

in his possession is the 'bloomin' ass' who loses it to the schemers and the borrowers who stand around apparently waiting for the chance to grab what others by hard toil have saved.

"Hence, I have said many times, if you have a few dollars to invest put it into a life assurance policy in almost any good company and I will guarantee you will never have reason to call yourself 'a bloomin' ass' on that account."

Shakespeare.

"The noblest man
That ever lived in the tide of times."

Shakespeare's Parentage.

Of late years a number of attempts have been made to prove that Shakespeare did not write the works attributed to him. Those who have made these attempts to dethrone Shakespeare have rested their case largely upon the claim

that he was of ignoble birth and inferior education, and therefore could not have produced the plays.

If we read over the history of English literature, we will find that genius has no necessary connection with blue blood. But even if gentle birth were a condition of genius, Shakespeare would not be



"KING HENRY V."

disqualified, for he was well-born. John Shakespeare and Mary Arden, the parents of the poet, were well-to-do, and, although their wealth took wings later in their lives, they occupied a good position for their time and were of some local distinction. Altogether it seems to me that Shakespeare anticipated Robert Ingersoll's advice, and choose his parents wisely.

Bernard Shaw has said some things about Shakespeare that are of questionable value, but he is nearer the truth than the Baconians when he says, "Shakespeare was not an illiterate, poaching laborer who came up to London to be a horseboy, but a gentleman, with all the social pretensions of our higher bourgeoisie."

Shakespeare's Education.

As to Shakespeare's education, it was certainly substantial. It is true that he did not enjoy a university training, as did several of his rivals and contemporaries. In fact, when he came into competition with these university-trained playwrights, it was evident that he was their inferior in scholastic attainments, although he was just as obviously their superior in every other qualification that goes to make the dramatic poet. He was by no means, however, an unlettered man. It was said of him that he knew little Latin and less Greek. This probably meant that he knew at least some Latin and some Greek, and was not, therefore, the ignorant boor that some too enthusiastic supporters of the Baconian theory have claimed. He was trained at an old-time grammar-school, probably remained there until he was about the age of fourteen. With such a mind as this limited opportunity would mean more than a university degree and a tour of Europe then would mean to an average man. It is not the school but the scholar that counts. Moreover, it is far from evident that the want of higher education was a disadvantage to him in the end. Indeed, to have escaped the university may have been the salvation of his genius and in this way—had he studied at the university he would have been probably a stupid imitator in after life of classical models, and would have been restrained from writing



"HAMLET."