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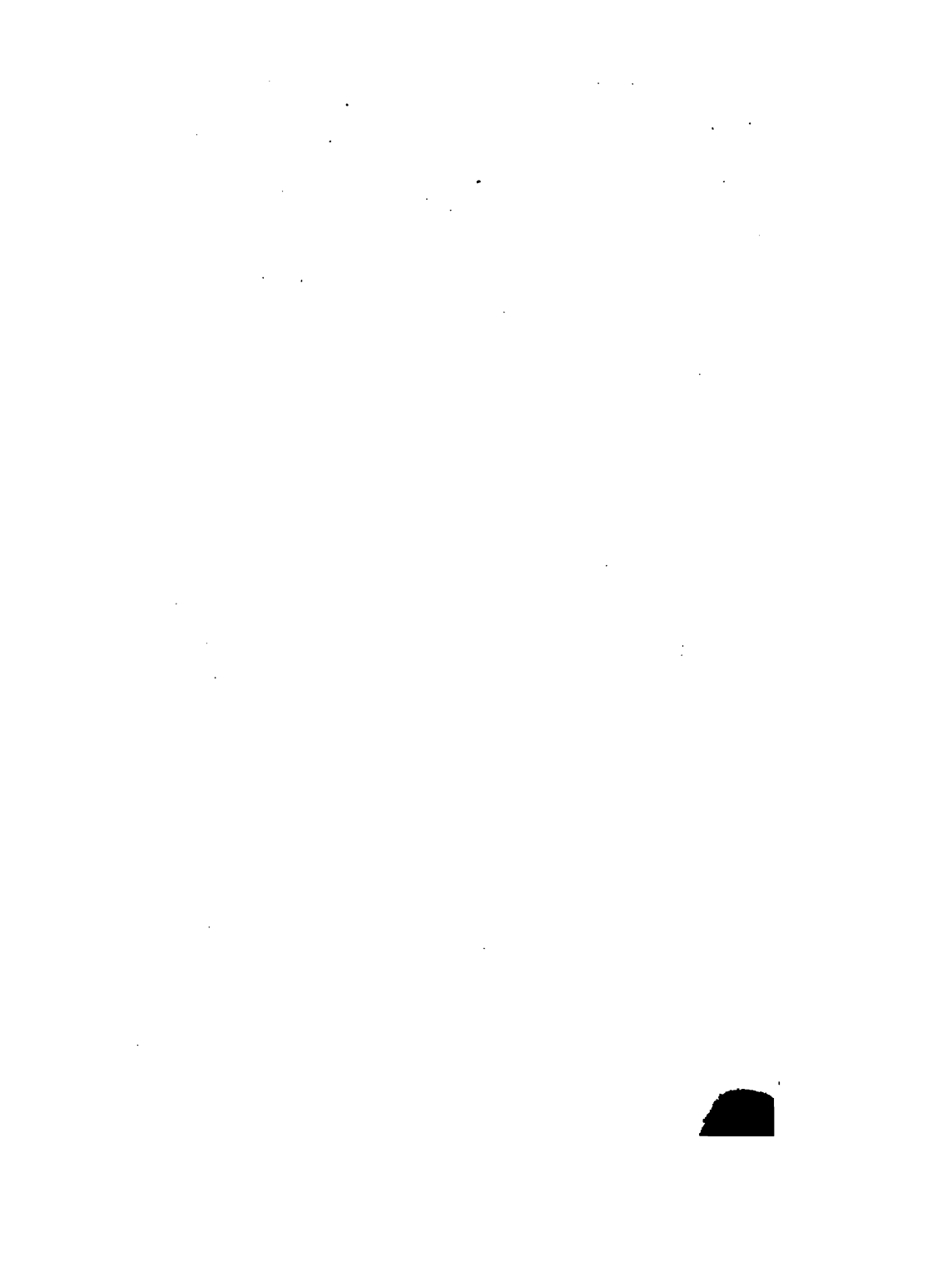
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SHAKESPEARE'S LIFE
AND WORK



**SHAKESPEARE'S LIFE
AND WORK**





Waller & Brown, pub. 18...

William Shakespeare
from the "Wroeshou" painting now in the
Shakespeare Memorial Gallery at Stratford-on-Avon.

London: Published by Smith, Elder & Co. 15, Abchurch Lane.

LIFE

SIDNEY LEE

LONDON

WILLIAM AND ANNE CLAY AND COMPANY



SHAKESPEARE'S LIFE AND WORK

BEING AN ABRIDGMENT, CHIEFLY FOR THE
USE OF STUDENTS, OF

A LIFE OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

BY

SIDNEY LEE

EDITOR OF 'THE DICTIONARY OF NATIONAL BIOGRAPHY'
HONORARY DOCTOR OF LETTERS IN THE VICTORIA UNIVERSITY

LONDON
SMITH ELDER, & CO., 15 WATERLOO PLACE

1900

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'TO THE GREAT VARIETY OF READERS'

SHAKESPEARE'S First Folio, Sig. A 3.

THIS work is a reprint, with some omissions and abbreviations, of the author's 'Life of William Shakespeare,' and is designed for the use of students and general readers who seek a complete and accurate account of the great dramatist's career and achievement in a small space at a moderate cost. The aim of the volume is to present, in language as terse and definite as possible, the net results of trustworthy research respecting Shakespeare's life and writings. In regard to topics of controversy the author confines himself to a statement of his final conclusions, and ventures to refer to the unabbreviated editions of the book all who desire to examine the grounds on which those conclusions are based. The footnotes in the larger editions give ample references to original authorities and discuss in detail points of doubt and difficulty; but although these footnotes are now omitted, the more pertinent pieces of illustrative information which they contain are incorporated in the present text. In accordance, too, with the distinctive scheme of this volume, the chapters which in former editions dealt at length with the character and significance of Shakespeare's sonnets have been greatly abridged, and those sections of the Appendix which were deemed essential to the exhaustive discussion of the subject have been excluded. But sufficient information has been retained to make the story of the sonnets perfectly coherent, and to indicate the precise

171647

lines of study that have led the author to the solutions, which he offers here, of the difficult problems which the poems present.

At the end of the volume will be found, as in the former editions, a succinct bibliography of Shakespearean literature and a note on the Bacon-Shakespeare controversy. The pictorial illustrations include the 'Droeshout' painting or 'Flower portrait' of Shakespeare in photogravure, facsimiles of all surviving specimens of his handwriting, a reproduction of the title-page of the First Folio edition of his works, and a facsimile of the contemporary inscription in Jaggard's presentation copy of the First Folio, now belonging to Mr. Coningsby Sibthorp. The full list of contents is intended to serve the purpose of a chronological table of the events and literature of which the book treats. Finally, it is hoped that the elaborate index will give the student ready control of the somewhat varied stores of information which the volume brings under his survey.

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SHAKESPEARE'S LIFE AND WORK

I

PARENTAGE AND BIRTH

SHAKESPEARE came of a family whose surname was borne through the middle ages by residents in very many parts of England—at Penrith in Cumberland, at Kirkland and Doncaster in Yorkshire, as well as in nearly all the midland counties. The surname had originally a martial significance, implying capacity in the wielding of the spear. Its first recorded holder is William Shakespeare or 'Saksper,' who was convicted of robbery and hanged in 1248; he belonged to Clapton, a hamlet (about seven miles south of Stratford-on-Avon) in the hundred of Kifftergate, Gloucestershire. The second recorded holder of the surname is John Shakespeare, who in 1279 was living at 'Freyndon,' perhaps Frittenden, Kent. The great mediæval guild of St. Anne at Knowle, whose members included the leading inhabitants of Warwickshire, was joined by many Shakespeares in the fifteenth century. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the surname is found far more frequently in Warwickshire than elsewhere. The archives of no less than twenty-four towns and villages there contain notices of Shakespeare families in the sixteenth century, and as many as thirty-four Warwickshire towns or villages were inhabited by Shakespeare families in the seventeenth century. Among them all William was a common Christian name. At Rowington, twelve miles to the north of Stratford, and in the same hundred of Barlichway, one of the most prolific Shakespeare families of Warwickshire resided in the sixteenth century, and no less than three Richard Shakespeares of Rowington, whose extant wills were proved respectively in 1560, 1591, and 1614, were fathers of sons called William. At least one other William Shakespeare

Distribution of the name.

was during the period a resident in Rowington. As a consequence, the poet has been more than once credited with achievements which rightly belong to one or other of his numerous contemporaries who were identically named.

s The poet's ancestry cannot be defined with absolute certainty. The poet's father, when applying for a grant of arms in 1596, claimed that his grandfather (the poet's great-grandfather) received for services rendered in war a grant of land in Warwickshire from Henry VII (see p. 94). No precise confirmation of this pretension has been discovered, and it may be, after the manner of heraldic genealogy, fictitious. But there is a probability that the poet came of good yeoman stock, and that his ancestors to the fourth or fifth generation were fairly substantial landowners. Adam Shakespeare, a tenant by military service of land at Baddesley Clinton in 1389, seems to have been great-grandfather of one Richard Shakespeare who held land at Wroxhall in Warwickshire during the first thirty-four years (at least) of the sixteenth century. Another Richard Shakespeare who is conjectured to have been nearly akin to the Wroxhall family was settled as a farmer at Snitterfield, a village four miles to the north of Stratford-on-Avon, in 1528. It is probable that he was the poet's grandfather. In 1550 he was renting a messuage and land at Snitterfield of Robert Arden; he died at the close of 1560, and on February 10 of the next year letters of administration of his goods, chattels, and debts were issued to his son John by the Probate Court at Worcester. His goods were valued at 35*l.* 17*s.*, which would be equivalent to 286*l.* 16*s.* in modern currency, the purchasing power of money being then eight times what it is now. Besides the son John, Richard of Snitterfield certainly had a son Henry; while a Thomas Shakespeare, a considerable landholder at Snitterfield between 1563 and 1583, whose parentage is undetermined, may have been a third son. The son Henry remained all his life at Snitterfield, where he engaged in farming with gradually diminishing success; he died in embarrassed circumstances in December 1596. John, the son, who administered Richard's estate, was in all likelihood the poet's father.

's About 1551 John Shakespeare left Snitterfield, which was his birthplace, to seek a career in the neighbouring borough of Stratford-on-Avon. There he soon set up as a

trader in all manner of agricultural produce. Corn, wool, malt, meat, skins, and leather were among the commodities in which he dealt. Documents of a somewhat later date often describe him as a glover. Aubrey, Shakespeare's first biographer, reported the tradition that he was a butcher. But though both designations doubtless indicated important branches of his business, neither can be regarded as disclosing its full extent. The land which his family farmed at Snitterfield supplied him with his varied stock-in-trade. As long as his father lived he seems to have been a frequent visitor to Snitterfield, and, like his father and brothers, he was until the date of his father's death occasionally designated a farmer or 'husbandman' of that place. But it was with Stratford-on-Avon that his life was mainly identified.

In April 1552 he was living there in Henley Street, a thoroughfare leading to the market town of Henley-in-Arden, and he is first mentioned in the borough records as paying in that month a fine of tweldepence for having a dirt-heap in front of his house. His frequent appearances in the years that follow as either plaintiff or defendant in suits heard in the local court of record for the recovery of small debts suggest that he was a keen man of business. In early life he prospered in trade, and in October 1556 purchased two freehold tenements at Stratford—one, with a garden, in Henley Street (it adjoins that now known as the poet's birthplace), and the other in Greenhill Street with a garden and croft. Thenceforth he played a prominent part in municipal affairs. In 1557 he was elected an ale-taster, whose duty it was to test the quality of malt liquors and bread. About the same time he was elected a burgess or town councillor, and in September 1558, and again on October 6, 1559, he was appointed one of the four petty constables by a vote of the jury of the court-leet. Twice—in 1559 and 1561—he was chosen one of the afferors—officers appointed to determine the fines for those offences which were punishable arbitrarily, and for which no express penalties were prescribed by statute. In 1561 he was elected one of the two chamberlains of the borough, an office of responsibility which he held for two years. He delivered his second statement of accounts to the corporation in January 1564. When attesting documents he occasionally made his mark, but there is evidence in the Stratford archives that he could write with facility ;

His settle-
ment at
Stratford.

and he was credited with financial aptitude. The municipal accounts, which were checked by tallies and counters, were audited by him after he ceased to be chamberlain, and he more than once advanced small sums of money to the corporation.

The poet's
mother.

With characteristic shrewdness he chose a wife of assured fortune—Mary, youngest daughter of Robert Arden, a wealthy farmer of Wilmcote in the parish of Aston Cantlowe, near Stratford. The Arden family in its chief branch, which was settled at Parkhall, Warwickshire, ranked with the most influential of the county. Robert Arden, a progenitor of that branch, was sheriff of Warwickshire and Leicestershire in 1438 (16 Hen. VI), and this sheriff's direct descendant, Edward Arden, who was himself high sheriff of Warwickshire in 1575, was executed in 1583 for alleged complicity in a Roman Catholic plot against the life of Queen Elizabeth. John Shakespeare's wife belonged to a humbler branch of the family, and there is no trustworthy evidence to determine the exact degree of kinship between the two branches. Her grandfather, Thomas Arden, purchased in 1501 an estate at Snitterfield, which passed, with other property, to her father Robert; John Shakespeare's father, Richard, was one of this Robert Arden's Snitterfield tenants. By his first wife, whose name is not known, Robert Arden had seven daughters, of whom all but two married; John Shakespeare's wife seems to have been the youngest. Robert Arden's second wife, Agnes or Anne, widow of John Hill (*d.* 1545), a substantial farmer of Bearley, survived him; but by her he had no issue. When he died at the end of 1556, he owned a farmhouse at Wilmcote and many acres, besides some hundred acres at Snitterfield, with two farmhouses which he let out to tenants. The post-mortem inventory of his goods, which was made on December 9, 1556, shows that he had lived in comfort; his house was adorned by as many as eleven 'painted cloths,' which then did duty for tapestries among the middle class. The exordium of his will, which was drawn up on November 24, 1556, and proved on December 16 following, indicates that he was an observant Catholic. For his two youngest daughters, Alice and Mary, he showed especial affection by nominating them his executors. Mary received not only 6*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.* in money, but the fee-simple of Asbies, his chief property at Wilmcote, consisting of a house with some fifty acres of

land. She also acquired, under an earlier settlement, an interest in two messuages at Snitterfield. But, although she was well provided with worldly goods, she was apparently without education; several extant documents bear her mark, and there is no proof that she could sign her name.

John Shakespeare's marriage with Mary Arden doubtless took place at Aston Cantlowe, the parish church of Wilmcote, in the autumn of 1557 (the church registers begin at a later date). On September 15, 1558, his first child, a daughter, Joan, was baptised in the church of Stratford. A second child, another daughter, Margaret, was baptised on December 2, 1562; but both these children died in infancy. The poet William, the first son and third child, was born on April 22 or 23, 1564. The latter date is generally accepted as his birthday, mainly (it would appear) on the ground that it was the day of his death. There is no positive evidence on the subject, but the Stratford parish registers attest that he was baptised on April 26.

←
The poet's
birth and
baptism.

Some doubt is justifiable as to the ordinarily accepted scene of his birth. Of two adjoining houses now forming a detached building on the north side of Henley Street, that to the east was purchased by John Shakespeare in 1556, but there is no evidence that he owned or occupied the house to the west before 1575. Yet this western house has been known since 1759 as the poet's birthplace, and a room on the first floor is claimed as that in which he was born. The two houses subsequently came by bequest of the poet's granddaughter to the family of the poet's sister, Joan Hart, and while the eastern tenement was let out to strangers for more than two centuries, and by them converted into an inn, the 'birthplace' was until 1806 occupied by the Harts, who latterly carried on there the trade of butcher. The fact of its long occupancy by the poet's collateral descendants accounts for the identification of the western rather than the eastern tenement with his birthplace. Both houses were purchased in behalf of subscribers to a public fund on September 16, 1847, and, after extensive restoration, were converted into a single domicile for the purposes of a public museum. They were presented under a deed of trust to the corporation of Stratford in 1866. Much of the Elizabethan timber and stonework survives, but a cellar under the 'birthplace' is the only portion which remains as it was at the date of the poet's birth.

Alleged
birth-
place.

II

CHILDHOOD, EDUCATION, AND MARRIAGE

his father
municipal
office.

IN July 1564, when William was three months old, the plague raged with unwonted vehemence at Stratford, and his father liberally contributed to the relief of its poverty-stricken victims. Fortune still favoured him. On July 4, 1565, he reached the dignity of an alderman. From 1567 onwards he was accorded in the corporation archives the honourable prefix of 'Mr.' At Michaelmas 1568 he attained the highest office in the corporation gift, that of bailiff, and during his year of office the corporation for the first time entertained actors at Stratford. The Queen's Company and the Earl of Worcester's Company each received from John Shakespeare an official welcome. The circumstance that he was the first bailiff to encourage actors to visit Stratford proves that his religion was not that of the contemporary puritan, whose hostility to all forms of dramatic representations was one of his most persistent characteristics. On September 5, 1571, John Shakespeare was chief alderman, a post which he retained till September 30 the following year. In 1573 Alexander Webbe, the husband of his wife's sister Agnes, made him overseer of his will; in 1575 he bought two houses in Stratford, one of them doubtless the alleged birthplace in Henley Street; in 1576 he contributed twelvecpence to the beadle's salary. But after Michaelmas 1572 he took a less active part in municipal affairs; he grew irregular in his attendance at the council meetings, and signs were soon apparent that his luck had turned. In 1578 he was unable to pay, with his colleagues, either the sum of fourpence for the relief of the poor or his contribution 'towards the furniture of three pikemen, two bellmen, and one archer' who were sent by the corporation to attend a muster of the trained bands of the county.

CHILDHOOD, EDUCATION, AND MARRIAGE 7

Meanwhile his family was increasing. Four children besides the poet—three sons, Gilbert (baptised October 13, 1566), Richard (baptised March 11, 1574), and Edmund (baptised May 3, 1580), with a daughter Joan (baptised April 15, 1569)—reached maturity. A daughter Ann was baptised September 28, 1571, and was buried on April 4, 1579. To meet his growing liabilities, the father borrowed money from his wife's kinsfolk, and he and his wife mortgaged, on November 14, 1578, Asbies, her valuable property at Wilmcote, for 40*l.* to Edmund Lambert of Barton-on-the-Heath, who had married her sister, Joan Arden. Lambert was to receive no interest on his loan, but was to take the 'rents and profits' of the estate. Asbies was thereby alienated for ever. Next year, on October 15, 1579, John and his wife made over to Robert Webbe, doubtless a relative of Alexander Webbe, for the sum apparently of 40*l.*, his wife's property at Snitterfield.

Brothers
and
sisters.

John Shakespeare obviously chafed under the humiliation of having parted, although as he hoped only temporarily, with his wife's property of Asbies, and in the autumn of 1580 he offered to pay off the mortgage; but his brother-in-law, Lambert, retorted that other sums were owing, and he would accept all or none. The negotiation, which was the beginning of much litigation, thus proved abortive. Through 1585 and 1586 a creditor, John Brown, was embarrassingly importunate, and, after obtaining a writ of distraint, Brown informed the local court that the debtor had no goods on which distraint could be levied. On September 6, 1586, John was deprived of his alderman's gown, on the ground of his long absence from the council meetings.

The
father's
financial
diffi-
culties.

Happily John Shakespeare was at no expense for the education of his four sons. They were entitled to free tuition at the grammar school of Stratford, which was re-constituted on a mediæval foundation by Edward VI. The eldest son, William, probably entered the school in 1571, when Walter Roche was master, and perhaps he knew something of Thomas Hunt, who succeeded Roche in 1577. As was customary in provincial schools, he was taught to write the 'Old English' character, which resembles that still in vogue in Germany. He was never taught the Italian script, which at the time was rapidly winning its way in fashionable cultured society, and is now universal among

Educa-
tion.

Englishmen. Until his death Shakespeare's 'Old English' handwriting testified to his provincial education. The general instruction that he received was mainly confined to the Latin language and literature. From the Latin accidence, boys of the period, at schools of the type of that at Stratford, were led, through conversation books like the 'Sententiæ Pueriles' and Lily's grammar, to the perusal of such authors as Seneca, Terence, Cicero, Virgil, Plautus, Ovid, and Horace. The eclogues of the popular renaissance poet, Mantuanus, were often preferred to Virgil's for beginners. The rudiments of Greek were occasionally taught in Elizabethan grammar schools to very promising pupils; but such coincidences as have been detected between expressions in Greek plays and in Shakespearean drama seem due to accident, and not to Shakespeare's study, either at school or elsewhere, of the Athenian drama.

Dr. Farmer enunciated in his 'Essay on Shakespeare's Learning' (1767) the theory that Shakespeare knew no language but his own, and owed whatever knowledge he displayed of the classics and of Italian and French literature to English translations. But several of the books in French and Italian whence Shakespeare derived the plots of his dramas—Belleforest's 'Histoires Tragiques,' Ser Giovanni's 'Il Pecorone,' and Cinthio's 'Hecatommithi,' for example—were not accessible to him in English translations; and on more general grounds the theory of his ignorance is adequately confuted. A boy with Shakespeare's exceptional alertness of intellect, during whose schooldays a training in Latin classics lay within reach, could hardly lack in future years all means of access to the literature of France and Italy.

The poet's
classical
equip-
ment.

With the Latin and French languages, indeed, and with many Latin poets of the school curriculum, Shakespeare in his writings openly acknowledged his acquaintance. In 'Henry V' the dialogue in many scenes is carried on in French which is grammatically accurate if not idiomatic. In the mouth of his schoolmasters, Holofernes in 'Love's Labour's Lost' and Sir Hugh Evans in 'Merry Wives of Windsor,' Shakespeare placed Latin phrases drawn directly from Lily's grammar, from the 'Sententiæ Pueriles,' and from 'the good old Mantuan.' The influence of Ovid, especially the 'Metamorphoses,' was apparent throughout his earliest literary work, both poetic and dramatic, and is

discernible in the 'Tempest,' his latest play (v. i. 33 seq.). In the Bodleian Library there is a copy of the Aldine edition of Ovid's 'Metamorphoses' (1502), and on the title is the signature 'W^m. Sh^e.,' which experts have declared—not quite conclusively—to be a genuine autograph of the poet. Ovid's Latin text was certainly familiar to him. His closest adaptations of Ovid's 'Metamorphoses' often reflect, however, the phraseology of the popular English version by Arthur Golding, of which some seven editions were issued between 1565 and 1597. From Plautus Shakespeare drew the plot of the 'Comedy of Errors,' and it is just possible that Plautus's comedies, too, were accessible in English. Shakespeare had no title to rank as a classical scholar, and he did not disdain a liberal use of translations. His lack of exact scholarship fully accounts for the 'small Latin and less Greek' with which he was credited by his scholarly friend, Ben Jonson. But Aubrey's report that 'he understood Latin pretty well' need not be contested, and his knowledge of French may be estimated to have equalled his knowledge of Latin, while he doubtless possessed just sufficient acquaintance with Italian to enable him to discern the drift of an Italian poem or novel.

Of the few English books accessible to him in his schooldays, the chief was the English Bible, either in the popular Genevan version, first issued in a complete form in 1560, or in the Bishops' revision of 1568, which the Authorised Version of 1611 closely followed. References to scriptural characters and incidents are not conspicuous in Shakespeare's plays, but, such as they are, they are drawn from all parts of the Bible, and indicate that general acquaintance with the narrative of both Old and New Testaments which a clever boy would be certain to acquire either in the schoolroom or at church on Sundays. Shakespeare quotes or adapts biblical phrases with far greater frequency than he makes allusion to episodes in biblical history. But many such phrases enjoyed proverbial currency, and others, which were more recondite, were borrowed from Holinshed's 'Chronicles' and secular works whence he drew his plots. As a rule his use of scriptural phraseology, as of scriptural history, suggests youthful reminiscence and the assimilative tendency of the mind in a stage of early development rather than close and continuous study of the Bible in adult life.

Shakespeare
and the
Bible.

Shakespeare was a schoolboy in July 1575, when Queen Elizabeth made a progress through Warwickshire on a visit to her favourite, the Earl of Leicester, at his castle of Kenilworth. References have been detected in Oberon's vision in Shakespeare's 'Midsummer Night's Dream' (II. ii. 148-68) to the fantastic pageants and masques with which the Queen during her stay was entertained in Kenilworth Park. Leicester's residence was only fifteen miles from Stratford, and it is possible that Shakespeare went thither with his father to witness some of the open-air festivities; but two full descriptions which were published in 1576, in pamphlet form, gave Shakespeare knowledge of all that took place. Shakespeare's opportunities of recreation outside Stratford were in any case restricted during his schooldays. His father's financial difficulties grew steadily, and they caused his removal from school at an unusually early age. Probably in 1577, when he was thirteen, he was enlisted by his father in an effort to restore his decaying fortunes. 'I have been told heretofore,' wrote Aubrey, 'by some of the neighbours that when he was a boy he exercised his father's trade,' which, according to the writer, was that of a butcher. It is possible that John's ill-luck at the period compelled him to confine himself to this occupation, which in happier days formed only one branch of his business. His son may have been formally apprenticed to him. An early Stratford tradition describes him as 'a butcher's apprentice.' 'When he kill'd a calf,' Aubrey proceeds less convincingly, 'he would doe it in a high style and make a speech. There was at that time another butcher's son in this towne, that was held not at all inferior to him for a naturall witt, his acquaintance, and coetanean, but dyed young.'

The poet's
marriage.

At the end of 1582 Shakespeare, when little more than eighteen and a half, took a step which was little calculated to lighten his father's anxieties. He married. His wife, according to the inscription on her tombstone, was his senior by eight years. Rowe, the poet's biographer of 1709, stated that she 'was the daughter of one Hathaway, said to have been a substantial yeoman in the neighbourhood of Stratford.'

Richard
Hath-
away of
Shottery.

On September 1, 1581, Richard Hathaway, 'husbandman' of Shottery, a hamlet in the parish of Old Stratford, made his will, which was proved on July 9, 1582, and is now preserved at Somerset House. His house and land, 'two and a half virgates,' had been long held in copyhold

by his family, and he died in fairly prosperous circumstances. His wife Joan, the chief legatee, was directed to carry on the farm with the aid of her eldest son, Bartholomew, to whom a share in its proceeds was assigned. Six other children—three sons and three daughters—received sums of money; Agnes, the eldest daughter, and Catherine, the second daughter, were each allotted 6*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.*, 'to be paid at the day of her marriage,' a phrase common in wills of the period. Anne and Agnes were in the sixteenth century alternative spellings of the same Christian name; and there is little doubt that the daughter 'Agnes' of Richard Hathaway's will became, within a few months of Richard Hathaway's death, Shakespeare's wife.

The house at Shottery, now known as Anne Hathaway's cottage, and reached from Stratford by field-paths, undoubtedly once formed part of Richard Hathaway's farmhouse, and, despite numerous alterations and renovations, still preserves many features of a thatched farmhouse of the Elizabethan period. The house remained in the Hathaway family till 1838, although the male line became extinct in 1746. It was purchased in behalf of the public by the Birthplace trustees in 1892.

No record of the solemnisation of Shakespeare's marriage survives. Although the parish of Stratford included Shottery, and thus both bride and bridegroom were parishioners, the Stratford parish register is silent on the subject. A local tradition, which seems to have come into being during the present century, assigns the ceremony to the neighbouring hamlet or chapelry of Luddington, of which neither the chapel nor parish registers now exist. But one important piece of documentary evidence directly bearing on the poet's matrimonial venture is accessible. In the registry of the bishop of the diocese (Worcester) a deed is extant wherein Fulk Sandells and John Richardson, 'husbandmen of Stratford,' bound themselves in the bishop's consistory court, on November 28, 1582, in a surety of 40*l.*, to free the bishop of all liability should a lawful impediment—'by reason of any precontract' [i.e. with a third party] or consanguinity—be subsequently disclosed to imperil the validity of the marriage, then in contemplation, of William Shakespeare with Anne Hathaway. On the assumption that no such impediment was known to exist, and provided that Anne obtained the consent of her

'friends,' the marriage might proceed 'with once asking of the bannes of matrimony betwene them.'

Bonds of similar purport, although differing in significant details, are extant in all diocesan registries of the sixteenth century. They were obtainable on the payment of a fee to the bishop's commissary, and had the effect of expediting the marriage ceremony while protecting the clergy from the consequences of any possible breach of canonical law. But they were not common, and it was rare for persons in the comparatively humble position in life of Anne Hathaway and young Shakespeare to adopt such cumbrous formalities when there was always available the simpler, less expensive, and more leisurely method of marriage by 'thrice asking of the banns.' Moreover, the wording of the bond which was drawn before Shakespeare's marriage differs in important respects from that adopted in all other known examples. In the latter it is invariably provided that the marriage shall not take place without the consent of the parents or governors of both bride and bridegroom. In the case of the marriage of an 'infant' bridegroom the formal consent of his parents was absolutely essential to strictly regular procedure, although clergymen might be found who were ready to shut their eyes to the facts of the situation and to run the risk of solemnising the marriage of an 'infant' without inquiry as to the parents' consent. The clergyman who united Shakespeare in wedlock to Anne Hathaway was obviously of this easy temper. Despite the circumstance that Shakespeare's bride was of full age and he himself was by nearly three years a minor, the Shakespeare bond stipulated merely for the consent of the bride's 'friends,' and ignored the bridegroom's parents altogether. Nor was this the only irregularity in the document. In other pre-matrimonial covenants of the kind the name either of the bridegroom himself or of the bridegroom's father figures as one of the two sureties, and is mentioned first of the two. Had the usual form been followed, Shakespeare's father would have been the chief party to the transaction in behalf of his 'infant' son. But in the Shakespeare bond the sole sureties, Sandells and Richardson, were farmers of Shottery, the bride's native place. Sandells was a 'supervisor' of the will of the bride's father, who there describes him as 'my trustie friende and neighbour.' The prominence of the Shottery husbandmen in the negotiations

preceding Shakespeare's marriage suggests the true position of affairs. Sandells and Richardson, representing the lady's family, doubtless secured the deed on their own initiative, so that Shakespeare might have small opportunity of evading a step which his intimacy with their friend's daughter had rendered essential to her reputation. The wedding probably took place, without the consent of the bridegroom's parents—it may be without their knowledge—soon after the signing of the deed. Within six months—in May 1583—a daughter was born to the poet, and was baptised in the name of Susanna at Stratford parish church on the 26th.

←
Birth of a daughter.

Shakespeare's apologists have endeavoured to show that the public betrothal or formal 'troth-plight' which was at the time a common prelude to a wedding carried with it all the privileges of marriage. But neither Shakespeare's detailed description of a betrothal nor of the solemn verbal contract that ordinarily preceded marriage lends the contention much support.

Formal betrothal probably dispensed with.

A contract of eternal bond of love,
Confirm'd by mutual joinder of your hands,
Attested by the holy close of lips,
Strengthen'd by interchangement of your rings ;
And all the ceremony of this compact
Seal'd in my [*i.e.* the priest's] function by my testimony.
Twelfth Night, v. i. 160-4.

Moreover, the whole circumstances of the case render it highly improbable that Shakespeare and his bride submitted to the formal preliminaries of a betrothal. In that ceremony the parents of both contracting parties invariably played foremost parts, but the wording of the bond precludes the assumption that the bridegroom's parents were actors in any scene of the hurriedly planned drama of his marriage.

A difficulty has been imported into the narration of the poet's matrimonial affairs by the assumption of his identity with one 'William Shakespeare,' to whom, according to an entry in the Bishop of Worcester's register, a license was issued on November 27, 1582 (the day *before* the signing of the Hathaway bond), authorising his marriage with Anne Whateley of Temple Grafton. The theory that the maiden name of Shakespeare's wife was Whateley is quite untenable, and it is unsafe to assume that the bishop's clerk, when making a note of the grant of the license in his

register, erred so extensively as to write 'Anne Whateley of Temple Grafton' for 'Anne Hathaway of Shottery.' The husband of Anne Whateley cannot reasonably be identified with the poet. He was doubtless another of the numerous William Shakespeares who abounded in the diocese of Worcester. Had a license for the poet's marriage been secured on November 27, it is unlikely that the Shottery husbandmen would have entered next day into a bond 'against impediments,' the execution of which might well have been demanded as a preliminary to the grant of a license but was wholly supererogatory after the grant was made.

III

THE FAREWELL TO STRATFORD

ANNE HATHAWAY'S greater burden of years and the likelihood that the poet was forced into marrying her by her friends were not circumstances of happy augury. Although it is dangerous to read into Shakespeare's dramatic utterances allusions to his personal experience, the emphasis with which he insists that a woman should take in marriage an 'elder than herself' ('Twelfth Night,' II. iv. 29), and that prenuptial intimacy is productive of 'barren hate, sour-ey'd disdain, and discord,' suggests a personal interpretation ('Tempest,' IV. i. 15-22). To both these unpromising features was added, in the poet's case, the absence of a means of livelihood, and his course of life in the years that immediately followed implies that he bore his domestic ties with impatience. Early in 1585 twins were born to him, a son (Hamnet) and a daughter (Judith); both were baptised on February 2. All the evidence points to the conclusion, which the fact that he had no more children confirms, that in the later months of the year (1585) he left Stratford, and that, although he was never wholly estranged from his family, he saw little of wife or children for eleven years. Between the winter of 1585 and the autumn of 1596—an interval which synchronises with his first literary triumphs—there is only one shadowy mention of his name in Stratford records. In April 1587 there died Edmund Lambert, who held Asbies under the mortgage of 1578, and a few months later Shakespeare's name, as owner of a contingent interest, was joined to that of his father and mother in a formal assent given to an abortive proposal to confer on Edmund's son and heir, John Lambert, an absolute title to the estate on condition of his cancelling the mortgage and paying 20*l.* But the deed does not indicate that Shakespeare personally assisted at the transaction

Shakespeare's early literary work proves that while in the country he eagerly studied birds, flowers, and trees, and gained a detailed knowledge of horses and dogs. All his kinsfolk were farmers, and with them he doubtless as a youth practised many field sports. Sympathetic references to hawking, hunting, coursing, and angling abound in his early plays and poems. And his sporting experiences passed at times beyond orthodox limits. A poaching adventure, according to a credible tradition, was the immediate cause of his long severance from his native place. 'He had,' wrote Rowe in 1709, 'by a misfortune common enough to young fellows, fallen into ill company, and, among them, some, that made a frequent practice of deer-stealing, engaged him with them more than once in robbing a park that belonged to [a wealthy country gentleman] Sir Thomas Lucy of Charlecote [between four and five miles to the north-east of] Stratford. For this he was prosecuted by that gentleman, as he thought, somewhat too severely; and, in order to revenge that ill-usage, he made a ballad upon him, and though this, probably the first essay of his poetry, be lost, yet it is said to have been so very bitter that it redoubled the prosecution against him to that degree that he was obliged to leave his business and family in Warwickshire and shelter himself in London.' The independent testimony of Archdeacon Davies, who was vicar of Saperton, Gloucestershire, late in the seventeenth century, is to the effect that Shakespeare 'was much given to all unluckiness in stealing venison and rabbits, particularly from Sir Thomas Lucy, who had him oft whipt, and sometimes imprisoned, and at last made him fly his native county to his great advancement.' The law of Shakespeare's day (5 Eliz. cap. 21) punished deer-stealers with three months' imprisonment and the payment of thrice the amount of the damage done.

The tradition has been challenged on the ground that the Charlecote deer-park was of later date than the sixteenth century. But Sir Thomas Lucy was an extensive game-preserved, and owned at Charlecote a warren in which a few harts or does doubtless found an occasional home. Samuel Ireland was informed in 1794 that Shakespeare stole the deer not from Charlecote, but from Fulbroke Park, a few miles off, and Ireland supplied in his 'Views on the Warwickshire Avon,' 1795, an engraving of an old farm-

aching
Charle-
e.

war-
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ubts of
a tra-
tion.

house in the hamlet of Fulbroke, where he asserted that Shakespeare was temporarily imprisoned after his arrest. An adjoining hovel was locally known for some years as Shakespeare's 'deer-barn,' but no portion of Fulbroke Park, which included the site of these buildings (now removed), was Lucy's property in Elizabeth's reign, and the amended legend, which was solemnly confided to Sir Walter Scott in 1828 by the owner of Charlecote, seems pure invention.

The ballad which Shakespeare is reported to have fastened on the park gates of Charlecote does not, as Rowe acknowledged, survive. No authenticity can be allowed the worthless lines beginning 'A parliament member, a justice of peace,' which were represented to be Shakespeare's on the authority of an old man who lived near Stratford and died in 1703. But such an incident as the tradition reveals has left a distinct impress on Shakespearean drama. Justice Shallow is beyond doubt a reminiscence of the owner of Charlecote. According to Archdeacon Davies of Saperton, Shakespeare's 'revenge was so great that' he caricatured Lucy as 'Justice Clodpate,' who was (Davies adds) represented on the stage as 'a great man,' and as bearing, in allusion to Lucy's name, 'three louses rampant for his arms.' Justice Shallow, Davies's 'Justice Clodpate,' came to birth in the 'Second Part of Henry IV' (1598), and he is represented in the opening scene of the 'Merry Wives of Windsor' as having come from Gloucestershire to Windsor to make a Star-Chamber matter of a poaching raid on his estate. The 'three lucas hauriant argent' were the arms borne by the Charlecote Lucys, and the dramatist's prolonged reference in this scene to the 'dozen white lucas' on Justice Shallow's 'old coat' fully establishes Shallow's identity with Lucy.

The poaching episode is best assigned to 1585, but it may be questioned whether Shakespeare, on fleeing from Lucy's persecution, at once sought an asylum in London. William Beeston, a seventeenth-century actor, remembered hearing that he had been for a time a country schoolmaster 'in his younger years,' and it seems possible that on first leaving Stratford he found some such employment in a neighbouring village. The suggestion that he joined, at the end of 1585, a band of youths of the district in serving in the Low Countries under the Earl of Leicester, whose

Justice
Shallow.

The flight
from
Stratford.

castle of Kenilworth was within easy reach of Stratford, is based on an obvious confusion between him and others of his name. The knowledge of a soldier's life which Shakespeare exhibited in his plays is no greater and no less than that which he displayed of almost all other spheres of human activity, and to assume that he wrote of all or of any from practical experience, unless the evidence be conclusive, is to underrate his intuitive power of realising life under almost every aspect by force of his imagination.

IV

ON THE LONDON STAGE

To London Shakespeare naturally drifted, doubtless trudging thither on foot during 1586, by way of Oxford and High Wycombe. Tradition points to that as Shakespeare's favoured route, rather than to the road by Banbury and Aylesbury. Aubrey asserts that at Grendon, near Oxford, 'he happened to take the humour of the constable in "Midsummer Night's Dream"'—by which he meant, we may suppose, 'Much Ado about Nothing'—but there were watchmen of the Dogberry type all over England, and probably at Stratford itself. The Crown Inn (formerly 3 Cornmarket Street) near Carfax, at Oxford, was long pointed out as one of his resting-places.

The journey to London.

In London Shakespeare was among strangers. The common assumption that Richard Burbage, the great actor with whom he was subsequently associated, was a native of Stratford, is wholly erroneous. Richard was born in Shoreditch, and his father came from Hertfordshire. John Heming, another of Shakespeare's actor-friends who has also been claimed as a native of Stratford, was beyond reasonable doubt born at Droitwich in Worcestershire. Similarly Thomas Greene, a popular comic actor at the Red Bull Theatre early in the seventeenth century, is conjectured to have belonged to Stratford on no grounds that deserve attention; and Shakespeare was never associated with him. To only one resident in London is Shakespeare likely to have been known previously to his arrival in 1586. Richard Field, a native of Stratford, and son of a friend of Shakespeare's father, had left Stratford in 1579 to serve an apprenticeship with Thomas Vautrollier, the London printer. Field was made free of the Stationers' Company in 1587, and resided for more than a quarter of a century afterwards at his printing-office in Blackfriars near Ludgate. He and

Richard Field, his townsman

Shakespeare were soon associated as author and publisher ; but the theory that Field found work in Vautrollier's printing-office for Shakespeare on his arrival in London is fanciful. No more can be said for the attempt to prove that he obtained employment as a lawyer's clerk. In view of his general quickness of apprehension, Shakespeare's accurate use of legal terms, which deserves all the attention that has been paid it, may be attributable in part to his observation of the many legal processes in which his father was involved, and in part to early intercourse with members of the Inns of Court.

theatrical
employ-
ment.

Tradition and common-sense alike point to one of the only two theatres (The Theatre or The Curtain) that existed in London at the date of his arrival as an early scene of his regular occupation. The compiler of the 'Lives of the Poets, by Theophilus Cibber' (1753) was the first to relate the story that his original connection with the playhouse was as holder of the horses of visitors outside the doors. According to the same writer, the story was related by Sir William D'Avenant to the actor Betterton ; but Rowe, to whom Betterton communicated it, made no use of it. The two regular theatres of the time were both reached on horseback by men of fashion, and the owner of The Theatre, James Burbage, kept a livery stable at Smithfield. There is no inherent improbability in the tale. Dr. Johnson's amplified version, in which Shakespeare was represented as organising a service of boys for the purpose of tending visitors' horses, sounds apocryphal.

play-
use
by visitor.

There is every indication that Shakespeare was speedily offered employment inside the playhouse. In 1587 the two chief companies of actors, claiming respectively the nominal patronage of the Queen and Lord Leicester, returned to London from a provincial tour, during which they visited Stratford. Two subordinate companies, one of which claimed the patronage of the Earl of Essex and the other that of Lord Stafford, also performed in the town during the same year. Shakespeare's friends may have called the attention of the strolling players to the homeless youth, rumours of whose search for employment about the London theatres had doubtless reached Stratford. From such incidents seems to have sprung the opportunity which offered Shakespeare fame and fortune. According to Rowe's vague statement, 'he was received into the

company then in being at first in a very mean rank.' William Castle, the parish clerk of Stratford at the end of the seventeenth century, was in the habit of telling visitors that he entered the playhouse as a servitor. Malone recorded in 1780 a stage tradition 'that his first office in the theatre was that of prompter's attendant' or call-boy. His intellectual capacity and the amiability with which he turned to account his versatile powers were probably soon recognised, and thenceforth his promotion was assured.

Shakespeare's earliest reputation was made as an actor, and, although his work as a dramatist soon eclipsed his histrionic fame, he remained a prominent member of the actor's profession till near the end of his life. By an Act of Parliament of 1571 (14 Eliz. cap. 2), which was re-enacted in 1596 (39 Eliz. cap. 4), players were under the necessity of procuring a license to pursue their calling from a peer of the realm or 'personage of higher degree'; otherwise they were adjudged to be of the status of rogues and vagabonds. The Queen herself and many Elizabethan peers were liberal in the exercise of their licensing powers, and few actors failed to secure a statutory license, which gave them a rank of respectability, and relieved them of all risk of identification with vagrants or 'sturdy beggars.' From an early period in Elizabeth's reign licensed actors were organised into permanent companies. In 1587 and following years, besides three companies of duly licensed boy-actors that were formed from the choristers of St. Paul's Cathedral and the Chapel Royal and from Westminster scholars, there were in London at least six companies of fully licensed adult actors; five of these were called after the noblemen to whom their members respectively owed their licenses (viz. the Earls of Leicester, Oxford, Sussex, and Worcester, and the Lord Admiral, Charles, Lord Howard of Effingham), and one of them whose actors derived their license from the Queen was called the Queen's Company.

The acting
companies.

The patron's functions in relation to the companies seem to have been mainly confined to the grant or renewal of the actors' licenses. Constant alterations of name, owing to the death or change from other causes of the patrons, render it difficult to trace with certainty each company's history. But there seems no doubt that the most influential of the companies named—that under the

The Lord Chamberlain's Company.

nominal patronage of the Earl of Leicester—passed on his death in September 1588 to the patronage of Ferdinando Stanley, Lord Strange, who became Earl of Derby on September 25, 1592. When the Earl of Derby died on April 16, 1594, his place as patron and licenser was successively filled by Henry Carey, first lord Hunsdon, Lord Chamberlain (*d.* July 23, 1596), and by his son and heir, George Carey, second lord Hunsdon, who himself became Lord Chamberlain in March 1597. After King James's succession in May 1603 the company was promoted to be the King's players, and, thus advanced in dignity, it fully maintained the supremacy which, under its successive titles, it had already long enjoyed.

A member of the Lord Chamberlain's.

It is fair to infer that this was the company that Shakespeare originally joined and adhered to through life. Documentary evidence proves that he was a member of it in December 1594 ; in May 1603 he was one of its leaders. Four of its chief members—Richard Burbage, the greatest tragic actor of the day, John Heming, Henry Condell, and Augustine Phillips—were among Shakespeare's lifelong friends. Under this company's auspices, moreover, Shakespeare's plays first saw the light. Only two of the plays claimed for him—'Titus Andronicus' and '3 Henry VI'—seem to have been performed by other companies (the Earl of Sussex's men in the one case, and the Earl of Pembroke's in the other).

The London theatres.

When Shakespeare became a member of the company it was doubtless performing at The Theatre, the playhouse in Shoreditch which James Burbage, the father of the great actor, Richard Burbage, had constructed in 1576 ; it abutted on the Finsbury Fields, and stood outside the City's boundaries. The only other London playhouse then in existence—the Curtain in Moorfields—was near at hand ; its name survives in Curtain Road, Shoreditch. But at an early date in his acting career Shakespeare's company sought and found new quarters. While known as Lord Strange's men, they opened on February 19, 1592, a third London theatre called the Rose, which Philip Henslowe, the speculative theatrical manager, had erected on the Bankside, Southwark. At the date of the inauguration of the Rose Theatre Shakespeare's company was temporarily allied with another company, the Admiral's men, who numbered the great actor Edward Alleyn among them.

Alleyn for a few months undertook the direction of the amalgamated companies, but they quickly parted, and no further opportunity was offered Shakespeare of enjoying professional relations with Alleyn. The Rose Theatre was doubtless the earliest scene of Shakespeare's pronounced successes alike as actor and dramatist. Subsequently for a short time in 1594 he frequented the stage of another new theatre at Newington Butts, and between 1595 and 1599 the older stages of the Curtain and of The Theatre in Shoreditch. The Curtain remained open till the Civil Wars, although its vogue after 1600 was eclipsed by that of younger rivals. In 1599 Richard Burbage and his brother Cuthbert demolished the old building of The Theatre and built, mainly out of the materials of the dismantled fabric, the famous theatre called the Globe on the Bankside. It was octagonal in shape, and built of wood, and doubtless Shakespeare described it (rather than the Curtain) as 'this wooden O' in the opening chorus of 'Henry V' (l. 13). After 1599 the Globe was mainly occupied by Shakespeare's company, and in its profits he acquired an important share. From the date of its inauguration until the poet's retirement, the Globe—which quickly won the first place among London theatres—seems to have been the sole playhouse with which Shakespeare was professionally associated. The equally familiar Blackfriars Theatre, which was created out of a dwelling-house by James Burbage, the actor's father, at the end of 1596, was for many years afterwards leased out to the company of boy-actors known as 'the Queen's children of the Chapel'; it was not occupied by Shakespeare's company until December 1609 or January 1610, when his acting days were nearing their end. The site of the Blackfriars Theatre is now occupied by the offices of the 'Times' newspaper in Queen Victoria Street, E.C.

In London Shakespeare resided near the theatres. According to a memorandum by Alleyn (which Malone quoted), he lodged in 1596 near 'the Bear Garden in Southwark.' In 1598 one William Shakespeare, who was assessed by the collectors of a subsidy in the sum of 13*s.* 4*d.* upon goods valued at 5*l.*, was a resident in St. Helen's parish, Bishopsgate, but it is not certain that this tax-payer was the dramatist.

Place of
residence
in London.

The chief differences between the methods of theatrical

representation in Shakespeare's day and our own lay in the fact that neither scenery nor women-actors were known to the Elizabethan stage. All female rôles were, until the Restoration in 1660, assumed in the public theatres by men or boys. Shakespeare alludes to the appearance of men or boys in women's parts when he makes Rosalind, in the epilogue to 'As you like it,' say laughingly to the men of the audience, '*If I were a woman*, I would kiss as many of you as had beards.' Similarly, Cleopatra on her downfall in 'Antony and Cleopatra,' v. ii. 220 seq., laments :

the quick comedians
Extemporally will stage us . . . and I shall see
Some squeaking Cleopatra *boy* my greatness.]

Men taking women's parts seem to have worn masks. In 'Midsummer Night's Dream' (i. ii. 53), Flute is bidden by Quince play Thisbe 'in a mask.' Similarly in Shakespeare's day the public stages were bare of any scenic contrivance except a front curtain opening in the middle and a balcony or upper platform resting on pillars at the back of the stage; from this balcony portions of the dialogue were sometimes spoken, but occasionally it seems to have been occupied by spectators. Sir Philip Sidney humorously described the spectator's difficulties in an Elizabethan playhouse, where, owing to the absence of stage scenery, he had to imagine the bare boards to present in rapid succession a garden, a rocky coast, a cave, and a battlefield ('Apologie for Poetrie,' p. 52). The absence of scenery, coupled with the substitution of boys for women, implies that the skill needed, on the part of actors, to rouse in the audience the requisite illusions was far greater in Shakespeare's day than at later periods.

Actors'
provincial
tours.

Although the scenic principles of the theatre of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries widely differed from those of the theatre of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the professional customs of Elizabethan actors approximated in many respects more closely to those of their modern successors than is usually recognised. The practice of touring in the provinces was followed with even greater regularity than now. Few companies remained in London during the summer or early autumn, and every country town with two thousand or more inhabitants could reckon on at least one visit from travelling actors between May and October. A rapid examination of the extant archives of some

seventy municipalities selected at random shows that Shakespeare's company between 1594 and 1614 frequently performed in such towns as Barnstaple, Bath, Bristol, Coventry, Dover, Faversham, Folkestone, Hythe, Leicester, Maidstone, Marlborough, New Romney, Oxford, Rye in Sussex, Saffron Walden, and Shrewsbury. Shakespeare may be credited with faithfully fulfilling all his professional functions, and some of the references to travel in his sonnets were doubtless reminiscences of early acting tours. It has been repeatedly urged, moreover, that Shakespeare's company visited Scotland, and that he went with it. In November 1599 English actors arrived in Scotland under the leadership of Lawrence Fletcher and one Martin, and were welcomed with enthusiasm by the king. Fletcher was a colleague of Shakespeare in 1603, but is not known to have been one earlier. Shakespeare's company never included an actor named Martin. Fletcher repeated the visit in October 1601. There is nothing to indicate that any of his companions belonged to Shakespeare's company. In like manner, Shakespeare's accurate reference in 'Macbeth' to the 'nimble' but 'sweet' climate of Inverness—

Shake-
speare's
alleged
travels.

In Scot-
land.

This castle hath a pleasant seat ; the air
Nimbly and sweetly recommends itself
Unto our gentle senses (*Macbeth*, I. vi. 1-6)—

and the vivid impression the dramatist conveys of the aspects of wild Highland heaths, have been judged to be the certain fruits of a personal experience ; but the passages in question, into which a more definite significance has possibly been read than Shakespeare intended, can be satisfactorily accounted for by his inevitable intercourse with Scotsmen in London and the theatres after James I's accession.

A few English actors in Shakespeare's day occasionally combined to make professional tours through foreign lands, where Court society invariably gave them a hospitable reception. In Denmark, Germany, Austria, Holland, and France, many dramatic performances were given before royal audiences by English actors between 1580 and 1630. That Shakespeare joined any of these expeditions is highly improbable. Actors of small account at home mainly took part in them, and Shakespeare's name appears in no extant list of those who paid professional visits abroad. It is, in fact, unlikely that Shakespeare ever set foot on the

In Italy. continent of Europe in either a private or professional capacity. He repeatedly ridicules the craze for foreign travel. To Italy, it is true, and especially to cities of Northern Italy, like Venice, Padua, Verona, Mantua, and Milan, he makes frequent and familiar reference, and he supplied many a realistic portrayal of Italian life and sentiment. But the fact that he represents Valentine in the 'Two Gentlemen of Verona' (i. i. 71) as travelling from Verona to Milan by sea, and Prospero in the 'Tempest' as embarking on a ship at the gates of Milan (i. ii. 129-44), renders it almost impossible that he could have gathered his knowledge of Northern Italy from personal observation. He doubtless owed all to the verbal reports of travelled friends or to books, the contents of which he had a rare power of assimilating and vitalising.

Shake-
speare's
rôles.

The publisher Chettle wrote in 1592 that Shakespeare was 'exclent in the qualitie [*i.e.* calling] he professes,' and the old actor William Beeston asserted in the next century that Shakespeare 'did act exceedingly well.' But the rôles in which he distinguished himself are imperfectly recorded. Few surviving documents refer directly to performances by him. At Christmas 1594 he joined the popular actors William Kemp, the chief comedian of the day, and Richard Burbage, the greatest tragic actor, in 'two several comedies or interludes' which were acted on St. Stephen's Day and on Innocents' Day (December 26 and 28) at Greenwich Palace before the Queen. The players received 'xiii*l*. vijs. viii*l*. and by waye of her Majesties rewarde vi*l*. xiiis. iiij*l*. in all xx*l*.' Neither plays nor parts are named. Shakespeare's name stands first on the list of those who took part in the original performances of Ben Jonson's 'Every Man in his Humour' (1598). In the original edition of Jonson's 'Sejanus' (1603) the actors' names are arranged in two columns, and Shakespeare's name heads the second column, standing parallel with Burbage's, which heads the first. But here again the character allotted to each actor is not stated. Rowe identified only one of Shakespeare's parts, 'the Ghost in his own "Hamlet,"' and Rowe asserted his assumption of that character to be 'the top of his performance.' John Davies of Hereford noted that he 'played some kingly parts in sport.' One of Shakespeare's younger brothers, presumably Gilbert, often came, wrote Oldys, to London in his younger days to see his brother act

in his own plays ; and in his old age, when his memory was failing, he recalled his brother's performance of Adam in 'As you like it.' In the 1623 folio edition of Shakespeare's 'Works' his name heads the prefatory list 'of the principall actors in all these playes.'

That Shakespeare chafed under some of the conditions of the actor's calling is commonly inferred from the 'Sonnets.' There he reproaches himself with becoming 'a motley to the view' (cx. 2), and chides fortune for having provided for his livelihood nothing better than 'public means that public manners breed,' whence his name received a brand (cxi. 4-5). If such self-pity is to be literally interpreted, it only reflected an evanescent mood. His interest in all that touched the efficiency of his profession was permanently active. He was a keen critic of actors' elocution, and in 'Hamlet' shrewdly denounced their common failings, but clearly and hopefully pointed out the road to improvement. His highest ambitions lay, it is true, elsewhere than in acting, and at an early period of his theatrical career he undertook, with triumphant success, the labours of a playwright. But he pursued the profession of an actor loyally and uninterruptedly until he resigned all connection with the theatre within a few years of his death

Alleged
scorn of
an actor's
calling.

V

EARLY DRAMATIC EFFORTS

Dramatic
work.

THE whole of Shakespeare's dramatic work was probably begun and ended within two decades (1591-1611), between his twenty-seventh and forty-seventh year. If the works traditionally assigned to him include some contributions from other pens, he was perhaps responsible, on the other hand, for portions of a few plays that are traditionally claimed for others. When the account is balanced, Shakespeare must be credited with the production, during these twenty years, of a yearly average of two plays, nearly all of which belonged to the supreme rank of literature. Three volumes of poems must be added to the total. Ben Jonson was often told by the players that 'whatsoever he penned he never blotted out [i.e. erased] a line.' The editors of the First Folio attested that 'what he thought he uttered with that easiness that we have scarce received from him a blot in his papers.' Signs of hasty workmanship are not lacking, but they are few when it is considered how rapidly his numerous compositions came from his pen, and they are in the aggregate unimportant.

His bor-
rowed
plots.

By borrowing his plots he to some extent economised his energy, but he transformed most of them, and it was not probably with the object of conserving his strength that he systematically levied loans on popular current literature like Holinshed's 'Chronicles,' North's translation of 'Plutarch,' widely read romances, and successful plays. In this regard he betrayed something of the practical temperament which is traceable in the conduct of the affairs of his later life. It was doubtless with the calculated aim of ministering to the public taste that he unceasingly adapted, as his genius dictated, themes which had already, in the hands of inferior writers or dramatists, proved capable of arresting public attention.

The professional playwrights sold their plays outright to one or other of the acting companies, and they retained no legal interest in them after the manuscript had passed into the hands of the theatrical manager. It was not unusual for the manager to invite extensive revision of a play at the hands of others than its author before it was produced on the stage, and again whenever it was revived. Shakespeare gained his earliest experience as a dramatist by revising or rewriting behind the scenes plays that had become the property of his manager. It is possible that some of his labours in this direction remain unidentified. In a few cases his alterations were slight, but as a rule his fund of originality was too abundant to restrict him, when working as an adapter, to mere recension, and the results of most of his labours in that capacity are entitled to rank among original compositions.

The
revision
of plays.

The determination of the exact order in which Shakespeare's plays were written depends largely on conjecture. External evidence is accessible in only a few cases, and, although always worthy of the utmost consideration, is not invariably conclusive. The date of publication rarely indicates the date of composition. Only sixteen of the thirty-seven plays commonly assigned to Shakespeare were published in his lifetime, and it is questionable whether any were published under his supervision. But subject-matter and metre both afford rough clues to the period in his career to which each play may be referred. In his early plays the spirit of comedy or tragedy appears in its simplicity; as his powers gradually matured he depicted life in its most complex involutions, and portrayed with masterly insight the subtle gradations of human sentiment and the mysterious workings of human passion. Comedy and tragedy are gradually blended; and his work finally developed a pathos such as could only come of ripe experience. Similarly the metre undergoes emancipation from the hampering restraints of fixed rule and becomes flexible enough to respond to every phase of human feeling. In the blank verse of the early plays a pause is strictly observed at the close of each line, and rhyming couplets are frequent. Gradually the poet over-rides such artificial restrictions; rhyme largely disappears; recourse is more frequently made to prose; the pause is varied indefinitely; extra syllables are, contrary to strict

Chrono-
logy of
the plays.

Metrical
tests.

metrical law, introduced at the end of lines, and at times in the middle; the last word of the line is often a weak and unemphatic conjunction or preposition. To the latest plays fantastic and punning conceits which abound in early work are rarely accorded admission. But, while Shakespeare's achievement from the beginning to the end of his career offers clearer evidence than that of any other writer of genius of the steady and orderly growth of his poetic faculty, some allowance must be made for ebb and flow in the current of his artistic progress. Early work occasionally anticipates features that become habitual to late work, and late work at times embodies traits that are mainly identified with early work. No exclusive reliance in determining the precise chronology can be placed on the merely mechanical tests afforded by tables of metrical statistics. The chronological order can only be deduced with any confidence from a consideration of all the internal characteristics as well as the known external history of each play. The premisses are often vague and conflicting, and no chronology hitherto suggested receives at all points universal assent.

'Love's
Labour's
Lost.'

There is no external evidence to prove that any piece in which Shakespeare had a hand was produced before the spring of 1592. No play by him was published before 1597, and none bore his name on the title-page till 1598. But his first essays have been with confidence allotted to 1591. To 'Love's Labour's Lost' may reasonably be assigned priority in point of time of all Shakespeare's dramatic productions. Internal evidence alone indicates the date of composition, and proves that it was an early effort; but the subject-matter suggests that its author had already enjoyed extended opportunities of surveying London life and manners, such as were hardly open to him in the very first years of his settlement in the metropolis. 'Love's Labour's Lost' embodies keen observation of contemporary life in many ranks of society, both in town and country, while the speeches of the hero Biron clothe much sound philosophy in masterly rhetoric. Its slender plot stands almost alone among Shakespeare's plots, in that it is not known to have been borrowed, and stands quite alone in openly travestying known traits and incidents of current social and political life. The names of the chief characters are drawn from the leaders in the civil war in France, which was in progress between 1589 and 1594, and was anxiously watched by the

English public. The hero is the King of Navarre, in whose dominions the scene is laid. The two chief lords in attendance on him in the play, Biron and Longaville, bear the actual names of the two most strenuous supporters of the real King of Navarre. The name of the Lord Dumain in 'Love's Labour's Lost' is a common anglicised version of that Duc de Maine or Mayenne whose name was so frequently mentioned in popular accounts of French affairs in connection with Navarre's movements that Shakespeare was led into the error of numbering him, although an enemy of Navarre, among his supporters. Mothe, or La Mothe, the name of the pretty, ingenious page, was that of a French ambassador who was long popular in London. Again, Armado, 'the fantastical Spaniard' who haunts Navarre's Court in the play, and is dubbed by another courtier 'a phantasm, a Monarcho,' is a caricature of a half-crazed Spaniard known as 'fantastical Monarcho' who for many years hung about Elizabeth's Court, and was under the delusion that he owned the ships arriving in the port of London. The name Armado was doubtless suggested by the Spanish 'Armada' of 1588. The scene ('Love's Labour's Lost,' v. ii. 158 sqq.) in which the princess's lovers press their suit in the disguise of Russians follows a description of the reception in 1584, by ladies at Elizabeth's Court, of Russian ambassadors who came to London to seek a wife among the ladies of the English nobility for the Tsar. Elsewhere the piece satirises with good humour contemporary projects of academies for disciplining young men; fashions of speech and dress current in fashionable circles; the inefficiency of rural constables and the pedantry of village schoolmasters and curates. The play was revised in 1597, probably for a performance at Court. It was first published next year by Cuthbert Burbie, a liveryman of the Stationers' Company with a shop in Cornhill adjoining the Royal Exchange, and on the title-page, which described the piece as 'newly corrected and augmented,' Shakespeare's name first appeared in print as that of author of a play.

Less gaiety characterised another comedy of the same date, 'The Two Gentlemen of Verona,' which dramatises a romantic story of love and friendship. There is every likelihood that it was an adaptation—amounting to a re-formation—of a lost 'History of Felix and Philomena,' which had been acted at Court in 1584. The story is the same as that

'Two
Gentle-
men of
Verona.'

of 'The Shepardess Felismena' in the Spanish pastoral romance of 'Diana' by George de Montemayor, which long enjoyed popularity in England. No complete English translation of 'Diana' was published before that of Bartholomew Yonge in 1598, but a manuscript version by Thomas Wilson, which was dedicated to the Earl of Southampton in 1596, was possibly circulated far earlier. Some verses from 'Diana' were translated by Sir Philip Sidney and were printed with his poems as early as 1591. Barnabe Rich's story of 'Apollonius and Silla' (from Cinthio's 'Hecatom-mithi'), which Shakespeare employed again in 'Twelfth Night,' also gave him some hints. Trifling and irritating conceits abound in the 'Two Gentlemen,' but passages of high poetic spirit are not wanting, and the speeches of the clowns, Launce and Speed—the precursors of a long line of whimsical serving-men—overflow with farcical drollery. The 'Two Gentlemen' was not published in Shakespeare's lifetime; it first appeared in the folio of 1623, after having, in all probability, undergone some revision.

'Comedy
of Errors.'

Shakespeare next tried his hand, in the 'Comedy of Errors' (commonly known at the time as 'Errors'), at boisterous farce. It also was first published in 1623. Again, as in 'Love's Labour's Lost,' allusion was made to the civil war in France. France was described as 'making war against her heir' (III. ii. 125). Shakespeare's farcical comedy, which is by far the shortest of all his dramas, may have been founded on a play, no longer extant, called 'The Historie of Error,' which was acted in 1576 at Hampton Court. In subject-matter it resembles the 'Menæchmi' of Plautus, and treats of mistakes of identity arising from the likeness of twin-born children. The scene (act iii. sc. i.) in which Antipholus of Ephesus is shut out from his own house, while his brother and wife are at dinner within, recalls one in the 'Amphitruo' of Plautus. Shakespeare doubtless had direct recourse to Plautus as well as to the old play, and he may have read Plautus in English. The earliest translation of the 'Menæchmi' was not licensed for publication before June 10, 1594, and was not published until the following year. No translation of any other play of Plautus appeared before. But it was stated in the preface to this first published translation of the 'Menæchmi' that the translator, W. W., doubtless William Warner, a veteran of the Elizabethan world of letters, had some time previously 'Englised' that

and 'divers' others of Plautus's comedies, and had circulated them in manuscript 'for the use of and delight of his private friends, who, in Plautus's own words, are not able to understand them.

Such plays as these, although each gave promise of a dramatic capacity out of the common way, cannot be with certainty pronounced to be beyond the ability of other men. It was in 'Romeo and Juliet,' Shakespeare's first tragedy, that he proved himself the possessor of a poetic and dramatic instinct of unprecedented quality. In 'Romeo and Juliet' he turned to account a tragic romance in great vogue in Italy, and popular throughout Europe. The story has been traced back to the Greek romance of 'Anthia and Abrocomas' by Xenophon Ephesius, a writer of the second century, but it seems to have been first told in modern Europe about 1470 by the Italian novelist Masuccio in his 'Novellino' (No. xxxiii.). It was adapted from Masuccio by Bandello in his 'Novelle' (1554, pt. ii., No. ix.) and Bandello's version became classical. It was through Bandello that the tale reached France, Spain, and England. His version was translated into French by Pierre Boaistuau de Launay, an occasional collaborator in the 'Histoires Tragiques' of François de Belleforest (Paris, 1559), and it was in process of dramatisation by both French and Spanish writers about the same time that Shakespeare was writing 'Romeo and Juliet.' Arthur Broke rendered into English verse the Italian version of Bandello in 1562, and William Painter published it in English prose in his 'Palace of Pleasure' in 1567. Shakespeare made acquaintance with the tale in Broke's verse. He introduced little change in the plot, but he impregnated it with poetic fervour, and relieved the tragic intensity by developing the humour of Mercutio, and by investing with an entirely new and comic significance the character of the Nurse. The ecstasy of youthful passion is portrayed by Shakespeare in language of the highest lyric beauty, and although a predilection for quibbles and conceits occasionally passes beyond the author's control, his 'Romeo and Juliet,' as a tragic poem on the theme of love, has no rival in any literature. If the Nurse's remark, 'Tis since the earthquake now eleven years' (1. iii. 23), be taken literally, the composition of the play must be referred to 1591, for no earthquake in the sixteenth century was experienced

in England after 1580. There are a few parallelisms with Daniel's 'Complaint of Rosamond,' published in 1592, and it is probable that Shakespeare completed the piece in that year. The piece probably underwent revision after its first production. The tragedy was issued in quarto in 1597 anonymously and surreptitiously—'as it hath been often (with great applause) plaid publicly by the right honourable the L[ord] of Hunsdon his servants.' The printer and publisher of the work was John Danter, a very notorious trader in books, with a shop in Hosier Lane, near Holborn Conduit; as 'Danter the printer,' a trafficker in the licentious products of academic youth, he figured without disguise of name in the *dramatis personæ* of the academic play of 'The Returne from Parnassus (1600?). A second quarto of 'Romeo and Juliet'—'newly corrected, augmented, and amended as it hath bene sundry times publicly acted by the right honourable the Lord Chamberlaine his servants'—was published, from an authentic version, in 1599, by a stationer of higher reputation, Cuthbert Burbie of Cornhill.

Of the original representation on the stage of three other pieces of the period we have more explicit information. These reveal Shakespeare undisguisedly as an adapter of plays by other hands. Though they lack the interest attaching to his unaided work, they throw invaluable light on some of his early methods of composition and his early relations with other dramatists.

Henry
I.

On March 3, 1592, a new piece, called 'Henry VI,' was acted at the Rose Theatre by Lord Strange's men. It was no doubt the play which was subsequently known as Shakespeare's 'The First Part of Henry VI.' On its first performance it won a popular triumph. 'How would it have joyed brave Talbot (the terror of the French),' wrote Nash in his 'Pierce Pennilesse' (1592, licensed August 8), in reference to the striking scenes of Talbot's death (iv. vi. and vii.), 'to thinke that after he had lyne two hundred yeares in his Tombe, hee should triumphe againe on the Stage, and have his bones newe embalmed with the teares of ten thousand spectators at least (at severall times) who, in the Tragedian that represents his person, imagine they behold him fresh bleeding!' There is no categorical record of the production of a second piece in continuation of the theme, but such a play quickly followed; for a third piece, treating of the concluding incidents of Henry

VI's reign, attracted much attention on the stage early in the following autumn.

The applause attending the completion of this historical trilogy caused bewilderment in the theatrical profession. The older dramatists awoke to the fact that their popularity was endangered by the young stranger who had set up his tent in their midst, and one veteran uttered without delay a rancorous protest. Robert Greene, who died on September 3, 1592, wrote on his deathbed an ill-natured farewell to life, entitled 'A Groats-worth of Wit bought with a Million of Repentance.' Addressing three brother dramatists—Marlowe, Nash, and Peele or Lodge—he bade them beware of puppets 'that speak from our mouths,' and of 'antics garnished in our colours.' 'There is,' he continued, 'an upstart Crow, beautified with our feathers, that with his *Tygers heart wrapt in a players hide* supposes he is as well able to bumbast out a blanke verse as the best of you ; and being an absolute *Johannes factotum* is, in his owne conceit, the only Shake-scene in a countrie. . . . Never more acquaint [those apes] with your admired inventions, for it is pity men of such rare wits should be subject to the pleasures of such rude groomes.' The 'only Shake-scene' is a punning denunciation of Shakespeare. The italicised quotation travesties a line from the third piece in the trilogy of Shakespeare's 'Henry VI :'

Greene's
attack.

Oh Tiger's heart wrapt in a woman's hide.

The tirade was probably inspired by an established author's resentment at the energy of a young actor—the theatre's factotum—in revising the dramatic work of his seniors with such masterly effect as to imperil their hold on the esteem of manager and playgoer. But Shakespeare's amiability of character and versatile ability had already won him admirers, and his successes excited the sympathetic regard of colleagues more kindly than Greene. In December 1592 Greene's publisher, Henry Chettle, prefixed an apology for Greene's attack on the young actor to his 'Kind Hartes Dreame,' a tract reflecting on phases of contemporary social life. 'I am as sory,' Chettle wrote, 'as if the originall fault had beene my fault, because myselfe have seene his [i.e. Shakespeare's] demeanour no lesse civill than he [is] exelent in the qualitie he professes, besides divers of worship have

Chettle's
apology.

reported his uprightness of dealing, which argues his honesty, and his facetious grace in writing that approves his art.'

vided
thorship
'Henry
'

The first of the three plays dealing with the reign of Henry VI was originally published in the collected edition of Shakespeare's works; the second and third plays were previously printed in a form very different from that which they subsequently assumed when they followed the first part in the folio. Criticism has proved beyond doubt that in these three plays Shakespeare did no more than add, revise, and correct other men's work. In 'The First Part of Henry VI' the scene in the Temple Gardens, where white and red roses are plucked as emblems by the rival political parties (II. iv.), the dying speech of Mortimer, and perhaps the wooing of Margaret by Suffolk, alone bear the impress of Shakespeare's style. The play dealing with the second part of Henry VI's reign was first published in 1594 anonymously from a rough stage copy by Thomas Millington, a stationer of Cornhill, to whom a license for the publication was granted on March 12, 1593-4. The volume, which was printed by Thomas Creede of Thames Street, bore the title 'The first part of the Contention betwixt the two famous houses of Yorke and Lancaster.' The play dealing with the third part of Henry VI's reign was first printed with greater care next year by Peter Short of Bread Street Hill, and was published, as in the case of its predecessor, by Millington. This quarto bore the title 'The True Tragedie of Richard, Duke of Yorke, and the death of good King Henry the Sixt, as it was sundrie times acted by the Earl of Pembroke his servants.' In both these plays, which Millington reissued in 1600, Shakespeare's revising hand can be traced. The humours of Jack Cade in 'The Contention' can owe their savour to him alone. It is clear that after he had hastily revised with another's aid the original drafts of the three pieces, they were put on the stage in 1592, the first two parts by his own company (Lord Strange's men), and the third, under some exceptional arrangement, by Lord Pembroke's men. But Shakespeare was not content to leave them thus. Within a brief interval, possibly for a revival, he undertook a more thorough revision, still in conjunction with another writer. 'The First Part of The Contention' was thoroughly overhauled, and was converted into what was entitled in the folio 'The Second Part of Henry VI;' there more than half the lines are new. 'The True Tragedie,' which

became in the folio 'The Third Part of Henry VI,' was less drastically handled; two-thirds of it was left practically untouched; only a third was thoroughly remodelled.

Who Shakespeare's coadjutors were in the two successive revisions of the trilogy of 'Henry VI' is matter for conjecture. The theory that Greene and Peele produced the original draft of the three parts of 'Henry VI' which Shakespeare recast, may help to account for Greene's indignant denunciation of Shakespeare as 'an upstart crow, beautified with the feathers' of himself and his fellow dramatists. Much can be said, too, in behalf of the suggestion that Shakespeare joined Marlowe, the greatest of his predecessors, in the first revision of which 'The Contention' and 'The True Tragedie' were the outcome. Most of the new passages in the second recension seem assignable to Shakespeare alone, but a few suggest a partnership resembling that of the first revision. It is probable that Marlowe began the final revision, but his task was interrupted by his death, and the lion's share of the work fell to his younger coadjutor.

Shakespeare shared with other men of genius that receptivity of mind which impels them to assimilate much of the intellectual effort of their contemporaries and to transmute it in the process from unvalued ore into pure gold. Had Shakespeare not been professionally employed in recasting old plays by contemporaries, he would doubtless have shown in his writings traces of a study of their work. The verses of Thomas Watson, Samuel Daniel, Michael Drayton, Sir Philip Sidney, and Thomas Lodge were certainly among the rills which fed the mighty river of his poetic and lyric invention. Kyd and Greene, among rival writers of tragedy, left more or less definite impression on all Shakespeare's early efforts in tragedy. It was, however, only to two of his fellow dramatists that his indebtedness as a writer of either comedy or tragedy was material or emphatically defined. Superior as Shakespeare's powers were to those of Marlowe, his coadjutor in 'Henry VI,' his early tragedies often reveal him in the character of a faithful disciple of that vehement delineator of tragic passion. Shakespeare's early comedies disclose a like relationship between him and Lyly.

Lyly is best known as the author of the affected romance of 'Euphues,' whence in later life Shakespeare, in 'Hamlet,' borrowed Polonius's advice to Laertes. Between 1580 and 1592 Lyly produced eight trivial and

Lyly's influence in comedies

insubstantial comedies, of which seven were written in prose, and one was in rhyme. Much of the dialogue in Shakespeare's comedies, from 'Love's Labour's Lost' to 'Much Ado about Nothing,' consists in thrusting and parrying fantastic conceits, puns, or antitheses. This is the style of intercourse in which most of Lyly's characters exclusively indulge. Three-fourths of Lyly's comedies lightly revolve about topics of classical or fairy mythology—in the very manner which Shakespeare first brought to a triumphant issue in his 'Midsummer Night's Dream.' Shakespeare's treatment of eccentric characters like Don Armado and his boy Moth in 'Love's Labour's Lost' reads like a reminiscence of Lyly's portrayal of Sir Thopas, a fat vainglorious knight, and his boy Epiton in the comedy of 'Endymion,' while Lyly's watchmen in the same play clearly adumbrate Shakespeare's Dogberry and Verges. The device of masculine disguise for love-sick maidens was characteristic of Lyly's method before Shakespeare ventured on it for the first of many times in 'Two Gentlemen of Verona,' and the dispersal through Lyly's comedies of songs possessing every lyrical charm is not the least interesting of the many striking features which Shakespeare's achievements in comedy seem to borrow from Lyly's comparatively insignificant experiments.

Marlowe's
influence
in tragedy.

Marlowe, who alone of Shakespeare's contemporaries can be credited with exerting on his efforts in tragedy a really substantial influence, was in 1592 and 1593 at the zenith of his fame. Two of Shakespeare's earliest historical tragedies, 'Richard III' and 'Richard II,' with the story of Shylock in his somewhat later comedy of the 'Merchant of Venice,' plainly disclose a conscious resolve to follow in Marlowe's footsteps.

In 'Richard III' Shakespeare, working singlehanded, takes up the history of England near the point at which Marlowe and he, apparently working in partnership, left it in the third part of 'Henry VI.' The subject was already familiar to dramatists. A Latin piece about Richard III, by Dr. Thomas Legge, had been in favour with academic audiences since 1579, and in 1594 the 'True Tragedie of Richard III' from some other pen was published anonymously; but Shakespeare's piece bears little resemblance to either. Shakespeare sought his materials in the encyclopædic 'Chronicle' of Holinshed, the rich quarry to which

'Richard
III.'

the whole series of his dramatic pictures of English history was to stand largely indebted. Throughout Shakespeare's 'Richard III' the effort to emulate Marlowe is undeniable. The tragedy is, says Mr. Swinburne, 'as fiery in passion, as single in purpose, as rhetorical often, though never so inflated in expression, as Marlowe's "Tamburlaine" itself.' The turbulent piece was naturally popular. Burbage's impersonation of the hero was one of his most effective performances, and his vigorous enunciation of 'A horse, a horse! my kingdom for a horse!' gave the line proverbial currency.

'Richard II' seems to have followed 'Richard III' without delay. Prose is avoided throughout 'Richard II,' a certain sign of early work. The piece was probably composed very early in 1593. Marlowe's tempestuous vein is far less apparent in 'Richard II' than in 'Richard III.' But although 'Richard II' be in style and treatment less deeply indebted to Marlowe than its predecessor, it was clearly suggested by Marlowe's 'Edward II.' Throughout its exposition of the leading theme—the development and pathetic collapse of the weak king's character—Shakespeare's historical tragedy closely imitates Marlowe's. Shakespeare drew the facts from Holinshed, but his embellishments are numerous, and include the magnificently eloquent eulogy of England which is set in the mouth of John of Gaunt. 'Richard III' and 'Richard II' were each published anonymously in one and the same year (1597) by Andrew Wise at the sign of the Angel in St. Paul's Churchyard; they were printed as they had 'been publicly acted by the right Honorable the Lorde Chamberlaine his servants;' but the deposition scene in 'Richard II,' which dealt with a topic distasteful to the Queen, was omitted from the impressions of 1597 and 1598, and it was first supplied in the quarto of 1608.

In 'As You Like It' (III. v. 80) Shakespeare parenthetically commemorated his acquaintance with, and his general indebtedness to, Marlowe by apostrophising him in the lines:

Dead Shepherd! now I find thy saw of might:
'Who ever loved that loved not at first sight?'

The second line is a quotation from Marlowe's poem 'Hero and Leander' (line 76). In the 'Merry Wives of Windsor' (III. i. 17-21) Shakespeare places in the mouth of Sir Hugh

'Richard II.'

Acknowledgments to Marlowe.

Evans snatches of verse from Marlowe's charming lyric, 'Come live with me and be my love.'

Between February 1593 and the end of the year the London theatres were closed, owing to the prevalence of the plague, and Shakespeare doubtless travelled with his company in the country. But his pen was busily employed, and before the close of 1594 he gave marvellous proofs of his rapid powers of production.

Titus
Androni-
cus.'

'Titus Andronicus' was in his own lifetime claimed for Shakespeare, but Edward Ravenscroft, who prepared a new version in 1678, wrote of it: 'I have been told by some anciently conversant with the stage that it was not originally his, but brought by a private author to be acted, and he only gave some master-touches to one or two of the principal parts or characters.' Ravenscroft's assertion deserves acceptance. The tragedy, a sanguinary picture of the decadence of Imperial Rome, contains powerful lines and situations, but is far too repulsive in plot and treatment, and too ostentatious in classical allusions, to take rank with Shakespeare's acknowledged work. Ben Jonson credits 'Titus Andronicus' with a popularity equalling Kyd's 'Spanish Tragedy,' and internal evidence shows that Kyd was capable of writing much of 'Titus.' It was suggested by a piece called 'Titus and Vespasian,' which Lord Strange's men played on April 11, 1592; this is only extant in a German version acted by English players in Germany, and published in 1620. 'Titus Andronicus' was obviously taken in hand soon after the production of 'Titus and Vespasian' in order to exploit popular interest in the topic. It was acted by the Earl of Sussex's men on January 23, 1593-4, when it was described as a new piece; but that it was also acted subsequently by Shakespeare's company is shown by the title-page of the first extant edition of 1600, which describes it as having been performed by the Earl of Derby's and the Lord Chamberlain's servants (successive titles of Shakespeare's company), as well as by those of the Earls of Pembroke and Sussex. It was entered on the 'Stationers' Register' on February 6, 1594, to John Danter, the printer, of Hosier Lane, who produced the first (imperfect) quarto of 'Romeo and Juliet.' Langbaine claims to have seen an edition of this date, but none earlier than that of 1600 is now known. The piece was then published, without the playwright's

supervision, by Edward White, a liveryman of the Stationers' Company with a shop abutting on St. Paul's Churchyard. The printer of the volume, James Roberts, who was in a large way of business in the Barbican, had ready means of access to theatrical manuscripts, whether or no the playwright assented to their publication, for he was printer and publisher of 'the players' bills' or programmes of the theatre. This office Roberts had purchased in 1594 of its previous holder, John Charlewood. He held it till 1613, when he sold it to William Jaggard.

For part of the plot of 'The Merchant of Venice' in which two romantic love stories are skilfully blended with a theme of tragic import, Shakespeare had recourse to 'Il Pecorone,' a fourteenth-century collection of Italian novels by Ser Giovanni Fiorentino, which was not published till 1558. There a Jewish creditor demands a pound of flesh of a defaulting Christian debtor, and the latter is rescued through the advocacy of 'the lady of Belmont,' who is wife of the debtor's friend. The management of the plot in the Italian novel is closely followed by Shakespeare. A similar story is slenderly outlined in the popular mediæval collection of anecdotes called 'Gesta Romanorum,' while the tale of the caskets, which Shakespeare combined with it in the 'Merchant,' is told independently in another portion of the 'Gesta.' But Shakespeare's 'Merchant' owes much to other sources, including more than one old play. Stephen Gosson describes in his 'Schoole of Abuse' (1579) a lost play called 'the Jew . . . showne at the Bull [inn] . . . representing the greedinesse of worldly chusers and bloody mindes of usurers.' This description suggests that the two stories of the pound of flesh and the caskets had been combined before for purposes of dramatic representation. The scenes in Shakespeare's play in which Antonio negotiates with Shylock are roughly anticipated, too, by dialogues between a Jewish creditor Gerontus and a Christian debtor in the extant play of 'The Three Ladies of London,' by R[obert] Wilson], 1584. There the Jew opens the attack on his Christian debtor with the lines :

Signor Mercatore, why do you not pay me? Think you I will
be mocked in this sort?

This three times you have flouted me—it seems you make thereat
a sport.

Truly pay me my money, and that even now presently,
Or by mighty Mahomet, I swear I will forthwith arrest thee.

'Merchant
of Venice.

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Subsequently, when the judge is passing judgment in favour of the debtor, the Jew interrupts :

Stay, there, most puissant judge. Signor Mercatore, consider what you do.

Pay me the principal, as for the interest I forgive it you.

Shylock
and Rode-
rigo
Lopez.

Above all is it of interest to note that Shakespeare in 'The Merchant of Venice' betrays the last definable traces of his discipleship to Marlowe. Although the delicate comedy which lightens the serious interest of Shakespeare's play sets it in a wholly different category from that of Marlowe's 'Jew of Malta,' the humanised portrait of the Jew Shylock embodies distinct reminiscences of Marlowe's caricature of the Jew ~~Barabbas~~. But Shakespeare soon outpaced his master, and the inspiration that he drew from Marlowe in the 'Merchant' touches only the general conception of the central figure. Doubtless the popular interest aroused by the trial in February 1594 and the execution in June of the Queen's Jewish physician, Roderigo Lopez, incited Shakespeare to a new and subtler study of Jewish character. Lopez was the Earl of Leicester's physician before 1586, and the Queen's chief physician from that date. An accomplished linguist, with friends in all parts of Europe, he acted in 1590, at the request of the Earl of Essex, as interpreter to Antonio Perez, a victim of Philip II's persecution, popularly called Don Antonio, whom Essex and his associates had brought to England in order to stimulate the hostility of the English public to Spain. Spanish agents in London offered Lopez a bribe to poison Antonio and the Queen. The evidence that he assented to the murderous proposal is incomplete, but he was convicted of treason, and was hanged at Tyburn on June 7, 1594. His trial and execution evoked a marked display of anti-Semitism on the part of the London populace at a time when very few Jews were domiciled in England. That a Christian named Antonio should be the cause of the ruin alike of the greatest Jew in Elizabethan England and of the greatest Jew of the Elizabethan drama is a curious confirmation of the theory that Lopez was the begetter of Shylock. It is to be borne in mind that Shylock (not the merchant Antonio) is the hero of Shakespeare's play, and the main interest culminates in the Jew's trial and discomfiture. The bold transition from that solemn scene which trembles on the brink of tragedy to the gently poetic and

humorous incidents of the concluding act attests a mastery of stagecraft; but the interest, although it is sustained to the end, is, after Shylock's final exit, pitched in a lower key. The 'Venesyon Comedy,' which Henslowe, the manager, produced at the Rose on August 25, 1594, was probably the earliest version of 'The Merchant of Venice,' and it was revised later. On July 17, 1598, the notorious James Roberts, who printed 'Titus Andronicus' and others of Shakespeare's plays, secured a license from the Stationers' Company for the publication of 'The Merchaunt of Venyce, or otherwise called the Jewe of Venyce,' on condition that the Lord Chamberlain gave his assent to the publication. It was not published till 1600, when two editions appeared, each printed from a different stage copy. Both editions came from Roberts's press, and Roberts published as well as printed the first quarto, which is more carefully printed than the second. Thomas Heyes (or Hayes) was the publisher of the second edition. Heyes's quarto was the text selected by the editors of the First Folio.

To 1594 must also be assigned 'King John,' which, like the 'Comedy of Errors' and 'Richard II,' altogether eschews prose. The piece, which was not printed till 1623, was directly adapted from a worthless play called 'The Troublesome Raigne of King John' (1591), which was fraudulently reissued in 1611 as 'written by W. Sh.,' and in 1622 as by 'W. Shakespeare.' There is very small ground for associating Marlowe's name with the old play. Into the adaptation Shakespeare flung all his energy, and the theme grew under his hand into genuine tragedy. The three chief characters—the mean and cruel king, the grief-stricken and desperately wronged Constance, and the soldierly humourist Faulconbridge—are in all essentials of his own invention, and are portrayed with the same sureness of touch that marked in Shylock his rapidly maturing strength. The scene, in which the gentle boy Arthur learns from Hubert that the king has ordered his eyes to be put out, is as affecting as any passage in tragic literature.

At the close of 1594 a performance of Shakespeare's early farce, 'The Comedy of Errors,' gave him a passing notoriety that he could well have spared. The piece was played on the evening of Innocents' Day (December 28), 1594, in the hall of Gray's Inn, before a crowded audience of benchers, students, and their friends. There was some

'King
John.'

'Comedy
of Errors
in Gray's
Inn Hall.

disturbance during the evening on the part of guests from the Inner Temple, who, dissatisfied with the accommodation afforded them, retired in dudgeon. 'So that night,' the contemporary chronicler states, 'was begun and continued to the end in nothing but confusion and errors, whereupon it was ever afterwards called the "Night of Errors."' Shakespeare was acting on the same day before the Queen at Greenwich, and it is doubtful if he were present. On the morrow a commission of oyer and terminer inquired into the causes of the tumult, which was casuistically attributed to a sorcerer having 'foisted a company of base and common fellows to make up our disorders with a play of errors and confusions.'

Two plays of uncertain authorship attracted public attention during the period under review (1591-4)—'Arden of Feversham' (licensed for publication April 3, 1592, and published in 1592) and 'Edward III' (licensed for publication December 1, 1595, and published in 1596). Shakespeare's hand has been traced in both, mainly on the ground that their dramatic energy is of a quality not to be discerned in the work of any contemporary whose writings are extant. There is no external evidence in favour of Shakespeare's authorship in either case. 'Arden of Feversham' dramatises with intensity and insight a sordid murder of a husband by a wife which took place at Faversham in 1551, and was fully reported by Holinshed. The subject is of a different type from any which Shakespeare is known to have treated, and although the play may be, as Mr. Swinburne insists, 'a young man's work,' it bears no relation either in topic or style to the work on which young Shakespeare was engaged at a period so early as 1591 or 1592. 'Edward III' is a play in Marlowe's vein, and has been assigned to Shakespeare on even more shadowy grounds. Capell reprinted it in his 'Prolusions' in 1760, and described it as 'thought to be writ by Shakespeare.' Many speeches scattered through the drama, and one whole scene—that in which the Countess of Salisbury repulses the advances of Edward III—show the hand of a master (ii. ii.) But there is even in the style of these contributions much to dissociate them from Shakespeare's acknowledged productions, and to justify their ascription to some less gifted disciple of Marlowe. A line in act ii. sc. i. ('Lilies that fester smell far worse than weeds') reappears in

Early
plays
doubtfully
assigned
to Shake-
peare.

Shakespeare's 'Sonnets' (xciv. l. 14). It was contrary to his practice to literally plagiarise himself. The line in the play was doubtless borrowed from a manuscript copy of the 'Sonnets.'

Two other popular plays of the period, 'Mucedorus' and 'Faire Em,' have also been assigned to Shakespeare on slighter provocation. In Charles II's library they were bound together in a volume labelled 'Shakespeare, Vol. I.,' and bold speculators have occasionally sought to justify the misnomer.

'Mucedorus,' an elementary effort in romantic comedy, dates from the early years of Elizabeth's reign; it was first published, doubtless after undergoing revision, in 1595, and was reissued, 'amplified with new additions,' in 1610. Mr. Payne Collier, who included it in his privately printed edition of Shakespeare in 1878, was confident that a scene interpolated in the 1610 version (in which the King of Valentia laments the supposed loss of his son) displayed genius which Shakespeare alone could compass. However readily critics may admit the superiority in literary value of the interpolated scene to anything else in the piece, few will accept Mr. Collier's extravagant estimate. The scene was probably from the pen of an admiring but faltering imitator of Shakespeare.

'Faire Em,' although not published till 1631, was acted by Shakespeare's company while Lord Strange was its patron, and some lines from it are quoted for purposes of ridicule by Robert Greene in his 'Farewell to Folly' at so early a date as 1592. It is another rudimentary endeavour in romantic comedy, and has not even the pretension of 'Mucedorus' to one short scene of conspicuous literary merit.

VI

THE FIRST APPEAL TO THE READING PUBLIC

Publica-
tion of
Venus
and
Adonis.

DURING the busy years (1591-4) that witnessed his first pronounced successes as a dramatist, Shakespeare came before the public in yet another literary capacity. On April 18, 1593, Richard Field, the printer, who was his fellow-townsmen, obtained a license for the publication of 'Venus and Adonis,' a metrical version of a classical tale of love. It was published a month or two later, without an author's name on the title-page, but Shakespeare appended his full name to the dedication, which he addressed in conventional style of obsequiousness to Henry Wriothesley, third Earl of Southampton. The Earl, who was in his twentieth year, was reckoned the handsomest man at Court, with a pronounced disposition to gallantry. He had vast possessions, was well educated, loved literature, and through life extended to men of letters a generous patronage. 'I know not how I shall offend,' Shakespeare now wrote to him, 'in dedicating my unpolished lines to your lordship, nor how the world will censure me for choosing so strong a prop to support so weak a burden. . . . But if the first heir of my invention prove deformed, I shall be sorry it had so noble a godfather.' 'The first heir of my invention' implies that the poem was written, or at least designed, before Shakespeare's dramatic work. It is affluent in beautiful imagery and metrical sweetness, but imbued with a tone of license which may be held either to justify the theory that it was a precocious product of the author's youth, or to show that Shakespeare was not unready in mature years to write with a view to gratifying a patron's somewhat lascivious tastes. The title-page bears a beautiful Latin motto from Ovid's 'Amores':

Vilia miretur vulgus ; mihi flavus Apollo
Pocula Castalia plena ministret aqua.

Marlowe in his translation of Ovid's 'Amores' had

already rendered these lines into somewhat awkward English thus :

Let base conceited wits admire vile things ;
Fair Phoebus lead me to the Muses' springs !

The influence of Ovid, who told the story of Venus and Adonis in his 'Metamorphoses,' is apparent in many of the details of Shakespeare's poem. But the theme was doubtless first suggested to him by a contemporary effort. Lodge's 'Scillaes Metamorphosis,' which appeared in 1589, is not only written in the same metre (six-line stanzas rhyming *a b a b c c*), but narrates in the exordium the same incidents in the same spirit. There is little doubt that Shakespeare drew from Lodge some of his inspiration.

A year after the issue of 'Venus and Adonis,' in 1594, Shakespeare published another poem in like vein, but far more mature in temper and execution. The digression (ll. 939-59) on the destroying power of Time, especially, is in an exalted key of meditation which is not sounded in the earlier poem. The metre, too, is changed ; seven-line stanzas (Chaucer's rhyme royal, *a b a b b c c*) take the place of six-line stanzas. The second poem was entered in the 'Stationers' Registers' on May 9, 1594, under the title of 'A Booke intituled the Ravyshement of Lucrece,' and was published in the same year under the title 'Lucrece.' Richard Field printed it, and John Harrison published and sold it at the sign of the White Greyhound in St. Paul's Churchyard. The classical story of Lucretia's ravishment and suicide is briefly recorded in Ovid's 'Fasti,' but Chaucer had retold it in his 'Legend of Good Women,' and Shakespeare must have read it there. Again, in topic and metre the poem reflected a contemporary poet's work. Samuel Daniel's 'Complaint of Rosamond,' with its seven-line stanza (1592), stood to 'Lucrece' in even closer relation than Lodge's 'Scilla,' with its six-line stanza, to 'Venus and Adonis.' Rosamond, in Daniel's poem, muses thus when King Henry challenges her honour :

But what ? he is my King and may constraîne me ;
Whether I yeeld or not, I live defamed ;
The World will thinke Authoritie did gaine me ;
I shall be judg'd his Love and so be shamed ;
We see the faire condem'n'd that never gamed ;
And if I yeeld, 'tis honourable shame ;
If not, I live disgrac'd, yet thought the same.

'Lucrece.

The pathetic accents of Shakespeare's heroine are those of Daniel's heroine purified and glorified. The passage on Time in 'Lucrece' is elaborated from one in Watson's 'Passionate Centurie of Love' (No. lxxvii.), and Watson acknowledges that he adapted his lines from an Italian poem by Serafino.

Shakespeare dedicated his second volume of poetry to the Earl of Southampton, the patron of his first, but the tone of the dedicatory epistle is changed. The poet now addressed the earl in terms of devoted friendship. Such expressions were not uncommon at the time in communications between patrons and poets, but, in their present connection, they suggest that Shakespeare's relations with the brilliant young nobleman had grown closer since he dedicated 'Venus and Adonis' to him in colder language a year before. 'The love I dedicate to your lordship,' Shakespeare wrote in the opening pages of 'Lucrece,' 'is without end, whereof this pamphlet without beginning is but a superfluous moiety. . . . What I have done is yours; what I have to do is yours; being part in all I have, devoted yours.'

Enthusiastic reception of the poems.

In these poems Shakespeare made his earliest appeal to the world of readers, and the reading public welcomed his addresses with unqualified enthusiasm. The London playgoer already knew Shakespeare's name as that of a promising actor and playwright, but his dramatic efforts had hitherto been consigned in manuscript, as soon as the theatrical representations ceased, to the coffers of their owner, the playhouse manager. His early plays brought him at the outset little reputation as a man of letters. It was not as the myriad-minded dramatist, but in the restricted rôle of adapter for English readers of familiar Ovidian fables, that he first impressed a wide circle of his contemporaries with the fact of his mighty genius. The perfect sweetness of the verse and the poetical imagery in 'Venus and Adonis' and 'Lucrece' practically silenced censure of the licentious treatment of the themes on the part of the seriously minded. Critics vied with each other in the exuberance of the eulogies in which they proclaimed that the fortunate author had gained a place in permanence on the summit of Parnassus. 'Lucrece,' wrote Michael Drayton in his 'Legend of Matilda' (1594), was 'revived to live another age.' In 1595 William Clerke in his 'Polimanteia' gave 'all praise' to 'sweet Shakespeare' for his 'Lucrecia.' John Weever, in a sonnet addressed to

'honey-tongued Shakespeare' in his 'Epigrams' (1595), eulogised the two poems as an unmatchable achievement, although he mentioned the plays 'Romeo' and 'Richard' and 'more whose names I know not.' Richard Carew at the same time classed him with Marlowe as deserving the praises of an English Catullus. Printers and publishers of the poems strained their resources to satisfy the demands of eager purchasers. No fewer than seven editions of 'Venus' appeared between 1594 and 1602; an eighth followed in 1617. 'Lucrece' achieved a fifth edition in the year of Shakespeare's death.

There is a likelihood, too, that Spenser, the greatest of Shakespeare's poetic contemporaries, was first drawn by the poems into the ranks of Shakespeare's admirers. It is hardly doubtful that Spenser described Shakespeare in 'Colin Clouts come home againe' (completed in 1594), under the name of 'Aetion'—a familiar Greek proper name derived from *ἀετός*, an eagle:

And there, though last not least is Aetion ;
A gentler Shepheard may no where be found,
Whose muse, full of high thought's invention,
Doth, like himselfe, heroically sound.

The last line seems to allude to Shakespeare's surname. We may assume that the admiration was mutual. At any rate, Shakespeare acknowledged acquaintance with Spenser's work in a plain reference to his 'Teares of the Muses' (1591) in 'Midsummer Night's Dream' (v. i. 52-3). There we read how

The thrice three Muses, mourning for the death
Of learning, late deceased in beggary,

was the theme of one of the dramatic entertainments wherewith it was proposed to celebrate Theseus's marriage. In Spenser's 'Teares of the Muses' each of the Nine lamented in turn her declining influence on the literary and dramatic effort of the age. Theseus dismissed the suggestion with the not inappropriate comment :

That is some satire keen and critical,
Not sorting with a nuptial ceremony.

But there is no ground for assuming that Spenser in the same poem referred figuratively to Shakespeare when he

made Thalia deplore the recent death of 'our pleasant Willy.'

All these and all that els the Comick Stage
 With seasoned wit and goodly pleasure graced,
 By which mans life in his likest image
 Was limned forth, are wholly now defaced . . .
 And he, the man whom Nature selfe had made
 To mock her selfe and Truth to imitate,
 With kindly counter under mimick shade,
 Our pleasant Willy, ah ! is dead of late ;
 With whom all joy and jolly meriment
 Is also dedaded and in dolour drent (ll. 199-210).

The name Willy was frequently used in contemporary literature as a term of familiarity without relation to the baptismal name of the person referred to. Sir Philip Sidney was addressed as 'Willy' by some of his elegists. A comic actor, 'dead of late' in a literal sense, was clearly intended by Spenser, and there is no reason to dispute the view of an early seventeenth-century commentator that Spenser was paying a tribute to the loss English comedy had lately sustained by the death of the comedian, Richard Tarleton. Similarly the 'gentle spirit' who is described by Spenser in a later stanza as sitting 'in idle cell' rather than turn his pen to base uses cannot be reasonably identified with Shakespeare.

But that same gentle spirit, from whose pen
 Large streames of honnie and sweete nectar flowe,
 Scorning the boldnes of such base-borne men
 Which dare their follies forth so rashlie throwe,
 Doth rather choose to sit in idle cell
 Than so himselfe to mockerie to sell (ll. 217-22).

Patrons at Court. Meanwhile Shakespeare was gaining personal esteem outside the circles of actors and men of letters. His genius and 'civil demeanour' of which Chettle wrote arrested the notice not only of Southampton but of other noble patrons of literature and the drama. His summons to act at Court with the most famous actors of the day at the Christmas of 1594 was possibly due in part to personal interest in himself. Elizabeth quickly showed him special favour. Until the end of her reign his plays were repeatedly acted in her presence. The revised version of 'Love's Labour's Lost' was given at Whitehall at Christmas 1597, and tradition credits the Queen with unconcealed enthusiasm

FIRST APPEAL TO THE READING PUBLIC 51

for Falstaff, who came into being a little later. Under Elizabeth's successor Shakespeare greatly strengthened his hold on royal favour, but Ben Jonson claimed that the Queen's appreciation equalled that of James I. When Jonson wrote in his elegy on Shakespeare of

those flights upon the banks of Thames
That so did take Eliza and our James,

he was mindful of many representations of Shakespeare's plays by the poet and his fellow-actors at the palaces of Whitehall, Richmond, and Greenwich during the last decade of Elizabeth's reign.

VII

THE SONNETS

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It was doubtless to Shakespeare's personal relations with men and women of the Court that his sonnets owed their existence. In Italy and France the practice of writing and circulating series of sonnets inscribed to great men and women flourished continuously throughout the sixteenth century. In England, until the last decade of that century, the vogue was intermittent. Wyatt and Surrey inaugurated sonnetteering in the English language under Henry VIII, and Thomas Watson devoted much energy to the pursuit when Shakespeare was a boy. But it was not until 1591, when Sir Philip Sidney's collection of sonnets entitled 'Astrophel and Stella' was first published, that the sonnet enjoyed in England any conspicuous or continuous favour. For the half-dozen years following the appearance of Sir Philip Sidney's volume the writing of sonnets, both singly and in connected sequences, engaged more literary activity in this country than it engaged at any period here or elsewhere. Men and women of the cultivated Elizabethan nobility encouraged poets to celebrate in single sonnets their virtues and graces, and under the same patronage there were produced multitudes of sonnet-sequences which more or less fancifully narrated, after the manner of Petrarch and his successors, the pleasures and pains of love. Between 1591 and 1597 no aspirant to poetic fame in the country failed to seek a patron's ears by a trial of skill on the popular poetic instrument, and Shakespeare, who habitually kept abreast of the currents of contemporary literary taste, applied himself to sonnetteering with all the force of his poetic genius when the fashion was at its height.

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ments.

Shakespeare had lightly experimented with the sonnet from the outset of his literary career. Three well-turned examples figure in 'Love's Labour's Lost,' probably his

earliest play; two of the choruses in 'Romeo and Juliet' are couched in the sonnet form; and a letter of the heroine Helen in 'All's Well that Ends Well,' which bears traces of very early composition, takes the same shape. It has, too, been argued ingeniously, if not convincingly, that he was author of the somewhat clumsy sonnet, 'Phaeton to his friend Florio,' which prefaced in 1591 Florio's 'Second Frutes,' a series of Italian-English dialogues for students.

But these were sporadic efforts. It was not till the spring of 1593, after Shakespeare had secured a nobleman's patronage for his earliest publication, 'Venus and Adonis,' that he became a sonneteer on an extended scale. Of the hundred and fifty-four sonnets that survive outside his plays, the greater number were in all likelihood composed between that date and the autumn of 1594, during his thirtieth and thirty-first years. His occasional reference in the sonnets to his growing age was a conventional device—traceable to Petrarch—of all sonnetteers of the day, and admits of no literal interpretation. In matter and in manner the bulk of the poems suggest that they came from the pen of a man not much more than thirty. Doubtless he renewed his sonnetteering efforts occasionally and at irregular intervals during the nine years which elapsed between 1594 and the accession of James I in 1603. But to very few of the extant examples can a date later than 1594 be allotted with confidence. Sonnet cvii., in which plain reference is made to Queen Elizabeth's death, may be fairly regarded as a belated and a final act of homage on Shakespeare's part to the importunate vogue of the Elizabethan sonnet. All the evidence, whether internal or external, points to the conclusion that the sonnet exhausted such fascination as it exerted on Shakespeare before his dramatic genius attained its full height.

In literary value Shakespeare's sonnets are notably unequal. Many reach levels of lyric melody and meditative energy that are hardly to be matched elsewhere in poetry. The best examples are charged with the mellowed sweetness of rhythm and metre, the depth of thought and feeling, the vividness of imagery and the stimulating fervour of expression which are the finest fruits of poetic power. On the other hand, many sink almost into inanity beneath the burden of quibbles and conceits. In both their excellences and their defects Shakespeare's sonnets betray near

Majority
Shake-
speare's
sonnets
composed
in 1594

sonnet

Their
literary
value.

kinship to his early dramatic work, in which passages of the highest poetic temper at times alternate with unimpressive displays of verbal jugglery. In phraseology the sonnets often closely resemble such early dramatic efforts as 'Love's Labour's Lost' and 'Romeo and Juliet.' There is far more concentration in the sonnets than in 'Venus and Adonis' or in 'Lucrece,' although occasional utterances of Shakespeare's Roman heroine show traces of the intensity that characterises the best of them. The superior and more evenly sustained energy of the sonnets is to be attributed, not to the accession of power that comes with increase of years, but to the innate principles of the poetic form, to metrical exigencies, which impelled the sonneteer to aim at a uniform condensation of thought and language.

The form
of Shake-
peare's
sonnets.

Shakespeare's 'Sonnets' ignore the somewhat complex scheme of rhyme adopted by Petrarch, whom the Elizabethan sonnetteers, like the French sonnetteers of the sixteenth century, recognised to be in most respects their master. Following the example originally set by Surrey and Wyatt, and generally pursued by Shakespeare's contemporaries, his sonnets aim at far greater metrical simplicity than the Italian or the French. They consist of three decasyllabic quatrains with a concluding couplet, and the quatrains rhyme alternately. A single sonnet does not always form an independent poem. As in the French and Italian sonnets of the period, and in those of Spenser, Sidney, Daniel, and Drayton, the same train of thought is at times pursued continuously through two or more. The collection of Shakespeare's 154 sonnets thus presents the appearance of an extended series of independent poems, many in a varying number of fourteen-line stanzas. The longest sequence (i.-xvii.) numbers seventeen sonnets, and in the original edition opens the volume.

Want of
anti-
quity of
subject-
matter.

It is unlikely that the order in which the poems were first printed follows the order in which they were written. Fantastic endeavours have been made to detect in the original arrangement of the poems a closely connected narrative, but the thread is on any showing constantly interrupted. The whole series is commonly separated by critics into two 'groups'—the first consisting of sonnets i. to cxxvi., all of which are usually described as being addressed to a young man, and the second consisting of sonnets cxxvii. to cliv., all of which are usually described as addressed to a

woman (a 'dark lady'). But both groups as a matter of fact include several meditative soliloquies in the form of sonnets that are addressed to no person at all, and a few of the sonnets in the first group might, as far as internal indications go, have been addressed to a woman. Readers and publishers of the seventeenth century acknowledged no sort of significance in the order in which the poems first saw the light. When the sonnets were printed for a second time in 1640—thirty-one years after their first appearance—they were presented in a completely different order. The short descriptive titles which were then supplied to single sonnets or to short sequences proved that the collection was regarded as a disconnected series of occasional poems in more or less amorous vein.

In whatever order Shakespeare's sonnets be studied, the claim that has been advanced in their behalf to rank as autobiographical documents can only be accepted with many qualifications. Elizabethan sonnets were commonly the artificial products of the poet's fancy. A strain of personal emotion is occasionally discernible in a detached effort, and is vaguely traceable in a few sequences; but autobiographical confessions were very rarely the stuff of which the Elizabethan sonnet was made. The typical collection of Elizabethan sonnets was a mosaic of plagiarisms, a medley of imitative studies. Echoes of the French or of the Italian sonnetteers, with their Platonic idealism, are usually the dominant notes. With good reason Sir Philip Sidney warned the public that 'no inward touch' was to be expected from sonnetteers of his day, whom he describes as

[Men] that do dictionary's method bring
 Into their rhymes running in rattling rows;
 [Men] that poor Petrarch's long deceased woes
 With newborn sighs and denized wit do sing.

The dissemination of false sentiment by the sonnetteers, and the mechanical monotony with which they treated 'the pangs of despised love' or the joys of requited affection, did not escape the censure of contemporary criticism. The air soon rang with sarcastic protests from the most respected writers of the day. Echoes of the critical hostility are heard, it is curious to note, in nearly all the references that Shakespeare himself makes to sonnetteering in his plays. 'Tush, none but minstrels like of sonnetting,' exclaims Biron in 'Love's Labour's Lost' (iv. iii. 158). In the 'Two Gentlemen

Lack of genuine sentiment in Elizabethan sonnets.

Shakespeare's scornful allusion to sonnets in his plays.

of Verona' (III. ii. 68 seq.) there is a satiric touch in the recipe for the conventional love-sonnet which Proteus offers the amorous Duke :

You must lay lime to tangle her desires
 By wailful sonnets whose composed rime
 Should be full fraught with serviceable vows
 Say that upon the altar of her beauty
 You sacrifice your sighs, your tears, your heart.

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At a first glance a far larger proportion of Shakespeare's sonnets give the reader the illusion of personal confessions than those of any contemporary, but when allowance has been made for the current conventions of Elizabethan sonnetteering, as well as for Shakespeare's unapproached affluence in dramatic instinct and invention—an affluence which enabled him to identify himself with every phase of human emotion—the autobiographic element in his sonnets, although it may not be dismissed altogether, is seen to shrink to slender proportions. As soon as the collection is studied comparatively with the many thousand sonnets that the printing presses of England, France, and Italy poured forth during the last years of the sixteenth century, a vast number of Shakespeare's performances prove to be little more than professional trials of skill, often of superlative merit, to which he deemed himself challenged by the efforts of contemporary practitioners. The thoughts and words of the sonnets of Daniel, Drayton, Watson, Barnabe Barnes, Constable, Spenser, and Sidney were frequently assimilated by Shakespeare in his poems with as little compunction as were the plays and novels of his contemporaries in his dramatic work. The imitative element in his sonnets is large enough to refute the assertion that in them as a whole he sought to 'unlock his heart.' It is true that the sonnets in which the writer reproaches himself with sin, or gives expression to a sense of melancholy, offer at times a convincing illusion of autobiographic confessions; and it is just possible that they stand apart from the rest, and reveal the writer's inner consciousness. But they may be, on the other hand, merely literary meditations, conceived by the greatest of dramatists, on infirmities incident to all human nature, and only attempted after the cue had been given by rival sonnetteers. At any rate, even their energetic lines are often adapted from the less forcible and less coherent utterances of contemporary poets,

and the themes are common to almost all Elizabethan collections of sonnets.

For example, in the numerous sonnets in which Shakespeare boasted that his verse was so certain of immortality that it was capable of immortalising the person to whom it was addressed, he gave voice to no conviction that was peculiar to his mental constitution, to no involuntary exaltation of spirit, or spontaneous ebullition of feeling. He was merely proving that he could at will, and with superior effect, handle a theme that Ronsard and Desportes, emulating Pindar, Horace, Ovid, and other classical poets, had lately made a commonplace of the poetry of Europe. Sir Philip Sidney, in his 'Apologie for Poetrie' (1595), wrote that it was the common habit of poets 'to tell you that they will make you immortal by their verses.' 'Men of great calling,' Nash wrote in his 'Pierce Pennilesse,' 1593, 'take it of merit to have their names eternised by poets.' In the hands of Elizabethan sonnetteers the 'eternising' faculty of their verse became a staple and indeed an inevitable topic. Spenser wrote in his 'Amoretti' (1595, Sonnet lxxv.):

Shakespeare's claims of immortality for his sonnets a borrowed conceit.

My verse your virtues rare shall eternize,
And in the heavens write your glorious name.

Again, when commemorating the death of the Earl of Warwick in the 'Ruines of Time' (c. 1591), Spenser assured the Earl's widowed Countess,

Thy Lord shall never die the whiles this verse
Shall live, and surely it shall live for ever :
For ever it shall live, and shall rehearse
His worthie praise, and vertues dying never,
Though death his soul doo from his body sever ;
And thou thyself herein shalt also live :
Such grace the heavens doo to my verses give.

Drayton and Daniel developed the conceit with unblushing iteration. Shakespeare, in his references to his 'eternal lines' (xviii. 12) and in the assurances that he gives the subject of his addresses that the sonnets are, in Daniel's exact phrase, his 'monument' (lxxx. 9, cvii. 13), was merely accommodating himself to the prevailing taste. Characteristically in

Sonnet lv. he invested the topic with a splendour that was not approached by any other poet :

Not marble, nor the gilded monuments
 Of princes, shall outlive this powerful rhyme ;
 But you shall shine more bright in these contents
 Than unswept stone besmear'd with sluttish time.
 When wasteful war shall statues overturn,
 And broils root out the work of masonry,
 Nor Mars his sword nor war's quick fire shall burn
 The living record of your memory.
 'Gainst death and all-oblivious enmity
 Shall you pace forth ; your praise shall still find room
 Even in the eyes of all posterity
 That wear this world out to the ending doom.
 So, till the judgement that yourself arise,
 You live in this, and dwell in lovers' eyes.

Vituperative sonnets addressed to a woman.

The imitative element is no less conspicuous in most of the sonnets at the end of the volume which Shakespeare addresses to a woman. In twelve of them Shakespeare abandons the sugared sentiment which characterises the greater number of his hundred and forty-two remaining sonnets. He grows vituperative and pours a volley of passionate abuse upon a 'dark lady' whom he represents as disdainful of his advances. The declamatory parade of figurative extravagance which he betrays in his sonnets of vituperation at once suggests that the emotion is feigned and that the poet is striking an attitude. But external evidence is conclusive as to the artificial construction of the vituperative sonnets. Every sonneteer of the sixteenth century, at some point in his career, devoted his energies to vituperation of a cruel siren, usually of dark complexion. The monotonous and artificial regularity with which the sonnetteers sounded the identical vituperative stop, alternately with their notes of adulation, excited ridicule in both England and France. It is quite possible that Shakespeare may have met in real life a dark-complexioned siren, and it is possible that he may have fared ill at her disdainful hands. But no such incident is needed to account for the presence of the 'dark lady' in the sonnets. It was the exacting conventions of the sonnetteering contagion, and not his personal experiences or emotions, that impelled Shakespeare to celebrate the cruel disdain of a 'dark lady' in his 'Sonnets.' Shakespeare's 'dark lady' has been compared, not very justly, with his splendid creation of

Cleopatra in his play of 'Antony and Cleopatra.' From one point of view the same criticism may be passed on both. There is no greater and no less ground for seeking in Shakespeare's personal environment, rather than in the world of his imagination, the original of the 'dark lady' of his sonnets than for seeking there the original of his Queen of Egypt.

Only in one group, composed of six sonnets scattered through the collection, is there traceable a strand of wholly original sentiment, boldly projecting from the web into which it is wrought and not to be readily accounted for. This series of six sonnets deals with a love adventure of no normal type. Sonnet cxliv. opens with the lines :

Two loves I have of comfort and despair
Which like two angels do suggest (*i.e.* tempt) me still ;
The better angel is a man right fair,
The worser spirit a woman colour'd ill.

The woman, the sonneteer continues, has corrupted the man and has drawn him from his 'side.' Five other sonnets treat the same theme. In three addressed to the man (xl., xli., and xlii.) the poet mildly reproaches a youthful friend for having sought and won the favours of a woman whom he himself loved 'dearly,' but the trespass is forgiven on account of the friend's youth and beauty. In the two remaining sonnets Shakespeare addresses the woman (cxxxiii. and cxxxiv.), and he rebukes her for having enslaved not only himself but 'his next self'—his friend. The definite element of intrigue that is suggested here is not found anywhere else in the range of Elizabethan sonnet literature, and may possibly reflect a personal experience. But it may be an error to treat the episode too seriously. A vague half-jesting reference, which deprives of serious import the amorous misadventure that is recorded in the six specified sonnets, and gives it a place in the annals of gallantry, was apparently made to it by a literary comrade in a poem that was published in September 1594, under the title of 'Willobie his Avisia, or the True Picture of a Modest Maid and of a Chaste and Constant Wife.'

The
intrigue
with the
poet's
mistress.

'Willobie
his Avisia.'

In this volume, which mainly consists of seventy-two cantos in varying numbers of six-line stanzas, the chaste heroine, Avisia, holds converse—in the opening section as a maid, and in the later section as a wife—with a series of passionate adorers.

In every case she firmly repulses their advances. Midway through the book its alleged author—Henry Willobie—is introduced in his own person as an ardent admirer, and the last twenty-nine of the cantos rehearse his woes and Avisá's obduracy. To this section there is prefixed an argument in prose (canto xlv.). It is there stated that Willobie, 'being suddenly affected with the contagion of a fantastical wit at the first sight of Avisá, pineth a while in secret grief. At length, not able any longer to endure the burning heat of so fervent a humour, [he] bewrayeth the secrecy of his disease unto his familiar friend *W. S.*, who not long before had tried the courtesy of the like passion and was now newly recovered of the like infection.' Yet [W. S.], finding his friend let blood in the same vein, took pleasure for a time to see him bleed, and instead of stopping the issue, he enlargeth the wound with the sharp razor of willing conceit,' encouraging Willobie to believe that Avisá would ultimately yield 'with pains, diligence, and some cost in time.' 'The miserable comforter' [W. S.], the passage continues, was moved to comfort his friend 'with an impossibility,' for one of two reasons. Either he 'now would secretly laugh at his friend's folly' because he 'had given occasion not long before unto others to laugh at his own.' Or 'he would see whether another could play his part better than himself, and, in viewing after the course of this loving comedy,' would 'see whether it would sort to a happier end for this new actor than it did for *the old player*. But at length this comedy was like to have grown to a tragedy by the weak and feeble estate that *H. W.* was brought unto,' owing to Avisá's unflinching rectitude. Happily, 'time and necessity' effected a cure. In two succeeding cantos in verse *W. S.* is introduced in dialogue with Willobie, and he gives him, in *oratio recta*, light-hearted and mocking counsel which Willobie accepts with results disastrous to his mental health.

Identity of initials, on which the theory of Shakespeare's identity with *H. W.*'s unfeeling adviser mainly rests, is not a strong foundation, and doubt is justifiable as to whether the story of 'Avisá' and her lovers is not fictitious. But the mention of '*W. S.*' as 'the old player,' and the employment of theatrical imagery in discussing his relations with Willobie, must be coupled with the fact that Shakespeare, at a date when mentions of him in print were rare, was eulogised by name as the author of '*Lucrece*' in some prefatory verses

to Willobie's volume. From such considerations the theory of 'W. S.'s' identity with Willobie's acquaintance acquires substance. If we assume that it was Shakespeare who took a roguish delight in watching his friend Willobie suffer the disdain of 'chaste Avisa' because he had 'newly recovered' from the effects of such an experience as he pictured in the six sonnets in question, it is to be inferred that the alleged theft of his mistress by another friend caused him no deep or lasting distress. The allusions that were presumably made to the episode by the author of 'Avisa' bring it, in fact, nearer the confines of comedy than of tragedy. At any rate they may be held to illustrate the slenderness of the relations that subsisted between the poetic sentiment which coloured even the most speciously intimate of Shakespeare's sonnets and the sentiment which actually governed him in life.

VIII

THE PATRONAGE OF THE EARL OF SOUTHAMPTON

Biographic fact in the 'dedicatory' sonnets.

BUT if very few of Shakespeare's sonnets can be safely treated as genuinely autobiographic revelations of sentiment, there lurk amid those specifically addressed to a young man, more or less literal hints of the circumstances in Shakespeare's external life that attended the poems' composition. Many offer direct evidence of the relations in which he stood to a patron, and to the position that he sought to fill in the circle of that patron's literary retainers. Twenty sonnets, which may for purposes of exposition be entitled 'dedicatory' sonnets, are addressed to one who is declared without periphrasis and without disguise to be a patron of the poet's verse (Nos. xxiii., xxvi., xxxii., xxxvii., xxxviii., lxix., lxxvii.—lxxxvi., c., ci., ciii., cvi.). In one of these—Sonnet lxxviii.—Shakespeare asserted :

So oft have I invoked thee for my Muse
And found such fair assistance in my verse
As every alien pen hath got my use
And under thee their poesy disperse.

Subsequently he regretfully pointed out how his patron's readiness to accept the homage of other poets seemed to be thrusting him from the enviable place of pre-eminence in his patron's esteem.

The Earl of Southampton the poet's sole patron.

Shakespeare states unequivocally that he has no patron but one.

Sing [*sc.* O Muse !] to the ear that doth thy lays esteem,
And gives thy pen both skill and argument (c. 7-8).
For to no other pass my verses tend
Than of your graces and your gifts to tell (ciii. 11-12).

The Earl of Southampton, the patron of his narrative poems, is the only patron of Shakespeare that is known to biographical research. No contemporary document or tradition

gives the faintest suggestion that Shakespeare was the personal friend or dependent of any other man of rank. A trustworthy tradition corroborates the testimony respecting Shakespeare's close intimacy with the Earl that is given in the dedicatory epistles of his 'Venus and Adonis' and 'Lucrece,' penned respectively in 1593 and 1594. According to Nicholas Rowe, Shakespeare's first adequate biographer, 'there is one instance so singular in its magnificence of this patron of Shakespeare's that if I had not been assured that the story was handed down by Sir William D'Avenant, who was probably very well acquainted with his affairs, I should not venture to have inserted; that my Lord Southampton at one time gave him a thousand pounds to enable him to go through with a purchase which he heard he had a mind to. A bounty very great and very rare at any time.'

There is no difficulty in detecting the lineaments of the Earl of Southampton in those of the man who is distinctively greeted in the sonnets as the poet's patron. Three of the twenty 'dedicatory' sonnets merely translate into the language of poetry the expressions of devotion which had already done duty in the dedicatory epistle in prose that prefaces 'Lucrece.' That epistle to Southampton runs :

The love [*i.e.* in the Elizabethan sense of friendship] I dedicate to your lordship is without end ; whereof this pamphlet, without beginning, is but a superfluous moiety. The warrant I have of your honourable disposition, not the worth of my untutored lines, makes it assured of acceptance. What I have done is yours ; what I have to do is yours ; being part in all I have, devoted yours. Were my worth greater, my duty would show greater ; meantime, as it is, it is bound to your lordship, to whom I wish long life, still lengthened with all happiness.

Your lordship's in all duty,

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.

Sonnet xxvi. is a gorgeous rendering of these sentences :

Lord of my love, to whom in vassalage
Thy merit hath my duty strongly knit,
To thee I send this written ambassage,
To witness duty, not to show my wit :
Duty so great, which wit so poor as mine
May make seem bare, in wanting words to show it,
But that I hope some good conceit of thine
In thy soul's thought, all naked, will bestow it ;
Till whatsoever star that guides my moving,
Points on me graciously with fair aspect,

And puts apparel on my tatter'd loving
 To show me worthy of thy sweet respect :
 Then may I dare to boast how I do love thee ;
 Till then not show my head where thou may'st prove me.

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The identification of the rival poets whose 'richly compiled' 'comments' of his patron's 'praise' excited Shakespeare's jealousy is a more difficult inquiry than the identification of the patron. The rival poets with their 'precious phrase by all the Muses filed' (lxxxv. 4) must be sought among the writers who eulogised Southampton and are known to have shared his patronage. The field of choice is not small. Southampton from boyhood cultivated literature and the society of literary men. In 1594 no nobleman received so abundant a measure of adulation from the contemporary world of letters. Thomas Nash justly described the Earl, when dedicating to him his 'Life of Jack Wilton' in 1594, as 'a dear lover and cherisher as well of the lovers of poets as of the poets themselves.' Nash addressed to him many affectionately phrased sonnets. The prolific sonneteer Barnabe Barnes and the miscellaneous literary practitioner Gervase Markham confessed, respectively in 1593 and 1595, yearnings for Southampton's countenance in sonnets which glow hardly less ardently than Shakespeare's with admiration for his personal charm. Similarly John Florio, the Earl's Italian tutor, who is traditionally reckoned among Shakespeare's literary acquaintances, wrote to Southampton in 1598, in his dedicatory epistle before his 'Worlde of Wordes' (an Italian-English dictionary) : 'As to me and many more, the glorious and gracious sunshine of your honour hath infused light and life.'

Shakespeare magnanimously and modestly described that *protégé* of Southampton, whom he deemed a specially dangerous rival, as an 'able' and a 'better' 'spirit,' 'a worthier pen,' a vessel 'of tall building and of goodly pride,' compared with whom he was himself 'a worthless boat.' He detected a touch of magic in the man's writing. His 'spirit,' Shakespeare hyperbolically declared, had been 'by spirits taught to write above a mortal pitch,' and 'an affable familiar ghost' nightly gulled him with intelligence. Shakespeare's dismay at the fascination exerted on his patron by 'the proud full sail of his [rival's] great verse'

PATRONAGE OF EARL OF SOUTHAMPTON 65

sealed for a time, he declared, the springs of his own invention (lxxxvi.).

The conditions of the problem are satisfied by the rival's identification with the young writer Barnabe Barnes, a poetic panegyrist of Southampton and a prolific sonneteer, who was deemed by contemporary critics certain to prove a great poet and scholar. His first collection of sonnets, 'Parthenophil and Parthenophe,' with many odes and madrigals interspersed, was printed in 1593; and his second, 'A Centurie of Spiritual Sonnets,' in 1595. In a sonnet that Barnes addressed in this earliest volume to the 'virtuous' Earl of Southampton he declared that his patron's eyes were 'the heavenly lamps that give the Muses light,' and that his sole ambition was 'by flight to rise' to a height worthy of his patron's 'virtues.' Shakespeare sorrowfully pointed out in Sonnet lxxviii. that his lord's eyes

Barnabe Barnes probably Shakespeare's chief rival.

that taught the dumb on high to sing,
And heavy ignorance aloft to fly,
Have added feathers to the learned's wing,
And given grace a double majesty ;

while in the following sonnet he asserted that the 'worthier pen' of his dreaded rival when lending his patron 'virtue' was guilty of plagiarism, for he 'stole that word' from his patron's 'behaviour.' The emphasis laid by Barnes on the inspiration that he sought from Southampton's 'gracious eyes' on the one hand, and his reiterated references to his patron's 'virtue' on the other, suggest that Shakespeare in these sonnets directly alluded to Barnes as his chief competitor in the hotly contested race for Southampton's favour. When, too, Shakespeare in Sonnet lxxx. employs nautical metaphors to indicate the relations of himself and his rival with his patron—

My saucy bark inferior far to his . . .
Your shallowest help will hold me up afloat,—

he seems to write with an eye on Barnes's identical choice of metaphor :

My fancy's ship tossed here and there by these [*sc.* sorrow's floods]
Still floats in danger ranging to and fro.
How fears my thoughts' swift pinnace thine hard rock !

PATRONAGE OF EARL OF SOUTHAMPTON 67

the terminology—often raised by Shakespeare's genius to the loftiest heights of poetry—that was invariably consecrated to such a purpose by a current literary convention.

We know Shakespeare had only one literary patron, the Earl of Southampton, and the view that that nobleman is the hero of the sonnets of friendship is strongly corroborated by such definite details as can be deduced from the vague eulogies in those poems of the youth's gifts and graces. Every compliment, in fact, paid by Shakespeare to the youth, whether it be vaguely or definitely phrased, applies to Southampton without the least straining of the words. In real life beauty, birth, wealth, and wit sat 'crowned' in the Earl, whom poets acclaimed the handsomest of Elizabethan courtiers, as plainly as in the hero of the poet's verse. Southampton has left in his correspondence ample proofs of his literary learning and taste, and, like the hero of the sonnets, was 'as fair in knowledge as in hue.' The opening sequence of seventeen sonnets, in which a youth of rank and wealth is admonished to marry and beget a son so that 'his fair house' may not fall into decay, can only have been addressed to a young peer like Southampton, who was as yet unmarried, had vast possessions, and was the sole male representative of his family. The sonneteer's exclamation, 'You had a father, let your son say so,' had pertinence to Southampton at any period between his father's death in his boyhood and the close of his bachelorhood in 1598. To no other peer of the day are the words exactly applicable. The 'lascivious comment' on his 'wanton sport' which pursues the young friend through the sonnets, and is so adroitly contrived as to add point to the picture of his fascinating youth and beauty, obviously associates itself with the reputation for sensual indulgence that Southampton acquired at Court and was, according to Nash, a theme of frequent comment among men of letters.

Direct references to Southampton in the sonnets of friendship.

There is no force in the objection that the young man of the sonnets of 'friendship' must have been another than Southampton because the terms in which he is often addressed imply extreme youth. In 1594, a date to which I refer most of the sonnets, Southampton was barely twenty-one, and the young man had obviously reached manhood. In Sonnet civ. Shakespeare notes that the first meeting between him and his friend took place three years before that poem was written, so that, if the words are to be taken

His youthfulness.

literally, the poet may have at times embodied reminiscences of Southampton when he was only seventeen or eighteen. But Shakespeare, already worn in worldly experience, passed his thirtieth birthday in 1594, and he probably tended, when on the threshold of middle life, to exaggerate the youthfulness of his noble admirer almost ten years his junior, who even later impressed his acquaintances by his boyish appearance and disposition.

the evi-
dence of
portraits.

But the most striking evidence of the identity of the youth of the sonnets of 'friendship' with Southampton is found in the close resemblance between the youth's 'fair' eyes and complexion and his 'golden tresses,' as described in the poet's verse, and the chief characteristics of the extant pictures of Southampton as a young man. Many times does Shakespeare tell us that the youth is fair in complexion, and that his eyes are fair. In Sonnet lxxviii. he points to his young friend's face as a map of what beauty was 'without all ornament, itself and true'—before fashion sanctioned the use of artificial 'golden tresses'—and he obviously implies that an unusual wealth of locks fell about the young man's neck. Shakespeare's many references to his youth's 'painted counterfeit' (xvi., xxiv., xlvi., lxxvii.) suggest, too, that his hero often sat for his portrait. Southampton's countenance survives in probably more canvases than that of any of his contemporaries. At least fifteen extant portraits have been identified on good authority—ten paintings, three miniatures (two by Peter Oliver and one by Isaac Oliver), and two contemporary prints. Most of these, it is true, portray their subject in middle age, when the roses of youth had faded, and they contribute nothing to the present argument. But the two portraits that are now at Welbeck, the property of the Duke of Portland, give all the information that can be desired of Southampton's aspect 'in his youthful morn.' One of these pictures represents the Earl at twenty-one, and the other at twenty-five or twenty-six. From either of the two Welbeck portraits which depict Southampton as a young man with fair eyes and complexion and with auburn hair falling below his shoulder, might Shakespeare have directly drawn his picture of the youth in the 'Sonnets.'

sonnet
lxxviii., the
best of the
series.

A few only of the sonnets that Shakespeare addressed to the youth can be allotted to a date subsequent to 1594; only two bear on the surface signs of a later composition.

PATRONAGE OF EARL OF SOUTHAMPTON 69

In Sonnet lxx. the poet no longer credits his hero with juvenile wantonness, but with a 'pure, unstained prime,' which has 'passed by the ambush of young days.' Sonnet cvii., apparently the last of the series, was penned almost a decade after the mass of its companions, for it makes references that cannot be mistaken to three events that took place in 1603—to Queen Elizabeth's death, to the accession of James I, and to the release from prison of the Earl of Southampton, who had been convicted in 1601 of complicity in the rebellion of the Earl of Essex. The first two events are thus described :

The mortal moon hath her eclipse endured
And the sad augurs mock their own presage ;
Incertainties now crown themselves assured,
And peace proclaims olives of endless age.

It is in almost identical phrase that every pen in the spring of 1603 was felicitating the nation on the unexpected turn of events, by which Elizabeth's crown had passed, without civil war, to the Scottish King, and thus the revolution that had been foretold as the inevitable consequence of Elizabeth's demise was happily averted. Cynthia (i.e. the moon) was the Queen's recognised poetic appellation. It is thus that she figures in the verse of Barnfield, Spenser, Fulke Greville, and Raleigh, and her elegists, following the same fashion, invariably likened her death to the 'eclipse' of a heavenly body. At the same time James was constantly said to have entered on his inheritance 'not with an olive branch in his hand, but with a whole forest of olives round about him, for he brought not peace to this kingdom alone' but to all Europe.

'The drops of this most balmy time,' in this same sonnet, cvii., is an echo of another current strain of fancy. James came to England in a springtide of rarely rivalled clemency, which was reckoned of the happiest augury. One source of grief alone was acknowledged : Southampton was still a prisoner in the Tower, 'supposed' (in Shakespeare's language) 'as forfeit to a confined doom.' The wish for his release was fulfilled quickly. On April 10, 1603, his prison gates were opened by 'a warrant from the king.' So bountiful a beginning of the new era, wrote John Chamberlain to Dudley Carleton two days later, 'raised all men's spirits . . .

107
1603
1592
27
31

Southampton

Allusion to Elizabeth's death.

Allusions to Southampton's release from prison.

and the very poets with their idle pamphlets promised themselves 'great things. Samuel Daniel and John Davies celebrated Southampton's release in buoyant verse. It is improbable that Shakespeare remained silent. 'My love looks fresh,' he wrote in the concluding lines of this Sonnet cvii., and he finally repeated the conventional promise that he had so often made before, that his friend should live in his 'poor rhyme,' 'when tyrants' crests and tombs of brass are spent.' It is impossible to resist the inference that Shakespeare thus saluted his patron on the close of his days of tribulation. Shakespeare's genius had then won for him a public reputation that rendered him independent of any private patron's favour, and he made no further reference in his writings to the patronage that Southampton had extended to him in earlier years. But the terms in which he greeted his former protector for the last time in verse justify the belief that, during his remaining thirteen years of life, the poet cultivated friendly relations with the Earl of Southampton, and was mindful to the last of the encouragement that the young peer offered him while he was still on the threshold of the temple of fame.

Circulation of the 'Sonnets' in manuscript.

In accordance with a custom that was not uncommon, Shakespeare did not publish his sonnets; he circulated them in manuscript. But their reputation grew, and public interest was aroused in them in spite of his unreadiness to give them publicity. A line from one of them :

Lilies that fester smell far worse than weeds (xciv. 14),

was quoted in the play of 'Edward III,' which was probably written before 1595. Meres, writing in 1598, enthusiastically commends Shakespeare's 'sugred sonnets among his private friends,' and mentions them in close conjunction with his two narrative poems. William Jaggard piratically inserted in 1599 two of the most mature of the series (Nos. cxxxviii. and cxliv.) in his 'Passionate Pilgrim.'

At length, in 1609, the sonnets were surreptitiously sent to press. Thomas Thorpe, the moving spirit in the design of their publication, was a camp-follower of the regular publishing army. He was professionally engaged in procuring for publication literary works which had been

widely disseminated in written copies, and had thus passed beyond their authors' control ; for the law then recognised no natural right in an author to the creations of his brain, and the full owner of a manuscript copy of any literary composition was entitled to reproduce it, or to treat it as he pleased, without reference to the author's wishes. On May 20, 1609, he obtained a license for the publication of 'Shakespeares Sonnets,' and this tradesmanlike form of title figured not only on the 'Stationers' Company's Registers,' but on the title-page. 'Sonnets by William Shakespeare' was the form of title natural to a book that was issued by a living author under strictly regular conditions. Thorpe employed George Eld to print the manuscript, and two booksellers, William Aspley and John Wright, to distribute the volume to the public. On half the edition Aspley's name figured as that of the seller, and on the other half that of Wright. The book was issued in June, and the owner of the 'copy' left the public under no misapprehension as to his share in the production by printing above his initials a dedicatory preface from his own pen. The appearance in an Elizabethan or Jacobean book of a dedication from the publisher's (instead of from the author's) pen was, unless the substitution was specifically accounted for on other grounds, an accepted sign that the author had no hand in the publication. Except in the case of his two narrative poems, which were published in 1593 and 1594 respectively, Shakespeare made no effort to publish any of his works, and uncomplainingly submitted to wholesale piracies of his plays and to the ascription to him of books by other hands. Such practices were encouraged by his passive indifference and the contemporary condition of the law of copyright. He cannot be credited with any responsibility for the publication of Thorpe's collection of his sonnets in 1609. With characteristic insolence Thorpe took the added liberty of appending a previously unprinted poem of forty-nine seven-line stanzas (the metre of 'Lucrece') entitled 'A Lover's Complaint,' in which a girl laments her betrayal by a deceitful youth. The poem, in a gentle Spenserian vein, has no connection with the 'Sonnets.' If, as is possible, it be by Shakespeare, it must have been written in very early days.

Their
piratical
publica-
tion in
1609.

'A Lover
Com-
plaint.'

A misunderstanding respecting Thorpe's dedicatory preface and his part in the publication has led many critics

into a serious misinterpretation of Shakespeare's poems. Thorpe's dedication ran thus :

TO . THE . ONLIE . BEGETTER . OF .
 THESE . INSVING . SONNETS .
 Mr. W. H. ALL . HAPPINESSE .
 AND . THAT . ETERNITIE .
 PROMISED .
 BY .
 OUR . EVER-LIVING . POET .
 WISHETH .
 THE . WELL-WISHING .
 ADVENTURER . IN .
 SETTING .
 FORTH .

T. T.

The words are fantastically arranged. In ordinary grammatical order they would run : 'The well-wishing adventurer in setting forth [i.e. the publisher], T[homas] T[horpe] wisheth Mr. W. H., the only begetter of these ensuing sonnets, all happiness and that eternity promised by our ever-living poet.'

Thomas
 Thorpe
 and 'Mr.
 W. H.'

Thorpe used throughout the bombastic language which was habitual to him. He advertised Shakespeare as 'our ever-living poet.' As the chief promoter of the undertaking, he called himself 'the well-wishing adventurer in setting forth,' and in resonant phrase designated as the patron of the venture, 'Mr. W. H.,' who was in all probability only a partner in the speculation. In the conventional dedicatory formula of the day—the precise words may be read in scores of contemporary dedications—he 'wisheth' 'Mr. W. H.' 'all happiness' and 'eternity,' such eternity as Shakespeare in the text of the sonnets conventionally foretold for his own verse. When Thorpe was organising under similar circumstances the issue of Marlowe's 'First Book of Lucan' in 1600, he sought the patronage of Edward Blount, a friend in the trade. 'W. H.' was doubtless in a like position. He is best identified with a stationer's assistant, William Hall, who was professionally engaged, like Thorpe, in procuring 'copy.' In 1606 Hall, who commonly conducted his operations under cover of the familiar initials 'W. H.,' won a conspicuous success of the predatory kind. In that year 'W. H.' announced that he had procured a neglected manuscript poem—'A Foure-fould Meditation'—by the Jesuit Robert Southwell who had been executed in 1595, and he published

it with a dedication (signed 'W. H.')

vaunting his good fortune in meeting with such treasure-trove. When Thorpe dubbed 'Mr. W. H.,' with characteristic magniloquence, 'the onlie begetter of these insuing sonnets,' he used 'begetter' in the sense of 'getter,' 'obtainer,' or 'procurer,' which was not uncommon in Elizabethan English, and he merely indicated in his Pistol-like dialect that 'Mr. W. H.' was a friendly member of the pirate-publisher fraternity who by getting into his hands, or procuring, a manuscript copy of Shakespeare's sonnets supplied the 'onlie' opportunity for their surreptitious issue. In accordance with custom, Thorpe gave Hall's initials only, because he was an intimate associate who was known by those initials to their common circle of friends. Hall was not a man of sufficiently wide public reputation to render it probable that the printing of his full name would excite additional interest in the book or attract buyers.

The common assumption that Thorpe in this boastful preface was covertly addressing, under the initials 'Mr. W. H.,' a young nobleman, to whom the sonnets were originally addressed by Shakespeare, ignores the elementary principles of publishing transactions of the day, and especially of those of the type to which Thorpe's efforts were confined. There was nothing mysterious or fantastic, although from a modern point of view there was much that lacked principle, in Thorpe's methods of business. His choice of patron for this, like all his volumes, was dictated solely by his mercantile interests. He was under no inducement and in no position to take into consideration the affairs of Shakespeare's private life. Shakespeare, through all but the earliest stages of his career, belonged socially to a world that was cut off by impassable barriers from that in which Thorpe pursued his undignified calling. It was wholly outside Thorpe's aims in life to seek to mystify his customers by investing a dedication with any cryptic significance.

No peer of the day, moreover, bore a name which could be represented by the initials 'Mr. W. H.' Shakespeare was never on terms of intimacy (although the contrary has often been recklessly assumed) with William, third Earl of Pembroke, when a youth. Seven years after Shakespeare's death, the first collected edition of his plays was jointly dedicated, in accordance with a fashion very widely followed at the moment by authors and publishers, to the Earl of

Pembroke, then Lord Chamberlain, and to his brother the Earl of Montgomery. The words of the dedication—which dubs Shakespeare the patrons' 'servant'—confute the theory of the existence of close relations in early life between Shakespeare and Pembroke; they merely affirm that the repeated performances of Shakespeare's plays at Court in James I's reign had drawn to him and to his work the favourable attention of Pembroke and his brother (see p. 168). But were complete proofs of Shakespeare's acquaintanceship with Pembroke forthcoming, they would throw no light on Thorpe's 'Mr. W. H.' The Earl of Pembroke was, from his birth to the date of his succession to the earldom in 1601, known by the courtesy title of Lord Herbert and by no other name, and he could not have been designated at any period of his life by the symbols 'Mr. W. H.' In 1609 Pembroke was a high officer of state, and numerous books were dedicated to him in all the splendour of his many titles. Star-Chamber penalties would have been exacted of any publisher or author who denied him in print his titular distinctions. Thorpe had occasion to dedicate two books to the earl in later years, and he there showed not merely that he was fully acquainted with the compulsory etiquette, but that his sycophantic temperament rendered him only eager to improve on the conventional formulas of servility. Laws of evidence compel the conclusion that no thought of the Earl of Pembroke presented itself either to Shakespeare when writing his sonnets, or to Thorpe when preparing them for publication.

IX

THE DEVELOPMENT OF DRAMATIC POWER

THE processes of construction which are discernible in Shakespeare's 'Sonnets' are thus seen to be identical with those that are discernible in the rest of his literary work. They present one more proof of his punctilious regard for the demands of public taste, and of his marvellous genius and skill in adapting and transmuting for his own purposes the labours of other workers in the field that for the moment engaged his attention. Most of Shakespeare's 'Sonnets' were produced in (1594) under the incitement of that freakish rage for sonnetteering which, taking its rise in Italy and sweeping over France on its way to England, absorbed for some half-dozen years in this country a greater volume of literary energy than has been applied to sonnetteering within the same space of time here or elsewhere before or since. The thousands of sonnets that were circulated in England between 1591 and 1597 were of every literary quality, from sublimity to inanity, and they illustrated in form and topic every known phase of sonnetteering activity. Shakespeare's collection, which was put together at haphazard and published surreptitiously many years after the poems were written, was a medley, at times reaching heights of literary excellence that none other scaled, but as a whole reflecting the varied features of the sonnetteering vogue. Apostrophes to metaphysical abstractions, vivid picturings of the beauties of nature, adulation of a patron, and vehement denunciation of the falseness and frailty of womankind—all appear as frequently in contemporary collections of sonnets as in Shakespeare's. He borrowed very many of his competitors' words and thoughts, but he so fused them with his fancy as often to transfigure them. Genuine emotion or the writer's personal experience very rarely inspired the Elizabethan sonnet, and Shakespeare's 'Sonnets' proved no exception to the rule. A personal note may have escaped him

General conclusions respecting the 'Sonnets.'

† involuntarily in the sonnets in which he gives voice to a sense of melancholy and self-remorse, but his dramatic instinct never slept, and there is no positive proof that he is doing more even in those sonnets than produce dramatically the illusion of a personal confession. Only in one scattered series of six sonnets, where he introduced a topic, unknown to other sonnetteers, of a lover's supersession by his friend in a mistress's graces, does he seem to show independence of his comrades and draw directly on an incident in his own life, but even there the emotion may be wanting in seriousness. The sole biographical inference deducible from the 'Sonnets' is that at one time in his career Shakespeare strained all his energies, after the fashion habitual to men of letters of the day, in an endeavour to monopolise the bountiful patronage of a young man of rank. External evidence agrees with internal evidence in identifying the belauded patron with the Earl of Southampton. Thus the real value of Shakespeare's 'Sonnets' to the poet's biographer is the corroboration they offer of the ancient tradition that the Earl of Southampton, to whom his two narrative poems were openly dedicated, gave Shakespeare at an early period of his literary career help and encouragement, which entitles him to a place in the poet's biography resembling that filled by the Duke Alfonso d'Este in the biography of Ariosto, or like that filled by Margaret, duchess of Savoy, in the biography of Ronsard.

But all the while that Shakespeare, in his 'Sonnets,' was fancifully assuring his patron

[How] to no other pass my verses tend
Than of your graces and your gifts to tell,

his dramatic work was steadily advancing. His 'verses' were in fact tending in many other and very different directions. To the winter season of 1595 probably belongs 'Midsummer Night's Dream,' although no edition appeared before 1600; then two were published, the earlier by Thomas Fisher, the later by James Roberts. Roberts's quarto, which corrects some misprints in the first version, was reprinted in the First Folio. The comedy may well have been written to celebrate a marriage in court circles—perhaps the marriage of the universal patroness of poets, Lucy Harington, to Edward Russell, third earl of Bedford, on December 12, 1594; or that of William Stanley, sixth earl of Derby, at Greenwich,

{
Mid-
summer
light's
dream.'

THE DEVELOPMENT OF DRAMATIC POWER 77

on January 24, 1594-5. The elaborate compliment to the Queen, 'a fair vestal throned by the west' (II. i. 157 seq.), was at once an acknowledgment of past marks of royal favour and an invitation for their extension to the future. Oberon's fanciful description (II. ii. 148-68) of the spot where he saw the little western flower called 'Love-in-idleness' that he bids Puck fetch for him, has been interpreted as a reminiscence of one of the scenic pageants with which the Earl of Leicester entertained Queen Elizabeth on her visit to Kenilworth in 1575. The whole play is in the airiest and most graceful vein of comedy. Hints for the story can be traced to a variety of sources—to Chaucer's 'Knight's Tale,' to Plutarch's 'Life of Theseus,' to Ovid's 'Metamorphoses' (bk. iv.), and to the story of Oberon, the fairy-king, in the French mediæval romance of 'Huon of Bordeaux,' of which an English translation by Lord Berners was first printed in 1534. The influence of John Lyly is perceptible in the rallery in which both mortals and immortals indulge. In the humorous presentation of the play of 'Pyramus and Thisbe' by the 'rude mechanicals' of Athens, Shakespeare improved upon a theme which he had already employed in 'Love's Labour's Lost.' But the final scheme of the 'Midsummer Night's Dream' is of the author's freshest invention, and by endowing—practically for the first time in literature—the phantoms of the fairy world with a genuine and a sustained dramatic interest, Shakespeare may be said to have conquered a new realm for art.

More sombre topics engaged him in the comedy of 'All's Well that Ends Well,' which may be tentatively assigned to 1595. Meres, writing three years later, attributed to Shakespeare a piece called 'Love's Labour's Won.' This title, which is not otherwise known, may well be applied to 'All's Well'—'The Taming of The Shrew,' which has also been identified with 'Love's Labour's Won,' has far slighter claim to the designation. The plot of 'All's Well,' like that of 'Romeo and Juliet,' was accessible in Painter's 'Palace of Pleasure' (No. xxxviii.) The original source is Boccaccio's 'Decamerone' (giorn. iii. nov. 9). Shakespeare, after his wont, grafted on the touching story of Helena's love for the unworthy Bertram the comic characters of the braggart Parolles, the pompous Lafeu, and a clown (Lavache) less witty than his compeers. Another original creation,

'All's
Well
that Ends
Well.'

Bertram's mother, Countess of Roussillon, is a charming portrait of old age. In frequency of rhyme and other metrical characteristics the piece closely resembles 'The Two Gentlemen,' but the characterisation betrays far greater power, and there are fewer conceits or crudities of style. The pathetic element predominates. The heroine Helena, whose 'pangs of despised love' are expressed with touching tenderness, ranks, despite her defiance of the dictates of maidenly modesty, with the greatest of Shakespeare's female creations.

Taming
'The
Shrew.'

'The Taming of The Shrew'—which, like 'All's Well,' was first printed in the folio—was probably composed soon after the completion of that solemn comedy. It is a revision of an old play on lines somewhat differing from those which Shakespeare had followed previously. From 'The Taming of A Shrew,' a comedy first published in 1594, Shakespeare drew the Induction and the scenes in which the hero Petruchio conquers Catherine the Shrew. He first infused into them the genuine spirit of comedy. But while following the old play in its general outlines, Shakespeare's revised version added an entirely new underplot—the story of Bianca and her lovers, which owes something to the 'Supposes' of George Gascoigne, an adaptation of Ariosto's comedy called 'I Suppositi.' Evidence of style—the liberal introduction of tags of Latin and the exceptional beat of the doggerel—makes it difficult to allot the Bianca scenes to Shakespeare; those scenes were probably due to a coadjutor.

Stratford
allusions
the
induction.

The Induction to 'The Taming of The Shrew' has a direct bearing on Shakespeare's biography, for the poet admits into it a number of literal references to Stratford and his native county which are of his own invention, and do not figure in the old play. Such personalities are rare in Shakespeare's plays, and can only be paralleled in two of slightly later date—the 'Second Part of Henry IV' and the 'Merry Wives of Windsor.' All these local allusions may well be attributed to such a renewal of Shakespeare's personal relations with the town as is indicated by external facts in his history of the same period (see p. 93). In the Induction to 'The Taming of The Shrew,' the tinker, Christopher Sly, describes himself as 'Old Sly's son of Burton Heath.' Burton Heath is Barton-on-the-Heath, the home of Shakespeare's aunt, Edmund Lambert's wife, and of her sons. The tinker in like vein confesses

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that he has run up a score with Marian Hacket, the fat alewife of Wincot. The references to Wincot and the Hackets are singularly precise. The name of the maid of the inn is given as Cicely Hacket, and the alehouse is described in the stage direction as 'on a heath.'

Wincot was the familiar designation of three small Warwickshire villages, and a good claim has been set up on behalf of each to be the scene of Sly's drunken exploits. There is a very small hamlet named Wincot within four miles of Stratford now consisting of a single farmhouse which was once an Elizabethan mansion ; it is situated on what was doubtless in Shakespeare's day, before the land there was enclosed, an open heath. This Wincot forms part of the parish of Quinton, where, according to the parochial registers, a Hacket family resided in Shakespeare's day. On November 21, 1591, 'Sara Hacket, the daughter of Robert Hacket,' was baptised in Quinton church. Yet by Warwickshire contemporaries the Wincot of the 'Taming of The Shrew' was unhesitatingly identified with Wilnecote, near Tamworth, on the Staffordshire border of Warwickshire, at some distance from Stratford. That village, whose name was pronounced 'Wincot,' was celebrated for its ale in the seventeenth century, a distinction which is not shown by contemporary evidence to have belonged to any place of like name. The Warwickshire poet, Sir Aston Cokain, within half a century of the production of Shakespeare's 'Taming of The Shrew,' addressed to 'Mr. Clement Fisher of Wincott' (a well-known resident of Wilnecote) verses which begin :

Shakspeare your *Wincot* ale hath much renowned,
That fox'd a Beggar so (by chance was found
Sleeping) that there needed not many a word
To make him to believe he was a Lord.

In the succeeding lines the writer promises to visit 'Wincot' (i.e. Wilnecote) to drink

Such ale as *Shakspeare* fancies
Did put Kit Sly into such lordly trances.

It is therefore probable that Shakespeare consciously invested the home of Kit Sly and of Kit's hostess with characteristics of Wilnecote as well as of the hamlet near Stratford.

Wilmcote, the native place of Shakespeare's mother, is also said to have been popularly pronounced 'Wincot.' A tradition which was first recorded by Capell as late as 1780 in his notes to 'The Taming of The Shrew' is to the effect that Shakespeare often visited an inn at 'Wincot' to enjoy the society of a 'fool who belonged to a neighbouring mill,' and the Wincot of this story is, we are told, locally associated with the village of Wilmcote. But the links that connect Shakespeare's tinker with Wilmcote are far slighter than those which connect him with Wincot and Wilnecote.

The mention of Kit Sly's tavern comrades—

Stephen Sly and old John Naps of Greece,
And Peter Turf and Henry Pimpernell—

was in all likelihood a reminiscence of contemporary Warwickshire life as literal as the name of the hamlet where the drunkard dwelt. There was a genuine Stephen Sly who was in the dramatist's day a self-assertive citizen of Stratford; and 'Greece,' whence 'old John Naps' derived his cognomen, is an obvious misreading of Greet, a hamlet by Winchcomb in Gloucestershire, not far removed from Shakespeare's native town. According to local tradition Shakespeare was acquainted with Greet, Winchcomb, and all the villages in the immediate neighbourhood, and he is still credited with the authorship of the local jingle which enumerates the chief hamlets and points of interest in the district. The lines run :

Dirty Gretton, dingy Greet,
Beggary Winchcomb, Sudely sweet ;
Hartshorn and Wittington Bell,
Andoversford and Merry Frog Mill.

Henry
[V.]

In 1597 Shakespeare turned once more to English history. He studied Holinshed's 'Chronicle' anew, together with a valueless but very popular drama entitled 'The Famous Victories of Henry V,' which was repeatedly acted between 1588 and 1595, and being licensed for publication in 1594, was published in 1598. Out of such materials Shakespeare worked up with splendid energy two plays on the reign of Henry IV. They form one continuous whole, but are known respectively as parts i. and ii. of 'Henry IV.'

The 'First Part of Henry IV' was on February 25, 1598, licensed for publication to the publisher Andrew Wise, who

had already fathered Shakespeare's Richard II and Richard III. It was printed soon afterwards by Peter Short, with the title 'The History of Henrie the Fovrth; With the battell at Shrewsburie, betweene the King and Lord Henry Percy, surnamed Henrie Hotspur of the North. With the humorous conceits of Sir John Falstalffe.' The popularity of the piece led to frequent reissues of this quarto edition—in 1599, 1604, 1608, and 1613.

The 'Second Part of Henry IV,' which was licensed for publication much later—on August 23, 1600—along with 'Much Ado about Nothing,' was printed by Valentine Sims for Andrew Wise, now in partnership with William Aspley; it bore the title 'The Second part of Henrie the fourth, continuing to his death, and coronation of Henrie the fift. With the humours of Sir John Falstaffe, and swaggering Pistoll. As it hath been sundrie times publicly acted by the right honourable the Lord Chamberlaine his seruants. Written by William Shakespeare.' Smaller success attended the venture than in the case of the First Part, and no reissue was called for in Shakespeare's lifetime.

The 'Second Part of Henry IV' is almost as rich as the Induction to 'The Taming of The Shrew' in direct references to persons and districts familiar to Shakespeare. Two amusing scenes pass at the house of Justice Shallow in Gloucestershire, a county which touched the boundaries of Stratford (III. ii and v. i.) When, in the second of these scenes, the justice's factotum, Davy, asked his master 'to countenance William Visor of Woncot against Clement Perkes of the Hill,' the local references are unmistakable. Woodmancote, where the family of Visor or Vizard has flourished since the sixteenth century, is still pronounced Woncot. (The quarto of 1600 reads Woncote; all the folios read Woncot. Yet Malone in the Variorum of 1803 introduced the new and unwarranted reading of Wincot, which has been unwisely adopted by succeeding editors.) Adjoining Woodmancote stands Stinchcombe Hill (still familiarly known to natives as 'The Hill'), which was in the sixteenth century the home of the family of Perkes. Very precise, too, are the allusions to the region of the Cotswold Hills, which were easily accessible from Stratford. 'Will Squele, a Cotswold man,' is noticed as one of Shallow's friends in youth (III. ii. 23); and when Shallow's servant Davy receives his master's instructions to sow 'the headland'

'with red wheat,' in the early autumn, there is an obvious reference to the custom almost peculiar to the Cotswolds of sowing 'red lammas' wheat at an unusually early season of the agricultural year. ✓

The kingly hero of the two plays of 'Henry IV' had figured as a spirited young man in 'Richard II'; he was now represented as weighed down by care and age. With him are contrasted (in part i.) his impetuous and ambitious subject Hotspur, and (in both parts) his son and heir Prince Hal, whose boisterous disposition drives him from Court to seek adventures among the hauntings of taverns. Hotspur is a vivid and fascinating portrait of a hot-headed soldier, courageous to the point of rashness, and sacrificing his life to his impetuous sense of honour. Prince Hal, despite his vagaries, is endowed by the dramatist with far more self-control and common sense.

On the first, as on every subsequent, production of 'Henry IV' the main public interest was concentrated neither on the King, nor on his son, nor on Hotspur, but on the chief of Prince Hal's riotous companions. At the outset the propriety of that great creation was questioned on a political or historical ground of doubtful relevance. Shakespeare in both parts of 'Henry IV' originally named the chief of the prince's associates after Sir John Oldcastle, a character in the old play of 'The Famous Victories of Henry V.' But Henry Brooke, eighth lord Cobham, who succeeded to the title early in 1597, and claimed descent from the historical Sir John Oldcastle, the Lollard leader, raised objection; and when the first part of the play was published with the acting-company's authority in 1598, Shakespeare bestowed on Prince Hal's tun-bellied follower the new and deathless name of Falstaff. A trustworthy edition of the second part of 'Henry IV' also appeared with Falstaff's name substituted for that of Oldcastle in 1600. There the epilogue expressly denied that Falstaff had any characteristic in common with the martyr Oldcastle: 'Oldcastle died a martyr, and this is not the man.' But the substitution of the name 'Falstaff' did not pass without protest. It hazily recalled Sir John Fastolf, an historical warrior of repute and wealth of the fifteenth century who had already figured in 'Henry VI,' and was owner at one time of the Boar's Head Tavern in Southwark. An Oxford scholar, Dr. Richard James, writing about 1625, protested that Shakespeare, after offending

Sir John Oldcastle's descendants by giving his 'buffoon' the name of that resolute martyr, 'was put to make an ignorant shift of abusing Sir John Fastolf, a man not inferior in vertue, though not so famous in piety as the other.' George Daniel of Beswick, the Cavalier poet, similarly complained in 1647 of the ill use to which Shakespeare had put Fastolf's name in order to escape the imputation of vilifying the Lollard leader. Fuller in his 'Worthies,' first published in 1662, while expressing satisfaction that Shakespeare had 'put out' of the play Sir John Oldcastle, was eloquent in his avowal of regret that 'Sir John Fastolf' was 'put in,' on the ground that it was making overbold with a great warrior's memory to make him a 'Thrasonical puff and emblem of mock-valour.'

The offending introduction and withdrawal of Oldcastle's name left a curious mark on literary history. Humbler dramatists (Munday, Wilson, Drayton, and Hathaway), seeking to profit by the attention drawn by Shakespeare to the historical Oldcastle, produced a poor dramatic version of Oldcastle's genuine history. They pretended to vindicate the Lollard's memory from the slur that Shakespeare's identification of him with his fat knight had cast upon it. In the prologue to the play of 'Oldcastle' (1600) appear the lines:

It is no pampered glutton we present,
Nor aged councillor to youthful sinne;
But one whose vertue shone above the rest,
A valiant martyr and a vertuous Peere.

Nevertheless of two editions of 'Sir John Oldcastle' published in 1600, one printed for T[homas] P[avier] was impudently described on the title-page as by Shakespeare.

But it is not the historical traditions which are connected with Falstaff that give him his perennial attraction. It is the personality that owes nothing to history with which Shakespeare's imaginative power clothed him. The knight's unfettered indulgence in sensual pleasures, his exuberant mendacity, and his love of his own ease are purged of offence by his colossal wit and jollity, while the contrast between his old age and his unreverend way of life supplies that tinge of melancholy which is inseparable from the highest manifestations of humour. The Elizabethan public, despite the protests of historical critics, recognised the triumphant success of the effort, and many of Falstaff's

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SHAKESPEARE'S LIFE AND WORK

telling phrases, with the names of his foils, Justice Shallow and Silence, at once took root in popular speech. Shakespeare's purely comic power culminated in Falstaff; he may be claimed as the most humorous figure in literature.

'Merry
Wives of
Windsor.'

In all probability 'The Merry Wives of Windsor,' a comedy inclining to farce, and unqualified by any pathetic interest, followed close upon 'Henry IV.' In the epilogue to the 'Second Part of Henry IV' Shakespeare had written: 'If you be not too much cloyed with fat meat, our humble author will continue the story with Sir John in it . . . where for anything I know Falstaff shall die of a sweat, unless already a' be killed with your hard opinions.' Rowe asserts that 'Queen Elizabeth was so well pleased with that admirable character of Falstaff in the two parts of "Henry IV" that she commanded him to continue it for one play more, and to show him in love.' Dennis, in the dedication of 'The Comical Gallant' (1702), noted that the 'Merry Wives' was written at the Queen's 'command and by her direction; and she was so eager to see it acted that she commanded it to be finished in fourteen days, and was afterwards, as tradition tells us, very well pleased with the representation.' In his 'Letters' (1721, p. 232) Dennis reduces the period of composition to ten days—'a prodigious thing,' added Gildon, 'where all is so well contrived and carried on without the least confusion.' The localisation of the scene at Windsor, and the complimentary references to Windsor Castle, corroborate the tradition that the comedy was prepared to meet a royal command. A license for the publication of the play was granted by the Stationers' Company to John Busby of the Crane in St. Paul's Churchyard on January 18, 1601-2. An imperfect draft was printed in 1602 by Thomas Creede of Thames Street, and was published at the Fleur de Luce in St. Paul's Churchyard by Arthur Johnson, who took the venture over from Busby; but the folio of 1623 first supplied a complete version of the 'Merry Wives.' The plot was probably suggested by an Italian novel. A tale from Straparola's 'Notti' (iv. 4), of which an adaptation figured in the miscellany of novels called Tarleton's 'Newes out of Purgatorie' (1590); another Italian tale from the 'Pecorone' of Ser Giovanni Fiorentino (i. 2); and a third romance, the Fishwife's tale of Brainford in the collection of stories called 'Westward for Smelts,' which is said by both Malone and Steevens to have

been published in 1603, although no edition earlier than 1620 is now known,—these three tales supply incidents distantly resembling episodes in the play. Nowhere has Shakespeare so vividly reflected the bluff temper of contemporary middle-class society. The presentment of the buoyant domestic life of an Elizabethan country town bears distinct impress of Shakespeare's own experience. Again, there are literal references to the neighbourhood of Stratford. Justice Shallow, whose coat-of-arms is described as consisting of 'luces,' is thereby openly identified with Shakespeare's early foe, Sir Thomas Lucy of Charlecote. When Shakespeare makes Master Slender repeat the report that Master Page's fallow greyhound was 'outrun on Cotsall [*i.e.* Cotswold]' (i. i. 93), he testifies to his interest in the coursing matches for which the Cotswold district was famed.

The spirited character of Prince Hal was peculiarly congenial to its creator, and in 'Henry V' Shakespeare, during 1598, brought his career to its close. The play was performed early in 1599, probably in the newly built Globe Theatre. A very imperfect draft was published in 1600 jointly by Thomas Millington of Cornhill and John Busby of St. Paul's Churchyard; it was printed, as in the case of the imperfect draft of the 'Merry Wives,' by Thomas Creede of Thames Street. This inadequate edition of 'Henry V,' which was ordered by the Stationers' Company 'to be stayed' on August 4, 1600, was twice reissued—in 1602 and 1608—before a complete version was supplied in the First Folio of 1623. The dramatic interest of 'Henry V' is slender. There is abundance of comic element, but death has removed Falstaff, whose last moments are described with the simple pathos that comes of a matchless art, and, though Falstaff's companions survive, they are thin shadows of his substantial figure. New comic characters are introduced in the persons of three soldiers respectively of Welsh, Scottish, and Irish nationality, whose racial traits are contrasted with telling effect. The irascible Irishman, Captain MacMorris, is the only representative of his nation who figures in the long list of Shakespeare's *dramatis personæ*. The scene in which the pedantic but patriotic Welshman, Fluellen, avenges the sneers of the braggart Pistol at his nation's emblem, by forcing him to eat the leek, overflows with vivacious humour. The piece in its main current presents a series of loosely connected

Henry V.
spirit
 ↓
leek
to be
stayed
1600
1602
1608

episodes in which the hero's manliness is displayed as soldier, ruler, and lover. The topic reached its climax in the victory of the English at Agincourt, which powerfully appealed to patriotic sentiment. Besides the 'Famous Victories of Henry V,' there was another lost piece on that subject, which Henslowe produced for the first time on November 28, 1595. 'Henry V' may be regarded as Shakespeare's final experiment in the dramatisation of English history, and it artistically rounds off the series of his 'histories' which form collectively a kind of national epic. For 'Henry VIII,' which was produced very late in his career, he was only in part responsible, and that 'history' consequently belongs to a different category.

Essex
and the
rebellion
of 1601.

A glimpse of autobiography may be discerned in the direct mention by Shakespeare in 'Henry V' of an exciting episode in current history. In the prologue to act v. Shakespeare foretold for Robert Devereux, second earl of Essex, the close friend of his patron Southampton, an enthusiastic reception by the people of London when he should come home after 'broaching' rebellion in Ireland.

Were now the general of our gracious empress,
As in good time he may, from Ireland coming,
Bringing rebellion broached on his sword,
How many would the peaceful city quit
To welcome him! (Act v. Chorus, ll. 30-4.)

Essex had set out on his disastrous mission as the would-be pacificator of Ireland on March 27, 1599. The fact that Southampton went with him probably accounts for Shakespeare's avowal of sympathy. But Essex's effort failed. He was charged, soon after 'Henry V' was produced, with treasonable neglect of duty, and he sought in 1601, again with the support of Southampton, to recover his position by stirring up rebellion in London. Then Shakespeare's reference to Essex's popularity with Londoners bore perilous fruit. The friends of the rebel leaders sought the dramatist's countenance. They paid 40s. to Augustine Phillips, a close friend of Shakespeare and a leading member of his company, to induce him to revive at the Globe Theatre 'Richard II' (beyond doubt Shakespeare's play), in the hope that its scene of the killing of a king might encourage a popular outbreak. Phillips subsequently deposed that he prudently told the conspirators who bespoke the piece that 'that play of Kyng Richard' was 'so old and so long out of use as that they

should have small or no company at it.' None the less the performance took place on Saturday (February 7, 1601), the day preceding that fixed by Essex for the rising. The Queen, in a later conversation with William Lambarde (on August 4, 1601), complained that 'this tragedie' of 'Richard II,' which she had always viewed with suspicion, was played at the period with seditious intent 'forty times in open streets and houses.' At the trial of Essex and his friends, Phillips gave evidence of the circumstances under which the tragedy was revived at the Globe Theatre. Essex was executed, and Southampton was imprisoned until the Queen's death. No proceedings were taken against the players, but Shakespeare wisely abstained, for the time, from any public reference to the fate either of Essex or of his patron Southampton.

Such incidents served to accentuate Shakespeare's growing reputation. For several years his genius as dramatist and poet had been acknowledged by critics and playgoers alike, and his social and professional position had become considerable. Inside the theatre his influence was supreme. When, in 1598, the manager of the company rejected Ben Jonson's first comedy—his 'Every Man in his Humour'—Shakespeare intervened, according to a credible tradition (reported by Rowe but denounced by Gifford), and procured a reversal of the decision in the interest of the unknown dramatist, who was his junior by nine years. He took a part when the piece was performed. Jonson was of a difficult and jealous temper, and subsequently he gave vent to an occasional expression of scorn at Shakespeare's expense, but, despite passing manifestations of his unconquerable surliness, there can be no doubt that Jonson cherished genuine esteem and affection for Shakespeare till death. Within a very few years of Shakespeare's death Sir Nicholas L'Estrange, an industrious collector of anecdotes, put into writing an anecdote for which he made Dr. Donne responsible, attesting the amicable relations that habitually subsisted between Shakespeare and Jonson. 'Shakespeare,' ran the story, 'was godfather to one of Ben Jonson's children, and after the christening, being in a deep study, Jonson came to cheer him up and asked him why he was so melancholy. "No, faith, Ben," says he, "not I, but I have been considering a great while what should be the fittest gift for me to bestow upon my god-

Shakespeare's popularity and influence.

child, and I have resolv'd at last." "I pr'ythee, what?" sayes he. "I' faith, Ben, I'll e'en give him a dozen good *Lattin* spoons, and thou shalt translate them." (*Latten* is a mixed metal resembling brass.)

The
Mermaid
meetings.

The creator of Falstaff could have been no stranger to tavern life, and he doubtless took part with zest in the convivialities of men of letters. Tradition reports that Shakespeare joined, at the Mermaid Tavern in Bread Street, those meetings of Jonson and his associates which Beaumont described in his poetical 'Letter' to Jonson :

What things have we seen
Done at the Mermaid? heard words that have been
So nimble, and so full of subtle flame,
As if that every one from whence they came
Had meant to put his whole wit in a jest,
And had resolved to live a fool the rest
Of his dull life.

'Many were the wit-combats,' wrote Fuller of Shakespeare in his 'Worthies' (1662), 'betwixt him and Ben Jonson, which two I behold like a Spanish great galleon and an English man of war; Master Jonson (like the former) was built far higher in learning, solid but slow in his performances. Shakespear, with the English man-of-war, lesser in bulk, but lighter in sailing, could turn with all tides, tack about, and take advantage of all winds by the quickness of his wit and invention.'

Meres's
ology,
598.

Of the many testimonies paid to Shakespeare's literary reputation at this period of his career, the most striking was that of Francis Meres. Meres was a learned graduate of Cambridge University, a divine and schoolmaster, who brought out in 1598 a collection of apophthegms on morals, religion, and literature which he entitled '*Palladis Tamia*.' In the book he interpolated 'A comparative discourse of our English poets with the Greek, Latin, and Italian poets,' and there exhaustively surveyed contemporary literary effort in England. Shakespeare figured in Meres's pages as the greatest man of letters of the day. 'The Muses would speak Shakespeare's fine filed phrase,' Meres asserted, 'if they could speak English.' 'Among the English,' he declared, 'he was the most excellent in both kinds for the stage' (i.e. tragedy and comedy). The titles of six comedies ('Two Gentlemen of Verona,' 'Errors,' 'Love's Labour's Lost,' 'Love's Labour's Won,' 'Midsummer

Night's Dream' and 'Merchant of Venice') and of six tragedies ('Richard II,' 'Richard III,' 'Henry IV,' 'King John,' 'Titus,' and 'Romeo and Juliet') were set forth, and mention followed of his 'Venus and Adonis,' his 'Lucrece,' and his 'sugred sonnets among his private friends.' These were cited as proof 'that the sweet witty soul of Ovid lives in mellifluous and honey-tongued Shakespeare.' In the same year a rival poet, Richard Barnfield, in 'Poems in divers Humors,' predicted immortality for Shakespeare with no less confidence.

And Shakespeare, thou whose honey-flowing vein
 (Pleasing the world) thy Praises doth obtain,
 Whose *Venus* and whose *Lucrece* (sweet and chaste)
 Thy name in Fame's immortal Book have placed,
 Live ever you, at least in fame live ever :
 Well may the Body die, but Fame dies never.

Shakespeare's name was thenceforth of value to unprincipled publishers, and they sought to palm off on their customers as his work the productions of inferior pens. As early as 1595, Thomas Creede, the surreptitious printer of 'Henry V' and the 'Merry Wives,' had issued the crude 'Tragedie of Loocrine,' as 'newly set foorth, overseene and corrected. By W. S.' It appropriated many passages from an older piece called 'Selimus,' which was possibly by Greene, and certainly came into being long before Shakespeare had written a line of blank verse. The same initials—'W. S.'—figured on the title-page of 'The True Chronicle Historie of Thomas, Lord Cromwell,' which was licensed on August 11, 1602, was printed for William Jones in that year, and was reprinted verbatim by Thomas Snodham in 1613. On the title-page of the comedy entitled 'The Puritaine, or the Widdow of Watling Streete,' which George Eld printed in 1607, 'W. S.' was again stated to be the author. Shakespeare's full name appeared on the title-pages of 'The Life of Oldcastle' in 1600 (printed for T[homas] P[avier]), of 'The London Prodigall' in 1605 (printed by T. C. for Nathaniel Butter), and of 'The Yorkshire Tragedy' in 1608 (by R. B. for Thomas Pavier). None of these six plays has any internal claim to Shakespeare's authorship; nevertheless all were uncritically included in the third folio of his collected works (1664). Schlegel and a few other critics of repute have, on no grounds that merit acceptance, detected signs of Shakespeare's genuine work in one of the six, 'The

Value of his name to publishers.

Yorkshire Tragedy ;' it is 'a coarse, crude, and vigorous impromptu,' which is clearly by a far less experienced hand.

The fraudulent practice of crediting Shakespeare with valueless plays from the pens of comparatively dull-witted contemporaries was in vogue among enterprising traders in literature both early and late in the seventeenth century. The worthless old play on the subject of King John was attributed to Shakespeare in the reissues of 1611 and 1622. Humphrey Moseley, a reckless publisher of a later period, fraudulently entered on the 'Stationers' Register' on September 9, 1653, two pieces which he represented to be in whole or in part by Shakespeare, viz. 'The Merry Devill of Edmonton' and the 'History of Cardenio,' a share in which was assigned to Fletcher. 'The Merry Devill of Edmonton' which was produced on the stage before the close of the sixteenth century, was entered on the 'Stationers' Register,' October 22, 1607, and was first published anonymously in 1608 ; it is a delightful comedy, abounding in both humour and romantic sentiment ; at times it recalls scenes of the 'Merry Wives of Windsor,' but no sign of Shakespeare's workmanship is apparent. The 'History of Cardenio' is not extant (see p. 136). Francis Kirkman, another active London publisher, who first printed William Rowley's 'Birth of Merlin' in 1662, described it on the title-page as 'written by William Shakespeare and William Rowley ;' it was reprinted at Halle in a so-called 'Collection of pseudo-Shakespearean plays' in 1887.

'The
Passionate Pil-
grim.'

But poems no less than plays, in which Shakespeare had no hand, were deceptively placed to his credit as soon as his fame was established. In 1599 William Jaggard, a well-known pirate publisher, issued a poetic anthology which he entitled 'The Passionate Pilgrim, by W. Shakespeare.' The volume opened with two sonnets by Shakespeare which were not previously in print, and there followed three poems drawn from the already published 'Love's Labour's Lost ;' but the bulk of the volume was by Richard Barnfield and others. A third edition of the 'Passionate Pilgrim' was printed in 1612 with unaltered title-page, although the incorrigible Jaggard had added two new poems which he silently filched from Thomas Heywood's 'Troia Britannica.' Heywood called attention to his own grievance in the dedicatory epistle before his

'Apology for Actors' (1612), and he added that Shakespeare resented the more substantial injury which the publisher had done him. 'I know,' wrote Heywood of Shakespeare, '[he was] much offended with M. Jaggard that (altogether unknown to him) presumed to make so bold with his name.' In the result the publisher seems to have removed Shakespeare's name from the title-page of a few copies. This is the only instance on record of a protest on Shakespeare's part against the many injuries which he suffered at the hands of contemporary publishers.

In 1601 Shakespeare's full name was appended to 'a poetical essaie on the Phœnix and the Turtle,' which was issued in an appendix to Robert Chester's 'Love's Martyr, or Rosalins complaint, allegorically shadowing the Truth of Love in the Constant Fate of the Phœnix and Turtle,'—a volume published by Edward Blount. The drift of Chester's crabbed verse is not clear, nor can the praise of perspicuity be allowed to the appendix to which Shakespeare contributed, together with Marston, Chapman, Ben Jonson, and 'Ignoto.' The appendix is introduced by a new title-page running thus: 'Hereafter follow diverse poeticall Essaies on the former subject, viz: the Turtle and Phœnix. Done by the best and chiefest of our modern writers, with their names subscribed to their particular workes: never before extant.' Shakespeare's alleged contribution consists of thirteen four-lined stanzas in trochaics, each line being of seven syllables, with the rhymes disposed as in Tennyson's 'In Memoriam.' The concluding 'threnos' is in five three-lined stanzas, also in trochaics, each stanza having a single rhyme. The poet describes in enigmatic language the obsequies of the Phœnix and the Turtle-dove, who had been united in life by the ties of a purely spiritual love. The poem may be a mere play of fancy without recondite intention, or it may be of allegorical import; but whether it bear relation to pending ecclesiastical, political, or metaphysical controversy, or whether it interpret popular grief for the death of some leaders of contemporary society, is not easily determined. Happily Shakespeare wrote nothing else of like character.

'The
Phœnix
and the
Turtle.'

X

THE PRACTICAL AFFAIRS OF LIFE

Shakespeare's practical temperament.

SHAKESPEARE, in middle life, brought to practical affairs a singularly sane and sober temperament. In 'Ratsey's Ghost' (1605), an anecdotal biography of Gamaliel Ratsey, a notorious highwayman, who was hanged at Bedford on March 26, 1605, the highwayman is represented as compelling a troop of actors whom he met by chance on the road to perform in his presence. At the close of the performance Ratsey, according to the memoir, addressed himself to a leader of the company, and cynically urged him to practise the utmost frugality in London. 'When thou feelest thy purse well lined (the counsellor proceeded), buy thee some place or lordship in the country that, growing weary of playing, thy money may there bring thee to dignity and reputation.' Whether or no Ratsey's biographer consciously identified the highwayman's auditor with Shakespeare, it was the prosaic course of conduct marked out by Ratsey that Shakespeare literally followed. As soon as his position in his profession was assured, he devoted his energies to re-establishing the fallen fortunes of his family in his native place, and to acquiring for himself and his successors the status of gentlefolk.

His father's difficulties.

His father's pecuniary embarrassments had steadily increased since his son's departure. Creditors harassed him unceasingly. In 1587 one Nicholas Lane pursued him for a debt for which he had become liable as surety for his brother Henry, who was still farming their father's lands at Snitterfield. Through 1588 and 1589 John Shakespeare retaliated with pertinacity on a debtor named John Tompson. But in 1591 a creditor, Adrian Quiney, obtained a writ of dstraint against him, and although in 1592 he attested inventories taken on the death of two neighbours, Ralph Shaw and Henry Field, father of the London printer, he was

on December 25 of the same year 'presented' as a recusant for absenting himself from church. The commissioners reported that his absence was probably due to 'fear of process for debt.' He figures for the last time in the proceedings of the local court, in his customary rôle of defendant, on March 9, 1595. He was then joined with two fellow traders—Philip Green, a chandler, and Henry Rogers, a butcher—as defendant in a suit brought by Adrian Quiney and Thomas Barker for the recovery of the sum of five pounds. Unlike his partners in the litigation, his name is not followed in the record by a mention of his calling, and when the suit reached a later stage his name was omitted altogether. These may be viewed as indications that in the course of the proceedings he finally retired from trade, which had been of late prolific in disasters for him. In January 1596-7 he conveyed a slip of land attached to his dwelling in Henley Street to one George Badger.

There is a likelihood that the poet's wife fared, in the poet's absence, no better than his father. The only contemporary mention made of her between her marriage in 1582 and her husband's death in 1616 is as the borrower at an unascertained date (evidently before 1595) of forty shillings from Thomas Whittington, who had formerly been her father's shepherd. The money was unpaid when Whittington died in 1601, and he directed his executor to recover the sum from the poet and distribute it among the poor of Stratford.

His wife's
debt.

It was probably in 1596 that Shakespeare returned, after nearly eleven years' absence, to his native town, and worked a revolution in the affairs of his family. The prosecutions of his father in the local court ceased. Thenceforth the poet's relations with Stratford were uninterrupted. He still resided in London for most of the year; but until the close of his professional career he paid the town at least one annual visit, and he was always formally described as 'of Stratford-on-Avon, gentleman.' He was no doubt there on August 11, 1596, when his only son, Hamnet, was buried in the parish church; the boy was eleven and a half years old.

Shakespeare's
return to
Stratford
in 1596.

At the same date the poet's father, despite his pecuniary embarrassments, took a step, by way of regaining his prestige, which must be assigned to the poet's intervention. He made application to the College of Heralds for a coat-of-arms. It is still customary at the College of Arms to inform an

The coat-
of-arms.

applicant for a coat-of-arms who has a father alive that the application should be made in the father's name, and the transaction conducted as if the father were the principal. It was doubtless on advice of this kind that Shakespeare was acting in his negotiations with the heralds. Then, as now, the heralds when bestowing new coats-of-arms commonly credited the applicant's family with an imaginary antiquity, and little reliance need be placed on the biographical or genealogical statements alleged in grants of arms. The poet's father or the poet himself when first applying to the College stated that John Shakespeare, in 1568, while he was bailiff of Stratford, and while he was by virtue of that office a justice of the peace, had obtained from Robert Cook, then Clarenceux herald, a 'pattern' or sketch of an armorial coat. This allegation is not noticed in the records of the College, and may be a formal fiction designed by John Shakespeare and his son to recommend their claim to the notice of the heralds in 1596. The negotiations of 1568, if they were not apocryphal, were certainly abortive; otherwise there would have been no necessity for the further action of 1596. In any case, on October 20, 1596, a draft, which remains in the College of Arms, was prepared under the direction of William Dethick, Garter King-of-Arms, granting John's request for a coat-of-arms. Garter stated, with characteristic vagueness, that he had been 'by credible report' informed that the applicant's 'parentes and late antecessors were for their valeant and faithfull service advanced and rewarded by the most prudent prince King Henry the Seventh of famous memorie, sythence whiche tyme they have continewed at those partes [i.e. Warwickshire] in good reputacion and credit;' and that 'the said John [had] maryed Mary, daughter and heiress of Robert Arden, of Wilmcote, gent.' In consideration of these titles to honour, Garter declared that he assigned to Shakespeare this shield, viz.: 'Gold, on a bend sable, a spear of the first, and for his crest or cognizance a falcon, his wings displayed argent, standing on a wreath of his colours, supporting a spear gold steeled as aforesaid.' In the margin of this draft-grant there is a pen sketch of the arms and crest, and above them is written the motto, 'Non Sanz Droict.' A second copy of the draft, also dated in 1596, is extant at the College. The only alterations are the substitution of the word 'grandfather' for 'antecessors' in the account of John Shakespeare's ancestry,

and the substitution of the word 'esquire' for 'gent' in the description of his wife's father, Robert Arden. At the foot of this draft, however, appeared some disconnected and unverifiable memoranda which John Shakespeare or his son had supplied to the heralds, to the effect that John had been bailiff of Stratford, had received a 'pattern' of a shield from Clarenceux Cook, was a man of substance, and had married into a worshipful family.

Neither of these drafts was fully executed. It may have been that the unduly favourable representations made to the College respecting John Shakespeare's social and pecuniary position excited suspicion even in the habitually credulous minds of the heralds, or those officers may have deemed the profession of the son, who was conducting the negotiation, a bar to completing the transaction. At any rate, Shakespeare and his father allowed three years to elapse before (as far as extant documents show) they made a further endeavour to secure the coveted distinction. In 1599 their efforts were crowned with success. Changes in the interval among the officials at the College may have facilitated the proceedings. In 1597 the Earl of Essex had become Earl Marshal and chief of the Herald's College (the office had been in commission in 1596); while the great scholar and antiquary, William Camden, had joined the College, also in 1597, as Clarenceux King-of-Arms. The poet was favourably known to both Camden and the Earl of Essex, the close friend of the Earl of Southampton. His father's application now took a new form. No grant of arms was asked for. It was asserted without qualification that the coat, as set out in the draft-grants of 1596, had been *assigned* to John Shakespeare while he was bailiff, and the heralds were merely invited to give him a 'recognition' or 'exemplification' of it. An 'exemplification' was invariably secured more easily than a new grant of arms. The heralds might, if they chose, tacitly accept, without examination, the applicant's statement that his family had borne arms long ago, and they thereby regarded themselves as relieved of the obligation of close inquiry into his present status. At the same time John Shakespeare asked permission for himself to impale, and his eldest son and other children to quarter, on 'his ancient coat-of-arms' that of the Ardens of Wilmcote, his wife's family. The College officers were characteristically complacent. A draft was prepared under

the hands of Dethick, the Garter King, and of Camden, the Clarenceux King, granting the required 'exemplification' and authorising the required impalement and quartering. On one point only did Dethick and Camden betray conscientious scruples. Shakespeare and his father obviously desired the heralds to recognise the title of Mary Shakespeare (the poet's mother) to bear the arms of the great Warwickshire family of Arden, then seated at Park Hall. But the relationship, if it existed, was undetermined; the Warwickshire Ardens were gentry of influence in the county, and were certain to protest against any hasty assumption of identity between their line and that of the humble farmer of Wilmcote. After tricking the Warwickshire Arden coat in the margin of the draft-grant for the purpose of indicating the manner of its impalement, the heralds on second thoughts erased it. They substituted in their sketch the arms of an Arden family living at Alvanley in the distant county of Cheshire. With that stock there was no pretence that Robert Arden of Wilmcote was lineally connected; but the bearers of the Alvanley coat were unlikely to learn of its suggested impalement with the Shakespeare shield, and the heralds were less liable to the risk of litigation. But the Shakespeares wisely relieved the College of all anxiety by omitting to assume the Arden coat. The Shakespeare arms alone are displayed with full heraldic elaboration on the monument above the poet's grave in Stratford Church; they alone appear on the seal and on the tombstone of his elder daughter, Mrs. Susanna Hall, impaled with the arms of her husband; and they alone were quartered by Thomas Nash, the first husband of the poet's granddaughter, Elizabeth Hall.

Some objection was taken a few years later to the grant even of the Shakespeare shield, but it was based on vexatious grounds that could not be upheld. Early in the seventeenth century Ralph Brooke, who was York herald from 1593 till his death in 1625, and was long engaged in a bitter quarrel with his fellow officers at the College, complained that the arms 'exemplified' to Shakespeare usurped the coat of Lord Mauley, on whose shield 'a bend sable' also figured. Dethick and Camden, who were responsible for any breach of heraldic etiquette in the matter, answered that the Shakespeare shield bore no more resemblance to the Mauley coat than it did to that of the Harley and the

Ferrers families, which also bore 'a bend sable,' but that in point of fact it differed conspicuously from all three by the presence of a spear on the 'bend.' Dethick and Camden added, with customary want of precision, that the person to whom the grant was made had 'borne magistracy and was justice of peace at Stratford-on-Avon; he married the daughter and heire of Arderne, and was able to maintain that Estate.'

Meanwhile, in 1597, the poet had taken openly in his own person a more effective step in the way of rehabilitating himself and his family in the eyes of his fellow-townsmen. On May 4 he purchased the largest house in the town, known as New Place. It had been built by Sir Hugh Clopton more than a century before, and seems to have fallen into a ruinous condition. But Shakespeare paid for it, with two barns and two gardens, the then substantial sum of 60*l*. Owing to the sudden death of the vendor, William Underhill, on July 7, 1597, the original transfer of the property was left at the time incomplete. Underhill's son Fulk died a felon, and he was succeeded in the family estates by his brother Hercules, who on coming of age, May 1602, completed in a new deed the transfer of New Place to Shakespeare. On February 4, 1597-8, Shakespeare was described as a householder in Chapel Street ward, in which New Place was situated, and as the owner of ten quarters of corn. The inventory was made owing to the presence of famine in the town, and only two inhabitants were credited with a larger holding. In the same year (1598) he procured stone for the repair of the house, and before 1602 had planted a fruit orchard. He is traditionally said to have interested himself in the garden, and to have planted with his own hands a mulberry-tree, which was long a prominent feature of it. When this was cut down, in 1758, numerous relics were made from it, and were treated with an almost superstitious veneration. Shakespeare does not appear to have permanently settled at New Place till 1611. In 1609 the house, or part of it, was occupied by the town clerk, Thomas Greene, 'alias Shakespeare,' who claimed to be the poet's cousin. His grandmother seems to have been a Shakespeare. He often acted as the poet's legal adviser.

Purchase
of New
Place.

It was doubtless under their son's guidance that Shakespeare's father and mother set on foot in November 1597—

six months after his acquisition of New Place—a lawsuit against John Lambert for the recovery of the mortgaged estate of Asbies in Wilmcote. The litigation dragged on for some years without result.

Appeals
for aid
from his
fellow-
townsmen.

Three letters written during 1598 by leading men at Stratford are still extant among the Corporation's archives, and leave no doubt of the reputation for wealth and influence with which the purchase of New Place invested the poet in his fellow-townsmen's eyes. Abraham Sturley, who was once bailiff, writing early in 1598, apparently to a brother in London, says: 'This is one special remembrance from our father's motion. It seemeth by him that our countryman, Mr. Shakspeare, is willing to disburse some money upon some odd yardland or other at Shottery, or near about us: he thinketh it a very fit pattern to move him to deal in the matter of our tithes. By the instructions you can give him thereof, and by the friends he can make therefor, we think it a fair mark for him to shoot at, and would do us much good.' Richard Quiney, another townsman, father of Thomas (afterwards one of Shakespeare's two sons-in-law), was, in the autumn of the same year, harassed by debt, and on October 25 appealed to Shakespeare for a loan of money. 'Loving countryman,' the application ran, 'I am bold of you as of a friend craving your help with xxx *li*.' Quiney was staying at the Bell Inn in Carter Lane, London, and his main business in the metropolis was to procure exemption for the town of Stratford from the payment of a subsidy. Abraham Sturley, writing to Quiney from Stratford ten days later (on November 4, 1598), pointed out to him that since the town was wholly unable, in consequence of the dearth of corn, to pay the tax, he hoped 'that our countryman, Mr. Wm. Shak., would procure us money, which I will like of, as I shall hear when, and where, and how.'

Financial
position
before
1599.

The financial prosperity to which this correspondence and the transactions immediately preceding it point has been treated as one of the chief mysteries of Shakespeare's career, but the difficulties are gratuitous. There is practically nothing in Shakespeare's financial position that a study of the contemporary conditions of theatrical life does not fully explain, although in estimating the present value of Shakespeare's income we must multiply each of its items by eight. It was not until 1599, when the Globe Theatre was built, that

he acquired any share in the profits of a playhouse. But his revenues as a successful dramatist and actor were by no means contemptible at an earlier date. His gains in the capacity of dramatist formed the smaller source of income. The highest price known to have been paid before 1599 to an author for a play by the manager of an acting company was 11*l.* ; 6*l.* was the lowest rate. A small additional gratuity—rarely apparently exceeding ten shillings—was bestowed on a dramatist whose piece on its first production was especially well received ; and the author was by custom allotted, by way of ‘benefit,’ a certain proportion of the receipts of the theatre on the production of a play for the second time. Other sums, amounting at times to as much as 4*l.*, were bestowed on the author for revising and altering an old play for a revival. The nineteen plays which may be set to Shakespeare’s credit between 1591 and 1599, combined with such revising work as fell to his lot during those eight years, cannot consequently have brought him less than 200*l.*, or some 20*l.* a year. Eight or nine of these plays were published during the period, but the publishers operated independently of the author, taking all the risks and, at the same time, all the receipts. The publication of Shakespeare’s plays in no way affected his monetary resources, although his friendly relations with the printer Field doubtless secured him, despite the absence of any copyright law, some part of the profits in the large and continuous sale of his poems.

But it was as an actor that at an early date he acquired a genuinely substantial and secure income. There is abundance of contemporary evidence to show that the stage was for an efficient actor an assured avenue to comparative wealth. In 1590 Robert Greene describes in his tract entitled ‘Never too Late’ a meeting with a player whom he took by his ‘outward habit’ to be ‘a gentleman of great living’ and a ‘substantial man.’ The player informed Greene that he had at the beginning of his career travelled on foot, bearing his theatrical properties on his back, but he prospered so rapidly that at the time of speaking ‘his very share in playing apparel would not be sold for 200*l.*’ Among his neighbours ‘where he dwelt’ he was reputed able ‘at his proper cost to build a windmill.’ In the university play, ‘The Return from Parnassus’ (1601 ?), a poor student enviously complains of the wealth

and position which a successful actor derived from his calling.

England affords those glorious vagabonds,
That carried erst their fardles on their backs,
Coursers to ride on through the gazing streets,
Sweeping it in their glaring satin suits,
And pages to attend their masterships ;
With mouthing words that better wits had framed,
They purchase lands and now esquires are made.

The travelling actors, from whom the highwayman Gamaliel Ratsey extorted a free performance in 1604, were represented as men with the certainty of a rich competency in prospect. An efficient actor received in 1635 as large a regular salary as 180*l.* The lowest known valuation set an actor's wages at 3*s.* a day or about 45*l.* a year. Shakespeare's emoluments as an actor before 1599 are not likely to have fallen below 100*l.* ; while the remuneration due to performances at Court or in noblemen's houses, if the accounts of 1594 be accepted as the basis of reckoning, added some 15*l.*

Thus over 130*l.* (equal to 1,040*l.* of to-day) would be Shakespeare's average annual revenue before 1599. Such a sum would be regarded as a very large income in a country town. According to the author of 'Ratsey's Ghost,' the actor, who may well have been meant for Shakespeare, practised in London a strict frugality, and there seems no reason why Shakespeare should not have been able in 1597 to draw from his savings 60*l.* wherewith to buy New Place. His resources might well justify his fellow-townsmen's opinion of his wealth in 1598, and suffice between 1597 and 1599 to meet his expenses, in rebuilding the house, stocking the barns with grain, and conducting various legal proceedings. But, according to tradition, he had in the Earl of Southampton a wealthy and generous friend who on one occasion gave him a large gift of money to enable 'him to go through with' a purchase to which he had a mind. A munificent gift, added to professional gains, leaves nothing unaccounted for in Shakespeare's financial position before 1599.

Financial
position
after 1599.

After 1599 his sources of income from the theatre greatly increased. In 1635 the heirs of the actor Richard Burbage were engaged in litigation respecting their proprietary rights in the two playhouses, the Globe and the Blackfriars theatres.

The documents relating to this litigation supply authentic, although not very detailed, information of Shakespeare's interest in theatrical property. Richard Burbage, with his brother Cuthbert, erected at their sole cost the Globe Theatre in the winter of 1598-9, and the Blackfriars Theatre, which their father was building at the time of his death in 1597, was also their property. After completing the Globe they leased out, for twenty-one years, shares in the receipts of the theatre to 'those deserving men Shakespeare, Hemings, Condell, Philips, and others.' All the shareholders named were, like Burbage, active members of Shakespeare's company of players. The shares, which numbered sixteen in all, carried with them the obligation of providing for the expenses of the playhouse, and were doubtless in the first instance freely bestowed. Hamlet claims, in the play scene (III. ii. 293), that the success of his improvised tragedy deserved to 'get him a fellowship in a cry of players'—a proof that a successful dramatist might reasonably expect such a reward for a conspicuous effort. In 'Hamlet,' moreover, both a share and a half-share of 'a fellowship in a cry of players' are described as assets of enviable value (III. ii. 294-6). How many shares originally fell to Shakespeare there is no means of determining. Records of later subdivisions suggest that they did not exceed two. The Globe was an exceptionally large and popular playhouse. It would accommodate some two thousand spectators, whose places cost them sums varying between two-pence and half a crown. The receipts were therefore considerable, hardly less than 25*l.* daily, or some 8,000*l.* a year. According to the documents of 1635, an actor-sharer at the Globe received above 200*l.* a year on each share, besides his actor's salary of 180*l.* Thus Shakespeare drew from the Globe Theatre, at the lowest estimate, more than 500*l.* a year in all.

His interest in the Blackfriars Theatre was comparatively unimportant, and is less easy to estimate. The often-quoted documents on which Collier depended to prove him a substantial shareholder in that playhouse have long been proved to be forgeries. The pleas in the lawsuit of 1635 show that the Burbages, the owners, leased the Blackfriars Theatre after its establishment in 1597 for a long term of years to the master of the Children of the Chapel, but bought out the lessee at the end of 1609, and then 'placed'

in it 'men-players which were Hemings, Condell, Shakespeare, &c.' To these and other actors they allotted shares in the receipts, the shares numbering eight in all. The profits were far smaller than at the Globe, and if Shakespeare held one share (certainty on the point is impossible), it added not more than 100*l.* a year to his income, and that not until 1610.

Later in-
come.

His remuneration as dramatist between 1599 and 1611 was also by no means contemptible. Prices paid to dramatists for plays rose rapidly in the early years of the seventeenth century. In 1613 Robert Daborne, a playwright of insignificant reputation, charged for a drama as much as 25*l.* Similarly the value of the author's 'benefits' grew with the growing vogue of the theatre. The exceptional popularity of Shakespeare's plays after 1599 gave him the full advantage of higher rates of pecuniary reward in all directions, and the seventeen plays which were produced by him between that year and the close of his professional career in 1611 probably brought him an average return of 20*l.* each or 340*l.* in all—nearly 30*l.* a year. At the same time the increase in the number of Court performances under James I, and the additional favour bestowed on Shakespeare's company, may well have given that source of income the enhanced value of 20*l.* a year.

Thus Shakespeare in the later period of his life was earning above 600*l.* a year in money of the period. With so large a professional income he could easily, with good management, have completed those purchases of houses and land at Stratford on which he laid out, between 1599 and 1613, a total sum of 970*l.*, or an annual average of 70*l.* These properties, it must be remembered, represented investments, and he drew rent from most of them. He traded, too, in agricultural produce. There is nothing inherently improbable in the statement of John Ward, the seventeenth-century vicar of Stratford, that in his last years 'he spent at the rate of a thousand a year, as I have heard,' although we may reasonably make allowance for exaggeration in the round figures.

Incomes
of fellow-
actors.

Shakespeare realised his theatrical shares several years before his death in 1616, when he left, according to his will, 350*l.* in money in addition to an extensive real estate and numerous personal belongings. There was nothing exceptional in this comparative affluence. His friends and

fellow-actors, Heming and Condell, amassed equally large, if not larger, fortunes. Burbage died in 1619 worth 300*l.* in land, besides personal property; while a contemporary actor and theatrical proprietor, Edward Alleyn, purchased the manor of Dulwich for 10,000*l.* (in money of his own day), and devoted it, with much other property, to public uses, at the same time as he made ample provision for his family out of the residue of his estate. Gifts from patrons may have continued occasionally to augment Shakespeare's resources, but his wealth can be satisfactorily assigned to better attested agencies. There is no ground for treating it as of mysterious origin.

Between 1599 and 1611, while London remained Shakespeare's chief home, he built up at Stratford a large landed estate which his purchase of New Place had inaugurated. In 1601 his father died, being buried on September 8. He apparently left no will, and the poet, as the eldest son, inherited the houses in Henley Street, the only portion of the property of the elder Shakespeare or of his wife which had not been alienated to creditors. Shakespeare permitted his mother to reside in one of the Henley Street houses till her death (she was buried September 9, 1608), and he derived a modest rent from the other. On May 1, 1602, he purchased for 320*l.* of the rich landowners William and John Combe of Stratford 107 acres of arable land near the town. The conveyance was delivered, in the poet's absence, to his brother Gilbert, 'to the use of the within named William Shakespeare.' A third purchase quickly followed. On September 28, 1602, at a court baron of the manor of Rowington, one Walter Getley transferred to the poet a cottage and garden which were situated at Chapel Lane, opposite the lower grounds of New Place. They were held practically in fee-simple at the annual rental of 2*s.* 6*d.* It appears from the roll that Shakespeare did not attend the manorial court held on the day fixed for the transfer of the property at Rowington, and it was consequently stipulated then that the estate should remain in the hands of the lady of the manor until he completed the purchase in person. At a later period he was admitted to the copyhold, and he settled the remainder on his two daughters in fee. In April 1610 he purchased from the Combes 20 acres of pasture land, to add to the 107 of arable land that he had acquired of the same owners in 1602.

Formation of the estate at Stratford, 1601-10.

The
Stratford
tithes.

As early as 1598 Abraham Sturley had suggested that Shakespeare should purchase the tithes of Stratford. Seven years later, on July 24, 1605, he bought for 440*l.* of Ralph Huband an unexpired term of thirty-one years of a ninety-two years' lease of a moiety of the tithes of Stratford, Old Stratford, Bishopton, and Welcombe. The moiety was subject to a rent of 17*l.* to the corporation, who were the reversionary owners on the lease's expiration, and of 5*l.* to John Barker, the heir of a former proprietor. The investment brought Shakespeare, under the most favourable circumstances, no more than an annuity of 38*l.*, and the refusal of persons who claimed an interest in the other moiety to acknowledge the full extent of their liability to the corporation led that body to demand from the poet payments justly due from others. After 1609 he joined with two interested persons, Richard Lane of Awston and Thomas Greene, the town clerk of Stratford, in a suit in Chancery to determine the exact responsibilities of all the tithe-owners, and in 1612 they presented a bill of complaint to Lord-chancellor Ellesmere, with what result is unknown. His acquisition of a part-ownership in the tithes was fruitful in legal embarrassments.

Recovery
of small
debts.

Shakespeare inherited his father's love of litigation, and stood rigorously by his rights in all his business relations. In March 1600 he recovered in London a debt of 7*l.* from one John Clayton. In July 1604, in the local court at Stratford, he sued one Philip Rogers, to whom he had supplied since the preceding March malt to the value of 1*l.* 19*s.* 10*d.*, and had on June 25 lent 2*s.* in cash. Rogers paid back 6*s.*, and Shakespeare sought the balance of the account, 1*l.* 15*s.* 10*d.* During 1608 and 1609 he was at law with another fellow-townsmen, John Addenbroke. On February 15, 1609, Shakespeare, who was apparently represented by his solicitor and kinsman, Thomas Greene, obtained judgment from a jury against Addenbroke for the payment of 6*l.*, and 1*l.* 5*s.* costs, but Addenbroke left the town, and the triumph proved barren. Shakespeare avenged himself by proceeding against one Thomas Horneby, who had acted as the absconding debtor's bail.

XI

MATURITY OF GENIUS

WITH an inconsistency that is more apparent than real, the astute business transactions of these years (1597-1611) synchronise with the production of Shakespeare's noblest literary work—of his most sustained and serious efforts in comedy, tragedy, and romance. In 1599, after abandoning English history with 'Henry V,' he addressed himself to the composition of his three most perfect essays in comedy—'Much Ado about Nothing,' 'As You Like It,' and 'Twelfth Night.' Their good-humoured tone seems to reveal their author in his happiest frame of mind; in each the gaiety and tenderness of youthful womanhood are exhibited in fascinating union; while Shakespeare's lyric gift bred no sweeter melodies than the songs with which the three plays are interspersed. At the same time each comedy enshrines such penetrating reflections on mysterious problems of life as mark the stage of maturity in the growth of the author's intellect. The first two of the three plays were entered on the 'Stationers' Registers' before August 4, 1600, on which day a prohibition was set on their publication, as well as on the publication of 'Henry V' and of Ben Jonson's 'Every Man in his Humour.' This was one of the many efforts of the acting company to stop the publication of plays in the belief that the practice was injurious to their rights. The effort was only partially successful. 'Much Ado,' like 'Henry V,' was published before the close of the year, being licensed for publication to Andrew Wise and William Aspley on August 23, 1600, at the same time as the 'Second Part of Henry IV.' Neither 'As you Like It' nor 'Twelfth Night,' however, was printed till it appeared in the Folio.

In 'Much Ado,' which appears to have been written in 1599, the brilliant and spirited comedy of Benedick and Beatrice, and of the blundering watchmen Dogberry and

Literary
work in
1599.

'Much
Ado
about
Nothing.'

Verges, is wholly original ; but the sombre story of Hero and Claudio, about which the comic incident revolves, is traceable to an Italian source. Bandello had first narrated the sad experiences of the heroine, whom he christened Fenicia, in his 'Novelle' (No. xxii.); Bandello's version was translated in Belleforest's 'Histoires Tragiques,' and Ariosto grafted it on his 'Orlando Furioso' (canto v.) Ariosto's rendering of the story, in which the injured heroine is called Ginevra and her lover Ariodante, was dramatised in England long before Shakespeare designed his comedy. According to the accounts of the Court revels, 'A Historie of Ariodante and Ginevra was shown before her Majestie on Shrovetuesdaie at night' in 1583. In 1591 Ariosto's account was turned into English by Sir John Harington in his spirited translation of 'Orlando Furioso.' Either the dramatised 'Historie' (which has not survived in print or manuscript) or Harington's verse may be regarded as the immediate source of the serious plot of 'Much Ado.' Throughout the play Shakespeare blended with a convincing naturalness the serious aspects of humanity, which the Italian story suggested, and the ludicrous aspects which he wholly illustrated by incident of his own invention. The popular comic actor William Kemp filled the rôle of Dogberry, and Cowley appeared as Verges. In both the Quarto of 1600 and the Folio of 1623 these actors' names are prefixed by a copyist's error to some of the speeches allotted to the two characters (act iv., scene ii.)

'As You
Like It.'

'As You Like It,' which quickly followed, is a dramatic adaptation of Lodge's romance, 'Rosalynde, Euphues Golden Legacie' (1590), but Shakespeare added three new characters of first-rate interest—Jaques, the meditative cynic; Touchstone, the most carefully elaborated of all Shakespeare's fools; and the hoyden Audrey. Hints for the scene of Orlando's encounter with Charles the Wrestler, and for Touchstone's description of the diverse shapes of a lie, were clearly drawn from a book called 'Saviolo's Practise,' a manual of the art of self-defence, which appeared in 1595 from the pen of Vincentio Saviolo, an Italian fencing-master in the service of the Earl of Essex. None of Shakespeare's comedies breathes a more placid temper or approaches more nearly to a pastoral drama. Yet there is no lack of intellectual or poetic energy in the enunciation of the contemplative philosophy which is cultivated in the

Forest of Arden. In *Rosalind, Celia, Phoebe, and Audrey* four types of youthful womanhood are contrasted with the liveliest humour.

The date of 'Twelfth Night' is probably 1600, and its name, which has no reference to the story, doubtless commemorates the fact that it was designed for a Twelfth Night celebration. 'The new map with the augmentation of the Indies,' spoken of by Maria (III. ii. 86), was a respectful reference to the great map of the world or 'hydrographical description' which was first issued with Hakluyt's 'Voyages,' in 1599 or 1600, and first disclosed the full extent of recent explorations of the 'Indies' in the New World and the Old. Like the 'Comedy of Errors,' 'Twelfth Night' achieved the distinction, early in its career, of a presentation at an Inn of Court. It was produced at Middle Temple Hall on February 2, 1601-2, and Manningham, a barrister who was present, described the performance. Manningham wrote that the piece was 'much like the "Comedy of Errors" or "Menechmi" in Plautus, but most like and neere to that in Italian called "Inganni."' Two sixteenth-century Italian plays entitled 'Gl' Inganni' ('The Cheats'), and a third called 'Gl' Ingannati' ('The Dupes'), bear resemblance to 'Twelfth Night.' It is just possible that Shakespeare had recourse to the last, which was based on Bandello's novel of Nicuola, and, being first published at Siena in 1538, became popular throughout Italy. But in all probability he drew the story solely from the 'Historie of Apolonius and Silla,' which was related in 'Riche his Farewell to Militarie Profession' (1581). The author of that volume, Barnabe Riche, translated the tale either direct from Bandello's Italian novel or from the French rendering of Bandello's work in Belleforest's 'Histoires Tragiques.' Romantic pathos, as in 'Much Ado,' is the dominant note of the main plot of 'Twelfth Night,' but Shakespeare neutralises the tone of sadness by his mirthful portrayal of Malvolio, Sir Toby Belch, Sir Andrew Aguecheek, Fabian, the clown Feste, and Maria, all of whom are his own creations. The ludicrous gravity of Malvolio proved exceptionally popular on the stage.

In 1601 Shakespeare made a new departure by drawing a plot from North's noble translation of 'Plutarch's Lives.' Plutarch is the king of biographers, and the deference which Shakespeare paid his work by adhering to the phraseology wherever it was practicable illustrates his literary discrimina-

Twelfth
Night.'

tion. On Plutarch's lives of Julius Cæsar, Brutus, and Antony, Shakespeare based his historical tragedy of 'Julius Cæsar.' Weever, in 1601, in his 'Mirror of Martyrs,' plainly refers to the masterly speech in the Forum at Cæsar's funeral which Shakespeare first put into Antony's mouth. There is no suggestion of the speech in Plutarch; hence the composition of 'Julius Cæsar' may be held to have preceded the issue of Weever's book in 1601. The general topic was already familiar on the stage. Polonius told Hamlet how, when he was at the university, he 'did enact Julius Cæsar; he was kill'd in the Capitol: Brutus kill'd him.' A play of the same title was known as early as 1589, and was acted in 1594 by Shakespeare's company. Shakespeare's piece is a penetrating study of political life, and, although the murder and funeral of Cæsar form the central episode and not the climax, the tragedy is thoroughly well planned and balanced. Cæsar is ironically depicted in his dotage. The characters of Brutus, Antony, and Cassius, the real heroes of the action, are exhibited with faultless art. The fifth act, which presents the battle of Philippi in progress, proves ineffective on the stage, but the reader never relaxes his interest in the fortunes of the vanquished Brutus, whose death is the catastrophe.

While 'Julius Cæsar' was winning its first laurels on the stage, the fortunes of the London theatres were menaced by two manifestations of unreasoning prejudice on the part of the public. The earlier manifestation, although speciously the more serious, was in effect innocuous. The puritans of the city of London had long agitated for the suppression of all theatrical performances, and it seemed as if the agitators triumphed when they induced the Privy Council on June 22, 1600, to issue to the officers of the Corporation of London and to the justices of the peace of Middlesex and Surrey an order forbidding the maintenance of more than two playhouses—one in Middlesex (Alleyn's newly erected playhouse, the 'Fortune' in Cripplegate) and the other in Surrey (the 'Globe' on the Bankside). The contemplated restriction would have deprived very many actors of employment, and driven others to seek a precarious livelihood in the provinces. Happily, disaster was averted by the failure of the municipal authorities and the magistrates of Surrey and Middlesex to make the order operative. All the London theatres that were already in existence went on their way unchecked.

'Julius
Cæsar,'
1601.

More calamitous was a temporary reverse of fortune which Shakespeare's company, in common with the other companies of adult actors, suffered soon afterwards at the hands, not of fanatical enemies of the drama, but of playgoers who were its avowed supporters. The company of boy-actors, chiefly recruited from the choristers of the Chapel Royal, and known as 'the Children of the Chapel,' had since 1597 been installed at the new theatre in Blackfriars, and after 1600 the fortunes of the veterans, who occupied rival stages, were put in jeopardy by the extravagant outburst of public favour that the boys' performance evoked. In 'Hamlet' (II. ii. 348-94), the play which followed 'Julius Cæsar,' Shakespeare pointed out the perils of the situation. The adult actors, Shakespeare asserted, were prevented from performing in London through no falling off in their efficiency, but by the 'late innovation' or 'novelty' of the children's vogue. They were compelled to go on tour in the provinces, at the expense of their revenues and reputation, because 'an aery [i.e. nest] of children, little eyases [i.e. young hawks],' dominated the theatrical world, and monopolised public applause. 'These are now the fashion,' the dramatist lamented, and he made the topic the text of a reflection on the fickleness of public taste :

The strife
between
adult and
boy actors.

HAMLET. Do the boys carry it away ?

ROSENCRANTZ. Ay, that they do, my lord, Hercules and his load too.

HAMLET. It is not very strange ; for my uncle is King of Denmark, and those that would make mows at him while my father lived, give twenty, forty, fifty, a hundred ducats apiece for his picture in little.

Jealousies in the ranks of the dramatists accentuated the actor's difficulties. Ben Jonson was, at the end of the sixteenth century, engaged in a fierce personal quarrel with two of his fellow dramatists, Marston and Dekker. The adult actors generally avowed sympathy with Jonson's foes. Jonson, by way of revenge, sought an offensive alliance with 'the Children of the Chapel.' Under careful tuition the boys proved capable of performing much the same pieces as the men. To 'the children' Jonson offered in 1600 his comical satire of 'Cynthia's Revels,' in which he held up to ridicule Dekker, Marston, and their actor-friends. The play, when acted by 'the children' at the Blackfriars Theatre, was warmly welcomed by the audience. Next year Jonson repeated his manœuvre with greater

effect. He learnt that Marston and Dekker were conspiring with the actors of Shakespeare's company to attack him in a piece called 'Satiro-Mastix, or the Untrussing of the Humorous Poet.' He anticipated their design by producing, again with 'the Children of the Chapel,' his 'Poetaster,' which was throughout a venomous invective against his enemies—dramatists and actors alike. Shakespeare's company retorted by producing Dekker and Marston's 'Satiro-Mastix' at the Globe Theatre next year. But Jonson's action had given new life to the vogue of the children. Playgoers took sides in the struggle, and their attention was for a season riveted, to the exclusion of topics more germane to their province, on the actors' and dramatists' boisterous war of personalities

Shakespeare's references to the struggle.

In his detailed references to the conflict in 'Hamlet' Shakespeare protested against the abusive comments on the men-actors of 'the common stages' or public theatres which were put into the children's mouths. Rosencrantz declared that 'the children so berattle [i.e. assail] the common stages—so they call them—that many wearing rapiers are afraid of goose-quills, and dare scarce come thither [i.e. to the public theatres].' Hamlet in pursuit of the theme pointed out that the writers who encouraged the vogue of the 'child-actors' did them a poor service, because when the boys should reach men's estate they would run the risk, if they continued on the stage, of the same insults and neglect which now threatened their seniors.

HAMLET. What are they children? Who maintains 'em? how are they escoted [i.e. paid]? Will they pursue the quality [i.e. the actor's profession] no longer than they can sing? Will they not say afterwards, if they should grow themselves to common players—as it is most like, if their means are no better—their writers do them wrong to make them exclaim against their own succession?

ROSENCRANTZ. Faith, there has been much to do on both sides, and the nation holds it no sin to tarre [i.e. incite] them to controversy: there was for a while no money bid for argument, unless the poet and the player went to cuffs in the question.

HAMLET. Is it possible?

GUILDENSTERN. O, there has been much throwing about of brains!

Shakespeare clearly favoured the adult actors in their rivalry with the boys, but he wrote more like a disinterested spectator than an active partisan when he made specific reference to the strife between the poet Ben Jonson and

the players. In the prologue to 'Troilus and Cressida,' which he penned in 1603, he warned his hearers, with obvious allusion to Ben Jonson's battles, that he hesitated to identify himself with either actor or poet. Passages in Ben Jonson's 'Poetaster,' moreover, pointedly suggest that Shakespeare cultivated so assiduously an attitude of neutrality that Jonson acknowledged him to be qualified for the rôle of peacemaker. The gentleness of disposition with which Shakespeare was invariably credited by his friends would have well fitted him for such an office.

Jonson figures personally in the 'Poetaster' under the name of Horace. Episodically Horace and his friends, Tibullus and Gallus, eulogise the work and genius of another character, Virgil, in terms so closely resembling those which Jonson is known to have applied to Shakespeare that they may be regarded as intended to apply to him (act v. sc. i.) Jonson points out that Virgil, by his penetrating intuition, achieved the great effects which others laboriously sought to reach through rules of art.

Jonson's
'Poet-
aster.'

His learning labours not the school-like gloss
That most consists of echoing words and terms . . .
Nor any long or far-fetched circumstance—
Wrapt in the curious generalities of arts—
But a direct and analytic sum
Of all the worth and first effects of arts.
And for his poesy, 'tis so rammed with life
That it shall gather strength of life with being,
And live hereafter, more admired than now.

Tibullus gives Virgil equal credit for having in his writings touched with telling truth upon every vicissitude of human existence.

That which he hath writ
Is with such judgment laboured and distilled
Through all the needful uses of our lives
That, could a man remember but his lines,
He should not touch at any serious point
But he might breathe his spirit out of him.

Finally, Virgil in the play is nominated by Cæsar to act as judge between Horace and his libellers, and he advises the administration of purging pills to the offenders. That course of treatment is adopted with satisfactory results.

As against this interpretation, one contemporary witness has been held to testify that Shakespeare stemmed the tide

of Jonson's embittered activity by no peace-making interposition, but by joining his foes, and by administering to him, with their aid, the identical course of medicine which in the 'Poetaster' is meted out to his enemies. In the same year (1601) as the 'Poetaster' was produced, 'The Return from Parnassus'—a third piece in a trilogy of plays—was 'acted by the students in St. John's College, Cambridge.' In this piece, as in its two predecessors, Shakespeare received, both as a playwright and a poet, high commendation, although his poems were judged to reflect somewhat too largely 'love's lazy foolish languishment.' The actor Burbage was introduced in his own name instructing an aspirant to the actor's profession in the part of Richard III, and the familiar lines from Shakespeare's play—

Now is the winter of our discontent
Made glorious summer by this sun of York—

are recited by the pupil as part of his lesson. Subsequently in a prose dialogue between Shakespeare's fellow-actors Burbage and Kempe, Kempe remarks of university dramatists, 'Why, here's our fellow Shakespeare puts them all down; aye, and Ben Jonson, too. O! that Ben Jonson is a pestilent fellow. He brought up Horace, giving the poets a pill; but our fellow Shakespeare hath given him a purge that made him bewray his credit.' Burbage adds: 'He is a shrewd fellow indeed.' This perplexing passage has been held to mean that Shakespeare took a decisive part against Jonson in the controversy with Dekker and Dekker's actor friends. But such a conclusion is nowhere corroborated, and seems to be confuted by the eulogies of Virgil in the 'Poetaster' and by the general handling of the theme in 'Hamlet.' The words quoted from 'The Return from Parnassus' hardly admit of a literal interpretation. Probably the 'purge' that Shakespeare was alleged by the author of 'The Return from Parnassus' to have given Jonson meant no more than that Shakespeare had signally outstripped Jonson in popular esteem. As the author of 'Julius Cæsar,' he had just proved his command of topics that were peculiarly suited to Jonson's vein, and had in fact outrun his churlish comrade on his own ground.

Jonson's resentment at the success of 'Julius Cæsar' is not open to question. It is on record. The most

Shakespeare's
alleged
partisan-
ship.

scornful criticism that Jonson is known to have passed on any composition by Shakespeare was aimed at a passage in 'Julius Cæsar,' and as Jonson's attack is barely justifiable on literary grounds, it is fair to assume that the play was distasteful to him from other considerations. 'Many times,' Jonson wrote of Shakespeare in his 'Timber,' 'hee fell into those things [which] could not escape laughter: As when hee said in the person of *Cæsar*, one speaking to him [i.e. Cæsar]; *Cæsar, thou dost me wrong*. Hee [i.e. Cæsar] replied: *Cæsar did never wrong, butt with just cause*: and such like, which were ridiculous.' Jonson derisively quoted the same passage in the induction to 'The Staple of News' (1625): 'Cry you mercy, you did not wrong but with just cause.' Possibly the words that were ascribed by Jonson to Shakespeare's character of Cæsar appeared in the original version of the play, but, perhaps owing to Jonson's captious criticism, they do not figure in the Folio version, the sole version that has reached us. The only words there that correspond with Jonson's quotation are Cæsar's remark:

Ben Jonson on 'Julius Cæsar.'

Know, Cæsar doth not wrong, nor without cause
Will he be satisfied

(III. i. 47-8). The rhythm and sense seem to require the reinsertion after the word 'wrong' of the phrase 'but with just cause,' which Jonson needlessly reprobated.

The superior popularity of Shakespeare's 'Julius Cæsar' in the theatre to Ben Jonson's Roman play of 'Catiline,' is brought into strong relief in the eulogistic lines on Shakespeare by his admiring critic, Leonard Digges (1588-1635), which appeared in the 1640 edition of Shakespeare's 'Poems':

So have I seen when Cæsar would appear,
And on the stage at half-sword parley were
Brutus and Cassius—oh, how the audience
Were ravish'd, with what wonder they went thence
When some new day they would not brook a line
Of tedious, though well laboured, Catiline.

At any rate, in the tragedy that Shakespeare brought out in the year following the production of 'Julius Cæsar,' he finally left Jonson and all friends and foes lagging far behind both in achievement and reputation. This new exhibition of the force of his genius re-established, too, the ascendancy of the adult actors who interpreted his work, and the boys' supremacy was quickly brought to an end.

'Hamlet,'
1602.

In 1602 Shakespeare produced 'Hamlet,' 'that piece of his which most kindled English hearts.' The story of the Prince of Denmark had been popular on the stage as early as 1589 in a lost dramatic version by another writer—doubtless Thomas Kyd, whose tragedies of blood, 'The Spanish Tragedy' and 'Jeronimo,' long held the Elizabethan stage. To that lost version of 'Hamlet' Shakespeare's tragedy certainly owed much. The story was also accessible in the 'Histoires Tragiques' of Belleforest, who adapted it from the 'Historia Danica' of Saxo Grammaticus. No English translation of Belleforest's 'Hystorie of Hamblet' appeared before 1608; Shakespeare doubtless read it in the French. But his authorities give little hint of what was to emerge from his study of them.

The problem of its publication.

The First Quarto, 1603.

Burbage created the title-part in Shakespeare's tragedy, and its success on the stage led to the play's publication immediately afterwards. The bibliography of 'Hamlet' offers a puzzling problem. On July 26, 1602, 'A Book called the Revenge of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, as it was lately acted by the Lord Chamberlain his Servants,' was entered on the Stationers' Company's Registers by the printer James Roberts, and it was published in quarto next year by N[icholas] L[ing] and John Trundell. The title-page stated that the piece had been 'acted divers times in the city of London, as also in the two universities of Cambridge and Oxford and elsewhere.' The text here appeared in a rough and imperfect state. In all probability it was a piratical and carelessly transcribed copy of Shakespeare's first draft of the play, in which he drew largely on the older piece.

The Second Quarto, 1604.

A revised version, printed from a more complete and accurate manuscript, was published in 1604 as 'The Tragical History of Hamlet Prince of Denmark, by William Shakespeare, newly imprinted and enlarged to almost as much again as it was, according to the true and perfect copy.' This was printed by I[ames] R[oberts] for the publisher N[icholas] L[ing]. The concluding words—'according to the true and perfect copy'—of the title-page of the Second Quarto were intended to stamp its predecessor as surreptitious and unauthentic. But it is clear that the Second Quarto was not a perfect version of the play. It was itself printed from a copy which had been curtailed for acting purposes.

A third version (long the *textus receptus*) figured in the Folio of 1623. Here many passages, not to be found in the quartos, appear for the first time, but a few others that appear in the quartos are omitted. The Folio text probably came nearest to the original manuscript; but it, too, followed an acting copy which had been abbreviated somewhat less drastically than the Second Quarto and in a different fashion. Theobald in his 'Shakespeare Restored' (1726) made the first scholarly attempt to form a text from a collation of the First Folio with the Second Quarto, and Theobald's text with further embellishments by Sir Thomas Hanmer, Edward Capell, and the Cambridge editors of 1866, is now generally adopted.

The Folio version.

'Hamlet' was the only drama by Shakespeare that was acted in his lifetime at the two Universities. It has since attracted more attention from actors, playgoers, and reader of all capacities than any other of Shakespeare's plays. Its world-wide popularity from its author's day to our own, when it is as warmly welcomed in the theatres of France and Germany as in those of England and America, is the most striking of the many testimonies to the eminence of Shakespeare's dramatic instinct. At a first glance there seems little in the play to attract the uneducated or the unreflecting. 'Hamlet' is mainly a psychological effort, a study of the reflective temperament in excess. The action develops slowly; at times there is no movement at all. The piece is the longest of Shakespeare's plays, reaching a total of over 3,900 lines. ('Hamlet' is thus some nine hundred lines longer than 'Antony and Cleopatra'—the play by Shakespeare that approaches it most closely in numerical strength of lines.) At the same time the total length of Hamlet's speeches far exceeds that of those allotted by Shakespeare to any other of his characters. Humorous relief is, it is true, effectively supplied to the tragic theme by Polonius and the grave-diggers, and if the topical references to contemporary theatrical history (II. ii. 350-89) could only count on an appreciative reception from an Elizabethan audience, the pungent censure of actors' perennial defects is calculated to catch the ear of the average playgoer of all ages. But it is not to these subsidiary features that the universality of the play's vogue can be attributed. It is the intensity of interest which Shakespeare contrives to excite in the character of the hero that

Popularity of 'Hamlet'

explains the position of the play in popular esteem. The play's unrivalled power of attraction lies in the pathetic fascination exerted on minds of almost every calibre by the central figure—a high-born youth of chivalric instincts and finely developed intellect, who, when stirred to avenge in action a desperate private wrong, is foiled by introspective workings of the brain that paralyse the will.

'Troilus
and
Cressida.'

Although the difficulties of determining the date of 'Troilus and Cressida' are very great, there are many grounds for assigning its composition to the early days of 1603. In 1599 Dekker and Chettle were engaged by Henslowe to prepare for the Earl of Nottingham's company—a rival of Shakespeare's company—a play of 'Troilus and Cressida,' of which no trace survives. It doubtless suggested the topic to Shakespeare. On February 7, 1602-3, James Roberts obtained a license for 'the booke of Troilus and Cresseda as yt is acted by my Lord Chamberlens men,' i.e. Shakespeare's company. Roberts printed the Second Quarto of 'Hamlet' and others of Shakespeare's plays; but his effort to publish 'Troilus' proved abortive owing to the interposition of the players. Roberts's 'book' was probably Shakespeare's play. The metrical characteristics of Shakespeare's 'Troilus and Cressida'—the regularity of the blank verse—powerfully confirm the date of composition which Roberts's license suggests. Six years later, however, on January 28, 1608-9, a new license for the issue of 'a booke called the history of Troylus and Cressida' was granted to other publishers, Richard Bonian and Henry Walley, and these publishers, more fortunate than Roberts, soon printed a quarto with Shakespeare's full name as author. The text seems fairly authentic, but exceptional obscurity attaches to the circumstances of the publication. Some copies of the book bear an ordinary type of title-page stating that the piece was printed 'as it was acted by the King's majesties servants at the Globe.' But in other copies, which differ in no way in regard to the text of the play, there was substituted for this title-page a more pretentious announcement running: 'The famous Historie of Troylus and Cresseid, excellently expressing the beginning of their loues with the conceited wooing of Pandarus, prince of Lacia.' After this pompous title-page there was inserted, for the first and only time in the case of a play by Shakespeare that was published in his lifetime, an advertisement or preface. In this interpolated

page an anonymous scribe, writing in the name of the publishers, paid bombastic and high-flown compliments to Shakespeare as a writer of 'comedies,' and defiantly boasted that the 'grand possessers'—i.e. the owners—of the manuscript deprecated its publication. By way of enhancing the value of what were obviously stolen wares, it was falsely added that the piece was new and unacted. This address was possibly the brazen reply of the publishers to a more than usually emphatic protest on the part of players or dramatist against the printing of the piece. The editors of the Folio evinced distrust of the Quarto edition by printing their text from a different copy showing many deviations, which were not always for the better.

The work, which in point of construction shows signs of haste, and in style is exceptionally unequal, is the least attractive of the efforts of Shakespeare's middle life. The story is based on a romantic legend of the Trojan war, which is of mediæval origin. Shakespeare had possibly read Chapman's translation of Homer's 'Iliad,' but he owed his plot to Chaucer's 'Troilus and Cresseid' and Lydgate's 'Troy Book.' In defiance of his authorities he presented Cressida as a heartless coquette; the poets who had previously treated her story—Boccaccio, Chaucer, Lydgate, and Robert Henryson—had imagined her as a tender-hearted, if frail, beauty, with claims on their pity rather than on their scorn. But Shakespeare's innovation is dramatically effective, and accords with strictly moral canons. The charge frequently brought against the dramatist that in 'Troilus and Cressida' he cynically invested the Greek heroes of classical antiquity with contemptible characteristics is ill supported by the text of the play. Ulysses, Nestor, and Agamemnon figure in Shakespeare's play as brave generals and sagacious statesmen, and in their speeches Shakespeare concentrated a marvellous wealth of pithily expressed philosophy, much of which has fortunately obtained proverbial currency. Shakespeare's conception of the Greeks followed traditional lines except in the case of Achilles, whom he transforms into a brutal coward. And that portrait quite legitimately interpreted the selfish, unreasoning, and exorbitant pride with which the warrior was credited by Homer and his imitators.

Treat-
ment
of the
theme.

Shakespeare's treatment of his theme cannot therefore be fairly construed, as some critics construe it, into a petty-

minded protest against the honour paid to the ancient Greeks and to the form and sentiment of their literature by more learned dramatists of the day, like Ben Jonson and Chapman. Although Shakespeare knew the Homeric version of the Trojan war, he worked in 'Troilus and Cressida' upon a mediæval romance, which was practically uninfluenced either for good or evil by the classical spirit.

Queen Elizabeth's death, March 24, 1603.

Despite the association of Shakespeare's company with the rebellion of 1601, and its difficulties with the Children of the Chapel Royal, he and his fellow actors retained their hold on Court favour till the close of Elizabeth's reign. As late as February 2, 1603, the company entertained the dying Queen at Richmond. Her death on March 24, 1603, drew from Shakespeare's early eulogist, Chettle, a vain appeal to him, under the fanciful name of Melicert, to

Drop from his honied muse one sable teare,
To mourne her death that gracèd his desert,
And to his laies opened her royal eare.

But, except on sentimental grounds, the Queen's death justified no lamentation on the part of Shakespeare. On the withdrawal of one royal patron he and his friends at once found another, who proved far more liberal and appreciative.

On May 19, 1603, James I, very soon after his accession, extended to Shakespeare and other members of the Lord Chamberlain's company a very marked and valuable recognition. To them he granted under royal letters patent a license 'freely to use and exercise the arte and facultie of playing comedies, tragedies, histories, enterludes, moralls, pastoralles, stage-plaies, and such other like as they have already studied, or hereafter shall use or studie as well for the recreation of our loving subjectes as for our solace and pleasure, when we shall thinke good to see them during our pleasure.' The Globe Theatre was noted as the customary scene of their labours, but permission was granted to them to perform in the town-hall or moot-hall of any country town. Nine actors are named. Lawrence Fletcher stands first on the list; he had already performed before James in Scotland in 1599 and 1601. Shakespeare comes second and Burbage third. The company to which they belonged was thenceforth styled the King's company; its members became 'the King's Servants,' and they took rank with the

James I's patronage.

Grooms of the Chamber. Shakespeare's plays were thenceforth repeatedly performed in James's presence, and there is a credible tradition that James wrote to Shakespeare 'an amicable letter' in his own hand, which was long in the possession of Sir William D'Avenant. This circumstance was first set forth in print, on the testimony of 'a credible person then living,' by Bernard Lintot the bookseller, in the preface to his edition of Shakespeare's poems in 1710. Oldys suggested that the 'credible person' who saw the letter while in D'Avenant's possession was John Sheffield, Duke of Buckingham (1648-1721).

In the autumn and winter of 1603 the prevalence of the plague led to the closing of the theatres in London. The King's players were compelled to make a prolonged tour in the provinces, which entailed some loss of income. For two months from the third week in October, the Court was temporarily installed at Wilton House, the residence of William Herbert, third earl of Pembroke, and late in November the company was summoned by the royal officers to perform in the royal presence. The actors travelled from Mortlake to Salisbury 'unto the Courte aforesaide,' and their performance took place at Wilton House on December 2. They received next day 'upon the Councils warrant' the large sum of 30*l.* 'by way of his majesties reward.' Many other gracious marks of royal favour followed. On March 15, 1604, Shakespeare and eight other actors of the company walked from the Tower of London to Westminster in the procession which accompanied the King on his formal entry into London. Each actor received four and a half yards of scarlet cloth to wear as a cloak on the occasion, and in the document authorising the grant Shakespeare's name stands first on the list. The dramatist Dekker was author of a somewhat bombastic account of the elaborate ceremonial, which accompanied a splendid series of copper-plate engravings of the triumphal arches spanning the streets. On April 9, 1604, the King gave further proof of his friendly interest in the fortunes of his actors by causing an official letter to be sent to the Lord Mayor of London and the Justices of the Peace for Middlesex and Surrey, bidding them 'permit and suffer' the King's players to 'exercise their playes' at their 'usual house,' the Globe. Four months later—in August—every member of the company was summoned by the King's order to attend at

Somerset House during the fortnight's sojourn there of the Spanish ambassador extraordinary, Juan Fernandez de Velasco, duke de Frias, and Constable of Castile, who came to London to ratify the treaty of peace between England and Spain, and was magnificently entertained by the English Court. Between All Saints' Day [November 1] and the ensuing Shrove Tuesday, which fell early in February 1605, Shakespeare's company gave no fewer than eleven performances at Whitehall in the royal presence.

XII

THE HIGHEST THEMES OF TRAGEDY

UNDER the incentive of such exalted patronage, Shakespeare's activity redoubled, but his work shows none of the conventional marks of literature that is produced in the blaze of Court favour. The first six years of the new reign saw him absorbed in the highest themes of tragedy, and an unparalleled intensity and energy, which bore few traces of the trammels of a Court, thenceforth illumined every scene that he contrived. To 1604 the composition of two plays can be confidently assigned, one of which—'Othello'—ranks with Shakespeare's greatest achievements; while the other—'Measure for Measure'—although as a whole far inferior to 'Othello,' contains one of the finest scenes (between Angelo and Isabella, II. ii. 43 sq.) and one of the greatest speeches (Claudio on the fear of death, III. i. 116-30) in the range of Shakesperean drama. 'Othello' was doubtless the first new piece by Shakespeare that was acted before James. It was produced at Whitehall on November 1. 'Measure for Measure' followed on December 26. Neither was printed in Shakespeare's lifetime. The plots of both ultimately come from the same Italian collection of novels—Giraldi Cinthio's 'Hecatommithi,' which was first published in 1565.

'Othello'
and
'Measure
for Mea-
sure.'

Cinthio's painful story of 'Un Capitano Moro,' or 'The Moor of Venice' (Deca. iii. Nov. vii.), is not known to have been translated into English before Shakespeare dramatised it in the play on which he bestowed the title of 'Othello.' He followed the main drift of the Italian romance with fidelity; but he rechristened all the personages excepting Desdemona; he introduced the new character of Roderigo, and first gave definite significance to the character of Emilia. Iago, who lacks in Cinthio's tale any feature to distinguish him from the conventional criminal of Italian fiction, became

in Shakespeare's hands the subtlest of all studies of intellectual villainy and hypocrisy. But Shakespeare's genius declared itself most signally in his masterly reconstruction of the catastrophe. He invested Desdemona's tragic fate with a wholly new and fearful intensity by making Iago's cruel treachery known to Othello at the last—just after Iago's perfidy had impelled the noble-hearted Moor, in groundless jealousy, to murder his gentle and innocent wife. The whole tragedy displays to magnificent advantage the dramatist's fully matured powers. An unfaltering equilibrium is maintained in the treatment of plot and characters alike.

Cinthio made the perilous story of 'Measure for Measure' the subject not only of a romance, but of a tragedy called 'Epitia.' Before Shakespeare wrote his play, Cinthio's romance had been twice rendered into English by George Whetstone. Whetstone had not only given a somewhat altered version of the Italian romance in his unwieldy play of 'Promos and Cassandra' (in two parts of five acts each, 1578), but he had also freely translated it in his collection of prose tales, 'Heptameron of Civil Discourses' (1582). Yet there is every likelihood that Shakespeare also knew Cinthio's play, which, unlike his romance, was untranslated; the leading character, who is by Shakespeare christened Angelo, was known by another name to Cinthio in his story, but Cinthio in his play (and not in his novel) gives the character a sister named Angela, which doubtless suggested Shakespeare's designation. In the hands of Shakespeare's predecessors the tale is a sordid record of lust and cruelty. But Shakespeare prudently showed scant respect for their handling of the narrative. By diverting the course of the plot at a critical point he not merely proved his artistic ingenuity, but gave dramatic dignity and moral elevation to a degraded and repellent theme. In the old versions Isabella yields her virtue as the price of her brother's life. The central fact of Shakespeare's play is Isabella's inflexible and unconditional chastity. Others of Shakespeare's alterations, like the Duke's abrupt proposal to marry Isabella, seem hastily conceived. But his creation of the pathetic character of Mariana 'of the moated grange'—the legally affianced bride of Angelo, Isabella's would-be seducer—skillfully excludes the possibility of a settlement (as in the old stories) between Isabella and Angelo on terms of marriage. Shakespeare's argument is throughout philosophically subtle.

The poetic eloquence in which Isabella and the Duke pay homage to the virtue of chastity, and the many expositions of the corruption with which unchecked sexual passion threatens society, alternate with coarsely comic interludes which suggest the vanity of seeking to efface natural instincts by the coercion of law. There is little in the play that seems designed to recommend it to the Court before which it was first performed. But the two emphatic references to a ruler's dislike of mobs, despite his love of his people, were perhaps penned in deferential allusion to James I, whose horror of crowds was notorious. In act I. sc. i. 67-72 the Duke remarks :

I love the people,
But do not like to stage me to their eyes.
Though it do well, I do not relish well
Their loud applause and aves vehement.
Nor do I think the man of safe discretion
That does affect it.

Of like tenor is the succeeding speech of Angelo (act II. sc. iv. 27-30) :

The general [i.e. the public], subject to a well-wish'd king, . . .
Crowd to his presence, where their untaught love
Must needs appear offence.

In 'Macbeth,' his 'great epic drama,' which he began in 1605 and completed next year, Shakespeare employed a setting wholly in harmony with the accession of a Scottish king. The story was drawn from Holinshed's 'Chronicle of Scottish History,' with occasional reference, perhaps, to earlier Scottish sources. The supernatural machinery of the three witches accorded with the King's superstitious faith in demonology; the dramatist lavished his sympathy on Banquo, James's ancestor; while Macbeth's vision of kings who carry 'twofold balls and treble sceptres' (iv. i. 20) plainly adverted to the union of Scotland with England and Ireland under James's sway. The allusion by the porter (II. iii. 9) to the 'equivocator . . . who committed treason' was perhaps suggested by the notorious defence of the doctrine of equivocation made by the Jesuit Henry Garnett, who was executed early in 1606 for his share in the 'Gunpowder Plot.' The piece was not printed until 1623. It is in its existing shape by far the shortest of all Shakespeare's tragedies ('Hamlet' is nearly twice as long), and it is possible that it survives only in an abbreviated

'Mac-
beth.'

acting version. Much scenic elaboration characterised the production. Dr. Simon Forman witnessed a performance of the tragedy at the Globe in April 1610, and noted that Macbeth and Banquo entered the stage on horseback, and that Banquo's ghost was materially represented (III. iv. 40 seq.) Like 'Othello,' the play ranks with the noblest tragedies either of the modern or the ancient world. The characters of hero and heroine—Macbeth and his wife—are depicted with the utmost subtlety and insight. In three points 'Macbeth' differs somewhat from others of Shakespeare's productions in the great class of literature to which it belongs. The interweaving with the tragic story of supernatural interludes in which Fate is weirdly personified is not exactly matched in any other of Shakespeare's tragedies. In the second place, the action proceeds with a rapidity that is wholly without parallel in the rest of Shakespeare's plays. Nowhere, moreover, has Shakespeare introduced comic relief into a tragedy with bolder effect than in the porter's speech after the murder of Duncan (II. iii. 1 seq.) The theory that this passage was from another hand does not merit acceptance. It cannot, however, be overlooked that the second scene of the first act—Duncan's interview with the 'bleeding sergeant'—falls so far below the style of the rest of the play as to suggest that it was an interpolation by a hack of the theatre. The resemblances between Thomas Middleton's later play of 'The Witch' (1610) and portions of 'Macbeth' may safely be ascribed to plagiarism on Middleton's part. Of two songs which, according to the stage directions, were to be sung during the representation of 'Macbeth' (III. v. and IV. i.), only the first line of each is noted there, but songs beginning with the same lines are set out in full in Middleton's play; they were probably by Middleton, and were interpolated by actors in a stage version of 'Macbeth' after its original production.

King
Lear.

'King Lear,' in which Shakespeare's tragic genius moved without any faltering on Titanic heights, was written during 1606, and was produced before the Court at Whitehall on the night of December 26 of that year—a fact stated on the title-page of the quartos. Eleven months later, on November 26, 1607, two undistinguished stationers, John Busby and Nathaniel Butter, obtained a license for the publication of the great tragedy, and Nathaniel Butter published a quarto edition in the following year (1608). This

was defaced by many gross typographical errors. Some of the sheets were never subjected to any correction of the press. The publisher, Butter, endeavoured to make some reparation for the carelessness of the edition by issuing a second quarto, which was designed to free the text of the most obvious incoherences of the first quarto. But the effort was not successful. Uncorrected sheets disfigured the second quarto little less conspicuously than the first. The first quarto is that in which Shakespeare's surname is spelt on the title-page 'Shak-speare,' and Butter gives his full address 'at the signe of the Pide Bull neere St. *Austin's* Gate.' The title-page of the second quarto gives the surname as 'Shakespeare,' and Butter's name appears without any address. In the First Folio the play was printed from a text different to that followed in the quartos, and the Folio first supplied a satisfactory version of the play. Like its immediate predecessor, 'Macbeth,' the tragedy of 'King Lear' was mainly founded on Holinshed's 'Chronicle.' The leading theme had been dramatised as early as 1593, but Shakespeare's attention was no doubt directed to it by the publication of a crude dramatic adaptation of Holinshed's version in 1605 under the title of 'The True Chronicle History of King Leir and his three Daughters—Gonorill, Ragan, and Cordella.' Shakespeare did not adhere closely to his original. He invested the tale of Lear with a hopelessly tragic conclusion, and on it he grafted the equally distressing tale of Gloucester and his two sons, which he drew from Sidney's 'Arcadia.' Sidney tells the story in a chapter entitled 'The pitiful state and story of the Paphlagonian unkind king and his blind son; first related by the son, then by his blind father' (bk. ii. chap. 10, ed. 1590, 4to; pp. 132-3, ed. 1674, fol.) Hints for the speeches of Edgar when feigning madness were drawn from Harsnet's 'Declaration of Popish Impostures,' 1603. In every act of 'Lear' the pity and terror of which tragedy is capable reach their climax. Only one who has something of the Shakespearean gift of language could adequately characterise the scenes of agony—'the living martyrdom'—to which the fiendish ingratitude of his daughters condemns the abdicated king—'a very foolish, fond old man, fourscore and upward.' The elemental passions burst forth in his utterances with all the vehemence of the volcanic tempest which beats about his defenceless head in the scene on the heath. The brutal

blinding of Gloucester by Cornwall exceeds in horror any other situation that Shakespeare created, if we assume that he was not responsible for the like scenes of mutilation in 'Titus Andronicus.' At no point in 'Lear' is there any loosening of the tragic tension. The faithful half-witted lad who serves the king as his fool plays the jesting chorus on his master's fortunes in penetrating earnest and deepens the desolating pathos.

'Timon of Athens.'

Although Shakespeare's powers showed no sign of exhaustion, he reverted in the year following the colossal effort of 'Lear' (1607) to his earlier habit of collaboration, and with another's aid composed two dramas—'Timon of Athens' and 'Pericles.' An extant play on the subject of 'Timon of Athens' was composed in 1600, but there is nothing to show that Shakespeare and his coadjutor were acquainted with it. They doubtless derived a part of their story from Painter's 'Palace of Pleasure,' and from a short digression in Plutarch's 'Life of Marc Antony,' where Antony is described as emulating the life and example of 'Timon Misanthropos the Athenian.' The dramatists may, too, have known a dialogue of Lucian entitled 'Timon,' which Boiardo had previously converted into a comedy under the name of 'Il Timone.' Internal evidence makes it clear that Shakespeare's colleague was responsible for nearly the whole of acts III. and V. But the character of Timon himself and all the scenes which he dominates are from Shakespeare's pen. Timon is cast in the mould of Lear.

'Pericles.'

There seems some ground for the belief that Shakespeare's coadjutor in 'Timon' was George Wilkins, a writer of ill-developed dramatic power, who, in 'The Miseries of Enforced Marriage' (1607), first treated the story that afterwards served for the plot of 'The Yorkshire Tragedy.' At any rate, Wilkins may safely be credited with portions of 'Pericles,' a romantic play which can be referred to the same year as 'Timon.' Shakespeare contributed only acts III. and V. and parts of IV., which together form a self-contained whole, and do not combine satisfactorily with the remaining scenes. The presence of a third hand, of inferior merit to Wilkins, has been suspected, and to this collaborator (perhaps William Rowley, a professional reviser of plays who could show capacity on occasion) are best assigned the three scenes of purposeless coarseness which take place in or before a brothel (IV. II.,

v. and vi.) From so distributed a responsibility the piece naturally suffers. It lacks homogeneity, and the story is helped out by dumb shows and prologues before the acts. But a matured felicity of expression characterises Shakespeare's own contributions, narrating the romantic quest of Pericles for his daughter Marina, who was born in a shipwreck and then separated from him. At many points in the piece the dramatist anticipated his latest dramatic effects. The shipwreck is depicted (iv. i.) as impressively as in the 'Tempest,' and Marina and her mother Thaisa enjoy many experiences in common with Perdita and Hermione in the 'Winter's Tale.' The prologues, which were not by Shakespeare, were spoken by an actor representing the mediæval poet John Gower, who in the fourteenth century had versified Pericles's story in his 'Confessio Amantis' under the title of 'Apollonius of Tyre.' It is also found in a prose translation (from the French), which was printed in Lawrence Twyne's 'Patterne of Painfull Adventures' in 1576, and again in 1607. After the play was produced, George Wilkins, one of the alleged coadjutors, based on it a novel called 'The Painful Adventures of Pericles, Prynce of Tyre, being the True History of the Play of Pericles as it was lately presented by the worthy and ancient Poet, John Gower' (1608). The publisher Edward Blount, who subsequently took a chief part in the production of the First Folio, obtained a license for the publication of 'Pericles' on May 20, 1608. 'Pericles' was, however, actually published for the first time in a very mangled form by Henry Gosson, of Pater-noster Row, in 1609. The bombastic form of title shows that Shakespeare had no hand in the publication. The title-page runs: 'The late, And much admired Play, called Pericles, Prince of Tyre. With the true Relation of the whole Historie, adventures, and fortunes of the said Prince: As also, The no lesse strange, and worthy accidents, in the Birth and Life, of his Daughter Marina. As it hath been diuers and sundry times acted by his Maiesties seruants at the Globe on the Banck-side. By William Shakespeare. Imprinted at London for Henry Gosson, and are to be sold at the signe of the Sunne in Pater-noster row, 1609.' A second edition, without revision, followed within a year, and it was reprinted in 1611, 1619, 1630, and 1635. 'Pericles' was not included in Shakespeare's collected works till 1664.

'Antony
and Cleo-
patra.'

On the same day (May 20, 1608) that Edward Blount obtained his license for the issue of 'Pericles' he secured from the Stationers' Company a second license, by the authority of Sir George Buc, the licenser of plays, for the publication of a far more impressive piece of literature—a 'booke called "Anthony and Cleopatra."' No copy of this date is known, and once again the company probably hindered the publication. The play was first printed in the Folio of 1623. The source of the tragedy is the life of Antonius in North's 'Plutarch.' Shakespeare closely followed the historical narrative, and assimilated not merely its temper, but, in the first three acts, much of its phraseology. A few short scenes are original, but there is no detail in such a passage, for example, as Enobarbus's gorgeous description of the pageant of Cleopatra's voyage up the Cydnus to meet Antony (II. ii. 194 seq.), which is not to be matched in Plutarch. In the fourth and fifth acts Shakespeare's method changes and he expands his material with magnificent freedom. The whole theme is in his hands instinct with a dramatic grandeur which lifts into sublimity even Cleopatra's moral worthlessness and Antony's criminal infatuation. The terse and caustic comments which Antony's level-headed friend Enobarbus, in the rôle of chorus, passes on the action accentuate its significance. Into the smallest as into the greatest personages Shakespeare breathed all his vitalising fire. The 'happy valiancy' of the style, too—to use Coleridge's admirable phrase—sets the tragedy very near the zenith of Shakespeare's achievement, and while differentiating it from 'Macbeth,' 'Othello,' and 'Lear,' renders it a very formidable rival.

'Corio-
lanus.'

'Coriolanus' (first printed from a singularly bad text in 1623) similarly owes its origin to the biography of the hero in North's 'Plutarch,' although Shakespeare may have first met his story in Painter's 'Palace of Pleasure' (No. iv.) He again adhered to the text of Plutarch with the utmost literalness, and at times—even in the great crises of the action—repeated North's translation word for word. The whole of Coriolanus's great speech on offering his services to Aufidius, the Volscian general (IV. v. 71-107), which begins—

My name is Caius Marcius, who hath done
To thee particularly and to all the Volsces,
Great hurt and mischief; thereto witness may
My surname, Coriolanus

closely follows Coriolanus's speech in North's translation of Plutarch, which opens : 'I am Caius Martius, who hath done to thyself particularly, and to all the Volsces generally, great hurt and mischief, which I cannot deny for my surname of Coriolanus that I bear.' Similarly Volumnia's stirring appeal to her son and her son's proffer of submission, in act v. sc. iii. 94-193, reproduce with equal literalness North's rendering of Plutarch. 'If we held our peace, my son,' Volumnia begins in North, 'the state of our raiment would easily betray to thee what life we have led at home since thy exile and abode abroad ; but think now with thyself,' and so on. The first sentence of Shakespeare's speech runs :

Should we be silent and not speak, our raiment
And state of bodies would bewray what life
We have led since thy exile. Think with thyself . . .

But the humorous scenes in 'Coriolanus' are wholly of Shakespeare's invention, and the course of the narrative was at times slightly changed for purposes of dramatic effect. The metrical characteristics prove the play to have been written about the same period as 'Antony and Cleopatra,' probably in 1609. In its austere temper it contrasts at all points with its predecessor. The courageous self-reliance of Coriolanus's mother, Volumnia, is severely contrasted with the submissive gentleness of Virgilia, Coriolanus's wife. The hero falls a victim to no sensual flaw, but to unchecked pride of caste, and there is a searching irony in the emphasis laid on the ignoble temper of the rabble, who procure his overthrow. By way of foil, the speeches of Menenius give dignified expression to the maturest political wisdom. The dramatic interest throughout is as single and as unflinchingly sustained as in 'Othello.'

XIII

THE LATEST PLAYS

The latest plays.

IN 'Cymbeline,' 'The Winter's Tale,' and 'The Tempest,' the three latest plays that came from his unaided pen, Shakespeare dealt with romantic themes which all end happily, but he instilled into them a pathos which sets them in a category of their own apart alike from comedy and tragedy. The placidity of tone conspicuous in these three plays (none of which was published in his lifetime) has been often contrasted with the storm and stress of the great tragedies that preceded them. But the commonly accepted theory that traces in this change of tone a corresponding development in the author's own emotions ignores the objectivity of Shakespeare's dramatic work. All phases of feeling lay within the scope of his intuition, and the successive order in which he approached them bore no explicable relation to substantive incident in his private life or experience. In middle life, his temperament, like that of other men, acquired a larger measure of gravity and his thought took a profounder cast than characterised it in youth. The highest topics of tragedy were naturally more congenial to him, and were certain of a surer handling when he was nearing his fortieth birthday than at an earlier age. The serenity of meditative romance was more in harmony with the fifth decade of his years than with the second or third. But no more direct or definite connection can be discerned between the progressive stages of his work and the progressive stages of his life. To seek in his biography for a chain of events which should be calculated to stir in his own soul all or any of the tempestuous passions that animate his greatest plays is to under-estimate and to misapprehend the resistless might of his creative genius.

In 'Cymbeline' Shakespeare freely adapted a fragment of British history taken from Holinshed, interweaving with it

a story from Boccaccio's 'Decameron' (day 2, novel ix.) 'Cymbeline.' Ginevra, whose falsely suspected chastity is the theme of the Italian novel, corresponds to Shakespeare's Imogen. Her story is also told in the tract called 'Westward for Smelts,' which had already been laid under contribution by Shakespeare in the 'Merry Wives.' The by-plot of the banishment of the lord, Belarius, who in revenge for his expatriation kidnapped the king's young sons and brought them up with him in the recesses of the mountains, is Shakespeare's invention. Although most of the scenes are laid in Britain in the first century before the Christian era, there is no pretence of historical vraisemblance. With an almost ludicrous inappropriateness the British king's courtiers make merry with technical terms peculiar to Calvinistic theology, like 'grace' and 'election.' In 1. i. 136-7 Imogen is described as 'past grace' in the theological sense. In 1. ii. 30-31 the Second Lord remarks: 'If it be a sin to make a true election, she is damned.' The action, which, owing to the combination of three threads of narrative, is exceptionally varied and intricate, wholly belongs to the region of romance. On Imogen, who is the central figure of the play, Shakespeare lavished all the fascination of his genius. She is the crown and flower of his conception of tender and artless womanhood. Her husband Posthumus, her rejected lover Cloten, her would-be seducer Iachimo are contrasted with her and with each other with consummate ingenuity. The mountainous retreat in which Belarius and his fascinating boy-companions play their part has points of resemblance to the Forest of Arden in 'As You Like It;' but life throughout 'Cymbeline' is grimly earnest, and the mountains nurture little of the contemplative quiet which characterises existence in the Forest of Arden. The play contains the splendid lyric 'Fear no more the heat of the sun' (1v. ii. 258 seq.) The 'pitiful mummerly' of the vision of Posthumus (v. iv. 30 seq.) must have been supplied by another hand. Dr. Forman, the astrologer who kept notes of some of his experiences as a playgoer, saw 'Cymbeline' acted either in 1610 or 1611.

'A Winter's Tale' was seen by Dr. Forman at the 'A Winter's Tale.'
Globe on May 15, 1611, and it appears to have been acted at court on November 5 following. Camillo's reflections (1. ii. 358) on the ruin that attends those who 'struck anointed kings' have been regarded, not quite conclusively,

as specially designed to gratify James I. The piece is based upon Greene's popular romance which was called 'Pandosto' in the first edition of 1588, and in numerous later editions, but was ultimately in 1648 re-christened 'Dorastus and Fawnia.' Shakespeare followed Greene, his early foe, in allotting a seashore to Bohemia—an error over which Ben Jonson and many later critics have made merry. A few lines were obviously drawn from that story of Boccaccio with which Shakespeare had dealt just before in 'Cymbeline.' But Shakespeare created the high-spirited Paulina and the thievish pedlar Autolycus, whose seductive roguery has become proverbial, and he invented the reconciliation of Leontes, the irrationally jealous husband, with Hermione, his wife, whose dignified resignation and forbearance lend the story its intense pathos. In the boy Mamilius the poet depicted childhood in its most attractive guise, while the courtship of Florizel and Perdita is the perfection of gentle romance. The freshness of the pastoral incident surpasses that of all Shakespeare's presentations of country life.

The
'tempest.'

'The Tempest' was probably the latest drama that Shakespeare completed. In the summer of 1609 a fleet bound for Virginia, under the command of Sir George Somers, was overtaken by a storm off the West Indies, and the admiral's ship, the 'Sea-Venture,' was driven on the coast of the hitherto unknown Bermuda Isles. There they remained ten months, pleasurably impressed by the mild beauty of the climate, but sorely tried by the hogs which overrun the island and by mysterious noises which led them to imagine that spirits and devils had made the island their home. Somers and his men were given up for lost, but they escaped from Bermuda in two boats of cedar to Virginia in May 1610, and the news of their adventures and of their safety was carried to England by some of the seamen in September 1610. The sailors' arrival created vast public excitement in London. At least five accounts were soon published of the shipwreck and of the mysterious island, previously uninhabited by man, which had proved the salvation of the expedition. 'A Discovery of the Bermudas, otherwise called the Ile of Divels,' written by Sylvester Jourdain or Jourdan, one of the survivors, appeared as early as October. A second pamphlet describing the disaster was issued by the Council of the Virginia Company in December, and a third by one of the leaders of the expedition, Sir

Thomas Gates. Shakespeare, who mentions the 'still vexed Bermoothes' (i. i. 229), incorporated in 'The Tempest' many hints from Jourdain, Gates, and the other pamphleteers. The references to the gentle climate of the island on which Prospero is cast away, and to the spirits and devils that infested it, seem to render its identification with the newly discovered Bermudas unquestionable. But Shakespeare incorporated the result of study of other books of travel. The name of the god Setebos whom Caliban worships is drawn from Eden's translation of Magellan's 'Voyage to the South Pole' (in the 'Historie of Travell,' 1577), where the giants of Patagonia are described as worshipping a 'great devil they call Setebos.' No source for the complete plot has been discovered, but the German writer, Jacob Ayrer, who died in 1605, dramatised a somewhat similar story in 'Die schöne Sidea,' where the adventures of Prospero, Ferdinand, Ariel, and Miranda are roughly anticipated. English actors were performing at Nuremberg, where Ayrer lived, in 1604 and 1606, and may have brought reports of the piece to Shakespeare. Or perhaps both English and German plays had a common origin in some novel that has not yet been traced. Gonzalo's description of an ideal commonwealth (ii. i. 147 seq.) is derived from Florio's translation of Montaigne's essays (1603), while into Prospero's great speech renouncing his practice of magical art (v. i. 33-57) Shakespeare wrought reminiscences of Golding's translation of Medea's invocation in Ovid's 'Metamorphoses' (vii. 197-206). Golding's rendering of Ovid had been one of Shakespeare's best-loved books in youth.

A highly ingenious theory, first suggested by Tieck, represents 'The Tempest' (which, excepting 'The Comedy of Errors,' is the shortest of Shakespeare's plays) as a masque written to celebrate the marriage of Princess Elizabeth (like Miranda, an island-princess) with the Elector Frederick. This marriage took place on February 14, 1612-13, and 'The Tempest' formed one of a series of nineteen plays which were performed at the nuptial festivities in May 1613. But none of the other plays produced seem to have been new; they were all apparently chosen because they were established favourites at Court and on the public stage, and neither in subject-matter nor language bore obviously specific relation to the joyous occasion. But 1613 is, in

fact, on more substantial ground far too late a date to which to assign the composition of 'The Tempest.' According to information which was accessible to Malone, the play had 'a being and a name' in the autumn of 1611, and was no doubt written some months before. The plot, which revolves about the forcible expulsion of a ruler from his dominions, and his daughter's wooing by the son of the usurper's chief ally, is, moreover, hardly one that a shrewd playwright would deliberately choose as the setting of an official epithalamium in honour of the daughter of a monarch so sensitive about his title to the crown as James I.

In the theatre and at court the early representations of 'The Tempest' evoked unmeasured applause. The success owed something to the beautiful lyrics which were dispersed through the play and had been set to music by Robert Johnson, a lutenist in high repute. Harmonised scores of Johnson's airs for the songs 'Full Fathom Five' and 'Where the Bee sucks,' are preserved in Wilson's 'Cheerful Ayres or Ballads set for three voices,' 1660. Like its predecessor 'A Winter's Tale,' 'The Tempest' long maintained its first popularity in the theatre, and the vogue of the two pieces drew a passing sneer from Ben Jonson. In the Induction to his 'Bartholomew Fair,' first acted in 1614, he wrote: 'If there be never a servant-monster in the Fair, who can help it he [i.e. the author] says? nor a nest of Antics. He is loth to make nature afraid in his plays like those that beget Tales, Tempests, and such like Drolleries.' The 'servant-monster' was an obvious allusion to Caliban, and 'the nest of Antics' was a glance at the satyrs who figure in the sheepshearing feast in 'A Winter's Tale.'

Nowhere did Shakespeare give rein to his imagination with more imposing effect than in 'The Tempest.' As in 'Midsummer Night's Dream,' magical or supernatural agencies are the mainsprings of the plot. But the tone is marked at all points by a solemnity and profundity of thought and sentiment which are lacking in the early comedy. The serious atmosphere has led critics, without much reason, to detect in the scheme of 'The Tempest' something more than the irresponsible play of poetic fancy. Many of the characters have been represented as the outcome of speculation respecting the least soluble problems of human existence. Little reliance should be placed on such interpretations. The creation of Miranda is the apotheosis in

Fanciful
interpretations of
'The
Tempest.'

literature of tender, ingenuous girlhood unsophisticated by social intercourse, but Shakespeare had already sketched the outlines of the portrait in Marina and Perdita, the youthful heroines respectively of 'Pericles' and 'A Winter's Tale,' and these two characters were directly developed from romantic stories of girl-princesses, cast by misfortune on the mercies of nature, to which Shakespeare had recourse for the plots of the two plays. It is by accident, and not by design, that in Ariel appear to be discernible the capabilities of human intellect when detached from physical attributes. Ariel belongs to the same world as Puck, although he is delineated in the severer colours that were habitual to Shakespeare's fully developed art. Caliban—Ariel's anti-thesis—did not owe his existence to any conscious endeavour on Shakespeare's part to typify human nature before the evolution of moral sentiment. Caliban is an imaginary portrait, conceived with matchless vigour and vividness, of the aboriginal savage of the New World, descriptions of whom abounded in contemporary travellers' speech and writings, and universally excited the liveliest curiosity. When Shakespeare wrote 'Troilus and Cressida' he had formed some conception of a character of the Caliban type; Thersites says of Ajax (III. iii. 264), 'He's grown a very land-fish, languageless, a monster.' In Prospero, the guiding providence of the romance of 'The Tempest,' who resigns his magic power in the closing scene, traces have been sought of the lineaments of the dramatist himself, who in this play probably bade farewell to the enchanted work of his life. Prospero is in the story a scholar-prince of rare intellectual attainments, whose engrossing study of the mysteries of science has given him command of the forces of nature. His magnanimous renunciation of his magical faculty as soon as by its exercise he has restored his shattered fortunes is in perfect accord with the general conception of his just and philosophical temper. Any other justification of his final act is superfluous.

While there is every indication that in 1611 Shakespeare abandoned dramatic composition, there seems little doubt that he left with the manager of his company unfinished drafts of more than one play which others were summoned at a later date to complete. His place at the head of the active dramatists was at once filled by John Fletcher, and Fletcher, with some aid possibly from his friend Philip

Unfin-
ished
plays.

The lost
play of
Car-
lenio.'

Massinger, undertook the working up of Shakespeare's unfinished sketches. On September 9, 1653, the publisher Humphrey Moseley obtained a license for the publication of a play which he described as 'History of Cardenio, by Fletcher and Shakespeare.' This was probably identical with the lost play, 'Cardenno,' or 'Cardenna,' which was twice acted at Court by Shakespeare's company in 1613—in May during the Princess Elizabeth's marriage festivities, and on June 8 before the Duke of Savoy's ambassador. Moseley, whose description may have been fraudulent, failed to publish the piece, and nothing is otherwise known of it with certainty; but it was no doubt a dramatic version of the adventures of the lovelorn Cardenio which are related in the first part of 'Don Quixote' (ch. xxiii.—xxxvii.) Cervantes's amorous story, which first appeared in English in Thomas Shelton's translation in 1612, offers much incident in Fletcher's vein. When Lewis Theobald, the Shakespearean critic, brought out his 'Double Falsehood, or the Distrest Lovers,' in 1727, he mysteriously represented that the play was based on an unfinished and unpublished draft of a play by Shakespeare. The story of Theobald's piece is the story of Cardenio, although the characters are renamed. There is nothing in the play as published by Theobald to suggest Shakespeare's hand. Dyce thought he detected in it traces of Shirley's workmanship, but it was possibly Theobald's unaided invention. Theobald doubtless took advantage of a tradition that Shakespeare and Fletcher had combined to dramatise the Cervantic theme.

'Two
Noble
Kins-
men.'

Two other pieces, 'The Two Noble Kinsmen' and 'Henry VIII,' which are attributed to a similar partnership, survive. 'The Two Noble Kinsmen' was first printed in 1634, and was written, according to the title-page, 'by the memorable worthies of their time, Mr. John Fletcher and Mr. William Shakespeare, gentlemen.' It was included in the folio edition of Beaumont and Fletcher's works of 1679. On grounds alike of æsthetic criticism and metrical tests, a substantial portion of the play was assigned to Shakespeare by Charles Lamb, Coleridge, and Dyce. The last included it in his edition of Shakespeare. Coleridge detected Shakespeare's hand in act I., act II. sc. i., and act III. sc. i. and ii. In addition to those scenes, act IV. sc. iii. and act V. (except sc. ii.) were subsequently placed to his credit. Some recent critics assign much of the alleged Shakespearean work to

Massinger, and they narrow Shakespeare's contribution to the first scene (with the opening song, 'Roses their sharp spines being gone') and act v. sc. i. and iv. An exact partition is impossible, but frequent signs of Shakespeare's workmanship are unmistakable. All the passages for which Shakespeare can on any showing be held responsible develop the main plot, which is drawn from Chaucer's 'Knight's Tale' of Palamon and Arcite, and seems to have been twice dramatised previously. A lost play, 'Palæmon and Arcyte,' by Richard Edwardes, was acted at court in 1566, and a second piece, called 'Palamon and Arsett' (also lost), was purchased by Henslowe in 1594. The non-Shakespearean residue of 'The Two Noble Kinsmen' is disfigured by indecency and triviality, and is of no literary value.

A like problem is presented by 'Henry VIII.' The play 'Henry VIII.' was nearly associated with the final scene in the history of that theatre which was identified with the triumphs of Shakespeare's career. 'Henry VIII' was in course of performance at the Globe Theatre on June 29, 1613, when the firing of some cannon incidental to the performance set fire to the playhouse, which was burned down. The theatre was rebuilt next year, but the new fabric never acquired the fame of the old. Sir Henry Wotton, describing the disaster on July 2, entitled the piece that was in process of representation at the time as 'All is True representing some principal pieces in the Reign of Henry VIII.' Wotton adds 'that the piece was set forth with many extraordinary circumstances of Pomp and Majesty, even to the matting of the Stage; the Knights of the Order, with their Georges and Garters, the Guards with their embroidered Coats, and the like: sufficient in truth within a while to make greatness very familiar, if not ridiculous. Now King *Henry* making a Masque at the Cardinal *Wolsey's* House, and certain Can[n]ons being shot off at his entry, some of the paper or other stuff wherewith one of them was stopped, did light on the Thatch, where being thought at first but an idle smoak, and their eyes more attentive to the show, it kindled inwardly, and ran round like a train, consuming within less than an hour the whole House to the very grounds. This was the fatal period of that vertuous fabrique; wherein yet nothing did perish, but wood and straw and a few forsaken cloaks; only one man had his breeches set on fire,

Burning of
the Globe
Theatre,
June 29,
1613.

that would perhaps have broyled him, if he had not by the benefit of a provident wit put it out with bottle[d] ale.'

The play of 'Henry VIII' which is commonly allotted to Shakespeare is loosely constructed, and the last act ill coheres with its predecessors. The whole resembles an 'historical masque.' It was first printed in the First Folio of Shakespeare's works in 1623, but shows traces of more hands than one. The three chief characters—the king, Queen Katharine of Arragon, and Cardinal Wolsey—bear clear marks of Shakespeare's best workmanship; but only act I. sc. i., act II. sc. iii. and iv. (Katharine's trial), act III. sc. ii. (except ll. 204-460), act v. sc. i., can on either æsthetic or metrical grounds be confidently assigned to him. These portions may, according to their metrical characteristics, be dated, like the 'Winter's Tale,' about 1611. There are good grounds for assigning nearly all the remaining thirteen scenes to the pen of Fletcher, with occasional aid from Massinger. Wolsey's familiar farewell to Cromwell (III. ii. 204-460) is the only passage the authorship of which excites really grave embarrassment. It recalls at every point the style of Fletcher, and nowhere that of Shakespeare. But the Fletcherian style, as it is here displayed, is invested with a greatness that is not matched elsewhere in Fletcher's work. That Fletcher should have exhibited such faculty once and once only is barely credible, and we are driven to the alternative conclusion that the noble valediction was by Shakespeare, who in it gave proof of his versatility by echoing in a glorified key the habitual strain of Fletcher, his colleague and virtual successor. James Spedding's theory that Fletcher hastily completed Shakespeare's unfinished draft for the special purpose of enabling the company to celebrate the marriage of Princess Elizabeth and the Elector Palatine, which took place on February 14, 1612-13, seems fanciful. During May 1613, according to an extant list, nineteen plays were produced at court in honour of the event, but 'Henry VIII' is not among them. The conjecture that Massinger and Fletcher alone collaborated in 'Henry VIII' (to the exclusion of Shakespeare altogether) does not deserve serious consideration.

XIV

THE CLOSE OF LIFE

THE concluding years of Shakespeare's life (1611-1616) were mainly passed at Stratford. It is probable that in 1611 he disposed of his shares in the Globe and Blackfriars theatres. He owned none at the date of his death. But until 1614 he paid frequent visits to London, where friends in sympathy with his work were alone to be found. His plays continued to form the staple of court performances. In May 1613, during the Princess Elizabeth's marriage festivities, Heming, Shakespeare's former colleague, produced at Whitehall no fewer than seven of his plays, viz. 'Much Ado,' 'Tempest,' 'Winter's Tale,' 'Sir John Falstaff' (i.e. 'Merry Wives'), 'Othello,' 'Julius Cæsar,' and 'Hotspur' (doubtless '1 Henry IV'). Of his actor-friends, one of the chief, Augustine Phillips, had died in 1605, leaving by will 'to my fellowe, William Shakespeare, a thirty-shillings piece of gold.' With Burbage, Heming, and Condell his relations remained close to the end. Burbage, according to a poetic elegy, made his reputation by creating the leading parts in Shakespeare's greatest tragedies. Hamlet, Othello, and Lear were rôles in which he gained especial renown. But Burbage and Shakespeare were popularly credited with co-operation in less solemn enterprises. They were reputed to be companions in many sportive adventures. The sole anecdote of Shakespeare that is positively known to have been recorded in his lifetime relates that Burbage, when playing Richard III, agreed with a lady in the audience to visit her after the performance; Shakespeare, overhearing the conversation, anticipated the actor's visit, and met Burbage on his arrival with the quip that 'William the Conqueror was before Richard the Third.'

Such gossip possibly deserves little more acceptance than the later story, in the same key, which credits Shake-

Plays at
court in
1613.

Actor-
friends.

speare with the paternity of Sir William D'Avenant. The latter was baptised at Oxford on March 3, 1605, as the son of John D'Avenant, the landlord of the Crown Inn, where Shakespeare lodged in his journeys to and from Stratford. The story of Shakespeare's parental relation to D'Avenant was long current in Oxford, and was at times complacently accepted by the reputed son. Shakespeare is known to have been a welcome guest at John D'Avenant's house, and another son, Robert, boasted of the kindly notice which the poet took of him as a child. It is safer to adopt the less compromising version which makes Shakespeare the godfather of the boy William instead of his father. But the antiquity and persistence of the scandal belie the assumption that Shakespeare was known to his contemporaries as a man of scrupulous virtue. Ben Jonson and Drayton—the latter a Warwickshire man—seem to have been Shakespeare's closest literary friends in his latest years.

Final settlement at Stratford.

At Stratford, in the words of Nicholas Rowe, 'the latter part of Shakespeare's life was spent, as all men of good sense will wish theirs may be, in ease, retirement, and the conversation of his friends.' As a resident in the town, he took a full share of social and civic responsibilities. On October 16, 1608, he stood chief godfather to William, son of Henry Walker, a mercer and alderman. On September 11, 1611, when he had finally settled in New Place, his name appeared in the margin of a folio page of donors (including all the principal inhabitants of Stratford) to a fund that was raised 'towards the charge of prosecuting the bill in Parliament for the better repair of the highways.'

Domestic affairs.

Meanwhile his own domestic affairs engaged some of his attention. Of his two surviving children—both daughters—the eldest, Susanna, had married, on June 5, 1607, John Hall (1575-1635), a rising physician of puritan leanings, and in the following February there was born the poet's only granddaughter, Elizabeth Hall. On September 9, 1608, the poet's mother was buried in the parish church, and on February 4, 1613, his third brother, Richard. On July 15, 1613, Mrs. Hall preferred, with her father's assistance, a charge of slander against one Lane in the ecclesiastical court at Worcester; the defendant, who had apparently charged the lady with illicit relations with one Ralph Smith, did not appear, and was excommunicated.

In the same year (1613), when on a short visit to

London, Shakespeare invested a small sum of money in a new property. This was his last investment in real estate. He then purchased a house, the ground-floor of which was a haberdasher's shop, with a yard attached. It was situated within six hundred feet of the Blackfriars Theatre—on the west side of St. Andrew's Hill, formerly termed Puddle Hill or Puddle Dock Hill, in the near neighbourhood of what is now known as Ireland Yard. The former owner, Henry Walker, a musician, had bought the property for 100*l.* in 1604. Shakespeare in 1613 agreed to pay him 140*l.* The deeds of conveyance bear the date of March 10 in that year. Next day, on March 11, Shakespeare executed another deed (now in the British Museum) which stipulated that 60*l.* of the purchase-money was to remain on mortgage until the following Michaelmas. The money was unpaid at Shakespeare's death. In both purchase-deed and mortgage-deed Shakespeare's signature was witnessed by (among others) Henry Lawrence, 'servant' or clerk to Robert Andrewes, the scrivener who drew the deeds, and Lawrence's seal, bearing his initials 'H. L.,' was stamped in each case on the parchment-tag, across the head of which Shakespeare wrote his name. In all three documents—the two indentures and the mortgage-deed—Shakespeare is described as 'of Stratford-on Avon, in the Countie of Warwick, Gentleman.' There is no reason to suppose that he acquired the house for his own residence. He at once leased the property to John Robinson, already a resident in the neighbourhood.

Purchase of a house in Blackfriars.

With puritans and puritanism Shakespeare was not in sympathy. His references to puritans in the plays of his middle and late life are so uniformly discourteous that they must be judged to reflect his personal feeling. The discussion between Maria and Sir Andrew Aguecheek regarding Malvolio's character in 'Twelfth Night' (II. iii. 153 et seq.) runs :

MARIA. Marry, sir, sometimes he is a kind of puritan.

SIR ANDREW. O! if I thought that, I'd beat him like a dog.

SIR TOBY. What, for being a puritan? thy exquisite reason, dear knight.

SIR ANDREW. I have no exquisite reason for 't, but I have reason good enough.

In 'Winter's Tale' (IV. iii. 46) the Clown, after making contemptuous references to the character of the shearers, remarks that there is 'but one puritan amongst them, and he

sings psalms to hornpipes.' Shakespeare could hardly therefore have viewed with unvarying composure the steady progress that puritanism was making among his fellow-townsmen. The town council of Stratford-on-Avon, whose meeting-chamber almost overlooked Shakespeare's residence of New Place, gave curious proof of their puritanic suspicion of the drama on February 7, 1612, when they passed a resolution that plays were unlawful and 'the sufferance of them against the orders heretofore made and against the example of other well-governed cities and boroughs,' and the council was therefore 'content,' the resolution ran, that 'the penalty of xs. imposed [on players heretofore] be x*li*, henceforward.' Nevertheless a preacher, doubtless of puritan proclivities, was entertained at Shakespeare's residence, New Place, after delivering a sermon in the spring of 1614. The incident might serve to illustrate Shakespeare's characteristic placability, but his son-in-law Hall, who avowed sympathy with puritanism, was probably in the main responsible for the civility.

In July John Combe, a rich inhabitant of Stratford, died and left 5*l*. to Shakespeare. The legend that Shakespeare alienated him by composing some doggerel on his practice of lending money at ten or twelve per cent. seems apocryphal, although it is quoted by Aubrey and accepted by Rowe. The lines as quoted by Aubrey ('Lives,' ed. Clark, ii. 226) run :

Ten-in-the-hundred the Devil allows,
But Combe will have twelve he swears and he vows ;
If any man ask, who lies in this tomb ?
Oh ! ho ! quoth the Devil, 'tis my John-a-Combe.

Rowe's version opens somewhat differently :

Ten-in-the-hundred lies here ingrav'd.
'Tis a hundred to ten, his soul is not sav'd.

Shakespeare's responsibility for the jingle is confuted by the fact that in one form or another it was widely familiar in Shakespeare's lifetime, but was never ascribed to him. The first couplet in Rowe's version was printed in the epigrams by H[enry] P[arrot] in 1608, and again in Camden's 'Remaines' in 1614. The whole first appeared in Richard Brathwaite's 'Remains' in 1618 under the heading: 'Upon one John Combe of Stratford upon

Aven, a notable Usurer, fastened upon a Tombe that he had Caused to be built in his Life Time.'

Combe's death involved Shakespeare more conspicuously than before in civic affairs. Combe's heir William no sooner succeeded to his father's lands than he, with a neighbouring owner, Arthur Mannering, steward of Lord-chancellor Ellesmere (who was ex-officio lord of the manor), attempted to enclose the common fields, which belonged to the corporation of Stratford, about his estate at Welcombe. The corporation resolved to offer the scheme a stout resistance. Shakespeare had a twofold interest in the matter by virtue of his owning the freehold of 106 acres at Welcombe and Old Stratford, and as joint owner—now with Thomas Greene, the town clerk—of the tithes of Old Stratford, Welcombe, and Bishopton. His interest in his freeholds could not have been prejudicially affected, but his interest in the tithes might be depreciated by the proposed enclosure. Shakespeare consequently joined with his fellow-owner Greene in obtaining from Combe's agent Replingham in October 1614 a deed indemnifying both against any injury they might suffer from the enclosure. But having thus secured himself against all possible loss, Shakespeare threw his influence into Combe's scale. In November 1614 he was on a last visit to London, and Greene, whose official position as town clerk compelled him to support the corporation in defiance of his private interests, visited him there to discuss the position of affairs. On December 23, 1614, the corporation in formal meeting drew up a letter to Shakespeare imploring him to aid them. Greene himself sent to the dramatist 'a note of inconveniences [to the corporation that] would happen by the enclosure.' But although an ambiguous entry of a later date (September 1615) in the few extant pages of Greene's ungrammatical diary has been unjustifiably tortured into an expression of disgust on Shakespeare's part at Combe's conduct, it is plain that, in the spirit of his agreement with Combe's agent, he continued to lend Combe his countenance. Happily Combe's efforts failed, and the common lands remain unenclosed.

At the beginning of 1616 Shakespeare's health was failing. He directed Francis Collins, a solicitor of Warwick, to draft his will, but though it was prepared for signature on January 25, it was for the time laid aside. On February 10, 1616, Shakespeare's younger daughter, Judith, married,

Attempt to enclose the Stratford common fields.

at Stratford parish church, Thomas Quiney, four years her junior, a son of an old friend of the poet. The ceremony took place apparently without public asking of the banns and before a license was procured. The irregularity led to the summons of the bride and bridegroom to the ecclesiastical court at Worcester and the imposition of a fine. According to the testimony of John Ward, the vicar, Shakespeare entertained at New Place his two friends, Michael Drayton and Ben Jonson, in this same spring of 1616, and 'had a merry meeting,' but 'itt seems drank too hard, for Shakespeare died of a feavour there contracted.' A popular local legend, which was not recorded till 1762, credited Shakespeare with engaging at an earlier date in a prolonged and violent drinking bout at Bidford, a neighbouring village, but his achievements as a hard drinker may be dismissed as unproven. The cause of his death is undetermined, but probably his illness seemed likely to take a fatal turn in March, when he revised and signed the will that had been drafted in the previous January. On Tuesday, April 23, he died at the age of fifty-two. (The date is in the old style, and is equivalent to May 3 in the new; the great Spanish author Cervantes, whose death is often described as simultaneous, died at Madrid ten days earlier—on April 13 in the old style, or April 23, 1616, in the new.) On Thursday, April 25 (O.S.), the poet was buried inside Stratford Church, near the northern wall of the chancel, in which, as part-owner of the tithes, and consequently one of the lay-rectors, he had a right of interment. Hard by was the charnel-house, where bones dug up from the churchyard were deposited. Over the poet's grave were inscribed the lines:

GOOD FREND FOR IESVS SAKE FORBEARE,
 TO DIGG HE DVST ENCLOSED HEARE :
 BLESE BE ¶ MAN ¶ SPARES THES STONES,
 AND CVRST BE HE ¶ MOVES MY BONES.

According to one William Hall, who described a visit to Stratford in 1694, these verses were penned by Shakespeare to suit the capacity of clerks and sextons, for the most part a very ignorant set of people.' Had this curse not threatened them, Hall proceeds, the sexton would not have hesitated in course of time to remove Shakespeare's dust to

'the bone-house.' As it was, the grave was made seventeen feet deep, and was never opened, even to receive his wife, although she expressed a desire to be buried with her husband.

Shakespeare's will, the first draft of which was drawn up before January 25, 1616, received many interlineations and erasures before it was signed in the ensuing March. Francis Collins, the solicitor of Warwick, and Thomas Russell, 'esquier,' of Stratford, were the overseers; it was proved by John Hall, the poet's son-in-law and joint-executor with Mrs. Hall, in London on June 22 following. The religious exordium is in conventional phraseology, and gives no clue to Shakespeare's personal religious opinions. What those opinions were, we have neither the means nor the warrant for discussing. But while it is possible to quote from the plays many contemptuous references to the puritans and their doctrines, we may dismiss as idle gossip Davies's irresponsible report that 'he dyed a papist.' The name of Shakespeare's wife was omitted from the original draft of the will, but by an interlineation in the final draft she received his second best bed with its furniture. No other bequest was made her. Several wills of the period have been discovered in which a bedstead or other article of household furniture formed part of a wife's inheritance, but none except Shakespeare's is forthcoming in which a bed forms the sole bequest. At the same time the precision with which Shakespeare's will accounts for and assigns to other legatees every known item of his property refutes the conjecture that he had set aside any portion of it under a previous settlement or jointure with a view to making independent provision for his wife. Her right to a widow's dower—i.e. to a third share for life in freehold estate—was not subject to testamentary disposition, but Shakespeare had taken steps to prevent her from benefiting—at any rate to the full extent—by that legal arrangement. He had barred her dower in the case of his latest purchase of freehold estate, viz. the house at Blackfriars. Such procedure is pretty conclusive proof that he had the intention of excluding her from the enjoyment of his possessions after his death. But, however plausible the theory that his relations with her were from first to last wanting in sympathy, it is improbable that either the slender mention of her in the will or the barring of her dower was designed by Shakespeare.

The will.

Bequest
to his
wife.

to make public his indifference or dislike. Local tradition subsequently credited her with a wish to be buried in his grave; and her epitaph proves that she inspired her daughters with genuine affection. Probably her ignorance of affairs and the infirmities of age (she was past sixty) combined to unfit her in the poet's eyes for the control of property, and, as an act of ordinary prudence, he committed her to the care of his elder daughter, who inherited, according to such information as is accessible, some of his own shrewdness, and had a capable adviser in her husband.

His
heiress.

This elder daughter, Susanna Hall, was, according to the will, to become mistress of New Place, and practically of all the poet's estate. She received (with remainder to her issue in strict entail) New Place, all the land, barns, and gardens at and near Stratford (except the tenement in Chapel Lane), and the house in Blackfriars, London, while she and her husband were appointed executors and residuary legatees, with full rights over nearly all the poet's household furniture and personal belongings. To their only child and the testator's granddaughter, or 'niece,' Elizabeth Hall, was bequeathed the poet's plate, with the exception of his broad silver and gilt bowl, which was reserved for his younger daughter, Judith. To his younger daughter he also left, with the tenement in Chapel Lane (in remainder to the elder daughter), 150*l.* in money, of which 100*l.*, her marriage portion, was to be paid within a year, and another 150*l.* to be paid to her if alive three years after the date of the will. To the poet's sister, Joan Hart, whose husband, William Hart, predeceased the testator by only six days, he left, besides a contingent reversionary interest in Judith's pecuniary legacy, his wearing apparel, 20*l.* in money, a life interest in the Henley Street property, with 5*l.* for each of her three sons, William, Thomas, and Michael. To the poor of Stratford he gave 10*l.*, and to Mr. Thomas Combe (apparently a brother of William, of the enclosure controversy) his sword. To each of his Stratford friends, Hamlett Sadler, William Reynoldes, Anthony Nash, and John Nash, and to each of his 'fellows' (i.e. theatrical colleagues in London), John Heming, Richard Burbage, and Henry Condell, he left xxv*s.* viii*d.*, with which to buy memorial rings. His godson, William Walker, received 'xx' shillings in gold.

Legacies
to friends.

Before 1623 an elaborate monument, by a London sculptor of Dutch birth, Gerard Johnson, was erected to Shakespeare's memory in the chancel of the parish church. As early as 1623, Leonard Digges, in commendatory verses before the First Folio, wrote that Shakespeare's works would be alive

The
tomb.

[When] Time dissolves thy Stratford monument.

The tomb includes a half-length bust, depicting the dramatist on the point of writing. The fingers of the right hand are disposed as if holding a pen, and under the left hand lies a quarto sheet of paper. The inscription, which was apparently by a London friend, runs :

Judicio Pylium, genio Socratem, arte Maronem,
Terra tegit, populus mæret, Olympus habet.

Stay passenger, why goest thou by so fast ?
Read, if thou canst, whom envious death hath plast
Within this monument ; Shakespeare with whome
Quick nature dide ; whose name doth deck ys tombe
Far more than cost ; sith all yt he hath writt
Leaves living art but page to serve his witt.
Obiit ano. doi 1616 Ætatis 53 Die 23 Ap.

At the opening of Shakespeare's career Chettle wrote of his 'civil demeanour' and of the reports of 'his uprightness of dealing which argues his honesty.' In 1601—when near the zenith of his fame—he was apostrophised as 'sweet Master Shakespeare' in the play of 'The Return from Parnassus,' and that adjective was long after associated with his name. In 1604 one Anthony Scoloker in a poem called 'Daiphantus' bestowed on him the epithet 'friendly.' After the close of his career Jonson wrote of him : 'I loved the man and do honour his memory, on this side idolatry as much as any. He was, indeed, honest and of an open and free nature.' John Webster, the dramatist, made vague reference in the address before his 'White Divil' in 1612 to 'the right happy and copious industry of M. Shakespeare, M. Decker, and M. Heywood.' No other contemporary left on record any definite impression of Shakespeare's personal character, and the 'Sonnets,' which alone of his literary work can be held to throw any illumination on a personal trait, mainly reveal him in the light of one who was willing to conform to all the conventional methods in vogue for strengthening the bonds between a poet and a

Personal
character.

great patron. His literary practices and aims were those of contemporary men of letters, and the difference in the quality of his work and theirs was due not to conscious endeavour on his part to act otherwise than they, but to the magic and involuntary working of his genius. He seemed unconscious of his marvellous superiority to his professional comrades. The references in his will to his fellow-actors, and the spirit in which (as they announce in the First Folio) they approached the task of collecting his works after his death, corroborate the description of him as a sympathetic friend of gentle, unassuming mien. The later traditions brought together by Aubrey depict him as 'very good company, and of a very ready and pleasant smooth wit,' and there is much in other early posthumous references to suggest a genial, if not a convivial, temperament, linked to a quiet turn for good-humoured satire. But Bohemian ideals and modes of life had no genuine attraction for Shakespeare. His extant work attests his 'copious' and continuous industry, and with his literary power and sociability there clearly went the shrewd capacity of a man of business. Pope had just warrant for the surmise that he

For gain not glory winged his roving flight,
And grew immortal in his own despite.

His literary attainments and successes were chiefly valued as serving the prosaic end of providing permanently for himself and his daughters. His highest ambition was to restore among his fellow-townsmen the family repute which his father's misfortunes had imperilled. Ideals so homely are reckoned rare among poets, but Chaucer and Sir Walter Scott, among writers of exalted genius, vie with Shakespeare in the sobriety of their personal aims and in the sanity of their mental attitude towards life's ordinary incidents.

XV

SURVIVORS AND DESCENDANTS

SHAKESPEARE'S widow died on August 6, 1623, at the age of sixty-seven, and was buried near her husband inside the chancel two days later. Some affectionately phrased Latin elegiacs—doubtless from Dr. Hall's pen—were inscribed on a brass plate fastened to the stone above her grave. The words run : 'Heere lyeth interred the bodye of Anne, wife of Mr. William Shakespeare, who depected. this life the 6th day of August, 1623, being of the age of 67 yeares.

The survivors.

Vbera, tu, mater, tu lac vitamq. dedisti,
 Vae mihi ; pro tanto munere saxa dabo !
 Quam mallem, amoueat lapidem bonus Angel[us] ore,
 Exeat ut Christi Corpus, imago tua.
 Sed nil vota valent ; venias cito, Christe ; resurget,
 Clausa licet tumulo, mater, et astra petet.'

The younger daughter, Judith, resided with her husband, Thomas Quiney, at The Cage, a house at the Bridge Street corner of High Street, which he leased of the Corporation from 1616 till 1652. There he carried on the trade of a vintner, and took part in municipal affairs, acting as a councillor from 1617 and as chamberlain in 1621-2 and 1622-3 ; but after 1630 his affairs grew embarrassed, and he left Stratford late in 1652 for London, where he seems to have died a few months later. Of his three sons by Judith, the eldest, Shakespeare (baptised on November 23, 1616), was buried in Stratford Churchyard on May 8, 1617 ; the second son, Richard (baptised on February 9, 1617-18), was buried on January 28, 1638-9 ; and the third son, Thomas (baptised on January 23, 1619-20), was buried on February 26, 1638-9. Judith survived her husband, sons, and sister, dying at Stratford on February 9, 1661-2, in her seventy-seventh year.

Mistress Judith Quiney.

The poet's elder daughter, Mrs. Susanna Hall, resided at

Mistress
Susanna
Hall.

New Place till her death. Her sister Judith alienated to her the Chapel Place tenement before 1633, but that, with the interest in the Stratford tithes, she soon disposed of. Her husband, Dr. John Hall, died on November 25, 1635. In 1642 James Cooke, a surgeon in attendance on some royalist troops stationed at Stratford, visited Mrs. Hall and examined manuscripts in her possession, but they were apparently of her husband's, not of her father's, composition. From July 11 to 13, 1643, Queen Henrietta Maria, while journeying from Newark to Oxford, was billeted on Mrs. Hall at New Place for three days, and was visited there by Prince Rupert. Mrs. Hall was buried beside her husband in Stratford Churchyard on July 11, 1649, and a rhyming inscription, describing her as 'witty above her sex,' was engraved on her tombstone. The whole inscription ran: 'Heere lyeth ye body of Svsanna, wife to John Hall, Gent., ye daughte of William Shakespeare, Gent. She deceased ye 11th of Jvly, A.D. 1649, aged 66.

Witty above her sexe, but that's not all,
Wise to Salvation was good Mistress Hall!
Something of Shakespere was in that, but this
Wholy of him with whom she's now in blisse.
Then, passenger, ha'st ne're a teare,
To weepe with her that wept with all?
That wept, yet set herselfe to chere
Them up with comforts cordiall.
Her Love shall live, her mercy spread,
When thou hast ne're a teare to shed.

The last
descen-
dant.

Mrs. Hall's only child, Elizabeth, was the last surviving descendant of the poet. In April 1626 she married her first husband, Thomas Nash of Stratford (*b.* 1593), who studied at Lincoln's Inn, was a man of property, and, dying childless at New Place on April 4, 1647, was buried in Stratford Church next day. At Billesley, a village four miles from Stratford, on June 5, 1649, Mrs. Nash married, as a second husband, a widower, John Bernard or Barnard of Abington, Northamptonshire, who was knighted by Charles II in 1661. About the same date she seems to have abandoned New Place for her husband's residence at Abington. Dying without issue, she was buried there on February 17, 1669-70. Her husband survived her four years, and was buried beside her. On her mother's death in 1649 Lady Barnard inherited under the poet's will the land near Stratford, New Place, the

house at Blackfriars, and (on the death of the poet's sister, Joan Hart, in 1646) the houses in Henley Street, while her father, Dr. Hall, left her in 1635 a house at Acton with a meadow. She sold the Blackfriars house, and apparently the Stratford land, before 1667. By her will, dated January 1669-70, and proved in the following March, she left small bequests to the daughters of Thomas Hathaway, of the family of her grandmother, the poet's wife. The houses in Henley Street passed to her cousin, Thomas Hart, the grandson of the poet's sister Joan, and they remained in the possession of Thomas's direct descendants till 1806 (the male line expired on the death of John Hart in 1800). By her will Lady Barnard also ordered New Place to be sold, and it was purchased on May 18, 1675, by Sir Edward Walker, Garter King-of-arms, through whose daughter Barbara, wife of Sir John Clopton, it reverted to the Clopton family. Sir John restored it in 1702. On the death of his son Hugh in 1752, it was bought by the Rev. Francis Gastrell (*d.* 1768), who demolished the renovated building in 1759. The site was left vacant and, with the garden attached, was annexed to the garden of the adjoining house. In 1864 the ground was purchased by public subscription and was converted into a public recreation ground.

Of Shakespeare's three brothers, only one, Gilbert, seems to have survived him. Edmund, the youngest brother, 'a player,' was buried at St. Saviour's Church, Southwark, 'with a fore noone knell of the great bell,' on December 31, 1607; he was in his twenty-eighth year. Richard, John Shakespeare's third son, died at Stratford in February 1613, aged 39. 'Gilbert Shakespeare adolescens,' who was buried at Stratford on February 3, 1611-12, was doubtless son of the poet's next brother, Gilbert; the latter, having nearly completed his forty-sixth year, could scarcely be described as 'adolescens'; his death is not recorded, but according to Oldys he survived to a patriarchal age.

Shake-
speare's
brothers.

XVI

AUTOGRAPHS, PORTRAITS, AND MEMORIALS

Extant specimens of Shakespeare's handwriting.

THE only extant specimens of Shakespeare's handwriting that are of undisputed authenticity consist of the five autograph signatures which are reproduced in this volume. As in the case of Edmund Spenser and of almost all the great authors who were contemporary with Shakespeare, no fragment of Shakespeare's handwriting outside his signatures—no letter nor any scrap of his literary work—is known to be in existence.

These five signatures were appended by the poet to the following documents :—

The Purchase-deed (on parchment), dated March 10, 1612-13, of a house in Blackfriars, which the poet then acquired (since 1841 in the Guildhall Library, London).

A Mortgage-deed (on parchment), dated March 11, 1613, relating to the house in Blackfriars, purchased by the poet the day before (since 1858 in the British Museum).

The Poet's Will, finally executed in March 1616, within a month of his death. This document, which is now at Somerset House, London, consists of three sheets of paper, at the foot of each of which Shakespeare signed his name.

His mode of writing.

In all the signatures Shakespeare used the old 'English' mode of writing, which resembles that still in vogue in Germany. During the seventeenth century the old 'English' character was finally displaced in England by the 'Italian' character, which is now universal in England and in all English-speaking countries. In Shakespeare's day highly educated men, who were graduates of the Universities and had travelled abroad in youth, were capable of writing both the old 'English' and the 'Italian' character with equal facility. As a rule they employed the



SHAKESPEARE'S AUTOGRAPH SIGNATURE APPENDED TO THE
PURCHASE-DEED OF A HOUSE IN BLACKFRIARS
ON MARCH 10, 1612-13

Reproduced from the original document now preserved in the Guildhall Library



'English' character in their ordinary correspondence, but signed their names in the 'Italian' hand. Shakespeare's use of the 'English' script exclusively was doubtless a result of his provincial education. He learnt only the 'English' character at school at Stratford-on-Avon, and he never troubled to exchange it for the more fashionable 'Italian' character in later life.

Men did not always spell their surnames in the same way in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The poet's surname has been proved capable of as many as four thousand variations. The name of the poet's father is entered sixty-six times in the Council books of Stratford-on-Avon, and is spelt in sixteen ways. There the commonest form is 'Shaxpeare.' The poet cannot be proved to have acknowledged any finality as to the spelling of his surname. It is certain that he wrote it indifferently *Shakespere* or *Shakspeare*, while he and his friends at times adopted the third form—*Shakespeare*. In these circumstances it is impossible to acknowledge in any one form of spelling a supreme claim to correctness. The signature to the purchase-deed of March 10, 1612-13, is commonly read as 'William Shakspeare,' though in all other portions of the deed the surname is spelt '*Shakespeare*.' The signature to the mortgage-deed of the following day, March 11, 1612-13, has been interpreted both as '*Shakspere*' and '*Shakspeare*.' In neither of these signatures are the letters following the first 'e' in the second syllable fully written out. They are indicated by a flourish above the 'e.' Shakespeare apparently deemed it needful to confine his signature to the narrow strip of parchment that was inserted in the fabric of the deed to bear the seal, and he consequently lacked adequate space wherein to complete his autograph. The flourish above the 'e' has been held to represent the cursive mark of abbreviation for 're' which was in use among mediæval scribes. It is doubtful, however, whether mediæval methods of handwriting were familiar to Shakespeare or his contemporaries. In the second of the two signatures, the flourish has also been read as 'a.' But in both cases the flourish has possibly a less determinate significance than any which has hitherto been assigned to it. It may be in both autographs no more than a hasty dash of the pen—a rough and ready indication that the writer was hindered from completing the word that

Spelling
of the
poet's
name.

Auto-
graphs
in the
Black-
friars
deeds.

he had begun by the narrowness of the strip of parchment to which he was seeking to restrict his handwriting. Whether, therefore, the surname in the two documents should be interpreted as 'Shakspere' or 'Shakspeare' cannot be stated positively.

to-
phs in
will.

The ink of the first signature which Shakespeare appended to his will has now faded almost beyond recognition, but that it was 'Shakspere' may be inferred from the facsimile made by George Steevens in 1776. The second and third signatures to the will, which are easier to decipher, have been variously read as 'Shakspere,' 'Shakspeare,' and 'Shakespeare;' but a close examination suggests that, whatever the second signature may be, the third, which is preceded by the two words 'By me' (also in the poet's handwriting), is 'Shakspeare.' 'Shakspere' is the spelling of the alleged autograph in the British Museum copy of Florio's 'Montaigne,' but the genuineness of that signature is disputable.

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But it is to be borne in mind that 'Shakespeare' was the form of the poet's surname that was adopted in the text of all the legal documents relating to the poet's property, and in the royal license to him in the capacity of a player in 1603. That form is to be seen in the inscription on his wife's tomb in the church of Stratford-on-Avon, although in the rudely cut inscription on his own monument his name appears as 'Shakspeare.' 'Shakspeare' figures in the poet's printed signatures affixed by his authority to the dedicatory epistles in the original editions of his two narrative poems 'Venus and Adonis' (1593) and 'Lucrece' (1594); it is prominent on the title-pages of almost all contemporary editions of his plays, and was employed in almost all the published references to him in the seventeenth century. Consequently, of the form 'Shakspeare' alone can it be definitely said that it has the sanction of legal and literary usage.

ake-
are's
raits.

Aubrey reported that Shakespeare was 'a handsome well-shap't man,' but no portrait exists which can be said with absolute certainty to have been executed during his lifetime, although one has recently been discovered with a good claim to that distinction. Only two of the extant portraits are positively known to have been produced within a short period after his death. These are the bust in Stratford Church and the frontispiece to the folio of 1623.



SHAKESPEARE'S AUTOGRAPH SIGNATURE APPENDED TO A DEED
MORTGAGING HIS HOUSE IN BLACKFRIARS
ON MARCH 11, 1612-13

Reproduced from the original document: now preserved in the British Museum



Each is an inartistic attempt at a posthumous likeness. There is considerable discrepancy between the two ; their main points of resemblance are the baldness on the top of the head and the fulness of the hair about the ears. The bust was by Gerard Johnson or Janssen, who was a Dutch stonemason or tomb-maker settled in Southwark. It was set up in the church before 1623, and is a rudely carved specimen of mortuary sculpture. There are marks about the forehead and ears which suggest that the face was fashioned from a death mask, but the workmanship is at all points clumsy. The round face and eyes present a heavy, unintellectual expression. The bust was originally coloured, but in 1793 Malone caused it to be whitewashed. In 1861 the whitewash was removed, and the colours, as far as traceable, restored. The eyes are light hazel, the hair and beard auburn. There have been numberless reproductions, both engraved and photographic. It was first engraved—very imperfectly—for Rowe's edition in 1709 ; then by Vertue for Pope's edition of 1725 ; and by Gravelot for Hanmer's edition in 1744. A good engraving by William Ward appeared in 1816. A phototype and a chromo-phototype, issued by the New Shakspeare Society, are the best reproductions for the purposes of study. The pretentious painting known as the 'Stratford' portrait, and presented in 1867 by W. O. Hunt, town clerk of Stratford, to the Birthplace Museum, where it is very prominently displayed, was probably painted from the bust late in the eighteenth century ; it lacks either historic or artistic interest.

The Stratford bust.

The 'Stratford' portrait.

The engraved portrait—nearly a half-length—which was printed on the title-page of the folio of 1623, was by Martin Droeshout. On the opposite page lines by Ben Jonson congratulate 'the graver' on having satisfactorily 'hit' the poet's 'face.' Jonson's testimony does no credit to his artistic discernment ; the expression of countenance, which is very crudely rendered, is neither distinctive nor lifelike. The face is long and the forehead high ; the top of the head is bald, but the hair falls in abundance over the ears. There is a scanty moustache, and a thin tuft is under the lower lip. A stiff and wide collar, projecting horizontally, conceals the neck. The coat is closely buttoned and elaborately bordered, especially at the shoulders. The dimensions of the head and face are disproportionately large as compared

Droeshout's engraving.

with those of the body. In the unique proof copy which belonged to Halliwell-Phillipps (now with his collection in America) the tone is clearer than in the ordinary copies, and the shadows are less darkened by cross-hatching and coarse dotting. The engraver, Martin Droeshout, belonged to a Flemish family of painters and engravers long settled in London, where he was born in 1601. He was thus fifteen years old at the time of Shakespeare's death in 1616, and it is consequently improbable that he had any personal knowledge of the dramatist. The engraving was doubtless produced by Droeshout very shortly before the publication of the First Folio in 1623, when he had completed his twenty-second year. It thus belongs to the outset of the engraver's professional career, in which he never achieved extended practice or reputation. A copy of the Droeshout engraving, by William Marshall, was prefixed to Shakespeare's 'Poems' in 1640, and William Faithorne made another copy for the frontispiece of the edition of 'The Rape of Lucrece' published in 1655.

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There is little doubt that young Droeshout in fashioning his engraving worked from a painting, and there is a likelihood that the original picture from which the youthful engraver worked has lately come to light. As recently as 1892 Mr. Edgar Flower, of Stratford-on-Avon, discovered in the possession of Mr. H. C. Clements, a private gentleman with artistic tastes residing at Peckham Rye, a portrait alleged to represent Shakespeare. The picture, which was faded and somewhat worm-eaten, dated beyond all doubt from the early years of the seventeenth century. It was painted on a panel formed of two planks of old elm, and in the upper left-hand corner was the inscription 'Will^m Shakespeare, 1609.' Mr. Clements purchased the portrait of an obscure dealer about 1840, and knew nothing of its history, beyond what he set down on a slip of paper when he acquired it. The note that he then wrote and pasted on the box in which he preserved the picture, ran as follows: 'The original portrait of Shakespeare, from which the now famous Droeshout engraving was taken and inserted in the first collected edition of his works, published in 1623, being seven years after his death. The picture was painted nine [*verè* seven] years before his death, and consequently sixteen [*verè* fourteen] years before it was published. . . . The picture was publicly exhibited in London seventy years ago, and



THREE AUTOGRAPH SIGNATURES SEVERALLY WRITTEN BY SHAKESPEARE ON THE THREE SHEETS OF HIS WILL ON MARCH 25, 1616

THE NATIONAL ARCHIVES, COLLEGE PARK, MARYLAND



many thousands went to see it.' In all its details and in its comparative dimensions, especially in the disproportion between the size of the head and that of the body, this picture is identical with the Droeshout engraving. Though coarsely and stiffly drawn, the face is far more skilfully presented than in the engraving, and the expression of countenance betrays some artistic sentiment which is absent from the print. Connoisseurs, including Mr. Sidney Colvin of the British Museum, and Mr. Lionel Cust, have almost unreservedly pronounced the picture to be anterior in date to the engraving, and they have reached the conclusion that in all probability Martin Droeshout directly based his work upon the painting. Influences of an early seventeenth-century Flemish school are plainly discernible in the picture, and it is just possible that it is the production of an uncle of the young engraver Martin Droeshout, who bore the same name as his nephew, and was naturalised in this country on January 25, 1608, when he was described as a 'painter of Brabant.' Although the history of the portrait rests on critical conjecture and on no external contemporary evidence, there seems good ground for regarding it as a portrait of Shakespeare painted in his lifetime—in the forty-fifth year of his age. No other pictorial representation of the poet has equally serious claims to be treated as contemporary with himself, and it therefore presents features of unique interest. On the death of its owner, Mr. Clements, in 1895, the painting was purchased by Mrs. Charles Flower, and was presented to the Memorial Picture Gallery at Stratford, where it now hangs. No attempt at restoration has been made. It is sometimes referred to as the 'Flower portrait.'

Of the same type as the Droeshout engraving, although less closely resembling it than the picture just described, is the 'Ely House' portrait (now the property of the Birth-place Trustees at Stratford), which formerly belonged to Thomas Turton, Bishop of Ely, and it is inscribed 'Æ. 39 x. 1603.' This painting is of high artistic value. The features are of a far more attractive and intellectual cast than in either the Droeshout painting or engraving, and the many differences in detail raise doubts as to whether the person represented can have been intended for Shakespeare. Experts are of opinion that the picture was painted early in the seventeenth century.

Early in Charles II's reign Lord-chancellor Clarendon

'Ely
House'
portrait.

Later
portraits.

added a portrait of Shakespeare to his great gallery in his house in St. James's. Mention is made of it in a letter from the diarist John Evelyn to his friend Samuel Pepys in 1689, but Clarendon's collection was dispersed at the end of the seventeenth century, and the picture has not been traced.

Of the numerous extant paintings which have been described as portraits of Shakespeare, only the 'Droeshout' portrait and the Ely House portrait, both of which are at Stratford, bear any definable resemblance to the Folio engraving or the bust in the church. In spite of their admitted imperfections, the engraving and the bust can alone be held indisputably to have been honestly designed to depict the poet's features. They must be treated as the standards of authenticity in judging of the genuineness of other portraits claiming to be of an early date.

The
'Chandos'
portrait.

Of other alleged portraits which are extant, the most famous and interesting is the 'Chandos' portrait, now in the National Portrait Gallery. Its pedigree suggests that it was intended to represent the poet, but numerous and conspicuous divergences from the authenticated likenesses show that it was painted from fanciful descriptions of him some years after his death. The face is bearded, and rings adorn the ears. Oldys reported that it was from the brush of Burbage, Shakespeare's fellow-actor, who had some reputation as a limner, and that it had belonged to Joseph Taylor, an actor contemporary with Shakespeare. These rumours are not corroborated; but there is no doubt that it was at one time the property of D'Avenant, and that it subsequently belonged successively to the actor Betterton and to Mrs. Barry the actress. In 1693 Sir Godfrey Kneller made a copy as a gift for Dryden. After Mrs. Barry's death in 1713 it was purchased for forty guineas by Robert Keck, a barrister of the Inner Temple. At length it reached the hands of one John Nichols, whose daughter married James Brydges, third Duke of Chandos. In due time the Duke became the owner of the picture, and it subsequently passed, through Chandos's daughter, to her husband, the first Duke of Buckingham and Chandos, whose son, the second Duke of Buckingham and Chandos, sold it with the rest of his effects at Stowe in 1848, when it was purchased by the Earl of Ellesmere. The latter presented it to the nation. Edward Capell many years before presented a copy by

Ranelagh Barret to Trinity College, Cambridge, and other copies are attributed to Sir Joshua Reynolds and Ozias Humphrey (1783). It was engraved by George Vertue in 1719 for Pope's edition (1725), and often later, one of the best engravings being by Vandergucht. A good lithograph from a tracing by Sir George Scharf was published by the trustees of the National Portrait Gallery in 1864. The Baroness Burdett-Coutts purchased in 1875 a portrait of similar type, which is said, somewhat doubtfully, to have belonged to John, lord Lumley, who died in 1609, and to have formed part of a collection of portraits of the great men of his day at his house, Lumley Castle, Durham. Its early history is not positively authenticated, and it may well be an early copy of the Chandos portrait. The 'Lumley' painting was finely chromolithographed in 1863 by Vincent Brooks.

The so-called 'Jansen' or Janssens portrait, which belongs to Lady Guendolen Ramsden, daughter of the Duke of Somerset, and is now at her residence at Bulstrode, was first doubtfully identified about 1770, when in the possession of Charles Jennens. Janssens did not come to England before Shakespeare's death. It is a fine portrait, but is unlike any other that has been associated with the dramatist. An admirable mezzotint by Richard Earlom was issued in 1811.

The
'Jansen'
portrait.

The 'Felton' portrait, a small head on a panel, with a high and very bald forehead (belonging since 1873 to the Baroness Burdett-Coutts), was purchased by S. Felton of Drayton, Shropshire, in 1792 of J. Wilson, the owner of the Shakespeare Museum in Pall Mall; it bears a late inscription, 'Gul. Shakespear 1597, R. B.' [i.e. Richard Burbage]. It was engraved by Josiah Boydell for George Steevens in 1797, and by James Neagle for Isaac Reed's edition in 1803. Fuseli declared it to be the work of a Dutch artist, but the painters Romney and Lawrence regarded it as of English workmanship of the sixteenth century. Steevens held that it was the original picture whence both Droeshout and Marshall made their engravings, but there are practically no points of resemblance between it and the prints.

The
'Felton'
portrait.

The 'Soest' or 'Zoust' portrait—in the possession of Sir John Lister-Kaye of the Grange, Wakefield—was in the collection of Thomas Wright, painter, of Covent Garden, in 1725, when John Simon engraved it. Soest was born twenty-one years after Shakespeare's death, and the portrait

The
'Soest'
portrait.

is only on fanciful grounds identified with the poet. A chalk drawing by John Michael Wright, obviously inspired by the Soest portrait, is the property of Sir Arthur Hodgson of Clopton House, and is on loan at the Memorial Gallery, Stratford.

Minia-
tures.

A well-executed miniature by Hilliard, at one time in the possession of William Somerville the poet, and now the property of Lord Northcote, was engraved by Agar for vol. ii. of the 'Variorum Shakespeare' of 1821, and in Wivell's 'Inquiry,' 1827. It has little claim to attention as a portrait of the dramatist. Another miniature (called the 'Auriol' portrait), of doubtful authenticity, formerly belonged to Mr. Lumsden Propert, and a third is at Warwick Castle.

The
Garrick
Club
bust.

A bust, said to be of Shakespeare, was discovered in 1845 bricked up in a wall in Spode & Copeland's china warehouse in Lincoln's Inn Fields. The warehouse had been erected on the site of the Duke's Theatre, which was built by D'Avenant in 1660. The bust, which is of black terra cotta, and bears traces of Italian workmanship, is believed to have adorned the proscenium of the Duke's Theatre. It was acquired by the surgeon William Clift, from whom it passed to Clift's son-in-law, Richard (afterwards Sir Richard) Owen the naturalist. The latter sold it to the Duke of Devonshire, who presented it in 1851 to the Garrick Club, after having two copies made in plaster. One of these copies is now in the Shakespeare Memorial Gallery at Stratford.

Alleged
death-
mask.

The Kesselstadt death-mask was discovered by Dr. Ludwig Becker, librarian at the ducal palace at Darmstadt, in a rag-shop at Mayence in 1849. The features resemble those of an alleged portrait of Shakespeare (dated 1637) which Dr. Becker purchased in 1847. This picture had long been in the possession of the family of Count Francis von Kesselstadt of Mayence, who died in 1843. Dr. Becker brought the mask and the picture to England in 1849, and Richard Owen supported the theory that the mask was taken from Shakespeare's face after death, and was the foundation of the bust in Stratford Church. The mask was for a long time in Dr. Becker's private apartments at the ducal palace, Darmstadt. It is now the property of Frau Oberst Becker, the discoverer's daughter-in-law, and is in her residence at Darmstadt (Heidelbergerstrasse 111).

The features are singularly attractive ; but the chain of evidence which would identify them with Shakespeare is incomplete.

A monument, the expenses of which were defrayed by public subscription, was set up in the Poets' Corner in Westminster Abbey in 1741. Pope and the Earl of Burlington were among the promoters. The design was by William Kent, and the statue of Shakespeare was executed by Peter Scheemakers. Another statue was executed by Roubiliac for Garrick, who bequeathed it to the British Museum in 1779. A third statue, freely adapted from the works of Scheemakers and Roubiliac, was executed for Baron Albert Grant, and was set up by him as a gift to the metropolis in Leicester Square, London, in 1879. A fourth statue (by Mr. J. A. Q. Ward) was placed in 1882 in the Central Park, New York. A fifth in bronze, by M. Paul Fournier, which was erected in Paris in 1888 at the expense of an English resident, Mr. W. Knighton, stands at the point where the Avenue de Messine meets the Boulevard Haussmann. A sixth memorial in sculpture, by Lord Ronald Gower, the most elaborate and ambitious of all, stands in the garden of the Shakespeare Memorial buildings at Stratford-on-Avon, and was unveiled in 1888 : Shakespeare is seated on a high pedestal ; below, at each side of the pedestal, stand figures of four of Shakespeare's principal characters : Lady Macbeth, Hamlet, Prince Hal, and Sir John Falstaff.

At Stratford, the Birthplace, which was acquired by the public in 1846 and converted into a museum, is, with Anne Hathaway's cottage (which was acquired by the Birthplace Trustees in 1892), a place of pilgrimage for visitors from all parts of the globe. The 26,510 persons who visited it in 1897 and the 25,444 persons who visited it in 1898 represented nearly forty nationalities. The site of the demolished New Place, with the garden, was also purchased by public subscription in 1861, and now forms a public garden. Of a new memorial building on the river-bank at Stratford, consisting of a theatre, picture-gallery, and library, the foundation-stone was laid on April 23, 1877. The theatre was opened exactly two years later, when 'Much Ado about Nothing' was performed, with Helen Faucit (Lady Martin) as Beatrice and Barry Sullivan as Benedick. Performances of Shakespeare's plays have since been given annually during

April. The library and picture-gallery were opened in 1881. A memorial Shakespeare library was opened at Birmingham on April 23, 1868, to commemorate the tercentenary of 1864, and, although destroyed by fire in 1879, was restored in 1882; it now possesses nearly ten thousand volumes relating to Shakespeare.

XVII

BIBLIOGRAPHY

ONLY two of Shakespeare's works—his narrative poems 'Venus and Adonis' and 'Lucrece'—were published with his sanction and co-operation. These poems were the first specimens of his work to appear in print, and they passed in his lifetime through a greater number of editions than any of his plays. At the time of his death in 1616 there had been printed seven editions of his 'Venus and Adonis' (1593 and 1594 in quarto, 1596, 1599, 1600, and two in 1602, all in small octavo), and five editions of his 'Lucrece' (1594 in quarto, 1598, 1600, 1607, 1616, all in small octavo). There was only one lifetime edition of the 'Sonnets,' Thorpe's surreptitious venture of 1609 in quarto; but three editions were issued of the piratical 'Passionate Pilgrim,' which was fraudulently assigned to Shakespeare by the publisher, William Jaggard, although it contained only a few occasional poems by him (1599, 1600 no copy known, and 1612).

Editions
of the
poems in
the poet's
lifetime.

Of posthumous editions of the two narrative poems in the seventeenth century, there were two of 'Lucrece' (both in octavo)—viz. in 1624 ('the sixth edition') and in 1655, the seventh edition, (with John Quarles's 'Banishment of Tarquin')—and there were as many as six editions of 'Venus' (1617, 1620, 1627, two in 1630, and 1636, all in octavo), making thirteen editions of this poem in all in forty-three years. No later edition of either poem was issued in the seventeenth century. They were next reprinted together with 'The Passionate Pilgrim' in 1707, and thenceforth they usually figured, with the addition of the 'Sonnets,' in collected editions of Shakespeare's works.

Posthu-
mous
editions
of the
poems.

A so-called first collected edition of Shakespeare's 'Poems' in 1640 (London, by T. Cotes for I. Benson) was mainly a reissue of the 'Sonnets,' but it omitted six (Nos. xviii., xix., xliii., lvi., lxxv., and lxxvi.), and it included the

The
'Poems'
of 1640.

twenty poems of 'The Passionate Pilgrim,' with some other pieces by other authors. Marshall's copy of the Droeshout engraving of 1623 formed the frontispiece. There were prefatory poems by Leonard Digges and John Warren, as well as an address 'to the reader' signed with the initials of the publisher. There Shakespeare's 'Sonnets' were described as 'serene, clear, and elegantly plain; such gentle strains as shall recreate and not perplex your brain. No intricate or cloudy stuff to puzzle intellect. Such as will raise your admiration to his praise.' A chief point of interest in the volume of 'Poems' of 1640 is the fact that the 'Sonnets' were printed there in a different order from that which was followed in the volume of 1609. Thus the poem numbered lxxvii. in the original edition opens the reissue, and what has been regarded as the crucial poem, beginning

Two loves I have of comfort and despair,

which was in 1609 numbered cxliv., takes the thirty-second place in 1640. In most cases a more or less fanciful general title is placed in the second edition at the head of each sonnet, but in a few instances a single title serves for short sequences of two or three sonnets which are printed as independent poems continuously without spacing. All the poems in 'The Passionate Pilgrim' are intermingled with the 'Sonnets,' together with extracts from Thomas Heywood's 'General History of Women,' although no hint is given that they are not Shakespeare's work. The edition concludes with three epitaphs on Shakespeare and a short section entitled 'an addition of some excellent poems to those precedent by other Gentlemen.' The volume is of great rarity. An exact reprint was published in 1885.

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Of Shakespeare's plays there were in print in 1616 only sixteen (all in quarto), or eighteen if we include the 'Contention,' the first draft of '2 Henry VI' (1594 and 1600), and 'The True Tragedy,' the first draft of '3 Henry VI' (1595 and 1600). These sixteen quartos were publishers' ventures, and were undertaken without the co-operation of the author.

➤ Two of the plays, published thus, reached five editions before 1616, viz. 'Richard III' (1597, 1598, 1602, 1605, 1612) and '1 Henry IV' (1598, 1599, 1604, 1608, 1613).

Three reached four editions, viz. 'Richard II' (1597, 1598, 1608 supplying the deposition scene for the first time, 1615); 'Hamlet' (1603 imperfect, 1604, 1605, 1611), and 'Romeo and Juliet' (1597 imperfect, 1599, two in 1609).

Two reached three editions, viz. 'Henry V' (1600 imperfect, 1602, and 1608) and 'Pericles' (two in 1609, 1611).

Four reached two editions, viz. 'Midsummer Night's Dream' (both in 1600); 'Merchant of Venice' (both in 1600); 'Lear' (both in 1608); and 'Troilus and Cressida' (both in 1609).

Five achieved only one edition, viz. 'Love's Labour's Lost' (1598), '2 Henry IV' (1600), 'Much Ado' (1600), 'Titus' (1600), 'Merry Wives' (1602 imperfect).

Three years after Shakespeare's death—in 1619—there appeared a second edition of 'Merry Wives' (again imperfect) and a fourth of 'Pericles.' 'Othello' was first printed posthumously in 1622 (4to), and in the same year sixth editions of 'Richard III' and '1 Henry IV' appeared. The largest collections of the original quartos—each of which survives in only four, five, or six copies—are in the libraries of the Duke of Devonshire, the British Museum, and Trinity College, Cambridge, and in the Bodleian Library.

Posthu-
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quartos o
the plays.

Lithographed facsimiles of most of these volumes, with some of the quarto editions of the poems (forty-eight volumes in all), were prepared by Mr. E. W. Ashbee, and issued to subscribers by Halliwell-Phillipps between 1862 and 1871. A cheaper set of quarto facsimiles, undertaken by Mr. W. Griggs, under the supervision of Dr. F. J. Furnivall, appeared in forty-three volumes between 1880 and 1889.

All the quartos were issued in Shakespeare's day at six-pence each. Perfect copies now range in price, according to their rarity, from 200*l.* to 300*l.* In 1864, at the sale of George Daniel's library, quarto copies of 'Love's Labour's Lost' and of 'Merry Wives' (first edition) each fetched 346*l.* 10*s.* On May 14, 1897, a copy of the quarto of 'The Merchant of Venice' (printed by James Roberts in 1600) was sold at Sotheby's for 315*l.* On April 25, 1899, a copy of the quarto of the 'Troublesome raigne of John King of England,' 1591, a play in vogue before Shakespeare attempted the same theme, was sold at Sotheby's for 510*l.*—the highest price that a quarto play of the period has yet reached.

The First Folio.

The publishing syndicate.

In 1623 the first attempt was made to give the world a complete edition of Shakespeare's plays. Two of the dramatist's intimate friends and fellow-actors, John Heming and Henry Condell, were nominally responsible for the venture, but it seems to have been suggested by a small syndicate of printers and publishers, who undertook all pecuniary responsibility. Chief of the syndicate was William Jaggard, printer since 1611 to the City of London, who was established in business in Fleet Street at the east end of St. Dunstan's Church. As the piratical publisher of 'The Passionate Pilgrim' he had long known the commercial value of Shakespeare's work. In 1613 he had extended his business by purchasing the stock and rights of a rival pirate, James Roberts, who had printed the quarto editions of 'The Merchant of Venice' and 'Midsummer Night's Dream' in 1600, and the complete quarto of 'Hamlet' in 1604. Roberts had enjoyed for nearly twenty years the right to print 'the players' bills,' or programmes, and he made over that privilege to Jaggard with his other literary property. It is to the close personal relations with the playhouse managers into which the acquisition of the right of printing 'the players' bill' brought Jaggard after 1613 that the inception of the scheme of the 'First Folio' may safely be attributed. Jaggard associated his son Isaac with the enterprise. They alone of the members of the syndicate were printers. Their three partners were publishers or booksellers only. Two of these, William Aspley and John Smethwick, had already speculated in plays of Shakespeare. Aspley had published with another in 1600 the 'Second Part of Henry IV' and 'Much Ado about Nothing,' and in 1609 half of Thorpe's impression of Shakespeare's 'Sonnets.' Smethwick, whose shop was in St. Dunstan's Churchyard, Fleet Street, near Jaggard's, had published in 1611 two late editions of 'Romeo and Juliet' and one of 'Hamlet.' Edward Blount, the fifth partner, was an interesting figure in the trade, and, unlike his companions, had a true taste in literature. He had been a friend and admirer of Christopher Marlowe, and had actively engaged in the posthumous publication of two of Marlowe's poems. He had published that curious collection of mystical verse entitled 'Love's Martyr,' one poem in which, 'a poetical essay of the Phoenix and the Turtle,' was signed 'William Shakespeare.'

The First Folio was doubtless printed in Jaggard's

printing office near St. Dunstan's Church. Upon Blount probably fell the chief labour of seeing the work through the press. It was in progress throughout 1623, and had so far advanced by November 8, 1623, that on that day Edward Blount and Isaac (son of William) Jaggard obtained formal license from the Stationers' Company to publish sixteen of the twenty hitherto unprinted plays that it was intended to include. The pieces, whose approaching publication for the first time was thus announced, were of supreme literary interest. The titles ran: 'The Tempest,' 'The Two Gentlemen,' 'Measure for Measure,' 'Comedy of Errors,' 'As You Like It,' 'All's Well,' 'Twelfth Night,' 'Winter's Tale,' '3 Henry VI,' 'Henry VIII,' 'Coriolanus,' 'Timon,' 'Julius Cæsar,' 'Macbeth,' 'Antony and Cleopatra,' and 'Cymbeline.' Four other hitherto unprinted dramas for which no license was sought figured in the volume, viz. 'King John,' '1 and 2 Henry VI,' and 'The Taming of The Shrew;' but each of these plays was based by Shakespeare on a play of like title which had been published at an earlier date, and the absence of a license was doubtless due to an ignorant misconception on the part either of the Stationers' Company's officers or of the editors of the volume as to the true relations subsisting between the old pieces and the new. The only play by Shakespeare that had been previously published and was not included in the First Folio was 'Pericles.'

Thirty-six pieces in all were thus brought together. The volume consisted of nearly one thousand double-column pages and was sold at a pound a copy. From the number of copies that survive it may be estimated that the edition numbered 500. The book was described on the title-page as published by Edward Blount and Isaac Jaggard, and in the colophon as printed at the charges of 'W. Jaggard, I. Smithweeke, and W. Aspley,' as well as of Blount. On the title-page was engraved the Droeshout portrait. Commendatory verses were supplied by Ben Jonson, Hugh Holland, Leonard Digges, and I. M., perhaps Jasper Maine. The dedication was addressed to the brothers William Herbert, Earl of Pembroke, the Lord Chamberlain, and Philip Herbert, Earl of Montgomery, and was signed by Shakespeare's friends and fellow-actors, Heming and Condell. The choice of such patrons was in strict accordance with custom. To the two earls in partnership nearly every work of

The pre-
factory
matter.

any literary pretension was dedicated at the period. Moreover, the third Earl of Pembroke was Lord Chamberlain in 1623, and exercised supreme authority in theatrical affairs. That his patronage should be sought for a collective edition of the works of the acknowledged master of the contemporary stage was a matter of course. The editors yielded to a passing vogue in soliciting the patronage of the Lord Chamberlain's brother in conjunction with the Lord Chamberlain. 'But since (the dedicators write) your lordships have bene pleas'd to thinke these trifles something, heretofore; and have prosequuted both them, and their Authour living, with so much favour: we hope that (they outliving him, and he not having the fate, common with some, to be exequutor to his owne writings) you will use the like indulgence toward them you have done unto their parent. There is a great difference, whether any Booke choose his Patrones, or find them: This hath done both. For, so much were your lordships' likings of the severall parts, when they were acted, as, before they were published, the Volume ask'd to be yours.' The dedicators imply that the brother earls fully shared the enthusiastic esteem which James I and all the noblemen of his Court extended to Shakespeare and his plays in the dramatist's lifetime. At the conclusion of their address to Lords Pembroke and Montgomery, the dedicators, in describing the dramatist's works as 'these remaines of your *Servant* Shakespeare,' remind their noble patrons anew that the dramatist had been a conspicuous object of their favour in his capacity of 'King's servant' or player.

The signatures of Heming and Condell were also appended to a succeeding address 'to the great variety of readers.' In both addresses the two actors probably made pretension to a larger responsibility for the enterprise than they really incurred, but their motives in identifying themselves with the venture were doubtless irreproachable. They disclaimed (they wrote in their second address) 'ambition either of selfe-profit or fame in undertaking the design,' being solely moved by anxiety to 'keepe the memory of so worthy a friend and fellow alive as was our Shakespeare.' 'It had bene a thing we confesse worthie to haue bene wished,' they inform the reader, 'that the author himselfe had liued to haue set forth and ouerseen his owne writings. . . .' A list of contents follows the address to the readers.

The title-page states that all the plays were printed

MR. WILLIAM
SHAKESPEARES
COMEDIES,
HISTORIES, &
TRAGEDIES.

Published according to the True Originall Copies



Wm. Strickland del. J. Goussier sculp.
LONDON
Printed by Isaac Iaggard, and Ed. Blount. 1623

FAC-SIMILE OF THE TITLE-PAGE OF THE FIRST FOLIO EDITION
OF SHAKESPEARE'S WORKS

From the copy in the Grenville Library at the British Museum

'according to the true originall copies.' The dedicators wrote to the same effect. 'As where (before) we were abus'd with diuerse stolne and surreptitious copies, maimed and deformed by the frauds and stealthes of incurious impostors that expos'd them: even those are now offer'd to your view cur'd and perfect in their limbes, and all the rest absolute in their numbers as he conceived them.' There is no doubt that the whole volume was printed from the acting versions in the possession of the manager of the company with which Shakespeare had been associated. But it is doubtful if any play were printed exactly as it came from his pen. The player-editors' boastful advertisement that they had access to his papers in which there was 'scarce a blot' admits of no literal interpretation. The First Folio text is often markedly inferior to that of the sixteen pre-existent quartos, which, although surreptitiously and imperfectly printed, followed playhouse copies of far earlier date. From the text of the quartos the text of the First Folio differs invariably, although in varying degrees. The quarto texts of 'Love's Labour's Lost,' 'Midsummer Night's Dream,' and 'Richard II,' for example, differ very largely, and always for the better, from the folio texts. On the other hand, the folio repairs the glaring defects of the quarto versions of 'The Merry Wives of Windsor' and of 'Henry V.' In the case of twenty of the plays in the First Folio no quartos exist for comparison, and of these twenty plays, 'Coriolanus,' 'All's Well,' and 'Macbeth' present a text abounding in corrupt passages.

The value of the text.

The plays are arranged under three headings—'Comedies,' 'Histories,' and 'Tragedies'—and each division is separately paged. The arrangement of the plays in each division follows no principle. The comedy section begins with the 'Tempest' and ends with the 'Winter's Tale.' The histories more justifiably begin with 'King John' and end with 'Henry VIII.' The tragedies begin with 'Troilus and Cressida' and end with 'Cymbeline.' This order has been usually followed in subsequent collective editions.

The order of the plays.

As a specimen of typography the First Folio is not to be commended. There are a great many contemporary folios of larger bulk far more neatly and correctly printed. It looks as though Jaggard's printing office were undermanned. The misprints are numerous and are especially conspicuous in the pagination. The sheets seem to have been worked off very slowly, and corrections were made while the press

The typography.



was working, so that the copies struck off later differ occasionally from the earlier copies. One mark of carelessness on the part of the compositor or corrector of the press, which is common to all copies, is that 'Troilus and Cressida,' though in the body of the book it opens the section of tragedies, is not mentioned at all in the table of contents, and the play is unpagged except on its second and third pages, which bear the numbers 79 and 80.

Unique
copies.

Three copies are known which are distinguished by more interesting irregularities, in each case unique. The copy in the Lenox Library in New York includes a cancel duplicate of a leaf of 'As You Like It' (sheet R of the comedies), and the title-page bears the date 1622 instead of 1623; but there is little doubt that the last figure has been tampered with by a modern owner. Samuel Butler, successively head-master of Shrewsbury and Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry, possessed a copy of the First Folio in which a proof leaf of 'Hamlet' was bound up with the corrected leaf.

The
Sheldon
copy.

The most interesting irregularity yet noticed appears in one of the two copies of the book belonging to the Baroness Burdett-Coutts. This copy is known as the Sheldon Folio, having formed in the seventeenth century part of the library of Ralph Sheldon of Weston Manor in the parish of Long Compton, Warwickshire. In the Sheldon Folio, the opening page of 'Troilus and Cressida,' of which the recto or front is occupied by the prologue and the verso or back by the opening lines of the text of the play, is followed by a superfluous leaf. On the recto or front of the unnecessary leaf are printed the concluding lines of 'Romeo and Juliet' in place of the prologue to 'Troilus and Cressida.' At the back or verso are the opening lines of 'Troilus and Cressida' repeated from the preceding page. The presence of a different ornamental headpiece on each page proves that the two are not taken from the same setting of the type. At a later page in the Sheldon copy the concluding lines of 'Romeo and Juliet' are duly reprinted at the close of the play, and on the verso or back of the leaf, which supplies them in their right place, is the opening passage, as in other copies, of 'Timon of Athens.' These curious confusions attest that while the work was in course of composition the printers or editors of the volume at one time intended to place 'Troilus and Cressida,' with the prologue omitted, after 'Romeo and Juliet.' The

last page of 'Romeo and Juliet' is in all copies numbered 79, an obvious misprint for 77; the first leaf of 'Troilus' is paged 78; the second and third pages of 'Troilus' are numbered 79 and 80. It was doubtless suddenly determined while the volume was in the press to transfer 'Troilus and Cressida' to the head of the tragedies from a place near the end, but the numbers on the opening pages which indicated its first position were clumsily retained, and to avoid the extensive typographical corrections that were required by the play's change of position, its remaining pages were allowed to go forth unnumbered.

A fourth copy of the First Folio presents unique features of a different kind of interest. Mr. Coningsby Sibthorp of Sudbrooke Holme, Lincoln, possesses a copy which has been in the library of his family for more than a century, and is beyond doubt one of the very earliest that came from the press of the printer William Jaggard. The title-page, which bears Shakespeare's portrait, is in a condition of unparalleled freshness, and the engraving is printed with unusual firmness and clearness. Although the copy is not at all points perfect and several leaves have been supplied in facsimile, it is a taller copy than any other, being thirteen and a half inches high, and at least a quarter of an inch superior in stature to that of any other known copy. The binding, rough calf, is partly original; and on the title-page is a manuscript inscription, in contemporary handwriting of indisputable authenticity, attesting that the copy was a gift to an intimate friend by the printer Jaggard. The inscription reads thus:

Jaggard's
presentation
copy
of the
First
Folio.

Ex dono Willi Jaggard Typographi. a. 1623

The fragment of the original binding is stamped with an heraldic device, in which a muzzled bear holds a banner in its left paw and in its right a squire's helmet. There is a crest of a bear's head above, and beneath is a scroll with the motto 'Augusta Vincenti' (i.e. proud things to the conqueror). This motto proves to be a pun on the name of the owner of the heraldic badge—Augustine Vincent, a highly respected official of the College of Arms, who is known from independent sources to have been, at the date

of the publication, in intimate relations with the printer of the First Folio. It is therefore clear that it was to Augustine Vincent that Jaggard presented as a free gift what was almost certainly the first copy of this great volume which came from his press. The inscription on the title-page I have ascertained, by comparison of it with Vincent's handwriting, to be in his autograph. Jaggard at the time appears to have lost the power of writing owing to failing sight. Mr. Sibthorp's copy of the First Folio is the most interesting memorial that has hitherto come to light of Jaggard's connection with the great publication.

Estimated
number of
intact
copies.

It is difficult to estimate how many copies survive of the First Folio, which is intrinsically the most valuable volume in the whole range of English literature, and extrinsically is only exceeded in value by some half-dozen volumes of far earlier date and of exceptional typographical interest. It seems that about two hundred copies have been traced within the past century. Of these fewer than twenty are in a perfect state, that is, with the portrait *printed (not inlaid)* on the title-page, and the flyleaf facing it, with all the pages succeeding it, intact and uninjured. (The flyleaf contains Ben Jonson's verses attesting the truthfulness of the portrait.) Excellent copies in this enviable state are in the Grenville Library at the British Museum, and in the libraries of the Duke of Devonshire, the Earl of Crawford, the Baroness Burdett-Coutts, Mr. A. H. Huth, and of several American collectors. Of these the finest is the perfect 'Daniel' copy belonging to the Baroness Burdett-Coutts. It measures 13 inches by $8\frac{1}{2}$, and was purchased by the Baroness for 716*l.* 2*s.* at the sale of George Daniel's library in 1864. This sum was long the highest price paid for the book, but the amount has on three recent occasions been exceeded. A perfect copy, measuring $12\frac{3}{8}$ inches by $7\frac{1}{2}$, fetched 840*l.* (4,200 dollars) at the sale of Mr. Brayton Ives's library in New York in March 1891. A second perfect copy in fine preservation, measuring $13\frac{3}{8}$ inches by $8\frac{3}{8}$, formerly the property of Sir Robert Sidney, first Earl of Leicester (Sir Philip Sidney's brother), whose arms are stamped on the original calf binding, was privately purchased for more than 1,000*l.* by Mr. J. Pierpont Morgan of New York in June 1899 of Mr. C. J. Toovey, bookseller, of Piccadilly, London. A third copy, measuring $12\frac{3}{4}$ inches by $8\frac{3}{8}$, which had been for a century

and more in Belgium, and is quite perfect save for slight injuries to the margins of the title-page and a few other leaves, was purchased by Mr. Bernard Buchanan Macgeorge of Glasgow for 1,700*l.* at a sale by Messrs. Christie, Manson, & Woods on July 11, 1899; this is the largest figure yet reached. The Sibthorp copy is far taller than any of these, and in many other respects is equally admirable, but a few of its leaves are missing. Some twenty more copies lack, like the Sibthorp copy, a few pages, although they are in other regards unimpaired. There remain about 160 copies which have sustained serious damage at various points.

A reprint of the First Folio unwarrantably purporting to be exact was published in 1807-8. The best reprint was issued in three parts by Lionel Booth in 1861, 1863, and 1864. The valuable photo-zincographic reproduction undertaken by Sir Henry James, under the direction of Howard Staunton, was issued in sixteen folio parts between February 1864 and October 1865. A reduced photographic facsimile, too small to be legible, appeared in 1876, with a preface by Halliwell-Phillipps.

The Second Folio edition was printed in 1632 by Thomas Cotes for Robert Allot and William Aspley, each of whose names figures as publisher on different copies. To Allot Blount had transferred, on November 16, 1630, his rights in the sixteen plays which were first licensed for publication in 1623. The Second Folio was reprinted from the First; a few corrections were made in the text, but most of the changes were arbitrary and needless. Charles I's copy is at Windsor, and Charles II's at the British Museum. The 'Perkins Folio,' now in the Duke of Devonshire's possession, in which John Payne Collier introduced forged emendations, was a copy of that of 1632. By far the highest price paid for a copy is 540*l.*, for which sum Mr. B. B. Macgeorge of Glasgow acquired at the Earl of Orford's sale in 1895 the fine copy formerly in the library of George Daniel. The Third Folio—for the most part a faithful reprint of the Second—was first published in 1663 by Peter Chetwynde, who reissued it next year with the addition of seven plays, six of which have no claim to admission among Shakespeare's works. 'Unto this impression,' runs the title-page of 1664, 'is added seven Plays never before printed in folio, viz. : Pericles, Prince

The
Second
Folio.

The
Third
Folio.

of Tyre. The London Prodigall. The History of Thomas Ld. Cromwell. Sir John Oldcastle, Lord Cobham. The Puritan Widow. A Yorkshire Tragedy. The Tragedy of Locrine.' The six spurious pieces which open the volume were attributed by unprincipled publishers to Shakespeare in his lifetime. Fewer copies of the Third Folio are reputed to be extant than of the Second or Fourth, owing to the alleged destruction of many unsold impressions in the Fire of London in 1666. The Fourth Folio, printed in 1685 'for H. Herringman, E. Brewster, R. Chiswell, and R. Bentley,' reprints the folio of 1664 without change except in the way of modernising the spelling ; it repeats the spurious pieces.

The
Fourth
Folio.

Eight-
eenth-
century
editors.

Since 1685 some two hundred independent editions of the collected works have been published in Great Britain and Ireland, and many thousand editions of separate plays. The eighteenth-century editors of the collected works endeavoured with varying degrees of success to purge the text of the numerous incoherences of the folios, and to restore, where good taste or good sense required it, the lost text of the contemporary quartos. It is largely owing to a due co-ordination of the results of the efforts of the eighteenth-century editors by their successors in the present century that Shakespeare's work has become intelligible to general readers unversed in textual criticism, and has won from them the veneration that it merits.

Nicholas
Rowe,
1674-
1718.

Nicholas Rowe, a popular dramatist of Queen Anne's reign, and poet laureate to George I, was the first critical editor of Shakespeare. He produced an edition of his plays in six octavo volumes in 1709. A new edition in eight volumes followed in 1714, and another hand added a ninth volume which included the poems. Rowe prefixed a valuable life of the poet embodying traditions which were in danger of perishing without a record. His text followed that of the Fourth Folio. The plays were printed in the same order, except that he transferred the spurious pieces from the beginning to the end. Rowe did not compare his text with that of the First Folio or of the quartos, but in the case of 'Romeo and Juliet' he met with an early quarto while his edition was passing through the press, and inserted at the end of the play the prologue which is met with only in the quartos. He made a few happy emendations, some of which coincide accidentally with the readings of the First Folio ; but his text is defaced by many palpable errors.

His practical experience as a playwright induced him, however, to prefix for the first time a list of *dramatis personæ* to each play, to divide and number acts and scenes on rational principles, and to mark the entrances and exits of the characters. Spelling, punctuation, and grammar he corrected and modernised.

The poet Pope was Shakespeare's second editor. His edition in six spacious quarto volumes was completed in 1725. The poems, edited by Dr. George Sewell, with an essay on the rise and progress of the stage, and a glossary, appeared in a seventh volume. Pope had few qualifications for the task, and the venture was a commercial failure. In his preface Pope, while he fully recognised Shakespeare's native genius, deemed his achievement deficient in artistic quality. Pope claimed to have collated the text of the Fourth Folio with that of all preceding editions, and although his work indicates that he had access to the First Folio and some of the quartos, it is clear that his text was based on that of Rowe. His innovations are numerous, and are derived from 'his private sense and conjecture,' but they are often plausible and ingenious. He was the first to indicate the place of each new scene, and he improved on Rowe's subdivision of the scenes. A second edition of Pope's version in ten duodecimo volumes appeared in 1728 with Sewell's name on the title-page as well as Pope's. There were few alterations in the text, though a preliminary table supplied a list of twenty-eight quartos. Other editions followed in 1735 and 1768. The last was printed at Garrick's suggestion at Birmingham from Baskerville's types.

Pope found a rigorous critic in Lewis Theobald, who, although contemptible as a writer of original verse and prose, proved himself the most inspired of all the textual critics of Shakespeare. Pope savagely avenged himself on his censor by holding him up to ridicule as the hero of the 'Dunciad.' Theobald first displayed his critical skill in 1726 in a volume which deserves to rank as a classic in English literature. The title runs 'Shakespeare Restored, or a specimen of the many errors as well committed as unamended by Mr. Pope in his late edition of this poet, designed not only to correct the said edition but to restore the true reading of Shakespeare in all the editions ever yet publish'd.' There at page 137 appears Theobald's great emendation in Shakespeare's account of Falstaff's death

Alexander
Pope,
1688-
1744.

Lewis
Theobald,
1688-
1744.

(Henry V, II, iii. 17): 'His nose was as sharp as a pen and a' babbled of green fields,' in place of the reading in the old copies, 'His nose was as sharp as a pen and a table of green fields.' In 1733 Theobald brought out his edition of Shakespeare in seven volumes. In 1740 it reached a second issue. A third edition was published in 1752. Others are dated 1772 and 1773. It is stated that 12,860 copies in all were sold. Theobald made the First Folio the basis of his text, although he failed to adopt all the correct readings of that version. Over 300 original corrections or emendations which he made in his edition have become part and parcel of the authorised canon. Theobald's principles of textual criticism were as enlightened as his practice was triumphant. 'I ever labour,' he wrote to Warburton, 'to make the smallest deviation that I possibly can from the text; never to alter at all where I can by any means explain a passage with sense; nor ever by any emendation to make the author better when it is probable the text came from his own hands.' Theobald has every right to the title of the Porson of Shakespearean criticism. The following are favourable specimens of his insight. In 'Macbeth' (I. vii. 6) for 'this bank and school of time,' he substituted the familiar 'bank and shoal of time.' In 'Antony and Cleopatra' the old copies (v. ii. 87) made Cleopatra say of Antony:

For his bounty,
There was no winter in't; an Anthony it was
That grew the more by reaping.

For the gibberish 'an Anthony it was,' Theobald read 'an autumn 'twas,' and thus gave the lines true point and poetry. A third notable instance, somewhat more recondite, is found in 'Coriolanus' (II. i. 59-60) where Menenius asks the tribunes in the First Folio version 'what harm can your besom conspectuities [i.e. vision or eyes] glean out of this character?' Theobald replaced the meaningless epithet 'besom' by 'bisson' (i.e. purblind), a recognised Elizabethan word which Shakespeare had already employed in 'Hamlet' (II. ii. 529).

Sir
Thomas
Hanmer,
1677-
1746.

The fourth editor was Sir Thomas Hanmer, a country gentleman without much literary culture, but possessing a large measure of mother wit. He was speaker in the House of Commons for a few months in 1714, and retiring soon afterwards from public life devoted his leisure to a

thoroughgoing scrutiny of Shakespeare's plays. His edition, which was the earliest to pretend to typographical beauty, was printed at the Oxford University Press in 1744 in six quarto volumes. It contained a number of good engravings by Gravelot after designs by Francis Hayman, and was long highly valued by book collectors. No editor's name was given. In forming his text, Hanmer depended exclusively on his own ingenuity. He made no recourse to the old copies. The result was a mass of common-sense emendations, some of which have been permanently accepted. A happy example of his shrewdness may be quoted from 'King Lear,' III. vi. 72, where in all previous editions Edgar's enumeration of various kinds of dogs included the line 'Hound or spaniel, brach or hym [or him].' For the last word Hanmer substituted 'lym,' which was the Elizabethan synonym for bloodhound. Hanmer's edition was reprinted in 1770-1.

In 1747 Bishop Warburton produced a revised version of Pope's edition in eight volumes. Warburton was hardly better qualified for the task than Pope, and such improvements as he introduced are mainly borrowed from Theobald and Hanmer. On both these critics he arrogantly and unjustly heaped abuse in his preface. The Bishop was consequently criticised with appropriate severity for his pretentious incompetence by many writers; among them, by Thomas Edwards, whose 'Supplement to Warburton's Edition of Shakespeare' first appeared in 1747, and, having been renamed 'The Canons of Criticism' next year in the third edition, passed through as many as seven editions by 1765.

Bishop
Warburton, 1698-
1779.

Dr. Johnson, the sixth editor, completed his edition in eight volumes in 1765, and a second issue followed three years later. Although he made some independent collation of the quartos, his textual labours were slight, and his verbal notes show little close knowledge of sixteenth and seventeenth century literature. But in his preface and elsewhere he displays a genuine, if occasionally sluggish, sense of Shakespeare's greatness, and his massive sagacity enabled him to indicate convincingly Shakespeare's triumphs of characterisation.

Dr. Johnson, 1709-
1783.

The seventh editor, Edward Capell, advanced on his predecessors in many respects. He was a clumsy writer, and Johnson declared, with some justice, that he 'gabbled

Edward
Capell,
1713-
1781.

monstrously,' but his collation of the quartos and the First and Second Folios was conducted on more thorough and scholarly methods than those of any of his predecessors, not excepting Theobald. His industry was untiring, and he is said to have transcribed the whole of Shakespeare ten times. Capell's edition appeared in ten small octavo volumes in 1768. He showed himself well versed in Elizabethan literature in a volume of notes which appeared in 1774, and in three further volumes, entitled 'Notes, Various Readings, and the School of Shakespeare,' which were not published till 1783, two years after his death. The last volume, 'The School of Shakespeare,' consisted of 'authentic extracts from divers English books that were in print in that author's time,' to which was appended 'Notitia Dramatica ; or, Tables of Ancient Plays (from their beginning to the Restoration of Charles II).'

George
Steevens,
1736-
1800.

George Steevens, whose saturnine humour involved him in a lifelong series of literary quarrels with rival students of Shakespeare, made invaluable contributions to Shakespearean study. In 1766 he reprinted twenty of the plays from the quartos. Soon afterwards he revised Johnson's edition without much assistance from the Doctor, and his revision, which embodied numerous improvements, appeared in ten volumes in 1773. It was long regarded as the standard version. Steevens's antiquarian knowledge alike of Elizabethan history and literature was greater than that of any previous editor ; his citations of parallel passages from the writings of Shakespeare's contemporaries, in elucidation of obscure words and phrases, have not been exceeded in number or excelled in aptness by any of his successors. All commentators of recent times are more deeply indebted in this department of their labours to Steevens than to any other critic. But he lacked taste as well as temper, and excluded from his edition Shakespeare's sonnets and poems, because, he wrote, 'the strongest Act of Parliament that could be framed would fail to compel readers into their service.' The second edition of Johnson and Steevens's version appeared in ten volumes in 1778. The third edition, published in ten volumes in 1785, was revised by Steevens's friend, Isaac Reed (1742-1807), a scholar of his own type. The fourth and last edition, published in Steevens's lifetime, was prepared by himself in fifteen volumes in 1793. As he grew older he made some reckless changes in the text,

chiefly with the unhallowed object of mystifying those engaged in the same field. With a malignity that was not without humour, he supplied, too, many obscene notes to coarse expressions, and he pretended that he owed his indecencies to one or other of two highly respectable clergymen, Richard Amner and John Collins, whose surnames were in each instance appended. He had known and quarrelled with both. Such proofs of his perversity justified the title which Gifford applied to him of 'the Puck of Commentators.'

Edmund Malone, who lacked Steevens's quick wit and incisive style, was a laborious and amiable archæologist, without much ear for poetry or delicate literary taste. He threw abundance of new light on Shakespeare's biography and on the chronology and sources of his works, while his researches into the beginnings of the English stage added a new chapter of first-rate importance to English literary history. To Malone is due the first rational 'attempt to ascertain the order in which the plays attributed to Shakespeare were written.' His earliest results on the topic were contributed to Steevens's edition of 1778. Two years later he published, as a supplement to Steevens's work, two volumes containing a history of the Elizabethan stage, with reprints of Arthur Brooke's 'Romeus and Juliet,' Shakespeare's Poems, and the plays falsely ascribed to him in the Third and Fourth Folios. A quarrel with Steevens followed, and was never closed. In 1787 Malone issued 'A Dissertation on the Three Parts of King Henry VI,' tending to show that those plays were not originally written by Shakespeare. In 1790 appeared his edition of Shakespeare in ten volumes, the first in two parts.

Edmund
Malone,
1741-
1812.

What is known among booksellers as the 'First Variorum' edition of Shakespeare was prepared by Steevens's friend, Isaac Reed, after Steevens's death. It was based on a copy of Steevens's work of 1793, which had been enriched with numerous manuscript additions, and it embodied the published notes and prefaces of preceding editors. It was published in twenty-one volumes in 1803. The 'Second Variorum' edition, which was mainly a reprint of the first, was published in twenty-one volumes in 1813. The 'Third Variorum' was prepared for the press by James Boswell the younger, the son of Dr. Johnson's biographer. It was based on Malone's edition of 1790, but included

Variorum
editions.

massive accumulations of notes left in manuscript by Malone at his death. Malone had been long engaged on a revision of his edition, but died in 1812, before it was completed. Boswell's 'Malone,' as the new work is often called, appeared in twenty-one volumes in 1821. It is the most valuable of all collective editions of Shakespeare's works, but the three volumes of preliminary essays on Shakespeare's biography and writings, and the illustrative notes brought together in the final volume, are confusedly arranged and are unindexed; many of the essays and notes break off abruptly at the point at which they were left at Malone's death. A new 'Variorum' edition, on an exhaustive scale, was undertaken by Mr. H. Howard Furness of Philadelphia, and eleven volumes have appeared since 1871 ('Romeo and Juliet,' 'Macbeth,' 'Hamlet,' 2 vols., 'King Lear,' 'Othello,' 'Merchant of Venice,' 'As You Like It,' 'Tempest,' 'Midsummer Night's Dream,' and 'Winter's Tale').

Nine-
teenth-
century
editors.

Of nineteenth-century editors who have prepared collective editions of Shakespeare's works with original annotations those who have most successfully pursued the great traditions of the eighteenth century are Alexander Dyce, Howard Staunton, Nikolaus Delius, the Cambridge editors William George Clark (1821-1878) and Dr. Aldis Wright, and the editors of the 'Bankside' edition of New York.

Alexan-
der Dyce,
1798-
1869.

Alexander Dyce was almost as well read as Steevens in Elizabethan literature, and especially in the drama of the period, and his edition of Shakespeare in nine volumes, which was first published in 1857, has many new and valuable illustrative notes and a few good textual emendations, as well as a useful glossary; but Dyce's annotations are not always adequate, and often tantalise the reader by their brevity. Howard Staunton's edition first appeared in three volumes between 1868 and 1870. He also was well read in contemporary literature and was an acute textual critic. His introductions bring together much interesting stage history. Nikolaus Delius's edition was issued at Elberfeld in seven volumes between 1854 and 1861. Delius's text is formed on sound critical principles and is to be trusted thoroughly. A fifth edition in two volumes appeared in 1882. The Cambridge edition, which first appeared in nine volumes between 1863 and 1866, exhaustively notes the textual variations of all preceding

Howard
Staunton,
1810-
1874.

Nikolaus
Delius,
1813-
1888.

editions, and supplies the best and fullest *apparatus criticus*. (Of new editions, one dated 1887 is also in nine volumes, and another, dated 1893, in forty volumes.) In America the most valuable of recent contributions to the textual study of Shakespeare is the 'Bankside' edition of twenty-one of the plays, the first volume of which was published by the Shakespeare Society of New York in 1888. Twenty plays have already appeared, each in a separate volume, under the general editorship of Mr. Appleton Morgan, prefaced by a critical essay from the pen of a Shakespearean scholar of repute; the twenty-first volume, which is to supply 'Othello,' is announced for early issue. Of the twenty-one selected plays, sixteen were printed in quarto before the publication of the First Folio, and five were based on older plays by other hands, which were also published in quarto before the First Folio. In the 'Bankside' edition the First Folio versions and the earlier quarto versions are printed in full, face to face, on parallel pages. A 'Sequel' to the 'Bankside' edition, published in 1894, treats in similar fashion the First Folio text of the 'Comedy of Errors' and the text of the Globe edition.

The
Cambridge
edition,
1863-6.

The
Bankside
edition.

Other editors of the complete works of Shakespeare of the nineteenth century whose labours, although of some value, present fewer distinctive characteristics, are: William Harness (1825, 8 vols.); Samuel Weller Singer (1826, 10 vols., printed at the Chiswick Press for William Pickering, illustrated by Stothard and others; reissued in 1856 with essays by William Watkiss Lloyd); Charles Knight, with discursive notes and pictorial illustrations by William Harvey, F. W. Fairholt, and others ('Pictorial edition,' 8 vols., including biography and the doubtful plays, 1838-43, often reissued under different designations); Bryan Waller Procter, i.e. Barry Cornwall (1839-43, 3 vols.), illustrated by Kenny Meadows; John Payne Collier (1841-4, 8 vols.; another edition, 8 vols., privately printed, 1878, 4to); Gulian Crommelin Verplanck (1786-1870), Vice-Chancellor of the University of New York (New York, in serial parts, 1844-6, and in 3 vols. 8vo, 1847, with woodcuts after previously published designs of Kenny Meadows, William Harvey, and others); Samuel Phelps, the actor (1852-4, 2 vols.; another edition, 1882-4); J. O. Halliwell (1853-61, 15 vols. folio, with an encyclopædic collection of annotations of earlier editors and pictorial illustrations); Richard

Other
nine-
teenth-
century
editions.

Grant White (Boston, U.S.A., 1857-65, 12 vols.); W. J. Rolfe (New York, 1871-96, 40 vols.); the Rev. H. N. Hudson (the Harvard edition, Boston, 1881, 20 vols.) The latest complete annotated editions are 'The Henry Irving Shakespeare,' edited by F. A. Marshall and others—especially useful for notes on stage history (8 vols. 1888-1890); 'The Temple Shakespeare,' concisely edited by Mr. Israel Gollancz (40 vols. 12mo, 1894-6); and 'The Eversley Shakespeare,' edited by Professor C. H. Herford (10 vols. 8vo, 1899).

Of one-volume editions of the unannotated text, the best are the Globe, edited by W. G. Clark and Dr. Aldis Wright (1864, and constantly reprinted—since 1891 with a new and useful glossary); the Leopold (1876), from the text of Delius, with preface by Dr. Furnivall; and the Oxford, edited by Mr. W. J. Craig (1894).

XVIII

POSTHUMOUS REPUTATION

SHAKESPEARE defied at every stage in his career the laws of the classical drama. He rode roughshod over the unities of time, place, and action. There were critics in his day who zealously championed the ancient rules, and viewed with distrust any infringement of them. But the force of Shakespeare's genius—its revelation of new methods of dramatic art—was not lost on the lovers of the ancient ways; and even those who, to assuage their consciences, entered a formal protest against his innovations, soon swelled the chorus of praise with which his work was welcomed by contemporary playgoers, cultured and uncultured alike. The unauthorised publishers of 'Troilus and Cressida' in 1608 faithfully echoed public opinion when they prefaced the work with the note: 'This author's comedies are so framed to the life that they serve for the most common commentaries of all actions of our lives, showing such a dexterity and power of wit that the most displeased with plays are pleased with his comedies. . . . So much and such savoured salt of wit is in his comedies that they seem for their height of pleasure to be born in the sea that brought forth Venus.'

Anticipating the final verdict, the editors of the First Folio wrote, seven years after Shakespeare's death: 'These plays have had their trial already and stood out all appeals.' Ben Jonson, the staunchest champion of classical canons, noted that Shakespeare 'wanted art,' but he allowed him in verses, prefixed to the First Folio, the first place among all dramatists, including those of Greece and Rome, and claimed that all Europe owed him homage:

Ben
Jonson's
tribute.

Triumph, my Britain, thou hast one to show,
To whom all scenes [i.e. stages] of Europe homage owe.
He was not of an age, but for all time.

In 1630 Milton penned in like strains an epitaph on 'the great heir of fame :'

What needs my Shakespeare for his honoured bones
The labour of an age in piled stones?
Or that his hallowed reliques should be hid
Under a star-ypointing pyramid?
Dear son of memory, great heir of fame,
What need'st thou such weak witness of thy name?
Thou in our wonder and astonishment
Hast built thyself a lifelong monument.

A writer of fine insight who veiled himself under the initials I. M. S. contributed to the Second Folio of 1632 a splendid eulogy. The opening lines declare 'Shakespeare's freehold' to have been

A mind reflecting ages past, whose clear
And equal surface can make things appear
Distant a thousand years, and represent
Them in their lively colours' just extent.

It was his faculty

To outrun hasty time, retrieve the fates,
Roll back the heavens, blow ope the iron gates
Of death and Lethe, where (confused) lie
Great heaps of ruinous mortality.

Milton and I. M. S. were followed within ten years by critics of tastes so varied as the dramatist of domesticity Thomas Heywood, the gallant lyrist Sir John Suckling, the philosophic and 'ever-memorable' John Hales of Eton, and the untiring versifier of the stage and court, Sir William D'Avenant. Before 1640 Hales is said to have triumphantly established, in a public dispute held with men of learning in his rooms at Eton, the proposition that 'there was no subject of which any poet ever writ but he could produce it much better done in Shakespeare.' Leonard Digges (in the 1640 edition of the 'Poems') asserted that every revival of Shakespeare's plays drew crowds to pit, boxes, and galleries alike. At a little later date, Shakespeare's plays were the 'closet companions' of Charles I's 'solitudes.'

After the Restoration public taste in England veered towards the French and classical dramatic models. Shakespeare's work was subjected to some unfavourable criticism as the product of nature to the exclusion of art, but the eclipse proved more partial and temporary than is commonly

admitted. The pedantic censure of Thomas Rymer on the score of Shakespeare's indifference to the classical canons attracted attention, but awoke in England no substantial echo. In his 'Short View of Tragedy' (1692) Rymer mainly concentrated his attention on 'Othello,' and reached the eccentric conclusion that it was 'a bloody farce without salt or savour.' In Pepys's eyes 'The Tempest' had 'no great wit,' and 'Midsummer Night's Dream' was 'the most insipid and ridiculous play;' yet this exacting critic witnessed thirty-six performances of twelve of Shakespeare's plays between October 11, 1660, and February 6, 1668-9, seeing 'Hamlet' four times, and 'Macbeth,' which he admitted to be 'a most excellent play for variety,' nine times. Dryden, the literary dictator of the day, repeatedly complained of Shakespeare's inequalities—'he is the very Janus of poets.' But in almost the same breath Dryden declared that Shakespeare was held in as much veneration among Englishmen as Æschylus among the Athenians, and that 'he was the man who of all modern and perhaps ancient poets had the largest and most comprehensive soul. . . . When he describes anything, you more than see it—you feel it too.' In 1693, when Sir Godfrey Kneller presented Dryden with a copy of the Chandos portrait of Shakespeare, the poet acknowledged the gift thus :

Dryden's
view.

TO SIR GODFREY KNELLER.

Shakspear, thy Gift, I place before my sight ;
With awe, I ask his Blessing ere I write ;
With Reverence look on his Majestick Face ;
Proud to be less, but of his Godlike Race.
His Soul Inspires me, while thy Praise I write,
And I, like *Teucer*, under *Ajax* fight.

Writers of Charles II's reign of such opposite temperaments as Margaret Cavendish, Duchess of Newcastle, and Sir Charles Sedley vigorously argued for Shakespeare's supremacy. As a girl the sober duchess declares she fell in love with Shakespeare. In her 'Sociable Letters,' which were published in 1664, she enthusiastically, if diffusely, described how Shakespeare creates the illusion that he had been 'transformed into every one of those persons he hath described,' and suffered all their emotions. When she witnessed one of his tragedies she felt persuaded that she was witnessing an episode in real life. 'Indeed,' she concludes, 'Shakespeare had a clear judgment, a quick wit,

a subtle observation, a deep apprehension, and a most eloquent elocution.' The profligate Sedley, in a prologue to the 'Wary Widdow,' a comedy by one Higden, produced in 1693, apostrophised Shakespeare thus :

Shackspear whose fruitfull Genius, happy wit
Was fram'd and finisht at a lucky hit
The pride of Nature, and the shame of Schools,
Born to Create, and not to Learn from Rules.

Restora-
tion adap-
tations.

Many adaptations of Shakespeare's plays were contrived to meet current sentiment of a less admirable type. But they failed efficiently to supersede the originals. Dryden and D'Avenant converted 'The Tempest' into an opera (1670). D'Avenant single-handed adapted 'The Two Noble Kinsmen' (1668) and 'Macbeth' (1674). Dryden dealt similarly with 'Troilus' (1679); Thomas Duffett with 'The Tempest' (1675); Shadwell with 'Timon' (1678); Nahum Tate with 'Richard II' (1681), 'Lear' (1681), and 'Coriolanus' (1682); John Crowne with 'Henry VI' (1681); D'Urfey with 'Cymbeline' (1682); Ravenscroft with 'Titus Andronicus' (1687); Otway with 'Romeo and Juliet' (1692); and John Sheffield, Duke of Buckingham, with 'Julius Cæsar' (1692). But during the same period the chief actor of the day, Thomas Betterton, won his spurs as the interpreter of Shakespeare's leading parts, often in unrevised versions. Hamlet was accounted that actor's masterpiece. 'No succeeding tragedy for several years,' wrote Downes, the prompter at Betterton's theatre, 'got more reputation or money to the company than this.'

From
1702
onwards.

From the accession of Queen Anne to the present day the tide of Shakespeare's reputation, both on the stage and among critics, has flowed onward almost uninterruptedly. The censorious critic, John Dennis, in his 'Letters' on Shakespeare's 'genius,' gave his work in 1711 whole-hearted commendation, and two of the greatest men of letters of the eighteenth century, Pope and Johnson, although they did not withhold all censure, paid him, as we have seen, the homage of becoming his editors. The school of textual criticism which Theobald and Capell founded in the middle years of the century has never ceased its activity since their day. Edmund Malone's devotion at the end of the eighteenth century to the biography of the poet and the contemporary history of the stage secured for him a vast

band of disciples, of whom Joseph Hunter and John Payne Collier well deserve mention. But of all Malone's successors, James Orchard Halliwell, afterwards Halliwell-Phillipps (1820-1889), has made the most important additions to our knowledge of Shakespeare's biography.

Meanwhile, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, there arose a third school to expound exclusively the æsthetic excellence of the plays. In its inception the æsthetic school owed much to the methods of Schlegel and other admiring critics of Shakespeare in Germany. But Coleridge in his 'Notes and Lectures' and Hazlitt in his 'Characters of Shakespeare's plays' (1817) are the best representatives of the æsthetic school in this or any other country. Although Professor Dowden, in his 'Shakespeare, his Mind and Art' (1874), and Mr. Swinburne in his 'Study of Shakespeare' (1880), are worthy followers, Coleridge and Hazlitt remain as æsthetic critics unsurpassed. In the effort to supply a fuller interpretation of Shakespeare's works—textual, historical, and æsthetic—two publishing societies have done much valuable work. 'The Shakespeare Society' was founded in 1841 by Collier, Halliwell, and their friends, and published some forty-eight volumes before its dissolution in 1853. The New Shakspeare Society, which was founded by Dr. Furnivall in 1874, issued during the ensuing twenty years twenty-seven publications, illustrative mainly of the text and of contemporary life and literature.

In 1769 Shakespeare's 'jubilee' was celebrated for three days (September 6-8) at Stratford, under the direction of Garrick, Dr. Arne, and Boswell. The festivities were repeated on a small scale in April 1827 and April 1830. 'The Shakespeare tercentenary festival,' which was held at Stratford from April 23 to May 4, 1864, claimed to be a national celebration.

Stratford
festivals.

On the English stage the name of every eminent actor since Betterton, the great actor of the period of the Restoration, has been identified with Shakespearean parts. Steele, writing in the 'Tatler' (No. 167) in reference to Betterton's funeral in the cloisters of Westminster Abbey on May 2, 1710, instanced his rendering of Othello as proof of an unsurpassable talent in realising Shakespeare's subtlest conceptions on the stage. One great and welcome innovation in Shakespearean acting is closely associated with Betterton's name. He encouraged the substitution, which

On the
English
stage.

The first appearance of actresses in Shakespearean parts.

Killigrew inaugurated, of women for boys in female parts. The first *role* that was professionally rendered by a woman in a public theatre was that of Desdemona in 'Othello,' apparently on December 8, 1660. Thomas Jordan, a very humble poet, wrote a prologue to notify the new procedure, and referred to the absurdity of the old custom :

For to speak truth, men act, that are between
Forty and fifty, wenches of fifteen,
With bone so large and nerve so uncompliant,
When you call DESDEMONA, enter GIANT.

The actress on the occasion is said to have been Mrs. Margaret Hughes, Prince Rupert's mistress ; but Betterton's wife, who was at first known on the stage as Mrs. Saunderson, was the first actress to present a series of Shakespeare's great female characters. Mrs. Betterton gave her husband powerful support, from 1663 onwards, in such *roles* as Ophelia, Juliet, Queen Katharine, and Lady Macbeth. Betterton formed a school of actors who carried on his traditions for many years after his death. Robert Wilks (1670-1732) as Hamlet, and Barton Booth (1681-1733) as Henry VIII and Hotspur, were popularly accounted no unworthy successors. Colley Cibber (1671-1757) as actor, theatrical manager, and dramatic critic, was both a loyal disciple of Betterton and a lover of Shakespeare, though his vanity and his faith in the ideals of the Restoration incited him to perpetrate many outrages on Shakespeare's text when preparing it for theatrical representation. His notorious adaptation of 'Richard III,' which was first produced in 1700, long held the stage to the exclusion of the original version.

David Garrick,
1717-
1779.

Towards the middle of the eighteenth century all earlier efforts to interpret Shakespeare in the playhouse were eclipsed in public esteem by the concentrated energy and intelligence of David Garrick. Garrick's enthusiasm for the poet and his histrionic genius riveted Shakespeare's hold on public taste. His claim to have restored to the stage the text of Shakespeare—purified of Restoration defilements—cannot be allowed without serious qualifications. Garrick had no scruple in presenting plays of Shakespeare in versions that he or his friends had recklessly garbled. He supplied 'Romeo and Juliet' with a happy ending ; he converted the 'Taming of The Shrew' into the

farce of 'Katharine and Petruchio,' 1754; he introduced radical changes in 'Antony and Cleopatra,' 'Two Gentlemen of Verona,' 'Cymbeline,' and 'Midsummer Night's Dream.' Nevertheless, no actor has won an equally exalted reputation in so vast and varied a repertory of Shakespearean rôles. His triumphant *début* as Richard III in 1741 was followed by equally successful performances of Hamlet, Lear, Macbeth, King John, Romeo, Henry IV, Iago, Leontes, Benedick, and Antony in 'Antony and Cleopatra.' Garrick was not quite undeservedly buried in Westminster Abbey on February 1, 1779, at the foot of Shakespeare's statue.

Garrick was ably seconded by Mrs. Clive (1711-1785), Mrs. Cibber (1714-1766), and Mrs. Pritchard (1711-1768). Mrs. Cibber as Constance in 'King John,' and Mrs. Pritchard in *Lady Macbeth*, excited something of the same enthusiasm as Garrick in Richard III and Lear. There were, too, contemporary critics who judged rival actors to show in certain parts powers equal, if not superior, to those of Garrick. Charles Macklin (1697?-1797) for nearly half a century, from 1735 to 1785, gave many hundred performances of a masterly rendering of Shylock. The character had, for many years previous to Macklin's assumption of it, been allotted to comic actors, but Macklin effectively concentrated his energy on the tragic significance of the part with an effect that Garrick could not surpass. Macklin was also reckoned successful in Polonius and Iago. John Henderson, the Bath Roscius (1747-1785), who, like Garrick, was buried in Westminster Abbey, derived immense popularity from his representation of Falstaff; while in subordinate characters like Mercutio, Slender, Jaques, Touchstone, and Sir Toby Belch, John Palmer (1742?-1798) was held to approach perfection. But Garrick was the accredited chief of the theatrical profession until his death. He was then succeeded in his place of predominance by John Philip Kemble, who derived invaluable support from his association with one abler than himself, his sister, Mrs. Siddons.

Somewhat stilted and declamatory in speech, Kemble enacted a wide range of characters of Shakespearean tragedy with a dignity that won the admiration of Pitt, Sir Walter Scott, Charles Lamb, and Leigh Hunt. Coriolanus was regarded as his masterpiece, but his renderings of Hamlet, King John, Wolsey, the Duke in 'Measure for Measure,' Leontes, and Brutus satisfied the most exacting canons of

John
Philip
Kemble,
1757-
1823.

Mrs.
Sarah
Siddons,
1755-
1831.

contemporary theatrical criticism. Kemble's sister, Mrs. Siddons, was the greatest actress that Shakespeare's countrymen have known. Her noble and awe-inspiring presentation of Lady Macbeth, her Constance, her Queen Katharine, have, according to the best testimony, not been equalled even by the achievements of the eminent actresses of France.

Edmund
Kean,
1787-
1833.

During the present century the most conspicuous histrionic successes in Shakespearean drama have been won by Edmund Kean, whose triumphant rendering of Shylock on his first appearance at Drury Lane Theatre on January 26, 1814, is one of the most stirring incidents in the history of the English stage. Kean defied the rigid convention of the 'Kemble School,' and gave free rein to his impetuous passions. Besides Shylock, he excelled in Richard III, Othello, Hamlet, and Lear. No less a critic than Coleridge declared that to see him act was like 'reading Shakespeare by flashes of lightning.' Among other Shakespearean actors of Kean's period a high place was allotted by public esteem to George Frederick Cooke (1756-1811), whose Richard III, first given in London at Covent Garden Theatre, October 31, 1801, was accounted his masterpiece. Charles Lamb, writing in 1822, declared that of all the actors who flourished in his time, Robert Bensley 'had most of the swell of soul,' and Lamb gave with a fine enthusiasm in his 'Essays of Elia' an analysis (which has become classical) of Bensley's performance of Malvolio. But Bensley's powers were rated more moderately by more experienced playgoers. Lamb's praises of Mrs. Jordan (1762-1816) in Ophelia, Helena, and Viola in 'Twelfth Night,' are corroborated by the eulogies of Hazlitt and Leigh Hunt. In the part of Rosalind Mrs. Jordan is reported on all sides to have beaten Mrs. Siddons out of the field.

William
Charles
Mac-
ready,
1793-
1873.

The torch thus lit by Garrick, by the Kembles, by Kean and his contemporaries was worthily kept alive by William Charles Macready, a cultivated and conscientious actor, who, during a professional career of more than forty years (1810-1851), assumed every great part in Shakespearean tragedy. Although Macready lacked the classical bearing of Kemble or the intense passion of Kean, he won as the interpreter of Shakespeare the whole-hearted suffrages of the educated public. Macready's chief associate in women characters was Helen Faucit (1820-1898, afterwards Lady Martin), whose refined impersonations of Imogen, Beatrice,

Juliet, and Rosalind form an attractive chapter in the history of the stage.

The most notable tribute paid to Shakespeare by any actor-manager of recent times was paid by Samuel Phelps (1804-1878), who gave during his tenure of Sadler's Wells Theatre between 1844 and 1862 competent representations of all the plays save six; only 'Richard II,' the three parts of 'Henry VI,' 'Troilus and Cressida,' and 'Titus Andronicus' were omitted. The ablest actress who appeared with Phelps at Sadler's Wells was Mrs. Warner (1804-1854), who had previously supported Macready in many Shakespearean dramas, and was a partner in Phelps's Shakespearean speculation in the early days of the venture. Sir Henry Irving, who since 1878 has been ably seconded by Miss Ellen Terry, has revived at the Lyceum Theatre between 1874 and the present time eleven plays ('Hamlet,' 'Macbeth,' 'Othello,' 'Richard III,' 'The Merchant of Venice,' 'Much Ado about Nothing,' 'Twelfth Night,' 'Romeo and Juliet,' 'King Lear,' 'Henry VIII,' and 'Cymbeline'), and has given all of them every advantage that they can derive from thoughtful acting as well as from lavish scenic elaboration. 'Hamlet' in 1874-5 and 'Macbeth' in 1888-9 were each performed by Sir Henry Irving for 200 nights in uninterrupted succession; these are the longest continuous runs that any of Shakespeare's plays are known to have enjoyed. But theatrical revivals of plays of Shakespeare are in England intermittent, and no theatrical manager since Phelps's retirement has sought systematically to illustrate on the stage the full range of Shakespearean drama. Far more in this direction has been attempted in Germany. In one respect the history of recent Shakespearean representations can be viewed by the literary student with unqualified satisfaction. Although some changes of text or some rearrangement of the scenes are found imperative in all theatrical representations of Shakespeare, a growing public sentiment in England and elsewhere has for many years favoured as loyal an adherence to the authorised version of the plays as is practicable on the part of theatrical managers; and the evil traditions of the stage which sanctioned the perversions of the eighteenth century are happily wellnigh extinct.

Music and art in England owe much to Shakespeare's influence. From Thomas Morley, Purcell, Matthew Locke,

Recent
revivals.

In music
and art.

and Arne to William Linley, Sir Henry Bishop, and Sir Arthur Sullivan, every distinguished musician has sought to improve on his predecessor's setting of one or more of Shakespeare's songs, or has composed concerted music in illustration of some of his dramatic themes. In art, the publisher John Boydell organised in 1787 a scheme for illustrating scenes in Shakespeare's work by the greatest living English artists. Some fine pictures were the result. A hundred and sixty-eight were painted in all, and the artists, whom Boydell employed, included Sir Joshua Reynolds, George Romney, Thomas Stothard, John Opie, Benjamin West, James Barry, and Henry Fuseli. All the pictures were exhibited from time to time between 1789 and 1804 at a gallery specially built for the purpose in Pall Mall, and in 1802 Boydell published a collection of engravings of the chief pictures. The great series of paintings was dispersed by auction in 1805. Few eminent artists of later date, from Daniel Maclise to Sir John Millais, have lacked the ambition to interpret some scene or character of Shakespearean drama.

In America no less enthusiasm for Shakespeare has been manifested than in England. Editors and critics are hardly less numerous there, and some criticism from American pens, like that of James Russell Lowell, has reached the highest literary level. Nowhere, perhaps, has more labour been devoted to the study of his works than that given by Mr. H. H. Furness of Philadelphia to the preparation of his 'New Variorum' edition. The Barton collection of Shakespeareana in the Boston Public Library is one of the most valuable extant, and the elaborate catalogue (1878-80) contains some 2,500 entries. First of Shakespeare's plays to be represented in America, 'Richard III' was performed in New York in March 1750. More recently Junius Brutus Booth (1796-1852), Edwin Forrest (1806-1892), John Edward McCullough, Forrest's disciple (1837-1885), Edwin Booth, Junius Brutus Booth's son (1833-1893), Charlotte Cushman (1816-1876), and Miss Ada Rehan (*b.* 1859) have maintained on the American stage the great traditions of Shakespearean acting; while Mr. E. A. Abbey has devoted high artistic gifts to pictorial representation of scenes from the plays.

The Bible, alone of literary compositions, has been translated more frequently or into a greater number of

languages than the works of Shakespeare. The progress of his reputation in Germany, France, Italy, and Russia was somewhat slow at the outset. But in Germany the poet has received for nearly a century and a half a recognition scarcely less pronounced than that accorded him in America and in his own country. Three of Shakespeare's plays, now in the Zurich Library, were brought thither by J. R. Hess from England in 1614. As early as 1626 'Hamlet,' 'King Lear,' and 'Romeo and Juliet' were acted at Dresden, and a version of 'The Taming of The Shrew' was played there and elsewhere at the end of the seventeenth century. But such mention of Shakespeare as is found in German literature between 1640 and 1740 only indicates a knowledge on the part of German readers either of Dryden's criticisms or of the accounts of him printed in English encyclopædias. The earliest sign of a direct acquaintance with the plays is a poor translation of 'Julius Cæsar' into German by Baron C. W. von Borck, formerly Prussian minister in London, which was published at Berlin in 1741. A worse rendering of 'Romeo and Juliet' followed in 1758. Meanwhile J. C. Gottsched (1700-66), an influential man of letters, warmly denounced Shakespeare in a review of von Borck's effort in 'Beiträge zur deutschen Sprache' and elsewhere. Lessing came without delay to Shakespeare's rescue, and set his reputation, in the estimation of the German public, on that exalted pedestal which it has not ceased to occupy. It was in 1759, in a journal entitled 'Litteraturbriefe,' that Lessing first claimed for Shakespeare superiority, not only to the French dramatists Racine and Corneille, who hitherto had dominated European taste, but to all ancient or modern poets. Lessing's doctrine, which he developed in his 'Hamburgische Dramaturgie' (Hamburg, 1767, 2 vols. 8vo) was at once accepted by the poet Johann Gottfried Herder in the 'Blätter von deutschen Art und Kunst,' 1771. Christopher Martin Wieland (1733-1813) in 1762 began a prose translation which Johann Joachim Eschenburg (1743-1820) completed (Zurich, 13 vols., 1775-84). Between 1797 and 1833 there appeared at intervals the classical German rendering by August Wilhelm von Schlegel and Ludwig Tieck, leaders of the romantic school of German literature, whose creed embodied, as one of its first articles, an unwavering veneration for Shakespeare. Schlegel translated only seventeen plays, and his workmanship excels that

In
Germany.

German
trans
lations.

of the rest of the translation. Tieck's part in the undertaking was mainly confined to editing translations by various hands. Many other German translations in verse were undertaken during the same period—by J. H. Voss and his sons (Leipzig, 1818-29), by J. W. O. Benda (Leipzig, 1825-6), by J. Körner (Vienna, 1836), by A. Böttger (Leipzig, 1836-7), by E. Ortlepp (Stuttgart, 1838-9), and by A. Keller and M. Rapp (Stuttgart, 1843-6). The best of more recent German translations is that by a band of poets and eminent men of letters including Friedrich von Bodenstedt, Ferdinand von Freiligrath, and Paul Heyse (Leipzig, 1867-71, 38 vols.) Most of these versions have been many times reissued, but, despite the high merits of von Bodenstedt and his companions' performance, Schlegel and Tieck's achievement still holds the field.

German
criticism.

Schlegel was a critic as well as a translator. His lectures on 'Shakespeare and the Drama,' which were delivered at Vienna in 1808, and were translated into English in 1815, are worthy of comparison with those of Coleridge, who owed much to their influence. Wordsworth in 1815 declared that Schlegel and his disciples first marked out the right road in æsthetic criticism, and enjoyed at the moment superiority over all English æsthetic critics of Shakespeare. Subsequently Goethe poured forth, in his voluminous writings, a mass of criticism even more illuminating and appreciative than Schlegel's. Although Goethe deemed Shakespeare's works unsuited to the stage, he adapted 'Romeo and Juliet' for the Weimar Theatre, while Schiller prepared 'Macbeth' (Stuttgart, 1801). Heine published in 1838 charming studies of Shakespeare's heroines (English translation 1895), and acknowledged only one defect in Shakespeare—that he was an Englishman.

Modern
German
writers on
Shake-
speare.

During the last half-century textual, æsthetic, and biographical criticism has been pursued in Germany with unflagging industry and energy; and although laboured and supersubtle theorising characterises much German æsthetic criticism, its mass and variety testify to the impressiveness of the appeal that Shakespeare's work has made to the German intellect. The efforts to stem the current of Shakespearean worship made by the realistic critic, Gustav Rümelin, in his 'Shakespearestudien' (Stuttgart, 1866), and subsequently by the dramatist, J. R. Benedix, in 'Die Shakespearemanie' (Stuttgart, 1873, 8vo), proved of no

effect. In studies of the text and metre Nikolaus Delius (1813-88) should, among recent German writers, be accorded the first place; and in studies of the biography and stage history Friedrich Karl Elze (1821-89). Of recent æsthetic critics in Germany, those best deserving recognition probably are Friedrich Alexander Theodor Kreyssig (1818-79), author of 'Vorlesungen über Shakespeare' (Berlin, 1858 and 1874) and 'Shakespeare-Fragen' (Leipzig, 1871); Otto Ludwig the poet (1813-65), author of 'Shakespeare-Studien,' and Eduard Wilhelm Sievers (1820-95), author of many valuable essays as well as of an uncompleted biography. Ulrici's 'Shakespeare's Dramatic Art' (first published at Halle in 1839) and Gervinus's Commentaries (first published at Leipzig in 1848-9), both of which are familiar in English translations, are suggestive but unconvincing æsthetic interpretations. The German Shakespeare Society, which was founded at Weimar in 1865, has published thirty-five year-books (edited successively by von Bodenstedt, Delius, Elze, F. A. Leo, and Prof. Brandl with Wolfgang Keller); each contains useful contributions to Shakespearean study.

Shakespeare has been no less effectually nationalised on the German stage. The four great actors—Friedrich Ulrich Ludwig Schroeder (1744-1816) of Hamburg, Ludwig Devrient (1784-1832), his nephew Gustav Emil Devrient (1803-1872), and Ludwig Barnay (*b.* 1842)—largely derived their fame from their successful assumptions of Shakespearean characters. Another of Ludwig Devrient's nephews, Eduard (1801-77), also an actor, prepared, with his son Otto, an acting German edition (Leipzig, 1873 and following years). An acting edition by Wilhelm Oechelhaeuser appeared previously at Berlin in 1871. Twenty-eight of the thirty-seven plays assigned to Shakespeare are now on recognised lists of German acting plays, including all the histories. In 1896 as many as 910 performances of twenty-three of Shakespeare's plays were given in German theatres. In 1897 no fewer than 930 performances were given of twenty-four plays. In 1898 performances of twenty-six plays reached a total of 895—an average of nearly three Shakespearean representations a day in the German-speaking districts of Europe. It is not only in capitals like Berlin and Vienna that the representations are frequent and popular. In towns like Altona, Breslau, Frankfort-on-the-Maine, Hamburg, Magde-

On the
German
stage.

burg, and Rostock, Shakespeare is acted constantly, and the greater number of his dramas is regularly kept in rehearsal. 'Othello,' 'Hamlet,' 'Romeo and Juliet,' and 'The Taming of The Shrew' usually prove most attractive. Of the many German musical composers who have worked on Shakespearean themes, Mendelssohn (in 'Midsummer Night's Dream'), Schumann, and Franz Schubert (in setting separate songs) have achieved the greatest success.

In France Shakespeare won recognition after a longer struggle than in Germany. Cyrano de Bergerac (1619-55), in his tragedy of 'Agrippine,' seemed to echo passages in 'Cymbeline,' 'Hamlet,' and 'The Merchant of Venice,' but the resemblances prove to be accidental. It was Nicolas Clément, Louis XIV's librarian, who, first of Frenchmen, put on record an appreciation of Shakespeare. When, about 1680, he entered in the catalogue of the royal library the title of the Second Folio of 1632, he added a note in which he allowed Shakespeare imagination, natural thoughts, and ingenious expression, but deplored his obscenity. Half a century elapsed before public attention in France was again directed to Shakespeare. The Abbé Prévost, in his periodical 'Le Pour et Contre' (1733 et seq.), acknowledged his power. The Abbé Leblanc, in his 'Lettres d'un François' (1745), while crediting him with many grotesque extravagances, recognised ungrudgingly the sublimity of his style. But it is to Voltaire that his countrymen owe, as he himself boasted, their first effective introduction to Shakespeare. Voltaire studied Shakespeare thoroughly on his visit to England between 1726 and 1729, and his influence is visible in his own dramas. In his 'Lettres Philosophiques' (1731), afterwards reissued as 'Lettres sur les Anglais,' 1734 (Nos. xviii. and xix.), and in his 'Lettre sur la Tragédie' (1731), he expressed admiration for Shakespeare's genius, but attacked his want of taste and art. He described him as 'le Corneille de Londres, grand fou d'ailleurs, mais il a des morceaux admirables.' Writing to the Abbé des Fontaines in November 1735, Voltaire admitted many merits in 'Julius Cæsar,' on which he published 'Observations' in 1764. Johnson replied to Voltaire's general criticism in the preface to his edition (1765), and Mrs. Elizabeth Montagu in 1769 in a separate volume, which was translated into French in 1777. Diderot made, in his 'Encyclopédie,' the first stand in France against the Voltairean position, and increased

opportunities of studying Shakespeare's works increased the poet's vogue. Twelve plays were translated in De la Place's 'Théâtre Anglais' (1745-8). Jean-François Ducis (1733-1816) adapted without much insight six plays for the French stage, beginning in 1769 with 'Hamlet,' his version of which was acted with applause. In 1776 Pierre Le Tourneur began a bad prose translation (completed in 1782) of all Shakespeare's plays, and declared him to be 'the god of the theatre.' Voltaire protested against this estimate in a new remonstrance consisting of two letters, of which the first was read before the French Academy on August 25, 1776. Here Shakespeare was described as a barbarian, whose works—'a huge dunghill'—concealed some pearls.

Although Voltaire's censure was rejected by the majority of later French critics, it expressed a sentiment born of the genius of the nation, and made an impression that was only gradually effaced. Marmontel, La Harpe, Marie-Joseph Chénier, and Chateaubriand in his 'Essai sur Shakespeare,' 1801, inclined to Voltaire's view; but Madame de Staël wrote effectively on the other side in her 'De la Littérature,' 1804 (i. caps. 13, 14, ii. 5). 'At this day,' wrote Wordsworth in 1815, 'the French critics have abated nothing of their aversion to "this darling of our nation." "The English with their bouffon de Shakespeare" is as familiar an expression among them as in the time of Voltaire. Baron Grimm is the only French writer who seems to have perceived his infinite superiority to the first names of the French theatre; an advantage which the Parisian critic owed to his German blood and German education.' The revision of Le Tourneur's translation by François Guizot and A. Pichot in 1821 gave Shakespeare a fresh advantage. Paul Dupont, in 'Essais Littéraires sur Shakespeare' (Paris, 1828, 2 vols.), was the last French critic of repute to repeat Voltaire's censure unreservedly. Guizot, in his discourse 'Sur la Vie et les Œuvres de Shakespeare' (reprinted separately from the translation of 1821), as well as in his 'Shakespeare et son Temps' (1852); Villemain in a general essay, and Barante in a study of 'Hamlet,' acknowledge the mightiness of Shakespeare's genius with comparatively few qualifications. Other complete translations followed—by Francisque Michel (1839), by Benjamin Laroche (1851), and by Emil Montégut (1867), but the best is that in prose by François Victor Hugo (1859-66), whose father, Victor

French critics' gradual emancipation from Voltairean influence.

Hugo the poet, published a rhapsodical eulogy in 1864. Alfred Mézières's 'Shakespeare, ses Œuvres et ses Critiques' (Paris, 1860), is a saner appreciation.

On the
French
stage.

Meanwhile 'Hamlet' and 'Macbeth,' 'Othello,' and a few other Shakespearean plays, became stock pieces on the French stage. A powerful impetus to theatrical representation of Shakespeare in France was given by the performance in Paris of the chief plays by a strong company of English actors in the autumn of 1827. 'Hamlet' and 'Othello' were acted successively by Charles Kemble and Macready; Edmund Kean appeared as Richard III, Othello, and Shylock; Miss Smithson, who became the wife of Hector Berlioz the musician, filled the rôles of Ophelia, Juliet, Desdemona, Cordelia, and Portia. French critics were divided as to the merits of the performers, but most of them were enthusiastic in their commendations of the plays. Alfred de Vigny prepared a version of 'Othello' for the Théâtre-Français in 1829 with eminent success. An adaptation of 'Hamlet' by Alexandre Dumas was first performed in 1847, and a rendering by the Chevalier de Châtelain (1864) was often repeated. George Sand translated 'As You Like It' (Paris, 1856) for representation by the Comédie Française on April 12, 1856. 'Lady Macbeth' has been represented in recent years by Madame Sarah Bernhardt, and 'Hamlet' by M. Mounet Sully of the Théâtre-Français. Four French musicians—Berlioz in his symphony of 'Romeo and Juliet,' Gounod in his opera of 'Romeo and Juliet,' Ambroise Thomas in his opera of 'Hamlet,' and Saint-Saëns in his opera of 'Henry VIII'—have sought with public approval to interpret musically portions of Shakespeare's work.

in Italy.

In Italy Shakespeare was little known before the present century. Such references as eighteenth-century Italian writers made to him were based on remarks by Voltaire. The French adaptation of 'Hamlet' by Ducis was issued in Italian blank verse (Venice, 1774, 8vo). Complete translations of all the plays made direct from the English were issued by Michele Leoni in verse at Verona in 1819-22, and by Carlo Rusconi in prose at Padua in 1831 (new edit. Turin, 1858-9). 'Othello' and 'Romeo and Juliet' have been very often translated into Italian separately. The Italian actors, Madame Ristori (as Lady Macbeth), Salvini (as Othello), and Rossi rank among Shakespeare's most

effective interpreters. Verdi's operas on Macbeth, Othello, and Falstaff (the last two with libretti by Boito), manifest close and appreciative study of Shakespeare.

Two complete translations have been published in Dutch; one in prose by A. S. Kok (Amsterdam, 1873-1880), the other in verse by Dr. L. A. J. Burgersdijk (Leyden, 1884-8, 12 vols.) In Holland.

In Eastern Europe, Shakespeare first became known through French and German translations. Into Russian 'Romeo and Juliet' was translated in 1772, 'Richard III' in 1783, and 'Julius Cæsar' in 1786. Sumarakow translated Ducis' version of 'Hamlet' in 1784 for stage purposes, while the Empress Catherine II adapted the 'Merry Wives' and 'King John.' Numerous versions of all the chief plays followed; and in 1865 there appeared at St. Petersburg the best translation in verse (direct from the English), by Nekrasow and Gerbel. A prose translation, by N. Ketzcher, begun in 1862, was completed in 1879. Gerbel issued a Russian translation of the 'Sonnets' in 1880, and many critical essays in the language, original or translated, have been published. Almost every play has been represented in Russian on the Russian stage. In Russia.

A Polish version of 'Hamlet' was acted at Lemberg in 1797; and as many as sixteen plays now hold a recognised place among Polish acting plays. The standard Polish translation of Shakespeare's collected works appeared at Warsaw in 1875 (edited by the Polish poet Kraszewski), and is reckoned among the most successful renderings in a foreign tongue. In Poland.

In Hungary, Shakespeare's greatest works have since the beginning of the century been highly appreciated by students and by playgoers. A complete translation into Hungarian appeared at Kaschau in 1824. At the National Theatre at Budapest no fewer than twenty-two plays have been of late years included in the actors' repertory. In Hungary.

Other complete translations have been published in Bohemian (Prague, 1874), in Swedish (Lund, 1847-51), in Danish (1845-50), and Finnish (Helsingfors, 1892-5). In Spanish a complete translation is in course of publication (Madrid, 1885 et seq.), and the eminent Spanish critic Menéndez y Pelayo has set Shakespeare above Calderon. In Armenian, although only three plays ('Hamlet,' 'Romeo and Juliet,' and 'As You Like It') have been issued, the In other countries.

translation of the whole is ready for the press. Separate plays have appeared in Welsh, Portuguese, Friesic, Flemish, Servian, Roumanian, Maltese, Ukrainian, Wallachian, Croatian, modern Greek, Latin, Hebrew, and Japanese ; while a few have been rendered into Bengali, Hindustani, Marathi, Gujarati, Urdu, Kanarese, and other languages of India, and have been acted in native theatres.

XIX

GENERAL ESTIMATE

No estimate of Shakespeare's genius can be adequate. In knowledge of human character, in wealth of humour, in depth of passion, in fertility of fancy, and in soundness of judgment, he has no rival. It is true of him, as of no other writer, that his language and versification adapt themselves to every phase of sentiment, and sound every note in the scale of felicity. Some defects are to be acknowledged, but they sink into insignificance when measured by the magnitude of his achievement. Sudden transitions, elliptical expressions, mixed metaphors, indefensible verbal quibbles, and fantastic conceits at times create an atmosphere of obscurity. The student is perplexed, too, by obsolete words and by some hopelessly corrupt readings. But when the whole of Shakespeare's vast work is scrutinised with due attention, the glow of his imagination is seen to leave few passages wholly unilluminated. Some of his plots are hastily constructed and inconsistently developed, but the intensity of the interest with which he contrives to invest the personality of his heroes and heroines triumphs over halting or digressive treatment of the story in which they have their being. Although he was versed in the technicalities of stagecraft, he occasionally disregarded its elementary conditions. But the success of his presentments of human life and character depended little on his manipulation of theatrical machinery. His unassailable supremacy springs from the versatile working of his insight and intellect, by virtue of which his pen limned with unerring precision almost every gradation of thought and emotion that animates the living stage of the world.

General
estimate.

Shakespeare's mind, as Hazlitt suggested, contained within itself the germs of all faculty and feeling. He knew intuitively how every faculty and feeling would develop in

any conceivable change of fortune. Men and women—good or bad, old or young, wise or foolish, merry or sad, rich or poor—yielded their secrets to him, and his genius enabled him to give being in his pages to all the shapes of humanity that present themselves on the highway of life. Each of his characters gives voice to thought or passion with an individuality and a naturalness that rouse in the intelligent playgoer and reader the illusion that they are overhearing men and women speak unpremeditatedly among themselves, rather than that they are reading written speeches or hearing written speeches recited. The more closely the words are studied, the completer the illusion grows. Creatures of the imagination—fairies, ghosts, witches—are delineated with a like potency, and the reader or spectator feels instinctively that these supernatural entities could not speak, feel, or act otherwise than Shakespeare represents them. The creative power of poetry was never manifested to such effect as in the corporeal semblances in which Shakespeare clad the spirits of the air.

Character
of Shake-
peare's
achieve-
ment.

its
universal
recog-
nition.

So mighty a faculty sets at nought the common limitations of nationality, and in every quarter of the globe to which civilised life has penetrated Shakespeare's power is recognised. All the world over, language is applied to his creations that ordinarily applies to beings of flesh and blood. Hamlet and Othello, Lear and Macbeth, Falstaff and Shylock, Brutus and Romeo, Ariel and Caliban are studied in almost every civilised tongue as if they were historic personalities, and the chief of the impressive phrases that fall from their lips are rooted in the speech of civilised humanity. To Shakespeare the intellect of the world, speaking in divers accents, applies with one accord his own words: 'How noble in reason! how infinite in faculty! in apprehension how like a god!'

APPENDIX

I

THE STUDY OF SHAKESPEARE'S LIFE AND WORK

THE scantiness of contemporary records of Shakespeare's career has been much exaggerated. An investigation extending over two centuries has brought together a mass of detail which far exceeds that accessible in the case of any other contemporary professional writer. Nevertheless, some important links are missing, and at some critical points appeal to conjecture is inevitable. But the fully ascertained facts are numerous enough to define sharply the general direction that Shakespeare's career followed. Although the clues are in some places faint, the trail never altogether eludes the patient investigator.

Contemporary records abundant

Fuller, in his 'Worthies' (1662), attempted the first biographical notice of Shakespeare, with poor results. Aubrey, in his gossiping 'Lives of Eminent Men,' based his ampler information on reports communicated to him by William Beeston (*d.* 1682), an aged actor, whom Dryden called 'the chronicle of the stage,' and who was doubtless in the main a trustworthy witness. A few additional details were recorded in the seventeenth century by the Rev. John Ward (1629-81), vicar of Stratford-on-Avon from 1662 to 1668, in a diary and memorandum-book written between 1661 and 1663 (ed. C. A. Severn, 1839); by the Rev. William Fulman, whose manuscripts are at Corpus Christi College, Oxford (with valuable interpolations made before 1708 by the Rev. Richard Davies, vicar of Saperton, Gloucestershire); by John Dowdall, who recorded his experiences of travel through Warwickshire in 1693 (London, 1838); and by William Hall, who described a visit to Stratford in 1694 (London, 1884, from Hall's letter among the Bodleian MSS.) Phillips in his 'Theatrum Poetarum' (1675), and Langbaine in his 'English Dramatick Poets' (1691), confined themselves to elementary criticism. In 1709 Nicholas Rowe prefixed to his edition of the plays a more ambitious memoir than had yet been attempted and

First efforts in biography.

embodied some hitherto unrecorded Stratford and London traditions with which the actor Thomas Betterton supplied him. A little fresh gossip was collected by William Oldys, and was printed from his manuscript 'Adversaria' (now in the British Museum) as an appendix to Yeowell's 'Memoir of Oldys,' 1862. Pope, Johnson, and Steevens, in the biographical prefaces to their editions, mainly repeated the narratives of their predecessor, Rowe.

Bio-
graphers
of the
nine-
teenth-
century.

In the Prolegomena to the Variorum editions of 1803, 1813, and especially in that of 1821, there was embodied a mass of fresh information derived by Edmund Malone from systematic researches among the parochial records of Stratford, the manuscripts accumulated by the actor Alleyn at Dulwich, and official papers of state preserved in the public offices in London (now collected in the Public Record Office). The available knowledge of Elizabethan stage history, as well as of Shakespeare's biography, was thus greatly extended. John Payne Collier, in his 'History of English Dramatic Poetry' (1831), in his 'New Facts' about Shakespeare (1835), his 'New Particulars' (1836), and his 'Further Particulars' (1839), and in his editions of Henslowe's 'Diary' and the 'Alleyn Papers' for the Shakespeare Society, while occasionally throwing some further light on obscure places, foisted on Shakespeare's biography a series of ingeniously forged documents, against which the student is warned. Joseph Hunter in 'New Illustrations of Shakespeare' (1845) and George Russell French's 'Shakespeareana Genealogica' (1869) occasionally supplemented Malone's researches. James Orchard Halliwell (afterwards Halliwell-Phillipps) printed separately, between 1850 and 1884, in various privately issued publications, all the Stratford archives and extant legal documents bearing on Shakespeare's career, many of them for the first time. In 1881 Halliwell-Phillipps began the collective publication of materials for a full biography in his 'Outlines of the Life of Shakespeare'; this work was generously enlarged in successive editions until it acquired massive proportions; in the seventh edition of 1887, which embodied the author's final corrections and additions, it reached near 1,000 pages. (There have been three subsequent editions—the tenth and last being dated 1898—which reprint the seventh edition without change.) Mr. Frederick Gard Fleay, in his 'Shakespeare Manual' (1876), in his 'Life of Shakespeare' (1886), in his 'History of the Stage' (1890), and his 'Biographical Chronicle of the English Drama' (1891), adds much useful information respecting stage history and Shakespeare's relations with his fellow-dramatists, mainly derived from a study of the original editions of the plays of Shakespeare and of his contemporaries; but unfortunately many of Mr. Fleay's statements and conjectures are un-

authenticated. For notices of Stratford, R. B. Wheler's 'History and Antiquities' (1806), John R. Wise's 'Shakespeare, his Birthplace and its Neighbourhood' (1861), the present writer's 'Stratford-on-Avon to the Death of Shakespeare' (1890), and Mrs. C. C. Stopes's 'Shakespeare's Warwickshire Contemporaries' (1897), may be consulted. Wise appends to his volume a tentative 'glossary of words still used in Warwickshire to be found in Shakespeare.' The parish registers of Stratford have been edited by Mr. Richard Savage for the Parish Registers Society (1898-9). Nathan Drake's 'Shakespeare and his Times' (1817) and G. W. Thornbury's 'Shakespeare's England' (1856) collect much material respecting Shakespeare's social environment.

Stratford
topo-
graphy.

The chief monographs on special points in Shakespeare's biography are Dr. Richard Farmer's 'Essay on the Learning of Shakespeare' (1767), reprinted in the Variorum editions; Bishop Wordsworth's 'Shakespeare's Knowledge and Use of the Bible' (4th ed. 1892); Octavius Gilchrist's 'Examination of the Charges . . . of Ben Jonson's Enmity towards Shakespeare' (1808); W. J. Thoms's 'Was Shakespeare ever a Soldier?' (1849), a study based on an erroneous identification of the poet with another William Shakespeare; Lord Campbell's 'Shakespeare's Legal Acquirements considered' (1859); John Charles Bucknill's 'Medical Knowledge of Shakespeare' (1860); C. F. Green's 'Shakespeare's Crab-tree, with its Legend' (1862); C. H. Bracebridge's 'Shakespeare no Deer-stealer' (1862); Ellacombe's 'Shakespeare as an Angler' (1883); J. E. Harting's 'Ornithology of Shakespeare' (1872); William Blades's 'Shakespeare and Typography' (1872); and D. H. Madden's 'Diary of Master William Silence (Shakespeare and Sport)', 1897. A full epitome of the biographical information accessible at the date of publication is supplied in Karl Elze's 'Life of Shakespeare' (Halle, 1876; English translation, 1888), with which Elze's 'Essays' from the publications of the German Shakespeare Society (English translation, 1874) are worth studying. A less ambitious effort of the same kind by Samuel Neil (1861) is seriously injured by the writer's acceptance of Collier's forgeries. Professor Dowden's 'Shakespeare Primer' (1877) and his 'Introduction to Shakespeare' (1893), and Dr. Furnivall's 'Introduction to the Leopold Shakespeare,' are all useful summaries of leading facts.

Special-
ised
studies
in bio-
graphy.

Useful
epitomes.

Francis Douce's 'Illustrations of Shakespeare' (1807, new edit. 1839), 'Shakespeare's Library' (ed. J. P. Collier and W. C. Hazlitt, 1875), 'Shakespeare's Plutarch' (ed. Skeat, 1875), and 'Shakespeare's Holinshed' (ed. W. G. Boswell-Stone, 1896) are of service in tracing the sources of Shakespeare's plots. Alexander Schmidt's 'Shakespeare Lexicon' (1874) and Dr. E. A. Abbott's 'Shakespearean Grammar' (1869,

Aids to
study of
plots and
text.

new edit. 1893) are valuable aids to a study of the text. W. Sidney Walker (1795-1846), sometime Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, deserves special mention among textual critics of the present century. He was author of two valuable works: 'Shakespeare's Versification and its apparent Irregularities explained by Examples from Early and Late English Writers' (1854), and 'A Critical Examination of the Text of Shakespeare, with Remarks on his Language and that of his Contemporaries, together with Notes on his Plays and Poems' (1860, 3 vols.) Walker's books were published from his notes after his death, and are ill arranged and unindexed, but they constitute a rich quarry, which no succeeding editor has neglected without injury to his work.

Modern
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hem.

The chief editions of the Sonnets that have appeared of late years with critical apparatus are those of Professor Dowden (1875, reissued 1896), Mr. Thomas Tyler (1890) and Mr. George Wyndham, M.P. (1898). Professor Dowden and Mr. Wyndham treat the identification of the young patron of the Sonnets with the Earl of Pembroke as a *prima facie* possibility. Mr. Thomas Tyler, in his edition of the 'Sonnets,' not only advocated that theory with much earnestness, but ingeniously if unconvincingly advanced a claim to identify the 'dark lady' of the 'Sonnets' with Mary Fitton, a lady of the Court and the Earl of Pembroke's mistress.

The history of the Pembroke theory is curious. It owes its origin to an erroneous and hasty guess that the Earl of Pembroke was known in youth as 'Mr. William Herbert,' and might therefore be the 'Mr. W. H.' of the publisher Thorpe's dedicatory preface. The Earl of Pembroke was solely known as 'Lord Herbert' until he succeeded to the title, and there is no evidence of Shakespeare's intimacy with him (cf. p. 73). James Boaden, a journalist and the biographer of Kemble and Mrs. Siddons, was the first to hazard publicly the guess identifying Thorpe's 'Mr. W. H.' with the Earl of Pembroke in a letter to the 'Gentleman's Magazine' in 1832. A few months later Mr. James Heywood Bright wrote to the magazine claiming to have reached the same conclusion thirteen years earlier, although he had not published it. Boaden re-stated the theory in a volume on 'Shakespeare's Sonnets' which he published in 1837. C. Armitage Brown adopted it in 1838 in his 'Shakespeare's Autobiographical Poems.' The Rev. Joseph Hunter accepted it in his 'New Illustrations of Shakespeare,' in 1845, but significantly pointed out (ii. 346) that it had not occurred to any of the writers in the great Variorum editions of Shakespeare, who included critics so acute in matters of literary history as Malone and George Steevens. The Pembroke theory during the half-century that followed enjoyed a curiously wide vogue, but during the past five years it has undergone new, minute and

impartial examination, and has been generally acknowledged to rest on foundations of sand.

The opposing theory that most of the Sonnets were addressed to the Earl of Southampton, Shakespeare's undoubted patron, was first fully stated by Nathan Drake in 1817 in 'Shakespeare and His Times,' ii. 1-73. It was revived with somewhat fantastic amplifications in 1866 in Mr. Gerald Massey's 'Secret Drama of Shakespeare's Sonnets,' which appeared in a second revised edition in 1888 (the text of the poems with a diffuse discussion). The Southampton theory strictly accords with the known facts of Shakespeare's life and work.

Useful concordances to the Plays have been prepared by Mrs. Cowden-Clarke (1845), to the poems by Mrs. H. H. Furness (Philadelphia, 1875), and to Plays and Poems, in one volume, with references to numbered lines, by John Bartlett (London and New York, 1895). A 'Handbook Index' by J. O. Halliwell (privately printed 1866) gives lists of obsolete words and phrases, songs, proverbs, and plants mentioned in the works of Shakespeare. An unprinted glossary prepared by Richard Warner between 1750 and 1770 is at the British Museum (Addit. MSS. 10472-542). Extensive bibliographies are given in Lowndes's 'Library Manual' (ed. Bohn); in Franz Thimm's 'Shakespeariana' (1864 and 1871); in the 'Encyclopædia Britannica,' 9th edit. (skilfully classified by Mr. H. R. Tedder); and in the 'British Museum Catalogue' (the Shakespearean entries in which, comprising 3,680 titles, were separately published in 1897).

Concordances.

Bibliographies.

The valuable publications of the Shakespeare Society, the New Shakspeare Society, and of the Deutsche Shakespeare-Gesellschaft, comprising contributions alike to the æsthetic, textual, historical, and biographical study of Shakespeare, are noticed above (see pp. 187, 195). To the critical studies, on which comment has already been made (see p. 187)—viz. Coleridge's 'Notes and Lectures' (1883), Hazlitt's 'Characters of Shakespeare's Plays' (1817), Professor Dowden's 'Shakspeare: his Mind and Art' (1875), and Mr. A. C. Swinburne's 'A Study of Shakespeare' (1879)—there may be added the essays on Shakespeare's heroines respectively by Mrs. Jameson in 1833 and Lady Martin in 1885; Dr. Ward's 'English Dramatic Literature' (1875, new edit. 1898); Richard G. Moulton's 'Shakespeare as a Dramatic Artist' (1885); 'Shakespeare Studies' by Thomas Spencer Baynes (1893); F. S. Boas's 'Shakspeare and his Predecessors' (1895), and Georg Brandes's 'William Shakespeare'—an elaborately critical but somewhat fanciful study—in Danish (Copenhagen, 1895, 8vo), in German (Leipzig, 1895), and in English (London, 1898, 2 vols. 8vo).

Critical studies.

II

THE BACON-SHAKESPEARE CONTROVERSY

Its
source.

THE apparent contrast between the homeliness of Shakespeare's Stratford career and the breadth of observation and knowledge displayed in his literary work has evoked the fantastic theory that Shakespeare was not the author of the literature that passes under his name, and perverse attempts have been made to assign his works to Francis Bacon (1561-1626), the great contemporary prose-writer, philosopher, and lawyer. It is argued that Shakespeare's plays embody a general omniscience (especially a knowledge of law) which was possessed by no contemporary except Bacon; that there are many close parallelisms between passages in Shakespeare's and passages in Bacon's works, and that Bacon makes enigmatic references in his correspondence to secret 'recreations' and 'alphabets' and concealed poems for which his alleged employment as a concealed dramatist can alone account.

The argu-
ment from
parallel-
isms.

The only point of any genuine interest raised in the argument from parallelisms of expression centres about a quotation from Aristotle which Bacon and Shakespeare not merely both make, but make in what looks at a first glance to be the same erroneous form. Aristotle wrote in his 'Nicomachean Ethics,' i. 8, that young men were unfitted for the study of *political* philosophy. Bacon, in the 'Advancement of Learning' (1605), wrote: Is not the opinion of Aristotle worthy to be regarded wherein he saith that young men are not fit auditors of *moral* philosophy?' (bk. ii. p. 255, ed. Kitchin). Shakespeare, about 1603, in 'Troilus and Cressida,' II. ii. 166, wrote of 'young men whom Aristotle thought unfit to hear *moral* philosophy.' But the alleged error of substituting *moral* for *political* philosophy in Aristotle's text is more apparent than real; it was not peculiar to Shakespeare and Bacon, but was in almost universal vogue at the time they wrote. By 'political' philosophy Aristotle, as his context amply shows, meant the ethics of civil society, which are hardly distinguishable from what is commonly called 'morals.' In the summary paraphrase of Aristotle's 'Ethics' which was translated into English from the Italian, and published in 1547, the passage to which both Shakespeare and

Bacon refer is not rendered literally, but its general drift is given as a warning that *moral* philosophy is not a fit subject for study by youths who are naturally passionate and head-strong. Such is the interpretation of Aristotle's language that was adopted by sixteenth and seventeenth century writers of all countries. Erasmus, in the epistle at the close of his popular 'Colloquia' (Florence, 1531, sig. Q Q), wrote of his endeavour to insinuate serious precepts 'into the minds of young men whom Aristotle rightly described as unfit auditors of *moral* philosophy' ('in animos adolescentium, quos recte scripsit Aristoteles inidoneos auditores ethicæ philosophiæ'). In a French translation of the 'Ethics' by the Comte de Plessis, published at Paris in 1553, the section is headed 'parquoy le ieune enfant n'est suffisant auditeur de la science *civile*;' but an English commentator (in a manuscript note written about 1605 in a copy of the book in the British Museum) turned the sentence into English thus: 'Whether a young man may be a fitte scholler of *morall* philosophie.' In 1622 an Italian essayist, Virgilio Malvezzi, in his preface to his 'Discorsi sopra Cornelio Tacito,' has the remark, 'E non è discordante da questa mia opinione Aristotele, il qual dice, che i giovani non sono buoni ascoltatori delle *morali*.' No genuine theory of a mysterious literary relationship between Shakespeare and Bacon can be based on the barren fact that each writer quoted a trite Aristotelian apophthegm in the precise form in which it enjoyed in their day a proverbial currency throughout Europe.

The Baconian method of argument may also be judged by the following example. Toby Matthew, at an uncertain date after January 1621, wrote to Bacon (as Viscount St. Albans) these words: 'The most prodigious wit that ever I knew of my nation and of this side of the sea is of your Lordship's name, though he be known by another.' This unpretending sentence is distorted into conclusive evidence that Bacon wrote works of commanding excellence under another's name, and among them probably Shakespeare's plays. According to the only sane interpretation of Matthew's words, his 'most prodigious wit' was some Englishman named Bacon whom he met abroad, bearing an assumed name. The reference is clearly to one of the pseudonymous Jesuits who were numerous among Matthew's friends. There is little doubt, in fact, that Matthew referred to Father Thomas Southwell, a learned Jesuit domiciled chiefly in the Low Countries, whose real surname was Bacon. (He was born in 1592 at Sculthorpe, near Walsingham, Norfolk, being son of Thomas Bacon of that place, and he died at Watten in 1637.) It was with reference to a book published by this man that Sir Henry Wotton wrote a few years later—on December 5, 1638—to Sir Edmund Bacon, half-brother to the great Francis Bacon, in language somewhat

Toby
Mat-
thew's
letter.

resembling Toby Matthew's: 'The Book of Controversies issued under the name of *F. Baconus* hath this addition to the said name, *alias Southwell*, as those of that Society shift their names as often as their shirts' ('Reliquiæ Wottonianæ,' 1672, p. 475).

Joseph C. Hart (U.S. Consul at Santa Cruz, *d.* 1855), in his 'Romance of Yachting' (1848), first raised doubts of Shakespeare's authorship of the plays and poems associated with his name. There followed in a like temper 'Who wrote Shakespeare?' in 'Chambers's Journal,' August 7, 1852, and an article by Miss Delia Bacon in 'Putnam's Monthly,' January 1856. On the latter was based 'The Philosophy of the Plays of Shakespeare unfolded by Delia Bacon,' with a neutral preface by Nathaniel Hawthorne (London and Boston, 1857). Miss Delia Bacon, who was the first to spread far abroad a spirit of scepticism respecting the established facts of Shakespeare's career, died insane on September 2, 1859. Mr. William Henry Smith, a resident in London, seems first to have suggested the Baconian hypothesis in 'Was Lord Bacon the author of Shakespeare's plays?—a letter to Lord Ellesmere' (1856), which was republished as 'Bacon and Shakespeare' (1857). The most learned exponent of this strange theory was Nathaniel Holmes, an American lawyer, who published at New York in 1866 'The Authorship of the Plays attributed to Shakespeare,' a monument of misapplied ingenuity (4th edit. 1886, 2 vols.) Bacon's 'Promus of Formularies and Elegancies,' a commonplace book in Bacon's handwriting in the British Museum (London, 1883), was first edited by Mrs. Henry Pott, a voluminous advocate of the Baconian theory; it contained many words and phrases common to the works of Bacon and Shakespeare, and Mrs. Pott pressed the argument from parallelisms of expression to its extremest limits. The Baconian theory has found its widest acceptance in America. There it achieved its wildest manifestation in the book called 'The Great Cryptogram: Francis Bacon's Cypher in the so-called Shakespeare Plays' (Chicago and London, 1887, 2 vols.), which was the work of Mr. Ignatius Donnelly of Hastings, Minnesota. The author pretended to have discovered among Bacon's papers a numerical cipher which enabled him to pick out letters appearing at certain intervals in the pages of Shakespeare's First Folio, and the selected letters formed words and sentences categorically stating that Bacon was author of the plays. Many refutations have been published of Mr. Donnelly's arbitrary and baseless contention.

A Bacon Society was founded in London in 1885 to develop and promulgate the unintelligible theory, and it inaugurated a magazine (named since May 1893 'Baconiana'). A quarterly periodical also called 'Baconiana,' and issued in the same

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interest, was established at Chicago in 1892. 'The Bibliography of the Shakespeare-Bacon Controversy' by W. H. Wyman, Cincinnati, 1884, gives the titles of two hundred and fifty-five books or pamphlets on both sides of the subject which were published since 1848; the list was continued during 1886 in 'Shakespeariana,' a monthly journal published at Philadelphia, and might now be extended to fully twice its original number.

The abundance of the contemporary evidence attesting Shakespeare's responsibility for the works published under his name gives the Baconian theory no rational right to a hearing; while such authentic examples of Bacon's effort to write verse as survive prove beyond all possibility of contradiction that, great as he was as a prose writer and a philosopher, he was incapable of penning any of the poetry assigned to Shakespeare. Defective knowledge and illogical or casuistical argument alone render any other conclusion possible.

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