere else but in Shakspeare and Warwickshire. But it is interesting to know that the Warwickshire girls still speak of their 'long purples' and 'love in idleness'; and that the Warwickshire boys have not forgotten their 'deadmen's fingers'; and that the 'nine mens morris' is still played on the cor_n.