Davies, of Hereford, "Players, I love you and your quality." But one quotation from the lecture will best illustrate the spirit of strong indignation under the influence of which it was delivered. Sir Henry tells us that Lord Tennyson, on one occasion, in his house at Freshwater, "when a guest had argued the Baconian hypothesis, rose from the table, exclaiming as he hastily left the room, 'I can't listen to you—you who would pluck the laurels from the brow of the dead Christ'!" In passing I may say that I should have imagined that "thorns" would have been a more appropriate word than "laurels" in this collocation; but, that apart, is it not clear that all reasoning, of any sort or kind, must be thrown away on those who regard the Stratfordian tradition as yet another inspired Gospel? "I can't listen to you!" That exactly expresses the spirit of some of those (a few only, I am thankful to say) who have done me the honour of noticing my book, even though I am no "Baconian."

But let us come to Sir Henry Irving's arguments for the actor-author. In the first place I notice one very curious remark. It is this: Sir Henry speaks of "the elementary fact that the Shakespearian plays were written *exclusively for* the stage." Beside this strange pronouncement I would ask the reader to place Mr. Swinburne's observations quoted at page 280 of my book.

"Scene by scene, line for line, stroke upon stroke, and touch after touch, he went over all the old laboured ground again, and not to ensure success in his own day, and fill his pockets with contemporary pence, but merely and wholly with a purpose to make it worthy of himself *and his future students*. . . . Not one single alteration in the whole play can possibly have been made *with a view to stage effect*, or to present popularity and profit. . . . Every change in the text of *Hamlet has impaired its fitness for the stage*, *and increased its value for the closet in exact and perfect proportion.*" Did Sir Henry Irving forget that when he put *Hamlet* on the stage, with such great and well-merited success, it was not the complete *Hamlet* as we now read it—not the *Hamlet* of Quarto II—but an "acting edition" that was set before the public, and that from that acting edition was omitted, as it always has been from the very first, whenever the play has come before the footlights, what Mr. Swinburne has called "the one essential speech . . . in which the personal genius of Shakespeare soars up to the very highest of its height and strikes down to the very deepest of its depth?" All this revision, then, was not done "exclusively for the stage"—on the contrary, it appears to have been done exclusively for the reader's closet.

Like considerations will show, I think, that Sir

Henry's arguments about what Canon Beeching has called "the arrangement of exits and entrances and so forth" have not really that weight which at first sight they might appear to have. "No actor," says Sir Henry, "ever had reason to complain that Shakespeare sent him tamely off or brought him feebly on." If this is true (and we may take Sir Henry's word for it, so far, at any rate, as concerns the great characters of the Shakespearean dramas, if not of all the rest), how far does this go towards proving that the author was an actor? The plays of Shakespeare—some of them at least—have been continually acted for upwards of three hundred years; with few exceptions they had been acted again and again before they were given to the world in print; we are constantly told that many of them, as they appear in the Folio of 1623, were printed from "prompt copies." Even an amateur actor knows what that means. It means that they had been fashioned according to the requirements of the stage—that they had been "licked into shape" by the stage manager. If it was found that any "exit or entrance" had been badly conceived, the fault could, of course, have been, and doubtless was, very soon rectified.

These considerations apply to all those Shakespearean dramas that are habitually placed upon the boards. But there are not a few which no manager ever thinks of mounting, and these for the most part, so far from showing the writing of an actor with an exclusive view to the stage, exhibit the work of a literary man, writing, as Mr. Swinburne says, "with an eye to the literary perfection" of his work; writing not for an ephemeral audience, but for posterity; writing not for the *stage*, but for the *study*. As Mr. R. M. Theobald very truly writes (I trust I may be forgiven for quoting from a Baconian): "So much is this the case, that about half of his (Shakespeare's) plays are never put on the boards, and probably were never intended for the theatre, being quite unsuitable for scenic effect. It is surely a most significant fact that the greatest of all dramatists has written so large a proportion of plays which must be valued not for their scenic merits, but for quite other reasons. *Troilus and Cressida* and *Timon*, for instance, could not have been written by a stage manager, making copy for his boards, looking chiefly, or in any way, at the market value of his poetical inventions. Even *Hamlet*, attractive as it is, if it were produced without abridgment, would be intolerable."[1] No doubt Sir Henry Irving, when playing the oft-played rôles of Hamlet, or Macbeth, or Shylock, found that his "exits and entrances" were all admirably

[1] *Shakespeare Studies in Baconian Light*, p. 154.

arranged. I wonder how he would have fared if he had essayed a part in *Troilus and Cressida*, for example!

Of a truth, then, when we come to consider the matter, there seems to be no more reason why the plays of Shakespeare must have been written by an actor, than why we should be compelled to affirm the same concerning *The Rivals*, and *The Critic*, and *The School for Scandal*. Sheridan's case, indeed, deserves consideration in this connexion. His father, it is true, had been an actor, and was for some years manager of the Dublin Theatre; but, in 1762, when Richard Brinsley was but eleven years of age, his parents settled in England, and the future dramatist and statesman was sent to Harrow. In 1774, when he was about twenty-three, he produced *The Rivals*, and at that time we may say with confidence that he knew little or nothing about the theatre. For this excellent comedy he had, as Mr. Rudolf Dircks says, "drawn freely on his late experiences. His life at Bath gave the atmosphere; his stolen interviews with Miss Linley, the duels, the numerous suitors, the unreasonable jealousies, provided the incidents and characters." In the same year *The Duenna* was produced with brilliant success. In 1777, when the author was only twenty-six, appeared *The School for Scandal*, which Hazlitt has pronounced "the most finished and faultless comedy which we have," and which, according to Mr. Dircks, "remains the most brilliantly effective comedy in our tongue." Here, again, "the materials were principally gathered from his Bath experiences." In these comedies the "exits and entrances" are admirably managed, though it is probable enough that it was not till the play was put into rehearsal that these were finally arranged. Yet the young playwright knew nothing of the *technique* of the stage at that time. Later on, when he wrote *Pizzaro*, it was very different. Let me again quote Mr. Dircks: "Nowadays, we hear that to be a good dramatist it is essential above all things to inhale 'the scent of the footlights.' *Pizzaro* is nauseating with this. Since the day of *The Rivals* and *The Critic*, Sheridan's long association with the theatre had thoroughly acclimatized him to the atmosphere which makes dramatists; and we see the result. The tragedy shows mastery of stage technique, the action is smart; there is ample room for scenic display; claptrap in plenty—everything, in fact, we might expect from one who had inhaled that fatal perfume." In other words, Sheridan could write immortal plays when he knew nothing of the theatre and "stage technique"; and wrote a very bad one when he had long inhaled "the scent of the footlights."

This hardly seems to square with Sir Henry Irving's theory ![1]

I have alluded to the fact, upon which Mr. Swinburne lays such stress, that *Hamlet* was subject to careful revision, and that not once only, but many times, as it would seem. But this revising of Shakespearean plays is a very remarkable phenomenon in the case, more especially because there seems to be very good evidence to show that much of the revision was done after Shakspere's death. I have devoted several pages of my book to this part of the argument (see p. 287 *et seq.*). Canon Beeching makes no attempt to deal with it, except that in a note, at p. 25, alluding to my "suggestion" (I should rather call it "contention"), "that as the Folio text of *Richard III.* preserves the misprints of the Quarto of 1622, and yet contains additional matter, it must have been retouched after the author's death," he observes, "a sufficient and more plausible explanation is that the editors of

[1] Against the opinion of Sir Henry Irving we may, I am told, set that of one who was not only a great actor, and stage manager of long experience, but also a very successful dramatist himself. I refer to the late Dion Boucicault, who, I am informed, was sceptical as to the Stratfordian authorship of the plays. I am indebted for this information to an American correspondent, who tells me that the fact is recorded by Mr. William Winter (author of *In Shakespeare's Country*) in his reminiscences, published in the U.S.A. under the title, I believe, of *Other Days*. I have not as yet been able to see this work.

the Folio took a 1622 text as the basis of their 'copy' for press." I confess I do not understand this. My contention is that the editor of the Folio *must* have taken "a 1622 text," viz. the Quarto of that date, as the basis of his copy for the press, leaving the twelve printer's errors uncorrected, the inference being that some person unknown, with the Quarto of 1622 in his hand (six years after Shakspere's death), made additions and improvements, and thus put the play into the form in which it appeared in 1623. But there are many other cases of the same kind. *Richard II.* was published anonymously in 1597, but in 1598 as by William Shake-speare. The Folio version, however, is based upon the Quarto of 1615, but, while repeating the errors of that quarto, it contains many additions and improvements made, apparently, subsequently to 1615. Did Shakspere do this revision? If so, where? At Stratford? But he had no MSS. there; he had parted with them once and for all. A strange case is that of *Othello*, which never saw the light in print till 1622. In 1623 it appears again, but now with 160 new lines and numerous important emendations. Again, *The Merry Wives* was issued in 1602, but reprinted in 1619, three years after Shakspere's death. In the 1623 Folio it appears in a new and greatly enlarged version, with no less than 1080 new lines. Who did all this rewriting and emendation? And what of the plays which were never heard of till 1623, such as *Timon*, *Julius Cæsar*, *Coriolanus*, and *All's Well?* Where were the MSS. of these plays preserved till seven years after Shakspere's death? These are questions which seem to merit some consideration.

In conclusion I will say a word as to Shakspere's Will. I have remarked, as many others have remarked before me, that there is no mention of books in Shakspere's Will. But, replies Canon Beeching, that remark applies no less to the wills of Richard Barnefield, or of John Marston, or of Samuel Daniel, or, indeed, of the "judicious Hooker," and I do not for a moment deny that there is considerable force in the rejoinder. I take it that it was by no means usual at that time to make a special bequest of books. It is true that Shakspere's son-in-law Hall did so, and as in those days it was exceptional to have a library, one might naturally expect that any one who had such property, and set store by it, would mention it among his testamentary dispositions.[1] But Shakspere's Will is remarkable for what it contains, as well as for what it omits—not indeed at all remarkable for player Shakspere, but remarkable if he were also the immortal dramatist. That player Shakspere should make specific bequests

[1] Just as Fletcher's father (e.g.) by his Will (1593) left his books between his sons Nathaniel and John.

of his silver gilt bowl, his sword, his plate, his jewels, and household stuff is natural enough. As to the "second-best bed," it is now suggested that poor Mrs. Shakspere, who survived her husband seven years, was bed-ridden and specially asked for it; but I really think that the gentle Shakspere might have left his "first-best" bed to the afflicted mother of his children! (There is, of course, no evidence of this affliction, but that is a trifle not worth consideration). All this, I say, is natural enough in player Shakspere, and, in fact, just what one might have expected. But from the immortal poet, the great philosopher of human nature, the centre of the world's desire, the man whose thoughts and teachings are not of an age but for all time, it is surely not unreasonable to expect something more than this. The critics seem to think that when they have shown that the player did all that we are entitled to expect that a player should do, they have done all that is necessary. But there I cannot follow them. From the writer of *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, and *King Lear* it seems natural to require a little more than that. "Shakespeare" was, it is impossible to doubt, an omnivorous reader. He had studied French and Italian,[1] and had large stores of

[1] "If he was at the pains to master Italian," says Canon Beeching (p. 58), "we may be sure that he read whatever he found worth reading in his own tongue."

classical knowledge. If we may trust Mr. Anders he must have read hundreds of books, and of these hundreds he must surely have owned some. What became of them all? They passed, it may be said, to the Halls as his residuary legatees. Possibly; but Hall knew the value of books, and Mrs. Hall knew, at any rate, the value of money. Hall was careful to make disposition of his "study of books" in his nuncupative will; but of Shakspere's books nothing is heard. One would have thought that some of them, at any rate, would have come into the possession of his favourite grandchild, Lady Barnard, who, upon her mother's death, became the owner of the New Place under Shakspere's will. But, alas, none have ever come to light, wherefore some worshippers at the Stratfordian shrine, more enthusiastic than honest, oppressed with the weight of this serious omission, and anxious to rectify it, have endeavoured to accomplish that object by forging the signature of "the poet" in books of a kind that he must be supposed to have possessed, such as Florio's translation of Montaigne's *Essays*, and other works. And yet Alleyn, who was only an actor, though it must be owned an actor of a very superior class, not only was the owner of books, but had no doubt how to dispose of them by his will! And is it not reasonable also to suppose that the great poet, the great dramatist, the great thinker, the great teacher, would have had *some* thoughts for those priceless works which had not been given to the world at the time of his death—works such as *The Tempest*, *As You Like It*, *Twelfth Night*, *Cymbeline*, *Winter's Tale*, *Julius Cæsar*, and *Macbeth?* Are we really to suppose that he was careless as to the fate of these—that having written them for the company, "for reward in that behalf," he ceased to trouble his head about them, and cared not a straw whether or not they were to be preserved for posterity? Are we to be told that this is a sane and reasonable belief with which all sensible men should rest contented? Have we really got no further than Pope's miserable *dictum* that the immortal who stands for all that we mean when we pronounce the magic name "Shakespeare" was, after all, a man so mean-spirited that he wrote for "gain" and not for "glory," and "grew immortal in his own despite"?

And now one final word. We must all worship at the shrine of Shakespeare. We must all admire, and venerate, and we must all be fain to love the creator of Hamlet and Macbeth; of Hotspur and Prince Hal; of Falstaff, and Bardolph, and Ned Poins; of Juliet, and Imogen, and Rosalind; and all the rest whose names are familiar in our mouths as household words. But what is this life that you, the biographers, have set before us as the life-story of this Immortal? From first to last there is not one creditable act in the whole of it—not a single act indicative of a generous, high-minded, and great-souled man, not one such act that has a jot or tittle of evidence to support it. It is sad, indeed, to see how these worshippers are constrained to belittle their demigod when it becomes necessary to speak about him as a man in the ordinary walks of human life. And so it has come about that, as Emerson wrote, "It must even go into the world's history that the best poet led an obscure and profane life, using his genius for the public amusement." His curse, it seems, has been fulfilled. It has rested upon those who have moved his bones, clothed them once more with the flesh of very common humanity, and summoned us all to fall on our knees before the paltry idol they have set up. With all possible respect, I think it is better to reserve our worship for "The Unknown God," revealed to us not by blind faith, but by manifest works—the immortal works of "Shakespeare."[1]

[1] I have more than once alluded to what the late Professor Churton Collins wrote, as recently as 1901, in *Ephemera Critica*, where he took occasion to republish a review of Lee's *Life of Shakespeare*. I will now give the passage in full (*op. cit.*, p. 213): "More than a century ago George Steevens wrote: 'All that can be known with any degree of certainty about Shakespeare is that he was born at Stratford-on-Avon, married and had children there, went to London, where he commenced actor, wrote poems and plays, returned to Stratford, made his will, died, and was buried

there' [I respectfully dissent as to the words 'wrote poems and plays,' but let that pass]. And, if we set aside probable inferences, this is all we do know of any importance about his life. His pedigree cannot certainly be traced beyond his father. Nothing is known of the place of his education—that he was educated at the Stratford Grammar School is pure assumption. His life, between his birth and the publication of *Venus and Adonis* in 1593, is an absolute blank. It is at least doubtful whether the supposed allusion to him in Greene's *Groat's Worth of Wit* and in Chettle's *Kind Heart's Dream* have any reference to him at all; it is still more doubtful whether the William Shakespeare of Adrian Quiney's letter, or of the Rogers and Addenbroke summonses, or the William Shakespeare who was assessed for property in St. Helens, Bishopsgate, was the poet. We know practically nothing of his life in London, or of the date of his arrival in London; we are ignorant of the date of his return to Stratford, of his happiness or unhappiness in married life, of his habits, of his last days, of the cause of his death. Not a sentence that fell from his lips has been authentically recorded. At least one-half of the alleged facts of his biography is as purely apocryphal as the life of Homer attributed to Herodotus." Ought not such words as these to give pause to some of our "cock-sure" Stratfordian critics, even although they be "men of letters," or so conceive themselves to be?

CHAPTER V

THE SCHOOLING OF SHAKSPERE

AS I have frequently had occasion to point out, there are many tabernacles in the Stratfordian camp, and especially is this fact notable when we consider the various phases of "orthodox" opinion with regard to the learning of Shakspere. Broadly speaking, there are now two schools, with two distinct creeds, with reference to this matter. The old school relies upon Rowe (1709) and the "ancient witnesses." "His father," says Rowe, "had bred him at a Free School[1] [he does not say what Free School], where 'tis probable he acquir'd that little *Latin* he was master of; but the narrowness of his circumstances, and the want of his assistance at home, forc'd his father to withdraw him from thence, and unhappily prevented his further

[1] A reviewer in the *Athenaeum* took me severely to task for speaking of Shakspere's school as the "Free School," though I had mentioned that it was always assumed to be the Free Grammar School of Stratford. But Rowe is our only authority for the fact that Shakspere attended school at all, and he speaks of a "Free School" only.

proficiency in that language. It is without controversy that he had no knowledge of the writings of the ancient poets," etc., etc. This agrees with the "ancient witnesses." What says old Fuller, for example? (1662). "Never any scholar . . . . his learning was very little." What says the Rev. John Ward, Vicar of Stratford? (1661-3) "A natural wit, without any art at all." And what need is there to cite Ben Jonson—"small Latin and less Greek"? Finally (as it was fondly imagined) came Richard Farmer's celebrated essay (1767), which was supposed to have settled "for all time" the question of Shakespeare's "Learning," in favour of the opinion handed down to us by tradition; so that Canon Beeching, "D.Litt.," is found writing in *The Guardian* of January 8, 1902, "Every literary critic knows that the Shakespearian plays reveal precisely that small Latin and less Greek which Jonson, who did know his classics, attributed to Shakespeare." But

> multa renascentur quæ iam cecidere, cadentque
> quæ nunc sunt in honore;

and so it came to pass that little more than a year after that confident pronouncement was made, as to what "every literary critic knows," the late Professor Churton Collins published his scholarly and illuminating articles in *The Fortnightly Review*, in which he showed conclusively, as many think who are quite competent to judge, that the writer of the *Plays* and *Poems* of "Shakespeare" must have had large Latin certainly, and not improbably a fair amount of Greek as well. Thus does the whirligig of time bring its revenges, and thus do we see how dangerous it is to build castles upon the shifting sands of Shakespearean controversy.

But since it has now been generally recognized that Professor Churton Collins's main contention is established by a careful consideration of "the works themselves," even although some may think that all his conclusions are not justified, a new school of opinion has arisen, or, perhaps, I should rather say, has come to life once more, with regard to the learning of Shakespeare, which actually holds that the immortal poet, the myriad-minded man, the great philosopher of human nature, the great teacher whose sayings are applicable "to all the needful uses of our lives"—I say this school actually holds of him that he was a highly cultured, a well-educated, and, indeed, a learned man! Well, perhaps the proposition, when it comes to be considered, will not be found an extravagant one after all.

But this being so, it is obviously necessary, on the time-honoured assumption that Shakspere the player is identical with Shakespeare the poet, that we should remodel our ideas concerning the schooling and education of the man whom Dr. Garnett thought himself justified in styling, in his early days, "a Stratford rustic." For this purpose it is, further, obviously necessary that we should make the following assumptions: (1) The curriculum and the instruction given at the Free Grammar School of Stratford was on a par with those of the very best schools in England at the time; (2) the masters must have been distinguished University scholars, and thoroughly competent to teach; (3) Shakspere must have attended the school at a very early age, let us say "seven"; (4) he must, even though by nature a stupendous genius, have applied himself to his lessons with a certain amount of assiduity; (5) he must have remained in attendance at the school for a sufficient number of years to have enabled him to reach the highest classes; (6) with this object, therefore (even though it may have been conclusively shown that Rowe spake no less than truth concerning his father's financial difficulties and need of assistance), we must discard as worthless the hitherto accepted tradition that Shakspere was removed from school at the age of thirteen.

all these assumptions are by no means necessary to the theory.

These necessary propositions are now accepted and maintained by that school of the "orthodox" which founds itself upon "the works themselves," putting aside, as a *quantité négligeable*, the testimony of the old note-collectors, memoir-writers, and biographers. For myself, I welcome this new school; but, verily, those who join it must beware. They are on the slippery slopes of rationalistic thought! One step more and they may find themselves among the "heretics."

I have, however, neither time, space, nor inclination to enter once more upon the vexed question of the learning of Shakespeare. My object, for the moment, is to consider some observations made by my friend, Mr. A. F. Leach, and published in the *Victoria History of Warwickshire*, relating to the masters of the Stratford Grammar School from 1569 to 1578. Mr. Leach is an authority upon old English Grammar Schools, and I regret that I had not seen his remarks concerning Shakspere's schooling before I published *The Shakespeare Problem Restated.*

I will first consider his observations upon the three Stratford schoolmasters, whose names we know so well, viz. Roche, Hunt, and Jenkins, premising that the period which it is important for our purposes to have regard to, is that between the years 1571 and 1577; for if Shakspere was sent to school at the very early age of seven (as is so frequently assumed), he commenced there at the former date; and if he was taken away at thirteen, as most of the biographers have hitherto thought probable, he left at the latter date. Of course it cannot be *proved* that he left school so early, but then it cannot be *proved* that he went to school at all, whether at Stratford or elsewhere.

The question then arises, Under what master, or masters, is it probable that Shakspere received such instruction as may be assumed to have been given to him at the Stratford School? Upon this matter Mr. Leach writes as follows (*op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 335): "In 1569 we find a new master, the account rendered 27 January, 1569–70, showing 'paid to Mr. Acton the scolemaster for his wages £20.' This Acton was, *no doubt*,[1] Thomas Acton, student of Christ Church, Oxford, B.A., 14 November, 1558, and M.A. 26 June, 1562. In 1571 he had gone, for we find the item 'Paid to Mr. Roche the scholemaster £20,' under 12 January, 1572. *He may have been* Walter Roche, of Corpus Christi College; Fellow 1558, B.A. 1 June, 1559, and *presumably* M.A. in 1562. Since William Shakespeare was born in 1564, and probably went to the Grammar School at seven or eight, Mr. Walter Roche may with great probability be claimed as the poet's first schoolmaster; but only while he was being initiated into the first elements among the 'petties.' For in 1573 another master

[1] When we read "no doubt" in Shakespearean biography, it generally means that there is much doubt. But as Shakspere is not alleged by anybody to have been under Mr. Acton, we need not inquire further as to this worthy.

had come, a 'Mr. Hunt,' as appears from the accounts rendered 17 February, 1573-4. He was *probably* George Hunt, a Merchant Taylors' School boy in 1565, who matriculated at Magdalen College, Oxford, in 1571, was a demy there in 1572-5, took his B.A. degree on 27 April, 1573, and became a fellow in 1575. *It is not unlikely* that he spent at Stratford the two years between his graduation and election to a fellowship. In 1575 he had left, the accounts rendered 14 March, 1575-6, showing 'paid to the serjeantes for a schole master that came from Warwick, 3s.,' probably expenses connected with his coming to be interviewed. *Mr. Hunt's successor must remain unidentified*, for unfortunately we do not know who was the master at Warwick at this time. The next master at Stratford mentioned by name is 'Mr. Jenkins,' who, according to the accounts, received 16 January, 1578-9, 'for his half-yeres wages £10,' so that he probably came at Lady Day, 1578. The next year's account shows 'to Mr. Jenkins scolemaster £15,' and 'to Mr. Cottam £6.' The payment to Cottam suggests a change of mastership, which is confirmed by an entry in the Worcester Episcopal Register, on 28 September, 1579: 'There issued a license to teach boys (licentia erudiendi pueros) in the town of Stratford to John Cottam.'"[1]

[1] The italics in the above quotation are mine.

These, therefore, are the dates, so far as they can be approximately fixed, of the Stratford masters during the period in question :—

1571. Roche.
1573. Hunt.
1574–5. An anonymous master from Warwick.
1578. Jenkins.
1579. Cottam.

Now what do we know of these masters? They are sometimes spoken of as though they were undoubtedly scholars of distinction. Thus Mrs. Stopes (*Shakespeare's Warwickshire Contemporaries*, p. 243) has this note regarding the first-mentioned: "Walter Roche, Mat. Corpus, 16th February, 1554–5; Lanc. Fellow, 1558; B.A. 1559," as though all these were ascertained facts. Mr. Leach, however, very properly tells us that this Roche "*may have been* Walter Roche of Corpus Christi College." Such a regard for accuracy is as welcome as it is rare where Shakespearean biography is concerned. Roche stayed a very short time at the school; indeed, the position of master at Stratford Free Grammar School just at that period does not seem to have been a very attractive one if we may judge by the "*va et vient*" of masters. Five in eight years! In any case Roche could have seen little of Shakspere at the school (supposing he went there), but he seems to have lived on at Stratford after he had ceased to be master, and in 1573 we find him, when Shakspere's father was witness to the conveyance of a piece of land near the supposed "Birthplace," writing John Shakspere's name as "John Shaxbere."[1] Well, the ex-master of the Grammar School, at any rate, ought to have known how John Shakspere liked his name to be spelt.

Then we come to Hunt, who is sometimes cited as Shakspere's master *par excellence.* Who was he? Mr. Leach says he was "*probably* George Hunt, a Merchant Taylors' School boy in 1565," etc., etc. Unfortunately Mr. Leach himself is not proof against the perverting though seductive influence which continually leads "Shakespearean" biographers to convert possibilities into certainties; for, later on, at page 43, we are told of this Hunt that he "was an *alumnus* of the school (Merchant Taylors') which produced Edmund Spenser, and of the college (Magdalen, Oxford) which produced Wolsey and Lilly of St. Paul's." So what was before merely "probable" has now become an actual fact, *more Stratfordiano!* But how little certainty there is about all this may be seen by a reference to Mrs. Stopes's work, where we are told of this man Hunt that "all writers on the subject call him 'Thomas,' for which there

[1] Halliwell-Phillipps, Vol. II., p. 232.

surely must have been some reason," and she cites Halliwell-Phillipps, who writes "that 'Thomas Hunt,' who had been one of the masters of the Stratford Grammar School during the poet's boyhood, is noted as having been curate of Luddington in 1584, in which year he was suspended for open contumacy" (with reference to *Outlines*, II, 364, note 299). Mrs. Stopes herself, however, argues for a *Simon* Hunt, of whom she gives various particulars. Then there was, as she tells us in a note, another man of this name who became B.A., Oxford, 1566, and M.A., 1569–70. Mr. Leach's Hunt, it may be remembered, was "George." So that clearly there is a large latitude of choice! Mr. Leach's Hunt, it may be noted in passing, did not take his B.A. degree till April, 1573, so that if he was the man who was at Stratford as master in February of that year he must have come as an undergraduate. But it is obvious that all this is mere matter of guesswork, and that, as we cannot really identify either Roche or Hunt, we cannot have the least idea of what their scholastic attainments may have been.

The next master is anonymous, and therefore we can assume anything that we choose concerning him. We might say, for instance, that "doubtless" he was a fine scholar, a Fellow of some college at Oxford or Cambridge, and a most successful teacher, by whose careful instruction Shakspere "doubtless" benefited. On the other hand, it is open to us to postulate an entirely incompetent pedagogue, hardly qualified to give their first lessons in "*hig*, *hag*, *hog*" to the sons of the butchers, and glovers, and tanners, and woolstaplers of Stratford. As with Thomas (or George or Simon) Hunt, it is clearly a case in which "you pay your money and you take your choice."

As for Jenkins and Cottam, *alias* Colby, *alias* Cotton (see Stopes, p. 245) we really need not stop to inquire further about them, for, I take it, it is pretty certain that Shakspere had left the school (always assuming that he went there) by 1578. Mrs. Stopes cites an entry in the accounts which I do not find in Mr. Leach's history of the school, viz. in 1578, "Paid to Sir Higges Schoolmaster, £10; *Item*, to Mr. Jenkins schoolmaster his half-year's wages, £10"; and on the 16th of January following, says Mrs. Stopes, Jenkins has the other £10, the master's "wages" at this time being £20. There seems, therefore, to have been a "Sir Higges" together with Jenkins in 1578, as well as a "Cottam"[1] in 1579. Mrs.

[1] This Cotton or Cottam is a mysterious personage. Mrs. Stopes cites him as being at the school with Jenkins in 1579. In Mr. Leach's pages (p. 337) he reappears with a Mr. Aspinall in 1582. Who was he? Nobody seems to know.

Stopes thinks that this man, Jenkins, was not popular, and so did not stay long (but none of them did!), and it has "occurred" to her that possibly "he had a strong Welsh accent which the burgesses did not like, and which may have struck one of his pupils so powerfully that he reproduced it in 'Sir Hugh Evans.'" Here, then, is strong evidence to prove that Shakspere remained at school beyond the age of thirteen; that he was under Thomas Jenkins, who spoke with a villainous Welsh accent, and who reappears as "Sir Hugh Evans"! What more can we possibly want to identify the player with the poet? Only give Thomas Jenkins a Welsh accent to order, and assume that Shakspere wrote a caricature of him, and the thing is done. But that is not all. Mr. Leach finds further evidence of identification still. "It is hard not to believe," he writes (p. 336), "that poor Mr. Hunt [he does not specify whether 'Thomas,' or 'George,' or 'Simon'] was the original of Holofernes. Is not his very name suggested when Holofernes enters talking of a *hunt,* 'very reverend sport truly'? He is presented as a prig and pedant of the most pronounced type." This is magnificent. We have now got both Mr. Jenkins[1] and Mr. Thomas

[1] I presume Mrs. Stopes means Jenkins, though at first I thought she referred to "Sir Higges." Why should not "Sir Higges" be caricatured as "Sir Hugh?" Who *was* "Sir Higges," anyway?

(or Mr. George, or Mr. Simon) Hunt reproduced in Shakespeare's plays. True it is that, not having the ghost of an idea who "poor Mr. Hunt" was, we have no evidence whatever to show that he was, in fact, a prig "of a pronounced," or, indeed, any type, nor have we a scrap of evidence that Jenkins spoke with a Welsh accent. But clearly "poor Hunt" *might* have been a prig; therefore "doubtless" he was so. And Holofernes talks about "a *hunt!*" This must surely be conclusive! This is sane, sober, reasonable evidence, such as must appeal to every man of sense. How different from the wild guesses and imaginative futilities of the heretical fanatics! And in this manner the chain of proof

> Might, odds-bobs, sir! in judicious hands,
> Extend from here to Mesopotamy![1]

[1] Nathaniel, the curate in *Love's Labour's Lost*, says to Holofernes: "Sir, I praise the Lord for you and so may my parishioners; for their sons are well tutored by you, and their daughters profit very greatly under you; you are a good member of the commonwealth." To this my friend Mr. Leach appends a very quaint note. "Are we to infer," he writes, "that the Stratford School in Shakespeare's time was *co-educational?* or is the reference to daughters, like the question, 'do you not educate youth at the charge-house on the top of the mountain? or *mons*, the hill?' introduced to put us off the scent and prevent us from supposing that the writer is hinting at the Free Grammar School of Stratford for boys only in the flattest part of the town?" I say nothing as to the very subtle suggestion that Shakespeare intended to "put us off the scent," but as to the idea that

But, to adopt the late Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman's historic expression, "Enough of this foolery!" Let us return to Shakspere's supposed schooldays, and to a consideration of the sort of instruction which he may, with any show of reason, be assumed to have received at the Free Grammar School.

I have shown that we can argue nothing from the supposed qualifications of the Stratford schoolmasters, because we really know nothing whatever about them. But those who, following Professor Churton Collins, have adopted the very reasonable belief that Shakespeare of the *plays* and *poems* must have had a good classical education, and certainly a very large supply of Latin, argue that there is no reason at all to believe

Nathaniel's reference to the "daughters" might indicate the existence of a "co-educational" school at Stratford, I can only say that if Mr. Leach had read a page or two of Rabelais before writing his note he would not, I think, have made such a curious comment upon this well-known passage. Nor is "the profession of the pedagogue himself" (Act IV, sc. ii, 80), which Mr. Leach thinks "not free from ambiguity," by any means puzzling when read in the same light. I can only compare with this ingenuous comment Mr. Robert Bridges's criticism on Malvolio's remark when he picks up Maria's letter, as to which see my book at page 15, note 2. Professor Gollancz, by the way, tells us that "the name Holofernes was possibly derived from Rabelais, for "Tubal Holophernes taught Gargantua his A B C." Moreover, "in his general characteristics, he resembles Rombus, the schoolmaster, in Sidney's *The Lady of the May.*" But perhaps Sidney also was caricaturing "poor Hunt!"

that Shakspere could not have attained all this learning and culture at the Stratford Grammar School. As I have said, they, of course, reject all tradition, and throw Rowe and the "ancient witnesses" to the winds. In the first place they keep Shakspere at school till the age of sixteen or eighteen. "The assumption," writes Mr. Leach, "that he left school at thirteen, i.e. in 1575, has no evidence to support it." Well, it has, at any rate, as good evidence as there is for any other of the alleged facts of Shakspere's life, and much better evidence than can be produced in support of most of such alleged facts. Rowe records it, having got it, as we are told, from Betterton; and it happens, as Mr. Halliwell-Phillipps remarked, to have received strong corroboration from records which show that John Shakspere, whose financial difficulties are mentioned by Rowe as the cause of Shakspere's being prematurely taken from school, was actually in embarrassed circumstances at that time. But, of course, if we are prepared either to abandon tradition, or to accept it at our own sweet will, as it may suit the exigencies of the case, the task of the "Shakespearean" biographer is infinitely simplified.

Then, again, we are told (and Mr. Leach is one of those who so contends) that the *curriculum* at the Grammar School may have been of an extremely advanced kind. We are told to look at Ipswich, and Rotherham, and Warwick, for example. Yes, but we have not a jot or tittle of evidence to prove what is so quietly assumed, viz. that the instruction given at the Free School of Stratford-on-Avon was on a par with that given at the very best schools in England at that time. I conceive it to be far more probable that it was a long way below that level; that the instruction given was of an inferior kind (though doubtless thought good enough for the little Stratford rustics); and that Shakspere, in any case, did not stay long enough at the school to make the most, or anything like the most, of such instruction as was, in fact, provided.

Again, if Shakspere was crammed with Latin at the school, as the disciples of this school of Shakespearean hypothesis assume; if it be true, as Professor Churton Collins claimed to have proved, "that so far from Shakespeare having no pretension to classical scholarship, he could almost certainly read Latin with as much facility as a cultivated Englishman of our own time reads French; that with some at least of the principal Latin classics he was intimately acquainted; that through the Latin language he had access to the Greek classics; and that of the Greek classics in the Latin versions he had, in all probability, a remarkably extensive knowledge"; then, surely,

? — and how does the c. E. of o. t. read F.?

it is only reasonable to believe that Shakspere (if he was, indeed, "Shakespeare") must have been not only an exceptionally clever boy, but that he must also have been an assiduous and industrious scholar. Yet all tradition, that is to say all the best evidence we have, would induce us to believe that the very contrary was the case.[1]

[1] A reviewer in *The Athenaeum*, quoting my words, "And yet there is no record or tradition of all this prodigious industry," confronts me with Webster's reference to "the right happy and copious *industry* of Master Shakespere" (*sic*). But I wrote of "the amount of reading which the lad Shakspere must have done, and assimilated, *during his brief sojourn at the Free School*" (p. 96), and I went on to say that "there is no record or tradition of all this prodigious industry," which is absolutely true. But what is it that Webster really says? In his dedication, prefixed to "The White Divel" (1612), he tells us that he has ever cherished a good opinion of other men's worthy labours. He refers to the works of Chapman, Johnson, Beaumont, and Fletcher, and then comes the passage referred to by the reviewer: "And lastly . . . the right happy and copious industry of M. Shake-speare [*sic*], M. Decker, and M. Heywood, wishing what I write may be read by their light. . . . non norunt Haec monumenta mori." Obviously Webster is alluding to the copious *works* of these various authors, just as we might now talk of the "copious industry" of Charles Dickens and George Eliot. I should be the last to deny "the happy and copious industry of M. Shake-speare"! Yet Mrs. Stopes (p. 11), who really ought to know better, cites these words in support of her theory (very charming, no doubt, but wholly imaginary) that Shakspere, when he came to London, "homeless and uncertain of a future, apprenticed to no trade [? as to the butcher's], educated to no profession, inheritor of no property . . . spent much time and study in Master Field's treasure house"—*industriously* working in the intervals of horse-holding and doing call-boy!

Note

But there are some further observations which must be made here. Mr. Leach writes: "However uncertain the identification of Shakespeare's masters may be, there is no uncertainty about his attitude towards school life and the profession. He never mentions school with anything but distaste, and never brings a schoolmaster on the stage except to hold him up to contempt and derision. . . . Shakespeare seems to have detested his schoolmasters as well as his schooling." In support of this we have references to various passages in the plays, and we have already seen how Mr. Leach and Mrs. Stopes, following some earlier commentators, assume that "poor Hunt" is caricatured in Holofernes, and Jenkins in Sir Hugh Evans.[1] Now, if this be so, Shakespeare

[1] Mr. Leach (*op. cit.*, p. 336) makes a very curious remark. "In Shakespeare's first play, *Love's Labour's Lost*," he writes, "*the scene of which is laid in his native woodland of Arden*, Holofernes, the school-master, is a principal character." It is hardly necessary to say that the forest of Arden does not appear in *Love's Labour's Lost*, but in *As You Like It!* Moreover, it is really futile to talk of "Arden" as "his native woodland," seeing that the play is founded on Lodge's *Rosalynde*, where we find that the banished king "lived as an outlaw in the forest of Arden," i.e. the Ardennes! Then Mr. Leach speaks of Grumio, in the *Taming of the Shrew*, coming from Petruchio's wedding "as willingly as e'er I came from school," as evidence of Shakespeare's dislike of schools generally; whereas it is merely a proverbial saying, as Steevens pointed out, and is to be found in Roy's collection. But if it be true that Shakspere "detested his schoolmasters as well as his schooling," it is in the highest degree improbable that he acquired much learning at the school.

must have had a very poor opinion indeed of his schoolmasters; he detested them, he caricatured them, and he held them up to ridicule on all possible occasions. Nevertheless, some of the critics entertain us very solemnly with appreciative accounts of the high degrees and scholarship of these Grammar School masters. But they cannot have it both ways. If these pedagogues were hopeless and ridiculous pedants, fitly represented by Holofernes and Sir Hugh Evans, they really cannot have been such masters as would have given the "Stratford rustic" such a good classical education as is now claimed for him, nor would he, surely, if such they were, viz. high-class university scholars, have so lampooned and ridiculed them. And Mr. Leach seems to have some appreciation of this—some apprehension that he may have gone too far—for, after giving us to understand that "poor Hunt" and Jenkins were insufferable prigs and pedants, and, in fact, *asses* of a very unhappy description, he, nevertheless, tells us that "whatever the deficiencies of Hunt or Jenkins may have been, they were at all events scholars enough to give Shakespeare, the son of a Stratford glover and butcher, as good an education as Ben Jonson, the mason or bricklayer, received at Westminster."

This is, indeed, an amazing statement. As to the legend that Jonson was "a mason or bricklayer," I have dealt with it at page 75 of my book, where I have quoted John Addington Symons on the education which Jonson received at the best school in England of his day (see, too, pp. 11 and 12). Jonson, as we know, was a special protégé of Camden's, the great Westminster master, of whom he wrote,

> Camden! Most reverend head, to whom I owe
> All that I am in arts, all that I know.

But, says Mr. Leach, the prigs and pedants of Stratford doubtless gave Shakspere just as good an education as Jonson received at Westminster. And how did Shakspere reward them? Did he, like Jonson, write appreciatory odes, inspired by good feeling and good taste, to express his gratitude to his masters for all they had done for him? Not he. He holds them up to the derision of all ages—to the scorn of all generations! What a delightful and attractive idol the Stratfordians have set up! But here, as usual, we have only to set the *bacilli* of one half of the argument together with the *streptococci* of the other half, and it will be found that they very quickly destroy one another.

And here I am well content to leave this matter of Shakspere's schooling. That the young man from Stratford, who came to London about 1587, composed, about 1588 (Fleay's *Life*, p. 103), or at all, for the matter of that, that extraordinary play *Love's Labour's Lost*, seems to me more deliriously improbable than any of the "curious myths of the Middle Ages"; neither is there the slightest ground for supposing that Shakespeare, in any of his plays, makes any reference whatever to the Stratford Grammar School.

A PERSONAL NOTE

ONE charge of a personal nature which has been brought against me has, I must confess, caused me some annoyance. It was first made, so far as I know, by a critic in *The Academy* (June 20th, 1908), but it has been repeated by Canon Beeching, not, indeed, in his "Reply," but in a letter to Mr. R. M. Theobald, a well-known "Baconian," which has since been published in the pages of *Baconiana*, Jan. 1909. Canon Beeching, in connexion with this charge, thinks well to apply to me an opprobrious epithet, in pursuance, I presume, of that prescriptive right to employ strong language which, as the late Professor Huxley used to tell us, is always claimed by the theologians. The charge is, in the words of the *Academy* reviewer, that I have "stooped to taunt a well-known opponent with his Semitic origin"; in other words, that I have actually taunted a distinguished man of letters with being a Jew.

That charge I repudiate most emphatically, and with no little indignation. In my opinion to taunt a man with his racial origin (whatever his race may be) is not only to descend to a very low level of controversy, but also to be guilty of a flagrant absurdity. One might just as well make it a subject of reproach against a man that he has been born at all, as to reproach him with the fact that he has been born of parents of a particular race.

How, then, has it come to pass that this charge has been brought against me, and upon what basis is it supposed to rest?

In criticising Mr. Sidney Lee's *Life of Shakespeare* I have called attention to the exuberant use which the biographer has made of the convenient adverb "doubtless," to buttress up assumptions concerning Shakspere's life which have no evidence to support them; but finding it opportune to enlist the services of that useful adverb myself, I wrote, in parenthesis, "I thank thee, Jew, for teaching me that word!" I set down this most appropriate Shakespearean quotation as it occurred to me, *currente calamo*. I should have made use of it, in this collocation, whoever might have been the subject of my observations, whether Jew or Gentile. Had I been in controversy with a Greek, and had the words run "I thank thee, Greek, for teaching me that word," I should have quoted them, in a similar manner, without the least idea of taunting my opponent with his race. Nor did I for a moment conceive that any such foolish and unworthy reproach would have been supposed to lie under my quotation of Gratiano's words with reference to my own use of Mr. Lee's favourite expression. Indeed, I am at a loss to see where taunt or reproach can possibly come in, nor can I believe that Mr. Lee himself, if he has done me the honour to read the passage in question, can have seen therein anything of the kind. Had such there been I would have most unreservedly apologised; but I can make no apology for an offence which exists only in the perverse imagination of one or two of my critics, and of which my many Jewish friends will know that I could never be guilty. Indeed, I think, "Save me from my friends" will have been Mr. Lee's own comment, if he has given a single thought to this foolish accusation which has been brought against me. But, it will be said, there is more yet. Have you not, on page x of your Preface, alluded to the fact that Mr. Lee dropped two *praenomina* in order to assume the one by which he is now known? Certainly I have done so, and if I thought there was anything in the least degree discreditable in the mere fact of a man's changing his name, I should both feel and express great regret for having mentioned a matter which might give pain. But I have never heard it for one moment suggested that a change of name, such as this, can possibly be made the subject of reproach. A friend of mine has dropped, not the *praenomen*, but the surname by which I originally knew him, in order to assume one which is borne by an ancient and noble family; and so far from this being made a reproach against him, he has since received the honour of knighthood! Can it, then, be seriously suggested that if a man does this very innocent thing, viz. the dropping of two *praenomina*, and the assumption of a new one in their place, no writer must ever make allusion to the fact? That, surely, can hardly be maintained. My own reference was of an entirely innocent nature, and was made in explanation of the fact that I had been a "puzzled investigator" in the pages of the *Oxford Calendar* of 1883. That there is here, or was intended to be, any unworthy "taunt" of the kind suggested, I absolutely deny. I can assure those critics who have fastened upon these two passages with such avidity, that to one who holds the opinions which I hold, both as to matters of race and as to matters of faith, the suggestion that reproach can be found in a "Semitic origin" is not a little ridiculous. To make such a suggestion would be entirely foreign to my principles and convictions.

I greatly regret that such matter of offence should have been read into any words of mine; but repeat that it exists only in the imagination of those who seem determined "chercher midi à quatorze heures." If they, by the interpretation which they have insisted on putting upon these words, have caused a moment's annoyance to a distinguished writer, of whom I trust I shall always speak with the respect to which his position in the world of letters entitles him, I can only say that I regret that most of all.

In conclusion, perhaps I may be allowed to say a last word as to my own position. A reviewer in *The Times* (Literary Supplement, January 7th, 1909), whose general courtesy and fairness I gratefully acknowledge, has, nevertheless, seen fit to style me "a rank Baconian." Now, as I have expressly disavowed this position, and as this is a matter peculiarly within my own knowledge, it is obvious that either my critic must attribute to me the deliberate making of a false statement, or that he had not read my Preface. In fairness to him, I prefer to adopt the latter alternative. As a simple matter of fact I am, in my present state of knowledge, entirely "agnostic" upon the question whether Bacon had any, and if so what, share in the composition of the plays which were published collectively, in 1623, as the works of "Shakespeare," but to which it is, as I conceive, beyond question that many pens had contributed, although one writer, undoubtedly, stands preeminent among them; "insignis ingreditur, victorque viros supereminet omnes."

Note.

But if I were to be asked whether do I think it more probable that Francis Bacon or the Stratford player wrote, say, *Venus and Adonis*, or *Love's Labour's Lost*, or the *Sonnets*, I should have no difficulty whatever in answering the question. I should find no difficulty whatever in conceiving that Bacon, who certainly wrote poetry in his youth (Waller, in the epistle dedicatory prefixed to his poems, in 1645, joins him with Sir Philip Sidney as one of the "nightingales" who sang in the spring-time of their lives), might have been the author of the poems or the play; whereas it is, to my mind, simply impossible to entertain the idea that these wondrous works emanated from "William of Stratford." *That* seems to me one of those beliefs which are generally accepted only because they have been handed down to us; because Time has clothed them in the livery of apparent respectability; and which "atavism" alone supports. On the other hand, to *believe* that Bacon was the author, without cogent evidence to that effect, would be ridiculous. I must be content, therefore, in this as in many other matters, and however unsatisfactory the position may be, to rest in agnosticism—at any rate until more light is shed upon "the Shakespeare Problem."

Note

THE END

THE SHAKESPEARE PROBLEM RESTATED

By GEORGE G. GREENWOOD, M.P.

PRESS OPINIONS (continued)

way in which the matter is set forth, and some new matter, the demonstration, for instance, on legal grounds of the baselessness of the poaching story, is, so far as I am aware, new in its entirety. It is a lawyer's contribution, such, perhaps, as only a lawyer could make. But the book is also the work of a scholar, and cannot possibly be set aside as the production of ignorance or fanaticism."

Sunday Times.—"Mr. Greenwood has exposed the weaknesses of the 'Stratfordian' position with splendid lucidity and cogency."

Manchester Guardian.—"His book is so strong that merely to call it the ablest extant argument against the identity of the Stratford-born actor with the author of the poems and plays does not give the full measure of its strength."

Nation.—"We would recommend all who care for Elizabethan literature to acquire it and read 'The Shakespeare Problem Restated.' For Mr. Greenwood is no faddist. . . . He gives evidence of a wide and close study, a critical temper, and a general mastery of his subject which may not carry conviction but must at least compel attention. Indeed, we doubt whether the case has ever been stated more persuasively or with greater force. . . . Mr. Greenwood has produced a carefully reasoned, scholarly, and interesting book."

Literary World.—"Mr. Greenwood's handling of the problem is very keen, and his book is bound to tell. . . . Mr. Greenwood's book is from first to last of absorbing interest."

Liverpool Courier.—"A serviceable book of incalculable value to a reader who wishes to become an expert on the Shakespeare problem, and most assuredly he has spoiled the complacency with which so many have held the old traditional faith."

Bookman.—"It is a book which cannot by any possibility be ignored. It is not based upon assertion but upon argument. It hits hard at accredited 'Stratfordian pundits.'"

1910

If Scene referred to Sh as S-scene
obviously be pronounced Shakespeare,
not Shaxpere.