

written under his own direction and supervision by Fletcher.

She first appears on the scene in the queenly role of a suppliant for the redress of a grievance, put upon the people by the great cardinal in the shape of an unjust exaction. She is successful and the odious tax is withdrawn. She next intercedes for the life of the Duke of Buckingham, who was accused of treason. In this she is not so successful, and the unfortunate duke loses his head. In her iniquitous semblance of a trial, she has the better of the argument all through. Her appeal to Henry for right and justice is one of the noblest and most touching speeches to be found in the poet's works. In it she stands forth as a model of wifely humility, womanly sense of wrong and queenly dignity. Upon her failure to obtain redress from her husband, she ignored the judges whom she could not trust, appealed to the Pope who could alone pronounce upon her marriage, and with queenly dignity left the court. Thus did she put the seal of a regal independence upon her actions in the trying ordeal. In her matchless simplicity, consciousness of wrong intended her, brave yet gentle defiance of her enemies, she is the most commanding figure in the court. She wins even the respect and admiration of her false and thwarted husband, who says :—

"Go thy ways, Kate;

That man i' the world who shall report he has
A better wife, let him not be trusted,
For speaking false in that; thou art alone
(If thy rare qualities, sweet gentleness,
Thy meekness saint-like, wife-like government,
Obeying in commanding,—and thy parts
Sovereign and pious else, could speak thee out
The queen of earthly queens."

Here, Catharine is brought out as a true product of the Catholic religion, the highest type of a Christian woman. There is no beating about the bush. The

poet's heart was in the work. He painted her not only as he believed she was, but also as he would have had her, had she been purely his own creation.

In her sad but peaceful end, the strength and purity of her life never weaken. She is Shakespeare's ideal of all that is noble and good in woman. Her last commissions to Henry are in full keeping with the dignity, tenderness and largeness of her character, in its three-fold aspect of queen, wife and woman. She asks him to care for their daughter Mary, and to give her virtuous breeding; to reward her faithful attendants;—never a harsh word for her miserable husband from her who, at his hands, had suffered such misery, humiliation and degradation. She forgave her enemies and expressed her will to be buried like a queen.

She said:—

"Strew me over

With maiden flowers, that all the world may know

I was a chaste wife to my grave; embalm me,
Then lay me forth: although unqueened, yet like

A queen, and daughter to a king, inter me."

To the last Henry was her husband, however erring; and to the last, like a true daughter of the Church, she was faithful and obedient. And so the long-suffering spirit, the innocent victim of the machinations of vile men and a vain, ambitious woman, went to its reward, and, with her death, all interest in the play ceases. Dr. Johnson has said that the genius of Shakespeare comes in and goes out with Queen Catharine. Her character according to Shakespeare is that of the most virtuous queen, the most loving wife and the tenderest mother ever portrayed in the English language. On her he has lavished all his wondrous art. He has painted her as without a blemish even from the mouth of those who did not love her, and