

Mr. Nathaniel Holmes is one of the most recent advocates of the alleged Baconian origin of Shakspeare's plays. We do not suppose that the supporters of this theory intend or expect to be taken in serious earnest. Like the disputants in the schools, they simply aim at the praise of ingenuity. No one, they would probably say, is bound to believe them. While, however, we feel that Mr. King, in devoting a small volume to the refutation of Mr. Holmes, has performed a work that was superfluous, we nevertheless with pleasure add that he has taken occasion, during the process, to furnish

the reader with some fresh and pleasant matter on an old subject. We shall regret, by the way, if in Canadian literature the established form of Shakspeare's name should be superseded by that which is adopted on every page of the volume before us. If, as Mr. King very properly argues, the authority of Heminge and Condell, of Meres, Weever, &c., is of weight as to the authenticity of the plays, it is equally good on the point of the common contemporary mode of rendering the great poet's name.

CURRENT LITERATURE.

"TWO names," says Dr. Lightfoot, "stand out prominently in the churches of provincial Asia during the age immediately succeeding the Apostles. Polycarp, of Smyrna, and Papias, of Hierapolis. Having disposed of the one in a former paper, he devotes a rather lengthy chapter in the *Contemporary* to the latter. Papias is rather a shadowy figure in church history—his age, his abilities, and the precise nature of his treatise in five books, are all matters of controversy. Irenæus says that he was a hearer of John and a companion of Polycarp. If this be true, especially the first clause, he forms a most important link stretching over a barren period in Christian literature, and thus bridges the chasm between the Apostolic age and the appearance of the earliest writings now extant more or less in their entirety. With regard to the age of Papias, on which much of the controversy between the author of *Supernatural Religion* depends, we think Dr. Lightfoot has made out his case here as in the case of Polycarp. The statement that Papias was "a hearer of John," that is of the Apostle, is not pressed, although the Professor regards it as by no means improbable. There were clearly two Johns named by this writer, and distinguished the one as of "the Lord's disciples" and the other as Presbyter or Elder John. Eusebius seems to think that the latter was the author of the Apocalypse. With characteristic acuteness Dr. Lightfoot succeeds, we think, in showing that Papias's martyrdom, as well as Polycarp's, have been post-dated by the Tübingen school and the author of *Supernatural Religion*. It is obvious that if Polycarp suffered in A.D. 164 his birth could not have been earlier than the year 80, which would make his intercourse with the personal followers of the Lord scarcely possible. Yet nothing is more certain than that he was on intimate terms with

one at least of the Apostles and a large circle of the first adherents to the Christian faith after them. The secret of the mistake in both cases is traced to the *Chronicon Paschale*, a compilation of the seventh century. No earlier writer mentions any date, "not even Eusebius;" but the *quasi*-authority starts boldly with the 133rd year of the Ascension, and jumbles together the martyrology of several generations which Eusebius has distinctly related as successive, instead of simultaneous. This is shown here by placing the extracts from the *Chronicon* side by side with the source of the compiler's information. As if to settle the question beyond cavil Dr. Lightfoot's quotations show that in the compilation, Papias was written by the transcriber, when Eusebius has Papyrus. We have no space to follow the writer in his statement of the positive evidence for Papias's date. It must suffice to say that his birth is placed at A.D. 60-70, and the publication of his work at A.D. 130-140. The author of "*Supernatural Religion*" has been singularly unfortunate here, for in his first volume he dates his work at "about the middle of the second century," whereas in the second volume he speaks of him as "flourishing in the *second* half of the second century"—an altogether untenable assumption. The work of Papias, which was one of considerable size is only known to us by extracts made by Irenæus and Eusebius, and its very title forms part of the controversy. The author of "*Supernatural Religion*" contends that if Papias had any written documents before him they were only the *λογια* or discourses of our Lord and not one of our canonical gospels. Great stress is laid upon his remark "I did not think that I could get so much profit from the contents of books as from the utterances of a living and abiding voice;" but everything depends on the real purpose of the work. Was