

and deeply imbued with their spirit, the great Florentine poet arose, dark and terrible as one of the old Hebrew brds ; and how the echoes of his sublime Vision had scarce died away and men yet held their breath for very awe, when our own land gave forth the large and noble utterance of Chaucer, a true poet, nay, one of the greatest of our poets, whom it is a shame for Englishmen to have neglected so long. I should have told how these two opposing lines seemed at length to merge and unite in the profound and creative Shakespere, of whom it has been said with truth, that were the dwellers of earth swept away as by a pestilence, and were the inhabitants of some other world then to alight upon our planet, these wonderful dramas would alone suffice to inform him of the passions and emotions, the joys and sorrows, the fears and hopes and aspirations of the race that lay buried at his feet. It is no mere national feeling that makes us speak of Shakespere as great among the greatest. He, it is true, is peculiarly our own ; he has gained for us a brighter aureole than all our achievements in science or in war ; he is entwined in our thoughts with every fondest recollection of our country and our home. But in his wondrous many-sidedness and universality, compared with all the world beside, he

Above the rest

In shape and gesture proudly eminent,  
Stands like a tower.

He is as the sun before whom all lesser luminaries fade. And in reviewing the history of the advance and retrocession of the landmarks of human intellect, and the names of those who have ruled as annointed kings in the realm of thought, it may be said that, apart from the sacred books, there have been but three great poets,—Homer, Dante, and the author of Hamlet and Othello.

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