

"O miserable base" — (King John).

"Let's hence to view the game" — (Othello).

This is unquestionable evidence of the versatility of the Bard of Avon; and, perhaps, it may be a warning of the "purposes noble" to which our literary creations are oftentimes applied. We have budding bards amongst the "Arts" contributing contingent to the "Review," so I take the liberty of reminding these "inglorious Miltons" (the mute is eliminated) of the penalties of "Fame." Don't mind Shakespeare; there is no "infirmity" about it. William is not always orthodox from an educational standpoint; he tells ye "to fling away ambition." The Prefect of Studies is going to expurgate "Henry VIII," as this saying of the great Master of Poesy is demoralizing the classes in literature.

The following little disquisition has been just unearthed from a pile of musty manuscripts; and I take the liberty of inflicting it upon the would-be poets just to illustrate how exacting the "Art Poetic" is in its demands upon the votaries who worship at the shrine of the Muses. I may add that the writing of this little essay many years ago cured me of poetic mania.

What is Poetry? This question is as old as humanity; for Poetry like Music is co-eval with language. Rhetoricians have striven to give us a definition; but they seem to have failed egregiously, as they give us merely a *description*. They have consequently found it necessary to confine themselves to the usual concomitants of Poetry than to its essential constituent. Rhetoricians are very wonderful people. Their minds are like those watches which an iconoclast speaks of: "None go just alike, but each one believes his own." Of course this does not apply to myself: I don't teach Rhetoric.

"Poetry," these wise people tell us, "consists in (not of) the harmonious arrangement of words in a sentence; and the division of a Composition into lines containing a certain succession of long and short syllables. Hence (according to this standard) whatever can be measured with a foot-rule, or employs rhythm, rhyme, alliteration, or assonance, is poetry. Then it follows (according to the ordinary methods of induction) that "Limericks" should be placed in the same category as, for example, Bryant's "Thanatopsis," or Longfellow's "Psalm of Life," or possibly Tennyson's "In Memoriam." By the way, both Longfellow and Tennyson give us pictures of Grief: Tennyson, in "In Memoriam," and Longfellow, in "Resignation"; and I beg leave to ask the admirers of the former, which of the two has the truer ring, and which teaches the heart the right bearing of human sorrow?