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Humor
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Paragraph copied from Lowell - Volume XI

Discussion of Shakespeare's Characteristics
in Essay on his Richard III

"The second characteristic, of which I should expect to see some adumbration, at least, in any unmistakable work of Shakespeare would be humor, in which itself, and in the quality of it, he is perhaps more unspeakably superior to his contemporaries than in some other directions, - I mean in the power of pervading a character with humor, creating it out of humor, so to speak, and yet never overstepping the limits of nature or coarsening into caricature. In this no man is or ever was comparable with him but Cervantes. Of this humor we have something more than the premonition in some of his earliest plays."

"Real wit keeps; real humor is of the same nature in Aristophanes and Mark Twain; but nothing grows mouldy so soon as mere fun, the product of animal spirits."