such distinction as he has at least as much to his choice of subjects and to the peculiarity of his life as to the felicity of his verse. Coming after a generation whose leading poets wrote for fashionable society, he shut him­self up in the country, tried to follow the life Arcadian, and wrote in the spirit of a recluse. He inherited the small estate of Leasowes, in the parish of Hales-Owen, Worcestershire. He was born at Leasowes in 1714, and after passing through Pembroke College, Oxford, retired there to realize Pope’s ideal in the *Ode to Solitude,* turned his paternal estate into an elaborate landscape garden, and lived there till his death in 1763. From the time that the management of the estate fell into his own hands, “he began,” Johnson says, “to point his prospects, to diversify his surface, to entangle his walks, and to wind his waters,—which he did with such judgment and such fancy as to make his little domain the envy of the great and the admiration of the skilful.” From this it will be seen that he did not anticipate late sentiment in his love of natural scenery ; he was a true child of the Queen Anne time in his liking for “Nature to advantage dressed.” And it would appear from his letters that he was not a contented recluse, but was weakly desirous of the notice of the world in his Arcadian retreat. Still there is a certain air of sincerity in his references to natural beauty and grandeur. Burns wrote of him in the preface to his first issue of poems as a poet “ whose divine elegies do honour to our language.” Shenstone practised the elegiac form assidu­ously, and some of his elegies are not without a certain imposing pomp and dignity of language, but we may safely suppose that it was the sentiments rather than the expression that captivated the peasant poet. His *Pastoral Ballads in Four Parts,* one of his earliest compositions, is also one of his best, and from its use in selections of poetry for the young is much more generally known. The triple rhythm and the simplicity of the language are happily suited to the pastoral fancy, and there is not too much of the artificial diction and imagery of such poetry. Such lines as—

Yet time may diminish the pain ;

The flower, and the shrub, and the tree

"Which I rear’d for her pleasure in vain In time may have comfort for me—

come nearer Wordsworth’s ideal of poetic diction than was common in the serious poetry of Shenstone’s time. But his *Schoolmistress,* in the Spenserian stanza (published in 1742, and so relieved from any suspicion of being an imitation of Thomson), is the poem by which he keeps a place in literature.

SHEPTON MALLET, a market-town of Somersetshire, England, is situated at the eastern extremity of the Mendip Hills, on the Somerset and Devon and the East Somerset Railways, 5 miles east of Wells and 20 south of Bristol. The church of Sts Peter and Paul, consisting of chancel, clerestoried nave, and aisles, is specially worthy of notice for its richly carved wooden roof and the ancient monu­ments of the Mallets and Gournays, formerly possessors of the manor. The grammar school was founded in 1677, and there are also a science and art school in connexion with South Kensington, a literary institute, and a mechanics’ institute. The principal public buildings are the court-house (1857), the masonic hall (1861), the prison, and the district hospital (1880). The market cross, one of the finest in the county, 51 feet in height, erected by Agnes and Thomas Buckland in 1500, was restored in 1841. About the end of last century Shepton Mallet had important cloth manufactures, and stocking-knitting was also largely carried on. The brewing of ale and porter is now one of its principal industries, and it has also rope- works and brick and tile works. In the vicinity there are

granite quarries and marble, asphalt, and lime works. The population of the urban sanitary district (area, 3572 acres) in 1871 was 5149, and in 1881 it was 5322.

Shepton, previous to the Conquest called Sepeton, was in the possession of the abbots of Glastonbury for four hundred years before it passed to Roger de Courcelle. Afterwards it came into the possession of the barons Malet or Mallet, one of whom was fined for rebellion in the reign of King John. From the Mallets it went to the Gournays, but in 1536 it reverted to the crown, and it is now included in the duchy of Cornwall. The town received the grant of a market from Edward II.

SHERBORNE, an ancient market-town of Dorsetshire, England, on the borders of Somersetshire, is situated on the southern slope of a hill overlooking the river Yeo, on the South-Western Railway, 6 miles east from Yeovil and 118 south-west from London by rail. In 705 Sher­borne was made by Ina, king of the West Saxons, the seat of a bishopric, which in 1078 was removed to Old Sarum (Salisbury). Previous to its removal a great Bene­dictine abbey had been founded by Bishop Roger. The minster or abbey church of St Mary possesses a Norman tower, much altered by later additions, and transepts also originally Norman, but the greater part of the building is Perpendicular. It was restored in 1848-58 at an expense of over £32,000, chiefly contributed by Mr W. Digby and Lord Digby. Ethelbald and Ethelbert, elder brothers of Alfred, were buried behind the high altar of the church, which contains a number of interesting tombs and monu­ments. Near the minster are the ruins of the castle, originally the palace of the bishops. It was besieged during the wars between Stephen and Maud, and also during those of the Commonwealth, when it was held for the king in 1642 by the marquis of Hertford, and resisted a five days’ siege by the earl of Bedford, but was in 1645 taken by Fairfax, when it was dismantled and reduced to ruins. The older portion of the modern mansion was built by Sir Walter Raleigh. Sherborne grammar school, occupy­ing the site of the abbey, was founded by Edward VI. in 1550, and holds a high rank among the public schools of England. Near the abbey close is the hospital of St John, dating from the 15th century. A literary institution, now called the Macready Institution, was established in 1850. The manor of Sherborne went with the bishop’s see, till in the reign of Elizabeth it was conferred on Sir Walter Raleigh. After his attainder it was bestowed by James I. on his favourite Carr, after which it passed to the Digbys, the present owners. The population of the urban sanitary district (area 411 acres) in 1871 was 5545, and in 1881 it was 5053.

SHERIDAN, the name of an Anglo-Irish family, made illustrious by the dramatist Richard Brinsley, but promi­nently connected with literature in more than one generation before and after his. We take the family in chronological order.

1. Thomas Sheridan, D.D. (1684-1738), grandfather of the dramatist, was the first to connect the family with literature. He is chiefly known as the favourite com­panion and confidant of Swift during his later residence in Ireland. But enough is left of his writing to enable us to understand the secret of his attraction for a man not easily pleased. His correspondence with Swift and his whimsical treatise on the *Art of Punning @@1* make perfectly clear from whom his grandson derived his high spirits and delight in practical joking. The *Art of Pun­ning* might have been written by the author of *The Critic.* Swift had a high opinion of his scholarship, and that it was not contemptible is attested by an edition of the *Satires* of Persius, printed at Dublin in 1728. When Swift came to Dublin as dean of St Patrick's, Sheridan was established there as a schoolmaster of very high

@@@1 Published in Nichols’s Supplement to the works of Swift, 1779.