

STRATFORD-ON-AVON.

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"Good frend, for Iesvs sake forbear
To digg y^e dust enclosed heare :
Blest be y^e man y^t spares thes stones
And evrst be he y^t moves my bones."

THE pilgrim to the tomb of Shakspeare must go, not as the Chinese philosopher might have expected, to Westminster Abbey, but to Stratford-on-Avon, the place of his birth, of his youthful days, of his later years of retirement, of his death, and—if his blessing is still to be sought by the generations to come—the place, too, of his dust until the last trump.

And it is absolutely fitting. For the words of Washington Irving are true with regard to all that is covered by the name of this Stratford—"the mind refuses to dwell on anything that is not connected with Shakspeare . . . the whole place seems but as his mausoleum." For there is but one name to be thought on, one only to be suggested by everything seen and heard from the time coach or train drops the degenerate pilgrim at the sound of the magic name "Stratford-on-Avon!" until the last hill that looks down on the sacred fields is lost in the distance. And ever after Memory will deal kindly with the pilgrim in his reminiscent moods, and at the slightest call throw on the screen again the whole blessed picture, and again fill the heart with the feelings of that ever memorable time. Let memory now do her work for a little: and our feet find again the path broadened and deepened by three centuries of pilgrims since the day that Shakspeare was first "discovered" and his haunts began to be sought.

Providence was good to him in the environment within which his early life was to be developed. Since native home must be ever sweet, how inexpressibly so must it be to one whose formative days are passed amid such fair scenes as fed his early fancy, of hill and lowland and wood and river. Set in the South West of Warwickshire, "the heart of England," there is no place within that shire, or indeed in all England, whose associations are more rich; whose beauty is more satisfying, and whose spirit is more restful and yet inspiring, than the quiet, unassuming little town