in that case what would follow ?

No sweet aspersion shall the heavens let fell,

To make this contract grow ; *but barren hate,*

*Sour-cy'd disdain and discord, shall bestrew The union of your bed with weeds to loathly That you shall hate it both.* Therefore take heed,

As Hymen’s lamps shall light you.

The young prince assures him in reply, that no strength of opportunity, concurring with the uttermost temptation, not

the murkiest den,

The most opportune place, the strong'st suggestion Our worser genius can———

should ever prevail to lay asleep his jealousy of self-control, so as to take any advantage of Miranda’s innocence. And he adds an argument for this abstinence, by way of reminding Prospero, that not honour only, but even prudential care of his own happiness, is interested in the observance of his promise. Any unhallowed anticipation would, as he insi­nuates,

take away

The edge of that day's celebration,

When I shall think, or Pbœbus’ steeds are founder'd.

Or night kept chain’d below ;

that is, when even the winged hours would seem to move too slowly. Even thus Prospero is not quite satisfied : du­ring his subsequent dialogue with Ariel, we are to suppose that Ferdinand, in conversing apart with Miranda, betrays more impassioned ardour than the wise magician altoge­ther approves. The prince’s caresses have not been unob­served ; and thus Prospero renews his warning :

Look thou be true : do not give dalliance

Too much the rein : the strongest oaths are straw

To the fire i' the blood : be more abstemious,

Or else—good night your vow.

The royal lover re-assures him of his loyalty to his engage­ments ; and again the wise father, so honourably jealous for his daughter, professes himself satisfied with the prince’s pledges.

Now in all these emphatic warnings, uttering the lan­guage “ of that sad wisdom folly leaves behind,” who can avoid reading, as in subtile hieroglyphics, the secret record of Shakspeare’s own nuptial disappointments ? We, indeed, that is, universal posterity through every age, have reason to rejoice in these disappointments ; for to them, past all doubt, we are indebted for Shakspeare’s subsequent migra­tion to London, and his public occupation, which, giving him a deep pecuniary interest in the productions of his pen, such as no other literary application of his powers could have approached in that day, were eventually the means of drawing forth those divine works which have survived their author for our everlasting benefit.

Our own reading and deciphering of the whole case is as follows. The Shakspeares were a handsome family, both father and sons. This we assume upon the following grounds: First, on the presumption arising out of John Shakspeare’s having won the favour of a young heiress higher in rank than himself ; secondly, on the presumption involved in the fact of three amongst his four sons having gone upon the stage, to which the most obvious (and per­haps in those days a *sine qua non)* recommendation would be a good person and a pleasing countenance ; thirdly, on the direct evidence of Aubrey, who assures us that Wil­liam Shakspeare was a handsome and a well-shaped man ; fourthly, on the implicit evidence of the Stratford monu­ment, which exhibits a man of good figure and noble coun­tenance ; fifthly, on the confirmation of this evidence by the Chandos portrait, which exhibits noble features, illus­trated by the utmost sweetness of expression ; sixthly, on the selection of theatrical parts, which it is known that Shakspeare personated, most of them being such as

required some dignity of form, viz. kings, the athletic (though aged) follower of an athletic young man, and su­pernatural beings. On these grounds, direct or circumstan­tial, we believe ourselves warranted in assuming that Wil­liam Shakspeare was a handsome and even noble-looking boy. Miss Anne Hathaway had herself probably some per­sonal attractions ; and, if an indigent girl, who looked for no pecuniary advantages, would probably have been early sought in marriage. But as the daughter of “ a substantial yeo­man," who would expect some fortune in his daughter’s sui­tors, she had, to speak coarsely, a little outlived her market. Time she had none to lose. William Shakspeare pleased her eye ; and the gentleness of his nature made him an apt subject for female blandishments, possibly for female arts. Without imputing, however, to this Anne Hathaway any thing so hateful as a settled plot for ensnaring him, it was easy enough for a mature woman, armed with such inevi­table advantages of experience and of self-possession, to draw onward a blushing novice ; and, without directly creating opportunities, to place him in the way of turning to account such as naturally offered. Young boys are ge­nerally flattered by the condescending notice of grown-up women ; and perhaps Shakspeare’s own lines upon a simi­lar situation, to a young boy adorned with the same natu­ral gifts as himself, may give us the key to the result :

Gentle thou art, and therefore to be won ;

Beauteous thou art, therefore to be assail'd ;

And, when a woman woos, what woman's son Will sourly leave her till he have prevail'd ?

Once, indeed, entangled in such a pursuit, any person of manly feelings would be sensible that he had no re­treat : *that* would be—to insult a woman, grievously to wound her sexual pride, and to insure her lasting scorn and hatred. These were consequences which the gentle-mind­ed Shakspeare could not face : he pursued his good for­tunes, half perhaps in heedlessness, half in desperation, un­til he was roused by the clamorous displeasure of her fa­mily upon first discovering the situation of their kinswo­man. For such a situation there could be but one atone­ment, and that was hurried forward by both parties ; whilst, out of delicacy towards the bride, the wedding was not ce­lebrated in Stratford (where the register contains no no­tice of such an event) ; nor, as Malone imagined, in Weston- upon-Avon, that being in the diocese of Gloucester ; but in some parish, as yet undiscovered, in the diocese of Wor­cester.

But now arose a serious question as to the future main­tenance of the young people. John Shakspeare was de­pressed in his circumstances, and he had other children besides William, viz. three sons and a daughter. The elder lives have represented him as burdened with ten ; but this was an error, arising out of the confusion between John Shakspeare the glover and John Shakspeare a shoemaker. This error has been thus far of use, that, by exposing the fact of two John Shakspeares (not kinsmen) residing in Stratford-upon-Avon, it has satisfactorily proved the name to be amongst those which are locally indigenous to War­wickshire. Meantime it is now ascertained that John Shak­speare the glover had only eight children, viz. four daughters and four sons. The order of their succession was this: Joan, Margaret, W**ILLIAM,** Gilbert, a second Joan, Anne, Richard, and Edmund. Three of the daughters, viz. the two eldest of the family, Joan and Margaret, together with Anne, died in childhood : all the rest attained mature ages, and of these William was the eldest. This might give him some advantage in his father’s regard ; but in a question of pecuniary provision precedency amongst the children of an insolvent is nearly nominal. For the present John Shak­speare could do little tor his son ; and, under these circum­stances, perhaps the father of Anne Hathaway would come forward to assist the new-married couple. This condition