

celebration naturally recalled the similar ovation given to Voltaire a hundred years ago (1778). And in both cases it was probably as much to the champion of the cause of freedom throughout Europe, as to the great *littérateur*, that the homage of the masses was offered.

We have to record the death of another man of distinction in letters, that of James Spedding, the editor of Bacon, on March 9th. He was over seventy years of age, and his death was the result of an accident. The friend and contemporary of the Poet Laureate and of other eminent men at Cambridge, he devoted his time and talents to the illustration of Bacon, another alumnus of his own University. Macaulay's picture, which is followed in its main outlines by Green in his "Short History," was an expansion of Pope's celebrated line. Macaulay failed to make allowance for the times in his wholesale condemnation of Bacon's moral and political character. Spedding attempted the reversal of the essayist's verdict. The truth, however, lies between them. If Bacon was not "the meanest of mankind," neither on the other hand had he any high moral elevation. But whatever views may be entertained upon the subject of Bacon's character, it is universally conceded that Spedding's labours, for the first time, put the whole facts within the reach of everyone, and that no reader need look further than his volumes for the means of forming an opinion.

Besides his Baconian studies, Spedding's name will always be connected with Shakespearian criticism and specially with the play of Henry VIII, in which he first attempted to distinguish the parts to be assigned to Fletcher and Shakespeare respectively. This was in 1850. He has since been an active member of the New Shakspeare Society and one of his latest acts was to express his strong disapproval of a late vagary of its Director, Mr. Furnivall. This subject has attracted much attention in London and elsewhere. It will be remembered that Milton once refused to "dispute philosophy with this pork who has never read any." Such language it was hoped had disappeared from literary disputes, but it has lately been revived by Mr. Furnivall. The modes of criticism adopted by this gentleman have excited keen criticism from Messrs. Swinburne and J. O. Halliwell-Phillips, the latter of whom is also a distinguished and able Shakespearian critic. Mr. Swinburne has constantly used language in relation to Mr. Furnivall, at which by this time no one is surprised, but which no one can resent as he does it on his personal responsibility. But the case was different when Mr. Furnivall, as Founder and Director of the New Shakspeare Society published, under the shadow of its name and in a preface to a fac-simile of the second quarto of Hamlet, an attack on Mr. Halliwell-Phillips as "a leading member of the firm of Pigsbrook & Co.," and described his criticism as "porcine vagaries" promulgated "on the prongs of a dung-fork." The use of this intemperate language has been properly condemned and has led to the resignation of many distinguished members of the Society. The whole subject is interesting as a "survival" in the midst of culture, and because of the proper manner in which such conduct has been treated.