

the glorious freedom that distinguishes him. To an orator or a writer of genius the university course is not without its perils. It is significant that in the plays of Shakespeare there are many ridiculous blunders that indicate that they were written by an "inexact" scholar; and these inaccuracies form an unanswerable argument against those who maintain that the plays were written by a finished scholar such as Bacon. The plays were evidently written by some one who had just a moderate education as we know Shakespeare to have had, but supplemented by the divinest poetic genius.

#### Shakespeare's Early Environment.

It was ideal. In saying this my statement will be fully substantiated by a glance through the beautiful pictures that have been collected by the editor of *SUNSHINE*, and which accompany this monograph. The scenery surrounding Stratford was such as to store his receptive mind with a wealth of just such metaphors and similes as are poured out in his writings. Wandering in boyhood and youth through beautiful forests, over luxuriant meadows and by lovely streams, he accumulated that wonderful treasury of Nature-knowledge that he uses in his poetry. True, his botany was not scientific, but it was all the more living and real for that very fact.

"I know a bank whereon the wild thyme blows,  
Where ox-lips and the nodding violet grows;  
Quite over-canopied with lush woodbine,  
With sweet musk-roses, and with eglantine:  
There sleeps Titania, some time of the night,  
Lull'd in these flowers with dances and delight."

The scenery of his great play, "As You Like It," might all be, probably was, sketched from the country surrounding Stratford-on-Avon. Taken altogether, we may say that the results of his literary labors in after life are entirely consistent with what we know his early education and environment to have been.

#### Shakespeare's English.

It is to be carefully noted that Shakespeare lived just at that time when the English language, the medium of his art, had reached its

perfection. The English language, as all our readers know, is the most composite in the world. There are in it British, Roman, Saxon and Norman elements. When Shakespeare began to write, these elements had just reached a state of perfect fusion, so that the Elizabethan writers had a most plastic and expressive medium in which to work. Two centuries before Chaucer, the father of English poetry, had demonstrated the fact that our language was capable of being wrought into a great literature. From his time to Shakespeare's, however, not

thing notable had been done, but the language had in the interval become more nearly perfected. It has been said that in the history of the world no medium of expression has been so nearly perfect as the Greek tongue. Nevertheless, so great a critic as the English poet Campbell has said that with "Marble" we are able to challenge comparison with the greatest of the Greek tragedies.

#### The Drama in Shakespeare's Time.

The arts are all related one to the other, but each artist finds certain modes of expression more congenial than others. No doubt Shakespeare's genius was essentially dramatic; that is, he could express himself more adequately through a play than through any other form of literature. That being true, it was essential for him that the drama should have been a sufficiently complete development of the drama in his day. In this he was very fortunate. Just as the English language had become complete and perfect when Shakespeare "happened along," so the drama, too, reached such a degree of perfection that he had no pioneer work to do.

It seems to me that one does not require to be very piously disposed to see the hand of Providence at work in bringing Shakespeare into the world just at the time and under the conditions that obtained when he did appear. If it were necessary, another curious fact might be cited to prove this divine intervention. Under Puritan influence, there came,

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