

our own intellect, and we think and speak and feel with the thought and feeling and speech of the interlocutors of the drama. Shakspeare's world is not exactly the world of reality, but only by an intensifying of all the faculties with which human nature is endowed.

But why this comparative perfection of poetic composition, while prose possesses the stilted character to which we have alluded? The reason seems to be, that a certain inversion being proper to poetry, both on account of the verse itself, and the more exalted style of thought, it is not out of place there: while poetry, from the very laws of verse, and exigencies of that style of composition, imposes its own limits upon the arrangement of words, and order of sentences, and does not admit of every varying caprice of mind and thought. Poetry, accordingly, arrives at greater perfection sooner than prose; and hence the earlier poets of any nation are for the most part as perfect as those of a later age; in some cases—as with Homer and Dante, not to say Chaucer—more so. No one quarrels with the early ballads of England and Scotland: on the contrary, they are still regarded in some respects—for simplicity and pathos—the models of that kind of composition. The simplicity and picturesqueness of the age undoubtedly impressed themselves upon them, but they do not exhibit the infantile character of the prose of those earlier periods.

Hooker's famous work is a defence of the Church recently established and organized in the land, as against the Puritanism which was just setting in, and which at length acquired such power in the Kingdom. The argument, though characterised by great candour, is still often more plausible than just, and the Polity is too much argued for, from the model of the Old Testament Scriptures, and the theory of Church and State as one, as well as from strictly monarchical views of civil institutions. We do not think the well-built argument, would have served to prevent the disestablishing of the Irish Church at the present day; and we are not sure but the Puritans, after all, upon most points, had the best of the argument, notwithstanding the profound views, and the many just principles, enunciated. The "Ecclesiastical Polity" is still a standard authority on all moral and political subjects, and is often appealed to for its principles, apart from the particular argument which it maintains. There can be but one view regarding the sobriety, and wisdom, and well-weighed expression, of the following passage on a subject which is controverted in our own day, as it was in the days of the Puritans, and on which it may not be impertinent to adduce such a statement of opinion entertained by one who has been preeminently styled the "judicious Hooker." "The prophet David," he says, "having singular knowledge, not in poetry alone, but in music also, judged them both to be things most necessary for the house of God, left behind him to that purpose a number of divinely-indited poems, and was further the author of adding unto poetry melody in public prayer; melody, both vocal and instrumentall, for the raising up of men's hearts, and the sweetening of their affections towards God. In which considerations the Church of Christ doth likewise at this present day retain it as an ornament to God's service, and an help to our own devotion. They which, under pretence of the law ceremonial abrogated, require the abrogation of instrumental music, approving, nevertheless, the use of vocal melody to remain, must show some reason wherefore the one should be thought a legal ceremony, and not the other. In church music, curiosity or ostentation of art, wanton, or light, or unsuitable harmony, such as only pleaseth the ear, and doth not naturally serve to the very kind and degree of