

and the dear presence of his first and last love—Anne Hathaway. (Cheers.) I do not think I am exaggerating when I say Shakspeare's mind was much more occupied with an establishment for his family at Stratford or at Shotteny, or at Shirley, than with his glorious works; and that to win and wear the honors of a Warwickshire gentler, an seemed to him a much more important object of ambition than to become the first poet of English race. He seems, from all we know of his career, to have been rather ashamed than otherwise, of his character of actor; to have been strangely indifferent to his fame as a dramatic writer; and to have been mainly anxious about his house at New Place, his coat of arms, his rank as esquire, and his last resting place, guarded with a cuirasse, in Stratford church. Strange power of Time and Place! Strange charm of custom and association! This genius now so universally felt and honored, was, probably, in his own day, far more anxious to found a family, and to assert a reputable social position, than to preserve to us those works which have made us all his clients, his debtors, and his dependants! [Cheers] Shakspeare appears to have lived generously, though by no means prodigally, and to have had the art of acquiring wealth.

This, then, is the image of the personal man—Shakspeare; shrewd, aspiring, accomplished, gallant, confident of renown; more anxious for his present than his future; joyous in society; contemplative, even to sadness, in solitude; in short an epitome of all nature, to whom truly, it might have been possibly said—“Look into your own heart, and write.” (Cheers.) As to his fortune, he died in what we call independent circumstances, in his native town, at the age of 52. Of his philosophy, a much wider subject, it would be quite impossible to give anything like a fair summary, within the limits of a popular address. In religion, though he lived within the range of the Reformation controversy, it is still disputed whether he was a Catholic or a Protestant; in politics, he was a constitutional-monarchist, an enemy of intolerance (as are seen in Falstaff's speech in Henry V.,) and a lover of the people, (as we see in Queen Catherine's speech on behalf of the working classes in Henry VIII.) In his Roman and English historic plays he has not spared such demagogues as Jack Cade, while he has done full justice to really honest popular leaders, like Brutus and Meenemus. To Shakspeare certainly more than any other writer we have, the praise of a well-balanced mind belongs; for while Milton was often a fanatic, and Dryden a partisan, and Byron a cynic, this great genius, like those impassible Assyrian Gods, who have been referred to the light of our days by indefatigable research, he looked straight out into all space, with a calm self-possession, which strikes one with awe,—it is so unlike our average humanity. (Cheers.) Of the originality of Shakspeare, I suppose there is now no second opinion. His works are unlike all that went before, unlike all efforts of the Greek, or Roman, or Italian mind. The fusion of comedy and tragedy in the same scene—such as in the grave-diggers' dialogue in *Hamlet*—and the fool's saucy repartees in *Lear*—are as marked in their originality, as a Gothic church is distinct from a Roman or a Grecian temple. The profundity of his thought, is only surpassed by its variety; and we may safely say of him, that there is neither subject nor object, in life or in literature, of which he does not furnish the highest and most lasting illustration. Now as to Shakspeare's influence on our ideas and our language,—the last point on which I wish to touch,—it is not easy to exaggerate its past extent, or its still growing increase. Tens of thousands of people talk of Shakspeare, who never read him, and hundreds of thousands think Shakspeare who do not talk him. I shall not attempt, ladies and gentlemen, any analysis of that large part of our popular opinion and judgment for which we are indebted to this illustrious author. You are here, to-night, as is fit and proper, to enjoy yourselves, and to confer pleasure on others. If the poet whose name we invoke were present in person, from all we know of his life and character, we may be quite certain he would take far more pleasure to mingle among so many fair ladies than to talk dull didactics here on this platform. Yet before the exquisite music which has been so skillfully selected for you be ended—before the merry dance begins—let me sum up, in a few words, my own crude idea of the place held, and the part performed in our English speaking world of thought by this great dramatist. “He was a man,” to use his own pregnant words, “take him for all in all, we ne'er shall look upon his like again.” He planted his compasses in his own age, and he swept with them the circumference of time. [Cheers.] He seized the trumpet of the Press, then newly wrought, and his voice is now familiar at the antipodes. [Cheers.] Of all English history his writings are the flower and crown. The British Empire may pass away: the vision of the brilliant Scottish reviewer of a New Zealand artist sketching a ruined St. Paul's from the last

standing arch of London bridge may be fulfilled in the fulness of time's changes; the bitter may repossess the Thames and the drier the Mersey; but this Island Oracle shall not be quelled or quenched, till the knell of all earthly things has sounded. His voice shall speak to all nations of the mysteries of life and death, of duty and destiny, of liberty and law, of the remorse that dogs the steps of crime, and the blessed place that shines on the good man's death bed [cheers]. To him all genius shall be tributary hereafter, as all genius has been in the past, which cause to know him, among actors, the long line from Burbage and Betterton to Dean and Macready; among commentators from Jonson to Gerwinus; among Statesmen from Southampton to Chatham and from Chatham to Derby; these are the subjects and clients of our Shakspeare. [Cheers.] To be numbered in such a Company even in the lowest place is honor sufficient, and I cannot express to you, ladies and gentlemen, the feeling of pleasure which moves me, while I speak on such a subject, and feel as I do now, that we too, are in the train, of such a sovereign. [Cheers.] Ladies and gentlemen, whoever shall live to see in the year of Grace, 1964, may, perhaps, find themselves here surrounded by a city, many times larger than Montreal is now. They may find themselves, even, ruled under a form or modification of government unknown to our age, and undesired to us, (cheers) but one thing I feel assured they will not find—that is—that even then there shall be found, in the valley of the St. Lawrence in Canada, a people more devoted to the memory, than we are more grateful for the benefactions, or more watchful of the ever increasing influence, of William Shakspeare (Loud cheers, amid which the Hon. Gentleman, sat down.)

## O D E.

BY G. HEAVYSEGE.

Read at the Shakespeare Ter-century celebration in the Mechanics' Hall, on Saturday the 23rd April, 1864.

When England, in the gathering years,  
Torn by intestine wars too long,  
Her rival roses drenched with tears,  
And drooping their compeers among;—  
Lain dripping, wet with civil gore,  
Drawn from their cups by native darts;—  
When anarchy from shore to shore,  
Had driven the ploughshare of sharp wrong  
Deep in the rich alluvial loam  
Of those indomitable hearts,  
Contending 'midst our island home;—  
When civil wounds, in after years,  
Were healed, and, from her foreign scars  
Delivered, joyful-breasted, strong,  
She, by Heaven's grace,  
Found time and space  
To pile her late opposing spears,  
And bring the harvest home of song,—  
To take her pre-appointed place  
In poetry amongst her peers:  
When soft and slow,  
In numbers low,  
As zephyrs blow;  
Or loud and strong  
As ere the high-topped mountain bears,  
She should attune her native tongue,—  
Draw from her language mighty gong  
The fabled music of the spheres:—  
When he whose birth  
Should glorify our Isle, the Proud Sea Queen,  
And lend to earth  
Its greatest spirit clothed in mortal mien;  
Event sublime,  
Fixed from Eternity,  
And silent following in the suit of Time:  
When he should come,  
Whose genius, as a new, rejoicing sun,  
Quenching the fixed stars and slow retiring moon,  
Should cause to pale the lights of classic Greece,  
And dim the splendours of Augustan Rome;—  
When he whose name  
Should be the synonym of Fame,  
Enduring as the heaven's frame;  
To whom Renown  
Should give this globe as an enduring crown,  
Make earth become,  
Each zone a circling tier for him to wear  
O'er his eternal eyes and bright brows never bare;