

"Mechanic slaves
With greasy aprons, rules, and hammers shall
Uplift us to the view; in their thick breaths,
Rank of gross diet, shall we be enclouded,
And forced to drink their vapour."

The references to drinking usages, moreover, are scattered plentifully through all his dramas, and intensified by the most homely and familiar illustrations, but without a single reference indicative of smoking usages; though various passages occur strikingly suggestive of such allusions, had the practice been as familiar as it became in those of younger contemporaries who survived him. In "Much Ado About Nothing," Borachio tells Don John: "being entertained for a pertumer, as I was smoking a musty room, comes in the Prince and Claudio hand in hand, in sad conference." (Act I. Scene III.) Again in "Romeo and Juliet," Romeo thus speaks of brawling love:—

"O anything, of nothing first created!
O heavy lightness! Serious vanity!
Mis-shapen chaos of well seeming forms!
Feather of lead, *bright smoke, cold fire, sick health!*"

And again in the same scene he exclaims:—

"Love is a smoke made with the fume of sighs."

If, as Malone infers from a satire of Sir John Davis, and other early notices, tobacco was smoked by the wits and gallants on the English stage, before the close of the sixteenth century, it is difficult to evade the conclusion that such similes may have derived their force from the tobacco fumes which rose visibly in sight of the audience. These allusions and similes, however, have perhaps more resemblance in verbal form, than in embodied fancy, to the ideas now suggested; and may be deemed, after all, sufficiently independent of the smoker's "cloud" to involve no necessary association with it, even had such been familiar to the poet; but it seems to me scarcely possible that Shakespeare could have retained unmodified the language of Lady Macbeth, in the conclusion of the first act of "Macbeth,"—one of the productions of his later years,—had the fumes of tobacco been so associated with wine and wassail, as they were within a very few years after the date of that wonderful drama. Encouraging her husband to "screw his courage to the sticking place," she says:—

"His two chamberlains
Will I with wine and wassail so convince,
That memory, the warder of the brain,
Shall be a fume, and the receipt of reason
A limbeck only."