

Robert Chambers has generously paid over to Mrs. Begg, the surviving sister of the poet Burns, the sum of £200; being the first profits derived from his *Life and edition of the Works of the poet*.

A SHAKSPEARIAN EPITAPH.

According to a recent correspondent of the *Athenæum*, there is an epitaph in Tongue Church, Shropshire, ascribed in positive terms to Shakspeare, by William Dugdale, in his *Visitation Book*. It is on Sir Thomas Stanley, who died about 1600:—

“Not monumental stone preserves our fame,
Nor sky-aspiring pyramids our name.
The memory of him for whom this stands
Shall outlive marble and defacer's hands.
When all to time's consumption shall be given,
Stanley, for whom this stands, shall stand in heaven.”

REYNOLDS' SKETCH BOOKS.

Among the various art-treasures accruing to this continent, the *Athenæum* thus comments on one acquisition in terms that seem to indicate our neighbours in the States have borne off from the dispersion of the Rogers' collection, only “an empty oyster shell!” Its interest, however, is considerable when regarded biographically, whatever be its actual artistic value, and on this account we may refer to it now that it is to be at so accessible a distance as New York.

“Sir Joshua Reynolds used to regret he had not enjoyed the advantages of an academical education in his youth, and always felt that he was unable to draw. The difficulties he laboured under are very apparent in three curious little books recently sold at the Rogers' sale. Two of them were the sketch-books Reynolds used in Italy, and contain notes and sketches of some of the most celebrated pictures and works of art, together with records of dates, places, travelling expenses, and frequent memoranda of colour. They were purchased by Rogers at the sale of the painter's effects, and are now on their way to America, where they can only be valued as having been the actual property of our great painter. Many of the pages, containing merely lead-pencil outlines, display such weak and uncertain drawing as a child would produce, rather than the notes of an experienced artist. Where broad shadow occurs the power of Reynolds may be seen. He worked in masses, not lines, and it is curious, where he was confined to the latter, to observe how he proceeded, adding one line upon the other until he arrived at something like his intention. He floundered, and was anything but academic. These peculiarities, however, were a part of the man, and never thoroughly overcome. In studying the individual artist they form an inseparable part of his character, and afford an insight into his mind. By these books we observe what pictures, scenes, and objects he thought most worthy of treasuring in his memory, and therefore it is to be regretted that they have passed so far from us into private hands where they become mere curiosities. He frequently designed and completed his composition on one and the same canvas, so that the masterly brush strokes at last concealed the wavering pencilings of the beginner. Such weaknesses are not discreditable to Reynolds; and it would be a pity for those who are jealous for his fame to anxiously endeavor to conceal them, since we know that by labour and perseverance these difficulties were at last overcome. He rarely quitted a subject till nothing more was to be desired.”