

THE FIVE AUTHORS OF SHAKE-SPEARES SONNETS

H. Because he needs no *praise* wilt thou be dumb ?
 And to be *praised* of ages yet to be.
 To subjects worse have given admiring *praise*.
 Than when it hath my *added praise* beside !
 Note these sixteen 'praise' lines—exactly four apiece.

M.P. Reserve their *character* with golden *quill*,
L. What's in the brain that *ink* may *character*,
H. . . . some antique *book*,
 Since mind at first in *character* was done.

M.P. And in the praise thereof *spends all his might*,
H. To speak of that which gives thee *all thy might* ?
Spend'st thou thy fury . . .

MINOR PARALLELISMS.—Minor parallelisms are exceedingly numerous. (1) *compile*, 78.9 and 85.2; (2) *mend*, 78.11 and 103.9; (3) *style*, 78.11 and 84.12; (4) *decay*, 79.3 80.14 and 100.11; (5) *sick Muse*, 79.4 and 86.12; (6) *sweet love*, 79.5 and 108.5; (7) *argument*, 79.5 and 100.8; (8) *afford*, 79.11 and 85.7; (9) *rich*, 102.3, 85.2 and 84.2, cf. 103.1; (10) *hymn*, 102.10 and 85.7; (11) *dull*, 102.14 and 103.8; (12) *antique*, 106.7 and 59.7; (13) *figure*, 106.10, 104.10 and 108.2, cf. 59.7; (14) *skill*, 106.12 and 100.8; (15) *painting*, 83.1-2 and 101.6-7; (16) *sin*, 83.9 and 103.9; (17) *dignify*, 84.8 and 101.4; and many others.

NOTES.

Shakespeare. (Nos. 78, 79, 102, 106.)

The tone of Shakespeare's contributions to this series differs very markedly from the tone of his sonnets in the first batch. As has already been noted, it is clear that when he paid The Patron the compliment of sending him those first nine sonnets, he did not anticipate that they would be set as a 'copy' for three other poets to imitate. As might have been expected therefore, they are merely exceptionally fine specimens of straightforward adulatory verse, entirely free from any suspicion of irony, parody, double-meaning or personal allusion. But the use to which they were put obviously made a continuance on these lines out of the question. And so we find that in the sonnets of this series (and, of course, this is also the case with all subsequent series) S. has dropped his original *natural* manner, and has adopted unreservedly the *artificial* manner demanded by the Rules of the Contest. In fact the spirit of The Contest dominates his entire contribution to a really remarkable extent. The first three sonnets are entirely made up of half-serious protests against the treatment accorded to his first batch, satirical allusions to the other three poets, and parodies of their language; and even in the fourth 'complimentary' sonnet he takes the opportunity of comparing the efforts of his fellow-competitors and himself with the productions of poets of former ages.

All the characteristics which distinguish S.'s work in the first batch are displayed to equal advantage in this series; and, in addition, he is able for the first time to exhibit his consummate mastery of the delicate art of administering what Puttenham calls "a privy nippe" to a literary rival without transgressing the bounds of good taste.

78.

A protest against "The Contest" scheme generally, followed by references to each of his three rivals individually.

1-2. Suggested by M.P.'s ridiculous lines in his D.D. sonnet (No. 38):

Be thou the tenth *Muse*, ten times more in worth
 Than those old nine whom rhymers *invoke*.

THE PERSONAL SONNETS—SECOND BATCH

S. had directly "invoked" The Patron in at least *three* of his sonnets in his first batch, viz., Nos. 18 (B.I.), 29 (D.D.), and 26 (E.D.).

3. "under thee." As POOLER explains, "under your patronage and countenance."
Second quatrain. S. refers to the four contestants in the order H., S., L., and M.P. All of these had acknowledged the inspiring influence of The Patron's eyes. The "dumb" poet is H., who in his E.D. sonnet (No. 23) had written.

O let my looks be then the eloquence
 And *dumb* presagers of my speaking breast.
 O! learn to read what *silent love* hath writ:

His tribute to The Patron's eyes is to be found in his No. 17 in the M.A. series:

If I could write *the beauty of your eyes.*

The 'heavy-ignorant' poet is S. himself (*v.* line 12) "my rude ignorance." Cf. also in the *V. and A.* dedication "my unpolished lines," and in the *Lucrece* dedication "my untutor'd lines." His tribute to The Patron's eyes is to be found in his first sonnet in the first batch:

But thou contracted to *thine own bright eyes.*

The "learned" poet is L., *i.e.*, William Warner, who besides being a learned limb of the law, was well-known for his translations of Plautus. His tribute to The Patron's eyes is to be found in his sonnet No. 14 in the M.A. series:

But *from thine eyes* my knowledge I derive,
 And constant stars, in them I read such art

The "grace" ful poet is M.P. Barnes was as fond of the word 'grace' as of the word 'worth.' LEE writes,¹ "after quibbling in Sonnet 72 [of the *Parthenophil* collection] on the resemblance between the *graces* of his cruel mistress's face and the *Graces* of classical mythology Barnes develops the topic in the next sonnet after this manner (the italics are my own):

Why did rich nature *graces* grant to thee,
 Since thou art such a niggard of thy *grace*?
 O how can *graces* in thy body be?
 Where neither they nor pity find a place!
 Grant me some *grace*! For thou with *grace* art wealthy
 And kindly may'st afford some *gracious* thing."

Again in the dedicatory sonnet to Southampton (just quoted) he hopes that his "worthless leaves" may be "with your countenance *graced*," and begs him to turn his *gracious* eyes, "those heavenly lamps which gives the Muses light" on his creeping Muse. Southampton had kindly condescended to do so, and had thereby (according to S.) increased Barnes' previous liberal allowance of 'grace' 100 per cent.!

9. Here S. commits the second of the two *gaffes* to which his fellow-competitors make satirical allusion;² that great prince, Henry third Earl of Southampton may, in his leisure hours, condescend to take a certain amount of interest in contemporary literature and literary men, but to have "one of these harlotry players" who has

¹ Life, p. 666.

² The references are M.P. 80.6 and 12, and 86.1 in this series; L. 76.1 in the M.P. series; and H. 103-2 in this series, and 25.2 and 7 in the P.R. series.

THE FIVE AUTHORS OF SHAKE-SPEARES SONNETS

addressed a set of complimentary verses to him, calling upon him to be "proud" of them is rather too much of a joke.

10. Another satirical reference to M.P.'s E.D. sonnet. 'Influence' echoes the line:

While thou dost breathe that *pour'st* into my verse,

and "born of thee" the complicated obstetrics of the last four lines.

11-14. The "others" are, of course, the other three competitors. S. hints that The Patron has 'helped' them—or possibly (*v.* next line) the 'grace'ful M.P. only—with their contributions to the First Batch.

79.

A continuation of the protest, followed by an ironical complaint that he had been cut out by M.P. The sonnet is a tissue of satirical references to Barnes' two dedicatory sonnets—the *Parthenophe* one, and his No. 38 in the E.D. series.

2-3. Barnes' "grace" again.

4. "another" is M.P.'s "slight Muse" which had superseded "those old nine" (No. 38), among whom S.'s was (presumably) included.

5-8. This quatrain parodies No. 38 very neatly. Barnes is called "thy poet" because he had dedicated *Parthenophe* to Southampton, and also (probably) because Southampton had given him pride of place among the competitors by sending S.'s contributions to him *first* of the three. "Muse," "argument" and "invent" echo the lines:

How can my *Muse* want subject to *invent*,
Whilst thou dost live that *pour'st* into my verse
Thine own sweet *argument* . . .

"travail" glances at the "Obstetrics" conceit of the last four lines, and in the phrase "a worthier pen" S. makes the first of his two sarcastic allusions to Barnes' excessive fondness for the word 'worth,' which furnishes the competitors with such a fertile subject for their satire.

9. A reference to the *Parthenophe* sonnet wherein Barnes addresses Southampton as "right *virtuous* Lord," and hopes that his Muse

"Shall to thy *virtues* of much worth aspire."

11-14. A recasting of the thoughts and phraseology of the two lines in No. 38:

O give *thysself* the *thanks*, if aught in me
The pain be mine, but *thine* shall be the *praise*.

102.

S.'s silence was due, not to a weakening in his affection for The Patron, (on the contrary it had grown stronger) but to a feeling that with the three new competitors all warbling so sweetly *his* voice might spoil the concert.

3-4. Another hit at Barnes, whose *Parthenophe* sonnet-book with its fulsome dedication to Southampton had actually been published *for sale*. The reader will remember in the B.I. series L.'s scorn of this disgraceful business:

I will not praise that purpose not to sell (21-14).

5-12. Very beautiful lines, far beyond the compass of any of his three imitators.

12. A neat allusion to M.P.'s two saccharine sonnets Nos. 8 in the M.A. series (four 'sweets') and 54 in the B.I. series (five 'sweets').

THE PERSONAL SONNETS—SECOND BATCH

106.

The inevitable compliment to The Patron's unfading charms. His beauty surpasses that of anybody, man or woman, recorded in history. Both thought and language are taken from Constable's *Miscellaneous Sonnets*, No. VII. (1590):

Miracle of the world I never will deny
That former poets praise the beauty of their days;
But all these beauties were but figures of thy praise,
And all those poets did of thee but prophesy.

4. An echo from the *Faery Queene*:

Fit for such ladies and such lovely knights

"old rhyme" is possibly a reference to Spenser's archaisms—"wight," for instance.
10 and 13. "our" and "we," i.e., S. himself and his three rivals.
12. Barnes' "worth" again.

The Minor Poet. (Nos. 85, 80, 86, 104.)

The structure of M.P.'s contribution is modelled on S.'s with really extraordinary exactness. His first sonnet, like S.'s, is entirely made up of allusions to the Contest and the contestants, complimentary references to the performances of his *confrères*, and a modest reference to his own: in his second and third sonnets he singles out S. for mingled praise and satire as he himself had been singled out by S.; and his fourth sonnet, like S.'s, "is the inevitable compliment to The Patron's unfading charms."

His four sonnets are much above his average in quality, his characteristic of *Smooth Versification* being displayed to great advantage throughout. Other characteristics exemplified are *Confused Thinking*, 80.9-12; *Slovenly Phrasing*, 85.6 and 8, 86.10, 104.10.

85.

1. A reference to S.'s "I sometime hold my tongue" (102.13).
2. "Reserve." "Deserve" should certainly be read, the line being obviously a paraphrase of S.'s:

Deserves the travail of a worthier pen;

and the meaning being "Deserves to be written with a golden quill." The language is slightly confused but eminently characteristic of M.P.

4. Meres, who appears to have been one of the "private friends" who were privileged to see S.'s "sugred sonnets," probably had this line in his mind when he wrote in *Palladis Tamia* (pub. 1598) "so I say that the Muses would speak with Shakespeare's fine-filed phrase, if they would speake English."

5. "Other," i.e., his three fellow-competitors.

6-7. The omission *metri causâ* of "an" before "unletter'd clerk" is characteristic of M.P. (cf. "by children's eyes" in M.A. No. 9). Note that here M.P. is trying to ridicule S.'s perfectly correct use of the word 'hymn' in its classical sense for the song of the nightingale. "That able spirit," i.e., Shakespeare. "Affords" is another attempt to burlesque S.'s language—to afford praise to a person (79.10-11) is intelligible English, but to afford a hymn is not.

10-14. A paraphrase of S.'s two lines:

My love is strengthened, though more weak in seeming
I love not less, though less the show appear (102. 1-2).

THE FIVE AUTHORS OF SHAKE-SPEARES SONNETS

13. "other" *i.e.*, his three fellow-competitors.

14. An echo from H.'s E.D. sonnet (23.10):

The *dumb* presagers of my *speaking* breast.

80.

A compliment, more or less sincere, to Shakespeare's sonnetteering prowess.

2. The "better spirit" is S., as noted above.

5. Barnes' "worth" again.

6. "proudest." A sarcastic allusion to S.'s second *gaffe* in 78.9 of this series (*v. note in loc.*).

7-10. There is something wrong about this metaphor. Surely he does not mean that in order to prevent his poetical venture from coming to grief, S. requires a *larger* measure of The Patron's support than he (M.P.) does himself? Barnes here reproduces a metaphor he has already used in his *Parthenophe* (No. 91):

My fancy's ship tost here and there by these,
Still floats in danger, ranging to and fro,
How fears my thoughts' swift pinnace thine hard rock?

11. "worthless." "worth" again.

12. Another sarcastic reference to S.'s "pride."

13. *i.e.*, "if S. wins the Contest and I get nothing."

86.

From the point of view of general Shakespearean criticism this is certainly the most important sonnet in the whole collection, inasmuch as it contains a definite and unequivocal assertion that Shakespeare was in the habit of receiving secret assistance from others in the composition of his "great verse."

1. A fine line; M.P.'s choice of a metaphor gives him the opportunity of saying exactly the right thing about S.'s poetry. Note yet another reference to S.'s "pride."

2. MASSEY, in his notes on this and the previous sonnet (80), writes about "The Rival Poet" as follows (my italics):—

Further, the description of this poet in his relationship to the Patron does not so much dwell on *what he has done for the Earl as what he is at present doing*. He is at work in the Earl's name, when the Poet writes sonnet 80, and Shakespeare is aware that his rival is then spending all his might, doing his utmost to honour the Earl and make our Poet "tongue-tied" in speaking of his patron's fame. He alludes chiefly *to work in progress not to work done*. There is rivalry in a race then being run, and Shakespeare says that if the rival should be victor over him, he will know and be able to say:—

"The worst was this, my love was my decay."

In sonnet 86, likewise, the Poet speaks of his rival's bark being "*bound for the prize of all-too-precious you*" not as having touched the shore, or reached the haven.

Transpose Shakespeare and The Rival Poet in this passage, and we have the real situation exactly—the race is only half over, and M.P. can still flatter himself that he has a chance.

5-10. These six lines are of extreme interest and importance. As we have seen, S. had singled out M.P. for attack, and scored heavily by satirical references to his dedications, his "worth," his "Obstetrics" conceit, his publishing profits from *Parthenophe*, etc. By the rules of the game the attack now passes to M.P. He has to do his best to get even with his assailant, and naturally aims at what he believes to be his weak spots. He has already satirized S.'s "pride" more than once, and he now

THE PERSONAL SONNETS—SECOND BATCH

suddenly opens a formidable assault on his main position by asserting that the super-excellence of his poetry is due to the fact that it is, in part at any rate, the work of certain other people who have been secretly collaborating with him. The lines speak for themselves; but if the reader is disposed to make the objection that S.'s nightly visitors are not humans at all, he is invited to consider that he commits himself to one of two alternative hypotheses, viz.: (a) that the poet *bonâ fide* believed that S. was helped by an actual goblin or goblins, or (b) that it was merely his metaphorical way of hinting that his rival's inspiration came to him chiefly at night. Now (a) is not very probable on the face of it, and besides does not explain "his compeers," *i.e.*, *compères*, cronies, flesh-and-blood people indubitably; while (b) would make the lines quite pointless, and equally fail to account for "compeers."¹

In lines 9-10 one particular spirit is indicated as the chief collaborator; and the terms "affable" and "gull" used with reference to this personage distinctly suggest that he is the poet's social and intellectual superior.² POOLER very pertinently asks: "Would good verse be inspired by the gulling of an affable ghost?" The answer is, that we are not dealing with "Shakespeare," but with the verse of a very minor poet whose besetting sin it is to use confused language and to prefer sound to sense; and that what he was trying to do was to combine the two ideas, (1) the condescension of a superior to an inferior, and (2) the treatment of the inferior as a butt or tool—"gull" being selected as affording a pleasing alliteration with "ghost" in the preceding line.

The commentators rather shirk their duty to this sonnet. LEE merely says:—"A compliment to the rival poet, and the main argument in favour of his identification with George Chapman; but Chapman's poetic style, though very involved, cannot be credited with exceptional dignity. Shakespeare's words will not bear too literal an interpretation": and POOLER dismisses the affable ghost as "probably the subject of some unrecorded conversation."

12. "Sick." A reference to S.'s "sick Muse" (79.4), *cf.* "faint" (80.1).

13. Probably a sarcastic reference to S.'s:

Look in thy glass, and tell the *face* thou viewest, etc.

104.

1-3. In his sonnet No. 21 in the B.I. series L. had hinted pretty plainly that M.P. had no first-hand knowledge of The Patron's personal appearance, and that his eulogistic references thereto were inspired by his *portrait* only. M.P. here repels the insinuation. He had seen The Patron face to face "When first your eye I eyed," three years ago, and also quite recently "such seems your beauty *still*."

10. "And no pace perceived." Slipshod grammar. Either 'and' should go, or 'is' should be inserted before 'perceived.'

11-12. "Hue." Spelt 'hew' in Q. (*cf.* 20.7-8).

13-14. S. in *his* complimentary sonnet (106) had commiserated the chroniclers of *past* ages on their bad luck in not having seen the perfection of human beauty as exemplified in the person of The Patron. M.P. now improves on this by informing *future* ages in this melodious but rather foggy couplet that once The Patron is dead such perfection can never be seen again. "Thou age unbred" is slipshod for "All ye

¹ Two points about this counter-attack deserve notice: (1) Barnes could scarcely have made the charge so confidently and with such particularity if it was not known, or at any rate strongly suspected, by the members of Southampton's literary coterie that S. *had* been receiving outside assistance; (2) In neither of the two subsequently-written Personal Series in which S. refers to his own poetical work (P.R. and M.P.) does he make any attempt to deny it.

² A possible explanation of S.'s two *gaffes*—his 'star' and his 'pride.'

THE FIVE AUTHORS OF SHAKE-SPEARES SONNETS

ages to come." Note "thou" changed to "you" in the next line; apparently "thou wast" offended M.P.'s sensitive ear.

The Lawyer. (Nos. 82, 83, 84, 108.)

The Lawyer's contribution follows closely the pattern set by S. and M.P. His first two sonnets like theirs are made up of allusions to the Contest and the contestants; the third contains more allusions mixed with adulation of The Patron; and the fourth like theirs is an extravagant compliment, *viz.*, that L., having previously exhausted all possible forms of praise, can now only repeat himself.

All his characteristics are well displayed: *Pedestrian Style*, 83.6, and 10-11, 108.6; *The Attorney*, 84.9-11, 108.9; *The Accountant*, 108.1-3; *Crude Humour*, 83.13-14, 84.5; *The Candid Friend*, 82.9-12; *The Old Dog*, 82.6-8, 108.9-14.

82.

The esoteric meaning of this interesting sonnet may be given as follows: "I do not claim, like my friend M.P., that you are my Muse's *légitime*, and so I cannot object to your accepting ardent dedicatory verses from him and the other competitors. Besides, your beauty being equalled by your intelligence, you soon discovered that my old-fashioned compliments were below par, and so very rightly, you commissioned these young exponents of the newest school of poetry to write you flowery sonnets in the fashion of the day. Nevertheless, let them do their best, and then compare their effusions with mine, and you will find that after all it is my antiquated but trusty Muse who has really hit the mark."

The sonnet closely imitates S.'s 79 not only in sentiment but in construction. Note particularly the "I grant . . . yet . . ."

79. *I grant, sweet love, thy lovely argument
Deserves the travail of a worthier pen
Yet what of thee thy poet doth invent.*
82. *I grant thou wert not married to my Muse
And therefore art enforced to seek anew
Some fresher stamp of the time-bettering days
And do so love; yet when they have devised.*

1-2. DOWDEN notes this as a reference to the "forsaking all others" of the marriage service. As already noted more than once, L. has a penchant for parodying the Prayer Book. He is alluding, of course, to M.P.'s peculiar *ménage à trois* described in ll. 9-12 of M.P.'s E.D. sonnet (already satirized by S. in his 78.10 in this series).

5. It is unfortunate that this line should bear such a very strong resemblance to Titania's apostrophe to her translated weaver—

Thou art as wise as thou art beautiful.

Or can it be that L. is taking a leaf out of H.'s book and showing that he too "can gleek upon occasion"?

6-8. These three lines are very clumsily expressed. "Finding thy worth" apparently means "finding *for* thy worth;" "the time-bettering days" = "days bettered by the time (*i.e.*, fashion);" and the "and" should begin l.6 instead of l.7. Note the reference to M.P.'s "worth."

9-14. These lines plus the first two of the next sonnet are an amalgam of two

THE PERSONAL SONNETS—SECOND BATCH

lines from *Love's Labour's Lost*, Act IV., sc. iii., and two lines from H.'s 53 in the B.I. series :

- I.L.L. Lend me the flourish of all gentle tongues
 Fie *painted rhetoric* ! O, she *needs* it not.
 No. 53. Oh Helen's *cheek* all art of beauty *set*,
 And *you* in Grecian tires are *painted* new.

83.

The remaining twelve lines of this sonnet are an amalgam on the same lines, and the sonnet furnishes the first complete example of what may be called the "Shakespearizing" type of sonnet, of which two or three examples will be found in the Personal Series and many more in the Dramatic Series. In this type, the competitor, instead of confining himself to the imitation of words and phrases occurring in the contributions of his fellow-competitors, selects as the basis of his sonnet words and phrases occurring in a passage or passages in Shakespeare's plays and narrative poems. The usual 'Contest' imitations may be worked in in addition, but the 'foreign' Shakespearean material is the predominating factor.

It would appear then that when L. was examining S.'s second sonnet in this series for material for his own second sonnet he was struck by the resemblance between the last line :

Since what he *owes* thee thou thyself *dost* pay.

and the lines in S.'s recently published *Lucrece* :

Therefore that praise which Collatine *doth* owe
 Enchanted Tarquin *answers* with surmise,

and on further investigation came to the conclusion that the whole stanza (No. 12) in which they occur could be parodied pretty easily, and accordingly took it as the basis or skeleton of his sonnet, padding it out ingeniously enough with allusions to his fellow-competitors and imitations of their phraseology in the usual way. The stanza is as follows :

Now thinks he that her husband's shallow tongue,
 The niggard prodigal that *praised* her so,
 In that high task hath *done* her beauty *wrong*,
 Which far *exceeds* his barren skill to show :
 Therefore that *praise* which Collatine *doth* owe
 Enchanted Tarquin *answers* with surmise,
 In *silent* wonder of still-gazing eyes.¹

The "Contest" allusions and imitations are as follows :—

1-2. H.'s 53.7-8

4-6. S.'s 79.14 in this series :

Since what he *owes* thee *thou* thyself *dost* pay.

7. The "antique pen" of S.'s 106.7 and "the golden quill" of M.P.'s 85.3—both in this series.

8. A gibe at M.P.'s "worth."

¹ Compare with L.'s deliberate imitation of a rival's verse Keats' unconscious plagiarism from the last two lines of this stanza in the famous simile which closes his great sonnet on Chapman's Homer :

Or like stout Cortez when with eagle eyes
 He *stared* at the Pacific—and all his men
Look'd at each other with a wild *surmise*—
Silent, upon a peak in Darien.

THE FIVE AUTHORS OF SHAKE-SPEARES SONNETS

10. M.P.'s 85.14 in this series :

Me for my *dumb* thoughts, speaking in effect.

12. The "others" are S. and M.P., with special reference to the latter. In the B.I. series both had promised "life" to The Patron :

S. So long *lives* this, and this gives *life* to thee. (18)

M.P. You *live* in this, and dwell in lovers' eyes. (55),

and in this series (86.4) M.P. had been obliged to confess that his immortalizing lines had died stillborn :

That did my ripe thoughts in my brain *inhearse*,
Making their *tomb* the womb wherein they grew ?

14. As S. had called M.P. "thy poet," L. now calls S. and M.P. "both your poets." As this is the first example of the "Shakespearizing" sonnet the reader may perhaps find it convenient to have it "parallelized," so as to display its peculiar construction. The *Lucrece* lines (plus the one *L.L.L.* line) are enclosed in brackets to distinguish them from those taken from the Sonnets

No. 83

References

I never saw that you did *painting need*,
And therefore to your *fair* no *painting set*,
I found, or thought I found, you did *exceed*
The *barren tender* of a poet's *debt*.
And therefore have I slept in your report,
That *you yourself*, being extant, well might *show*
How far a *modern quill* doth come too short,
Speaking of worth, what *worth* in you doth grow.
This *silence* for my sin you did impute,
Which shall be most my glory being *dumb* ;
For I *impair not beauty* being mute,
When others would give *life and bring a tomb*.
There *lives more life* in one of your fair eyes
Than both your poets can in *praise* devise.

(Fie *painted* rhetoric ! O she *needs* it not.
On Helen's cheek all *art of beauty set*,
(Which far *exceeds* his *barren* skill to *show* :)
(Therefore that *praise* which Collatine doth owe
Since what he owes thee, *thou thyself* dost *pay*,
I see their *antique pen* would have expressed,
Reserve their character with golden *quill*,
Praising your worth despite his cruel hand.
(In *silent wonder* of still-gazing eyes.)
Me for my *dumb* thoughts, speaking in effect.
(In that high task hath *done her beauty wrong*.)
Making their tomb the womb wherein they grew ?
So long *lives* this, and this gives *life* to thee.
You *live* in this, and dwell in lovers' eyes.
(Enchanted Tarquin *answers* with surmise.)

Note as characteristic of L.'s style :

- (a). The clumsy construction of lines 7 and 8.
- (b). The exceedingly clumsy effect of 'being dumb' at the end of line 10, followed by 'being mute' at the end of the next line.
- (c). The humorous (!) antithesis between The Patron's *one* eye and the best efforts of *both* poets.

84.

5. Another characteristic example of L.'s primitive sense of humour. The pun 'pen'—'penury' is bad enough in all conscience, but with "lean" added from S.'s "a-lien pen" (78.3) one has little hesitation in putting it down as the vilest line in the *Sonnets*.

13-14. The abruptness with which The Candid Friend introduces this remarkably plain-spoken couplet is in L.'s best manner.

108.

The first two quatrains present us with an amusingly matter-of-fact description of

THE PERSONAL SONNETS—SECOND BATCH

L.'s search for inspiration for this complimentary sonnet. The Accountant-poet sits in his office with his 'brain-register' before him, ready to inscribe any new item that occurs to him and enter its value in the figure column. But owing to S. and M.P. having already appropriated for *their* respective complimentary sonnets, the one the whole of the beauties of the *past*, and the other the whole of the beauties of the *future*, he can find nothing fresh to enter, and is reduced to repeating the same old compliments he had paid The Patron in the first sonnet of his first batch (No. 105 in the E.D. Series). The "prayers divine"—the same day after day—of line 5, like the "hallowed" of line 8, reproduce the Church Service atmosphere of that 'idolatrous' sonnet. The "first" of line 8 is interesting as showing that, unlike S. and M.P., L. had not paid literary court to The Patron before entering for the "Contest." Note "brain" and "character" borrowed from M.P.'s 81.3 and 85.3 respectively, and "figured" borrowed from the "prefiguring" of S.'s 106.10. Note too the 'pedestrian' effect of line 6. In the last six lines the veteran of the party repeats the description of his age-worn appearance given in the first quatrain of his No. 63 in the B.I. Series. The thirteenth line is clumsily phrased; it apparently means "Finding my affection for you deep-rooted, and as strong as when I first fell in love with you." On line 9 POOLER notes: "Malone who was a lawyer explains: 'By the case of love the poet means his own compositions,' *i.e.*, the pleadings."

The Humorist. (Nos. 100, 101, 59, 103.)

The Humorist's contribution is burlesque at its best and brightest. Throughout he sets four objects before him:—

- (1). To burlesque his rivals' references to, and excuses for, their respective Muses in this series.
- (2). To pull The Patron's leg.
- (3). To parody words and phrases used by his rivals in their contributions to this and previous series.
- (4). To attain these three objects without departing too noticeably from the tone and line of treatment of The Theme adopted by his rivals in this series.

He is amazingly successful all round. As regards (1) and (2) the reader is invited to read the four sonnets through as they stand, without troubling himself about italics and underlinings, and judge for himself. Perhaps the following attempt at a rendering of their esoteric meaning in the vulgar tongue may help him:

H. (*loq.*). "What's my Muse about, I wonder, that she hasn't been here all this time doing her duty by her Patron? Wasting her energies on some disreputable poem or other, I suppose, instead of composing respectable sonnets in praise of her good Patron who likes them so much. Ah, there you are, Muse. Come here at once and make up for lost time." (*The Muse reluctantly returns and sits down.*) "No, don't sit there doing nothing; get up and take a good look at your Patron's sweet face and see whether, in spite of S.'s express orders to the contrary, it has developed any wrinkles since you saw it last. If so, you will have to expatiate on Old Time's failure to do any real damage, pointing out that the wrinkles are an improvement rather than otherwise, and that owing to your efforts on his behalf his life is actually growing longer instead of shorter . . . But upon my word, Muse, I really don't know what excuse you *can* offer for going off like this and neglecting such a combination of truth and beauty as The Patron. You know what M.P. said about his being a beautiful rose dyed deep in truth, and L.'s

THE FIVE AUTHORS OF SHAKE-SPEARES SONNETS

'prognostications' that beauty and truth depend upon him to such an extent that when he dies they will die too. *You* depend upon him at any rate—that's what makes you so 'dignified,' as L. says. . . . What's that you say? 'If he's as wonderful as you say, he doesn't want any painting from *my* brush.' Nonsense! That's no excuse for saying *nothing*. Besides, you know quite well that if you care to exert yourself you can offer him a poetical tribute which will make his name live longer than even one of those elaborate tombs (what a vile rhyme L.'s "dumb" and 'tomb' is, by the way!) which are so fashionable nowadays. Come Muse! Don't be discouraged like L., just because S. and M.P. between them have pre-empted the whole of past and future history for their complimentary sonnets; take my advice and go to *pre*-history—sing of what he looked like in his previous incarnation, fourteen thousand years ago or thereabouts."

(*The Muse takes his advice and obliges with No. 59—a languid imitation of S.'s No. 106—in which she wishes that she could see what The Patron's poetical contemporaries had said about him then, so that she might judge whether their verse was better, or worse, or exactly the same, as that of the competitors in the present Contest; and finishes by opining emphatically that some of the people admired and praised by these prehistoric bards deserved it less than The Patron did*). H. much annoyed and disappointed): "Tut! Tut! What a shockingly bad performance—spoiling a splendid chance like that! We'd have done better to leave it alone after all." (*Addressing The Patron*): "Please don't blame me for this failure. The fact is that having to compose a sonnet in praise of the remarkable face that confronts you in the glass has been too much for us altogether."

As regards object No. 3, the reader is referred to the notes on individual sonnets below. He will find that in most cases the words and phrases parodied have something unusual or quaint about them which lends itself to ridicule.

As regards No. 4, in the first place he is referred to the analysis of "The Treatment of The Theme" given above, and in the second place he is invited to note that successive generations of commentators have been completely deceived. They have all, apparently, accepted each of these four sonnets at its face value as a serious, *bona fide* compliment to The Patron. This is very odd; one would have thought that the four couplets *alone*—especially the last two—would have aroused suspicion at a very early stage in the development of *Sonnets'* criticism.

The whole contribution is saturated with H.'s characteristics of *Subtle Humour* and *Personal Allusion*; Sonnet No. 59 and the excuses for its intentional failure given in No. 103 furnish an excellent example of the *Polite Shirker*; and *Compressed Thought* is exemplified in 101.7-9, 59.3-4.

100.

First Quatrain. Note the two echoes, one from M.P.'s 80.3 and the other from L.'s 84.6, both in this series:—

M.P. And in the praise thereof *spends all his might*
L. That to his *subject lends* not some small *glory*.

Note also his reference to Barnes' 'worth' in line 3. The reference to the "base subjects" on which H.'s Muse is wasting her time, fits very well with the identification of The Humorist with Donne. Many of his early poems—the erotic *Songs and Sonnets*—are full of deliberately indecent expressions and allusions.

7-8. Note the echoes of S.'s "lays," "skill" and "argument," and of S., M.P., and L.'s "pen"—all in this series.

THE PERSONAL SONNETS—SECOND BATCH

9-10. In his 19 in the B.I. Series, S., addressing Time, had said:—

But I forbid thee one most heinous crime :
O, *carve* not with thy hours *my love's fair brow*,
Nor draw no *lines* there with thine antique pen.

H. now bids his Muse see whether this unusual order has been executed or not.

The Couplet. The first line is deliberately unrhythmical, and the second deliberately quaint. POOLER says, "scythe . . . knife, crooked scythe a hendiadys." It is a complicated echo of three lines taken from M.P. (B.I. 60), L. (B.I. 63), and H. himself (M.A. 126), respectively:—

M.P. And nothing stands but for *his scythe* to mow:
L. Against confounding age's cruel *knife*.
H. Doth hold Times' fickle glass, *his sickle* hour (mower?).

101.

First Quatrain. The references to "truth and beauty" parody two passages, one from M.P.'s No. 54 in the B.I. Series, and one from L.'s No. 14 in the M.A. Series:—

M.P. O, how much more doth *beauty* beauteous seem
By that sweet ornament which *truth* doth give !
The canker-blooms have full as deep a *dye*.
L. As *truth* and *beauty* shall together thrive,
If from thyself to store thou would'st convert ;
Or else of thee this I prognosticate :
Thy end is *truth's* and *beauty's* doom and date.

The ungrammatical "and therein dignified" is, apparently, a double-barrelled parody of (1) M.P.'s ungrammatical "and no pace perceived" (104.10), and (2) L.'s unusual word "dignified" (84.8)—both in this series.

6-7. A paraphrase of L.'s 83.1-2, in this series :

I never saw that you did painting need,
And therefore to you fair no painting set ;

9-11. The reader's special attention is invited to this parody of L.'s faulty rhyme 'dumb' and 'tomb' in the corresponding sonnet (and almost exactly in the same place in the sonnet) No. 83. The modernized spelling of the text ruins its effectiveness. In the Quarto L.'s two words are spelt "dombe" and "tombe" so as to make a 'rhyme to the eye,' while in this sonnet H. spells them "dumb" and "tombe" so as to accentuate the disparity. Line 11 parodies M.P.'s lines in his 55 in the B.I. Series :

Not marble nor *the gilded monuments*
Of princes shall *outlive* this powerful rhyme.

Both the original and the parody refer to the practice of erecting elaborately decorated funeral monuments which began to come into fashion in the latter part of the sixteenth century. Thus we read in LEE'S *Life*, (p. 496) that in 1591 the celebrated "tombmaker" Garret Johnson, "received the handsome sum of £200 for designing and erecting the elaborate tombs of the brothers Edward Manners, third Earl of Rutland, and John Manners, fourth Earl, which were set up in the church at Bottesford, Leicestershire, the family burying-place." These may be the very tombs referred to ; Roger Manners, the fifth Earl, was a very intimate friend of Southampton.

13-14. Note the subtle ambiguity of the last line. *Esoterically* "long hence" refers to the prehistoric *past* of the next sonnet.

THE FIVE AUTHORS OF SHAKE-SPEARES SONNETS

59.

This is H.'s "complimentary" sonnet put third, (as noted above) so that it may be laughed at in the fourth. It is an *intentionally* feeble parody of S.'s complimentary Sonnet 106. Note "wasted time" and "old world"; "prefiguring" and "image"; "antique pen" and "antique book"; while "we" and "they," "wonder," and the couplet rhymes, are common to both.

3-4. A complicated parody of M.P., The "labouring for invention" echoes his 'invent' and the obstetrics of his E.D. Sonnet, No. 38; and the "brains" and "bear amiss" his "miscarriage" conceit in the corresponding sonnet (and in *exactly* the same place in the sonnet), No. 81:—

That did my ripe thoughts in my brain inhearse,
Making their tomb the womb wherein they grew ?

And both M.P. and H. probably had in mind Shakespeare's phrase in his dedication of *V. and A.*—"But if the first *heir* of my *invention* prove *deformed*."

5-12. All the commentators have gone astray in interpreting this passage. It is very odd that none of them should have realized that by a "course of the sun," the poet means not a solar *year* of 365 days, but a solar *cycle*, *i.e.*, 28 years, and that the allusion is to Plato's Great Year, at the end of which everything begins to happen all over again. But the latest editor of the *Sonnets* (MR. POOLER), writing in 1918, merely notes on line 6, "500 may be intended to refer vaguely to the dawn of literature in England." One would scarcely pick out 1095 A.D. as an epoch-making date! Now $500 \times 28 = 14,000$, which is near enough to Macrobius' estimate of 15,000 years for the *Magnus Annus Platonis*. Fourteen thousand years ago The Patron was blooming in his present beauty, and being "sonnetted" by prototypes of S., M.P., L., and H. The Muse wishes she could see the volume in which these effusions were 'charactered,' in order to compare them with the present lot.

13-14. This couplet is not only a piece of bare-faced impertinence, but one of the finest examples in the language of "the Art of Sinking in Poetry." Yet the commentators pass over it in silence.

103.

H.'s criticism of, and excuse for, the previous sonnet. His affected consternation at the failure of his Muse to rise to the height of her great argument is delightfully comic, and his double-edged compliments to The Patron's countenance are as skilfully executed as they are audaciously conceived. In addition, it is one of the most remarkable specimens of the 'mosaic' or 'patchwork' type of sonnet to be found in the collection. It is, literally, made up of scraps taken from the contributions of his three fellow-competitors, and fitted together with extraordinary ingenuity.

First Quatrain. Here H. makes satirical allusion to certain more or less ridicule-provoking thoughts and phrases used by his three rivals in their respective E.D. Sonnets, *viz.*, S.'s "poor wit," "bare," and "all naked" duty, M.P.'s parturient Muse and The Patron's sweet "argument," and L.'s threefold theme with its wondrous "scope":—

- S. Duty so great which wit so *poor* as mine
May make seem *bare* in wanting words to *show* it ;
In thy soul's thought, *all naked* will bestow it.
- M.P. How can *my Muse* want subject to invent,
Thine own sweet *argument*, too excellent
And he that calls on thee, let him *bring forth*
- L. Three themes in one which wondrous *scope* affords.

THE PERSONAL SONNETS—SECOND BATCH

He also parodies M.P.'s absurd line in this Series,

And to the most of *praise add* something more ; (85.10),

and manages to get in allusions both to S.'s "pride" and M.P.'s "worth"—altogether a notable triumph!

Second Quatrain. Parodies S.'s 3.1-2 in the M.A. Series, and 102.14 in this series, M.P.'s 80.1 in this series, and L.'s 105.11 in the E.D. Series.

- S. *Look in thy glass* and tell the *face* thou viewest
 Because I would not *dull* you with my song.
 M.P. *O, how I faint* when *I* of you do *write*,
 L. And in this change is *my invention spent*.

Third Quatrain. Parodies S.'s 79.2 and 78.11, M.P.'s reference to The Patron's expected donations for the Contest prizes in 81.1-2, and L.'s 83.9 and 84.6.

- S. *My verse* alone hath all *thy gentle grace*.
 In others' works thou dost but *mend* the style,
 M.P. Was it the proud full sail of *his great verse*,
 Bound for the *prize* of all-too-precious you.
 L. This silence for my *sin* you did impute,
 For I *impair* not beauty being mute,
 That to his *subject* lends not some small glory.

Couplet. An outrageous insult camouflaged as a 'patchwork' of echoes from each of his three rivals:—

- S. *Look in thy glass*, and tell the *face* thou viewest (3).
 M.P. But when your *countenance fill'd up* his line (86).
 L. Which three before never *kept seat* in one. (105).

This preposterous couplet is passed over in silence by the commentators, like its predecessor.

Perhaps these complicated echoes and parodies will be better appreciated if the sonnet is "parallelized" after the fashion of L.'s 83 above.

103

Previous Sonnets

Alack, what *poverty* my *Muse* brings forth,
 That having such a *scope* to show her *pride*,
 The *argument all bare*, is of more worth
 Than when it hath my *added praise* beside!

O, blame me not, if *I* no more can *write*!
Look in your glass, and there appears a *face*
 That *over-goes my blunt invention* quite,
Dulling my lines and doing me disgrace.
 Were it not *sinful*, then, striving to *mend*,
 To *mar* the *subject* that before was well?
 For to no other pass *my verses* tend
 Than of *your graces* and *your gifts* to tell;
 And more, much more, than in *my verse* can sit,
Your own glass shows you when you *look in it*.

How can *my Muse* want *subject* to invent,
 Thine own sweet *argument*, too excellent
 Be thou the tenth *Muse*, ten times *more in worth*,
 And he that calls on thee let him *bring forth*
 And to the most of *praise add something more*;
 Duty so great which wit so *poor* as mine
 May make seem *bare* in wanting words to *show it*.
 In thy soul's thought *all naked* will bestow it;
 But be most *proud* of that which I compile,
 Three themes in one which wondrous *scope* affords,
O, how I faint, when *I* of you do *write*,
Look in your glass and tell the *face* thou viewest
 And in this change is *my invention spent*
 Because I would not *dull* you with *my song*.
 This silence for my *sin* you did impute,
 In others' works thou dost but *mend* the style,
 For I *impair* not beauty being mute,
My verse alone had all *thy gentle grace*;
 Bound for the *prize* of all-too-precious you,
 Which three before never *kept seat* in one.

THE FIVE AUTHORS OF SHAKE-SPEARES SONNETS

Note.—BARNABE BARNES THE BUTT.

The reader will not have failed to observe that in this one-series batch, as in the four series of the First Batch, most of the 'comic relief' has been provided at the expense of The Minor Poet, Barnabe Barnes. In the Third Batch (to be considered in the next chapter), he will find an exactly similar state of affairs—the other three competitors hammering away again at his 'worth,' his sloppy language, and the addle-headed conceits of his E.D. sonnet, and The Humorist again going out of his way to sneer at him as a coward. Although all these references are duly noticed in the Notes on the texts of the sonnets in which they occur, no attempt has been made to give a full explanation in each individual case, as this would have meant a quite inadmissible amount of wearisome iteration. But if one collects these 'M.P.-ragging' references and analyses them, one finds it easy to classify a large proportion of them—half at least—under one or other of four distinct *motifs* which keep on cropping up throughout the Personal section. And I think it should be possible, without straining the kind reader's patience too severely, to exhibit this four-*motif* classification in a separate explanatory Note. This then is the purpose of this Note. And I have thought it advisable to put it in *here*, instead of in its natural place at the end of the next chapter. The disadvantage of this arrangement is that the reader will have to take the references to the Third Batch on trust for the time being; the advantage is that he will be put in immediate possession of the key to the more important of the many puzzles of that batch, which, as he will discover in due course, contains a larger number of 'difficult' sonnets than all the other ten series put together.

But before entering on this classification, it would be as well, perhaps, to set down here what little is known of Barnes' life and literary career. He was a son of Richard Barnes, the well-known Bishop of Durham, and was born in 1569. He went up to Oxford in 1586, but left some years later without taking a degree. He joined Essex's expeditionary force against the Prince of Parma in 1591, but he must have returned to England in or before 1593, as his first literary venture—The *Parthenophil* collection of sonnets and odes—was published in that year. It was favourably received, though certain sonnets were censured for their extravagance and bad taste. In 1595 he published another collection of sonnets—this time of a religious character—which seem to have fallen rather flat. In 1607 he published a dull and unpleasant tragedy, *The Devil's Charter*. He died at Durham in 1609. For information about his personal character we have to rely almost entirely on the evidence of hostile witnesses. He took sides with Gabriel Harvey in that worthy's notorious quarrel with Nashe, and contributed a sonnet against Nashe to Harvey's *Pierce's Supererogation*, which was published in 1593. When Nashe in due course replied to Harvey's attack in his ferocious lampoon, *Have with you to Saffron Walden* (1595), he singled out Barnes for special attention. Some extracts may be quoted:—

Carnead. Hee (Harvey) bids Barnabe of the Barnes be the gallant poet like Spenser, or the valiant souldiour like Baskerville, and ever remember his French service with such a generall.

Respond. What his souldiourship is I cannot judge, but if ever you have a chaine to runne away with as hee did with a nobleman's steward's chayne at his Lord's enstalling at Windsore . . . Neither of these princockesses (Barnes or Chute) once cast up their noses towards Powles Churchyard, or so much as knew how to knock at a printing-house door, till they comforted themselves with Harvey who infected them with his own spirit of Bragganisme which after so increased and multiplied in them as no man was able to endure them. The first of them (which is Barnes) presently uppon it, because he would be noted, getting him a strange payre of Babilonian britches . . . and so went up and down towne, where he was generally laught out by the noblemen and ladies . . . One of the best articles against Barnes I have overslipt, which is, that he is in print for

THE PERSONAL SONNETS—SECOND BATCH

a braggart in that universall applauded Latine poem of Master *Campion*; where in an epigram entitled in Barnum beginning :

Mortales decem tela inter Gallica caesos,¹

he shews how he bragd, when he was in *France* he slue ten men, when (*fearfull cowbaby*) he never heard peice shot off but hee fell down flat on his face.

Campion, too, not content with satirizing "Barnzy's" cowardice, hints (in another epigram) that he had connived at an intrigue between Harvey and his own (Barnes') wife.

It is not on record that Barnes took any action against the authors of these remarkably libellous statements.

Other contemporary references to his personal character are few and unimportant. The general impression one receives is that though his contemporaries admitted (as modern critics also admit) that he possessed a *quantum* of the true poetic afflatus, they regarded him, generally speaking, as a weak, silly, and affected person, addicted to writing perfervid and unballasted verse. Such a man was a predestined butt.

To come now to the four leading 'M.P.-ragging' motifs mentioned above. The first three originate in the absurdities of his sonnet No. 38, and the fourth originates in his reputation as a blustering coward.²

It will be convenient to begin by quoting No. 38 again :—

How can my Muse want subject to invent.
Whilst thou dost breathe, that pour'st into my verse
Thine own sweet argument, too excellent
For every vulgar paper to rehearse ?
O, give thyself the thanks, if aught in me
Worthy perusal stand against thy sight ;
For who's so dumb that cannot write to thee,
When thou thyself dost give invention light ;
Be thou the tenth Muse, ten times more in worth
Than those old nine which rhymers invoke ;
And he that calls on thee, let him bring forth
Eternal numbers to outlive long date.
If my slight Muse do please these curious days
The pain be mine, but thine shall be the praise.

Motif No. 1. This may be called the 'Argument-Invention-Subject' motif.

The absurdities of the first three lines are patent. By "want subject to invent," M.P. (to quote the notes on the sonnet),³ "presumably means to say 'lack a subject to exercise her invention (imagination) upon,' but the words as they stand cannot bear this (or for the matter of that, any other) meaning."

¹ The text of the epigram is as follows :—

Mortales decem tela inter Gallica caesos
Marte tuo perhibes ; in numero vitium est.
Mortales nullos si dicere, Barne, volebas.
Servaret numerum versus itemque fidem.

² Parolles in *All's Well*, "a great way fool, solely a coward," looks very much like a caricature of Barnes. Parolles was "beaten for picking a kernel out of a pomegranate," as, according to Nashe, Barnes was beaten for stealing a chain ; his gartered sleeves and peculiarly-knotted scarf bear the same brand of cheap swagger as Barnes' "Babylonian britches" ; and his explanation for refusing to fight—"What I dare too well do, I dare not do," might very well be the actual speech on which H. based his satirical reference to Barnes as—

Some fierce thing replete with too much rage,
Whose strength's abundance weakens his own heart.

³ V. p. 53 supra.

THE FIVE AUTHORS OF SHAKE-SPEARES SONNETS

Again, apart from the context, one would scarcely guess that "thine own sweet argument" means 'the subject of thine own sweetness'—which, in an unintentionally ludicrous metaphor, M.P. calls upon The Patron to pour into his empty verses.

Motif No. 2. This may be called the 'Enigmatical Obstetrics' motif.

In the last six lines we get a hopeless muddle. At the beginning of the sonnet we find three normal people—one female, namely, M.P.'s Muse, and two males, namely, M.P. himself and his noble patron. Then without any warning, at the end of the sonnet we find the noble patron performing the part of a Super-Muse (of doubtful sex), and M.P. himself preparing to lie-in of a poem! To quote the Notes again¹ "who is to 'bring forth' immortal verse? The poet, his own 'slight Muse,' or the newly-appointed tenth Muse. Apparently from line 14 the poet himself is to be brought to bed, but for some mysterious reason, the tenth Muse, *i.e.*, Southampton, is to take credit for the result."

Motif No. 3. This may be called the 'Worth' motif.

Barnes had a curious passion for the word "worth," and dragged it in on all possible occasions, sometimes with a very incongruous effect. For instance, prefixed to his *Parthenophil* collection we find a dedicatory sonnet to Southampton, written very much on the lines of No. 38 in this collection. In that sonnet he brings in "worth" twice:—

These *worthless* leaves which I to thee present,
Shall to my virtues of much *worth* aspire :

(As pointed out in the Notes on No. 38, this *Parthenophil* sonnet was well known to all his three *confrères*.)

Here in his No. 38 we also have it twice:—

Worthy perusal stand against thy sight ;
Be thou the tenth Muse, ten times more in *worth*.

And in two other sonnets of the First Batch we have it again:—

60. Praising thy *worth* despite his cruel hand.
37. Take all my comfort of thy *worth* and truth.

Motif No. 4. This may be called the 'Cowardice' motif.

The allusions made by Nashe and Campion (quoted above) shew that Barnes' reputation for cowardice was well established.

Now let us attempt to trace, batch by batch, the course of these four 'comic relief' threads of the Personal sonnet-web.

First Batch.

Shakespeare. S., of course, has no reference. The two others open the ball.
The Lawyer. L. brings in Motif No. 1 once.

105. Fair kind and true is all my *argument*,
And in this change is my *invention* spent,

The Humorist. H. brings in Motif No. 3 twice and No. 4 once.

16. Neither in inward *worth* nor outward fair,
62. And for myself mine own *worth* do define,
As I all others in all *worths* surmount.
23. Or some fierce thing replete with too much rage,
Whose strength's abundance *weakens his own heart* ;

¹ *v. p. 54 supra.*

THE PERSONAL SONNETS—SECOND BATCH

(In the first six lines of this last sonnet, H. refers to each of his three competitors in their 'natural' order, S., M.P., L., giving two lines to each. These are lines 3 and 4.)

Second Batch.

Shakespeare. Here S. gets his first chance of ragging M.P., and, as pointed out in the Notes, he does rag him very thoroughly—especially in his three first sonnets, which are, in essence, a series of sarcastic allusions to M.P. expressed in a series of parodies of M.P.'s own phraseology. He brings in No. 1 once, No. 2 twice, and No. 3 twice. The best way, perhaps, to exhibit these five references will be to place the lines in which S. deliberately parodies or imitates the thoughts and language of M.P.'s sonnet No. 38 side by side with their models:—

S.	M.P. (No. 38.)
<p>78. So oft I have invoked thee for <i>my Muse</i> Yet be most proud of that which I compile, Whose <i>influence is thine</i> and <i>born of thee</i> :</p> <p>79. I grant, sweet love, <i>thy lovely argument</i> Deserves the <i>travail</i> of a <i>worthier</i> pen ; Yet what of thee thy poet <i>doth invent</i>.</p> <p>No praise to thee but what in thee doth live. Then thank him not for that which he doth say,</p> <p>106. They had not skill enough thy <i>worth</i> to sing.</p>	<p>Be thou the tenth muse, ten times more in worth Than those old nine which rhymers invoke ; How can <i>my Muse</i> want subject to <i>invent</i>, While thou dost breathe, that <i>pour'st into my</i> verse <i>Thine own sweet argument</i>, too excellent And he that calls on thee, let him <i>bring forth</i> When thou thyself <i>dost give invention light</i> ?</p> <p>The pain be mine, but thine shall be the praise. O, give thyself the thanks, if aught in me <i>Worthy</i> perusal stand against thy sight.</p>

(Note the skilful 'portmanteau' effect of

. thy lovely *argument*.
 Deserves the *travail* of a *worthier* pen

—the three main *motifs* in a line and a half).

The Minor Poet. This is M.P.'s first opportunity of shewing that he is aware of the ragging to which he has been subjected. He wisely drops his indefensible *Argument-Invention-Subject* conceit for good, but attempts to justify his *Enigmatic Obstetrics* by presenting a simplified (but still decidedly comic) version, in which he appears as the sole parent of his poetical offspring, explaining why the accouchement he was expecting in his First Batch sonnet (No. 38) has resulted in a miscarriage.

86. That did my *ripe* thoughts in my brain inhearse
 Making their tomb the womb wherein they grew.

He is still, however, unrepentant about 'worth':—

80. But since your *worth*, wide as the ocean is,
 Or being wreck'd, I am a *worthless* boat.

The Lawyer. L. gets in two allusions apiece to *Motifs* Nos. 1, 2, and 3:—

82. I grant thou wert not *married to my Muse*,
 Of their fair *subject*, blessing every book.
 Finding thy *worth* a limit past my praise ;

83. Speaking of *worth* what *worth* in you doth grow.
 While others would *give life and bring a tomb*.

THE FIVE AUTHORS OF SHAKE-SPEARES SONNETS

(Note here the allusion to M.P.'s 'miscarriage' development of his Motif No. 2.)

84 That to his *subject* lends not some small glory.

The Humorist. H. exploits the first three *motifs* in the most thorough going fashion, bringing in No. 1 no less than seven times, No. 2 twice, and No. 3 twice.

100. Where art thou Muse that thou forget'st so long
Spend'st thou thy fury on some *worthless* song?
Darkening thy power to lend base *subjects* light?
And gives thy pen both skill and *argument*.

59. how are our brains beguiled,
Which *labouring* for *invention* bear amiss
The second burthen of a former child.

(Note here how he, too, follows the 'miscarriage' development of No. 2.)

103. To *subjects* worse have given admiring praise.
Alack, what poverty my Muse brings forth,
The *argument* all bare is of more worth
That overgoes my blunt *invention* quite,
To mar the *subject* that before was well?

Third Batch.

As noted above, the kind reader will have to take the references and my explanations thereof 'on trust' for the present.

Shakespeare. S. brings in No. 2 once and No. 3 twice.

116. Let me not to the *marriage* of true minds
Admit impediments.

(the reference is to the marriage of L.'s Muse to The Patron in his No. 82 in the Second Batch. L. is always boasting about his "truth.")

Whose *worth's* unknown although his height be taken.

("whose" and "his" refer to M.P., and "unknown" means non-existent, nil.)

74. The *worth* of that is that which it contains.

The Minor Poet. M.P. sticks to his revised version of his *Obstetrics* conceit, and also to his 'worth.'

70. Thy *worth* the greater being woo'd of time;
72. For you in me can nothing *worthy* prove;
For I am shamed by that which I bring forth,
And so should you to love things nothing *worth*.

The Lawyer. L. brings in Nos. 1 and 2 twice each.

76. And keep *invention* in a noted weed,
Showing *their birth* and whence they did proceed?
And you and love are all my *argument*;
32. Had my friend's Muse grown with this growing age,
A *dearer birth* than this his love had brought,

THE PERSONAL SONNETS—SECOND BATCH

The Humorist. H. brings in No. 2 once, No. 3 twice, and No. 4 once.

39. O, how thy *worth* with manners may I sing,
25. The *painful warrior famed for worth*,
After a thousand victories once foiled,
Is from the book of honour razed quite.

(Note in the first-quoted line of No. 25, quite the neatest of all the 'portmanteau' allusions to M.P.; "painful" recalls his labour-pains in his No. 38, "warrior" is, of course, ironical, and "famed for worth" is an even more direct gibe than S.'s "a worthier pen.")

Perhaps it will make things clearer if these rather complicated pleasantries are set forth in tabular form. The following table shews them arranged in strictly chronological order—reading from left to right:—

THE FIVE AUTHORS OF SHAKESPEARES SONNETS

BARNABE BARNES

SHAKESPEARE

THE MINOR POET

FIRST

Explanation.	
Reference to Motif No. 1.—	<u>underlined.</u>
Do.	Motif No. 2.— <i>italicized.</i>
Do.	Motif No. 3.— in bold type
Do.	Motif No. 4.— <u>wavy ruled.</u>

- (*Parth.* These **worthless** leaves which I to thee
present
Shall to thy virtues of much **worth** aspire.)
38. How can *my Muse* want subject to invent,
Thine own sweet argument too excellent
Worthy perusal stand against thy sight ;
When thou thyself dost give invention
light ?
Be *thou* the tenth *Muse* ten times more in
worth
And he that calls on thee *let him bring forth*
The pain be mine but thine shall be the praise.
60. Praising thy **worth** despite his cruel hand.
37. Take all my comfort of thy **worth** and truth.

SECOND

78. How oft I have invoked thee for *my Muse*
Whose influence is thine and *born of thee* :
79. I grant, sweet love, thy lovely argument
Deserves the *travail* of a **worthier** pen ;
Yet what of thee thy poet doth invent
106. They had not skill enough thy **worth** to sing.

80. But since your **worth**, wide as the ocean is,
Or being wreck'd, I am a **worthless** boat,
86. That did my ripe thoughts in *my brain* inhearse,
Making their tomb the womb wherein they grew.

THIRD

116. Let me not to the *marriage* of true minds
Admit impediments. . . .
Whose **worth's** unknown, although his height
be taken.
74. The **worth** of that is that which it contains,

70. Thy **worth** the greater being woo'd of time ;
72. For you in me can nothing **worthy** prove ;
For I am shamed by that which *I bring forth*,
And so should you to love thing nothing **worth**.

THE PERSONAL SONNETS—SECOND BATCH

THE BUTT.

THE LAWYER.

THE HUMORIST.

BATCH.

105. Fair, kind, and true is all my argument,
And in this change is my invention spent.

16. Neither in inward **worth** nor outward fair
62. And for myself mine own **worth** do define
As I all other in all **worths** surmount.
23. Or some fierce thing replete with too much rage,
Whose strength's abundance weakens his own
heart ;

BATCH.

82. I grant thou wert not *married to my Muse*,
Of their fair subject blessing every book.
Finding thy **worth** a limit past my praise ;
83. Speaking of **worth** what **worth** in you doth grow
While others would *give life and bring a tomb*.
84. That to his subject lends not some small glory.

100. Where art thou, *Muse*, that thou forget'st so
long
Spend'st thou thy fury on some **worthless** song,
Darkening thy power to lend base subjects
light ?
And give thy pen both skill and argument.
59. . . . How are *our brains* beguiled
Which *labouring* for invention, *bear amiss*
The second burthen of a former child!
To subjects worse have given admiring praise.
103. Alack, what poverty *my Muse brings forth*,
The argument all bare is of more **worth**
That overgoes my blunt invention quite,
To mar the subject that before was well ?

BATCH.

76. And keep invention in a noted weed,
Showing *their birth and whence they did proceed?*
And you and love are all my argument ;
32. Had *my friend's Muse* grown with this growing
age
A dearer birth than this his love had brought.

25. The painful warrior famed for **worth**,
After a thousand victories once foiled,
Is from the book of honour razed quite.
39. O, how thy **worth** with manners may I sing,

CHAPTER IV.—THE PERSONAL SONNETS.—THIRD BATCH.

As we have seen, Series Nos. 1 to 4 constituted the first batch of Personal Sonnets ; after a certain interval, in response to a hint from The Patron, came Series No. 5, which in itself constituted the second batch ; and now, after another interval of uncertain length, come the three last Series, Nos. 6, 7, and 8, plus The Patron's single Sonnet No. 121, which, though composed and despatched at different times, are yet all so intimately inter-connected as regards subject-matter that they may be conveniently treated as constituting the third (and final) batch.

The history of this batch may be taken to have been somewhat as follows : Some time after the receipt of the second batch of sonnets Southampton got into a fast set at Court, and started leading a dissolute life in London, rather 'dropping' his little coterie of literary hangers-on in consequence. Probably this was late in 1595 or early in 1596 when, as LEE tells us, he was "courting Elizabeth Vernon with too much familiarity." Anyhow, whatever the exact date, his new friends were doing so much harm to his reputation, and he had lost his interest in the Contest to such an extent, that the four poets decided to give him a gentle reminder of his duty to himself and to literature, and sent him the two-sonnet Series No. 6 (Patron's Peccadilloes) accordingly. Some of the criticisms of his conduct contained in these sonnets—especially in the contributions of The Lawyer and The Humorist—were decidedly pointed, and Southampton not unnaturally got annoyed. However he resolved to play the game, and retorted in kind with a "halting sonnet of his own pure brain" (No. 121), in which he turned the tables on his monitors with a vigorous *tu quoque*. This sonnet was apparently accompanied by a verbal or written communication, in which he declared that the poets had neglected him and not he the poets, warned them that he was not going to permit this sort of criticism again, and ordered them to send him a full poetical apology. The result was the four-sonnet Series No. 7 (Poet's Repentance), to which Shakespeare (followed, of course, by the other three) appended his two-sonnet Series No. 8 (The Moribund Poet) as a decisive intimation that no more batches of 'adulatory' sonnets were to be expected.

SERIES No. 6.—The Patron's Peccadilloes.

The Theme. The Poet mildly reproves The Patron for deserting him and getting into bad company.

The Theme.—The Poet mildly reproaches the Patron

SHAKESPEARE

33

Full many a glorious morning have I seen
Flatter the mountain-tops with sovereign eye,
Kissing with golden face the meadows green,
Gilding pale streams with heavenly alchemy ;
Anon permit the basest clouds to ride
With ugly rack on his celestial face,
And from the forlorn world his visage hide,
Stealing unseen to west with this disgrace :
Even so my sun one early morn did shine
With all-triumphant splendour on my brow ;
But, out, alack ! he was but one hour mine,
The region cloud hath masked him from me now.
Yet him for this my love no whit disdaineth ;
Suns of the world may stain when heaven's sun
staineth.

34

Why didst thou promise such a beauteous day,
And make me travel forth without my cloak,
To let base clouds o'ertake me in my way,
Hiding thy bravery in their rotten smoke ?
'Tis not enough that through the cloud thou break,
To dry the rain on my storm-beaten face,
For no man well of such a salve can speak
That heals the wound and cures not the disgrace :
Nor can thy shame give physic to my grief ;
Though thou repent, yet I have still the loss ;
The offender's sorrow lends but weak relief
To him that bears the strong offence's cross.
Ah, but those tears are pearls which thy love sheds,
And they are rich and ransom all ill deeds.

THE MINOR POET

94

They that have power to hurt and will do none,
That do not do the thing they most do show
Who, moving others, are themselves as stone,
Unmoved, cold and to temptation slow ;
They rightly do inherit heaven's graces
And husband nature's riches from expense ;
They are the lords and owners of their faces,
Others but stewards of their excellence.
The summer's flower is to the summer sweet,
Though to itself it only live and die,
But if that flower with base infection meet,
The basest weed outbraves his dignity :
For sweetest things turn sourest by their deeds ;
Lilies that fester smell far worse than weeds.

70

That thou art blamed shall not be thy defect,
For slander's mark was ever yet the fair ;
The ornament of beauty is suspect,
A crow that flies in heaven's sweetest air.
So thou be good, slander doth but approve
Thy worth the greater, being woo'd of time ;
For canker vice the sweetest buds doth love,
And thou present'st a pure unstained prime.
Thou hast pass'd by the ambush of young days,
Either not assail'd, or victor being charged ;
Yet this thy praise cannot be so thy praise,
To tie up envy evermore enlarged :
If some suspect of ill mask'd not thy show,
Then thou alone kingdoms of hearts shouldst owe.

TREATMENT OF THE THEME.

The general tone of the sonnets in this series is sober and restrained. There is a notable absence of personal allusions, and The Humorist's contribution is, for once, not conceived in a spirit of ragging and burlesque. It would seem that the poets intended their hints and warnings to be taken more or less seriously.

Shakespeare deals with The Theme very tactfully. His chief complaint is that The Patron has withdrawn the light of his countenance from him. He touches very lightly indeed on the injustice of such conduct, and assumes that The Patron has already repented thereof even unto tears.

The Minor Poet characteristically evades the issue altogether, and elects to represent The Patron as an innocent victim of lying and malicious rumours.

The Lawyer's treatment is in striking contrast to The Minor Poet's. In his best *Candid Friend* manner he tells The Patron in so many words that he has become a sensualist and a lover of low company. He, however, bids him not repine, as everybody has faults, and even *he* (The Lawyer) is not altogether exempt. One wonders, by the way, whether this last bit of information had the soothing effect on Southampton contemplated by the author.

THE PERSONAL SONNETS—THIRD BATCH

PATRON'S PECCADILLOES. (P.P.)

for deserting him and getting into bad company.

THE LAWYER

69

Those parts of thee that the world's *eye doth view*
 Want *nothing* that the thought of hearts can mend ;
 All *tongues*, the voice of souls, give thee that due,
 Uttering bare truth, even so as foes commend.
 Thy outward thus with outward *praise* is *crown'd* ;
 But those same tongues, that give thee so thine own,
 In other accents do this *praise* confound
 By seeing farther than the eye hath shown.
 They look into the beauty of thy mind,
 And that, *in guess*, they measure *by thy deeds* ;
 Then, churls, their thoughts, although their eyes
 were kind,
 To thy fair flower add the rank *smell* of weeds :
 But why thy *odour* matcheth *not thy show*,
 The soil is this, that thou dost *common* grow.

35

No more be grieved at that which thou hast done :
 Roses have thorns, and silver fountains mud ;
Clouds and eclipses *stain* both moon and *sun*.
 And loathsome *canker* lives *in sweetest bud*.
 All men make faults, and even I in this,
 Authorizing thy trespass with compare,
 Myself corrupting, *salving* thy amiss,
 Excusing *thy sins* more than *thy sins* are ;
 For to thy sensual fault I bring in sense—
 Thy adverse party is thy advocate—
 And 'gainst myself a lawful plea commence :
 Such civil war is in my love and hate,
 That I an accessory needs must be
 To that *sweet* thief which *sourly* robs from me.

THE HUMORIST

95

How sweet and lovely dost thou make the shame
 Which, like a *canker in the fragrant rose*,
 Doth *spot* the beauty of thy *budding* name !
 O, in what sweets dost thou *thy sins* inclose !
 That *tongue* that tells the story of thy days,
 Making lascivious comments on thy sport,
 Cannot *dispraise* but in a kind of *praise* ;
 Naming thy name blesses an ill report.
 O, what a mansion have those vices got
 Which for their habitation chose out thee,
 Where beauty's veil doth cover every blot
 And *all things turn* to fair *that eyes can see* !
 Take heed, dear heart, of this large privilege ;
 The hardest knife ill used doth lose his edge.

96

Some say, thy fault is youth, some wantonness ;
 Some say, thy grace is youth and gentle sport ;
 Both grace and faults are loved of more and less :
 Thou makest faults graces that to thee resort.
 As on the finger of a *throned queen*
 The *basest* jewel will be well *esteem'd*,
 So are those errors that in thee are seen
 To truths translated and for true things *deem'd*.
 How many lambs might the stern wolf betray,
 If like a lamb he could his looks translate !
 How many *gazers* mightst thou lead away,
 If thou wouldst use the strength of all thy state !
 But do not so ; I love thee in such sort,
As thou being mine, mine is thy good report.

The Humorist's condemnation of The Patron's conduct, though less clumsily expressed than The Lawyer's, is not a whit less severe.

As a natural result of these differences in treatment there is an absence of that close imitation of S.'s thoughts which distinguishes most of the other series. And though many resemblances are traceable—especially between The Lawyer and The Humorist—they can be sufficiently shewn, and more conveniently dealt with, under the next heading.

VERBAL PARALLELISMS.

Verbal parallelisms are numerous and close—most remarkably so when the disparity between the various treatments is considered.

- | | |
|------|--|
| S. | Anon permit the <i>basest</i> clouds to ride
To let <i>base</i> clouds o'ertake me in my way. |
| M.P. | But if that flower with <i>base</i> infection meet,
The <i>basest</i> weed outbraves his dignity. |
| L. | . . . thou dost <i>common</i> grow. |
| H. | The <i>basest</i> jewel will be well esteemed. |
| S. | Suns of the world may <i>stain</i> when heaven's <i>sun staineth</i> . |
| M.P. | And thou present'st a pure <i>unstained</i> prime. |

THE FIVE AUTHORS OF SHAKE-SPEARES SONNETS

- L. Clouds and eclipses *stain* both moon and sun,
H. Doth *spot* the beauty of thy budding name !
- S. And they are rich and ransom all *ill deeds*.
M.P. For *sweetest* things turn *sourest* by *their deeds*.
Lilies that fester *smell* far worse than *weeds*.
If some *suspect* of *ill* mask'd *not thy show*,
L. To that *sweet* thief that *sourly* robs from me.
And that *in guess*, they measure *by thy deeds* ;
To thy fair *flower* add the rank *smell* of *weeds* :
But why thy *odour* matcheth *not thy show*,
- M.P. That do not do the *thing* they must do *show*,
For *sweetest things* turn *sourest* by their deeds ;
L. Those parts of thee *that* the world's eye *doth view*
Want *nothing* that the thoughts of hearts can mend.
H. And all *things* turn to fair *that eyes can see* !
- M.P. For *canker* vice the *sweetest buds* doth love,
L. And loathsome *canker* lives in *sweetest bud*.
H. Which like a *canker* in the *fragrant* rose,
- M.P. Yet this thy *praise* cannot be so thy *praise*,
L. Thy outward thus with outward *praise* is crown'd ;
In other accents do this *praise* confound
H. Cannot *dispraise* but in a kind of *praise*.

Note the attributes of royalty bestowed upon the Patron by each of the four poets, viz. :—

- S. Flatter the mountain-tops with *sovereign* eye,
M.P. Then thou alone *kingdoms* of hearts shouldst owe.
L. Thy outward thus with outward *praise* is crown'd ;
H. As on the finger of a *throned* queen.

Minor Parallelisms: (1) *Clouds*, 33.5, 35.3; (2) *salve*, 34.7, 35.7; (3) *thy sins*, 35.8, 95.4; (4) *tongue*, 69.6, 95.5.

NOTES.

Shakespeare. (Nos. 33, 34.)

Shakespeare's beautiful No. 33 is a supreme example of the sonneteer's art and one of the best-known sonnets in the language. No. 34, though it lacks the wonderful word-painting of its predecessor, is nevertheless a notably good sonnet—clear, easy, and melodious throughout. And yet, on analysis, each of them proves to be a 'patch-work' sonnet made up of thoughts and phrases borrowed from Shakespeare's own poems and plays, and ingeniously worked up into the semblance of an original poem. It would seem that Shakespeare had lately written his *First Part of Henry IV.*, which depicts his favourite hero in much the same situation as Southampton, *i.e.*, wasting his time and damaging his reputation by keeping disreputable company.¹ Now, in the play, Prince Hal takes an early opportunity of putting himself right with the audience by

¹ Indeed it is a tenable hypothesis that the same circumstances which suggested the eight sonnets of this series suggested also a good deal of the under-plot of the play; Prince Hal might very well stand for that "great prince," Southampton, and his rowdy Boar's Head crew for some of Southampton's disreputable new companions. Falstaff, at any rate, appears to have been a portrait or caricature of an acquaintance of his; we find Lady Southampton a few years later writing in a letter to her husband in Ireland: "Al the nues I can send you that I think wil make you mery is that I reade in a letter from London that Sir John Falstaf is by his Mrs. Dame Pintpot made father of a godly milers thum, a boye thats all heade and veri litel body; but this is a secret."

THE PERSONAL SONNETS—THIRD BATCH

informing them in a soliloquy that he is misbehaving on purpose, in order to obtain greater *kudos* when he turns respectable later on :

Yet herein will I imitate the sun,
Who doth permit the base contagious clouds
To smother up his beauty from the world,
That when he please again to be himself,
Being wanted, he may be more wonder'd at,
By breaking through the foul and ugly mists
Of vapours that did seem to strangle him.

Shakespeare now deliberately takes this passage as the basis of his two sonnets and applies it to Southampton. This was quite 'a happy thought'; it gave him an opportunity of paying a compliment to Southampton's character and position in society, of furnishing him with an excuse for his recent conduct, and of giving him a hint that reformation was overdue. But why he elected to construct his *entire contribution* on 'patch-work' lines is a more difficult question. Perhaps the answer is that he was dissatisfied with the way in which L. had handled thoughts and phrases borrowed from his (S.'s) plays and poems in his 'Shakespearizing', Sonnet No. 83 in the P.E. Series, and wanted to show him and the other competitors how it should be done. At any rate he has done so most thoroughly and decisively; he has laid under contribution no less than seven different passages—all from his own works, and all dealing with the same subject, *viz.*, the glory of the rising sun—and yet has succeeded in producing a magnificently poetical and perfectly *spontaneous* effect.

The 'basic' passage from *K. Henry IV.* has already been quoted; the other six are as follows:—

(a). The dawn which rouses "sick-thoughted" Venus to seek the early-rising Adonis :

856. *The sun arises in his majesty ;
Who doth the world so gloriously behold,
That cedar-tops and hills seem burnished gold.*

(b). The dawn which parts Romeo from his bride (Act III., sc. 5) :

Night's candles are burnt out, and jocund day
Stands tip-toe on the *misty mountain-tops*.

(c). The dawn which gives the signal to Oberon and his fairy crew to hasten back to Fairyland (Act III., sc. 2) :

Even till the eastern gate, all fiery-red,
Opening on Neptune with fair blessed beams,
Turns into yellow gold his salt green streams.

(d). The dawn of the Lady Blanch's wedding-day (*King John*, Act III., sc. 1.) :

To solemnize this day *the glorious sun*
Stays in his course and *plays the alchemist*,
Turning with splendour of his precious eye
The meagre cloddy earth to *glittering gold*.

(e) and (f). The moisture-dispelling beams of the early morning sun to which both Navarre and Longueville compare the glances of their mistress's eyes (*L.L.L.*, Act IV., sc. 3) :

Nav. So sweet a *kiss* the *golden sun* gives not
To those fresh morning drops upon the rose,
As thy eye-beams, when their fresh rays have smote

THE FIVE AUTHORS OF SHAKE-SPEARES SONNETS

The night of *dew* that on *my cheeks down-flows* :
 So *ridest* thou *triumphing* in my woe.
 Do but behold the *tears* that swell in me,
 And they thy *glory* through my grief will show.

Long. Then thou, fair *sun*, which on my earth *dost shine*,
 Exhal'st this vapour-vow ; . . .
 Thy grace, being gained, *cures all disgrace in me*.

Perhaps it will save the reader's time to 'parallelize' these passages. The left-hand column below shows, in their proper order, the lines in the two sonnets in which the most conspicuous 'echoes' occur; and the right-hand column shows the echoed lines in an order designed to facilitate comparison of the verbal similarities.

Nos. 33 and 34

Plays and Poems

Full many a *glorious* morning have I seen
 Flatter the *mountain tops* with *sovereign eye*,

Kissing with *golden* face the meadows *green*,
Gilding pale streams with heavenly *alchemy*;

Anon *permit* the *basest* clouds to *ride*
 With *ugly* rack on his celestial face,
 And from the *forlorn* world his *visage* hide,
 Even so my *sun* one early morn *did shine*
 With all-*triumphant* splendour on my brow ;
 Hiding thy *bravery* in their *rotten* smoke ?
 'Tis not enough that *through* the cloud thou *break* ;
 To *dry* the rain on my storm-beaten face,
 That heals the wound and *cures* not the *disgrace*.

The sun arises in his *majesty* ;
 Who doth the world so *gloriously* behold
 That cedar tops and hills *seem burnished* gold.
 Stands tip-toe on the *misty* mountain-tops.
 So sweet a *kiss* the *golden* sun gives not
 Turns into *yellow* gold his salt *green* streams.
 Stays in his course and plays the *alchemist*,
 Who doth *permit* the *base* contagious clouds
 By *breaking* through the foul and ugly mists
 To smother up his *beauty* from the world,
 Then thou, fair *sun*, which on my earth *doth shine*,
 So *ridest* thou *triumphing* in my woe.
 Turning with *splendour* of his precious eye
 Exhal'st this vapour-vow
 The night of *dew* that on my cheek *down flows* ;
 Thy grace, being gained, *cures all disgrace* in me.

The Minor Poet. (Nos. 94, 70.)

The Minor Poet's two sonnets are much above his average. It is probably because the theme is more 'actual' than usual that he curbs his propensity for fine writing; at any rate there is a notable absence of the sugary sentiment, the extravagant hyperboles, and the rickety metaphors which usually distinguish his work. The following characteristics are exemplified: *Smooth Versification* throughout; *Sound not Sense*, 94.9, 70.12; *The Flunkey*, 70.8-14.

94.

2. Cf. ll. 7-8, 12 of his No. 20 in the M.A. Series.

14. This line is borrowed from the contemporary play, *Edward III.*, and occurs in a scene which some critics have attributed to Shakespeare.

70.

6. Barnes' "worth" again.

7-8. Probably suggested by the lines in 2 *Gent. Verona* :

. . . . as in the *sweetest* bud
 The eating *canker* dwells, so eating *love*
 Losing his verdure even in the *prime*.

8-14. This piece of characteristic flunkeyism stultifies M.P. himself and the other three competitors as well. If The Patron had done nothing wrong the *raison d'être* of the series disappears.

THE PERSONAL SONNETS—THIRD BATCH

The Lawyer. (Nos. 69, 35.)

The Lawyer's contribution is of average merit and displays several of his characteristics to great advantage: *Pedestrian Style*, 35.5-9; *The Attorney*, 35.10-14; *Clumsy Humour*, 69-14, 35.9; *The Candid Friend*, *passim*.

69.

1-2. Cf. 94.2 in this series, and 20.7-8, 12 and 17.4 in the M.A. Series.

8. How do tongues see?

11-12. A pretty broad hint that the line taken by M.P., namely, that The Patron had done nothing wrong, was nonsense. That "these same tongues" = M.P. is plainly indicated by L.'s extraordinarily close imitation of his imagery and language (*v.* Parallels Nos. 3 and 4 above). L. insinuates that although M.P.'s "eyes were kind," *i.e.*, although *outwardly* he politely smiled approval on The Patron's doings, *inwardly* he thought harshly of him, and considered that he was acquiring an unsavoury reputation.

14. The *Candid Friend* with a vengeance.

35.

2-4. L. here takes M.P.'s imitation of the *Two Gent. of Verona* lines (70.7), and improves on it by superimposing an imitation of the lines in *Lucrece* (848-50):

Why should the *worm* intrude the maiden *bud*?
Or toads infect *fair founts* with venom *mud*?

7-8. The lines are not satisfactory as they stand. They should probably be read:—

Myself corrupt *in* salving thy amiss,
Excusing *thee* sins more than my sins are,

the idea being that to make excuses for your bad conduct is rather more sinful than that conduct itself—clumsily expressed, but quite in L.'s manner.

9. The same sense of humour which regarded a pun on "lean penury" and "alien pen" as funny (*v.* No. 84) is responsible for this effort.

The Humorist. (Nos. 95, 96.)

As noted above, The Humorist's most characteristic characteristics are absent from his contribution to this series. It is clear that The Patron's sexual conduct was becoming a matter of serious concern to his friends, and that the hints and warnings of this series were meant to be taken much more seriously than the more or less conventional compliments of the first two series. There is a certain amount of *double entendre* and a little satire at The Patron's expense, and *The Polite Shirker* reveals himself in the couplet of 96.

95.

1-4. Beautiful poetry. It is a pity that H.'s conception of his part as clown to the troupe did not allow him to give us more of the same quality here and elsewhere.

7. An unpleasing rhythmical effect—obviously intentional.

12-13. Cf. 69.2 in this series.

96.

9-12. A prophetic warning; Southampton seduced Elizabeth Vernon before 'making an honest woman of her' in 1598.

13-14. The ambiguity is intentional.

THE FIVE AUTHORS OF SHAKE-SPEARES SONNETS

THE LINK.

We now come to what is, from the point of view of The Theory, the most important sonnet in the whole collection, namely, The Patron's No. 121, in which he replies to the strictures passed upon him by the four poets in the last series. It is the indispensable link which joins together the eight sonnets of that series on the one hand and the sixteen sonnets of *The Poet's Repentance* series with its pendant, the eight sonnets of *The Moribund Poet* series, on the other. Moreover, it sheds a good deal of light on the real nature of the relations existing between The Patron and the competitors.

THE LINK. (No. 121.)

The Theme.—The Patron makes a 'tu quoque' reply to Series No. 6.

THE PATRON

121

'Tis better to be vile than vile esteemed,
When not to be receives reproach of being :
And the just pleasure lost, which is so deemed
Not by our feeling, but by others' seeing :
For why should others' false adulterate eyes
Give salutation to my sportive blood ?
Or on my frailties why are frailer spies,
Which in their wills count bad what I think good ?
No, I am that I am, and they that level
At my abuses reckon up their own :
I may be straight, though they themselves be bevel ;
By their rank thoughts my deeds must not be shown ;
Unless this general evil they maintain,
All men are bad and in their badness reign.

Few sonnets have puzzled the commentators more. The latest editor, POOLER, notes : " A very difficult sonnet, whether the subject is the prejudice against the stage (Burgersdijk), or some particular slander ; and if the latter, which seems likely, whether Shakespeare himself or his friend was slandered ; if his friend, Shakespeare identifies himself with him and writes as if the case were his own." Their chief stumbling-blocks appear to have been—

- (a). The self-righteous and truculent tone, which contrasts so strikingly with that of the sonnets which immediately precede and follow it.
- (b). The obscurity and strangeness of the language, especially in the first six and last two lines.
- (c). The cryptic allusions to the wicked " others " who spy upon the poet's blameless actions.

These stumbling-blocks disappear when it is realised that the author—

- (a). is not a professional " rogue and vagabond " attempting to justify his conduct in the eyes of his Noble Patron, but the Noble Patron himself vigorously ' strafing ' his social inferiors for presuming to criticise his private life.
- (b). is not a supreme master of the English language, embodying in deathless verse sentiments suitable to the ' gentle Shakespeare ' of the

THE PERSONAL SONNETS—THIRD BATCH

- biographers, but a literary novice struggling to express in an unfamiliar medium a patently fictitious outburst of virtuous indignation.
- (c). is not moralising "at large," but delivering a counter-attack in reply to the P.P. offensive, and turning against their authors various words and phrases used in that audacious enterprise.

The severest and most outspoken censure of The Patron's conduct was that passed by L., who concentrated S.'s and M.P.'s insinuations and warnings with regard to evil deeds, suspicious behaviour, deceptive appearances, malodorous weeds, etc., in the following lines:—

And that in guess they measure by thy *deeds*;
Then churls their *thoughts* although their *eyes* were *kind*,
To thy fair flower add the *rank* smell of weeds:
But why thy odour matcheth not thy *show*,
The soil is this, that thou dost common grow.

The Patron now takes these lines as the basis of his own sonnet, and graciously accepting H.'s tactful suggestion that his irregularities were merely "sport" (95.6 and 96.2), retorts as follows:—

For why should others false adulterate *eyes*
Give *salutation* to my *sportive* blood?
By their *rank thoughts* my *deeds* must not be *shown*.¹

He then goes on to admonish his monitors severely, the puzzling verb "reign" in his final couplet being an allusion to the *royal* position accorded to him by all the three poets in the P.P. Series, and the final couplet itself a lofty rebuke to them for accusing him of disreputable conduct and doing homage to him as a king of men in the same breath.

Thus interpreted the sonnet presents no particular difficulty, and might be paraphrased in the language of a young blood of the present day as follows:—

"Upon my word, it's better to lead a fast life and get what fun you can out of it, than to run straight and yet have people putting you down as a debauchee wallowing in hectic pleasures that exist only in their own imaginations. I know I make slips occasionally, and play the fool more than I should do, but that's no reason why a gang of *real* sensualists should hail me as one of themselves, and put their own vile construction on actions of mine which I know to be harmless. Your last batch of sonnets gives the whole four of you away hopelessly, because they make it clear that *your* working theory of life is that everybody is out to get as much vicious pleasure out of it as he can, and the finest fellow is the man who manages to get most. Anyhow, straight or crooked, I intend to 'gang ma ain gait.' The tone of your comments shows that you have disgustingly low minds, and I'll thank you to keep your thoughts to yourselves in future. Understand quite clearly that I am not going to have you people criticising my private conduct like this again."

VERBAL PARALLELISMS.

The sonnet borrows thoughts and phrases from the P.P. Series, and is in turn extensively borrowed from by the four poets in the P.R. Series, where they have to accept their wiggling with humility, and do their best to answer the counter-charges brought

¹ Cf. stanza 27 of *A Lover's Complaint*, beginning:

All my offences that abroad you see
Are errors of the blood, none of the mind,

where a wicked wolf in sheep's clothing (who bears a strong resemblance to Southampton) sets himself to betray a "young and simple" lamb.

THE FIVE AUTHORS OF SHAKE-SPEARES SONNETS

against them by The Patron. In view of the 'structural' importance of this sonnet we may anticipate a little, (as in the Note on Barnes the Butt in the last chapter), and exhibit here not only The Link's borrowings from the last series, but also the counter-borrowings in the next series. The reader's particular attention is invited to the subjoined list of parallelisms shewing the 'backward-and-forward-chaining.' The extracts are arranged in *chronological* order, the passages from The Link being distinguished by italics. The borrowings and counter-borrowings are indicated by underlining in the usual way.

THE LINK. BACKWARD-AND-FORWARD-CHAINING.

(1) Esteem-deem.

P.P. { **H.** The basest jewel will be well esteem'd,
 For truth translated and for true things deemed.
Link. 'Tis better to be vile than vile esteem'd,
 And the just pleasure lost which is so deemed.

(2) False-judging eyes.

P.P. { **L.** Then churls, their thoughts, although their eyes were kind
H. Making lascivious comments on thy sport,
 How many gazers might thou lead away
Link. For why should others' false adulterate eyes
 Give salutation to my sportive blood?
 And on my frailties why are frailer spies;
 P.R. { **S.** O never say that I was false of heart,
 All frailties that besiege all kinds of blood,
 Most true it is that I have look'd on truth
Askance and strangely . . .
 Then give me welcome . . .
M.P. How have mine eyes out of their spheres been fitted,
L. . . . although to-day thou fill
 Thy hungry eyes even till they wink with fulness,
 To-morrow see again . . .

(3) Bad-good-will.

Link. That in their wills count bad what I think good?
 P.R. { **S.** To leave for nothing all thy sum of good;
M.P. Which rank of goodness would by ill be cured:
L. Book both my wilfulness and errors down,
H. So you o'ergreen my bad my good allow?
 Which die for goodness, who have lived for crime.

(4) Rank-thoughts-deeds-shown.

P.P. { **S.** And they are rich and ransom all ill deeds.
M.P. That do not do the things they most do show,
 For sweetest things turn sourest by their deeds;
L. And that in guess they measure by thy deeds;
 Then churls their thoughts although their eyes were kind
 To thy fair flower add the rank smell of weeds:
 But why thy odour matcheth not thy show,
Link. By their rank thoughts my deeds must not be shown;
 P.R. { **S.** Gored mine own thoughts, sold cheap what is most dear,
M.P. Which rank of goodness would by ill be cured:
L. The guilty goddess of my harmful deeds,

THE PERSONAL SONNETS—THIRD BATCH

(5) *The 'Royalty' motif.*

- | | | | |
|------|---|-------|--|
| P.P. | { | S. | Flatter the mountain tops with <u>sovereign</u> eye, |
| | | M.P. | Then thou alone <u>kingdoms</u> of <u>hearts</u> should owe. |
| | | L. | Thy outward thus with outward praise is <u>crown'd</u> ; |
| | | H. | As on the finger of a <u>throned</u> queen |
| | | Link. | <i>All men are bad, and in their badness reign.</i> |
| P.R. | { | S. | Never believe though in my nature <u>reigned</u> |
| | | M.P. | Creep in 'twixt vows and change decrees of <u>kings</u> , |
| | | L. | Were't aught to me I bore the <u>canopy</u> , |
| | | | With my extern the outward <u>honouring</u> , |
| | | H. | <u>Great princes'</u> favourites their fair leaves spread. |

SERIES No. 7.—The Poet's Repentance.

This series, which offers Southampton an *amende honorable* for the strictures and warnings of the P.P. series, may be reasonably supposed to have followed his Link sonnet pretty closely in point of time. Shakespeare (whose example was followed by The Minor Poet and The Lawyer) was plainly anxious to appease a justly-incensed Patron, and proceeded to do so by accepting completely his (Southampton's) version of the temporary estrangement, and by expressing profound contrition for offences which he (Shakespeare) never committed. This brings us back again into an atmosphere of complete artificiality ; and the series abounds in the extravagances, ironical allusions, parodies, and personalities which distinguish all the "Contest" Series except the P.P. series just discussed.

The Theme—The Poet contritely acknowledges the truth of the Patron's counter-charges, and asks to be forgiven.

The Theme.—The Poet contritely acknowledges the truth of

SHAKESPEARE

THE MINOR POET

109
O, never say that I was false of heart,
Though absence seem'd my flame to qualify.
As easy might I from myself depart
As from my soul, which in thy breast doth lie :
That is my home of love : if I have ranged,
Like him that travels, I return again ;
Just to the time, not with the time exchanged,
So that myself bring water for my stain.
Never believe, though in my nature reign'd
All frailties that besiege all kinds of blood,
That it could so preposterously be stain'd,
To leave for nothing all thy sum of good ;
For nothing this wide universe I call,
Save thou, my rose ; in it thou art my all.

110
Alas, 'tis true I have gone here and there,
And made myself a motley to the view,
Gored mine own thoughts, sold cheap what is most
dear,
Made old offences of affections new ;
Most true it is that I have look'd on truth
Askance and strangely : but, by all above,
These blenches gave my heart another youth,
And worse essays proved thee my best of love.
Now all is done, have what shall have no end :
Mine appetite I never more will grind
On newer proof, to try an older friend,
A god in love, to whom I am confined.
Then give me welcome, next my heaven the best,
Even to thy pure and most most loving breast.

120
That you were once unkind befriends me now,
And for that sorrow which I then did feel
Needs must I under my transgression bow,
Unless my nerves were brass or hammer'd steel.
For if you were by my unkindness shaken,
As I by yours, you've pass'd a hell of time ;
And I, a tyrant, have no leisure taken
To weigh how once I suffer'd in your crime.
O, that our night of woe might have remember'd
My deepest sense, how hard true sorrow hits,
And soon to you, as you to me, then tender'd
The humble salve which wounded bosoms fits !
But that your trespass now becomes a fee ;
Mine ransoms yours, and yours must ransom me.

116
Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments. Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds,
Or bends with the remover to remove :
O, no ! it is an ever-fixed mark,
That looks on tempests and is never shaken ;
It is the star to every wandering bark,
Whose worth's unknown, although his height be
taken.
Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
Within his bending sickle's compass come ;
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.
If this be error and upon me proved,
I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

115
Those lines that I before have writ do lie,
Even those that said I could not love you dearer :
Yet then my judgement knew no reason why
My most full flame should afterwards burn clearer.
But reckoning Time, whose million'd accidents
Creep in 'twixt vows, and change decrees of kings,
Tan sacred beauty, blunt the sharp'st intents,
Divert strong minds to the course of altering things ;
Alas, why, fearing of Time's tyranny,
Might I not then say ' Now I love you best,'
When I was certain o'er uncertainty,
Crowning the present, doubting of the rest ?
Love is a babe ; then might I not say so,
To give full growth to that which still doth grow ?

118
Like as, to make our appetites more keen,
With eager compounds we our palate urge ;
As, to prevent our maladies unseen,
We sicken to shun sickness when we purge ;
Even so, being full of your ne'er-cloying sweetness,
To bitter sauces did I frame my feeding ;
And sick of welfare found a kind of meetness
To be diseased, ere that there was true needing.
Thus policy in love, to anticipate
The ills that were not, grew to faults assured,
And brought to medicine a healthful state,
Which, rank of goodness, would by ill be cured :
But thence I learn, and find the lesson true,
Drugs poison him that so fell sick of you.

119
What potions have I drunk of Siren tears,
Distill'd from limbecks foul as hell within,
Applying fears to hopes and hopes to fears,
Still losing when I saw myself to win !
What wretched errors hath my heart committed,
Whilst it hath thought itself so blessed never !
How have mine eyes out of their spheres been fitted,
In the distraction of this madding fever !
O benefit of ill ! now I find true
That better is by evil still made better ;
And ruin'd love, when it is built anew,
Grows fairer than at first, more strong, far greater.
So I return rebuked to my content,
And gain by ill thrice more than I have spent.

36
Let me confess that we two must be twain,
Although our undivided loves are one :
So shall those blots that do with me remain,
Without thy help, by me be borne alone.
In our two loves there is but one respect,
Though in our lives a separable spite,
Which though it alter not love's sole effect,
Yet doth it steal sweet hours from love's delight
I may not evermore acknowledge thee,
Lest my bewailed guilt should do thee shame,
Nor thou with public kindness honour me,
Unless thou take that honour from thy name :
But do not so ; I love thee in such sort,
As thou being mine, mine is thy good report.

THE PERSONAL SONNETS—THIRD BATCH

POET'S REPENTANCE. (P.R.)

his Patron's counter-charges, and asks to be forgiven.

THE LAWYER

111

O, for my sake do you with *Fortune* chide,
The guilty goddess of my harmful deeds,
That did not better for my life provide
Than *public* means which *public* manners breeds.
Thence comes it that my name *receives a brand*,
And almost thence *my nature* is subdued
To what it works in, like the dyer's hand ;
Pity me then and wish I were renew'd ;
Whilst, like a willing patient, I will *drink*
Potions of eisel 'gainst my strong *infection* ;
No *bitterness* that I will *bitter* think,
Nor double penance, to correct correction.
Pity me, then, dear friend, and I assure ye
Even that your pity is enough to *cure me*.

117

Accuse me thus : that I have scanted all
Wherein I should your great deserts repay.
Forgot upon your *dearest love* to call,
Whereto all bonds do tie my day by day ;
That I have frequent been with *unknown* minds,
And given to time your own dear-purchased right ;
That I have hoisted sail to all the winds
Which should transport me farthest from your sight.
Book both my wilfulness and *errors* down,
And on just proof surmise accumulate ;
Bring me within the level of your *frown*,
But shoot not at me in your waken'd hate ;
Since my appeal says I did strive to prove
The constancy and virtue of your love.

125

Were 't aught to me I bore the canopy,
With my extern the outward honouring,
Or laid *great bases* for eternity,
Which prove more *short* than waste or *ruining* ?
Have I not seen dwellers on form and favour
Lose all, and more, by paying too much *rent*,
For compound sweet forgoing simple savour,
Pitiful thrivers, in their gazing *spent* ?
No, *let me* be obsequious in thy heart,
And take thou my oblation, poor but free,
Which is not mix'd with seconds, knows no art
But mutual render, only me for thee.
Hence, thou suborn'd informer ! a true soul
When most impeach'd stands least in thy control.

56

Sweet love, renew thy force ; be it not said
Thy edge should *blunter* be than *appetite*,
Which but to-day by *feeding* is allay'd,
To-morrow *sharpened* in his former might :
So, love, be thou ; although to-day thou *fill*
Thy hungry eyes even till they wink with *fulness*,
To-morrow see again, and do not kill
The spirit of love with a perpetual dulness.
Let this sad interim like the ocean be
Which parts the shore, where two contracted new
Come daily to the banks, that, when they see
Return of love, more blest may be the view ;
Or call it winter, which, being full of care,
Makes summer's *welcome* thrice more wish'd, more
rare.

THE HUMORIST

112

Your *love and pity* doth the *impression* fill
Which vulgar scandal *stamp'd* upon my brow ;
For what care I who calls me well or ill,
So you o'er-green my bad, my good allow ?
You are my all the world, and I must strive
To know my shames and praises from your tongue ;
None else to me, nor I to none alive,
That *my steel'd sense or changes* right or wrong.
In so profound abysm I throw all care
Of others' voices, that my adder's sense
To critic and to flatterer stopped are.
Mark how with my neglect I do dispense :
You are so strongly in my purpose bred
That all the world *besides* methinks are dead.

123

No, Time, thou shalt not boast that I do *change* :
Thy pyramids *built up* with newer might
To me are nothing novel. nothing strange ;
They are but dressings of a former sight.
Our dates are brief, and therefore we admire
What thou dost foist upon us that is old ;
And rather make them born to our desire
Than think that we before have heard them told.
Thy registers and thee I both defy,
Not wondering at the present nor the past,
For thy records and what we see *doth* lie,
Made more or less by thy continual haste.
This I do vow, and this shall ever be,
I will be true, despite thy scythe and thee.

124

If my *dear love* were but the *child* of state,
It might for *Fortune's* bastard be unfather'd,
As subject to Time's love or to Time's hate,
Weeds among weeds, or flowers with flowers gather'd
No, it was *builded* far from *accident* ;
It suffers not in smiling pomp, nor falls
Under the blow of thrall'd discontent,
Whereto the inviting time our fashion calls :
It fears not *policy*, that heretic,
Which works on *leases* of *short-number'd hours*.
But all alone stands *hugely* politic,
That it nor *grows* with heat nor *drowns* with showers
To this I witness call the fools of time,
Which die for goodness, who have lived for crime.

25

Let those who are in favour with their stars
Of public honour and proud titles boast,
Whilst I, whom *fortune* of such triumph bars
Unlook'd for joy in that I *honour* most.
Great princes' favourites their fair leaves spread
But as the marigold at the sun's eye,
And in themselves their pride lies buried,
For at a *frown* they in their glory die.
The painful warrior famoused for fight,
After a thousand victories once foil'd
Is from the book of honour razed quite,
And all the rest forgot for which he toil'd ;
Then happy I, that *love* and am *beloved*
Where I may not *remove* nor be *removed*.

THE FIVE AUTHORS OF SHAKE-SPEARES SONNETS

TREATMENT OF THE THEME.

Shakespeare has eight main thoughts :—

- (a). I admit that I have neglected you. (109.5-8, 120 *passim*).
- (b). And given myself to folly and evil companions. (110.1-6).
- (c). My reason for doing so was [that I wished to try the quality of my affection for you by experimenting on others.] (110.8-11).
- (d). I repent and will not do so again. (110.7-12).
- (e). Please forgive me and take me back into favour. (110.13-14).
- (f). Because you are all the world to me. (109.13-14, 110-12).
- (g). And your past unkindness should be set off against my present unkindness. (120 *passim*).
- (h). My affection for you is too great to be weakened by time. (109 and 116 *passim*).

The Minor Poet ascribes *his* aberrations to the hallucinations of fever. He follows S. in (a) (118.5-7); in (b) (119.1-2, 5); in (c) (118 *passim*), *his* reason being that he hoped that his conduct would operate, partly as a dose of bitters which would enable him to enjoy The Patron's sweetness more keenly, and partly as a cathartic which would counteract the effects of partaking of the said sweetness too freely; in (d) (119.13, 36.10); in (e) he *reverses* S.'s sentiment, and begs *not* to be taken back into favour lest The Patron's reputation should suffer (36 *passim*); he omits (f) and (g); and follows S. again in (h) (115 *passim*, 119.11-12).

The Lawyer also ascribes *his* aberrations to bad health. He represents himself as suffering from a severe infectious disorder, and is willing to take any amount of the nastiest medicines that may be prescribed for him. He then shifts the scene to a law-court, and represents himself as an accused person charged with neglecting The Patron; the "suborned informer" who brings the charge further insinuating that his former professions of affection for The Patron were insincere. L. pleads Guilty to the charge of neglect, but Not Guilty to the charge of insincerity. He follows S. in (a) (117.1-4); in (b) (111.2, 117.5 and 9); in (c), *his* reasons being first that he belongs to a soul-deadening profession which has almost obliterated the primitive purity of his character (111.3-7), and secondly, that he wished to test the strength of The Patron's affection for him (117.13-14); in (d) (111.9-12); in (e) (111.8 and 13-14); he omits (f) and (g); and follows S. again in (h) (56 *passim*).

The Humorist characteristically takes an entirely different line. The stories about him are mere vulgar scandal (112.1-2); and so far from admitting that he has neglected The Patron, he actually apologizes for cultivating him to such an extent as to make him neglect everybody else (112 *passim*). This line of treatment, of course, precludes him from following S. in (a), (b), (c), (d), (e), and (g); but he echoes him wholeheartedly in (f) (112.5-14), and (h) (123.13-14, 124 *passim*, 25.3-14).

It would appear that the reason why M.P., L., and H. have omitted (g) is that in the P.P. Series they had all laid stress on The Patron's *general* conduct, whereas S. had concerned himself almost exclusively with the wrong done to himself *individually*.

VERBAL PARALLELISMS.

Both verbal parallelisms and 'echoes' from other sonnets are very numerous in this series. The echoes will be dealt with as usual in the Notes. The main verbal parallelisms are as follows :—

- S.** Like him that travels *I return* again
M.P. So *I return* rebuked to my content.

THE PERSONAL SONNETS—THIRD BATCH

- L. . . . That when they see
Return of love. . . .
- S. Just to *the time*, not with *the time exchanged*,
. . . . *Love is not love*
Which *alters* when it *alteration* finds.
- M.P. Alas! why fearing of *Time's* tyranny,
Which though it *alter* not *love's* sole effect.
- L. Forgot upon your *dearest love* to call,
And given to *time* your own dear-purchased right.
- H. No, *Time*, thou shalt not boast that I do *change* :
If my *dear love* were but the child of state,
- S. For *nothing this wide universe* I call,
Save *thou*, my rose ; in it *thou art my all*.
- H. *You are my all the world* . . .
That all the world *besides*, methinks, are dead.
- S. Mine *appetite* I never more will *grind*
M.P. Like as to *make* our *appetites* more *keen*,
. . . . *blunt* the *sharp'st* intents,
- L. Thy edge should *blunter* be than *appetite*,
To-morrow *sharpened* in its former might.
- S. *Let me* not to the marriage of true minds
M.P. *Let me* confess that we two must be twain,
L. No, *let me* be obsequious in thy heart.
H. *Let those* who are in favour with their stars

Note that in the case of S. M.P. and L. the single line quoted is the first line of the last sonnet in the sequence.

- S. . . . *Love is not love*
Or bends with the *remover* to *remove* ;
Love's not *Time's fool*, though rosy lips and cheeks
Within his bending *sickle's* compass come.
- H. To this I witness call the *fools of Time*,
I will be true despite thy *scythe* and thee ;
Then happy I that *love* and am *beloved*
Where I may not *remove* or be *removed*.
- S. If this be *error* and upon me proved,
M.P. What wretched *errors* hath my heart committed.
L. Book both my wilfulness and *errors* down,
- M.P. As to prevent our *maladies* unseen,
Even so being *full* of you ne'er-cloying sweetness,
To *bitter* sauces did I frame my *feeding* ;
Which rank of goodness would by ill be *cured* ;
What *potions* have I *drunk* of Siren tears,
- L. Which but to-day by *feeding* is allay'd,
So love be thou ; although to-day thou *fill*
- L. Which but to-day by *feeding* is allay'd
Thy hungry eyes even till they wink with *fulness* ;
Whilst, like a willing patient, I will *drink*
Potions of eisel 'gainst my strong *infection* ;
No *bitterness* that I will *bitter* think,
Even that your pity is enough to *cure* me.
- M.P. And *ruin'd love*, when it is *built* anew,
Grows fairer than at first, more strong, far *greater*.
L. Or laid *great bases* for eternity,
Which prove more short than waste or *ruining*?
- H. No, it [sc. my *love*] was *builded* far from accident ;
It suffers not in smiling pomp nor *falls*,
But all alone stands *hugely* politic.

THE FIVE AUTHORS OF SHAKE-SPEARES SONNETS

- M.P.** Nor thou with *public* kindness *honour* me,
Unless thou take that *honour* from thy name.
L. Than *public* means which *public* manners breeds.
With my extern the outward *honouring*,
H. Of *public honour* and proud titles boast,
Unlook'd for joy in that I *honour* most.

Minor Parallelisms: (1) *Flame*, 109.2, 115.4; (2) *my nature*, 109.9, 111.6; (3) *welcome*, 110.13, 56.14; (4) *unknown*, 116.8, 117.5; (5) *brief hours*, 116.11, 124.10; (6) *unkind*, 120.1, 36.11; (7) *policy*, 118.9, 124.9; (8) *spent*, 119.14, 125.8; (9) *fortune*, 111.1, 124.2, 25.3; (10) *frown*, 117.11, 25.8.

NOTES.

Shakespeare. (Nos. 109, 110, 120, 116.)

The scheme of S.'s contribution is a very simple one. The first two sonnets acknowledge the general correctness of the charges brought against the poets in The Patron's Link sonnet, and repeat much of its phraseology. The third sonnet recalls the very similar charges brought by S. against The Patron in his No. 34 in the P.P. Series, and repeats much of its phraseology. The fourth sonnet refers to each of his three fellow-competitors in turn, allotting one quatrain to each competitor; each quatrain reproduces a striking 'thought' or metaphor used by the competitor in question in a previous sonnet, and repeats much of its phraseology.

The limitations imposed by this scheme, together with the ultra-artificiality of the sentiments which the poet is called upon to express, probably account for S.'s failure to attain his usual standard of artistic merit in this contribution. The sonnets run smoothly enough, but lack the distinction of many in the earlier series.

109.

1. Meets the charge of *falseness* brought by Southampton in l.5 of the Link sonnet. The emphasis is on the "heart"—S.'s eyes may have glanced aside and his judgment gone astray, (as he admits in the first six lines of the next sonnet) but his heart has been in the right place throughout.

8. The "stains" which in the P.P. sonnet No. 33 are ascribed to The Patron, are here transferred to himself 'according to plan,' the "water" he is ready to shed being the humble equivalent of the rich pearls which fell from The Patron's eyes in the couplet of No. 34.

9-12. These lines deliberately echo the Link sonnet, the catchwords being "reign," "frailties," "blood," and "good."¹

110.

1-4. S. contritely admits that it was he, and not The Patron, who had really worn the fool's motley, and like old Khayyam, "sold his reputation for a Song." According to Prof. Dowden, however, the first two lines "are commonly taken to express his dislike for his life as a player."²

5-6. S.'s plea of Guilty to The Patron's charge of possessing "*false adulterate eyes*."

¹ v. p. 94 *supra*.

² But why not bring out the full professional inwardness of this remarkable revelation? Why not call it "a poignant confession by an eminent London tragedian that he had once sunk so low as to tour the provinces as Comic Lead"?

THE PERSONAL SONNETS—THIRD BATCH

12. Probably a hit at L.'s irreverent allusion to the First Commandment in his E.D. sonnet No. 105 :—

Let not my *love* be called *idolatry*,
Nor my beloved as an *idol* show,
Therefore my verse to constancy *confined*.

13. Echoes 1.6 of the Link sonnet :—

Give salutation to my sportive blood ?

120.

As already noted, this sonnet is a sort of palinode to S.'s 34 in the P.P. series, reversing the positions of The Patron and himself.

9. For "our" should probably be read "your."

10-14. These lines faithfully reproduce the imagery and phrasing of the last eight lines of No. 34, the catchwords being "sorrow," "salve," "wound," "ransomed," and "trespass" ("ill deeds"). Moreover, STAUNTON'S emendation of "shame" for "soon" in l. 11 (which POOLER calls "needless") gives yet another. This emendation is almost certainly right; "soon" is feeble, and "[y]our night of woe" is certainly not a suitable subject for the verb "tendered." It is sufficient to put these five lines side by side with the five corresponding lines of the P.P. sonnet to justify Staunton :

34

For no man well of such a *salve* can speak
That heals the *wound* and cures not the disgrace ;
Nor can thy *shame* give physic to my grief ;
The offender's *sorrow* yields but weak relief
And they are rich and *ransom* all *ill deeds*.

120

My deepest sense how hard true *sorrow* hits,
And soon [*shame*] to you, as you to me then, tender'd
The humble *salve* that *wounded* bosoms fits !
But that your *trespass* now becomes a fee ;
Mine *ransoms* yours, and yours must *ransom* me.

116.

In this sonnet, as noted above, S. "refers to each of his three fellow-competitors in turn, allotting one quatrain to each competitor." He takes them in the order, L., M.P., and H.

First Quatrain. The reference is to the first two lines of L.'s first sonnet in the P.E. Series (82)—one of the numerous satirical allusions to M.P.'s mysteriously epicene *ménage à trois* which forms the basis of his "Obstetrics" conceit—where L., addressing The Patron, says :—

I grant thou wert not *married* to my Muse,
And therefore mayst without attain't o'erlook
The dedicated words which writers use,

and then, referring to himself in his favourite rôle of *The Candid Friend* :

Thou *truly* fair were *truly* sympathised
In *true* plain words by thy *true*-telling friend.

S. now, as one of the "writers" alluded to, replies—"If The Patron is thinking of committing matrimony with your 'true-plain' but sympathetic Muse, please don't imagine that *I* am going to forbid the banns."

Second Quatrain. The reference is to the last ten lines of M.P.'s No. 80 in the P.E. Series, where he—possibly not without a suspicion of irony—humbly confesses his inferiority to S. in the following nautical metaphor :—

THE FIVE AUTHORS OF SHAKE-SPEARES SONNETS

But since your *worth*, wide as the ocean is,
The humble as the proudest sail doth bear,
My *saucy bark*, inferior far to his,
On your broad main doth wilfully appear.
Or being wrecked, I am a *worthless* boat,
He of *tall* building and of goodly pride.

S. now takes over the metaphor, and unkindly observes that if he (S.) is a 'tall ship,' M.P. is a small bark whose "worth" (M.P.'s speciality) is "unknown," *i.e.*, nil, and "height" so insignificant as to be easily measured. The commentators have entirely misunderstood the last two lines. For some reason or other they have all, without exception, assumed that the relative clause in l. 8 refers to "star" instead of to its natural and immediate antecedent "bark." But though they have all gone off together on the wrong tack, no two of them steer exactly the same course, and the record of their divagations makes rather interesting reading. Perhaps the reader would like to judge for himself.

PALGRAVE explains line 8 thus: "Apparently whose stellar influence is unknown though his angular altitude has been determined." SCHMIDT, on the other hand, explains "unknown" as "inexpressible, incalculable, immense." DOWDEN partially accepts his view, and notes: "The passage seems to mean, as the star, over and above what can be ascertained concerning it for our guidance at sea, has unknowable occult virtue and influence, so love, beside its power of guiding us, has incalculable potencies. This interpretation is confirmed by the next sonnet (CXVII.) in which the simile of sailing at sea is introduced; Shakespere there confesses his wanderings, and adds as his apology

I did strive to prove
The constancy and virtue of your love—

constancy, the guiding fixedness of love; *virtue*, the 'unknown worth'." POOLER'S view again is slightly different. He says: "The unknown worth may be the power to attract as well as to guide, in fact, its full influence, and it is only those who love who know of this." Now, as DOWDEN remarks, the same simile reappears in the next sonnet (117), and here we find 'unknown' again in the phrase 'unknown minds,' which is thus glossed by the three last-named authorities: "such as I should be ashamed to mention" (SCHMIDT); "persons who may not be known, or obscure persons" (DOWDEN); "nonentities or, better perhaps, strangers" (POOLER). It would appear therefore that these three distinguished critics see nothing out-of-the-way in the fact that a great artist like Shakespeare should, in the course of one and the same simple metaphor running through two *consecutive* sonnets, deliberately confuse his readers by using a highly ambiguous adjective in two diametrically opposed senses. INGLEBY again after quoting Cæsar's reference to himself, as "constant as the northern star," observes: "Here human virtue is figured under the 'true-fix'd and resting quality' of the northern star. Surely, then, the 'worth' spoken of must be *constancy* or *fixedness*. The sailor must know that the star has this worth, or his latitude would not depend on its altitude. Just so without the knowledge of this worth in love, a man 'hoists sail to all the winds,' and is 'frequent with unknown minds.'" S. WALKER boldly proposes to read "whose *north's* unknown" explaining "As, by following the guidance of the northern star, a ship may sail an immense way, yet never reach the true north; so the limit of love is unknown. Or can any other good sense be made of 'north'? *Judicent rei astronomicae periti.*"

There are many other interpretations of varying degrees of ingenuity and profundity.

Third Quatrain. The reference is to H.'s 'Envoy' Sonnet (126) in the M.A. Series,

THE PERSONAL SONNETS—THIRD BATCH

in which he warned The Patron that sooner or later he and his beauty would fall into the clutches of Time. The lines specially echoed are :—

O thou, my lovely boy, who in thy power
Dost hold Time's fickle glass, his sickle hour [mower] ;
May time disgrace and wretched minutes kill,
Yet fear her, O thou minion of her pleasure !

The "mower" in square brackets being my own emendation.

S. imposes limitations on the operations of H.'s 'bending sickle' or 'sickle mower.' Time may capriciously preserve The Patron's good looks beyond the normal period, or on the other hand may suddenly destroy them as H. suggests, but he has no such power over his friend's affection for him.

The Couplet. These two lines seem rather pointless, unless, as alas ! is not unlikely, the point is an unseemly pun on a 'writ of error.'

The Minor Poet. (Nos. 115, 118, 119, 36.)

The Minor Poet's contribution is a feeble and sloppy performance. It exemplifies the following characteristics: *Confused Thinking*, 119.1-2; *Slovenly Phrasing*, 115.5-9, 36.7; *Sound not Sense*, 115.11, 119.3 and 10; *Forcing the Note*, 119.7-8, 36.10; *The Flunkey*, 36.11-14.

115.

1-2. POOLER asks "Can this refer to lost sonnets?" Certainly no such sentiment is to be found in M.P.'s sonnets in the Personal Series—or in any other sonnet in the collection for the matter of that.

4. His "flame" is taken from S.'s (109.2).

5. Note the anacoluthon.

118.

M.P., like S., has been on the sick list, but while S. was a *surgical* case—incised wound in the cardiac region (120.12)—, M.P. was in the *medical* ward—high fever consequent on over-feeding and injudicious drug-taking. The grotesque medical metaphors which make up this sonnet prove M.P. to have been destitute of the saving grace of humour; nobody with the most rudimentary sense of the ludicrous could have written this sonnet *seriously*.

12. "Rank" and "goodness" echo lines 8 and 10 of the Link Sonnet.

119.

First Quatrain. One had the idea that it was the Sirens' *songs*, not their tears, which lured men to destruction. Perhaps he is confusing them with crocodiles, who, as we know, invariably weep over their victims. Again, one had not realised that the Sirens' infernal "foulness" extended even to their lachrymal glands. 1. 3. What does this well-sounding line *mean*? The idea apparently is that he was afraid of things happening which he ought to be glad to think would happen, but can this meaning be extracted from M.P.'s English?

7-8. M.P.'s hysterical plea of Guilty to The Patron's charge of possessing "false adulterate eyes."

10. POOLER notes "I do not know this proverb." Nor, one imagines, does any body else. Most of the other commentators have shirked the line, but POOLER tackles it manfully as follows: "Perhaps we should read *evil* for *better*. There is an Icelandic

THE FIVE AUTHORS OF SHAKE-SPEARES SONNETS

saying rendered by W. Morris, 'Bettered is bale by bale that follows it.' " But why should "Shake-speare's" imperfect acquaintance with Icelandic have made him write nonsense in English?

36.

7. "Love's sole effect." POOLER notes "perhaps its happy influence." But it is merely Barnese for "the unity produced by love," as in his No. 55, "all-oblivious enmity,"="oblivion the enemy of all." That this is the real meaning is proved by H.'s phrase—

And our dear love lose name of single one,

in his sonnet No 69 in the next (M.P. series), which parodies systematically the first seven lines of this sonnet. l. 10, "my bewailed guilt." DOWDEN notes, "Explained by Spalding and others as 'the blots that remain with Shakespere on account of his profession as an actor.' But perhaps the passage means: 'I may not claim you as a friend, lest my relation to the dark woman—now a matter of grief—should convict you of faithlessness in friendship.'" POOLER notes "If the guilt consisted, as some suppose, in Shakespeare's making himself an accessory after the fact to his friend's offence, it is hard to see who bewailed it, or how it could shame the offender. There is no clue to the meaning in Shakespeare's life or writings, but, if we will, we may call the expression ironical, and say that the friend may have been warned under pain of disinheritance against associating with disreputable persons such as players."

Alas for these fine-spun imaginings! It is only the egregious Barnabe 'forcing the note.'

13-14. This couplet is 'lifted' bodily from H.'s last sonnet in the preceding series (No. 96). In both cases the poet represents himself as the *alter ipse* of The Patron, and makes the fact the basis of an appeal to The Patron to be more careful of his behaviour. But whereas in H.'s sonnet he is warned against following a highly reprehensible line of conduct lest his bad reputation might reflect on the Poet's, here he is warned against being civil to the Poet in public lest the latter's bad reputation should reflect on his own—an interesting contrast in "characteristics."

The Lawyer. (Nos. 111, 117, 125, 56.)

The Lawyer's contribution is a very characteristic one. *Pedestrian Style* throughout—all the metaphors he borrows from M.P. and S. are treated in the most matter-of-fact fashion, and the couplets of 111 and 56 are verse only by courtesy; *The Attorney*, 117 *passim*, 125.13-14; *The Accountant*, 117.9, 125.6-7; *Crude Humour*, 125.5 and 11; *The Candid Friend*, 125 *passim*; *The Old Dog*, 125.11.

111.

1-7. DOWDEN notes "Continues the apology for his wanderings of heart, ascribing them to his ill-fortune that, as commonly understood, which compels him to a player's way of life." Now there is no doubt that the professional actor in the reign of Elizabeth might be described as depending on

Public means which public manners breeds.

which, as POOLER explains, means "a profession which does not promote independence and self-respect." But surely the rest of these semi-serious references to the unkindness of Fortune, and the effects of a long continuance in a degrading vocation, are not suitably

THE PERSONAL SONNETS—THIRD BATCH

placed in the mouth of that rising young actor-poet, William Shakspeare, son of John Shakspeare the poverty-stricken Stratford tradesman. They suggest rather a middle-aged man whose career has fallen short of the promise and expectation of his youth, and therefore *are* very suitable in the mouth of that middle-aged solicitor, William Warner, author of *Albion's England*. Warner had been a 'University wit,' and at the age of twenty-eight had published a monumental poem which attained great and immediate popularity—so much so indeed that at one time he and Spenser were bracketted together as the Homer and Virgil of the age. Now at the age of thirty-seven he finds himself playing second fiddle to two young poets of a newer and more fashionable school, and grinding away for a livelihood at that least romantic of callings—an attorney in a London Court of Common Pleas.

8-14. Note how closely in the last half of this sonnet and the first half of the last sonnet (No. 56), L. imitates, or rather parodies, the language of M.P.'s medical sonnets, Nos. 118 and 119. L. like M.P. is a *medical* case—chronic attorneyitis.

117.

This sonnet also borrows from M.P.—this time from sonnet No. 11, in his *Parthenophil*, where the scene is laid in the "Court of Steadfast Love." In this and the next sonnet we find L. in the dock, with The Patron as complainant, judge, and (apparently) appellate authority. The procedure is consequently rather irregular, but the arguments which make up the bulk of the two sonnets follow closely the familiar lines of a speech for the defence after a plea of Guilty—the gravity of the offence is minimized, criminal intention denied, a set of plausible excuses for 'my most unfortunate client' put forward, penitence professed, restitution offered, malice on the part of the prosecution suggested, and the better feelings of the Court eloquently appealed to. L. is, of course, thoroughly at home in this Old Bailey atmosphere, and sonnet 117 in particular positively reeks of legal technicalities.

4. Imitated from a line in Barnes' sonnet aforesaid, where the complainant "cries" in Court:

And if in *bonds* to thee my *love* be *tied*.

5-8. "Unknown" is used in the same sense as in S.'s 116 (from which L. borrows this nautical metaphor) *i.e.*, 'worthless.' The commentators interpret variously 'strangers,' 'nonentities,' 'such as I should be ashamed to mention.' These "unknown minds" are contrasted with the "true minds" of S.'s No. 116, and the "strong minds" of M.P.'s 115.

9-12. "Wilfulness" and "level" are echoes from ll.8-9 of the Link sonnet.

13-14. L.'s excuse is the reverse of S.'s in 110.11-12. S. misbehaved in order to try the strength of his love for The Patron, L. in order to try that of The Patron's love for him.

125.

This sonnet has puzzled the commentators a good deal. It is an attack on M.P.'s Flunkey-cum-Forcing The Note attitude towards The Patron, followed by a justification of L.'s own Candid Friend-cum-Old Dog ditto.

1-2. L. reiterates the charge he had brought against M.P. in his No. 69 in the P.P. series, that while extolling The Patron's sovereign beauty he had shirked saying what he really thought about his character—

Thy *outward* thus with *outward* *praise* is *crowned*,

THE FIVE AUTHORS OF SHAKE-SPEARES SONNETS

3-8. L. here appropriates and develops in characteristic fashion M.P.'s simile in his corresponding sonnet (119) in which he compares his love for The Patron to a building (*v.* parallelism No. 10, and also 'lose' and 'spent' taken from lines 2 and 14 respectively). "Dwellers on form and favour" = M.P., who had particularly *dwelt on* The Patron's physical perfections, and who had *dwelt in* and (paid rent for) the aforesaid building—an unmeritorious pun. "Compound" also has apparently a double meaning: (1) compound, as opposed to simple, interest; (2) the elaborate sugary sonnets (full of the word "sweet") addressed by M.P. to The Patron. The general idea is that M.P. has missed his chance in the Contest by overdoing adulation of The Patron.

9. The emphasis is on "me" and "heart." *I* do not fawn upon you like M.P., but to your true *inward* self I offer an absolute devotion.

10-12. "Render" is a legal term "used in reference to its legal sense a 'return' in kind, money, etc., under certain circumstances" (POOLER). "Seconds" is another pun like "dwellers." An oblation usually consisted of flour or meal, and 'seconds' is the technical term for an inferior quality of flour; "That our author's oblation was pure, unmixed with baser matter, is all that he meant to say" (STEEVENS). But there is also an esoteric allusion to people who acted as the competitors' 'seconds' by giving them advice and assistance in compiling their contributions—"the compeers by night, giving him aid" who, according to M.P., taught Shakespeare to write, and astonished his (M.P.'s) verse (*v.* No. 81 in the P.E. series). That H. is here endorsing M.P.'s charge against S. appears probable from the fact that these three lines obviously imitate the last four lines of S.'s corresponding sonnet (No. 120): "Poor oblation" answers to "humble salve," legal "render" to legal "tender," and "mutual" and "me for thee" to "mine and yours" and "you to me."

13-14. The "informer" who appears so abruptly is apparently the person who had told The Patron that The Poets had neglected him, and the people who had "suborned" him to do so are apparently certain envious members of Southampton's literary suite who had *not* been invited to enter for the Contest (*cf.* ll. 7-8 in H.'s corresponding sonnet No. 124). The sonnet may be freely translated as follows: "(You are annoyed with me for referring to your private life in the P.P. Series, but) would it have done me any good to render mere lip-service to your beauty, or to use it—lying as it does at the mercy of Time and Chance—as the foundation for the everlasting fabric of *my* love? Look at M.P. who erected *his* love-house on this plan, and has been paying you as rent not a fair meed of praise but an extravagant amount of subtle and complicated flattery. He, poor fool, looks to get it back three times over in the shape of rewards from you, but he may go on looking till the Greek Calends—you are merely disgusted, and so far from finding increased favour in your sight he has lost even that favour with which you regarded him before the Contest was started. *I* am not like him; *I* have built on the solid foundations of your qualities of head and heart, and *my* tribute of praise is not a fancy-rent of fulsome flattery but a plain simple free-will offering—all my own too, not adulterated with other people's additions—emblematic of our mutual affection. As for *you* you scoundrelly informer whom the disappointed aspirants to a place in the Contest have suborned to abuse our kind Patron's ear with false stories of our delinquencies, be off with you! The more lies you tell about an honest, true-hearted person like myself the less harm you do him!"

56.

1-8. As already pointed out, these lines closely imitate or parody M.P.'s 118. Lines 5-8 give L.'s plea of Guilty to the charge of possessing "false adulterate eyes." In *his* case his eyes deceived him because they were drowsy from overfeeding.

THE PERSONAL SONNETS—THIRD BATCH

9-14. These six lines are as bad as anything in the collection. The "two contracted *new*" (prob. a reference to the fact that The Patron's affair with L.'s Muse was of more recent date than the three others) are apparently Hero and Leander, and the "ocean" the Hellespont; but the language is strained, confused, and bathetic throughout.

The Humorist. (Nos. 112, 123, 124, 25.)

The Humorist's contribution is a very subtly-conceived and elaborately-executed piece of work which will call for specially minute examination and analysis. In considering it the reader is requested to be good enough to adopt the following procedure:—

First. To read through the four sonnets as they stand without paying attention to the italics and underlinings. He will find that although the language is obscure and strange in places, and some of the allusions appear unusually cryptic, yet, broadly speaking, the four sonnets follow much the same lines as those of the other three competitors—the poet's misdemeanours are excused, the strength of his affection for The Patron insisted on, and Time's inability to affect it confidently anticipated.

Next. To read through the eight sonnets of the *next* (Moribund Poet) series, (attached as a pendant to, and despatched along with, the present series) noting particularly the following two points:

- (a). All the poets except H. represent themselves as being at the point of death.
- (b). L. admits the superior excellence of the other poets' contributions, referring particularly to their use of "new-found methods" and "compounds strange."

Next. To accept *provisionally* the following detailed explanation of the esoteric meaning of the present series offered by The Theory, namely:

- A. The misdemeanour to which H. confesses is not the offence of neglecting The Patron (as in the case of the other three,) but the offence of breaking the rules of the Contest by taking a line of his own in his contributions to the six previous series.
- B. The love whose unchanging quality he celebrates so eloquently is not his love for the Patron (as in the case of the other three,) but his love for *himself*—the "self-love" referred to in his No. 62 in the B.I. series, and his No. 23 in the E.D. series—"skilfully camouflaged as the real thing."
- C. No. 123 alludes to S.'s magnificently successful 'Shakespearizing' sonnet No. 33 in the P.P. series, and his almost equally successful 'palinodizing' sonnet No. 73 in the M.P. series.
- D. H. is throughout ridiculing the pusillanimity of his three colleagues in allowing The Patron's displeasure to scare them into making an announcement of their imminent (poetical) death.
- E. H. has deliberately set himself the task of cramming into each sonnet as many personal allusions to his colleagues, satirical references to their poetical performances, and imitations and parodies of their language, as it will hold.

Finally. To test this explanation for himself by re-reading the four sonnets along with the detailed notes which he will find under each. In these notes the four *motifs* A. 'Rule-breaking,' B. 'Self-love,' C. 'Shakespearizing,' D. 'Dead competitors,' will be noted as they occur, and in the case of E. the personal allusions will be explained and the lines imitated will be quoted.

THE FIVE AUTHORS OF SHAKE-SPEARES SONNETS

112.

Motif A. 'Rule-breaking,' with two introductions of *Motif D.* 'Dead Competitors.'

Somebody had apparently complained (not without good reason) that H. was not 'playing the game'—that he had been taking undue liberties in the matter of treating the various themes, and in burlesquing the efforts of his colleagues. H. wittily defends himself against this "vulgar scandal" by arguing that as according to their own statements in the *next* series the three rivals must all be dying or dead, he need not pay any attention to their protests, or their feelings, or their literary methods, and is justified in looking to The Patron *only* for approbation or disapprobation. Thus the three poets are the "none" and "none" of l.6, the "others" of l.9, and the "all the world beside" of l.14; while the "critic" (censurer) and the "flatterer" are The Lawyer (*Candid Friend*) and The Minor Poet (*Flunkey*) respectively.

The first two quatrains are a tissue of echoes from the contributions of other competitors to this and the succeeding series.

- 1-2. "Pity me then, dear friend," "my name receives a brand" (L.III.).
- 3-4. Which in their wills *count bad* what I *think good* (Link 121).
5. For nothing this *wide universe* I call,
Save thou, my rose; in it *thou art my all*. (S. 109).
6. For I am *shamed* by that which I bring forth,
To hang more *praise* upon deceased I (M.P. 72).
7. The numerous references made to their own deaths by H.'s three rivals in the next series. *Alive* is used in a double sense—'living' and 'aware of the importance of.'
8. My deepest *sense* how *hard* true sorrow *hits* (S. 120).

This last line shows that instead of the unnatural "or changes" of the text, we should read "o'er charges," the reference being to a steel-clad jousting in a tournament. "Hard-hitting" would suggest the tilt-yard to an Elizabethan as naturally as it does the polo-ground or cricket-field to us. The commentators, by the way, cheerfully accept this extraordinary displacement of the word "or," and interpret generally "none but you can alter my fixed opinions whether they are right or wrong" (POOLER).

13-14. "In my purpose bred." A strange phrase of which the meaning seems to be "my purpose to look to you and to you only as the arbiter of the Contest is so strongly held that, etc."—H. 'plays to the whistle.' Note that he uses the rather unexpected word "purpose," carefully avoiding any word that would suggest *emotion*, e.g., love, affection, heart, fancy, etc., any one of which would be more appropriate if the sentiment was really what it seemed to be on the surface. "All the world" (*tout le monde*), i.e., every body else *connected with the Contest*; the three other competitors are moribund, and only the referee is left.

123.

Motif C. 'Shakespearizing,' followed (in the couplet) by *Motif B.* 'Self-Love.'

1-8. These eight lines echo L.'s contribution to the next series (Nos. 76 and 32). In these two sonnets L. had frankly admitted that his sonnets were inferior to those of his rivals—"outstripped by every pen," and "exceeded by the height of happier men"—and had referred particularly to S.'s two Shakespearizing sonnets in the P.P. series and his 'palinode' sonnet, No. 73, in the M.P. series, as exhibiting the "new-found methods" and "compounds strange" which had given S. occasion for "new pride." These eight lines may be 'parallelized' with nine lines from the two sonnets imitated.

THE PERSONAL SONNETS—THIRD BATCH

123

76 and 32

No, *Time*, thou shalt not boast that I do *change* :
 Thy pyramids built up with *newer* might
 To me are nothing *novel*, nothing *strange* ;
 They are but *dressings of a former sight*.
 Our dates are brief, and therefore we admire
 What thou dost foist upon us that is *old* ;
 And rather make them *born to our desire*
 Than think that we before have heard them *told*.

Why is my verse so barren of *new* pride ;
 So far from variation and quick *change* ?
 Why with the *time* do I not glance aside
 To *new-found* methods and to compounds *strange* ?
 For all my best is *dressing old* words *new*.
 A dearer *birth* than this his *love* had brought,
 For as the sun is daily new and *old*,
 So is my love still telling what is *told*.

Note the rhymes (1) 'change-strange,' and (2) 'old—told.'

9-12. In this quatrain H. refers to each of his three rivals in turn (in the order, L., S., and M.P.), by echoing phrases used by them in this and the P.E. series, namely :—

- L. What's new to speak, what new to *register*, (108. P.E.)
 S. When in the *chronicles of wasted time*
 And we that now behold the *present* days,
 Have eyes to *wonder*, but lack tongues to praise. (106. P.E.)
 M.P. But *reckoning* Time whose million'd accidents
 Those lines that I before have writ *do lie*, (115. P.R.)

Note the ambiguity of the last line of the sonnet. The casual reader would naturally suppose that the person to whom H. was vowing everlasting fidelity was The Patron, the initiated would understand that (as circumstantially signified in the next sonnet) it was *himself*.

124.

Motif B. 'Self-Love,' followed (in the couplet) by *Motif D.* 'Dead Competitors.'

The sonnet is constructed on the model of S.'s last sonnet in the series (No. 116) ; each gives a list of things which the poet's love cannot be, do, or suffer, set forth in phraseology borrowed from his three fellow-competitors, and each starts its fourth line with an emphatic "No." But whereas S.'s 'love' is Love in the abstract with a special reference to the affection existing between himself and the Patron, H.'s "dear love" is his love for *himself*. Hence it is that he is able to declare so confidently that it has been, is, and will be, immune from the various vicissitudes experienced by the 'loves' of the other three. The reader is requested to note two points : (a) the intentional ambiguity of the 'love' references—H. is particularly careful, both here and in the preceding and succeeding sonnets, to avoid using any language which would *distinctly* mark his 'love' as being connected with The Patron ; (b) the ingenuity displayed in getting into the couplet so large a number of the vicissitudes aforesaid, and so large a proportion of the original words and phrases used to describe them.

This sonnet is regarded by the commentators as being one of the most 'difficult' in the collection, and their notes thereon exhibit an interesting diversity of opinion. In order that the reader may be in a position to compare the interpretations of the leading authorities both with each other and with the interpretation offered by The Theory, I shall summarize them briefly as each 'difficulty' comes up for examination.

1-2. An amalgam of M.P.'s "Love is a babe" (115.13) and L.'s "Fortune" (111.1) ; H.'s (self)-love is *not* the fruit of a 'guilty' amour between Fortune and 'state' (*i.e.*, circumstance or chance), and has *not* been deprived of a father's natural protection in consequence.

DOWDEN explains "the child of state" as 'born of place and power and pomp' ; BEECHING as the offspring of "circumstances of nature and fortune, explained by 'accident' in line 5" ; POOLER thinks the reference may be to "a courtier or statesman, subject to the vicissitudes of politics and Fortune's wheel."

THE FIVE AUTHORS OF SHAKE-SPEARES SONNETS

3-4. Based on S.'s "Time's bending sickle" (116.9-10) with a side reference to the 'flowers' and 'weeds' of the P.P. Series (M.P. 94.9-14, L. 69.12).

POOLER thinks that "strictly 'weeds' may denote courtiers or public men neglected; 'flowers' those in favour."

5-6. An amalgam of (a) M.P.'s "*ruin'd* love, when it is *built* anew" (119.11), (b) M.P.'s "Time whose million'd *accidents*" (110.5), and (c) L.'s reference to the smiling flatterers who "bore the canopy," and came to grief thereby (125). "Pomp" like "canopy" connotes royalty.

POOLER thinks that the allusion may be to "the house that was founded upon a rock, St. Matt. VII. 25," and the meaning "My love is not withered by the sun of prosperity; I do not in my prosperity, neglect my friend, or, perhaps he does not neglect me in his."

7-8. The two most obscure lines in this obscure sonnet. They contain a cryptic and highly elliptical allusion to L.'s informer (125.13), but the exact meaning is not quite clear. Probably "discontent" = disgruntled aspirants to a place in the "Contest" who had suborned him to deliver a blow against the favoured Four by telling lies about them to The Patron. Taking this view one might paraphrase as follows: "Nor is it destroyed by the blow dealt by certain disappointed rivals of ours who, envious of the favour with which you regarded us, have seized the present favourable opportunity [sc. that afforded by your resentment by being criticised by us in the P.P. series] of indulging a malignity which has hitherto been kept in check by fear, [and have tried to make you believe that we have behaved badly to you]. Note "*our* fashion." It is not 'the' as it would naturally be if it referred to the fashion of the day, or 'my' as it would naturally be if it referred to the popularity of the author of the sonnet (who starts by speaking of "*my* dear love").

The commentators' views are as follows: DOWDEN explains "when time puts us, who have been in favour out of fashion." TYLER says "the poet is alluding pretty evidently to the discontent existing after the death of Essex. The discontent was 'thralled' as being kept down and held in subjection." BEECHING says "the main reference here is to the Jesuit intrigues, 'the blow of thralled discontent' being the 'Powder plot' and 'thralled discontent' the discontent of a party held down by penal enactments." CASE tentatively suggests that there is an "allusion in 'thralled discontent' and 'our fashion' to his [sc. S.'s] affairs as an actor." And POOLER comparing l. 12 "nor drowns with showers," says "the idea seems to be that the rain does not beat it down, or if the flower has now become a tree in Shakespeare's phantasmagoria, there may be a reference to its being hewn down."

Third Quatrain. These cryptic lines are the result of an attempt on H.'s part to cram into a single quatrain no less than five echoes from his rivals' contributions; (1) M.P.'s "*policy* in love" which "grew to faults assured" (118.9-10), and his ruined love which when rebuilt "*grows* fairer than at first more strong, far *greater*" (119.10-12); (2) L.'s building tenants who paid "too much *rent*" (125.6) and laid "*great* bases for eternity which proved more *short* than waste or ruining" (125.3-4); (3) The "flames" of S.'s and M.P.'s fires which rose and sank according to circumstances (109.2 and 115.4); (4) S.'s love which does not alter with Time's "*brief* hours" (116.11)—all in this series; and (5) the hot sunshine succeeded by *rain* squalls of S.'s 33 and 34 in the previous (P.P.) series. "Heretic" is the only allusion unaccounted for. Note "all alone"—H's love is *sui generis* and self-contained.

The commentators are rather puzzled by "heretic" except BEECHING, who suggests that if "policy" has an "allusion to the Guy Fawkes' plot, there is special point in the

THE PERSONAL SONNETS—THIRD BATCH

epithet 'heretic' as a *paraprosdokian*." (!) So also for l. 11 he remarks that "a friendship like the poet's is a great building like the Houses of Parliament, only not subject to such dangers." DOWDEN merely notes "love itself is infinitely prudent, prudent for eternity." Line 12 is a very strange one, and STEEVENS suggested "glows" for "grows," arguing (reasonably enough one would think) that "though a *building* may be drowned, *i.e.*, deluged with rain, it can hardly *grow* under the influence of heat." For this he was rebuked by MALONE, who observed "Our poet frequently starts from one idea to another. Though he had compared his affection to a building he seems to have deserted that thought; and here, perhaps, meant to allude to the progress of vegetation, and the accidents that retard it." Successive generations of orthodox editors have endorsed this reprobation of Steevens' audacious criticism of the sacrosanct Swan of Avon, one of the latest of them, MR. GERALD MASSEY, poet and Bardolater, specially distinguishing himself by amiably adding: "The obtuseness and impertinence of this critic [Steevens] are at times insufferable; to see him in Shakespeare's company at all causes a general sense of uncomfortableness such as Launce may have felt respecting the manners of his dog Crab."

13-14. The esoteric meaning of this very neat and ingenious couplet is clear. The "fools of Time" (116.9) are the other three competitors; they had all allowed their affection for The Patron to be *tampered with by Time* (S. 109.6-7, 116.9; M.P., 115.5-9; L., 117.5-6—all in this series); they are all *dead* or dying men (The Moribund Poet series *passim*); their deaths all appear to be connected with the misuse of The Patron's *goodness* (S., 109.12; M.P., 118.12-14; L., 117.2 and 111.9-14—all in this series); and all of them appear to have been *criminally* neglectful of The Patron (S., 110 *passim*, 120 *passim*; M.P., 36.3 and 10; L., 111.2, 117.1-3—all in this series). They are called as "witnesses" (a) to prove that their respective 'loves' have suffered the things enumerated above, and (b) to certify that H.'s peculiar kind of love has not suffered and is not likely to suffer anything of the sort. The sudden introduction of these three witnesses for the defence imitates the sudden introduction of the "suborn'd informer"—the witness for the prosecution—of L.'s 'corresponding' sonnet No. 125.

The commentators interpret as follows: DOWDEN, "I call to witness the transitory unworthy loves (fools of time = sports of time. See 116.9) whose death was a virtue since their life was a crime." WYNDHAM, "who are so much the dupes of Time that they attach importance to the mere order of sequence in which events occur, and believe that a deathbed repentance can cancel a life of crime." BEECHING, "I believe the allusion here is to the Jesuit conspirators whose object in life was to murder the king, and who when caught posed as martyrs to the faith."

Even with the explanations supplied by The Theory the sonnet remains obscure and confused; without them it is a sheer nightmare—or rather let us say in the more reverent language of the commentators who remember *Whose* work they are speaking of—a *paraprosdokian* phantasmagoria.

25.

Motifs. B. 'Self-Love' and D. 'Dead Competitors.'

This interesting sonnet is full of personal allusions; in each of the first two quatrains H. is laughing at his three *confrères* collectively and severally, and in the third he gets in a very shrewd thrust at M.P.

First Quatrain. The references to the poets are as follows:

S. His two *gaffes*, *viz.*, his 'star' and his 'proud' verse.

M.P. The 'public' kindness with which The Patron 'honoured' him (36.11).

THE FIVE AUTHORS OF SHAKE-SPEARES SONNETS

- L. The outward 'honour' which he stoutly refused to pay to The Patron in public (125.1-2), and the 'public' means of livelihood provided for him by 'Fortune' (111.1-4).

In line 3 note the pride that apes humility: Donne was at the time a brilliant young man of fashion, engaged in rapidly getting through a large patrimony in the company of the choicest spirits of the day. Note also the subtle ambiguity of line 4: "unlook'd for" seems to be used adverbially in a sense about half-way between 'unsuspected' and 'unexpectedly.' The esoteric meaning of the quatrain appears to be something like this: "Fortune has arranged my life on other lines than those of my esteemed colleagues. I cannot talk about 'my star' and my 'proud verse' which have gained for me the *honourable* title of Chief Sonneteer like S., or regard it as an *honour* to be nodded to in public by The Patron like M.P., or earn my livelihood in the *honourable* profession of the law like L.; I have other ideas about honour, and pay it to somebody whom I delight to honour more than anybody else in the world [*i.e.*, himself]."

Second Quatrain. The "great princes' favourites," like "those who are in favour with their stars" of the first quatrain are, of course, H.'s three fellow-competitors, all of whom are dying (in the M.P. series) from the effects of The Patron's displeasure conveyed in his Link sonnet. The references are

- S. *Flatter* the mountain tops with sovereign eye
Even so my *sun* one early morn did shine (P.P. 33).
Where yellow *leaves* or few or none do hang (M.P. 73)

and, of course, his 'pride' again.

- M.P. My name be *buried where my body is* (M.P. 72).
L. Bring me within the level of your *frown* (P.R. 117).

Note the shockingly bad rhythm of the sixth line:—

But as the marigold at the sun's eye.

Third Quatrain. In this quatrain 'Barnes the Butt' is the sole object of H.'s attack. The first line (as already noted in Chapter II above) was printed in the original 1609 edition and in all subsequent editions down to the middle of the eighteenth century:—

The painful warrior famoused for *worth*,

Then THEOBALD, "the Porson of Shakespearean criticism," brought his critical acumen to bear on the passage, and, discovering that lines 9 and 11 did not rhyme, brilliantly amended 'worth' into 'fight,' and 'fight' it has remained ever since.¹ Now this sort of thing—in which the earlier commentators indulged very freely—did not, as a rule, do much harm, but in this particular instance it has taken a good deal of 'punch' out of H.'s blow at M.P.; and the kind reader is therefore requested to restore the Quarto reading and read 'worth'—M.P.'s 'worth' again, needless to say. One may conjecture that H. originally wrote 'fight,' but seeing an opportunity for getting in an extra dig at M.P., subsequently altered it to 'worth,' and the 'quite' of line 11 to 'forth' accordingly, and that owing to his own negligence or that of a transcriber, the MS. from which the printer set up the text gave effect to the first alteration, but not to the second.

¹ This, by the way, is the gentleman who, writing to a literary friend, expressed himself as follows:—"I ever labour to make the smallest deviation that I possibly can from the text; never to alter at all when I can by any means explain a passage with sense; nor ever by an emendation to make the author better when it is probable that the text came from his own hand."

THE PERSONAL SONNETS—THIRD BATCH

This remarkably effective line which gets into its ten syllables three separate and distinct allusions to M.P., all of an uncomplimentary character, namely (1) to his absurd 'Obstetrics' conceit, (2) to his tiresome harping on the word 'worth,' and (3) to his reputation as a cowardly braggart, has already been discussed in the 'Barnes the Butt' Note in Chapter III above, to which the reader is invited to refer. Lines 11 and 12 contain further echoes from M.P. viz. (1) the loss of honour referred to in his No. 36.10-12 in this series, and (2) the lines in his No. 72 in the next series:—

After my death, dear love, *forget me quite*
For you in me can nothing *worthy* prove.

It seems not a little odd that all the commentators should have taken these four cryptic lines *seriously* at their face value. In the first place, 'painful' is not a very suitable epithet for a warrior; in the second place, while it is an allowable poetical exaggeration to speak of a man as "the hero of a *hundred* fights" a *thousand* is patently absurd; and in the third place, it is not true that a veteran soldier who happens once in a way to be honourably defeated has his name forthwith "razed quite" (a very strong expression) from the Book of Honour—as the histories of famous captains abundantly testify.

The Couplet. The phraseology is borrowed from S.'s last sonnet in this series (No. 116):—

. . . *Love is not love*
Which . . . bends with the *remover to remove.*

It gives a broad hint as to the real nature of H.'s peculiar 'love'; the only case in which a lover *may* not be removed from the loved one is when the two are identical.

The reader is now in a position to appreciate the many exemplifications of H.'s characteristics furnished by his four sonnets in this series: *Compressed Thought*, 123 *passim*, 124 *passim*, esp. ll. 7-8; *Deliberate Dissonance*, 25.6; *Subtle Humour*, *Personal Allusion*, and *The Polite Shirker*, throughout.

SERIES No. 8.—The Moribund Poet.

With this series 'The Contest' comes to an end; *why* it came to an end at this point can be conjectured only—possibly 'by command,' possibly because Shakespeare decided that in view of his little tiff with The Patron over the P.P. Series he had done quite enough to "witness duty." At any rate, these eight sonnets shew quite clearly that it *has* come to an end, and round it off very neatly.

The Theme.—The dying Poet commends to The Patron his completed tale of adulatory sonnets.

Thus the theme of the *last* of the eight Contest series is the analogue and complement of the theme of the *first* (the E.D. series), "The Poet modestly commends to the Patron his first batch of adulatory sonnets."

THE FIVE AUTHORS OF SHAKESPEARES SONNETS

SERIES No. 8—

The Theme.—The dying Poet commends to The Patron

SHAKESPEARE

73

That time of year thou mayst in me behold
 When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang
 Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,
 Bare ruin'd choirs, where late the sweet birds sang.
 In me thou see'st the twilight of such day
 As after sunset fadeth in the west ;
 Which by and by black night doth take away,
 Death's second self, that seals up all in rest.
 In me thou see'st the glowing of such fire,
 That on the ashes of his youth doth lie,
 As the death-bed whereon it must expire,
 Consum'd with that which it was nourish'd by.
 This thou perceivest, which makes thy love more
 strong,
 To love that well which thou must leave ere long.

74

But be contented : when that fell arrest
 Without all bail shall carry me away,
 My life hath in this line some interest,
 Which for memorial still with thee shall stay.
 When thou reviewest this, thou dost review
 The very part was consecrate to thee :
 The earth can have but earth, which is his due ;
 My spirit is thine, the better part of me :
 So then thou hast but lost the dregs of life,
 The prey of worms, my body being dead ;
 The coward conquest of a wretch's knife,
 Too base of thee to be remembered.
 The worth of that is that which it contains,
 And that is this, and this with thee remains.

THE MINOR POET

71

No longer mourn for me when I am dead
 Than you shall hear the surly sullen bell
 Give warning to the world that I am fled
 From this vile world, with vilest worms to dwell :
 Nay, if you read this line, remember not
 The hand that writ it ; for I love you so,
 That I in your sweet thoughts would be forgot,
 If thinking on me then should make you woe.
 O, if, I say, you look upon this verse
 When I perhaps compounded am with clay,
 Do not so much as my poor name rehearse,
 But let your love even with my life decay ;
 Lest the wise world should look into your moan,
 And mock you with me after I am gone.

72

O, lest the world should task you to recite
 What merit lived in me, that you should love }
 After my death, dear love, forget me quite,
 For you in me can nothing worthy prove ; }
 Unless you would devise some virtuous lie,
 To do more for me than mine own desert,
 And hang more praise upon deceased I
 Than niggard truth would willingly impart :
 O' lest your true love may seem false in this
 That you for love speak well of me untrue,
 My name be buried where my body is,
 And live no more to shame nor me nor you.
 For I am shamed by that which I bring forth,
 And so should you, to love things nothing worth.

TREATMENT OF THE THEME.

Shakespeare's general sentiment is 'I am old and shall die soon ; but though my body must decay in the grave, my sonnets will live and remain with you,' and this sentiment is more or less faithfully reflected by The Minor Poet and The Lawyer. The Humorist, *more suo*, takes a diametrically opposite line. He will not join the others in playing Pantaloon to The Patron's Harlequin ; when he sees The Patron well-stricken in years, then, and not till then, will he consent to look upon his own death as imminent. Nor will he follow them in affecting to regard his sonnetteering career as closed ; on the contrary, he looks forward to continuing his output of adulatory verse in circumstances less embarrassing to his native modesty.

The framework on which S.'s two sonnets are built is made up of four thoughts :

- (a). The Poet's approaching death.
- (b). The Poet's estimate of the value of his own sonnets.
- (c). The Patron's remembrance of the Poet himself.

THE PERSONAL SONNETS—THIRD BATCH

MORIBUND POET. (M.P.)

his completed tale of adulatory sonnets.

THE LAWYER

32

If thou survive my well-contented day
 When that churl Death *my bones with dust shall cover*,
 And shalt by fortune once more *re-survey*
These poor rude lines of thy deceased lover,
 Compare them with the bettering of the time,
 And though they be outstripp'd by every pen,
 Reserve them for my love, not for their rhyme
 Exceeded by the height of happier men.
 O, then vouchsafe me but this loving thought:
 'Had my friend's Muse grown with this growing age,
 A dearer birth than this his love had brought,
 To march in ranks of better equipage:
 But since he died, and poets better *prove*,
 Theirs for their style I'll read, his for his *love*.' }

76

Why is my verse so barren of new pride,
 So far from variation or quick change?
 Why with the time do I not glance aside
 To new-found methods and to compounds strange?
 Why write I still all one, ever the same,
 And keep invention in a noted weed,
 That every word doth almost tell my name,
 Showing their birth and where they did proceed?
 O, know, sweet love, I always write of you,
 And you and love are still my argument;
 So all my best is dressing old words new,
 Spending again what is already spent:
 For as the sun is daily new and old,
 So is my love still telling what is told.

THE HUMORIST

22

My glass shall not persuade me I am old,
 So long as youth and thou are of one date;
 But when in thee time's furrows I behold,
 Then look I death my days should expiate.
 For all that beauty that doth cover thee
 Is but the seemly raiment of my heart,
 Which in thy breast doth live, as thine in me
 How can I then be elder than thou art?
 O, therefore, love, be of thyself so wary,
 As I, not for myself, but for thee will;
 Bearing thy heart, which I will keep so chary
 As tender nurse her babe from faring ill.
 Presume not on thy heart when mine is slain;
 Thou gavest me thine, not to give back again.

39

O, how thy worth with manners may I sing,
 When *thou art all the better part of me*?
 What can mine own praise to mine own self bring?
 And what is 't but mine own when I praise thee?
 Even for this let us divided live,
 And our dear love lose name of single one,
 That by this separation I may give
 That due to thee which thou deservest alone.
 O absence, what a torment wouldst thou *prove*,
 Were it not thy sour leisure gave sweet leave
 To entertain the time with thoughts of *love*,
 Which time and thoughts so sweetly doth deceive,
 And that thou teachest how to make one twain,
 By praising him here who doth hence remain!

(d). The Patron's remembrance of the Poet's verses.

M.P. and L. use exactly the same framework, and H. uses as much of it as he can consistently with his peculiar treatment of The Theme.

(a). S. (*passim*): M.P. (*passim*): L. 32 *passim*: H. (22 *passim*).

(b). S. places considerable value on his verse (74 *passim*); M.P. declares his to be worthless, and is thoroughly ashamed of it (72 *passim*); L. admits his inferiority to the other poets (32 *passim*); and H. does so by implication in offering the excuse that as he and The Patron are identical, good manners prevented him from praising him as he would have wished (39.1-4).

(c) and (d). S. says 'Forget *me* but remember my *verses*' (74 *passim*); M.P. says 'Forget both *me* and my *verses*—both are worthless' (*passim*); L. says 'Remember my *verses*, inferior though they are, for the love you bear *me*' (32 *passim*); and H. (who is not going to die yet awhile) says 'Leave *me*, and you will find the *verses* I am going to write better worth remembering' (39.5-14).

THE FIVE AUTHORS OF SHAKE-SPEARES SONNETS

THE PALINODES.

But the feature which gives an unique interest to this series is what may be called the *palinodic* character of each of the four contributions. Imitations and parodies of the thoughts of his colleagues are, of course, common in S.'s contributions as they are in those of the other three; and he, like them, shews no hesitation in referring to his own previous sonnets when (as for instance in the P.R. series) the argument requires it. But his procedure in this series is of a totally different character. He selects from three of his own sonnets three separate thoughts, and deliberately *reverses* them, emphasising his new departure by allotting exactly one quatrain to each thought. *His example is followed by all three of his colleagues*; each of them selects one of his own previous sonnets and deliberately reverses its sentiment, while following its phraseology more or less closely.

Shakespeare's palinode is contained in the first of his two sonnets (No. 73). In his *first* quatrain the thought selected is from his No. 102 in the P.E. Series. *Then*, in exquisite verse, he compared his sonnetting of his Patron to the promise of spring and the plenty of summer: *now*, in verse more exquisite still, he laments that his inspiration has left him; there has come a "frost, a killing frost," and "all is winter now."

102

Our love was new and then but in the *spring*,
When I was wont to greet it with my lays;
As *Philomel* in summer's front doth *sing*,
And stops her pipe in growth of riper days;
Not that the *summer* is less pleasant now
Than when her mournful hymns did hush the night,
But that wild *music* burthens every *bough*,
And *sweets* grown common lose their dear delight.

73

That *time of year* thou mayst in me behold
When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang
Upon those *boughs* which shake against the cold,
Bare ruin'd choirs, where late the *sweet birds sang*.

In his *second* quatrain the thought selected is from his great sonnet No. 33 in the P.P. Series. *Then* he compared his Patron's favour to the glorious beams of the morning sun: *now* there is no question of any temporary overclouding, of alternating sunshine and shower; the sun of The Patron's favour has set for ever, and there remains only a grey twilight soon to fade away into the hopeless blackness of the night.

33

Full many a glorious morning have I seen
Flatter the mountain-tops with sovereign eye,
Even so my sun one early morn did shine
With all-triumphant splendour on my brow.

73

In me thou see'st the twilight of such day
As after sunset fadeth in the West;
Which by and by black night doth take away,
Death's second self, which seals up all in rest.

In his *third* quatrain the thought selected is from his first sonnet in the P.R. Series (No. 109). *Then* he compared his love for his Patron to a brightly-burning fire: *now* there is no flame, nothing but the dull glow of a few embers soon to be smothered in the ashes of a passion exhausted by its own intensity.

Though absence seemed my flame to qualify:

In me thou see'st the glowing of such fire,
That on the ashes of his youth doth lie,
As the death-bed whereon it must expire,
Consumed with that which it was nourish'd by.

The Minor Poet's palinode is partly in his first sonnet, partly in his second. The sonnet selected is his No. 38 in the E.D. series. *Then* he could write in a spirit of jaunty condescension: *now* his self-depreciation is almost abject.

THE PERSONAL SONNETS—THIRD BATCH

38

How can my Muse want subject to invent,
While thou dost breathe, that pour'st into *my verse*
Thine own sweet argument, too excellent
For every vulgar paper to *rehearse* ?
O, give thyself the thanks, if aught *in me*
Worthy perusal stand against thy sight ;
For who's so dumb that cannot write to thee,
When thou thyself dost give invention light ?
And he that calls on thee, let him *bring forth*
Eternal numbers to outlive long date.
Be thou the tenth Muse, ten times more in *worth*
Than those old nine which rhymers invoke ;
If my slight Muse do please those curious days,
The pain be mine, but thine shall be the *praise*.

[Note the rhymes (1) verse—rehearse, (2) bring forth—worth].

The Lawyer, like S., confines his palinode to one sonnet, and like M.P. selects his sonnet in the E.D. Series (No. 105). Then he proposed to take The Patron's perfections as the sole theme of his verse, confidently relying on its inexhaustibility and the "wondrous scope" it would afford him: *now* after following this plan he finds that he has to apologize for the barrenness and monotony of the results.

105

Since *all alike* my songs and praises be
To one, of one, still such, and ever so.
Therefore *my verse* to constancy confined,
Fair, kind, and true is all *my argument*,
Fair, kind, and true *varying* to other words ;
And in this *change* is my *invention spent*,
Three themes *in one*, which wondrous scope affords.

[Note the rhyme argument—spent.]

The phraseology of the original sonnet could scarcely have been reproduced more faithfully.

The Humorist's palinode, like M.P.'s, is contained partly in his first and partly in his second sonnet. He selects for his treatment his first sonnet in the B.I. Series (No. 62). Then he was old and his Patron young, and his praise of his own beauty was declared to be really the praise of his Patron's: *now* he not only repudiates the suggestion that he is older than his Patron, but declares that his praise of his Patron's beauty is really praise of his own.

62

But when *my glass* shows me myself indeed,
Beat'd and choppp'd with tann'd antiquity,
And for myself *mine own worth* do define,
As I all other in all *worths* surmount.
'Tis *thee, myself* that for myself I *praise*
Painting my age with *beauty of thy days*.

22 and 39

My glass shall not *persuade me* I am old,
But when in thee *time's furrows* I behold,
O! how thy *worth* with manners may I sing,
What can *mine own praise to my own self* bring ?
And, what is't but *mine own* when I *praise thee* ?
As I not for myself but for thee will,
And all the *beauty that doth cover thee*.

Again an exact reproduction of the original phraseology.

The reader's particular attention is invited to this quartet of palinodes; he will find nothing like it anywhere else in the *Sonnets*.

VERBAL PARALLELISMS.

As a result of the two facts, *first* that S.'s fellow-competitors are copying not so

THE FIVE AUTHORS OF SHAKE-SPEARES SONNETS

much his language as his methods, and *second* that H. takes an entirely different line from the rest, the list of *internal* verbal parallelisms and imitations is a good deal shorter than in most of the preceding series.

Note the rhyme prove-love used once by each of the three competitors, M.P., L., and H.

Note the *exactly* regular placing of the eight lines beginning with "O" (M.P. 3, L. 2, H. 3). Three lines ruled horizontally through the text would eliminate the lot.

S. My life has in *this line* some interest,
When thou reviewest this, (sc. *verse*) *thou dost review*

M.P. Nay, if you read *this line* remember not
O! if, I say, *you look upon this verse*

L. And shalt, by fortune, once more *re-survey*
These poor rude lines . . .

S. The *earth* can have but *earth*, which is his due ;

M.P. When I perhaps compounded am with *clay*,

L. When that churl Death my bones with *dust* shall cover.

S. My spirit is thine, *the better part of me* :

H. When thou art all *the better part of me* ?

S. The *prey of worms*, my body being dead.

M.P. From this vile world with vilest *worms to dwell*.

N.B. References to the affection between The Patron and the Poet—*my love, your love, our love*—occur in such profusion that it would be tedious to tabulate them.

NOTES.

In reading the eight sonnets of this series it should be borne in mind that the "death" to which the competitors refer means *esoterically* the conclusion of The Contest, and that each of them is estimating the value of his own contributions and anticipating The Patron's verdict. They all seem to realize pretty well that it will be "Eclipse first, the rest nowhere."

Shakespeare. (Nos. 73, 74.)

In this series S. gives us of his very best. After the lengthy and tiresome business of worrying out the inner meaning of H.'s four crabbed sonnets in the P.R. Series, it is truly refreshing to turn to this transparently clear and perfectly melodious verse, and marvel anew at S.'s effortless mastery of his instrument and his material.

73.

In this beautiful sonnet S. paints a most convincing portrait of himself as a disillusioned, neglected, decrepit old man sadly remembering the happy days of yore, [some months distant!] when he was an inspired young poet basking in the favour of a much-loved Patron. The picture is a masterpiece, perfect in composition, tone, atmosphere—everything; and it presents us with yet another striking proof of the utter unreality of the sentiments expressed in the sonnets.

74.

This sonnet is conceived in the same spirit as his contribution to the B.I. series, and its final couplet recalls the final couplet of that series—

So long as men can breathe, or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

THE PERSONAL SONNETS—THIRD BATCH

The Minor Poet. (Nos. 71, 72.)

The Minor Poet acknowledges his defeat in pathetic terms. The following characteristics are exemplified: *Slovenly Phrasing*, 72.7; *Smooth Versification* throughout; *Sound not Sense*, 71.4; *Forcing the Note* throughout; *The Flunkey*, 71.7-8, 72.12-14.

71.

This sonnet contains several echoes from 2 *Henry IV*. Compare.

Henry IV. Part 2.

Sounds ever after as a *sullen bell*
Remembered tolling a departing friend.
That thou art crowned, not that *I am dead*.
Only *compound me with forgotten dust*;
Give that which gave thee life unto the worms.

71

No longer mourn for me when *I am dead*
Than you shall hear the surly *sullen bell*
Give warning to the world that I am fled
From this vile world, with vilest *worms* to dwell:
Nay, if you read this line, *remember not*
When I perhaps *compounded am with clay*.

6-8. The Patron's convenience is the only thing to be considered by the obsequious Poet.

9-10. Note the unpleasing effect of the unnecessary expletives 'I say' and 'perhaps.'

13-14. This looks as if M.P. had begun to realize his position as the butt of his fellow-competitors.

72.

An amusing feature of this sonnet is the emergence of a striking contrast between the respective attitudes of S. and M.P. towards their own sonnetteering performances both *in posse* and *in esse*. In the E.D. series S. modestly apologized for the short-comings of his first batch, and hoped, with the kind assistance of The Patron, to do better another time. M.P., on the other hand, despising the efforts of the ordinary ruck of vulgar versifiers, kindly informed his Patron that he (The Patron) might take the credit for the applause to be given to his own (M.P.'s) superior performance. Now in this series S., his tale of sonnets completed, reviews them with legitimate satisfaction, and can tell his Patron

The *worth* of that is that which it contains,
And that is this, and this with thee remains.

M.P. on the other hand is overwhelmed with shame when he contemplates the inferiority of his own productions.

For I am shamed by that which I bring forth,
And so should you to love things nothing *worth*.

4. Another example of M.P.'s "worth." See also line 14.

7. A particularly flagrant example of 'rhyme-hunting.'

13-14. S.'s two other fellow-competitors admit their inferiority more or less. But M.P. is not only ashamed of his verses, but calls shame on his Patron for liking them!

Note in l. 13 the last appearance *in his own verse* of M.P.'s over-worked 'Obstetrics' conceit.

The Lawyer. (Nos. 32, 76.)

The Lawyer's contribution is rather above his average in literary merit, and unlike M.P.'s, is written in a more or less dignified tone. The *Old Dog* characteristic pervades both sonnets to the exclusion of the rest.

32.

5. Cf. his line in the P.E. Series (No. 82).

Some fresher stamp of the *time-bettering* days.