

death. Surely the signals of portents are trodden ground in all the literature of the period without any need of being tracked to a particular source. Then again in his charming essay on Shakespeare's *Natural History*, where Mr. Elton, pressing Gerard into service rightly, tells us that "Heart's Ease" or "Love-in-Idleness belongs to the yellow wall-flower used for a cordial against melancholy, he goes strangely astray with regard to pansies. "'That's for thoughts,' said Ophelia," comments Mr. Elton, "but 'pansy' and 'fancy' are not unlike in sound, and it was probably to this accident that the 'pretty Paunce' owed its amatory character." He shuts his eyes to the obvious derivation from *pensée*. We cannot, however, resist quoting from an admirable passage in this portion of Mr. Elton's treatment:

We may note that Shakespeare evidently loved strength and brightness in his trees and flowers. He prefers the bold oxlip to the pale-faced company in the primrose path; the dim violets are loved for their marvellous sweetness, "sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes;" his daffodils are not the twin-bellied flowers of the South, but the old Crusader's daffodils, "white as the sun, though pale as a lily," which Ray found growing in crowds on his journeys through Arden. If we looked with the poet into the cottage gardens, we should find among the favourites the bright and jewelled Crown Imperial, the great Mary lilies in sheaves, and the golden Flower-de-luce. . .

But the class of imperception indicated is not confined merely to pedantries. It peeps out in many biographical criticisms, notably, we think, in the attempt to prove that Shakespeare's bequest of his second best bed to his wife does not imply anything but unchequered affection; though the surmise that Mrs. Shakespeare may have suffered during her later years from derangement of mind is ingenious and has many slight indications to support it. In these regards, too, there are some striking omissions. We should have expected Mr. Elton, for instance, to have remembered and mentioned the trial of Dr. Lopez, and the substitution of one "Daniel" as judge in commission. To these events there are many covert allusions in the *Merchant of Venice*, notably "A Daniel come to judg-