and in others that he was a woolstapler. It is now settled beyond dispute that he was a glover. This was his pro­fessed occupation in Stratford, though it is certain that, with this leading trade, from which he took his denomina­tion, he combined some collateral pursuits ; and it is possi­ble enough that, as openings offered, he may have meddled with many. In that age, and in a provincial town, nothing like the exquisite subdivision of labour was attempted which we now see realized in the great cities of Christendom. And one trade is often found to play into another with so much reciprocal advantage, that even in our own days we do not much wonder at an enterprising man, in country places, who combines several in his own person. Accord­ingly John Shakspeare is known to have united with his town calling the rural and miscellaneous occupations of a farmer.

Meantime his avowed business stood upon a very differ­ent footing from the same trade as it is exercised in mo­dem times. Gloves were in that age an article of dress more costly by much, and more elaborately decorated, than in our own. They were a customary present from some cities to the judges of assize, and to other official per­sons ; a custom of ancient standing, and in some places, we believe, still subsisting ; and in such cases it is reasonable to suppose that the gloves must originally have been more valuable than the trivial modern article of the same name. So also, perhaps, in their origin, of the gloves given at fu­nerals. In reality, whenever the simplicity of an age makes it difficult to renew the parts of a wardrobe except in capi­tal towns of difficult access, prudence suggests that such wares should be manufactured of more durable materials ; and, being so, they become obviously susceptible of more lavish ornament. But it will not follow, from this essential difference in the gloves of Shakspeare’s age, that the glo­ver’s occupation was more lucrative. Doubtless he sold more costly gloves, and upon each pair had a larger profit ; but for that very reason he sold fewer. Two or three gen­tlemen “ of worship” in the neighbourhood might occa­sionally require a pair of gloves, but it is very doubtful whether any inhabitant of Stratford would ever call for so mere a luxury.

The practical result, at all events, of John Shakspeare’s various pursuits does not appear permanently to have met the demands of his establishment ; and in his maturer years there are indications still surviving that he was under a cloud of embarrassment. He certainly lost at one time his social position in the town of Stratford ; but there is a strong presumption, in *our* construction of the case, that he finally retrieved it; and for this retrieval of a station which he had forfeited by personal misfortunes or neglect, he was altogether indebted to the filial piety of his immor­tal son.

Meantime the earlier years of the elder Shakspeare wore the aspect of rising prosperity, however unsound might be the basis on which it rested. There can be little doubt that William Shakspeare, from his birth up to his tenth or perhaps his eleventh year, lived in careless plenty, and saw nothing in his father’s house but that style of liberal house­keeping which has ever distinguished the upper yeomanry and the rural gentry of England. Probable enough it is that the resources for meeting this liberality were not strict­ly commensurate with the family income, but were some­times allowed to entrench, by means of loans or mortgages, upon capital funds. The stress upon the family finances was perhaps at times severe ; and that it was borne at all, must be imputed to the large and even splendid portion which John Shakspeare received with his wife.

This lady, for such she really was in an eminent sense, by birth as well as by connections, bore the beautiful name of Mary Arden, a name derived from the ancient forest district@@1 of the county ; and doubtless she merits a more ela­borate notice than our slender materials will furnish. To have been *the mother of Shakspeare,—*how august a title to the reverence of infinite generations, and of centuries be­yond the vision of prophecy. A plausible hypothesis has been started in modern times, that the facial structure, and that the intellectual conformation, may be deduced more frequently from the corresponding characteristics in the mother than in the father. It is certain that no very great man has ever existed, but that his greatness has been re­hearsed and predicted in one or other of his parents. And it cannot be denied, that in the most eminent men, where we have had the means of pursuing the investigation, the mother has more frequently been repeated and reproduced than the father. We have known cases where the mother has furnished all the intellect, and the father all the moral sensibility ; upon which assumption, the wonder ceases that Cicero, Lord Chesterfield, and other brilliant men, who took the utmost pains with their sons, should have failed so conspicuously ; for possibly the mothers had been women of excessive and even exemplary stupidity. In the case of Shakspeare, each parent, if we had any means of recover­ing their characteristics, could not fail to furnish a study of the most profound interest ; and with regard to his mo­ther in particular, if the modern hypothesis be true, and if we are indeed to deduce from *her* the stupendous intellect of her son, in that case she must have been a benefactress to her husband’s family beyond the promises of fairyland or the dreams of romance ; for it is certain that to her chiefly this family was also indebted for their worldly comfort.

Mary Arden was the youngest daughter and the heiress of Robert Arden of Wilmecote, Esq. in the county of War­wick. The family of Arden was even then of great anti­quity. About one century and a quarter before the birth of William Shakspeare, a person bearing the same name as his maternal grandfather had been returned by the commissioners in their list of the Warwickshire gentry ; he was there styled Robert Arden, Esq. of Bromich. This was in 1433, or the l'2th year of Henry VI. In Henry VII.'s reign, the Ardens received a grant of lands from the crown ; and in 1568, four years after the birth of William Shakspeare, Edward Arden, of the same family, was sheriff of the county. Mary Arden was therefore a young lady of excellent descent and connections, and an heiress of considcrable wealth. She brought to her hus­band, as her marriage portion, the landed estate of As- bics, which, upon any just valuation, must be considered as a handsome dowry for a woman of her station. As this point has been contested, and as it goes a great way towards de­termining the exact social position of the poet’s parents, let us be excused for sifting it a little more narrowly than might else seem warranted by the proportions of our pre­sent life. Every question which it can be reasonable to raise at all, it must be reasonable to treat with at least so much of minute research as may justify the conclusions which it is made to support.

The estate of Asbies contained fifty acres of arable land, six of meadow, and a right of commonage. What may we assume to have been the value of its fee-simple ? Malone, who allows the total fortune of Mary Arden to have been L.110. 13s. 4d, is sure that the value of Asbies could not have been more than one hundred pounds. But why ? Be­cause, says he, the “ average” rent of land at that time was no more than three shillings per acre. This we deny ; but

@@@, And probably so called by some remote ancestor who had emigrated from the forest of Ardennes, in the Netherlands, and *now* for ever memorable to English ears from its proximity to Waterloo.