

Though Dr. Stafford's sojourn among us was brief, he won many warm friends and his memory still remains to those of his congregation an example of a gifted and brilliant life devoted to the cause of Christ.

One View of Shakespeare.

The glory of a nation lies not in the path of conquest amid heaps of gory slain and the ashes of burning hamlets, but in the victory of mind over matter, the progress of literature, science and art. The advance of literature marks a grand march of mental and moral culture. The barriers of bigotry and ignorance are rapidly disappearing before the advent of a wider range of thought. Though the hand of time has scarred and seamed the Gothic edifice and trailed the ivy over the ruins of the Norman castle, its scarring touch rests lightly on the old masters of English literature. The nineteenth century still drinks at the "well of English undefyled," and derives its inspiration from the bard of Avon.

Shakespeare's influence on the literature of his own age is associated with the progress of the drama. During the time of Chaucer mysteries or miracle plays were celebrated by the churchmen to instruct the people regarding Biblical characters and the legends of the saints. These finally became secularized, taking the form of the Interlude. The comedy sprang from the interlude winning its first triumph in Ralph Roister Doister. The story of Gorbuduc next laid claim to public attention and founded the tragedy. Notwithstanding the great advance made since the time of the early drama, these plays were dull and insipid, devoid of real human interest. The increasing demand for dramatic literature is evinced by the group of writers who now began to give their attention to it; Ford, Marlowe, Greene, Kyd and Peele. Actuated by caprice and bowing at the shrine of

popular opinion, their finest productions were invested with a semi-barbarism such as characterized their lives.

From the rude quarry of the middle ages, the stately edifice of English literature now rose in all its splendor. The rough hewn ore in the hand of the miner and the polished gem at the lapidary bear little similarity, its symmetry and its beauty are the result of combined labor. Shakespeare's genius never shone more resplendent than when breathing life into the dust and ashes of the past, retouching and condensing the treasured material of the ages. Aware that modern originality consists in resetting ancient gems of thought, Shakespeare combined the research, and the sublime ideas of his predecessors in his early plays *Venus and Adonis* *Romeo and Juliet*, *Midsummer Nights Dream* are famous, not because of unique conception, but for the blending of exquisite thought and exquisite verse. Ransacking the dusty pages of a decayed civilization and exploring the misty realms of the ideal world, he elevated the drama from mere imitation to art. The dim shades of thought and fancy which had as yet found no adequate expression, were seized with a grasp of a master mind and placed before the world of letters for ever.

This literary age, the Shakespearian, was one of regal magnificence combining much of the splendor of the Orient, with the exquisite harmony of combination and symmetry of form which mark the writings of this great author. No one writer has bequeathed such an array of characters or exhibited so completely the human mind in all its varied moods and phases from the cruelty and extortion of *Shylock* to the mad, overcharged soul of *Hamlet*, who thinks "the time is out of joint." The panorama of human life, from the cradle to the grave is enshrined in a volume of his plays and poems. The inmost recesses of the soul are explored, and every chord and passion vibrates with his touch. Classic legend, fairy tale and ballad lore form the ground work of the most interesting thread of comedy and tragedy, woven yet by artistic hand.

Recent research clearly demonstrates