

Susanna Hall, for and during the term of her natural life. It was then entailed upon her first son and his heirs-male; and, in default of such issue, on her second son and his heirs-male; and so on, in default of such issue, to his granddaughter, Elizabeth Hall; and, in default of such issue, to his daughter Judith and her heirs-male. By this strict entailment," remarks the biographer, "it was manifestly the object of Shakspeare to found a family; but, like many other such purposes of short-sighted humanity," it is added, "the object was not accomplished. His elder daughter had no issue, but Elizabeth and she died childless. The heirs-male of Judith died before her. And so the estates were scattered after the second generation; and the descendants of his sister were the only transmitters to posterity of his blood and lineage." We see little of the great poet's own character in his more celebrated writings: he was too purely dramatic for that; and, like the "mirror held up to nature" of his own happy metaphor, reflected rather the features of others than his own. It is, however, a curious fact, that in the portion of his writings which *do* most exhibit him,—his sonnets,—there is no pleasure on which he dwells half so much as the pleasure of living in one's posterity. And, in urging the young friend to whom these exquisite compositions are addressed to marry, he rings the changes on this motive alone throughout twenty sonnets together. We rather wonder how the circumstance should have escaped the thousand and one critics and commentators who have written on Shakspeare; but certain it is, that an intense appreciation of the sort of prospective shadowy immortality that posterity confers on the founder of a family forms one of the most prominent features of the poetry in which he most indulged his own feelings, and that with this marked appreciation the provisions of his will thoroughly harmonize. He tells his friend that the sear leafless autumn of old age, and the