

IV. CONCLUSION.

§ 1. *The Functions of the Seer and Interpreter Fulfilled.*

Such honour is due to those who accomplish the divine will. Here was a Spirit, compact of the noblest gifts, each and all moulded to the fullest—developed to the highest, the widest—by unwearied constancy in their culture, their use, their application to the world without and the world within. And, the result was—the deposit among a race destined in the latter days to replenish the earth and to be the most influential of all races—of a special element of power to be employed permanently in the perfecting, the Christianizing of men. As is the wont so often, in the workings of God, this was done once—once for all. To our great SEER and INTERPRETER, there has been no successor like or second. In the particular arena, in which, in one point of view, his activity manifested itself, and which was, as we have seen, a simple accident of that manifestation—immediately on his disappearance, a fatal deterioration commenced.

The predestined work was done: and, this completed, the doer was withdrawn. He and his indeed, calculating by the years the human frame is constructed to endure, looked forward with reason to a continuance for many days, amidst the familiar scenes of this lower life. But the Father of the spirits of all flesh, knew best when it was fitting that the spirit which had been so “finely touched”—and that too, with such “fine issues”—should return to his sphere and be classed according to his works.

• § 2. *The most Authentic Effigies of Shakespeare.*

The temporary vesture of the flesh, which he laid down, has mouldered to dust, undisturbed, in the Church of the Holy Trinity at Stratford—the grand old parish-church where he had learned to commune with his fellow-citizens and fellow-Christians, in the national worship of his country. (Note XIX.) There, within a niche in the northern wall of its chancel, is preserved the well-known presentment of his outward form, which, sculptured from a mask taken from the actual face, approximates, it is likely, more nearly than any of the painted or engraved portraiture, to what the reality was. The more we study the whole contour of that somewhat rudely carved, but expressive bust,—as we all now can do by holding in our hands direct reflections of it from the photographic mirror—the more we shall feel that we have there, so far as is possible now, the genuine unidealized man before us. Among the many things associated with the memory of the great poet which interest the imagination of pilgrims to his native place, that bust is the true AGALMA, as the old Greek would say—the sacred gem—the object possessed of the strongest power of fascination. (Notes XX., XXI. and XXII.)