

save one, a rude, unsightly specimen of the oak-framed domicile of the days of Elizabeth and James. Its walls are incrustated with staring white-wash, its beams carelessly daubed over with lamp-black; a deserted butcher's shop, of the fifth-rate class, with the hooks still sticking in the walls, and the sill-board still spread out, as if to exhibit the joints, occupies the ground-floor; the one upper story contains a single rickety casement, with a forlorn flower-pot on the sill; and directly in front of the building there is what seems a rather clumsy sign-board, hung between two poles, that bears on its weather-beaten surface a double line of white faded letters on a ground of black. We read the inscription, and this humblest of dwellings — humble, and rather vulgar to boot — rises in interest over the palaces of kings: — “The immortal Shakspeare was born in this house.” I shall first go and see the little corner his birth-place, I said, and then the little corner his burial-place: they are scarce half a mile apart; nor, after the lapse of more than two centuries, does the intervening modicum of time between the two events, his birth and his burial, bulk much larger than the modicum of space that separates the respective scenes of them; but how marvellously is the world filled with the cogitations which employed that one brain in that brief period! Could it have been some four pounds' weight of convoluted matter, divided into two hemispheres, that, after originating these buoyant immaterialities, projected them upon the broad current of time, and bade them sail onwards and downwards forever? I cannot believe it: the sparks of a sky-rocket survive the rocket itself but a very few seconds. I cannot believe that these thoughts of Shakspeare, “that wander through eternity,” are the mere sparks of an exploded rocket, — the mere scintillations of a little galvanic battery, made of fibre and