

man. His range includes the loftiest and the lowest characters, and takes in all between. There was no human greatness which he could not adequately conceive and portray; whether it was a purely intellectual greatness, as in Hamlet; or a purely constitutional greatness, — forceful and massive, — as in Coriolanus and Othello; or a happy combination of both, as in Julius Cæsar. He could have drawn with equal effect, had he flourished in an after period, the Lord Protector of England and the Lord Protector's Latin secretary; and men would have recognized the true Milton in the one, and the genuine Cromwell in the other.

It has frequently occurred to me, that the peculiar dramatic faculty developed so prominently in these three authors, that, notwithstanding their disparities of general intellect, we regard it as constituting their generic stamp, and so range them together in one class, seems, in the main, rather a humble one, when dissociated from the auxiliary faculties that exist in the mind of genius. Like one of our Scotch pebbles, so common in some districts, in their rude state, that they occur in almost every mole-hill, it seems to derive nearly all its value and beauty from the cutting and the setting. A Shakspeare without genius would have been merely the best mimic in Stratford. He would have caught every peculiarity of character exhibited by his neighbors, — every little foible, conceit, and awkwardness, — every singularity of phrase, tone, and gesture. However little heeded when he spoke in his own character, he would be deemed worthy of attention when he spoke in the character of others; for whatever else his *viva voce* narratives might want, they would be at least rich in the dramatic; men would recognize in his imitations peculiarities which they had failed to remark in the originals, but which, when detected by the keen eye of the mimic, would delight them, as "natural though not obvious;"