

albumen, like that of the torpedo, and whose ashes would now lie in the corner of a snuff-box.

I passed through the butcher's shop, over a broken stone pavement, to a little gloomy kitchen behind, and then, under charge of the guide, up a dark narrow stair, to the low-browed room in which the poet was born. The floor of old oak, much worn in the seams, has apparently undergone no change since little Bill, be-frocked and be-booted in woolen prepared from the rough material by the wool-comber his father, coasted it along the walls, in bold adventure, holding on, as he went, by tables and chairs. The ceiling, too, though unluckily covered up by modern lath and plaster, is in all probability that which stretched over the head of the boy. It presents at least no indication of having been raised. A man rather above the middle size may stand erect under its central beam with his hat on, but with certainly no room to spare; and it seems more than probable that, had the old ceiling been changed for another, the new one would have been heightened. But the walls have been sadly altered. The one window of the place is no longer that through which Shakspeare first saw the light; nor is the fireplace that at which he stealthily lighted little bits of stick, and twirled them in the air, to see the fiery points converted into fiery circles. There are a few old portraits and old bits of furniture, of somewhat doubtful lineage, stuck round the room; and, on the top of an antique cabinet, a good plaster cast of the monumental bust in the church, in which, from its greater accessibility, one can better study than in the original the external signs affixed by nature to her mind of largest calibre. Every part of the walls and ceiling is inscribed with names. I might add mine, if I chose, to the rest, the woman told me; but I did not choose it. Milton and Dryden would have added theirs: he, the sublimest of poets, who, ere criticism