

would have done on discovering the deception. Would he have wreaked vengeance on the lovers?—he was young and valiant—but no, he is too noble, and loved Juliet too much for that. Or would he have drowned his love in “war’s wild alarms”? He certainly would not have tamely submitted to his fate, and devoured his bitter grief alone: that would not be poetical nor Shakspearian. Scott, indeed, who has given us the proud, gloomy, Roderick Dhu, and who resembles Shakspeare in depicting character and in the possession of a shrewd, keen common sense, always guiding him right, however surrounded by the romantic or pathetic, says, in one of his novels that most men can look back to some period of their youth in which a sincere and early affection was repulsed or betrayed or rendered abortive under opposing circumstances, little episodes which leave a tinge of romance in every bosom, and allow us never to listen with indifference to a tale of true love. I trow, such could not have been the case with Paris or Romeo; that would not have been the Shakspearian ideal of a lover; with him, especially in those characters held up for approbation, love is deep, sudden and irresistible, as it is natural, noble, and outspoken—a pure all engrossing flame kindled at the shrine of the unsullied soul, none else he deems worthy the name, and well he knows how to distinguish the genuine from the counterfeit article. In Romeo we have probably an example of both; his wire drawn conceits and extravagant declamations are the exponents of his fancied love for Rosaline, but when the true, deep passion seizes him there are no more exaggerated similies; even the news of her death wrings from him merely, “then, stars, I defy you.” His resolution is sudden and determined, and he speaks in a business-like manner as becomes a matter of so vital interest. Here, then, we have, a

genuine Shakspearian love story, without equal in all the domains of fiction. It may not be amiss to enumerate here some of the characteristics of his lovers, both male and female. All are straightforward, honest and honorable; his young men are gentlemen, all, whose characters might be studied with profit by men of the present day. Gay or sad, they are high spirited and manly young fellows, but few of them given to excessive rollicking or drinking, all are vigorous, healthy, brave, generous, natural and affectionate; men who do not merely write “sonnets to their mistress’ eye-brows,” but who are able and ready to climb walls, wrestle, fight tyrants, breast the waves, or lead a column, whose hearts nothing can lacerate, unless a woman be concerned, for Shakspeare’s pages show the truth of Milton’s grim pun:

“The tenor of man’s woes is still from woman to begin.”

and well is it for the devoted youth if some Friar Lawrence can be found with herbs of sufficient potency to heal the wounds made by a Juliet. Though Shakspeare derives man’s chief and most frequent woes from the daughters of Eve, he is by no means their enemy, on the contrary, no poet treats them with more gentleness and scrupulous care, indeed he is truly a woman’s poet. No other writer has drawn her in such various characters, all true in their kind, and none has placed her on so lofty a pedestal; the foremost and indeed only great English dramatist, as a delineator of female character he stands alone in the world. We might search in vain through the dominion of all literature, ancient and modern, for the counterpart of the beautiful creations of his pen. The ancients, after all is said, were, compared to him, mere barbarians. In all Greek literature we find no real domestic life; the presence of woman but rarely graces the scenes, except in such disagreeable