

It will, perhaps, be urged that, in a period of such national moment, the patriotism of Shakespeare might have found expression in the great issues of the day, notably those which culminated in the defeat of the Armada; but we must remember that the noise of popular excitement and the very nearness of the events had not yet suffused them with that halo of distance and romance on which dramatic art can best play. It may be, too, that current etiquette and the imperious wishes of the great Queen and even of her successor forbade the dramatizing of events in which high policy of the day was involved. It is at least a generous inference, on a likely basis of fact—the more likely because the poet's patriotism does not rest upon inference alone. We cannot say, but we can believe, that, had death not claimed him while yet the shadows of evening had barely begun to fall around, he would, in later years, have immortalized Drake and the great adventure in epic verse.

The chivalrous element in Patriotism allows, indeed commands, admiration of the like quality in men of a different nation or a different race. When Shakespeare pictured Brutus' scorn of bribery he showed what patriotism implies; and when he put these words into the mouth of the great patrician: "Who is here so rude that would not be a Roman? . . . Who is here so vile that will not love

his country?" he not only stated the historic pride in Roman citizenship, but, subjectively, he commended the high virtue in those throughout the world who have the soul to appreciate it.

Shakespeare was no soldier to lead armies to battle for his country's cause; but he wrote great enduring words of loyalty. Quiet influences are indeed the most potent; the pen is mightier than the sword! the still small voice is a greater power than the earthquake or the whirlwind, and the immortal word of a poet of high vision is a greater leaven in the life that counts than the strident voice.

The title of this short essay presumes a reference to patriotism, not only in the poet's works but in his personal life. Our love of birthplace, of hearth and home is a cameo of our larger national outlook; and it is a sure proof of Shakespeare's patriotic feeling that, while yet in the summer of his years, a man with an honourable competence and in high public esteem, he returned to make his permanent home in scenes hallowed by the fragrant memories of boyhood, and, imbued with the dignity of the English gentleman, sought and obtained armorial bearings and gave himself to public usefulness.

William Shakespeare was a world genius and a "patriot bard."



Shakespeare's Birthplace—Stratford-on-Avon—Visited by thousands of Canadian Soldiers.