

Regular Drama, contain information laboriously sifted from innumerable trustworthy sources, while the pages devoted to the consideration of the lives and works of Shakspeare's predecessors, and of the later Elizabethan dramatists, are from the very nature of the subject, no less than from the skill of the writer, full of vivid interest. The analysis of the plots, and the comments on the style and characters of the plays of the various authors, cannot fail to be of the highest value in directing students of both sexes what to select for reading, and what to avoid, in the prolific Dramatic Literature whose treasures are disclosed to their eyes.

About two hundred and fifty pages are taken up with Shakspeare and his works, and a useful account is given of the tests to be applied in endeavouring to fix approximately the chronological order of the unrivalled plays. Ben Jonson seems to be a great favourite with Professor Ward, and the reasons which justify his admiration are stated with remarkable lucidity and critical acumen.

Having recently had occasion to censure a writer for having (in his book entitled *Bacon versus Shakspeare*,) traduced the fair fame of one of Shakspeare's greatest friends and admirers, we may be pardoned by our readers for quoting from Professor Ward's first volume the following corroboration of our views: "It may indeed be questioned whether the long-prevalent notion of Jonson as a quarrelsome egotist would have maintained itself *had it not been for the perverse ingenuity which endeavoured to fasten on his memory the charge of a consuming jealousy against the greatest of all his contemporaries.* While on the one hand, we cannot permit ourselves to give absolute credence to most of the pleasant traditions concerning the personal intimacy between Ben Jonson and Shakspeare—and pleasant they nearly all are—it must, on the other hand, be asserted that the supposed proofs of Jonson's malignity against Shakspeare as a writer, have collapsed before a close enquiry into their foundation. The very fact of his having been invited to write the verses, *To the memory of my beloved Master William Shakspeare, and what he hath left us*, (which were printed with Jonson's name under the portrait of Shakspeare prefixed to the First Folio) shows the light in which