CITATION AND EXAMINATION OF WILLIAM SHAKSPEARE, EUSEBY TREEN, JOSEPH CARNABY, AND SILAS GOUGH, CLERK, BEFORE THE WORSHIPFUL SIR THOMAS LUCY, KNIGHT, TOUCHING DEER-STEALING ON THE NINETEENTH DAY OF SEPTEMBER IN THE YEAR OF GRACE 1582

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Citation and examination of William Shakspeare, Euseby Treen, Joseph Carnaby, and Silas Gough, clerk, before the worshipful Sir Thomas Lucy, knight, touching deer-stealing on the nineteenth day of September in the year of Grace 1582 by Walter Savage Landor

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WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR

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OF

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ETC.



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REFORE THE WORSHIPFUL

SIR THOMAS LUCY, KNIGHT

TOUCHING DEER-STEALING

On the Nineteenth Day of September, in the Year of Grace, 1582
NOW FIRST PUBLISHED FROM ORIGINAL PAPERS

TO WHICH IS ADDED

A CONFERENCE OF MASTER EDMUND SPENSER, A GENTLE-MAN OF NOTE, WITH THE EARL OF ESSEX TOUCHING THE STATE OF IRELAND, A. D. 1505

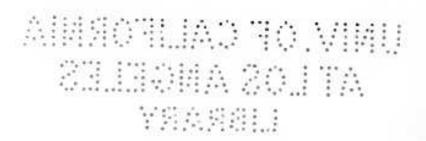
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INTRODUCTION.

THE years spent at Fiesole were not only the most serene and peaceful, but the most fruitful of the long, active, and turbulent life of WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR. He was at the maturity of his power; his children were his playfellows; his garden was his playground. Nestled amid the olives, the Villa Gherardesca was in the heart of some of the most charming scenery in the Old World; one looked from it toward the woods of Vallombrosa and the Tuscan hills. What happier lot for a poet than that he should possess "grapes, figs, and a nightingale, - all at your service," as Landor wrote Mrs. Hare. That the charm of this lovely bit of Italy might be complete, it possessed associations which counted for more to the imagination than all the visible beauty which surrounded it: "Be it known, I am master of the very place to which the greatest genius of Italy, or the Continent, conducted those ladies who told such pleasant tales in the warm weather, and the very scene of his Ninfale." It is not surprising that in this enchanting atmosphere he wrote some of the finest prose of the century, — a prose which reveals the highest distinction of thought and style.

At Fiesole, between the years 1829 and 1837, "The Citation and Examination of William Shakspeare," "Pericles and Aspasia," and "The Pentameron" were written. There is nothing in English which surpasses these three masterpieces in the quality of pure literature. If there is any prose which can be applied as a test of perfect form, as Mr. Arnold proposed to apply certain pieces of verse, it is to be found in these beautiful creations. In the "Imaginary Conversations" Landor often nods, and the reader does not escape the contagion of his prosiness; in dealing with abstractions, with thought detached from persons, he lacked the faculty of co-ordination, and sometimes strayed into dreary and arid places. But in these three works Landor was complete master of his materials; his imagination shaped and colored them with a subtile sense of the quality of each group of ideas and sentiments, and with a faultless perception of the symmetry of the whole.

"Pericles and Aspasia" is a beautiful transcription of Greek life in its most imaginative, and therefore in its truest, form; "The Pentameron" is a ravishing glimpse of the Italy of Petrarch and Boccaccio; and "The Citation and Examination of William Shakspeare " is a veritable piece of the old time in the English country side. Landor often betrays the limitation of his understanding; but in these noble works his imagination got the better of his tendency to prose, and allying itself in each case with the spirit of the material upon which it worked, produced these transcriptions of life, each so perfect of its kind and all so different that we are reminded of Shakspeare's magical illustration of the lavish and richly colored life of Egypt in "Antony and Cleopatra," and of the large simplicity and massive form of Roman life in "Julius Cæsar."

In "The Citation and Examination of William Shakspeare," Landor was dealing with an incident or tradition in which he had already, in an earlier dialogue, shown his interest, and with a country which had for him all the charm of boyhood memories. He was born at Warwick, and his recollections of the country are peculiarly vivid. Revisiting the place of his birth in his seventy-eighth year, he picked up two mulberries, the first to fall on the gravelled walk, and remembered that he was repeating an act of seventy years before! The scenery about Stratford and the grounds of the Charlecote estate were not only familiar to him, but haunted his imagination by reason of their associations with