

character ; there would have been no time to get a leaden-coffin or the suitable materials for one, that is lead of sufficient substance or thickness, from the neighbouring borough of Worcester or Warwick or Coventry, as it is very doubtful whether such material was purchasable in the year 1616 at Stratford, or that there was a plumber or artificer therein capable of making a leaden coffin at a few hours notice. For we must take into consideration the mode of home travelling and the conveyance of goods at the time, pillions,^s pad-nags, and pack-horses, coaches being only used by the nobility and landed-gentry ; the condition of the roads, the time occupied in a journey from London to Oxford from Oxford to Coventry or Warwick ; the condition of the people in the reigns of Elizabeth and James I. History informs us that "the greatest part of our buildings in the cities and good towns of England consisteth only of timber, cast over with thick clay to keep out the wind." London, in the reign of James, was almost entirely built of wood. The houses of the nobility and wealthy landed-proprietors, lords of the manor, throughout the city and country were built of brick and stone ; these were the exceptions — lead would not be in demand at Stratford for cisterns, roofings, parapets, porticos, dairies and other purposes to which it is now applied. As the probability is that thick sheet lead was not obtainable on the 24th day of April, 1616, in Stratford, the probability, also, is that the body of the Poet was placed in a wooden coffin, not impervious to the air ; and it is also probable, very