the companion sonnet as "a maid of Dian's." Who is meant? I cannot doubt that this "fairest votary" is the same as "the Imperial votaress" of the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, against whom "Cupid's fiery shaft" was launched in vain, being "quench'd in the chaste beams of the watery moon"; and we all remember the famous portrait of Elizabeth as Diana with the crescent moon on her brow. But my interpretation goes further. In Sonnet 153 this "maid of Dian's" steeps the "love-kindling fire,"

> In a cold valley fountain of that ground;
> Which borrowed from this holy fire of Love
> A dateless lively heat, still to endure,
> *And grew a seething bath, which yet men prove*
> *Against strange maladies a sovereign cure.*
> But at my mistress' eye Love's brand new-fired,
> The boy for trial needs would touch my breast;
> I, sick withal, *the help of bath desired*,
> *And thither hied*, a sad distempered guest,
> But found no cure; the bath for my help lies
> Where Cupid got new fire, my mistress' eyes.

Note "I . . . thither hied." Whither? Surely here is an allusion to the city of Bath, popular in Elizabethan times as "against strange maladies a sovereign cure." Similarly we have in Sonnet 154:—

> This brand she quenched in a cool well hard by,
> Which from Love's fire took heat perpetual,
> Growing a bath and healthful remedy
> For men diseased; but I, my mistress' thrall,
> *Came there for cure.*

When this thought struck me I at once referred to the "Third Variorum" to see if any of the commentators had suggested an allusion to the city of Bath, and I found that Steevens, one of the acutest of critics, had done so. Here, then, I believe, we have an allusion to the poet's "Mistress," the Virgin Queen, and to the city of Bath. Now Elizabeth, as we know from Nichol's *Progresses* (Vol. III, p. 250), and other sources, was at Bath in 1592, and, as Nichol's Editor observes, had evidently been there previously. He quotes a letter without date, but published in 1596, addressed probably to Lord Burleigh, which speaks of Bath

as "a place resorted unto so greatly, being at two times of the yeare as it were the pilgrimage of health to all saints," which reminds us of the words of the sonnet, "which yet men prove against strange maladies a sovereign cure." Was Shakspere at Bath with the Queen? I think it probable that "Shakespeare" was; and thus, perchance, he came to write a paraphrase of a Greek epigram, and so to gain a place, among other scholars, in Dr. Wellesley's *Anthologia*. Possibly he had found that "as for appetite, the waters of Parnassus are not like the waters of the Spaw," as one wrote to Essex in 1594!

It is rather curious, by the way, to find that Bath was celebrated not only as a health resort, but as a favoured abode of the Muses—that its springs were not only famed for healing virtue but as "Pierian waters," and that there were Swans of that Avon also! Thus in *The New Bath Guide*, printed for J. Dodsley in Pall Mall, 1772, I note the following lines:—

> Sweet are yon hills that crown this fertile vale!
> Ye genial springs, Pierian waters, hail!
> Hail woods and lawns! Yes—oft I'll tread
> Yon pine-clad mountain's side,
> Oft trace the gay enamell'd mead
> Where *Avon* rolls his pride.
> Sure next to fair Castalia's streams,
> And Pindus' flowery path,
> Apollo most the springs esteems,
> And verdant meads of *Bath*.

Mr. Elton (p. 241) says: "The Sonnets in question show a real knowledge of the virtues of the 'Bathonian King's Bath.'"

CHAPTER V

"TITUS" AND THE TRILOGY

WE have seen how hopeless is the disagreement of the Stratfordians as to such questions as the following: "Was Shakespeare a man of learning and culture?" "Did he travel in foreign countries?" etc.; and I have suggested that the answer to such questions must be an emphatic "yes" in the case of Shakespeare, and an emphatic "no" in the case of Shakspere. And now, before passing on to consider the few remaining facts that are known to us as to the life of Shakspere after he had come to London, it is necessary to examine another question, or rather two questions, with regard to which the Stratfordians are divided in a similar manner. Did Shakespeare write *Titus Andronicus?* Did he write the Trilogy of *Henry VI*, or any part of it?

It is necessary to consider these questions before going further, because they have a not unimportant bearing on the arguments of Mr. Collins and others in favour of a learned Shakespeare, which we have just considered.

I have indicated that in my judgment Mr. Collins's argument, taken as a whole, must command acceptance; but that proposition must be limited by the following qualification. So far as the argument is founded on passages culled from *Titus Andronicus* I cannot admit its validity, for I am firmly convinced that this play was not written by Shakespeare. Again, so far as the argument is based upon passages selected from the Trilogy of *Henry VI*

it must be looked upon with great suspicion, for, in my opinion, there is little or nothing of Shakespeare in *Henry VI*, Part 1, and although we may reasonably think that his work appears in some measure in Parts 2 and 3, yet, as I shall show, it is by no means easy to say with anything like certainty, what passages in those two plays are to be ascribed to the Master.[1]

I am aware, of course, that nobody but the literary pundit, or "the brilliant young man," is allowed to lay claim to the possession of "the literary sense," so I must not appeal to that sense in support of the assertion that no one adequately endowed therewith could contend that either *Andronicus* or *Henry VI* (Part 1, at any rate,) is the work of the Master Mind. Still I may, perhaps, venture to express my conviction that Shakespeare, the divine Magician, who by a touch of his magic wand was able to commute the commonest of clay into the purest of gold, has not exercised his enchantment in the production of these dramas. But, since my judgment on such a matter, as I am fully aware, carries no weight except for myself, I will seek to commend it to the reader by other arguments, which, happily, are not difficult to find.

Let us take *Andronicus* first. "That *Titus Andronicus* is Shakespeare's work," writes Mr. Collins, "is as certain as anything connected with him can be, external and internal evidence alike are conclusive as to its authencity."[2] If the truth of this proposition is "as certain as anything connected with him can be," I can only say that nothing connected with Shakespeare has any certainty at all. I have already more than once referred to Malone, who, in my judgment, was one of the ablest and acutest, as well as one of the most industrious, of Shakespearean critics. I am aware that it is the custom of some of our modern

[1] See *infra*, p. 151, and Note A at end of this chapter.
[2] *Fortnightly Review*, April, 1903, p. 629 n.

instructors to put aside Malone with a Podsnappian wave of the hand, but in my humble opinion it would be to their advantage if they would pay more attention to his writings. Of this I feel sure, that no one is adequately equipped for Shakespearean controversy who has not read and considered Malone's criticisms. Malone, too, has this great advantage at the present day, that he wrote before the question of the Shakespearean authorship had arisen, so that he was not biassed in his judgments by the thought of how they might affect the anti-Stratfordian heresy. He is unstirred by the passions aroused by the Baconian theory, and is under no apprehension lest his pronouncements should perchance be found to give a loophole for the arrows of the unorthodox.

Now Malone has devoted several pages of very able and instructive criticism to the question of the authorship of *Andronicus*, and thus sums up his final conclusion: "All these circumstances combined, prove with irresistible force that the play of Titus Andronicus has been erroneously ascribed to Shakespeare." So much for Mr. Collins's "certainty"! "As certain as anything connected with Shakespeare can be," quotha!

But now, as one *nullius addictus jurare in verba magistri*, I will set before the reader the reasons—or some of them—upon which Malone's judgment is based. (See his edition by Boswell, Vol. XXI, p. 557, and Vol. II, at p. 310.)

"To enter into a long disquisition," says he, "to prove this piece not to have been written by Shakspeare, would be an idle waste of time. To those who are not conversant with his writings, if particular passages were examined, more words would be necessary than the subject is worth; those who are well acquainted with his works cannot entertain a doubt on the question." This is, indeed, sad in view of Mr. Collins's enunciation of the very opposite certainty! "I will, however," adds Malone,

"mention one mode by which it may be easily ascertained. Let the reader only peruse a few lines of Appius and Virginia, Tancred and Gismund, The Battle of Alcazar, Jeronimo, Selimus Emperor of the Turks, The Wounds of Civil War, The Wars of Cyrus, Locrine, Arden of Feversham, King Edward I, the Spanish Tragedy, Selyman and Perseda, King Leir, the old King John, or any other of the pieces that were exhibited before the time of Shakspeare, and he will at once perceive that Titus Andronicus was coined in the same mint."

But this is by no means all. The play is one of great antiquity. It is mentioned in the induction to Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair*, in 1614, as one that had been exhibited "five and twenty or thirty years," which, if we take the lowest number, throws it back to the year 1589, and to 1584, if we take the highest.[1] "A booke entitled 'A Noble Roman Historie of Titus Andronicus'" was entered at Stationers' Hall, by John Danter, February 6th, 1593–4. "This," says Malone, "was undoubtedly the play, as it was printed in that year (according to Langbaine, who alone appears to have seen the first edition)[2] and acted by the servants of the Earls of Pembroke, Derby, and Sussex. It is observable that in the entry no author's name is mentioned, and that the play was originally performed by the same company of comedians who exhibited the old drama entitled The Contention of the Houses of York and Lancaster, the old Taming of a Shrew, and

[1] Jonson ranks together *Andronicus* and *Hieronymo* or *Jeronimo*, Kyd's sanguinary tragedy. "Professor Baker," writes Mr. Robertson, "is probably quite right in his conclusion that 'even as far back as 1585 the story of Titus had been staged,' though the phrase of Ben Jonson in *Bartholomew Fair*, making *Titus* and *Jeronimo* twenty-five or thirty years old in 1614, is a somewhat insecure basis for certainty." (*Did Shakespeare write Titus Andronicus?*" p. 220.) But as Mr. Robertson also says (p. 237), "Jonson's manner of reference to an early form of the play almost excludes the belief that he held it for Shakespeare's."

[2] A copy of the 1594 edition has recently been discovered. (See *Athenæum*, January 21, 1905.)

Marlowe's King Edward II, by whom not one of Shakespeare's Plays is said to have been performed. . . . Shakespeare's name is *not* in the title page of the edition printed in quarto in 1611, and therefore, we may conclude, was not in the title page of that in 1594, of which the other was undoubtedly a reimpression. . . . In short, the high antiquity of the piece, its entry on the Stationers' books, and being afterwards printed without the name of our author,[1] its being performed by the servants of Lord Pembroke (Shakespeare's plays having been acted by the Lord Chamberlain's or the Queen's or King's servants), the stately march of the versification, the whole colour of the composition, its resemblance to several of our most ancient dramas, the dissimilitude of the style from our author's undoubted compositions, and the tradition mentioned by Ravenscroft,[2] when some of his contemporaries had not been long dead (for Lowin and Taylor, two of his fellow-comedians, were alive a few years before the Restoration, and Sir John D'Avenant, who had himself written for the stage in 1626, did not die till April, 1668), all these circumstances combined, prove with irresistible force that the play of Titus Andronicus has been erroneously ascribed to Shakespeare."

But, then, it is objected that *Titus Andronicus* is mentioned by Francis Meres in his *Palladis Tamia* (1598) as being the work of Shakespeare. This, I take it, is the chief reason why our neo-Stratfordians are so anxious to make poor Shakespeare responsible for this repulsive play. For there is a curious idea that the fact that Meres mentions certain tragedies and comedies of Shakespeare, in the year 1598, is somehow evidence of the Stratfordian authorship. Meres, however, merely mentions the name of the reputed author of the plays which he

[1] The three editions of 1594, 1600, and 1611 were all printed *without* Shakespeare's name.

[2] As to which see below, p. 136 and n.

enumerates as "Shakespeare's." He supplies no evidence to connect the author with the Stratford Player. Howbeit, the Stratfordians, or some of them, are now extremely reluctant to admit (as did the old critics) that Meres must have made a mistake in his catalogue. For, if he was inaccurate or misinformed in this particular, why not in others also? Besides, there is a reason more cogent still. How about Heminge and Condell? Are we to confess that they admitted a spurious drama into the collection of 1623? Are we to cast doubts upon the sacred book? Are we to allow our faith to be undermined by such insidious beginnings? No, perish the thought! A fig for Malone! A fig for Hallam! A fig for all the old critics! A fig for evidence! That Shakespeare wrote *Andronicus* is as certain—as anything else about Shakespeare!

I will consider the first folio of 1623, and the circumstances in which it was published, later on. As to Meres, Malone writes as follows: "His *enumerating* this among Shakspeare's plays may be accounted for in the same way in which we may account for its being *printed* by his fellow-comedians in the first folio edition of his works. Meres was in 1598, when his book appeared, intimately connected with Drayton, and *probably* acquainted with some of the dramatick poets of the time, from some or other of whom he might have heard that Shakspeare interested himself about this tragedy, or had written a few lines for the author. The *internal evidence furnished by the piece itself*, and proving it not to have been the production of Shakspeare, greatly outweighs any single testimony on the other side. Meres might have been misinformed, or inconsiderately have given credit to the rumour of the day. For six of the plays which he has mentioned (exclusive of the evidence which the representation of the pieces themselves might have furnished), he had perhaps no better authority than the whisper of the theatre; for

they were not printed." And it is pointed out that he could not have been deceived by the title-page, since Shakespeare's name was not there.

The tradition mentioned by Ravenscroft (1686), to which allusion has been made, is as follows: "I have been told," says he (in his preface to an altered version of this play, published in 1687), "by some anciently conversant with the stage, that it was not originally his, but brought by a private author to be acted, and he only gave some master touches to one or two of the principal parts or characters."[1] This is the only warrant for the idea that Shakespeare might possibly have "written a few lines for the author," as Malone suggests; but I prefer to believe that Meres simply made a mistake when he ascribed this ghastly drama to Shakespeare. "*Titus Andronicus*," says Hallam,[2] "is now by common consent denied to be, in any sense, a production of Shakespeare; very few passages, I should think not one, resemble his manner." As to the mention of it by Meres, he says, "In criticism of all kinds, we must acquire a dogged habit of resisting testimony, when *res ipsa per se vociferatur to the contrary*."

If ever there was a case where *res ipsa per se vociferatur*, it is this of *Titus Andronicus*. Strange, then, is it not, to find Mr. Churton Collins appealing to *internal evidence* (save the mark!) to prove the "certainty" of Shakespeare's

[1] Mr. Collins is very contemptuous of this "miserable scribbler," and says he is entirely untrustworthy. If that is the case, there is one witness the less in favour of Shakespeare's having even a finger (as Messrs. Garnett and Gosse put it) in *Andronicus's* pie. Ravenscroft begins by saying, "I think it a greater theft to rob the dead of their praise than the living of their money. That I may not appear guilty of such a crime, 'tis necessary I should acquaint you that there is a play *in Mr. Shakespeare's volume* under the name of *Titus Andronicus*, from which I drew a part of this." He continues as in the text. It is certainly not necessary for those who maintain that *Titus* is not by Shakespeare to accept the truth of Ravenscroft's tradition, which, as Mr. J. M. Robertson writes, has no value "save as testifying to a current doubt, in 1672, of Shakespeare's authorship of *Titus*." (See *Did Shakespeare write "Titus Andronicus"?*, pp. 11–13.)

[2] *History of Literature*, Vol. II, p. 179 (1873).

authorship? Or, rather, would it not be strange in any field of literature outside the Shakespearean controversy? Of *that*, however, it may be said to be altogether characteristic.

Mr. Collins's "certainty" has also to face the opposition of Mr. Sidney Lee, who writes (p. 58): "The tragedy, a sanguinary picture of the decadence of Imperial Rome, contains powerful lines and situations, but is far too repulsive in plot and treatment, and too ostentatious in classical allusions, to take rank with Shakespeare's acknowledged work.[1] Ben Jonson credits *Titus Andronicus* with a popularity equalling Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy*, and internal evidence shows that Kyd was capable of writing much of Titus." We have seen, also, that Jonson couples *Titus Andronicus* with another play of Kyd's, viz. *Hieronymo*. For these and other reasons the learned Dr. Farmer was of opinion that Kyd was the author of this repulsive drama. Boswell, however, opined that it was the work of Marlowe, and I think there is something to be said for that theory. As Malone tells us (Vol. II, p. 311), "Marlowe's King Edward II and some other old plays were performed by the servants of the Earl of Pembroke, by whom not one of Shakespeare's undisputed dramas was exhibited." Now, one thing that strikes the reader of *Titus* is the peculiar way in which Latin quotations are brought in "neck and crop." Take, for instance, Act II, Scene 1, 133:—

Sit fas aut nefas . . . per Styga per manes vehor.[2]

Or Act IV, Scene 1, 81:—

Magni Dominator poli
Tam lentus audis scelera? tam lentus vides?

[1] It will be seen that Malone's arguments are much more thorough and convincing.

[2] *Manes* is evidently a misprint for *amnes*. The words of Seneca are *per Styga per amnes sequar*. This and the following quotation are both from Seneca's *Hippolytus*.

And, again, Act IV, Scene 2, 20, the well-known lines from Horace :—

Integer vitae, scelerisque purus
Non eget Mauri jaculis, nec arcu.

I think very few even of our neo-Stratfordians would contend that these quotations proceeded from the pen of Shakespeare. They are, however, quite in Marlowe's style. Take, for example, the play of *Edward II*, just mentioned as having been performed, as was *Titus*, by the Earl of Pembroke's servants. Here we have (Act IV, Scene 6) :—

Quem dies vidit veniens superbum
Hunc dies vidit fugiens jacentem.

This also is a quotation from Seneca (*The Thyestes.*)

In Act V (Scene 4, 69) we have a quotation from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, viz. :—

Major sum quam cui possit fortuna nocere.

See also lines 8, 61, and 63.

It is noticeable that the writer, whoever he was, who converted "The Second Part of the Contention of the Two Famous Houses of York and Lancaster" into the third part of *King Henry VI*, has put a quotation from Ovid (*Epistle from Phillis to Demophoon*) into the mouth of the dying Rutland, so that we have the following :—

Clifford: Thy father slew my father, therefore die.
(*Stabs him.*)
Rutland: *Di faciant laudis summa sit ista tuae!*
(*Dies.*)

Thus the poor boy expires with a Latin quotation and a pun (*Die, Di*) on his lips! The author of the old quarto was not guilty of this double atrocity, and we may, I think, be convinced that Shakespeare is equally innocent.

Thus had I written on Mr. Collins's note concerning *Titus Andronicus*, at p. 629 of his article in the *Fortnightly Review* for April, 1903, and before I had read his essay on

"Shakespearean Paradoxes" in his recently published *Studies in Shakespeare.* In the latter article Mr. Collins sets forth the grounds on which he would have us rehabilitate this rejected play. Mr. Collins is very indignant with that modern criticism which "seems to assume that to tell the truth is to thresh the straw; that anything which is new is better than anything which is true," and he quotes from M. Duruy: "If I had a device, it would be *The True, The True Only*, I would leave the beautiful and the good to settle matters afterwards as best they could." Herein I am heartily in agreement with Mr. Collins. Such criticism as that which he describes is abominable. But "Let the galled jade wince, our withers are unwrung." I am entirely conscious that I only seek the truth in this interesting Shakespearean problem. It is simply puerile on the part of Mr. Collins to ascribe to all those who disagree with him on these matters "indifference to evidence, to probability, to reason." Really, this sort of language should be reserved for the theologian when he is dealing with the "infidel." And to speak of those who have dared to impugn the authenticity of *Titus Andronicus* as "these iconoclasts" is simply fatuous. For who are numbered among "these iconoclasts"? Theobald, Johnson, Malone, Farmer, Steevens, Hallam, Hazlitt, Professor Dowden, Mr. Fleay, Dr. Furnivall, Dr. Garnett, nay, even Mr. Sidney Lee himself![1] Yet in the face of such a body of

[1] In his lecture on Plays Partly Written by Shakespeare, prefixed to Dr. Forshaw's *At Shakespeare's Shrine*, Dr. Garnett thus speaks of *Titus Andronicus*: "If Shakespeare wrote any part of *Titus Andronicus* and *Edward the Third*, he certainly did not write the whole . . . but his participation in either, though not impossible, is not as yet sufficiently demonstrated." "*Titus Andronicus*," observes Hazlitt, "is certainly as unlike Shakespeare's usual style as it is possible. It is an accumulation of vulgar physical horrors, in which the power exercised by the poet bears no proportion to the repugnance excited by the subject." Dr. Furnivall writes: "Only a few passages in *Titus* can be Shakspere's." (Preface to the First Quarto *Hamlet*). Mr. Collins appeals to the authority of Charles Knight, who argued in favour of the authenticity of *Titus*. But Knight is a broken reed to lean upon. An enthusiastic Shakespeariolater, he "went bald-

opinion as this Mr. Collins commits himself to the proposition that, "it may be said without reserve that, if Shakespeare was not the author of *Titus Andronicus*, there is an end to circumstantial testimony in literary questions; for *the evidence external and internal* is as conclusive as such evidence can be"![1]

I have shown that Malone finds that "*the evidence external and internal*" conclusively proves the very opposite. What says the celebrated Dr. Farmer? After observing that Shakespeare's name was not "on the title-page of the only edition published in his lifetime,"[2] he writes: "Indeed, *from every internal mark* I have not the least doubt but this horrible piece was originally written by the author of the lines thrown into the mouth of the Player in *Hamlet*, and of the Tragedy of *Locrine*; which, likewise, from some assistance perhaps given to his friend, hath been unjustly and ignorantly charged upon Shakespeare." What says

headed" in favour of the two parts of the *Contention* having been written by Shakespeare also. I verily believe that if the six additional plays (not to mention *Pericles*) published in the 1664 folio had been included in the collection of 1623, Knight would have maintained that these, too, were all the work of Shakespeare—and perhaps Mr. Collins would have been of the same opinion! "All the editors and critics," says Johnson, of *Andronicus*, "agree with Mr. Theobald in supposing this play spurious. I see no reason for differing from them." Johnson did not believe that Shakespeare wrote any part of the play, and alludes to "the total difference of conduct, language, and sentiment by which it stands apart from all the rest." Dr. Farmer makes merry with Capell's "new argument" that "it must have been written by Shakespeare, because at that time *other people* wrote in *the same manner!*" He adds, "Capell thought *Edward III* was Shakespeare's because *nobody* could write so, and *Titus Andronicus* because *everybody could*." (Compare Mr. Collins's argument subsequently referred to, p. 146.) M. Mason agreed that "Shakespeare had no hand in this abominable tragedy." These are some of Mr. Collins's "iconoclasts"!

[1] Mr. Collins has now found an ally in Professor Courthope, whose theories I deal with in Note B affixed to this chapter.

[2] The learned Farmer is astray here, for three editions of *Titus* were published in Shakspere's lifetime, viz., those of 1594, 1600, and 1611. None of them bore Shakespeare's name. I quote from Farmer's celebrated essay, republished in Nicol Smith's *Eighteenth Century Essays on Shakespeare*, p. 203.

that distinguished Shakespearean, Mr. Fleay? "That this play is not by Shakespeare is pretty certain from internal evidence." (*Life of Shakespeare*, p. 280.) "It was acted, as we know from *Henslowe's Diary*, by Shakespeare's own company," writes Mr. Collins. "Fortunately we know that it was produced by the Earl of Sussex's men, 23rd January, 1594, and Shakespeare belonged to Derby's (Lord Strange's)," writes Mr. Fleay.[1] Malone, too, as I have shown, points to the fact that this tragedy, with *The Contention*, the old *Taming of a Shrew*, and Marlowe's *Edward II*, was performed by a company (Lord Pembroke's), by whom none of his admitted plays were represented.

It must have been one of Shakespeare's very earliest dramas, says Mr. Collins, therefore "if it could be shown that the play could not have been produced, say, before 1593, however overwhelming may be the other evidence of its Shakespearean authorship, the whole case must fall to the ground." "*Titus Andronicus*," says Messrs. Garnett and Gosse, "although pre-Shakespearean in spirit, was probably founded upon *Titus and Vespasian*, a play produced in April, 1592, and was acted as a new play in January, 1594, when Shakespeare would have been incapable of work so exaggerated and inartistic." If this be so, Mr. Collins's "whole case must fall to the ground," but it is only right to remark that, if we accept the theory of Messrs. Garnett and Gosse, we must assume that the play referred to by Ben Jonson was another and older version of *Titus Andronicus*. "The problem," says Mr. Israel Gollancz, "is complicated by the fact that there must have been at least three plays on the subject, according to the

[1] Henslowe's *Diary*, under the date of January 22nd, 1593-4, mentions *Titus and Ondronicus* as "ne," i.e. "new" (though this *may* mean no more than "revised") and as originally played by Sussex's men. If *Titus* was really by Shakespeare, it is curious indeed that the diarist never mentions the dramatist's name. See *post*, chap. XII.

references in the Stationers' Registers, and Henslowe's *Diary*." All this might, at least, have taught Mr. Collins not to speak on the subject with such a pontifical air of *ex cathedra* dogmatism. But since he so readily accuses those who disagree with him with "indifference to evidence" and disregard of truth, let us see further what his own idea of "evidence" is. First, we have some singularly unconvincing parallels. Shakespeare wrote, "The quality of mercy is not strained. . . . It is an attribute of God Himself," etc., therefore he must have written the lines:—

> Wilt thou draw near the nature of the gods?
> Draw near them then in being merciful.

In *Titus* we find the line:—

> The hunt is up, the morn is bright and *grey*.

Now "*grey*," says Mr. Collins, "is Shakespeare's favourite and constantly repeated epithet for the morning and the morning sky." Yes, no doubt it is, and "the grey morn" and "the grey dawn" have been favourite expressions with a multitude of authors, including the writer of *Kathleen Mavourneen!* Aye, but here is an example. In Sonnet cxxxii Shakespeare writes of certain eyes that he loves, and which look with pretty ruth upon his pain,

> And truly not the morning sun of heaven
> Better becomes the *grey* cheeks of the east . . .
> As those two mourning eyes become thy face.

Now this comparison of the "mourning eyes," lighting up the face, to the "morning sun," lighting up the grey eastern sky, is a beautiful one. We have the same *contrast* in *Henry IV*, part 2, Act II, sc. 3, where we read of the glory of Percy that

> It stuck upon him as the *sun* in the *grey* vault of heaven.

How absolutely different is the expression "the morn is bright and grey"! In the sonnet Shakespeare alludes to

grey sky brightening as the morning sun shines upon it. The expression in the play almost amounts to a contradiction in terms. The grey morn is not *bright;* the *bright* morn is not *grey*. In the words of the old rhyme—it is the "morning grey" which is the "sure sign" of the fine bright day *to come*. It is the bright morning which so often turns to the grey cloudy day, as Shakespeare had himself noticed (see Sonnet xxxiii). Therefore it was, no doubt, that Hanmer suggested the reading "gay" instead of "grey." How commonplace! How unpoetical! Such, perhaps, will be the reader's comment. But is it so? That which is poetical must be true to Nature, and such is the description of a morning as "bright and gay." Anyhow, to argue from the sonnet to the authenticity of *Titus* seems to me little better than childish. If such proofs by parallels is to be admitted, the Baconian authorship of Shakespeare has been proved up to the hilt! But, nevertheless, Hanmer's emendation must be rejected, and the old reading "grey" retained, and the passage turns out to give strong confirmation to the theory that not Shakespeare but Peele was part author of *Titus*, for in Peele's *Old Wives' Tale* (l. 350) we have the very same expression, applied, not indeed to the "morn" but to the "welkin" or vault of heaven.

> The day is clear, the welkin bright and grey,
> The lark is merry and records her notes.

Then there are the lines in *Titus*:—

> She is a woman, therefore may be[1] woo'd,
> She is a woman, therefore may be won.

And in *1 Henry VI*, 5, 3:—

> She's beautiful and therefore to be woo'd;
> She is a woman, therefore to be won.

[1] Not "*to* be," as Mr. Collins misquotes it.

Yes, but as it seems perfectly clear that *1 Henry VI* is not by Shakespeare this parallel is not to the point. In fact, the parallels between *Titus* and *Henry VI* are strongly confirmatory of the theory that Marlowe had, at least, a share in the authorship, for we have similar parallels between *Henry VI* and *Edward II.* Thus, *Edward II*, Act I, Scene 4 :—

> He wears a lord's revenue on his back,

and *2 Henry VI*, Act I, Scene 3 :—

> She bears a duke's revenues on her back.

And, again, *Edward II*, Act II, Scene 2 :—

> The haughty Dane commands the narrow seas ;

and *3 Henry VI*, Act I, Scene 1 :—

> Stern Falconbridge commands the narrow seas.

Well may Mr. Verity say (notes to his edition of *Edward II*), "There are numerous similarities of diction between Marlowe's plays and the three parts of *Henry VI*, which support the view that he was in some way connected with the latter; as also with the two plays of *The Contention* and *The True Tragedie*, from which Parts 2 and 3 of *Henry VI* appear to have been recast. In *Titus Andronicus*, again, there are echoes of Marlowe."

Then there is another form of proof which consists in citing fine lines which must be indicative of the "masterly touch" of Shakespeare, just as if no one but Shakespeare in those times was capable of writing a fine line! Just as if "Marlowe's mighty line" was unknown to us![1]

Then there is the influence of Ovid in *Titus Andronicus.* Just as if Marlowe, also, was not saturated with Ovid!

[1] Messrs. Garnett and Gosse point out (Vol. II, p. 208) that not only does the play of *Titus Andronicus* bear upon it the impress of Marlowe, but also that though the "choicest passages" might be worthy of Shakespeare, the style is different from his.

But there is another proof still. It is to be found in Shakespeare's well-known "fondness for legal phraseology, and his profuse employment of it is so marked that its absence would be almost conclusive against the authenticity of a work attributed to him." But *Titus Andronicus*, we are told, "will sustain the test." In proof of which, Mr. Collins gravely puts forth such expressions as the following :— [1]

"*Affy* in thy uprightness," "True nobility *warrants* these words," "*Suum cuique* is our Roman justice," "The Prince in justice *seizeth* but his own." Why "*seizeth*" here should be italicised as a legal expression I cannot conceive. Is it because Mr. Collins is thinking of the legal "livery of seisin"? Is it to be seriously contended that wherever the word "seize" is used we have a legal expression? We have other instances of this fancied "legal phraseology" equally ridiculous, such as "will *doom* her death"!

"There is nothing so dangerous," said Lord Campbell (and he is quoted by Mr. Collins), "as for one not of the craft to tamper with our free-masonry." A very true remark—a layman "laying down the law" concerning legal phraseology is sadly apt to talk nonsense. What says Mr. Castle, K.C., (who really does know something about law)? "Whatever reason there is for thinking that it [*Titus*] was not the work of Shakespeare, there is still greater reason for thinking it could not be the work of any lawyer, especially of one who has shown such accurate knowledge as we find in Shakespeare's other plays. . . . In fact, it [this play] seems to do everything that a lawyer would not do, and leave undone everything that he would." Again, "Anyone has only to see how differently the arrest and trial of a prisoner is treated in *Measure for Measure* or in *Henry the Fifth* where the three conspirators are

[1] The italics are Mr. Collins's.

arrested for treason in due form, and then compare these plays with the stuff given in *Titus Andronicus*, to at once see that the former plays show a knowledge of law and legal procedure, whilst the latter is the work of one who is remarkably ignorant of both." It is the very play which "most conspicuously displays his ignorance of law and want of legal training."

It seems a waste of time to pursue Mr. Collins's curious arguments any further. He would, of course, settle the question by his usual epithet. All who venture to disagree with him (and as we have seen, their name is legion and their authority great) will be dismissed as "ignorant," "absurd," "indifferent to evidence," etc. But there is just one other specimen of Mr. Collins's controversial methods to which I must call attention. Shakespeare, says Mr. Collins, "was eminently a man of business, and he followed at first, with timid servility, the fashion." Now let us apply this to *Titus Andronicus*. "He [Shakespeare to wit] had probably never written blank verse before, so he took that of Marlowe, Greene, and Peele as his models, and with what success he has imitated that blank verse may be judged from the fact that the drama has been attributed to those poets"!

This is exquisite. The critics have seen Marlowe, Greene, and Peele, one or all, in *Titus*, and it has been contended that one of these writers, or two, or all of them conjointly, was, or were, responsible for it. Not so, says Mr. Collins: the fact that the blank verse of *Titus* is so like the blank verse of Marlowe, Greene, and Peele, merely proves that that shrewd business man, that timid, servile imitator Shakespeare, exercised his wonderful genius in imitating that blank verse, and with such success that it has actually been ascribed to those very writers! Comment, surely, is superfluous.[1]

[1] See Dr. Farmer on Capell, who seems to have anticipated Mr. Collins in this curious argument. *Ante*, p. 140 n.

We have to observe, too, that Mr. Collins will not even allow that *Titus* is an old play recast by Shakespeare, or that anybody else had a hand in it at all. Messrs. Garnett and Gosse, whose opinion as to the non-Shakespearean authorship of the play I have quoted above, believe nevertheless that Shakespeare "had enough of a finger in *Andronicus's* pie when (having probably been kept in abeyance by the closing of the theatres) it was served up to the public as 'a new piece,' to mislead the judicious Meres into attributing it to him." Not so Mr. Collins. He is a "whole-hogger," to borrow an elegant expression from the modern political world. "The unity of the play is," he tells us, "quite unmistakable; the hand throughout is the same; there is nothing to indicate that it is a recast or recension of another work." Yet Messrs. Garnett and Gosse are "disposed to think that his (Shakespeare's) share may be discriminated."

"Gentlemen," wrote Mr. Leslie Stephen, addressing the theologians, "wait till you have some show of agreement amongst yourselves."[1] May we not say the same to the orthodox Shakespeareans who excommunicate us as fools and fanatics incapable of weighing evidence, affected with invincible ignorance? To Mr. Collins, at any rate, I would venture to tender the time-honoured counsel, "Physician, heal thyself"!

Thus had I written before the publication of Mr. J. M. Robertson's excellent and closely reasoned work, *Did Shakespeare write Titus Andronicus?* That work seems to me to dispose very effectually of the supposed Shakespearean authorship. Mr. Robertson's own belief is that Peele and Greene were the chief authors of *Titus*, though Kyd also had some share in it. "The probability is that between 1590 and 1592 Greene revised or expanded an older play, in which Peele had already a large share; but there is the alternative possibility that Peele revised an old

[1] *An Agnostic's Apology*, p. 41.

play by Greene and Kyd." He does not believe that Marlowe had "any serious share" in *Titus*. Whether or not this be the right solution of the problem, I am not now concerned to discuss. The point is that "Shakespeare" did not write the play. Of course, some of the "unorthodox" would like to think that he did; for if so, there are in this case very weighty arguments to prove that "Shakespeare" could not have been Shakspere of Stratford. On the other hand, some of the most ardent worshippers at the Stratfordian shrine cling to the Shakespearean authorship because of the inclusion of the play, not only in Meere's list, but also in the First Folio. Reason and evidence, internal and external, are, however, against them. It is amusing to see how completely Mr. Robertson, with pitiless logic, and far superior knowledge, disposes of Mr. Churton Collins. I cannot forbear one quotation. "We have seen a number of professors of literature, English and German, pronounce on a question of literary morphology without attempting any methodic comparison of the possible sources of type; for even the painstaking Professor Schröer has but glanced at them. Professor Collins, for his part, avows that he has not read Professor Schröer because, as he explains, 'I abominate German academic monographs, and indulge myself in the luxury of avoiding them, wherever it is possible to do so; being moreover insular enough to think that, on the question of the authenticity of an Elizabethan drama, an English scholar can dispense with German lights.' The trouble is that Professor Collins dispenses with all lights. On the one hand he dismisses the German critics as unreadable, though his special thesis may be said to have been 'made in Germany'; on the other hand, the whole line of English critics who are against him are dismissed by him, without argument, as paradoxers, iconoclasts, and illegitimate practitioners. All the while it has not occurred to him, in the exercise of his special functions, to collate *Titus*

critically with the contemporary Elizabethan drama, any more than he has thought of comparing Shakespeare's prose with the other prose of the time in pronouncing on its special merits. I cannot promise him that he will find such collation a 'luxury,' but he had better attempt it or else abandon the discussion. Simple brow-beating will hardly avail him beyond the circle of his co-believers."[1]

Equally to the point are Mr. Robertson's remarks on the highly characteristic assertion of Mr. Bellyse Baildon, the editor of *Titus* in the "Arden" edition, that whoever refuses to accept the infallibility of Meres "is deliberately giving himself over gagged and bound to the anti-Shakespeareans"! By "anti-Shakespeareans" Mr. Bellyse Baildon[2] means, of course, those *Pro-Shakespeareans* who do not believe that the "Stratford rustic" wrote the plays and poems, which they admire and appreciate quite as highly as any of their Stratfordian critics. But let us hear Mr. Robertson as to Meres. "Concerning the testimony of Meres, it was long ago pointed out that his lists of plays, like some of his lists of poets, are very artificially drawn up in *sixes*, six tragedies being named to balance six comedies. Lists so framed are *prima facie* open to suspicion, whatever might be the good faith of the maker; and in declaring that whoever refuses to accept the bare assertion of Meres 'is deliberately giving himself over gagged and bound to the anti-Shakespeareans,' Mr. Baildon is merely substituting vociferation for argument. Meres is not known to have had any personal acquaintance with Shakespeare before 1598 [nor at that time nor after it, I would add]. Mr. Baildon's statement that 'Shakespeare read his MS. sonnets to him' is a pure fiction on Mr. Baildon's part." Yes, "pure fiction" indeed! I would rather describe it in rather stronger terms. But it is highly characteristic of the fertile invention of the

[1] *Opus cit.*, p. 241.

[2] Since this was written we have heard with much regret of Mr. Baildon's death.

"orthodox" school. But, continues Mr. Robertson, "the argument from Meres proves too much. On no grounds can we say that a bare ascription by him counts for much more than an ascription by a contemporary publisher. Now, as is well known, the *First Part of Sir John Old-castle*, printed in 1600, has Shakespeare's name in full on the title-page; and *A Yorkshire Tragedy* is similarly ascribed to him on the title-page of the quarto of 1608. On Mr. Baildon's principles, we 'deliver ourselves gagged and bound to the anti-Shakespeareans' if we decide that these plays are not Shakespeare's. Yet we all do so decide." Mr. Robertson's conclusion is that Meres "ascribed *Titus* to Shakespeare on the strength of a false or misleading report." Moreover, he appeals to Shakespeare's own declaration that *Venus and Adonis*, published in 1593, was "the first heir" of his "invention."[1] "With this declaration on record, and with the research of Mr. Fuller and Professor Baker lying before him, Mr. Baildon speaks of *Titus* as written by Shakespeare 'between 1589 and 1593.' And Mr. Collins, who protests so loudly his respect for external evidence, simply declines to let Shakespeare's own assertion stand for anything!"

But what, then, of the First Folio? Are we to doubt the infallibility of that sacred canon? Yes, for it obviously includes much that is not Shakespearean—*Henry VI* to wit[2] (at any rate, the first part), and *Henry VIII*, which, according to Stratfordian critics, was in great part written by Fletcher.

As to the internal evidence against *Titus* from vo-

[1] As to this, however, see p. 517 n.

[2] Mr. Robertson says: "Meres, it will be remembered, does *not* credit Shakespeare with the *Henry VI* plays, though they had been much played long before 1598; the folio includes them as Shakespeare's, even as it ascribes solely to him the *Henry VIII* of which so much is visibly Fletcher's." We must remember, however, first, that Meres's lists were not, apparently, intended to be exhaustive; and, secondly, that he was, as I contend, quite right in not including the *Henry VI* plays as Shakespearean.

cabularly, metre, versification, plot, structure, etc., I can only refer the reader to Mr. Robertson's very instructive work.

Let us now consider the Trilogy, and here again I must refer to Malone, whose dissertation on the three parts of *King Henry VI* (Vol. XVIII, p. 557) was pronounced by Professor Porson (no mean judge) "to be one of the most convincing pieces of criticism he had ever met with." (Boswell's note at p. 597.) Malone sets himself to prove that *The First Part of King Henry VI*, which was first published in the Folio of 1623, and of which therefore there is no quarto edition, "was the entire or nearly the entire production of some ancient dramatist," and that *The Whole Contention of the Two Houses of York and Lancaster*, written probably before the year 1590 in two parts (viz. the first part of the *Contention*, etc., *with the Death of the good Duke Humphrey*, etc., first printed in 1594, and the second part, or *The true Tragedie of Richarde Duke of York, and the Death of good King Henrie the Sixt*, which originally appeared in 1595; both parts being printed together in 1600), was also the composition of some writer who preceded Shakespeare. According to Malone, therefore, the author of *Henry VI*, Part 1, was not the author of the two parts of the *Contention*, and Shakespeare was not the author of any one of these three dramas. This proposition, which, in my opinion, is the true one, Malone proceeds to substantiate by arguments at which I can only glance in passing. First, as to *Henry VI*, Part 1: "With respect to the diction and the allusions . . . it is very observable that in the *First* Part of *King Henry VI* there are more allusions to mythology, to classical authors, and to ancient and modern history than can be found in any one piece of our author's written in an English story; and that these allusions are introduced very much in the same manner as they are introduced in the plays of Greene, Peele

Lodge, and other dramatists who preceded Shakespeare; that is they do not naturally arise out of the subject, but seem to be inserted merely to show the writer's learning." Of this Malone then proceeds to give copious examples, for which I must refer to his essay. Then, again, "The versification of this play appears to me clearly of a different colour from that of all our author's genuine dramas, while at the same time it resembles that of many plays produced before the time of Shakespeare. In all the tragedies written before his time, or just when he commenced author, a certain stately march of versification is very observable. The sense concludes or pauses almost uniformly at the end of every line, and the verse has scarcely ever a redundant syllable. The tragedies of *Marius and Sylla*, by T. Lodge, 1594; *A Looking Glass for London and England*, by T. Lodge and R. Green, 1598; *Selyman and Perseda*, written before 1592; *Selimus, Emperour of the Turks*, 1594; *The Spanish Tragedy*, 1592; and *Titus Andronicus* will furnish examples of a similar versification; a versification so exactly corresponding with that of the First Part of King Henry VI and The Whole Contention of the Two Houses of Yorke and Lancaster as it originally appeared, that I have no doubt these plays were the production of some one or other of the authors of the pieces above quoted or enumerated." Of this again we have copious illustrations.

Then we have the well-known quotation from Thomas Nash's *Pierce Pennilesse his supplication to the Devil* (1592): "How would it have joyed brave Talbot," etc., which almost undoubtedly refers to *Henry VI*, Part 1, showing that that play had been on the stage before 1592.[1]

[1] Some, of course, maintain that this is an allusion to an older play on the wars of York and Lancaster. See p. 167. Gifford declares there were "*two score* old plays on this subject on the stage." *Memoirs of Ben Jonson* (Col. Cunninghame's edition, 1875, p. xli). But this, I imagine, is an exaggeration. Payne Collier thought the allusion was to a lost play of which Shakespeare made use in his *Henry VI*, Part 1.

Nash, it may be remembered, was an intimate friend of Green and Peele.

Further, the author of the first part of *Henry VI* makes the King say :—

> When I was young (as yet I am not old)
> *I do remember how my father said*,
> A stouter champion never handled sword.

Whereas in *Henry VI*, Parts 2 and 3, and also in the second part of the *Contention*, Henry says that he was made a king *at nine months old.*

After more arguments to a similar effect Malone writes : "On all these grounds it appears to me clear that neither Shakspeare nor the author of The First Part of the Contention, etc., or The true Tragedie of Richard Duke of York, etc., could have been the author of The *First* Part of King Henry VI." He claims, in fact, to have "vindicated Shakspeare from being the writer" of that play, in which, as he truly says, "from the beginning to the end, except perhaps in some scenes of the fourth act, there is not a single print of the footsteps of Shakespeare."[1]

[1] "It may be asked," says Malone, "if the First Part of King Henry VI was not written by Shakspeare, why did Heminge and Condell print it with the rest of his works?" and on the assumption that those worthy men were the real and not merely the nominal editors of the First Folio, he naturally finds it somewhat difficult to answer the question. "The only way that I can account for their having done so," he says, "is by supposing either that their memory at the end of thirty years was not accurate concerning our author's pieces, as appears indeed evident from their omitting Troilus and Cressida, which was not recollected by them till the whole of the first folio and even the table of contents (which is always the last work of the press) had been printed ; or that they imagined the insertion of this historical drama was necessary to understanding the two pieces that follow it ; or, lastly, that Shakespeare for the advantage of his own theatre, having written a few lines in the *First* Part of King Henry VI, after his own *Second* and *Third* part had been played, they conceived this a sufficient warrant for attributing it, along with others, to him, in the general collection of his works. . . . Is it possible to conceive that they could have any other reason for giving Titus Andronicus a place in their edition of Shakespeare's works than his having written twenty or thirty lines in that piece, or having retouched a few verses of it, if indeed he did so much?" Malone's *Shakespeare*, by Boswell, Vol. XXI, p. 592. I consider the question of the First Folio later on. See chap. IX.

As to *Henry VI*, Parts 2 and 3, "A book entituled The First Part of the Contention of the Two famous Houses of Yorke and Lancaster with the Deathe of the good Duke Humphrie, and the Banishment and Deathe of the Duke of Yorke, and the tragical Ende of the proud Cardinal of Winchester, with the notable Rebellion of Jack Cade, and the Duke of Yorke's first Claime unto the Crowne, was entered at Stationers' Hall, by Thomas Millington, March 12th, 1593–4. The true Tragedie of Richard Duke of Yorke, and the Death of good King Henry Sixt, etc., was entered at Stationers' Hall at the same time. They were printed, as I have before observed, separately in 1594 and 1595, and reprinted together for the same person, T. Millington, in 1600. The first thing that strikes us in this entry is *that the name of Shakspeare is not mentioned*, nor is it in the early editions, nor, when the two plays were published in 1600, did the printer ascribe them to our author in the title-page (though his reputation was then at the highest), as surely he would have done had they been his compositions. In a subsequent edition, indeed, of the same pieces printed by one Pavier, without date, but in reality in 1619, after our great poet's [i.e. Shakspere's] death, the name of Shakespeare appears; but this was a bookseller's trick, founded upon our author's celebrity, on his having new modelled these plays,[1] and on the proprietors of the Globe and Blackfriars Theatre not having published Shakespeare's Second and Third Parts of King Henry VI. The very same deception was practised with respect to King John. The old play (written perhaps by the same person who was the author of The Contention of the Two famous Houses, etc.) was printed in 1591, like that piece, *anonymously*. In 1611 (Shakespeare's King John, founded on the same story, having been probably often acted and admired) the old piece in two parts was reprinted, and, in order to

[1] Such is Malone's supposition.

deceive the purchaser, was said in the title-page to be written by *W. Sh.*[1] A subsequent printer in 1622 grew more bold and affixed Shakespeare's name to it at full length. It is observable that Millington, the bookseller, by whom the First Part of the Contention of the Two Famous Houses, etc. was entered at Stationers' Hall, in 1593–4, and for whom that piece and The Tragedie of the Duke of York, etc., were printed, was not the proprietor of any one of Shakspeare's unpublished plays, except King Henry V, of which he published a *spurious* copy."

Then, too, we find in the case of these two old quarto plays, as in the case of *Titus Andronicus*, that they are said in their title-pages to have been "sundry times acted by the earle of Pembrooke his servantes." "Titus Andronicus and The old Taming of a Shrew," says Malone, "were acted by the same company of comedians, but not *one* of our author's plays is said in its title-page to have been acted by any but the Lord Chamberlain's, or the Queen's, or King's servants.[2] This circumstance alone, in my opinion, might almost decide the question."

Further, when "William Pavier republished the Contention of the Two Houses, etc., in 1619, he omitted the words in the original title page,—'as it was acted by the Earl of Pembroke his servantes,'—just as, on the republication of King John in two parts, in 1611, the words 'as it was acted in the honourable city of London' were omitted, because the omitted words in both cases marked the respective pieces not to be the production of Shakspeare. And as in King John the letters W. Sh. were added in 1611 to deceive the purchaser, so in the republication of The Whole Contention, etc., Pavier, having dismissed the words above mentioned, inserted these, 'Newly corrected

[1] A useful pseudonym! I deal further with the old play of *King John* in chap. XVI.

[2] The first edition of *Romeo and Juliet*, 1597, is said to have been acted by the Right Honble. the Lord of Hunsdon his servants; but Lord Hunsdon was Lord Chamberlain.

and enlarged by William Shakespeare'; knowing that these pieces had been made the ground work of two other plays, that they had in fact been *corrected and enlarged* (though not in that copy which Pavier printed, which is a mere republication from the Edition of 1600) and exhibited under the titles of The Second and Third Part of King Henry VI, and hoping that this new edition of the *original* plays would pass for those *altered* and *augmented* by Shakspeare, which were then unpublished."[1]

Malone asserts (and gives arguments in proof) that 'there are certainly very good grounds for believing that the First Part of the Contention of the Two Houses of York and Lancaster, etc., and The True Tragedie of Richarde Duke of Yorke were written by the author or authors of the old King John printed in 1591." He at first thought that Greene and Peele (both University men, it may be remembered) were the joint authors of the two old quarto plays, or that Greene was the author of one and Peele of the other. Subsequently, however, (see Vol. II, p. 312) he came to the conclusion that Marlowe was the author of the old King John. He adds, "A passage in his historical drama of King Edward II, which Dr. Farmer has pointed out to me since the Dissertation was printed, also inclines me to believe, with him, that Marlowe was the author of one, if not both, of the old dramas on which Shakespeare formed the two plays which in the first folio edition of his works are distinguished by the titles of The Second and Third Parts of King Henry VI." Further on (Vol. XVIII, p. 592) he thus sums up his argument: "The entry on the Stationers' books of the old play, entitled the First Part of the Contention of the Two Houses of Yorke and Lancaster, etc.,

[1] "In the same manner," says Malone, "the old Taming of a Shrew, on which our author formed a play, had been entered at Stationers' Hall in 1594, and was printed in 1607 (also by Cuthbert Burbie in 1596) without doubt with a view to pass it on to the public as the production of Shakspeare."

without the name of the author; that piece and The True Tragedie of Richarde Duke of York, etc., being printed in 1600 anonymously; their being founded on the chronicle of Hall, who was not Shakspeare's historian, and represented by the servants of Lord Pembroke, by whom none of his uncontested dramas were represented; the colour, diction, and versification of these old plays, the various circumstances, lines, and speeches that are found in them, and not in our author's new modification of them, as published in folio by his original editors; the resemblances that have been noticed between his other works and such parts of these dramas as are only exhibited in their folio edition; the discordances (in matters of fact) between certain parts of the old plays printed in quarto, and Shakspeare's undoubted performances; the transpositions that he has made in these pieces; the repetitions, and the peculiar Shaksperian inaccuracies, and phraseology, which may be traced in the folio, and not in the old quarto plays; these and other circumstances which have been stated in the foregoing pages form, when united, such a body of argument and proofs in support of my hypothesis, as appears to me (though I will not venture to assert that 'the probation bears no hinge or loop to hang a doubt on') to lead directly to the door of *truth*."

In his preliminary remarks to the play of *Henry VI*, Part 1, Malone calls attention to the fact that many as are the "Shaksperianisms" in Parts 2 and 3, yet "none of these Shaksperian passages are to be found here" (viz. in Part 1). "I am therefore," he adds, "decisively of opinion that this play was not written by Shakspeare." This old play, viz. the first part of *Henry VI*, Malone supposed to have been written in 1589, or before.

Mr. Lee, it may be added, speaking of the Trilogy, says: "Criticism has proved beyond doubt that in these plays Shakespeare did no more than add, revise, and correct other men's work. In 'The First Part of Henry VI'

the scene in the Temple Gardens . . . the dying speech of Mortimer, and perhaps the wooing of Margaret by Suffolk, alone bear the impress of his style." The fact is, as Gifford long ago wrote, that "the production of such a drama as the *First Part of Henry VI* can confer no distinction on any abilities whatever."[1]

I need not pursue these arguments further. The point is that Shakespeare was not the author of those three plays. How any one could imagine that he was the author of *Henry VI*, Part 1, passes my comprehension. Of the opening lines Coleridge writes: "If you do not feel the impossibility of [these lines] having been written by Shakespeare, all I dare suggest is that you may have ears—for so has another animal—but an ear you cannot have, *me judice*." And of the whole play he writes: "The hand of the Great Master is only occasionally perceptible" therein. The question is, is it perceptible at all? Certain critics, of course, proceed in this case, as with *Andronicus*, to pick out some few fine passages and to ascribe them to Shakespeare, as though nobody of that time but he could possibly have written fine passages. I have not the slightest doubt that if it had been a question whether Shakespeare had any hand in Marlowe's *Faustus*, the beautiful lines,

> Oh thou art fairer than the evening air,
> Clad in the beauty of a thousand stars,

would have been unhesitatingly assigned to him. Acting on this principle, Mr. Israel Gallancz tells us that the Temple Garden scene (*Henry VI*, Part 1, Act II, Scene 4) "is *certainly* Shakespeare's, though judged by metrical peculiarities it may well have been added some years after 1591." These *certainties*, so dear to the critic (cf. Mr. Collins's "certainty" as to *Andronicus*), are out of place. All we are entitled to say is that Shakespeare *may* have added

[1] *Gifford's Jonson*, by Cunningham, p. 165.

certain passages to this and to the two quarto plays, and that, if so, this scene is probably one of them.

In the second part of *Henry VI* the finest scene is the death of Cardinal Beaufort :—

> Lord Cardinal, if thou think'st on heaven's bliss,
> Hold up thy hand, make signal of thy hope.
> He dies and makes no sign. O God, forgive him !

But this occurs in the old quarto play :—

> Lord Cardinal,
> If thou diest assured of heavenly blisse,
> Hold up thy hand, and make some sign to us.
> O see, he dies, and makes no sign at all :
> O God, forgive his soule !

And as Malone points out, it is remarkable that a similar proof is demanded in the old play of *The Troublesome Reign of King John* also, when that King is expiring :—

> Then good my lord, if you forgive them all,
> Lift up your hand in token you forgive.

Again :—

> In token of thy faith,
> And signe thou diest the servant of the Lord,
> Lift up thy hand, that we may witnesse here
> Thou diest the servant of our Saviour Christ.—
> Now joy betide thy soul !

Coincidences such as these greatly strengthen the theory that these two plays were by the same author. It should be mentioned, however, as possibly pointing to Greene's joint authorship of the second part of the *Contention*, that in the quarto, "*Abradas*, the *Macedonian* pirate," is mentioned, whereas in *Henry VI*, Part 2, we have "*Bargulus* the strong *Illyrian* pirate." "Abradas the great Macedonian pirate," is, we are told, only to be found in Greene's pamphlet, entitled *Penelope's Web* (1589). As to Greene's famous reference to "Shake-scene," in his *Groat's Worth of Wit*, I shall deal with it later on.[1]

[1] See chap. XI.

It is a curious fact that the adapter of the second part of the *Contention* makes a strange confusion between Queen Margaret and Eleanor, Duchess of Gloucester. Thus, in *Henry VI*, Part 2, Act III, Scene 2, the King, replying to Margaret, says :—

> I thank thee, *Nell*, these words content me much.

And the Queen actually refers to herself as Eleanor.

> Why, then, dame Eleanor ! was ne'er thy joy.

And again :—

> Because thy flinty heart, more hard than they,
> Might in thy palace perish [1] Eleanor.

And yet again :—

> Ay me, I can no more ! die, Eleanor !

Knight, and others, quietly substitute the word Margaret (which, in the first instance, makes hash of the metre) without mentioning the fact that, as Mr. Gollancz says, "The playwright here seems, by some strange error, to have thought of Eleanor instead of Margaret." He seems to have been a hasty writer, whoever he was, and as inaccurate as Francis Bacon himself ! [2]

The conclusion of the whole matter is that *Titus Andronicus*, and the Trilogy of *Henry VI*, are not the work of Shakespeare ; that his hand is probably not to be found at all in *Titus*, and only once or twice (if at all) in *Henry VI*, Part 1, but that he it probably was who altered and remodelled the two parts of the old *Contention of the Houses of York and Lancaster*, thereby producing *Henry VI*, Parts 2 and 3.

It is obvious that this conclusion has an important bearing on the question of Shakespeare's learning. Thus, turning again to Mr. Collins's articles, we find the following (*Fortnightly Review*, April, 1903, p. 628) : "It would

[1] i.e. cause to perish.

[2] I trust it will not be said that I present this as a Baconian argument.

not be too much to say that *Titus Andronicus* and the three parts of *Henry VI* are saturated with the influence of these tragedies," viz. of Seneca. But in the light of the foregoing observations this argument is found to be devoid of weight, and if Shakespeare's knowledge of Seneca is to be proved, it must be from other dramas, such as *Richard III*, in which, says Mr. Collins, the influence of this writer is "obviously apparent," or *King John*, *Hamlet*, and *Macbeth*, where we are told such influence "is to be traced."[1] On the other hand, since we may, perhaps, assume that the lines 210–20 of *Henry VI*, Part 2, Act III, Scene 2, are of Shakespeare's authorship (seeing that they do not appear in the old quarto), the argument that Shakespeare was acquainted with *Lucretius II*, 352–60 ("the exquisitely pathetic picture of the heifer hunting with lowings after its butchered calf"), is not excluded. But the passage *1 Henry VI*, 1, 6, which has so frequently been cited,

> Thy promises are like Adonis gardens,
> That one day bloomed and fruitful were the next,

cannot be appealed to as showing Shakespeare's classical knowledge, because we may say with confidence that it is not from his pen.[2]

If however we assume, with all the critics, that the scene in the Temple Garden is Shakespeare's, then, of

[1] I have already shown how Seneca appears in *The Merchant of Venice*, *ante*, p. 94.

[2] Undue importance has been assigned to this passage, as though it showed that Shakespeare must have read Plato's *Phædrus*, which had not been translated in his time. The writer, it is to be noticed, does not use this proverbial expression "the gardens of Adonis" in its proper sense. "It was applied to things which grew quickly, made a show for a short time and then withered away (Plato, *Phædrus*, 276 B.), but the author of this play, desirous of making a show of his learning, without considering its propriety, has made the Dauphin apply it as an encomium." (Blakeway quoted by Gollancz.) Bacon was no doubt thinking of these "gardens of Adonis" when he wrote "the gardens of love, wherein he now playeth himself, are fresh to-day and fading to-morrow." (Essex's Device: speech of the Hermit.)

course, we are free to found upon it any argument which it may be thought to sustain as to his knowledge of law and lawyers. (See *Shakespeare, Bacon, Jonson, and Greene*, by E. J. Castle, K.C., p. 65.) But since we may say with confidence that Shakespeare was not the original author of the Trilogy of *Henry VI*, and can at the utmost only be supposed to have added a very few touches to Part 1, and to have "enlarged" and remodelled Parts 2 and 3, I attach very little importance to the inferences which Judge Webb draws (*The Mystery of William Shakespeare*, p. 42) from the assumption that this "noble Trilogy" was written by the same man as he who wrote the undoubted *Plays* and *Poems* of Shakespeare.[1]

There are other plays, arguments founded upon which, as to Shakespeare's learning, etc., must be received with caution, such as *Pericles*, *Timon of Athens*, *Troilus and Cressida*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, and *Henry VIII*, since in none of these is it possible to say how much is from the pen of Shakespeare and how much from that of another writer.[2] But of these plays more anon.

[1] What an entirely different atmosphere we are in when we read *Henry IV*, for example! Or take *Richard III*, and read King Edward's sublime and touching speech, "Have I a tongue to doom my brother's death," etc. Here we have the real Master, immortal, divine, unapproachable. It requires no "expert" to tell us this. I am aware, of course, that some critics think that *Richard III* is not entirely by Shakespeare. Mr. Robertson, e.g., suggests that Marlowe had a hand in it, on account of the "double-endings," a very doubtful test as I think. Mr. Sidney Lee writes (p. 57): "In *Richard III* Shakespeare, working single-handed, takes up the History of England near the point at which Marlowe and he, apparently working in partnership, left it in the third part of *Henry VI*."

[2] The reader may consult Dr. Garnett's lecture, previously referred to, on "Plays partly written by Shakespeare." "It may surprise some of my hearers," says Dr. Garnett, "to be told that so considerable a part of the work which passes under Shakespeare's name is probably not from his hand." Part of *Macbeth* is now generally ascribed to Middleton, the author of *The Witch*.

NOTE A TO CHAPTER V

MR. SWINBURNE'S CRITICISM

It may be useful to set beside Mr. Collins's confident assertions the remarks of a celebrated critic who certainly has himself never suffered from want of confidence in his own opinion and judgment. In his *Study of Shakespeare*, Mr. Swinburne has made some observation on Marlowe's share in certain of the Shakespearean dramas. "No scholar," says he, "believes in the single authorship of *Pericles* or *Andronicus*; none, I suppose, would now question the part taken by some hireling or journeyman in the arrangement or completion for the stage of *Timon of Athens*; and few probably would refuse to admit a doubt of the total authenticity or uniform workmanship of the *Taming of the Shrew*." Let us see what our critic has to say of Marlowe. "When Christopher Marlowe," writes Mr. Swinburne, "came up to London from Cambridge, a boy in years, a man in genius, and a god in ambition, he found the stage which he was born to transfigure and re-create by the might and masterdom of his genius encumbered with a litter of rude rhyming farces and tragedies which the first wave of his imperial hand" swept utterly away. Then, after discussing various plays, and telling us, amongst other things, with reference to the scenes in *Richard II* devoted to the exposition of the character of that King, that he "cannot discern in any of them an equality in power and passion to the magnificent scene of abdication in Marlowe's *Edward II*," the critic thus writes (p. 50) of Parts 2 and 3 of *King Henry VI*: "Two points must of course be taken for granted: that Marlowe was more or less concerned in the production, and Shakespeare in the revision of these plays; whether before or after his additions to the original *First Part of King Henry VI* we cannot determine, though the absence of rhyme might seem to indicate a later date for the recast of the *Contention*. *But it is noticeable*

that the style of Marlowe appears more vividly and distinctly in passages of the reformed than of the unreformed plays. [My italics.] Those famous lines, for example, which open the fourth act of the *Second Part of King Henry VI*, are not to be found in the corresponding scene of the first part of the *Contention;* yet whether they belong to the original sketch of the play, or were inserted as an afterthought into the revised and expanded copy, the authorship of these verses is surely unmistakable :—

> The gaudy, blabbing, and remorseful day
> Is crept into the bosom of the sea ;
> And now loud howling wolves arouse the jades
> That drag the tragic melancholy night—

Aut Christophorus Marlowe, aut diabolus; it is inconceivable that any imitator but one should have had the power so to catch the very trick of his hand, the very note of his voice, and incredible that the one who might would have set himself to do so : for if this be not indeed the voice and this the hand of Marlowe, then what we find in these verses is not the fidelity of a follower, but the servility of a copyist.[1] No parasitic rhymester of past or present days who feeds his starveling talent on the shreds and orts, 'the fragments, scraps, the greasy relics' of another man's board, ever uttered a more parrot-like note of plagiary. The very exactitude of the repetition is a strong argument against the theory which attributes it to Shakespeare. That he had much at starting to learn of Marlowe, and that he did learn much—that in his earliest plays, the influence of the elder poet, the echo of his style, the iteration of his manner, may be perpetually traced—I have already shown that I should be the last to question; but so exact an echo, so servile an iteration as this, I believe we shall nowhere find in them. . . . From this sample it might seem that the main difficulty must be to detect anywhere the sign-manual of Shakespeare, even in the best passages of the revised play. . . . In the earliest form known to us of this play it should seem that we have traces of Shakespeare's handiwork, in the latest that we find evidence

[1] As we have seen (*ante*, p. 146), Mr. Collins thinks this quite "credible." He ascribes to Shakespeare "the servility of a copyist."

of Marlowe's. But it would be something too extravagant for the veriest wind-sucker among commentators to start a theory that a revision was made of his original work by Marlowe after additions had been made to it by Shakespeare; yet we have seen that the most unmistakable signs of Marlowe's handiwork, the passages which show most plainly the personal and present seal of his genius, belong to the play only in its revised form; while there is no part of the whole composition which can so confidently be assigned to Shakespeare as to the one man then capable of such work, as can an entire and important episode of the play in its unrevised state. Now the proposition that Shakespeare was the sole author of both plays in their earliest shape is refuted at once, and equally from without and from within, by evidence of tradition and by evidence of style. There is therefore proof irresistible and unmistakable of at least a double authorship; and the one reasonable conclusion left to us would seem to be this, that the first edition we possess of these plays is a partial transcript of the text as it stood after the first additions had been made by Shakespeare to the original work of Marlowe and others; for that this original was the work of more hands than one, and hands of notably unequal power, we have again the united witness of traditional and internal evidence to warrant our belief; and that among the omissions of this imperfect text were certain passages of the original work, which were ultimately restored in the final revision of the entire poem as it now stands among the collected works of Shakespeare. No competent critic who has given due study to the genius of Marlowe will admit that there is a single passage of tragic interest in either form of the text, which is beyond the reach of the father of English tragedy; or if there be one seeming exception in the expanded and transfigured version of Clifford's monologue over his father's corpse, which is certainly more in Shakespeare's tragic manner than in Marlowe's, and in the style of a later period than that in which he was on the whole apparently content to reproduce or to emulate the tragic manner of Marlowe, there is at least but this one exception to the general and absolute truth of the rule; and even this great tragic passage is rather out of the range of Marlowe's style than

beyond the scope of his genius. In the later as in the earlier version of these plays, the one manifest excellence of which we have no reason to suppose him capable is manifest in the comic or prosaic scenes alone. The first great rapid sketch of the dying cardinal, afterwards so nobly enlarged and perfected on revision by the same or by a second artist, is as clearly within the capacity of Marlowe as of Shakespeare; and in either edition of the latter play, successively known as *The True Tragedy of Richard Duke of York*, as the *Second Part of the Contention*, and as the *Third Part of King Henry VI*, the dominant figure which darkens all the close of the poem with presage of a direr day is drawn by the same strong hand in the same tragic outline. From the first to the last stage of the work there is no mark of change or progress here; the whole play indeed has undergone less revision, as it certainly needed less, than the preceding part of the *Contention*."[1]

With regard to *Titus Andronicus*, Mr. Swinburne (p. 30) refers (as does Malone) to the tragedy of *Selimus, Emperor of the Turks*, published in 1594, which indicates a "brief and obscure period of transition," and "undoubtedly in the main represents the work of a prior era to the reformation of the stage by Marlowe." He continues, "The level regularity of its unrhymed scenes is just like that of the weaker portions of *Titus Andronicus* and the *First Part of King Henry the Sixth*, the opening scene, for example, of either play. With *Andronicus* it has also in common the quality of exceptional monstrosity, a delight in the parade of mutilation as well as massacre. It seems to me possible that the same hand may have been at work on all three plays." On this hypothesis it seems possible that *Titus* instead of being the work of one author was the work of three, viz., the old writer of *Selimus*, who may be supposed to have written the first draft as it were; Marlowe, who, working on this groundwork, brought the play practically into shape as we now know it; and Shake-

[1] Mr. W. L. Courtney writes in the *Fortnightly Review* (October, 1905): "Gloucester, the Lord Protector, sometimes speaks with the voice of Marlowe, according to Mr. Ingram; while it is very interesting to note that, although Kentish men do not appear in Shakespeare's other plays, they are spoken of admiringly in *Henry the VI*. Marlowe was, of course, a Kentish man."

speare, who added a few touches.[1] So much, again, for Mr. Collins's "certainty"! As to *Henry VI*, Part 1, Mr. Swinburne writes: "As we are certain that he (Shakespeare) cannot have written the opening scene, that he was at any stage of his career incapable of it, so may we believe, as well as hope, that he is guiltless of any complicity in that detestable part of the play which attempts to defile the memory of the virgin saviour of her country. In style it is not, I think, above the range of George Peele at his best." In a characteristic note, he adds: "One thing is certain: that damnable last scene at which the gorge rises even to remember it is in execution as unlike the crudest phase of Shakespeare's style as in conception it is unlike the idlest birth of his spirit."

As already mentioned (p. 152), Thomas Nash, in his *Pierce Penilesse, his supplication to the Divell*, made a reference to a play of *King Henry VI* as early as 1592. "How would it have joyed brave *Talbot* (the terror of the French) to thinke that after he had lyne two hundred yeares in his tombe, hee should triumphe again on the stage," etc. "We have here," says Dr. Ingleby, "doubtless an allusion to the play of *Henery VI* mentioned in *Henslowe's Diary* (March 3, 1591–2)." Few critics, I imagine, will contend that this old play was Shakespeare's. Dr. Ingleby continues, "this may or may not be identical with *the First Part of Henry the Sixth*, in the Folio Edition of Shakespeare, 1623. *Whether Shakespeare had any share in this latter play is, to say the least, problematical.*" *Henry VI*, Part 1, was not printed in any shape before it appeared in the First Folio. "It is plausibly conjectured," says Mr. Collier, "that Shakespeare never touched the First Part of *Henry VI* as it stands in his works, and it is merely the old play on the early events of that reign, which was most likely written about 1589." Dr. Drake (*Shakespeare and His Times*, Vol. II, 297) says the play "offers no trace of any finishing strokes from the master-bard."

[1] If anybody can so believe?

NOTE B TO CHAPTER V

PROFESSOR COURTHOPE'S THEORY

It is one of the troubles of a writer on Shakespearean controversy that the flow thereof is ceaseless and inexhaustible. We have seen that old critics like Malone and Farmer, and modern critics like Mr. Sidney Lee, Mr. Fleay, and Mr. J. M. Robertson, are agreed that *Titus Andronicus* is not the work of Shakespeare, while Mr. Churton Collins, on the other hand, asserts that it is "as certain as anything connected with him can be" that he *did* write this repulsive play. There has now appeared another doughty champion of the authenticity of *Titus* in the person of Mr. W. T. Courthope, late Professor of Poetry in the University of Oxford, the fourth volume of whose *History of English Poetry*, containing an appendix on "some of the early plays assigned to Shakespeare, and their relationship to the development of his dramatic genius," has recently been published.

I have styled Mr. Collins a "whole-hogger," but I find that this expressive, if rather inelegant, epithet should have been reserved for the Oxford professor, for Mr. Courthope not only sides with Mr. Collins in accepting *Titus Andronicus* as wholly Shakespearean ("doubtless Shakespeare's earliest pure tragedy," he calls it, adopting Mr. Lee's favourite adverb), but also casts his lot in with Charles Knight, and maintains that the old plays known as *The Contention* and *The True Tragedy* are the work of Shakespeare, and, of course, that all three parts of *Henry VI* are Shakespearean, and, further, that, "by parity of reasoning, *The Troublesome Raigne of King John* and *The Taming of A Shrew* may also be confidently regarded as his early work."

Here is variance indeed among the "experts"! The unhappy *Titus*, knocked over by the missiles of all the best critics, lay sprawling on the ground, as we fondly thought, never to rise again. Mr. Collins sets him up on his pedestal once more, only

to be again overthrown by Mr. Robertson. Then comes Mr. Courthope and writes "resurgam" on the battered effigy. Mr. Courthope follows Charles Knight in asserting that *The Contention* and *The True Tragedy* are Shakespearean, but Charles Knight thought so meanly of *Titus* that he refused to print it at all in his edition of Shakespeare. Coleridge wrote that he who thought that the opening lines of *Henry VI*, Part 1, could possibly have been written by Shakespeare, might indeed have ears, like "another animal," but could not have "an ear"; and Mr. Lee, as we have seen, writing of the three parts of *Henry VI*, says that "criticism has proved beyond doubt that in these plays Shakespeare did no more than add, revise, and correct other men's work."[1] As to *The Troublesome Raigne* and *The Taming of A Shrew*, the overwhelming preponderance of criticism has hitherto been against the Shakespearean authorship of these old plays. In a word, there seems to be now as much diversity of opinion among the high priests of the Stratfordian shrine as there could possibly be, and the moral thence to be derived by the unprejudiced searcher after truth is that he must take nothing on authority, but should endeavour to arrive at his own conclusion, according to the dictates of reason and common sense, as best he may.

For my part, I own that I am not impressed by Professor Courthope's arguments, which seem to me extremely meagre. He contends that Malone's reasoning is fallacious, because although "a work of genius always carries on its face the unmistakable personality of the author . . . it is a fallacy to suppose that this character will be always of one rigid and immutable type"; and he regards "the early plays in question," which "were produced while Shakespeare was a young man, lately arrived in London," as the work of the same master mind that produced *Hamlet* and *Lear* and *Macbeth*, so that by the comparison of the latter plays with the former we are enabled to study and appreciate "the development of genius." That is a matter which everybody must decide for himself. To me *solvitur legendo*. Let the student read these plays one after the other, beginning with the earlier ones, and see if he can bring himself to this conclusion.

[1] Has it proved as much?

I certainly cannot. But, then, Mr. Courthope quotes Grant White to the effect that, if Shakespeare in *Henry VI* stole thousands of lines from *The Contention* and *True Tragedy*, those old plays must be his work also, "otherwise he must be branded with unexampled plagiarism." Yes; but suppose Shakespeare was not the author of *Henry VI!* In that case the argument as to plagiarism has no weight.[1]

But, again, says Mr. Courthope, if Shakespeare did not write *The Troublesome Raigne*, or only wrote part of it in collaboration with Marlowe and others, "he cannot be acquitted of mean plagiarism" when he wrote *King John* without making any acknowledgment of his indebtedness. But this is "an incredible hypothesis." Therefore we must "assume him to have been the sole author" of the old drama, which is "doubtless crude, ill-constructed, and full of obvious imitation, such as might be expected from a dramatist of small experience, but yet containing more of the elements of greatness than any historic play which had yet been produced on the English stage."

This argument does not strike me as a convincing one. I look upon Shakespeare as the man who took old plays and "alchemized them," giving us new lamps for old ones. In giving us *King John* for *The Troublesome Raigne* he gave us gold for brass, and I do not imagine that he troubled his head at all about possible charges of plagiarism. In the ten plays which form the series of "Histories" he was putting together, as Mr. Gollancz says, "a great national Epic on the crises in English history from the reign of Richard II to that of Richard III, with King John and Henry VIII respectively as the Prologue and Epilogue of the whole." In so doing, he took the work of others and "transmuted it into gold"; but he also, as I suppose, took much of such work untransmuted, just as he found it. At any rate, unless we are to contend that the whole of the dramas included in the

[1] The upholders of the authenticity of *Titus* attach much weight to the fact that it was mentioned by Meres in 1598. But Meres makes no mention of the early play of *Henry VI.* He mentions *King John*, which was not published till it appeared in the Folio of 1623. Are we to suppose that he alludes to *The Troublesome Raigne*, which was published anonymously in 1591, reprinted in 1611 as "written by W. Sh.," and again in 1622 with the words "Written by William Shake-speare" on the title-page?

Folio came from Shakespeare's pen, we cannot acquit him of appropriating the work of others without acknowledgment. But the fact is, of course, that ideas as to the rights of authorship in those days were totally different from what they are now.

It is, however, no part of my purpose to controvert Mr. Courthope's arguments. On the contrary, I should be only too glad to accept them if I could find it possible to do so; for contending, as I do, that, on full and dispassionate consideration of all the evidence, the conclusion emerges that the Stratford Player was not the author of the works of Shakespeare, I should naturally welcome results which so strongly tend to confirm and fortify that contention.[1] For what follows if Mr. Courthope's arguments are sound? It is generally agreed (and Mr. Courthope adopts that view) that *The Troublesome Raigne* was written soon after the defeat of the Spanish Armada "to gratify the strong patriotic and Protestant feeling of the people." It must, therefore, have been written about 1588 or 1589. *Titus* must have been written in 1589 at the latest, and probably a year or two before that date. All the three plays on the reign of Henry VI must have been written previously to 1592 (H.-P., Vol. I, p. 87), and, according to Malone, quoted by Mr. Courthope, *The Whole Contention of the Two Houses of Yorke and Lancaster* was probably written before 1590. *The Taming of a Shrew* was published in 1594, but if, as it seems reasonable to suppose, Greene alluded to it in his *Menaphon*, under date 1589, it must have been in existence several years earlier.[2]

[1] The Baconians have long ago put forward the contention now raised by Mr. Courthope, viz. that the old plays in question are the work of "Shake-speare," and they now, of course, appeal to his authority in support of that position. See an article on the "Early Contemporary Evidence relating to the Authorship of the Elizabethan Drama," by the late Rev. Walter Begley, in *Baconiana*, October, 1906.

[2] Greene writes: "We had an ewe among our rams whose fleece was white as the hairs that grow on Father Boreas' cheek." This, says Mr. Edwin Reed, is "evidently a thrust at 'The Taming of a Shrew,' which contained the following:—

Whiter than are the snowy Apennines,
Or icy hair that grows on Boreas' chin.'"

(*Francis Bacon our Shake-speare*, p. 66.) But Richard Simpson long ago called attention to this allusion. (See Mr. Walter Begley's article in *Baconiana* above referred to.)

Now it is generally agreed that William Shakspere, then "a Stratford rustic," as Dr. Garnett has described him, came to London about 1587 or 1588. He "made his way to London," writes Mr. Lee (in his preface to Methuen's Standard Library *Shakespeare*, 1905), "where he obtained humble employment in the earliest playhouse that had been built in the country"; and we must now add, if we accept Mr. Courthope's theory, he at once produced five most remarkable plays, viz. *Titus Andronicus*, *The Taming of a Shrew*, *The Troublesome Raigne*, and the three parts of *Henry VI!* These, it appears, sprang fully armed from his brain, like Minerva from the head of Jove!

Really, really, there must be some limits even to Stratfordian demands on our credulity!

Est quodam prodire tenus *sed* non datur ultra.

On grounds of ordinary common sense and knowledge of human possibilities, I unhesitatingly say that this hypothesis is preposterous, and that if Shakespeare was in truth the author of these old plays, then, of a certainty, Shakespeare was not the man from Stratford.

We may observe, too, though this is a trifling matter by comparison, that this extraordinary theory entirely sets at naught Shakespeare's statement that *Venus and Adonis* was the first heir of his invention. For that highly polished, cultured, and scholarly poem was not published till 1593, and must have been written after 1589, in which year appeared Lodge's *Scilla's Metamorphosis*, from which, as Mr. Lee writes (p. 66), "there is little doubt that Shakespeare drew some of his inspiration."[1]

Again, it may be useful to notice that *Titus* is mentioned in Henslowe's *Diary* as a new play acted at his theatre on January 23, 1593; that *Henry VI* is repeatedly mentioned in the *Diary*;[2]

[1] "Of his two poems," writes Mr. Collins (*Studies in Shakespeare*, p. 120), "*Venus and Adonis* is plainly modelled on Lodge's *Scilla's Metamorphosis*." Yet he had previously told us (p. 108) that "it seems to me highly probable that it was composed at Stratford before he came up to London, as early perhaps as 1585"! Such is modern Stratfordian criticism.

[2] Judge Stotsenburg gives sixteen references, ranging from 1591 to 1593. (See his *Impartial Study*, p. 422.)

and that "The Tamynge of a Shrowe" is mentioned under date 11th of June, 1594. If these plays, or early plays with these titles, were really the work of Shakespeare, it becomes more extraordinary than ever that Henslowe, who mentions the names of all the other dramatists of his time, makes not a single reference to the greatest of them.[1]

[1] See *post*, chap. XII, "The Silence of Philip Henslowe." See also chap. XVI, on "The Early Authorship Argument."

CHAPTER VI

LATER LIFE AND DEATH OF SHAKSPERE

HAVING considered the question of the sort of education which the youthful Shakspere was likely to have acquired at the Stratford Free School (on the assumption that his father sent him, and allowed him to continue there for a short time), we were naturally led on to consider the further question: What amount of learning must be postulated for the author of the *Plays* and *Poems*? and as the answer to this question is to be found in the works of Shakespeare we were further led into a digression as to the authorship of *Titus Andronicus*, and the Trilogy of *Henry VI.*

Let us now return to Shakspere of Stratford, whom we left in London, whither, according to Mr. Lee, he had "naturally drifted, *doubtless* trudging thither on foot during 1586, by Oxford and High Wycombe," though Messrs. Garnett and Gosse, as we have seen, giving rein to their imagination after the approved manner of Shakespearean critics, have put forward the hypothesis that instead of drifting to London, the young provincial enlisted in Leicester's force for the Low Countries. We will, however, now follow Mr. Lee, who, at least before these latest contributors to the endless Shakespearean literature, was fondly supposed to have written the "definitive" orthodox *Life.*

"Shakespeare's earliest reputation," writes Mr. Lee, "was made as an actor, and, although his work as a

dramatist soon eclipsed his histrionic fame, he remained a prominent member of the actor's profession till near the end of his life." Now the actor's profession in the time of Elizabeth was by no means held in high esteem. "These players," says Asinius Lupus, in Jonson's *Poetaster* (1601),[1] "are an idle generation, and do much harm in a state, corrupt young gentry very much, I know it." To which, and further observations to the same effect, Tucca replies: "Th'art in the right. . . . They are grown licentious, the rogues; libertines, flat libertines. They forget they are i' the statute the rascals; they are blazoned there; there they are tricked, they and their pedigrees; they need no other heralds, I wiss." The last words are a hit at those players who, like Shakspere, were desirous of obtaining a grant of a coat-of-arms, but the statute referred to is the Act of Elizabeth under which "Common Players" were ranked with rogues and vagabonds. "By an Act of Parliament of 1571 (14 Eliz. cap. 2)," writes Mr. Lee (p. 32), "which was re-enacted in 1596 (39 Eliz. cap. 4), players were under the necessity of procuring a licence to pursue their calling from a peer of the realm or 'personage' of higher degree, otherwise they were adjudged to be of the status of rogues and vagabonds." This statement, however, is not accurate, and I fear Mr. Lee had not "verified his quotations." The earlier of the two statutes of Elizabeth dealing with this matter is not 14 Eliz. cap. 2, but 14 Eliz. cap. 5 (1572), and the "licence" under the Act was to be given by two Justices of the Peace. The Act is: "An act for the Punishment of Vagabonds, and for Relief of the Poor and Impotent." Section 5 gives us a definition of "Rogues, Vagabonds, and Sturdy Beggars," among whom were to be classed "All Fencers, Bearwardes, Common Players in Enterludes, and Minstrels, not belonging to any Baron of this Realme or towards any other honourable Personage of greater

[1] Act I, Scene 1.

degree.[1] All Juglers, Pedlars, Tinkers, and Petty Chapmen; which said Fencers, etc., etc., shall wander abroad, and have not License of two Justices of the Peace at least, whereof one to be of the Quorum." By Section 2, any such person if convicted as a vagabond at the Quarter Sessions was to be adjudged to be "grievously whipped, and burnt through the gristle of the right ear with a hot iron of the compass of an inch about," unless he could find someone to go surety for him and take him into service. The Act 39 Eliz. cap. 4 (1597) repealed the former statute, but it contained much the same definition of "Rogues, Vagabonds, and Sturdy Beggars," which by Section 2 included "All persons calling themselves scholars going about begging. . . . All Fencers, Bearwards, Common Players in Interludes, and Minstrels wandering abroad (other than Players of Interludes belonging to any Baron of this Realm, or any other honourable Personage of greater Degree, to be authorized to play under the hand and seal of Arms of such Baron or Personage)," etc. Under this Act the person offending might be ordered "to be stripped naked from the middle upward and to be openly whipped until his or her body be bloody," and to be sent from parish to parish until he or she should be finally consigned to the parish where he or she was born.

These statutes give a pretty clear idea of the sort of estimation in which the players were held in the time of Shakespeare. No doubt, when taken under the patronage of the Queen or one of the great Elizabethan peers, they obtained, as Mr. Lee says, "a rank of respectability," and were relieved "of all risk of identification with vagrants or 'sturdy beggars.'" Yet, as we have seen, it could be made matter of reproach against them that they were "in the statute."

[1] Mr. Lee marks "personage of *higher* degree" as a quotation. The error is not material, but it is well to quote Acts of Parliament with accuracy.

Documentary evidence, as Mr. Lee tells us, proves that Shakspere was a member of the Lord Chamberlain's company in 1594, and "it is fair to infer" that this was the company that he "originally joined and adhered to through life." Of his life as an actor, indeed of his life in London generally, we really know nothing. However, Mr. Lee jogs along merrily enough with his convenient "doubtless." "When Shakespeare became a member of the company it was *doubtless* performing at The Theatre, the playhouse in Shoreditch which James Burbage, the father of the great actor Richard Burbage, had constructed in 1576."

The only other London playhouse then in existence was the Curtain in Moorfields, but Philip Henslowe, the speculative theatrical manager, erected a third, called the Rose, on the Bankside, Southwark. "The Rose Theatre," says Mr. Lee, "was *doubtless* the earliest scene of Shakespeare's pronounced successes alike as actor and dramatist." This is odd, because Henslowe kept a diary, which has been preserved, containing minute and valuable information respecting the English drama from 1591 to 1609. Henslowe recorded his dealings with all the leading playwrights of the day, but never once mentions the name of Shakespeare! *Doubtless* he had good reason for not doing so, but what it was, if Shakespeare achieved his earliest successes as a dramatist at the Rose Theatre, it is extremely difficult to imagine.[1]

"In 1599," writes Mr. Lee, "Richard Burbage and his brother Cuthbert demolished the old building of The Theatre and built, mainly out of the materials of the dismantled fabric, the famous theatre called the Globe on Bankside. It was octagonal in shape and built of wood, and *doubtless* Shakespeare described it (rather than the Curtain) as 'this wooden O,' in the opening chorus of

[1] See chapter XII. on "The Silence of Philip Henslowe."

Henry V.[1] After 1599 the Globe was mainly occupied by Shakespeare's [i.e. Shakspere's] company, and in its profits he acquired an important share. From the date of its inauguration until the poet's retirement, the Globe—which quickly won the first place among London theatres,—seems to have been the sole playhouse with which Shakespeare [i.e. Shakspere] was professionally associated."[2]

"The practice of touring in the provinces" (I still quote from Mr. Lee's *Life*) "was followed with even greater regularity then than now. Few companies remained in London during the summer or early autumn, and every country town with two thousand or more inhabitants could reckon on at least one visit from travelling actors between May and October. . . . Shakespeare may be credited with faithfully fulfilling all his professional functions, and some of the references to travel in his sonnets were *doubtless* reminiscences of early acting tours." Many Shakespeareans believe that Shakspere went with a company to Scotland[3] also, and some have sent him to

[1] Nevertheless, Mr. E. K. Chambers thinks that the Globe was a square theatre, and that the "wooden O" refers "to some earlier theatre, probably the Curtain"! *Stratford Town Shakespeare*, Vol. X, p. 356.

[2] S. L., p. 37. With reference to the boy actors who took women's parts Mr. Lee has propounded what seems to me an extraordinary theory. In the *Midsummer Night's Dream* (I, 2, 53) Flute, when told he is to play "Thisby," protests, "Nay, faith let me not play a woman, I have a beard coming." To which Quince rejoins "That's all one; you shall play it in a mask, and you may speak as small as you will." Whereupon Mr. Lee comments, "Men taking women's parts seem to have worn masks"! I presume Mr. Lee means *men* as distinct from *boys*, but, even so, surely it is a preposterous supposition. Imagine Juliet (e.g.) with a set mask face of only one expression! But the passage cited seems to give no warrant for such a revolting assumption. It would be quite in character with Quince's company of clowns, and part of the joke, that one of them should play "Thisby" in a mask. But it seems ridiculous to infer that this was the general practice. Had it been so "bully Bottom" would, surely, have been aware of it. But he evidently was not, for when the possibility of a mask is suggested, he interposes, "An I may hide my face let me play Thisby too"! In ordinary cases, if the boy had "a beard coming" the simple remedy would be, not to wear an absurd mask, but to shave it off.

[3] Mr. Alexander Cargill, in *Chambers's Journal*, December, 1904, shows

Germany, Italy, and the Low Countries, but, as we have seen, Mr. Lee thinks it unlikely that he ever set foot on the Continent. "He *doubtless* owed all to the verbal reports of travelled friends or to books." In truth, however, he seems to have had quite enough to do at home. He was constantly acting (either in London or on tour in the provinces), and "remained a prominent member of the actor's profession till near the end of his life." He became, as we have seen, actor-manager also,[1] with a considerable share in the theatre, and "at an early period of his theatrical career he undertook, with triumphant success, the labours of a playwright." Nevertheless "he pursued the profession of an actor loyally and uninterruptedly until he resigned all connection with the theatre within a few years of his death." And now:

> Match me this marvel save in Eastern clime;
>
> "The whole of Shakespeare's dramatic work was probably begun and ended within two decades (1591–1611) between his twenty-seventh and forty-seventh year," and "he must be credited with the production during those twenty years of a yearly average of two plays, nearly all of which belong to the supreme rank of literature," and "three volumes of poems must be added to the total."

There is no "mystery of William Shakespeare," so we

that there is no evidence whatever to prove that Shakspere was ever in Scotland. All the records have been ransacked, and the names of various players have been found noted as visiting the north in Elizabethan times (Fletcher being one), but Shakspere is nowhere mentioned.

[1] We are told that he had shares both in the Globe and Blackfriars Theatres (S. L., p. 214). Mr. Henry Davey (*Stratford Town Shakespeare*, Vol. X, p. 283) tells us that a share in the Globe "was reckoned worth over £200 a year," viz., I presume, some £1000, or more, calculated according to the present value of money. The same critic writes (p. 280): "Shakespeare's gains as an actor must far have exceeded his author's fees . . . his colleagues, Burbage, Heminge, and Condell, all died worth at least as much." I take it that this is true, and that the Rev. John Ward's tale of the large allowance granted him for writing two plays a year is pure fiction. The actor Alleyn, as is well known, made a very large fortune. (See p. 207.)

are assured, except in the minds of fanatics. A young provincial, with such smattering of education as he could procure during four or five years at a Free School (assuming, in his favour, that he was there), late butcher's apprentice, and speaking the dialect of his native county, comes, a penniless wanderer, straight from the society of the boors and petty tradesmen of obscure and illiterate Stratford, becomes successively horse-holder outside and "servitor" inside one of the London playhouses (and *such* playhouses!), obtains a place in the company, is constantly and assiduously playing to London audiences, or touring in the provinces; an actor-manager with shares in two theatres, and with a keen eye to business (taking *rem facias rem* as his motto); and, with all this, turning out each year at least two plays belonging to "the supreme rank of literature"—marvellous works not of an age, but for all time, replete with learning, as Mr. Collins has shown, and redolent of the highest culture, as no one, surely, but a "fanatic" *enragé* can deny, besides wondrous courtly and scholarly poems composed in quite early days, but marked in the same or even higher degree by the same learning and the same culture; yet remaining (for so the fact is, in spite of the diligent and lifelong investigations of enthusiastic admirers) *nomen et umbra*, and nothing more, for posterity—*here* is no mystery, *here* is nothing to marvel at, except "for those to whom the ways of genius are a stumbling-block"![1]

[1] "All the arts, sciences and literatures must have been mastered by our sleepless Shakespeare, either at Stratford school or in the midst of his London career, when operating two theatres, reading plays for his stage, editing them, and acting himself (and Mr. Cohn will have it that in these unaccounted-for times he had visited Germany with his troupe and performed in all its principal cities, coining money as he went). Mr. Brown, Dr. Bell, and others announce that they believe that these travels of his extended to Italy, and Mr. Thoms and Mr. Cohn, to some extent, account for Shakespeare on the Continent by believing that instead of going at once to London when fleeing from Stratford before Sir Thomas Lucy, he enlisted under Leicester for the Netherlands in 1585, but left the ranks for the more lucrative career of an

Well, then, this man Shakespeare was learned; he could read the Latin classics, "*ad sensum* with pleasure and facility"; he had some knowledge of Greek and of Greek classic writers also; he was polished, cultured, scholarly, courtly; he moved in high society, was on intimate terms with great nobles, and had "personal relations" with some of the most distinguished men and women of the great Queen's Court: of all this there can be no doubt.[1] Neither can there be a doubt that he was the happy possessor of many books, and revelled in them. An ardent advocate of education, too, must he have been who proclaimed to his own and to all generations yet to come, that

There is no darkness but ignorance.

Let us continue our quest under the orthodox guidance of Mr. Sidney Lee. Shakspere's "father's pecuniary embarrassments had steadily increased since his son's departure. Creditors harassed him unceasingly." In 1591 a creditor, Adrian Quiney, obtained a writ of distraint against him, and on December 25th of the same year he was "presented" as a recusant for absenting himself from church, his absence being, apparently, due to fear of process for debt.

actor. But these theories only crowd still more thickly the brief years in which the great works (which are, after all, what the world regards in these investigations) appeared. Either at Stratford school, or in the Blackfriars, or else by pure intuition, all this exact learning must have been absorbed." Appleton Morgan's *The Shakespearean Myth*, p. 218, referring to *Shakespeare in Germany*, by Albert Cohn; *Shakespeare's Autographical Poems*, by C. A. Brown; *Essays on Shakespeare*, by Karl Elze; and *The Supposed Travels of Shakespeare*, by Mr. Thoms.

[1] "It was *doubtless* to Shakespeare's personal relations with men and women of the Court that his sonnets owed their existence" (S. L., p. 72.) "Shakespeare *doubtless* knew Florio as Southampton's protégé, and read his fine translation of Montaigne's Essays with delight" (p. 73 n.). "Shakespeare was also *doubtless* acquainted with Giles Fletcher's similar handling of the theme," etc. (p. 67 n.). I spare the reader further instances of the use of this convenient but rather irritating adverb. See pp. 25, 28, 34, 37, 39, 41, 44, 50 (twice), 55, 67 n., 72, 73 n., 74, 176, 178, 183, 186 n., 192, 193, and *passim*.

Shakspere's wife, it seems, fared in his absence no better than his father. "The only contemporary mention made of her between her marriage in 1582 and her husband's death in 1616 is as the borrower at an unascertained date (evidently before 1595) of forty shillings from Thomas Whittington, who had formerly been her father's shepherd. The money was unpaid when Whittington died in 1601, and he directed his executors to recover the sum from the poet,[1] and distribute it among the poor of Stratford." I do not know what the evidence is to show that this debt must have been incurred before 1595.[2] It is sad to think that the man who in 1597 was so rich that he was able to purchase the largest house in Stratford, known as New Place, left his wife so badly provided for that she was constrained to borrow from her father's shepherd, and to find that the debt remained unpaid at the death of the lender in 1601. Yet in the year previous to the purchase of New Place we find the erst penniless John Shakspere, backed, as we must suppose, by his now well-to-do son, making application to the Heralds' College for a coat-of-arms. This application John Shakspere had made once before, viz. in 1568, while he was bailiff of Stratford, supporting it by numerous fictions concerning his family. The negotiations of 1568, however, proved abortive. The application, therefore, was now renewed by John and William Shakspere, or rather, as it would seem, by William in John's name, and was accompanied by more fictitious allegations; and changes having taken place at the Heralds' College in 1597 (Essex becoming

[1] Whittington, it need hardly be mentioned, says nothing about "the poet."

[2] Mr. H.-Phillipps gives the extract from Whittington's will as follows: "Unto the poore people of Stratford xl.s. that is in the hand of Anne Shaxspere, wyfe unto Mr. Wyllyam Shaxspere, and is due debt unto me, beyng paid to mine executor by the sayd Wyllyam Shaxspere or his assignes according to the true meanyng of this my will." (H.-P., Vol. II, 186.)

Earl Marshal, and Camden Clarenceux King-of-Arms), a novel procedure was adopted by the applicants, who now audaciously asserted that certain draft grants prepared by the heralds in the previous year had been *assigned* to John Shakspere while he was bailiff, and the heralds, instead of being asked for a grant of arms, "were merely invited to give him a 'recognition' or 'exemplification of it,'" which was a thing much more easily secured than a grant, for "the heralds might, if they chose, tacitly accept, without examination, the applicant's statement that his family had borne arms long ago, and they thereby regarded themselves as relieved of the obligation of close inquiry into his present status." (S. L., p. 151 and note.) There was, however, a limit beyond which these complaisant heralds refused to go. The Shaksperes, father and son, had calmly desired them to recognise the title of Mary Shakspere, John's wife, to bear the arms of the great Warwickshire family of Arden then seated at Park Hall.[1] On this matter, however, the heralds appear, as Mr. Lee says, to "betray conscientious scruples," and this audacious claim was abandoned. The Shaksperes, however, obtained their coat-of-arms, with the motto so provocative of criticism *non sanz droict*, which, as their right seems to have been altogether imaginary, was presumably assigned to them on the *lucus a non lucendo* principle.

Whether Mr. William Shakspere, Gent., *Armiger*, etc., now settled permanently at Stratford seems not quite clear. The purchase of New Place was, owing to the sudden death of the vendor, not finally completed till

[1] "Ridiculous statements were made respecting the claims of the two families [i.e. Shakspere's and his wife's]. Both were really descended from obscure country yeomen, but the heralds made out that the predecessors of John Shakespeare were rewarded by the Crown for distinguished services, and that his wife's ancestry were entitled to armorial bearings," the heralds of course acting on the "ridiculous statements" made by Shakspere. (H.-P., Vol. I, p. 162.)

1602, but in February, 1597-8, we find Shakspere a householder in Chapel Street ward, in which New Place was situated, and "owner of ten quarters of corn." Only two inhabitants, we are informed, were credited with a larger holding. "In the same year (1598) he procured stone for the repair of the house, and before 1602 had planted a fruit orchard." In 1611, at any rate, he appears to have permanently settled at New Place. As the poor student says, in *The Return from Parnassus*, speaking of "those glorious vagabonds," the players who had enriched themselves:

> With mouthing words that better wits had framed,
> They purchase lands and now esquires are made.

Now, therefore, we find Shakspere settled once more in his little native town of Stratford among the petty tradesmen, butchers, glovers, wool-staplers, mercers, drapers, haberdashers, innkeepers, *et hoc genus omne*, from whose society he had fled so many years before. He now occupies himself with building, planting orchards, etc., lending money, bringing lawsuits, buying up tithes, attempting to enclose common lands,[1] etc. One letter written to him in 1598 has been preserved. It is the only one. The writer is Richard Quiney, a fellow-townsman (whose son Thomas afterwards married Shakspere's daughter Judith), begging for a loan of money. Whether the request was granted is not known. In the same year another townsman, Abraham Sturley, writing, as it seems, to a brother in London, mentions "our countriman, Mr. Shaksper" as "willing to disburse some money upon some odd yardland or other at Shottery or near about us: he thinketh it a very fit pattern to move him to deal in the matter of our tithes." And the same Sturley, writing in November, 1598, to Richard Quiney aforesaid, points out to him that since the town was wholly unable, in consequence of the dearth of corn, to pay the tax, he hoped "that our

[1] See H.-P., Vol. I, 226 *et seq.*

countriman, Mr. Wm. Shak. would procure us money, which I will like of as I shall hear when and where and how."

Rare old Ben Jonson remained poor to the end of his days, but Shakspere, the cautious, prudent, worldly-wise, saving Shakspere, actor and actor-manager, had acquired a fortune, and Mr. Lee tells us that "Pope had just warrant for the surmise that he

> For gain not glory winged his roving flight
> And grew immortal in his own despite"!

He had inherited too, so Mr. Lee tells us, his father's love of litigation. Litigious he certainly was, whether that quality was inherited or not, and, as certainly, he "stood rigorously by his rights in all his business relations." He found gain if not glory in money-lending, and was as rigorous as Shylock in strictly enforcing the conditions of the bond. "In March, 1600, he recovered in London a debt of £7 from one John Clayton. In July, 1604, in the local court at Stratford, he sued one Philip Rogers to whom he had supplied since the preceding March malt to the value of £1. 19s. 10d., and had on June 25 lent 2/- in cash. Rogers paid back 6/- and Shakespeare [i.e. Shakspere] sought the balance of the account, £1. 15s. 10d. During 1608 and 1609 he was at law with another fellow-townsman John Addenbroke." Then, in February, 1609, he obtains judgment against Addenbroke for the payment of £6, and £1. 5s. costs, "but Addenbroke left the town, and the triumph proved barren." One Thomas Horneby, however, had made himself surety for Addenbroke, and Shakspere, as Mr. Lee says, "avenged himself" by proceeding against the unfortunate surety.

I have not space to enlarge upon this life of Shakspere, the retired gentleman, among the *petite bourgeoisie* of "the dirtiest village in all Britain." It is what the French would style *banale* to the last degree. What many people

have found extraordinary (on the hypothesis that Shakspere = Shakespeare) is that these "astute business transactions," as Mr. Lee well calls them, "of these years (1597–1611), synchronise with the production of Shakespeare's noblest literary work—of his most sustained and serious efforts in comedy, tragedy and romance." Mr. Lee, however, thinks this to be an inconsistency "more apparent than real." It does not strike him as at all out of the way that a man should be writing *Hamlet*,[1] and at the same time bringing actions for petty sums lent on loan at some unspecified interest. Why should it be? Shakespeare wrote *Hamlet* not for "glory" in his own time, still less with posterity, but simply for "gain." It was something that would *pay*, and there would be so much the more for money-lending, tithe-buying, the enclosure of common fields, etc. Such is the orthodox creed which except a man believe faithfully without doubt he shall be damned everlastingly as fool and fanatic.

The incident of the attempt to enclose the common fields affords such a characteristic example of Shakspere's shrewd habit of looking after his own interest that it ought not to be omitted. It seems that one William Combe (son of that John Combe whose usurious propensities Shakspere is said to have satirised in doggerel verses), about the year 1614, attempted, in conjunction with a neighbouring owner, "to enclose the common fields which belonged to the corporation of Stratford about his estate at Welcombe. The corporation resolved to offer the scheme a stout resistance. Shakespeare [i.e. Shakspere] had a twofold interest in the matter by virtue of his owning the freehold of 106 acres at Welcombe and Old Stratford, and as the joint owner now with Thomas Greene, the town clerk, of the tithes of Old Stratford, Welcombe, and Bishopton. His interest in his freeholds could not

[1] "Neither a lender nor a borrower be!"

have been prejudicially affected, but his interest in the tithes might be depreciated by the proposed enclosure. Shakespeare consequently joined with his fellow-owner Greene in obtaining from Combe's agent, Replingham, in October, 1614, a deed indemnifying both against any injury they might suffer from the enclosure. *But having thus secured himself against all possible loss, Shakespeare threw his influence into Combe's scale,*"[1] and supported the scheme of enclosure! Verily, a sharp man of business this! "Happily," however, as Mr. Lee says, "Combe's efforts failed, and the common lands remain unenclosed," in spite of the efforts of the new owner of New Place.

All that we know further of this very common life is that it came to an end in April, 1616.[2] According to the Rev. John Ward, Vicar of Stratford (writing in 1661–3), "Shakespear, Drayton, and Ben Johnson had a merry meeting, and itt seems drank too hard, for Shakespear died of a feavour there contracted." This meeting is said to have taken place at New Place, but the Rev. John Ward was writing at least five-and-forty years after Shakspere's death, and there can be little doubt that the story is a myth. Shakspere's friends, as his will shows, were Stratford worthies like Thomas Combe, Thomas Russell, or Hamnet Sadler; or his fellow-players, Heminge, Burbage, and Condell.[3]

The will was apparently drafted by Francis Collins, an attorney at Warwick, who signs as the first witness. It was possibly intended to be engrossed, but Shakspere's death came, as we may suppose, more suddenly than was

But v. Mag. Thumm-Kintzel's article in La Revue, 15.VII.1910.

[1] Italics mine.

[2] April 23, O.S.; May 3, N.S.

[3] "There is no mention of Drayton, Ben Jonson, or any of his other literary friends." (H.-P., Vol. I, 233.) We may add that if Jonson had been present with Drayton at the supposed Stratford meeting, just before Shakspere's death, it is odd that he made no mention of it to Drummond in 1618. But the meeting is, no doubt, imaginary. I cannot see, however, that the story "can be refuted by the fact that he made his will in January, corrected it in March, and died in April," as Canon Beeching contends. As to Michael Drayton, Mrs. Stopes writes that "he was very communicative about himself,

anticipated. There are many erasures and interlineations, and the date is left as of March 25th. There are three sheets, at the foot of each of which Shakspere signs his name.

One of the interlineations, apparently therefore an afterthought, is the bequest to his wife. "Item, I gyve unto my wiefe my second best bed with the furniture." Great efforts have been made to show that there is nothing in this inconsistent with the theory that Shakspere was living with his wife on terms of idyllic affection. They have not been successful. "The name of Shakespeare's wife was omitted from the original draft of the will," writes Mr. Lee, "but by an interlineation in the final draft she received his second-best bed with its furniture. No other bequest was made to her. Several wills of the period have been discovered in which a bedstead or other article of household furniture formed part of a wife's inheritance, but none except Shakespeare's is forthcoming in which a bed forms the sole bequest." Comfort was for a time found in the belief that at any rate the widow had her "dower" in the testator's freehold lands, but Mr. Lee obtained an opinion from the late Mr. Charles Elton, Q.C., an eminent authority on real property law, to the effect that at any rate in the case of Shakspere's latest purchase of freehold estate, viz. the house at Blackfriars, the right to dower was "barred" by the form of the conveyance, and there can be but little doubt that in the case of all his purchases of freeholds uses to bar dower had been inserted, as, indeed, was customary.[1]

he had many friends and patrons, he showered dedications among these broadcast, and from the dedications we learn much about his circumstances and ambitions." She adds pathetically, "It would have been comforting to us to have had as much authoritative autobiography of Shakespeare as we have of Michael Drayton." Very comforting indeed! And why has not Drayton told us anything about his dear friend Shakspere, the great poet and dramatist? (Drayton b. 1563, d. 1631.)

[1] In Mr. Elton's posthumously published notes, collected in a bulky volume under the name of *William Shakespeare, his Family, and Friends*,

New Place is left to the testator's daughter, Susanna Hall, for life, with remainder in tail male, with remainder over to the younger daughter Judith in tail male. As to personal property "the precision with which Shakespeare's will accounts for and assigns to other legatees every known item of his property refutes the conjecture that he had set aside any portion of it under a previous settlement or jointure with a view to making independent provision for his wife." Alas for the idyllic legend of the rustic beauty, Anne Hathaway, to whose supposed shrine so many pilgrims annually direct their adoring feet! She had to put up with the second-best bed with the furniture thereof![1]

Mr. Lee, as we have seen, speaks of the precision with which this will accounts for and assigns to other legatees *every known item* of Shakspere's property. And precise it is. He gives to his niece, Elizabeth Hall, "all my plate except my brod silver and gilt bole, that I now have." He gave £10 to the poor of Stratford. He gives his sword to Thomas Combe. He gives divers small pecuniary legacies. He gives to "Hamlett Sadler xxvj^{s} viij^{d} to buy him a ringe," and the same to William Raynoldes for the same purpose. "And to my fellowes, John Hemynges, Richard Burbage, and Henry Cundell xxvj^{s} viij^{d} a peece to buy them ringes." To his daughter Judith he gives his "broad silver gilt bole."[2] All the rest of his "goodes,

it is only remarked that "nothing was said about Mrs. Anne Shakespeare's right to dower" (p. 227). But Mr. Elton had written to Mr. Lee, in 1897: "I have looked to the authorities with my friend, Mr. Herbert Mackay, and there is no doubt that Shakespeare barred the dower" in the case of the Blackfriar's freehold at any rate. (S. L., p. 222, note.)

[1] Mr. Henry Davey makes a truly delightful comment. He tells us that this "much-derided bequest . . . indicates that she was bed-ridden"! The humours of Stratfordian exegesis are really inexhaustible. If the poor woman was bed-ridden, which is an entirely gratuitous assumption (she lived more than seven years after Shakspere's death), was that any reason for cutting her off with the "second-best bed" only?

[2] Mr. Lee writes (p. 223): "To his younger daughter he also left, with the tenement in Chapel Lane (in remainder to the elder daughter), £150 in money," etc. This is erroneous. The tenement in Chapel Lane is not men-

chattels, leases, plate, jewels, and household stuffe whatsoever" he gives, devises, and bequeaths to his son-in-law, John Hall, and his daughter Susanna, whom he appoints executors of his will.

The reader will have noticed one stupendous omission. Plate, jewels, the testator's sword, his silver-gilt bowl, his second-best bed, his household stuff, all these are mentioned, but of book or manuscript there is no mention whatever. What is the inference? Is it possible that the immortal bard, the myriad-minded man, the wonder of all ages, the great teacher, the universal philosopher, he who tells us so truly that ignorance is the only real darkness—is it possible that this man died without a book in his possession? Ben Jonson, as we know, had a grand library. He loved books, and he constantly gave them away to his friends. "The number of books which Jonson gave away is prodigious," writes his editor, and "some kind and cordial expression of his friendship accompanies each of them."[1] But Shakespeare, if indeed Shakspere and

tioned, but Shakspere left (*inter alia*) £50 to his daughter Judith "upon her surrendering" a copyhold tenement at Stratford, holden of the manor of Rowington, to her sister Susanna! Then Mr. Lee says that to his sister Joan he left (*inter alia*) "a life interest in the Henley Street property." This, again, is erroneous. The Henley Street houses were left to Susanna. To Joan he devised "the house with the appurtenaunces in Stratford, wherein she dwelleth, for her naturall lief, under the yearlie rent of xij^{d}." These inaccuracies were pointed out by Mr. Stronach, in his pamphlet already referred to, but he himself falls into error as to the devise to Joan, which he describes as "a 'tenemente,' place not mentioned." It is odd indeed that Mr. Lee should have so misstated the document. Mr. Henry Davey, possibly misled by Mr. Lee, falls into the same errors both as to Judith and Joan Hart. "There were *bequests* to his sister Joan," writes Mr. Davey, but there was also a *devise* of the house in which she lived, as above-mentioned; and Judith did *not* receive "the tenement in Chapel Lane" (*Stratford Town Shakespeare*, Vol. X, p. 394). Mr. Halliwell-Phillipps, who correctly states the effect of the will, remarks that the testator "in devising his real estate to one child" had followed a general custom. (H.-P., Vol. I, p. 235, and see the will set forth at p. 169 of Vol. II.)

[1] i.e. as an inscription, such as that in Casaubon's Commentary on Persius presented to John Rowe. (See *Jonson's Works*, by Gifford, Colonel Cunningham's Edition, after p. 274.)

Shakespeare are one, dies without a single volume in his possession!

If he had had a library, if he had had in his possession any of those books which the poet Shakespeare used, and which he must have so much valued, is it credible that he would not have mentioned them? Would he have considered them of less importance than plate and linen, and jewels, and silver-gilt bowls? Compare the nuncupative will, made in 1635 by his son-in-law, John Hall. Hall was only a provincial doctor, a man who believed in the curative properties of "frog-spawn water, juice of goose-excrements, powdered human skulls, and swallows' nests," yet he, at least, had some appreciation of the value of books and manuscripts. The following is an extract of his will as reduced to writing by his witnesses: "Item, concerning *my study of bookes*, I leave them, sayd he, to you, my sonn Nash, to dispose of them as you see good. As for my *manuscriptes*, I would have given them to Mr. Boles, if hee had been here; but forasmuch as hee is not heere present, you may, son Nash, burne them, or doe with them what you please."[1]

"My study of books"—"my manuscripts." Of both there is in Shakespeare's will a silence that is truly appalling—appalling, that is, on the common hypothesis of authorship, but perfectly natural on the theory that player Shakspere and poet Shakespeare are distinct personages.[2]

[1] Note that Shakspere's books, if he had had any, would have been included in Hall's bequest. "In a nuncupative will that was made by Mr. Hall a few hours before he died, he gave Thomas Nash, the husband of his only child, his 'study of books.' As the Halls were Shakespeare's residuary legatees, there can hardly be a doubt that any volumes that had been possessed by the latter at Stratford-on-Avon were included in this bequest . . . but, from the absence of all reference to books in the will of 1616, it may be safely inferred that *the poet himself was not the owner of many such luxuries*"! (H.-P., Vol. I, p. 251). For "many" read "any."

[2] "But can you name three or four books which Bacon had in his possession when he died?" I once heard asked in argument, and the questioner seemed

It has been said that Shakspere had appointed his fellow-players, Heminge and Condell, to be his literary executors, and that he had, before his death, handed over to them his manuscripts "cur'd and perfect in their limbes, absolute in their members, as he conceived them."[1] If so, is it possible that he would have said not a word about them in his will? Not a word to indicate what his wishes were as to the time or manner of their publication, or to record his wish that published they should be, these immortal manuscripts, which he had (on this hypothesis) corrected for publication, and written out "without a blot"!

Let us remember what these manuscripts were. They included such masterpieces as *The Tempest*, *Macbeth*, *Twelfth Night*, *Measure for Measure*, *Coriolanus*, *Julius Cæsar*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Cymbeline*, *As You Like It*, and *The Winter's Tale*. Had the First Folio of 1623 never been published the world would have lost all these priceless possessions. Is it possible to suppose that the author of such works was utterly careless as to whether they were published or not? Nay, the theory is that the spotless, blotless, corrected manuscripts were handed over by the author some time before his death to his fellow-players, Heminge and Condell, whom (by a separate "nuncupative" will, I suppose!) he had appointed his literary executors. Yet, though he names these men in his written will, though he leaves them each 26s. 8d. to buy a ring, he breathes no whisper as to his wishes concerning that property compared with which all his lands,

to think he had triumphed because an answer was not forthcoming. But that is not the point. The point is that Shakspere makes no provision as to his books or MSS., though particular as to small matters of personal property. Bacon's will contains a specific bequest of his books—"I give to my brother Constable all my books"—and very particular directions as to his writings. The will of the actor Alleyn also (1626) is in striking contrast to that of Shakspere. Alleyn had books, and had no doubt how to dispose of them.

[1] Prefatory address "To the Great Variety of Readers," prefixed to the First Folio, as to which see chap. IX.

all his personalty, had they been a thousand times as great, would have been as dross.

But so it is at every turn in this man's life. At every turn we are asked to stretch our credulity to breaking point by accepting that which is contrary to all human experience and to all reasonable probability.

Let us consider this matter a little further. Mr. and Mrs. Hall were, as we have seen, appointed by Shakspere his residuary legatees. To them, therefore, would have gone his books and his manuscripts, if such he had. "Dr. Hall," as Judge Webb says, "was a man of business, and proved the will of his father-in-law on the 26th June, 1616, two months after his decease, but he never dreamt of claiming the Shakespearean plays as a portion of his residuary estate." Why not? These manuscripts, these plays, were valuable, and it is not suggested that Mr. and Mrs. Hall were indifferent to monetary considerations. Why, then, did they, executors and residuary legatees, make no claim to this valuable property? And why did their testator, who, if careless of literary fame, was, by universal consent, anything but careless when property was concerned, leave no directions as to its disposition? The Stratfordian answer to the question is, of course, that Shakspere had already disposed of all his manuscripts to the acting company to which he belonged, and had no further interest in them, either personal or proprietary. We will examine this theory when we come to deal with the First Folio edition and the law of copyright in the sixteenth and the beginning of the seventeenth century. For the present it may be sufficient to note that our great supposed poet and dramatist had at his death neither book nor manuscript in his possession, or to which he was legally entitled, or in which he had any interest whatever. Yet, even if he had parted with all his dramatic manuscripts, and cared not to retain any transcripts in his possession, one would think that he would at least have been

found in possession of copies of his *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece*, and of the *Sonnets*, whether in manuscript or print. But the Stratfordians seem to think it the most natural thing in the world that their hero should have died bookless.[1]

With regard to Susanna Hall an instructive incident has been put on record. Hall died in 1635, and "during the civil wars, about the year 1642, a surgeon named James Cooke, attending in his professional capacity on a detachment stationed at Stratford Bridge, was invited to New Place to examine the books which the doctor had left behind him."[2] Mrs. Hall told him "she had some books left by one that professed physic with her husband for some money." Whereupon, says Cooke, "I told her if I liked them I would give her the money again." She brought them forth, and says Cooke further, "I, being acquainted with Mr. Hall's hand, told her that one or two of them were her husband's, and showed them her;—she denied: I affirmed, till I perceived she began to be offended, at last I returned her the money."

[1] Since I wrote the above, another Stratfordian "gem, of purest ray serene," has been supplied by a writer in the *Speaker* (December 7th, 1904). Mr. Arthur Symons, writing on "Stratford and an Edition of Shakespeare," after alluding to New Place as the house "in which he had lived for at least the most mysterious years of his life, the five years in which he wrote nothing," adds this truly precious comment towards the end of the article:—"I am not at all sure that Shakespeare had really given up work and ambition during those last years in which he was seeming to do nothing. May he not have been meditating, may he not have actually begun a revision of his old work which he may well have hesitated to carry far? Shakespeare revising Shakespeare: it suggests an ambition beyond anything that a man has conceived." Mr. Symons does not inform us whether Shakspere was revising his manuscripts, or if he was working on the already published quartos, nor does he suggest what became of these books and manuscripts, with all the priceless revised work, at Shakspere's death. Was he, perchance, revising some of those masterpieces which never saw the light till seven years after his death, such as *Macbeth*, *The Tempest*, *Twelfth Night*, *The Winter's Tale?* Besides, had he not, at some unknown date, handed over his "writings" to the two players "cur'd and perfect of their limbes," and all the rest, "absolute in their members, as he conceived them"? Truly it cannot be said that the Baconians have any monopoly of drivel. (See chap. IX. on the First Folio.)

[2] H.-P., Vol. I, p. 252.

"The conversation here recorded," writes Mr. Halliwell-Phillipps (Vol. I, p. 252), "would appear to show that Mrs. Hall's education had not been of an enlarged character; that books and manuscripts, even when they were the productions of her own husband, were not of much interest to her. Were it otherwise, it would be difficult to account for the pertinacity with which she insisted upon the book of cases (i.e. a manuscript Latin medical case-book of Hall's, which Cooke translated into English and published in 1657) not being in the doctor's handwriting; for his caligraphy is of an uniform and somewhat peculiar description, not readily to be mistaken for any of the ordinary styles of writing then in use. It is very possible, however, that the affixion of her signature to a document was the extent of her chirographical ability, for the art of writing was then rare amongst the ladies of the middle class, and her sister was a marks-woman."

This incident, as Mr. Phillipps also says, "exhibits her (Mrs. Hall) in one direction as a true scion of the poet [Shakspere to wit], a shrewd person of business, caring more for gold than for books, albeit she was somewhat disturbed at the notion of parting with any of the latter that had been written by her husband, to whom she was warmly attached."[1]

Apparently, then, Mr. Shakspere's elder daughter was not able to recognise her husband's handwriting, although his "caligraphy" was "of an uniform and somewhat peculiar description." She brings out manuscripts, however, and is very willing to sell them; but, alas, there are none of her father's! What had become of them, and what had become of those books which he (if Shakspere = Shakespeare) must have possessed—his Holinshed, his North's *Plutarch*, his Florio's *Montaigne*, his *Belleforest*, his

[1] "Son Nash" had apparently not cared to deprive Mrs. Hall of his father's MSS. (See p. 191.)

Italian Romances, and all the other precious volumes which were the delight of the immortal dramatist?[1] What had become of them all? Where were they? And Echo answers "where"?

And here we are brought face to face with an astounding fact. Mrs. Hall could at any rate manage to affix her signature to a document, though probably this "was the extent of her chirographical ability." But her sister Judith, "the poet's" younger daughter, was unable to write her name. *Credite posteri!* The bard who was not of an age but for all time; the bard who has provided an appropriate word of poetry or philosophy for every incident and every contingency of human life; the bard whom to know is indeed a liberal education; the literary light of the world; the myriad-minded man who wrote that "there is no darkness but ignorance"—this greatest of the immortals, this demigod, did not even take the trouble to see that his daughter learnt to write her name! He left no books, and he left a daughter who could not read![2]

One is fain to ask which hypothesis, then, makes the greater demand upon our credulity, the Baconian, or the Stratfordian?

Elizabeth, the only child of the Halls, born in February, 1608, was Shakspere's last lineal descendant. He is said to have entertained a great affection for her. "If he had not been extremely fond of the little girl, it is not likely that he would have specifically bequeathed so mere a child nearly the whole of his plate in addition to a valuable contingent interest in his pecuniary estate." (H.-P., Vol. I, p. 205.)

This Elizabeth Hall married, first, Thomas Nash, of Stratford, a man of property who studied at Lincoln's Inn, and, secondly, John Barnard, of Abington, North-

[1] See Anders's *Shakespeare's Books*.

[2] As to the absurd suggested parallel in Milton's case see p. 204, note.

amptonshire, who was knighted by Charles II. On her mother's death she became the owner of New Place, and other property under Shakspere's will. Lady Barnard lived till 1669–70, and one would have supposed that she would have had much to say about the great poet, her grandfather, who was so fond of her as a child; that she would have cherished his memory, and would have affectionately preserved and been proud to exhibit many relics of him, including those books (if any!) which were at New Place when he died. Alas! Nothing of the kind. Only the same silence that can be felt!

"It appears from the records of some Chancery proceedings," says Mr. Halliwell-Phillipps, "that she inherited in after life the shrewd business qualities of her grandfather, but with this exception, nothing is known of her disposition or character." It seems that the descendants of the immortal poet were as unappreciative of their only claim to distinction as Shakespeare himself was careless of posthumous, or even contemporary, fame!

But, at any rate, we have the Stratford monument, with the well-known bust, that "rudely carved specimen of mortuary sculpture," as Mr. Lee calls it, with its "heavy unintellectual expression," the "clumsy" work of "Gerard Johnson or Janssen, who was a Dutch stonemason or tomb-maker, settled in Southwark."[1] Nobody knows who erected it, but it—or rather *some* monument—must apparently have been there before 1623, for Leonard Digges, in verses prefixed to the First Folio of that year, writes:—

> When that stone is rent,
> And Time dissolves thy Stratford Monument.

This Leonard Digges does not allude to the inscription on a tablet, placed below the bust, which may or may not

[1] "The statement that it was cut by 'Gerard Johnson,' an Amsterdam 'tomb-maker,' is invariably accepted, but can be traced to no historical source." (Appleton Morgan, *The Shakespearean Myth*, p. 97.) I have more to say as to the bust. See chapter VIII. on "The Portraits of Shakespeare."

have been on the Stratford monument at the time when he wrote. Nobody knows who wrote it, or when; just as nobody knows who erected the monument. If we could only interrogate those who published the First Folio, seven years after Shakspere's death, no doubt they could throw some valuable light on the subject. Very possibly "some gentlemen of London" caused the monument to be erected in Stratford Church, and employed Gerard Janssen, of Southwark, for that purpose (if *he* was the clumsy workman) somewhere about the time when the great work was being prepared for publication. But whoever he was that composed that inscription he could hardly have been much of a scholar, for the two Latin lines with which it commences contain a howling false quantity :—

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

It is to be hoped that Roche, or Hunt, or Jenkins, of Stratford Grammar School, would not have allowed the first syllable of Sōcrates to appear as the second foot of a dactyl!

These Latin lines claim for Shakespeare that he was a Nestor in experienced judgment, a Socrates in philosophical genius, and a Virgil in poetic art. As applied to Shakspere of Stratford, so far as we know of him, these comparisons do not seem very appropriate. Nestor was the old man famed for the wisdom of his advice in the council of heroes. It does not seem that Shakspere had much of the Nestor about him, nor, indeed, as Mr. Walter Begley says, was there "much of the 'Socratic method' or the Socratic philosophy displayed in any part of the life of William Shakespeare, the player, so far as we know it." As to "Maronem," the poet Shakespeare's contemporaries seem generally to have looked upon him as rather Ovidian than Virgilian.[1] It is remarkable that the dis-

[1] Mr. Walter Begley (*Is it Shakespeare?*, p. 103), by a slip, turns "Maronem" into "Ovid"!

tich, as Messrs. Garnett and Gosse remark, "is silent as to his work as a dramatist."

After this follow some English lines which show that the writer had no knowledge of the circumstances of Shakspere's interment, for they speak of him as lying "within this monument," whereas he lies, or is said to lie, as all the world knows, under the stone in the chancel, and not within the monument. "It is curious," too, as Mr. Halliwell-Phillipps observes, that in this inscription "there should be no allusion to his personal character." Is it possible that a distinction was drawn even here between the "Shakespeare" of this cenotaph and the "Shakspere" who is buried in the chancel?

Let us turn now to that stone in the chancel. Here we have Shakspere's epitaph, written by himself:—

> Good friend for Jesus sake forbeare
> To digg the dust encloased heare:
> Blest be ye man yt spares thes stones,
> And curst be he yt moves my bones.

These, we are told, are the last lines written—these the last sentiments uttered by the author of *Hamlet!* If so, the author of *Hamlet* might well have written also the doggerels on "Lousy Lucy," and the epitaph on old "John-a-Combe," which tradition has ascribed to him.[1]

Another extraordinary fact in this amazing life is that, with the exception of the *Plays*, and *Venus and Adonis*, and *The Lucrece*, and the *Sonnets*, and that puzzle-poem, *The Phœnix and The Turtle*, Shakespeare appears to have written nothing, unless we are to accept the above-mentioned doggerels as his indeed! If "Shakespeare" was but a *nom de plume* this need not excite surprise, for it would merely mean that the author, whoever he

[1] Are we, really, to believe that the bard of the world's adoration, the sublime teacher, the great-minded, tolerant, "gentle" philosopher, died with a curse upon his lips—an imprecation against any man who might *move his bones?* A mean and vulgar curse indeed!

was, cared to publish those plays and poems only under that pseudonym. But if Shakspere was indeed Shakespeare it does seem unaccountable that he should have written no lines to friends or patrons, no elegies on famous men or women of his day, no lyrics other than those, or some of those, which appear in the dramas, no epigrams, no epitaphs, no epithalamiums. Take Jonson's case, for example. Jonson wrote hundreds of poems, which in that day were classed as "epigrams." He wrote lines to his master, Camden, lines on the death of the Countess of Pembroke,[1] lines to "Lord Bacon" on his birthday, poetical addresses many, to friends, and patrons and personages of distinction, and a large number of lyrics and occasional pieces. In these poems, and in his prologues and epilogues, Jonson is continually giving us broad indications of his own personality; Shakespeare never gives us a glimpse of his, except it be in those enigmatical "Sonnets among his private friends." His plays "did take Eliza and our James"; yet the great Queen dies, and he sheds no melodious tear, weaves no wreath of song to lay upon her tomb. Prince Henry dies, "than which," says Grosart, "no death since Sydney's had so moved the heart of the nation as none evoked such splendid sorrow from England's foremost names—with one prodigious exception—in 'melodious teares.'"[2] And the one prodigious exception is Shakespeare. But why should William Shakspere, of Stratford, have played the part of "William the Silent"? No plausible answer to this question has ever been suggested.

But, surely, when this great poet died there was a great burst of lamentation, a great concert of praise! Surely all his brother minstrels who survived him vied with each other to write his elegy. Alas! Again silence—the silence that can be felt. "His death was greeted with

[1] If these be really his. [They are Wm. Browne's]

[2] Grosart's *Joshua Sylvester*, Vol. I, p. 17.

a chorus of elegiac and panegyrical verses, poured forth by the best poets of the moment," writes Mr. J. A. Symonds, but he is speaking not of Shakespeare, but of Jonson.[1] How different was the case of Shakespeare! It was not till seven years after the death of Shakspere that "Shakespeare's" elegy was written by this Ben Jonson whose own death was thus "greeted with a chorus of elegiac and panegyrical verse." It is true that one William Basse, a year before that (1622), had written some curious lines, in which he bids

> Renowned Spencer lie a thought more nigh
> To learned Chaucer, and rare Beaumont lie
> A little nearer Spenser, to make room
> For Shakespeare in your threefold, fourfold tomb,[2]

as though he thought Shakespeare was going to be buried in Westminster Abbey, as most assuredly Shakespeare ought to have been. But where is the "chorus of elegiac and panegyrical verses, poured forth by the best poets of the moment?" And once more "Echo answers '*where?*'" It was not till the First Folio appeared in 1623 that a tribute was paid to his memory. Why was this? Was it because "the friends of the Muses" were, for the most part, aware that Shakespeare had not died with Shak-

[1] Jonson died in August, 1637. At the beginning of 1638 was published *Jonsonus Virbius*, or the memory of Ben Jonson revived by the friends of the Muses. In this collection are poems by most of the men of genius of that age; by the Lord Falkland, the Lord Buckhurst, Sir John Beaumont, Sir Thomas Hawkins, Mr. Waller, Waring, Mayne, and Cartwright, of Oxford, and many others. "This piece was published by Dr. Dupper, Bishop of Chichester and Tutor to Charles the Second, then Prince of Wales. What is there so desirable as to be loved in life, and lamented after death by wise and good men; or what more honourable to a poet than to have his memory embalmed by the tears of the Muses?" (Whalley, *Life of Jonson*, p. 53.)

[2] There are a good many versions of this poem. (See Ingleby's *Centurie of Prayse*, p. 136.) The lines, says Dr. Ingleby, "are usually attributed to the elder W. Basse." The date seems uncertain. See pp. 336 and 472.

spere? Did Jonson perchance think that his idea might be realised when he wrote—

> What a sight it were
> To see thee in our waters yet appear,
> To make those flights upon the banks of Thames
> Which so did take Eliza and our James?

Be the explanation what it may, the fact that Shakspere should have practically remained seven years in his grave "unwept, unhonoured, and unsung" is one of those extraordinary things which we find in Shakspere's life alone—extraordinary, that is, if Shakspere be Shakespeare; quite intelligible on the contrary hypothesis.

Sixteen plays of Shakespeare were published in Shakspere's lifetime: but it appears that not one of them was published with his sanction. "He made no audible protest," writes Mr. Lee, "when seven contemptible dramas in which he had no hand were published with his name or initials on the title-page." In 1599 William Jaggard published *The Passionate Pilgrim* with the name "W. Shakespeare" on the title-page as author. There were twenty pieces in all in the volume, but only five were written by Shakespeare, the bulk of the book being by Richard Barnfield and others. For thirteen years Jaggard allowed this book to be read as the work of Shakespeare (Shakspere making no sign), and in 1612 he issued a third edition, still under Shakespeare's name as sole author, in which he included two new poems by Thomas Heywood as the work of Shakespeare. Heywood protested, and Jaggard removed Shakespeare's name from a few copies, and continued selling the rest as Shakespeare's. Shakspere made no protest, but Heywood stated that *Shakespeare* was offended, and very probably he was so; but as he was, so I conceive, "a concealed poet," writing under a *nom de plume*, he seems to have only made known his annoyance through the medium of Heywood.

Note.

To all this must be added that, so far as we know,

Shakspere never during his life did or said anything to show that he claimed to be the author of the *Plays* and *Poems* or any of them. Among the many extraordinary things in this (on the common hypothesis) inexplicable life, this is surely one of the most extraordinary.

My last comment on the life of William Shakspere of Stratford shall be this. Meagre as our knowledge of it is, it is yet too much. Mr. Lee's claim that we have "a mass of biographical detail which far exceeds that accessible in the case of any poet contemporary with Shakespeare" is, indeed, sufficiently ridiculous, but it would be far better for the Stratfordian theory if we had no biographical detail at all. If we knew nothing, we might imagine anything. What we do know is fatal to the case. It gives rise to the strongest possible presumption against the identity of Shakspere the player with Shakespeare the poet. It fully explains how Whittier came to write "Whether Bacon wrote the wonderful plays or not, I am quite sure the man Shakspere neither did nor could," and how John Bright came to say, in the vigorous style that was usual with him, "Any man who believes that William Shakspere of Stratford wrote 'Hamlet' or 'Lear' is a fool." Such strong language, however, as that used by the great tribune is to be deprecated. It should be left for the High Priests and Pharisees of literature. It is better to point out with Emerson how impossible it is to marry the facts of this man's life to the works that are ascribed to him. "Other admirable men have lived lives in some sort of keeping with their thought, but this man in wide contrast."

NOTE ON THE IGNORANCE OF JUDITH SHAKSPERE

(*See p.* 196.)

Mr. Henry Davey, who writes the "Memoir" in the *Stratford Town Shakespeare*, casting about, like other Stratfordian apologists, for a parallel case to Judith's, has fixed upon Milton's daughter Anne. Of Judith he writes (Vol. X, p. 293), "probably, like Milton's eldest daughter, she could not write." This is really pitiful. Milton's three motherless daughters, living with their blind father, may not have received the best of education; but, at any rate, they could all read; indeed, the two younger girls read to their father works in French, Latin, Italian, and Spanish. Phillips adds Greek and Syriac also, but this must he taken *cum grano*. He says, indeed, that they read without understanding, but, as Professor Masson comments, this "is credible only in the sense that it roughly describes the actual result." But what of the eldest daughter, Anne? Well, we are told that, although she could read, she could not write. But Anne was a deformed cripple, and Professor Masson tells us that it was "her bodily infirmity" which prevented her from writing. Now, many a man —and woman too—unable to read or write, has learnt to scribble a signature (such was apparently Susanna Hall's case), but this poor girl, who, although she could read perfectly well, was prevented by her bodily infirmity from writing, is put before us as a parallel to the ignorant and entirely uneducated Judith Quiney! Is it really suggested, then, that Milton would not have caused his eldest daughter to be as well educated as her sisters had it not been for her physical and, perhaps, mental infirmities? To such lengths are Stratfordian apologists driven!

CHAPTER VII

THE TRADITIONAL SHAKSPERE

BY tradition is meant, as the dictionaries tell us, that which is handed down by oral communication—*id quod est traditum*. When a man has been in any way remarkable, stories naturally gather around his memory, which, it may be, become subsequently embodied in the writings of diarists and chroniclers. These, if only they appear to have proceeded from trustworthy contemporary sources, form very fair "evidence of reputation" as to the character and circumstances of the subject of them. Now the contemporary records as to Shakspere's life being meagre in the extreme, it not unnaturally occurred to certain persons, in the latter part of the seventeenth century, to consult "ancient witnesses" as to the life of the man to whom was attributed a work so magnificent as the authorship of the *Plays* and *Poems* of Shakespeare, and to take notes of the stories told to them. Such traditional stories naturally require to be closely scrutinised, but they ought not, as Mr. Halliwell-Phillipps justly says, "to be hastily rejected as unworthy of serious discussion," although "the latter is much too frequently the treatment extended to these hearsay records," and one which is "highly favoured by numerous critics of the present day, who, guided by some mysterious instinct, assume to have a more intimate knowledge of Shakespeare's [i.e. Shakspere's] personal history than was vouchsafed to the ancient inhabitants of his own native town." Let us see, therefore, what sort of man was Shak-

spere of Stratford, and what sort of life he led according to the oldest traditional records which have come down to us.

Unfortunately we find no evidence of this description till between forty and fifty years after Shakspere's death. Let us begin with good old Thomas Fuller, whose *Worthies of Warwickshire*, forming part of his history of the *Worthies of England*, was published in 1662, the author having died in 1661, so that his notes on Shakespeare were probably written several years before the date of publication—say forty years or so after the death of Shakspere.

Fuller

"He was," says Fuller, "an eminent instance of the truth of that rule *poeta non fit sed nascitur*—one is not made but born a poet. Indeed, *his learning was very little*, so that, as Cornish diamonds are not polished by any lapidary, but are pointed and smoothed even as they are taken out of the earth, so nature itself was all the art which was used upon him."

Here we see that Fuller is at direct variance with Jonson—at any rate, the Jonson of the Folio lines:—

> Yet must I not give Nature all: thy Art,
> My gentle Shakespeare, must enjoy a part. . . .
> For a good Poet's made as well as born.
> And such wert thou.

At the same time he is in complete agreement with Jonson as to Shakspere's "small Latin and less Greek," telling us plainly that "his learning was very little," and saying that if alive he would confess himself "never any scholar."[1]

Next we have the Rev. John Ward, vicar of Stratford, who compiled a memoranda-book, begun, as an entry tells us, in February, 1661, and finished in April, 1663. His induction to the living occurred in 1662, so that he had

[1] I have dealt with Fuller's imaginary wit combats between Shakspere and Jonson elsewhere. See chap. XI.

only recently settled in the town when he wrote his notes on Shakspere, but Mr. Halliwell-Phillipps thinks "there can be no reasonable doubt that he has accurately repeated the prevalent local gossip" in his scanty entries. "I have heard," he says, "that Mr. Shakespeare was a natural wit, without any art at all; he frequented the plays all his younger time, but in his elder days lived at Stratford, and supplied the stage with two plays every year, and for that had an allowance so large that he spent at the rate of a thousand a year,[1] as I have heard. Shakespeare, Drayton, and Ben Jonson had a merry meeting, and, it seems, drank too hard, for Shakespeare died of a fever there contracted." Such was the "local gossip" about Shakspere forty-six years after his death—"a natural wit, without any art at all," a boon companion, and a hard drinker.

We next come to John Aubrey, who completed his *Lives of Eminent Men* in the year 1680. Aubrey certainly does not bear a high reputation for accuracy or trustworthiness. Mr. Phillipps calls him "one of those foolish and detestable gossips who record everything that they hear or misinterpret," and says that "he must have been in the habit of compiling from imperfect notes of conversations, or, no doubt in many instances, from his own recollections of them." Gifford recalls the saying of Anthony Wood, the biographer of Jonson, that Aubrey was "a roving magotty-pated man," and says that "he thought little, believed much, and confused everything." Too much reliance must not, therefore, be placed upon the statements of this "industrious antiquarian." He may have been personally veracious, as Malone believed,

[1] About £8000 of our money, I suppose; £5000 at the least—a pretty good "allowance" for writing plays! And Milton got £10 only for the copyright of *Paradise Lost!* See *ante*, p. 179 n., as to Shakspere's earnings. The actor Alleyn gave, we are told, no less a sum, in the whole, than £8870 for his estate at Dulwich, which would be equal to more than £40,000 of our present money. This shows what a fortune could be accumulated by a successful actor.

but that he was careless and inaccurate, if not even reckless in statement cannot, I think, be disputed, and he has made many bad and palpable blunders. Still he has some interesting notes on Shakspere, though we must remember that the subject of them had died upwards of sixty years before they were made. I have already quoted the passage to the effect that "his father was a butcher," and that the boy "exercised his father's trade, but when he killed a calf he would do it in a high style, and make a speech." He goes on to say, "This William, being inclined naturally to poetry and acting, came to London I guesse about 18,[1] and was an actor at one of the playhouses, and did act exceedingly well. . . . He began early to make essayes at dramatique poetry, which at that time was very lowe, and his playes tooke well. He was a handsome well shap't man, very good company, and of a very readie and pleasant smooth witt." He goes on to speak in characteristic fashion of "the humour of the cunstable in a Midsomers Night's Dreame," whom he apparently confuses with Dogberry in *Much Ado About Nothing*, and then quotes as authentic the doggerels on the death of old John O'Combe, the money-lender, ascribed to Shakspere, and concludes as follows: "Though as Ben Jonson says of him, that he had but little Latine and lesse Greek, he understood Latine pretty well, for he had been in his younger yeares a schoolmaster in the country."

Aubrey.

This latter statement that "the immortal William" had in his younger years been a village schoolmaster has been eagerly caught at by some who saw plainly that the "small Latin" idea will not hold water, and thought that as a country dominie Shakspere might have had the opportunity of picking up some of the large Latin which was undoubtedly possessed by the author of the *Plays*

[1] This would take Shakspere to town in 1582, but his twins were not born till 1585. I have already given reasons for putting the date of the "Hegira" at 1587 or thereabouts.

and *Poems*. So, just as certain others have made Shakspere an attorney's clerk in order to account, as they fondly imagine, for his knowledge of law, and as others, again, have sent him as a soldier to the Low Countries to study men and manners, he has been made, on the authority of the "magotty-pated man," a teacher of "hig, hag, hog" to rustic brats. When and where he so taught Aubrey unfortunately omits to mention, but as he supposes that Shakspere came to London about eighteen, and was an actor at one of the playhouses, he must have occupied the pedagogue's stool at a somewhat early age. Obviously this schoolmaster story, which rests entirely upon the statement of this blundering untrustworthy gossip, is a mere myth; but it will, of course, be believed by those who wish to believe it in the fond hope that therein they may find some comfort.[1]

These, then, are the tales about Shakspere as jotted down by Aubrey upwards of sixty years after the death of the Stratford Player. A butcher's son, apprenticed to his father's trade, making speeches in high style as he killed a calf, leaving Stratford (and wife and children, though Aubrey does not seem to have heard of these) while still a boy, and at once taking to acting and playwriting. Aubrey, it may be observed, does not dissent from the "small Latin and less Greek," but goes rather farther than the other collectors of gossip in saying that "he understood Latine pretty well." Here, then, is the traditional Shakspere according to Aubrey.

I need not again quote at length the notes made by the Rev. William Fulman some little time before the year 1688, or the additions to them made, previously to 1708, by the Rev. Richard Davies. The reader will remember

[1] Mr. Henry Davey (*Stratford Town Shakespeare*, Vol. X, pp. 264, 271) thinks it "almost certain" that what Aubrey really wrote was "*under* a schoolmaster"! If so, I presume "in the country" means at Stratford. Well, if we desire to insert a word in Aubrey's narrative, or any other, why should we not be at liberty to do so? *Cela se fait à Stratford!*