

Is it not marvellous that he, living in an age of great deeds, of adventures in far off lands and unknown seas—in a time of religious wars—in the days of the Armada—the massacre of St. Bartholomew—the Edict of Nantes—the assassination of Henry III.—the victory of Lepanto—the execution of Marie Stuart—did not mention the name of any man or woman of his time? Some have insisted that the paragraph ending with the lines:

“The imperial votress passed on in maiden meditation fancy free,”

referred to Queen Elizabeth; but it is impossible for me to believe that the daubed and wrinkled face, the small black eyes, the cruel nose, the thin lips, the bad teeth, and the red wig of Queen Elizabeth could by any possibility have inspired these marvellous lines.

It is perfectly apparent from Shakespeare's writings that he knew but little of the nobility, little of kings and queens. He gives to these supposed great people great thoughts, and puts great words in their mouths and makes them speak—not as they really did—but as Shakespeare thought such people should. This demonstrates that he did not know them personally.

Shakespeare lived during the great awakening of the world, when Europe emerged from the darkness of the Middle Ages, when the discovery of America had made England, that blossom of the Gulf Stream, the centre of commerce, and during a period when some of the greatest writers, thinkers, soldiers and discoverers were produced.

Cervantes was born in 1547, dying on the same day as Shakespeare died. He was undoubtedly the greatest writer that Spain has produced. Rubens was born in 1577. Camoens, the Portuguese, the author of the “*Luciad*,” died in 1597. Giordano Bruno—greatest of martyrs—was born in 1548—visited London in Shakespeare's time—delivered lectures at Oxford, and called that institution “the widow of learning.” Drake circled the globe in 1580. Galileo was born in 1564—the same year with Shakespeare. Michael Angelo died in 1563. Kepler—he of the Three Laws—born in 1571. Calderon, the Spanish dramatist, born in 1601. Corneille, the French poet, in 1606. Rembrandt, greatest of painters, 1607. Shakespeare was born in 1564. In that year John Calvin died. What a glorious exchange!

Seventy-two years after the discovery of America Shakespeare was born, and England was filled with the voyages and discoveries written by Hakluyt, and the wonders that had been seen by Raleigh, by Drake, by