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THE GENUINE IN SHAKESPEARE

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

THE PROBLEM OF "HAMLET"

"HAMLET" ONCE MORE

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF THE SHAKESPEARE CANON

THE SHAKESPEARE CANON. PART I
- I: The Origination of "Henry V"
- II: The Origination of "Julius Cæsar"
- III: The Authorship of "Richard III"

THE SHAKESPEARE CANON. PART II
- I: The Authorship of "The Two Gentlemen of Verona"
- II: The Authorship of "Richard II"
- III: The Authorship of "The Comedy of Errors"
- IV: The Problem of "Measure for Measure"

THE SHAKESPEARE CANON. PART III
- I: The "Acceptance" of Shakespeare
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CROCE AS SHAKESPEAREAN CRITIC

ELIZABETHAN LITERATURE

THE GENUINE IN SHAKESPEARE

A CONSPECTUS

BY

J. M. ROBERTSON

Author of "The Shakespeare Canon," etc.

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The Coster : I ain't argyin' with yer : I'm a-tellin' yer.

The Other Coster : Can't yer do both ?

The Professor : Let us get away from this.

PREFACE

IT has been thought that a brief conspectus of the views put in the series of volumes by the author on "The Shakespeare Canon" and on separate plays might be serviceable, especially when the whole of the Canon is covered. This small volume, accordingly, presents the subject with brevity, and without notes or *apparatus criticus*. Tentative solutions and ascriptions are put as such; definite propositions are worded with due emphasis.

What is called "controversy," in the sense of censure of exponents of hostile views, was not in this field begun or sought by the author, but has been at points forced upon him by his antagonists. Living names, however, are here seldom introduced for censure. Many conclusions put crisply in these pages were reached through long analyses of *pro* and *con*, duly set forth in larger volumes.

The student, nevertheless, is here broadly shown the reasons for the conclusions offered him, and has his choice as to whether he will inquire further.

Needless to say, he is advised not to give final assents without such investigation.

The author is fain to add that in his own earliest and non-systematic inquiries, penned thirty or more years ago, he was still partly under the sway of traditional presuppositions; and that, in particular, he had not then clearly realised how the special verse-manner of Shakespeare had indicated itself at his very outset. The correct statement would seem to be that while the poet certainly underwent a gradual evolution from experiment to mastery, the first tentatives constitute a recognisable new departure, the expression of a unique faculty.

And it is probably the very common lacking or laggard percipience for verse rhythm that chiefly stands in the way of discrimination between really Shakespearean and pseudo-Shakespearean work. None the less, the case is assuredly not one for authoritarian pronouncements. Only by testable evidence and by faithful argument can scientific solutions ever be reached.

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THE GENUINE IN SHAKESPEARE

I. The Delusive Traditions

IT is a strange thing that Shakespeare, who perhaps of all writers—certainly of all writers since Dante—has been most written about, is of all great writers the most misknown. It was said of Voltaire, in the last generation, that with all his fame he was ill-known; and the statement was broadly true. But if we say "misknown," it is still truer of Shakespeare.

We may say it alike of his life and of his work. By this time there is an almost surprising amount of agreement, among the careful students of his life, in confessing that most of the traditions about his youth at Stratford are of no value. That he was the son of a butcher; that he would make a declamation over the killing of a calf; that he was haled up and punished for deer stealing before Sir Thomas Lucy and took a literary revenge by lampooning Lucy in THE MERRY WIVES; that he was an attorney's clerk; that on coming to London he organised a set of boys to hold gentlemen's horses while they were in the playhouse—all those late traditions have been critically dissected and dismissed. It is significant of the human fidelity to

tradition in general that even some academic investigators who have rejected all the other stories incline to hold on to the late tale—said by Aubrey to have been told him by the son of an actor who had been a member of Shakespeare's "company" —that the dramatist had been in his youth a country schoolmaster.

But all the stories, probably, are still believed among a majority of Shakespeare's readers, as the majority of the Swiss still believe the story of Tell and the apple, proved long ago by the scholars to have been a myth. It was Shakespeare's destiny to be misknown in this fashion, to begin with; long before and long after the virtuosi of error had with wide acceptance declared him to be the mere dummy or pen-name of Bacon, or of Rutland, or of Derby, or of Oxford, or any one of the yet unexhausted list of claimants to the Shakespearage. Most of us, it would seem, are really more qualified to believe error than to discover truth; and there are probably more Baconians, still, than circumspect students, as distinguished from unsuspecting readers, of the plays. It is so easy to accept a theory that requires no study.

But that is only the strictly biographical side of the misconceiving; and there is no limit to the further myth-mongering. That the poet was wonderfully well up in law, and that he was well read in Latin and Greek, are still widely believed assertions, no matter how much may have been written to demonstrate that other dramatists were far more

lavish of law phrases than he; and that even the Latin tags in those of the Folio plays which he did *not* write reveal no large range of scholarship. Even academics who profess to be rigidly critical of all the traditions can be found to insist that he probably read freely in French and Italian. They have no evidence. Nobody can outgo in credulity, at times, some of the professed scrutineers.

And this will continue. These chapters, setting forth what seems to a lay student the sifted critical truth about Shakespeare the man and the dramatist, will not convince the traditionists any more than the Baconians or the Rutlandites or the rest. They are not planned with any such expectation. They are written just by way of telling to whosoever cares to listen the conclusions or surmises of one lifelong student and investigator.

II. Shakespeare's Personal Testimony

It may be reassuring to some to learn that in regard to Shakespeare's beginnings as a play-writer we propose to accept his own explicit testimony. Nothing is more significant of the vast spontaneous conspiracy of mystification than the fact that hardly two inquirers, lay or academic, are content to take Shakespeare's own word, as it stands, when he declares in the dedication to the VENUS AND ADONIS that that poem is "the first heir of my invention." Of that fairly plain avowal, which declares that he has hitherto "invented" no other whole work

worth publishing, whether in poetry or drama, there is perpetual and obstinate misrepresentation. And this simply because the mass of the plays in the 1623 Folio, published under the auspices of his old colleagues, Heminge and Condell, cannot be chronologically accommodated without declaring a number of them to have been, as some certainly were, written before 1593, the date of the issue of the VENUS AND ADONIS. To save the face of the Folio, the Foliolaters burke the critical problem, Who wrote them? and distort Shakespeare's evidence.

It is possible, of course, to imagine an honest guess which should leave open the theory that Shakespeare had written a whole play or plays before 1593. One can argue that "perhaps" the poem was written years before 1593, though only then published, and that it was his first complete composition of any length about, say, 1589. Such pleas have been advanced, not with any pretence of believing them, but just by way of showing what "might have been," and persuading readers to pay no attention to the poet's own volunteered assertion.

But there is simply no ground in common-sense for believing that Shakespeare—driven, as all biographers agree, to London about 1585–7 by the *res angusta domi*, to provide for a quickly swelling family—would have held back for even three years a poem so well fitted for the popular market. And there is not merely that strong negative ground for rejecting the distortion of his words. Even scholars

who obstinately refuse to admit that he was telling the truth in the natural meaning of his words agree that the VENUS is penned in imitation of the stanza-manner of Lodge's GLAUCUS AND SCILLA, published in 1589, and the LUCRECE in imitation of the stanza-manner of Daniel's COMPLAINT OF ROSAMOND (1592). Yet some who profess to recognise these facts would have us believe that Shakespeare wrote the VENUS before leaving home, holding it up through all his early years of struggle and hardship. That it was written in 1592–3, while the theatres were closed for the plague, is the one rational inference from the facts.

III. Distortions of the Testimony

Nothing, however, will induce the scholars who swear by the Folio to admit that Shakespeare meant what he pretty plainly said in the dedication to the VENUS. Professing to stand or fall by the "external evidence," they determinedly deny the most vital item in that evidence. Even as the builders of war-ships will to the last resist, by hook or crook, naval disarmament, the devotees of the Folio refuse to take a testimony which for an honest student is incomparably stronger than the merely passive pretence of the editors of the Folio. Even a leading supporter of the tradition admits that Heminge and Condell would not have hesitated to include non-Shakespearean matter in the Folio. Yet we get from the latest champion of that commercial com-

pilation a deliberate perversion of the words, " first heir of my invention." " This, *however*," we are told, " *need* mean no more than the first of his published works." Observe the " need." We may fitly paraphrase thus: " The matter can be ' wangled ' for our purpose."

The case is " gross as a mountain, open, palpable." Shakespeare did *not* mean: " my first *published* work." Had he meant that, he would have said so. He meant " my first complete literary work " ; " my first invention of an organised story." Like all other young men of high literary gift—nay, like most men of literary taste with any measure of gift—he must previously have written verses, being then twenty-nine years old. As we shall shortly see, he had done more. He had written at least a part of one play ; and he may well have written parts of others. But he had not *constructed* a play. He had not " invented " or composed a plot, either in a play or in a poem. This is at once the only honest and the only reasonable foundation for any theory of Shakespeare's work as dramatist.

The fashion in which the sworn sectaries of the Folio argue their case is happily illustrative at once of their quandary and their strategy. They actually suppose they are explaining away Shakespeare's own words by reminding us that when Greene died in 1592, after denouncing Shakespeare, almost by name, as a " Johannes Factotum, in his own conceit the only Shake-scene in a country," Greene's apologetic friend and publisher, Chettle, testified

(without using Shakespeare's name but clearly referring to him) that the young man whom Greene had aspersed was known for his "facetious grace in writing."

That is a valid testimony, honestly to be accepted. But it no more proves that Shakespeare had written a whole play—in face of his own declaration—than it proves that he had written only humorous matter. "Facetious" did not then mean "jocular." Derived from the Latin word *facetus*, it substantially meant "urbane." What the statement does suggest to a fair interpreter is that the young man had written *in a comedy*.

IV. The "Henry VI" Plays

What was Shakespeare's first piece of dramatic writing it is impossible to say. Those who try to make a chronology from the Folio, taking all the plays as of his own composition, cannot pretend to ascertain what is the earliest matter *in quality*, for they are practically agreed on rejecting "literary connoisseurship" as untrustworthy. They well may, for they certainly have little literary connoisseurship of their own. And this, of course, is only to say that they belong to the majority who read poetry without perception of rhythmic as distinct from metric quality—a morally innocent disqualification. In so far as they try to adhere to their avowed principles, they seem to be led to fixing on I HENRY VI as Shakespeare's first play, because we have the con-

temporary evidence of Nashe that in 1592 the Talbot death-scenes in *a* play had a great success, and the further evidence of Henslowe's Diary that a "Harey the Sixth" was played in that year.

That might seem sufficient for the purposes of the Folio school in general; but the more intelligent of its members cannot help seeing that I HENRY VI as it stands is a *recast* play, and was originally written at a still earlier date. The earlier unprinted form, accordingly, is also claimed by some for Shakespeare. In any case, the school in general (with exceptions) stand to it that Shakespeare was a play-author years before 1593 in respect of either I HENRY VI or the whole three plays of the HENRY VI trilogy.

Now, there is little of "facetious grace" in I HENRY VI apart from the comedy scenes, which are poor, or the scene in the Temple Gardens, commonly called the Roses scene. But that scene has been very generally assigned to Shakespeare, even by critics who confess that he cannot have written either the opening scene or the Talbot death-scenes. And it should be frankly admitted that, if Shakespeare *had* written the Roses scene in 1592, he might still quite properly speak of the VENUS in 1593 as the "first heir of his invention"—meaning that he had neither composed nor planned the play as a whole.

But, as we shall see, there are overwhelming *literary* reasons for deciding that Shakespeare not only did not write the Roses scene, but wrote *no*

scene in I HENRY VI. Of course, he may have slightly revised lines or speeches in it for his company: it is impossible to prove that he did not, and perhaps not *very* unlikely that he did. Yet there is good reason for inferring that, being a higher and a nobler spirit than his colleagues, he deeply disliked in that play the vile treatment finally accorded to Joan of Arc. He would pass most plots for theatre purposes, but this might well have repelled him utterly. Later, when we trace his share in various plays, we shall find that he handled or rewrote them in *the degree of his interest in the subject*, or of the opening given him by his company.

Thus he very extensively rewrote HAMLET, which we *know* to be a recast of an earlier play, probably written by Thomas Kyd. Also he completely rewrote not only KING JOHN (certainly based on an older play which is in print) but I HENRY IV, which has latterly been shown to contain, under the surface of its prose, traces of the verse of an older play. (2 HENRY IV, nevertheless, contains much verse from another hand, not necessarily because Shakespeare was not interested in it.) On the other hand, while he (with another) entirely recomposed LEAR, of which the old form is in print, and very fully rewrote MACBETH, OTHELLO, and ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA, even as he did HAMLET, and as he did the best comedies in the degree of his satisfaction with them, he rewrote ALL'S WELL much less than he did MEASURE FOR MEASURE, which would appeal more to him, as it should to us.

If, at this point, it should be objected that we have no right to credit our author with moral predilections because they happen to be ours, the answer is that we indeed have no right to apply *à priori* moral tests without a backing from strictly literary tests, such as we really have here. It is a gratuitous fallacy, for instance, to assume that Shakespeare would have refused to handle such a theme as that of Heywood's A WOMAN KILLED WITH KINDNESS, had it come in his way. But nonetheless a perception of Shakespeare's moral sanity is a main element in our total conception of him; so much so that to find him countenancing a baseness would make a radical difference in our whole thought concerning him. And it is a special baseness in I HENRY VI that we take to have repelled him as it repels us.

It is quite reasonable, then, to say that while Shakespeare *did* some genuine re-writing in the last Act of 2 HENRY VI, as we shall see later, he would not *want* to do any such service in I HENRY VI; and as a matter of literary fact it contains no speech marked by his style, his diction, his versification, his thought, or his feeling. If we are to look rationally for his earliest dramatic work, then, we must look elsewhere—always remembering, of course, that his earliest insertions in plays *may not have been preserved at all.*

V. Shakespeare's First Dramatic Writing

A quite dispassionate study will probably lead us to the conclusion that the earliest surviving dramatic writing by Shakespeare is the first scene of the COMEDY OF ERRORS. A good scholar has, indeed, pointed to the opening lines of LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST as the earliest sample. And, as those lines suggest the influence of Marlowe on the young poet, though clearly not written *by* Marlowe as they stand, but bearing the stamp of Shakespeare's versification and diction, the claim makes a reasonable appeal, in the light of the common assumption that LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST *must* be Shakespeare's oldest play.

That assumption, however, was not critically made, being largely founded on inference from the fact that the play contains a great deal of rhyme, youthful-looking fun, and comic pedantry, with little constructive power. When, on those loose lines of inference, it was actually dated 1588 in the "New English Dictionary," the decision was quite unwarrantable as serious chronology. And even if he had contributed to the LABOURS before 1593, there can be no certainty that the opening lines were part of his first work on it. The admitted revision may have touched there.

The whole question of the date and origination of LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST, in fact, yet remains to be scientifically handled. There is no good reason for believing either that Shakespeare originated it or that he wrote all of it as it now stands. But there is

certainly good reason for believing that the first scene of the COMEDY OF ERRORS (not the second, and not the play as a whole) was written by Shakespeare. And though the first scene cannot be said to show any trace of the influence of Marlowe, having not even the oracular touch, and being written with a continuous construction which the "end-stopped" verse of Marlowe never attained, it is yet, for Shakespeare, distinctly "youthful." It is indeed more youthful-looking than almost anything in the blank-verse of the MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM, Shakespeare's first complete play, so far as we can tell.

It will be necessary to go into this a little more fully, to make clear wherein the profound difference between the *versification* of Shakespeare and all his predecessors and contemporaries consists. For that is one of the vital matters that are hopelessly obscured by the academics and others who want to ascribe to Shakespeare the whole contents of the Folio. But the first point to settle is that the ERRORS is to be dated 1591. His own testimony assures us that in that case he did not "invent" it: the play as a whole is not his. But for those who have inner eyes to know style and the inner ear to hear rhythm, the opening scene is certainly his, just as the second scene is certainly not.

VI. *The Date of the "Comedy of Errors"*

That the ERRORS must be as early as 1591 is to be proved by one fact in particular. As the commentators have noted, the phrase (III, ii, 127) about France "making war against her heir" puts the play between 1589 and 1593, because only in those years was France so describable, the "heir" being Henri IV. Seeing that in 1591 England was actually assisting Henri against his Catholic foes, that year is obviously likely; and, as we shall see, the play cannot be later, in its present form, than the beginning of 1592.

It has been repeatedly pointed out that a passage in ARDEN OF FEVERSHAM, entered on the Stationers' Register for publication in April of 1592, dates that play just after the ERRORS. The passage (II, i, 49) is a description of "A lean-faced writhen knave," pointing obviously to one in the ERRORS (V, lines 237–40), which in turn points back to two in THE JEW OF MALTA. The passage in the ERRORS is plainly Marlowe's, being a free variant of those in THE JEW, while that in ARDEN is a *narrative* description, in Kyd's rather than in Marlowe's manner, combining in a laboured way details from both the ERRORS and THE JEW passages, which in themselves are vividly dramatic. The COMEDY OF ERRORS, then, was on the stage in 1591–2.

We cannot claim, of course, that the whole of Shakespeare's work in the opening scene, or in any later scene, was necessarily done as early as 1591:

indeed, the style of the Duke's vivid and vigorous speech to Ægeon reads like a somewhat later re-writing. But in any case the "earliness" of the long speech of Ægeon—which is easily fluent without poignancy—will not be denied by any competent student of Shakespeare's work; and 1591 is really a very likely date for it.

Here we are faced by the absurdities involved in a special academic delusion. The reader of Scene i will observe that there are only three "double-endings"—that is, lines ending with an extra syllable (as in "To be or not to be, that is the *question*"). But in Scene ii, where the versification is of a quite different kind, there are 24 double-endings in the 103 blank-verse lines (two of the total of 105 lines are in rhyme), which is 23 per cent as against the 2 per cent of Scene i. Scholars like Furnivall noticed the low figure in the first scene, and, so far rightly, pointed to it as marking Shakespeare's early verse-manner. Strangely enough, however, they did not go on to realise that Scene ii must, on their own principles, be either non-Shakespearean or of much later date. But the *end-stopped* character of the lines in general, to say nothing of their generally prosaic style, was impossible for Shakespeare at any date, even after he had multiplied his double-endings. This is an induction, not a dogma.

And this combination of a high-rate of double-endings with a constant predominance of end-stopped form in the verse is what rules out Shakespeare as

author of either the HENRY VI plays or RICHARD III, in which they culminate. Marlowe's is the ruling hand; and while in RICHARD III we find him seconded at points by Kyd, as in the entrance of Anne, and perhaps expanded by Heywood later, in the second wooing, Shakespeare's hand enters in only a few places at most. The outstanding point is Buckingham's speech in Act III, scene vii, line 117, where we have a rhythm and a diction totally different from those of the bulk of the play. For the rest, the clues of style and phrase to Marlowe abound, thick and threefold, visible to any watchful eye. The play is, in short, Marlowe's, as was long ago claimed by Fleay.

VII. Verse Tests

We who compare them carefully can see that Scene ii of the ERRORS is not Shakespeare's at all. Not only has it all those double-endings, its verse is in general *end-stopped*: that is to say, the sense and the rhythm generally end with the line, and even the sense is rarely "run on." In the first scene, on the contrary, 20 per cent of the lines "run on," and this mostly both in syntax and in rhythm. Here we have, in visibly early matter, the first vital differentiation between Shakespearean and pre-Shakespearean verse. The beginner is indeed writing *like* a beginner, not in the great style, yet in his own; and though the poetry is *for him* third-rate it *is* poetry. Scene ii is not only end-stopped and heavy

with double-endings: it is in the main prosaic, in a way that Shakespeare is never prosaic in his demonstrably genuine work.

The prosaism is Marlowe's. In his serious plays he is poetic beyond the range or power of the other pre-Shakespeareans. In his comedy he is at a loss to be poetic, especially in non-serious dialogue; and only by falling back on such poetic figures as his often-used phrase about a drop of water in the ocean can he give here a forced poetic touch.

Thus does the case broadly stand. But certain American scholars—diligent and serious inquirers—have strangely made up their minds that it must have been Shakespeare who first multiplied double-endings; and one of them, accordingly, gives him the inferior Scene ii of the ERRORS and the sequel, and denies him Scene i, poetry and all, though the Duke's speech is better blank-verse than any in the rest of the play. They are demonstrably wrong. All critics of necessity admit that the DREAM, KING JOHN, and I HENRY IV are among Shakespeare's earlier plays, and later than the ERRORS. But in KING JOHN and I HENRY IV his percentages of double-endings are only 6.3 and 5.1 respectively; in the (revised) DREAM 7.3.

That is how he *certainly* wrote as late as 1595 and thereabouts, in plays which are the best of his early work. To say, then, that it is he who multiplies double-endings in I HENRY VI and RICHARD II and RICHARD III and the ERRORS is to palter with the plain evidence. To prove him the pioneer of double-

endings, the statistics must be "cooked." And cooked, accordingly, they have been. The poet is actually extolled for an æsthetic crudity, and denied credit for his real merit; while he is further represented as beginning his career by laboriously writing second-rate Marlowese.

VIII. Marlowe's Versification

That the real pioneer of the multiplied double-ending was Marlowe is easily shown. In TAMBURLAINE he has few; yet in certain scenes, inferably additions, the percentage notably increases. So in EDWARD II, and in THE JEW OF MALTA. But the decisive thing is that in his posthumous translation, line for line, of the First Book of Lucan's PHARSALIA, we find actually 26 per cent of double-endings in the first hundred lines; and in the whole piece 17 per cent. It is he, then (as we might have seen with certainty in the Roses scene of I HENRY VI if we had read with eye for style and ear for end-stopped rhythm) who had carried the double-ending beyond 25 per cent when he died in 1593. And it was he who put 23 per cent in Scene ii of the ERRORS. That verse, and that diction, are his.

Other men followed his lead, Kyd being the first. Some of the scenes in SOLIMAN AND PERSEDA and ARDEN OF FEVERSHAM, both critically assignable in the main to Kyd, reach high percentages. Greene, on the other hand, was slow to follow, as he had been slow to take to blank-verse, looking jealously askance

at Marlowe's success in 1588. But there was a reason for the double-ending, and before his death in 1592 Greene had accepted it. The reason was that the double-ending gave the blank-verse writer not only a somewhat greater freedom, previously accepted as it were perforce, but gave the ear some relief from the monotony inseparable from end-stopped verse.

Shakespeare was the last to follow the new fashion, precisely because he least needed any such relief. From the outset he overcame monotony by his run-on rhythm; and when he had found the secret of ending a verse-sentence in the middle and not at the end of a line, he had doubly transcended monotony. Hence in the DREAM and I HENRY IV. he does not want the multiplied double-ending. When the fashion had become general he tranquilly followed it, instinctively shunning the new monotony of *too many* double-endings, which is even more wearisome to the rhythmic sense than the earlier. But not till the later years of the decade did he write his own verse with such percentages of double-endings as we find in the Roses scene and Scene ii of the ERRORS.

Only in terms of those general rules or principles will the student ever find his way to the knowledge of the genuine as against the non-genuine work in the Shakespeare Folio; though that, of course, will not take us all the way.

IX. *Shakespeare's Versification*

Let us now note, in passing, by examples, the kind of movement or pulsation, the rhythm, the thought, the phrasing which mark off Shakespeare from other men. Take the opening lines of the Duke's speech in Scene i of the ERRORS, which, if not as early in its present form as Ægeon's, is at least certainly not late, having indeed a touch in it of youthful imperfection :—

> Merchant of Syracusa, plead no more.
> I am not partial to infringe our laws.
> The enmity and discord which of late
> Sprung from the rancorous outrage of your duke
> To merchants, our well-dealing countrymen,
> Who, wanting guilders to redeem their lives,
> Have seal'd his rigorous statutes with their bloods,
> Excludes all pity from our threatening looks. . . .

That last line distinctly savours of the artificial "expletive" diction of the pre-Shakespeareans. It is written in the poet's first period. But how firm, how full, and how easeful, already, is the diction: and how remarkable, in contrast with all previous work, is the large construction of the whole period, whereof six lines, after the two crisp ones which begin, make a continuous sentence, the sense and the rhythm alike having a free movement. Marlowe never wrote like this, though he could make extended periods with his end-stopped lines: at his highest poetic bursts, and they are splendid in their leaping way, his lines, however mighty, are mostly un-

constructed clauses. For a blank-verse that hitherto, at its best, was bounding, we have now a verse that is winged.

Not yet, indeed, do we see the play of the great pinions of the great period to come: the verse of Ægeon is not on the plane of passion. But it is Shakespeare's verse, as distinct from that of every other man of the day, prehensile, expressive without strain; above all, continuous in the rhythm, of which the breaks are not dictated by the line-length but by the sense, which may pause anywhere. In the next scene, even where a line is occasionally "run on" in syntax, we have entirely lost the constructive control; and in the lines on the merchant who has been apprehended:—

> And, not being able to buy out his life,
> According to the statute of the town
> Dies ere the *weary* sun set in the west.
> There is your money that I had to keep—

we have the line-making mode of Marlowe, with the supererogatory touch of poetry about the weary sun (a favourite conceit of his) followed by an incongruous descent to the purely prosaic.

The play, we infer, had been drafted by Marlowe, evidently re-writing an older one which contained old-fashioned doggerel that has not been wholly removed. Shakespeare, as evidently, has rewritten the entire first scene—perhaps, one guesses, because he was playing Ægeon, old men's parts being traditionally assigned to him as an actor. But though he contributes some graceful and forceful rhyme and

other verse later on, the play as a whole is certainly not his. Only rhythm-deaf readers can think it so.

X. *The Genuine Versification Sampled*

A little later, we again have his "authentic hand." It occurs in the last Act of 2 HENRY VI, his first traceable entrance into the trilogy. None but he can have rewritten that speech of Young Clifford (V, ii, 31) :—

Shame and confusion ! all is on the rout :
Fear frames disorder, and disorder wounds
Where it should guard. O war ! thou son of hell,
Whom angry heavens do make their minister,
Throw in the frozen bosoms of our part
Hot coals of vengeance ! Let no soldier fly :
He that is truly dedicate to war
Hath no self-love, nor he that loves himself
Hath not essentially, but by circumstance,
The name of valour. (*Seeing his father's body.*)
O ! let the vile world end,
And the premisèd flames of the last day
Knit earth and heaven together ;
Now let the general trumpet blow his blast,
Particularities and petty sounds
To cease !—Wast thou ordained, dear father,
To lose thy youth in peace, and to achieve
The silver livery of advisèd age,
And in thy reverence and thy chair-days thus
To die in ruffian battle !

This insertion, we may reasonably infer, belongs to the period in which he wrote, in 2 HENRY IV,

those lines for the old son-bereft Northumberland (I, i, 150) :—

Now bind my brows with iron ; and approach
The ragged'st hour that time and spite dare bring
To frown upon the enrag'd Northumberland.
Let heaven kiss earth ! now let not nature's hand
Keep the wild flood confin'd ! let order die !
And let this world no longer be a stage
To feed contention in a lingering act ;
But let one spirit of the first-born Cain
Reign in all bosoms, that, each heart being set
On bloody courses, the rude scene may end,
And darkness be the burier of the dead !

Both speeches belong to the order of "storm and stress," the clangorous or plangent declamation that marks the old battelous chronicle drama ; we are still in the age of rhetoric ; we might almost say, of rant ; and yet both speeches transcend all previous stage rhetoric of that order, alike in thought, in phrase, in intensity, in versification, and, in the first case, in piercing pathos. Even the partial duplication of the thought—a thing not uncommon in Shakespeare, as distinct from the frequent repetition of *phrases* by his predecessors—is partly a clue to his mind : we have it long afterwards, in terser form, in MACBETH :—

I 'gin to be aweary of the sun,
And wish the estate o' the world were now undone ;

also in ANTONY and in CORIOLANUS.

But the most important thing thus far is that we

shall recognise in the extract from 2 HENRY VI, in juxtaposition with that from 2 HENRY IV, the way Shakespeare's verse goes, and also the way it blends philosophic thought spontaneously with passionate diction. The former passage is the touchstone by which to test all pretences of finding Shakespeare's hand in the HENRY VI trilogy; and yet no discriminator has so cited it since Malone, who, by adding many other passages as equally Shakespearean, nullified his testimony to this. Fleay, who with broad justice denied that Shakespeare had any hand in 2 and 3 HENRY VI, overlooked this. The speech, indeed, is not Shakespeare's to the close: it ends in academic classicism in the manner of Marlowe and Kyd and Heywood. But in other short speeches in the same scene, by Margaret and Young Clifford, we have the same verse-vibration and movement and the same pregnancy; and these lines on old Salisbury are from the same hand:—

> That winter lion who in rage forgets
> Aged contusions and all brush of time,
> And, like a gallant in the brow of youth,
> Repairs him with occasion?

The critical reader will by this time, if not before, be conscious of a certain *strangeness* in the phrasing—something Elizabethan, something of its own age, and not of ours. And that is always to be looked for in Shakespeare, however familiar he becomes to us. "Premisèd" he used in the sense of "thrown forward," as Kyd used "prefixed" to mean "prearranged" or "fixed beforehand." So "approach"

may mean "bring on." "Ragged'st," we are also to remember, had then the force we should now give to "rugged'st." To become at home in Shakespeare, we have to master that old-time speech. But what of old speech is better worth mastering?

XI. Anomalies of Orthodoxy: "Richard II," etc.

When we have thus detected the open secret of Shakespeare's authentic style, we are near the solution of several problems of the Canon. Take, for instance, that of RICHARD II. In the eighteenth century Dr. Johnson and others saw it as one of the plays which Shakespeare had only revised. But Malone dogmatically pronounced to the contrary, and his lead has been generally followed, even Fleay assenting. Then arose, however, a new problem, that of the date.

Good critics find the play genuine, but quite early—in fact, Shakespeare's first historical tragedy. Yet it has 11 per cent of double-endings, while I HENRY IV and KING JOHN have only about half that rate. On the other hand it has 19.9 per cent of run-on lines (more than OTHELLO) where KING JOHN has only 17.7. This high rate certainly suggests that Shakespeare has worked considerably on the play, presumably before he wrote I HENRY IV, which has 22.8 of run-on lines. And the solution lies in noting that here he is revising.

That RICHARD II is fundamentally a Marlowe play is provable in many ways, by clues of matter and

manner, style and sentiment. The prophetic speech of the Bishop of Carlisle in Act IV, scene i, 114–148, is in every way a close parallel to that of Antony in JULIUS CÆSAR (III, i, 259–276) ; and both are in Marlovian and pre-Shakespearean verse. The first Act of RICHARD II is emphatically Marlowe's in conception, management, and style, with perhaps collaboration by Peele. And the rhyme-work in the play, which Swinburne oddly regarded as Shakespeare's submission to the influence of Greene, is pretty clearly Marlowe's also.

That Shakespeare acted as reviser we know for certain when we attentively read Richard's speech (III, ii, 160–170) which begins : " Within the hollow crown That rounds the mortal temples of a King," and it is by tracing the various appearances of *that* rhythm, *that* silvery poetry, that we shall ascertain how far he laid hands on the play. He transmuted, in fact, what appealed to him, leaving the play in the main Marlovian. Early work it certainly is, but revisory work only.

We have now made a beginning in knowing *how* Shakespeare wrote : the only trustworthy ground for any opinion as to *what* he wrote, whether before or after VENUS AND ADONIS. If we are to believe, by coercion, that he wrote the whole of every play in the Folio because Heminge and Condell seem to say so, we are condemned to believe nonsense. Such compulsions are paralyses of æsthetic perception and critical thought. We can at once detect his hand in RICHARD III, where it enters in Act III, sc. vii, at

line 117, as aforesaid. But the great bulk of the play is no more in that verse than is the Roses scene in I HENRY VI.

In TITUS ANDRONICUS, as it stands, there are demonstrably four verse-styles, those of Peele, Marlowe, Kyd, and Greene, and not one scene in the verse-style of the Shakespeare we have been listening to in the foregoing extracts. If Shakespeare wrote that odious play, he was making his first tragedy a pandemonium of brutality and nightmare horrors, and doing it all in maniacal apery of all the styles in sight, when he already could transcend all.

There are serious and reputable scholars who can affect to believe this, in an age in which bishops openly accept geology and Darwinism. Literary medievalism thus outgoes clerical. This can happen only where professed scholars refuse to use the literary sense, and rely solely on what they call bibliography. Whether or not they were born so, they have made themselves style-blind and rhythm-deaf. The closest parallel in culture-history is that of the attitude of the Italian academics who refused to look through Galileo's telescope. Some might point, further, to the legendary ostrich who buries his head in the sand to escape his pursuers.

And yet the professed bibliographers are disloyal to their own declared allegiance. They are simply bad bibliographers. They refuse to accept the strongest documentary evidence available, the express testimony of Shakespeare himself. Yet

more, while professing to trust solely in Heminge and Condell they flout those authorities half the time. The late Professor Sir Walter Raleigh proclaimed in his monograph on Shakespeare that we must hold to the safe anchorage of Heminge and Condell or drift helplessly on a violent sea, "subject to *every* wind of doctrine." On the very next page the Professor writes that "At the beginning of his career Shakespeare made very free use of the work of *other men*, and, moreover, sometimes reshaped his own work, so that *it is often difficult to assess the extent of his rights in the play as we have it.*" Such are our bifrontal academic lawgivers, themselves adrift without chart or compass.

According to another, who has editorially made the most explicit admissions that there is non-Shakespearean matter in TIMON and in PERICLES, a large part of HENRY VIII has been shown to be not by Shakespeare but by Fletcher. Hardly one academic now ventures to deny this. And yet prominent authorities among them profess to distrust all "literary connoisseurship," and to follow Heminge and Condell through thick and thin. It was precisely by literary connoisseurship that such critics as Spedding and Ingram demonstrated the hand of Fletcher in HENRY VIII. And an authority who nevertheless repudiates connoisseurship has avowed in so many words that Heminge and Condell were "not in the least likely" to scruple about inserting non-Shakespearean matter. The "orthodox" school have elected to stand by tergiversation,

and by tergiversation will fall, if literary conscience and literary percipience are not doomed to disappear from this field.

XII. The Master's Mentality. Plots

I can well conceive, nevertheless, that a serious student, faced by the new doctrine, should pause in doubt, if not in dismay. Taught to believe that Shakespeare was a kind of dramatic wizard, who at his will called up from his original imagination every plot, every scene, every character, and thus penned the entire manifold Folio, the shaken student may ask, " Am I then to conceive of our Master Dramatist as one who for the most part pieced or adapted, patched or trimmed, recast or rewrote, ever so completely, plays planned and written by other men ? Surely some other men planned and wrote, singly, many whole plays, even if those plays were afterwards altered at points ? Marlowe wrote TAMBURLAINE and the JEW, and probably wrote his FAUSTUS originally to his own plan, though the theatre had it later cut about, to get comic effects. Could Shakespeare have been less original, less constructive ? Even Greene seems to have written whole plays 'on his own,' inventing his plots. Was Shakespeare less capable ? "

It is a fair challenge, to be fairly met. The answers are to be made both in general and in particular. To begin with, plot invention is both common and facile. Nashe confessed Greene to be

"his craft's master" in plotting plays. But what are the plots worth? Our great Shakespearean plays, with the great plots, are one and all old stories, the fit survivors of hundreds more. It was just because Shakespeare knew that the best plots were not the newly invented ones that he rather turned back to the old ones. His first, and indeed his only, complete play was the DREAM. It has lived chiefly by its poetic charm, not at all by its airy-fairy plot.

Scribe was the most fecund of plot-makers. He has written no great play. Productivity is not genius. A score of men in Shakespeare's age, Spaniards, French, English, wrote singly far more plays than are contained in the Folio. Alexandre Hardy wrote hundreds; Lope de Vega about as many. Thomas Heywood wrote scores, and claims to have had "a hand or a main finger in two hundred and twenty"—apparently then a current phrase meaning just a great many. But Heywood's best play is not a treasured classic; and most of the rest are unread.

The sin of the orthodox tradition, in Shakespeare's case, has been to substitute quantity for quality. Shakespeare *could* have written plays *ad libitum.* Apparently no man in his day, except perhaps Greene, Marlowe and Heywood, could write so swiftly and so easily. He hardly ever blotted, the players tell us. But his was the ease of greatness. Greene's facility often meant mere trash, and never means great poetry or great thought; whereas our hearts would leap at the thought of retrieving even

a lost scene that was certainly Shakespeare's.

Perhaps it is well that he never dreamt of the fame in store for him. To have done so he must have been much less deeply sane than he was. The enduring marvel of his work is that he penned it all very much as need arose, thinking primarily just to do something that served his company's need. What we reckon the greatest literature we possess was penned just to attract and entertain theatre audiences. Later we shall be able to realise the significance of the fact.

XIII. *Dramatic and Poetic Power*

Great genius for dramatic poetry, then, consists not in plot-making or plot-constructing; and the gift for these yields in the main immemorable work. The required genius consists, fundamentally, in the power to conceive or create what we feel to be living personalities; to enter into any kind of soul in any dramatic situation; to make us feel that in each we are listening to a real voice, even in verse, which actual people do not speak.

That is the primordial and indispensable faculty. Exerted in prose, it has an intensive power in drama as compared with fiction, even though great fiction gives us, with less swift impact, a similar conviction, illusion, and fascination. Thus Shakespeare can be for us irresistible in prose comedy, making a Falstaff or a Dame Quickly, a Doll Tearsheet or a Mercutio or a Touchstone, a Beatrice or a Rosalind, hold us

spellbound, because he has lifted them all to the height of his own wit or humour, and thus, "our fancy of itself bereaving," makes each seem to us more real than reality itself. For here there is no such question of inconsistency as can arise in a serious action; all inconsistency is part of the fun.

But when this creative gift, as we call it, is turned to the utterance in consummately rhythmical verse of every grade of thought and feeling and passion, playing over the whole keyboard of humanity, it achieves a still more marvellous mastery of our souls, because it has conjoined the function of verbal self-portraiture with the function of poetry in the greatest of all poetic media. Those who do not respond to the poetry alike as worded thought and as exquisite rhythm (and there are many such) can never know the whole magic of Shakespeare.

To quote samples freely would be to fill a volume, but a few may serve. In AS YOU LIKE IT, an early rather than a late play, on the plane of serious comedy, we have Orlando coming in great trouble, sword in hand, to the group round the banished Duke, and hotly demanding food for his fainting old servitor friend, whom he has had to leave behind. Being quietly rebuked and invited to share in the meal, he melts in apology, and then urges his plea :—

> But whate'er you are
> That in this desert inaccessible,
> Under the shade of melancholy boughs,
> Lose and neglect the creeping hours of time,
> If ever you have look'd on better days. . . .

till even in this unimpassioned scene we are transported to a higher air, the verse

> Untwisting all the chains that tie
> The hidden soul of harmony,

(to use the words of another Master), till the fusion of drama and poetry, action and word-music, is for us consummated beyond description.

XIV. The Shakespearean Supremacy

Shelley, in fervid haste, put forth a doctrine which he had not thought out, to the effect that the ideal drama is attainable only by a collaboration of *all* the arts. But that was a theoretic extravagance. External music must not compete with spoken verse ; masks hinder and do not help illusion ; dancing is grown excrescent to serious drama ; and scene-painting must ever be subsidiary if it is not to injure acting. What the Elizabethan drama at its best achieved, by means of blank verse, was a union of the two marriageable arts of living speech and vital verse, a thing possible in perfection only to supreme genius in an age of literary renascence ; now indeed exotic for the stage, save in precarious reproduction, yet happily made compassable for himself by the fit reader of the undying text.

It is because (1) Shakespeare possessed in perfection those two great faculties of presentment of personality in action, and of mastery of the most plastic of all forms of verse, faculties so supremely

rare in combination as to put him apart from all other men ; and because (2) his grasp of life included a power of impassioned thought as singular as his lordship of language, that he is what he is for mankind. He has touched more spirits to fine issues, and stirred more men to "thoughts beyond the reaches of their souls," than any other who ever wrought in words.

"And this is all the witchcraft he has used." Not plot invention: for he invented little; not even perfect reconstruction, for (to say nothing of the comedies) the four great tragedies, HAMLET, MACBETH, OTHELLO, LEAR, are all at points open to serious criticism on that score; not these, but a far rarer ministry. Matthew Arnold, recoiling from one of the "detestable" passages in MACBETH which are *not* written by Shakespeare at all, yet academically unable to see as much, once blunderingly declared that the Master was "not even eminently an artist." He was of course thinking of that "slow endeavouring art" which the greater Milton declared Shakespeare to have "shamed." But there is art and art, the compilatory and painstaking on the one hand, and the mightily creative on the other, which can outdo the first, as seems to have been felt even by disciplinary Ben Jonson.

It is, indeed, the master of all artists who lifts Macbeth to Delphic height with that reverberating reverie, "To-morrow, and to-morrow, and to-morrow . . . ", and makes of Prospero the Delian diver who reaches the utmost bound of things:

We are such stuff
As dreams are made on, and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep.

This is an art that outgoes, and yet contains, the art of sheer drama, and the art of sheer poetry, in an art that is thought *in excelsis*. And yet this too is verily " an art that Nature makes."

XV. *Shakespeare's Literary Motives*

Perhaps the student, then, can be content to contemplate a Shakespeare who, working for his theatre company, was in his turn content to revise, recast, or more or less completely rewrite other men's plays; who in his own first complete play, the DREAM, had and could have no great theatrical success, and probably wrote for an outside occasion; and who proceeded for a time either to " touch up " other men's work, as in RICHARD II, or completely to rewrite previous plays, as in KING JOHN and I HENRY IV.

I now surmise that even KING JOHN had been begun by Marlowe, planning to rewrite the old play (in which he had shared) as he built RICHARD III on the foundations of the old TRUE TRAGEDIE OF RICHARD III and his own TRUE TRAGEDIE OF RICHARD DUKE OF YORK. The first Act of KING JOHN, with its 16 per cent of double-endings, being mainly in notably end-stopped verse, is much more like his work than the other's. Shakespeare, I think,

finished the play *because* Marlowe had begun it, rather than because the subject fascinated him. It was very good practice ; and he could show at many points his character-drawing power, as well as his command of language and versification.

Here, perhaps, one reared on the canonical tradition may once more baulk at the apparent implication that the Master made light of inspiration, and had an unexpected eye to the main chance. That possible stumbling-block, then, had better be faced at once. The simple truth is that many greatly gifted writers have wrought with an eye to the main chance. Dr. Johnson even declared that no man but a fool ever wrote except for money. But that is only one of the two theoretic extremes between which lies the truth.

Dr. A. C. Bradley has shown it with his usual perspicacity. Shakespeare and Scott, both illustrious penmen—and, we may add, Dickens and Thackeray and George Sand and George Eliot and many another—would at least never have written so much as they did had they not needed or desired so to earn. But, as Dr. Bradley puts it, they were not " impelled to write simply and solely by the desire to make money." The very fact that they chose to write came of the mastering faculty for writing and the joy in doing it. But there is really no reason to suppose that Shakespeare would have written VENUS AND ADONIS had it not been that the closing of the theatres by the plague had made it necessary for him to boil his pot by his pen. It was not a great

poetic undertaking, explicable in terms of sheer inspiration.

It was clearly the pecuniary and other success of that poem that moved him to write, very soon afterwards, THE RAPE OF LUCRECE, a " respectable " theme on which he could " make good " against puritanic criticism of the other. It is pretty certain that he wrote both with incomparable facility, pouring into the former all manner of grist from current plays and, curiously enough, from his earlier sonnets, even to the extent of putting in the mouth of Venus a highly incongruous appeal. But if anybody is possessed by the idea that Shakespeare was inspired first and last by the wish to write poetry of that kind, let him ask himself why, once the playwright grew prosperous, he never published another poem, though he seems to have done such things with no more than merely pleasurable effort.

XVI. His Elusiveness

This is one of the " acid tests " that idolatrous orthodoxy, shaming its very idol, always evades. He who will face all the facts and seek the sheer truth must realise that this poet, in virtue of the very plenitude of his faculty, transcends cheap illusions, looks life in the face, addresses himself to the economic business of that life on the lines of a gift he knows himself to possess, and will proceed to the end to exercise that and other gifts just as the opportunity comes to him, as playwright and play-

reviser for the theatrical company of which he has become a main member.

It is tempting, from such a starting-point, to seek to "pluck out the heart of the mystery" of the Master. But again let us give ear to common-sense. The greatest of all geniuses in what we may call the world of humanism is really not to be sounded when he has not chosen to be. We can progressively know him, up to a point, by negatives—first, happily, by realising that he did *not* commit the artistic stupidities or crudities assigned to him by the lax opportunism of the comrades who "edited" as his their general "dump," to which he had given his gold, and others their silver and copper. We know, further, that he had no sky-high scruples about writing for the market, as need arose. This theatre-poet knew his function—to please, somehow, the general audience. To that modest end, he used his common-sense as he used his singular faculty.

That is to say, he had no vanity worth mentioning, no soaring ambition, no passion for fame; though he must, we infer, have seen at a glance the limitations of other men's gifts, even when he modestly admired and desired "this man's art, and that man's scope." And thus it was possible for him to grow in power, to develop alike his insight and his genius for expression, till the art and scope of the others were left far behind. Grow and develop he certainly did. The young man of thirty is not the wizard of ten or twenty years later. Genius grows, even as does talent. Rightly we may divide his output into

three periods, of which the last is the greatest. And yet he remained just the actor and theatre-poet of the Globe Theatre, fitly esteemed by his fellows so far as they could realise what he was.

There remains something stupefying in the spectacle of Apollo tranquilly helping to run a popular show, " the greatest of the sons of men," as he has been called, working for a little old London theatre, while self-important statesmen at best gave him a patronising glance, and only indigent poets dreamt of giving him a panegyric. For that very reason, we shall do well not to think we can " round him in an epigram," or even conceive him as we might have known him after years of intimacy. That his friend Ben Jonson, who thought so well of himself, should sing over him a fine *post-mortem* dithyramb, is a satisfying thing. But it must frankly be said that those who have undertaken to expound " his mind and art " have mostly been not very subtle in their appraisements of either, being hampered by an untrue tradition. As for the godlike journalists who think to " size him up " in their stride, " the rest is silence."

Psycho-physiology, given the literary sense and critical discipline, may one day probe deeper than the professors of literature have thus far managed to do. But it is our business first to go on tracing to the end his footsteps in the Folio, distinguishing patiently between his spoor and that of other men—a task perhaps enough for a lifetime. So that, if a practical student should by this time have reached

the stage of wanting to come to particulars, we may admit him to be within his right, even to the point of rudeness. We have to go through many plays before we come to the great ones.

XVII. Alien Matter in "2 Henry IV"

When we note that I HENRY IV has the lowest percentage (5.1) of double-endings in all of the Folio plays, and yet is quite plainly from the hand of Shakespeare almost throughout, we are justified in putting it as presumably the first of the three early plays of which he wrote or rewrote the whole, unless we surmise, as there are some reasons for doing, that the DREAM (which has 7.3 per cent) was at different times revised, whereas I HENRY IV has not that appearance. Yet none of the "orthodox" editors or commentators seems to put it earlier than 1596–7. This is a sample of the post-dating forced on them by having to pack so many non-Shakespearean plays before 1593.

Yet I HENRY IV is plainly "early" work; and the style even of the passage before cited from Part II is rather less ripe than the kindred passage inserted in the last act of 2 HENRY VI, which has a more varied rhythm. It becomes thus more and more plainly incredible that Shakespeare wrote either in or after 1593 the RICHARD II and RICHARD III plays, of which the first greatly, and the second far more greatly, exceed both JOHN and I HENRY IV in double-endings. Then comes the double anomaly

of the high (16.3) percentage of double-endings in 2 HENRY IV, which is commonly dated only a year after Part I. When we now note how different is the versification of the heavily double-ended verse in 2 HENRY IV from most of that, in the same play, which has far lower percentages, we are forced to the fresh inference that much of the verse in 2 HENRY IV as a whole is not Shakespeare's, though he wrote a good deal *in* it.

Let the doubter look for himself, scanning in particular the second scene of Act V, and noting closely the line movement of the long speech of the Chief Justice. Some of the lines in the scene may very well be Shakespeare's; but in the chief speeches, with their clustering double-endings, we have verse as markedly end-stopped as any in the whole Folio. The scene as a whole has 25 per cent—about five times the average for 1 HENRY IV.

But that is not all. The diction and the thought, the play of reflection, though vivacious, are un-Shakespearean. Even in 1 HENRY IV and the apparently genuine portions of Part II, indeed, we have still the young Shakespeare. The language is diffuse, for him. Everything is said at needless length, and in Part I there are superfluous scenes. The thought, too, evidently follows old tracks; and the priggish pronouncements of Prince Henry (which may or may not have been revised by Shakespeare) are evidently dictated by a recent stage tradition. We have not the great Shakespeare here; only at best the endlessly eloquent young poet, who can put

anything into mellifluous verse. But the verse *is* so mellifluous that when a line does not scan we know that, if it is his, it has suffered from the copyist or the printer. In Act V, scene ii, of 2 HENRY IV, on the contrary, the verse is staccato, rarely admirable in phrase, and quite rigidly end-stopped.

Again, let the student ask himself whether Falstaff's long speech in praise of sherris-sack has the spontaneous quality of the fat knight's fun in so many other scenes. And let him then compare this *bravara* work with the clearly analogous exercise in Chapman's MONSIEUR D'OLIVE in which that personage dilates endlessly in praise of tobacco. There is a curious kinship in the two pieces.

To trace the alien hand or hands, however, will require a careful comparative scrutiny. Here it must suffice to say, with a few elucidations, that there *is* alien matter, not only in Henry scenes but in some others where the double-endings multiply and the verse stiffens. If there is one thing certain in this enquiry, it is that when Shakespeare in his genuine work (as in HAMLET, 22 per cent; ANTONY, 26.5 per cent) attains anything like 25 per cent of double-endings, his verse has reached a quality of rhythmic continuity that utterly transcends the quality of those scenes in 2 HENRY IV in which we find those high percentages.

XVIII. The Moral Test. Prince Hal

And still that is not all. In certain scenes in 2 HENRY IV, in particular in those (IV, v) in which the prince takes away the crown, thinking his father dead, and then delights his sick and grieved father with a perfervid explanation ; those (IV, ii) in which Westmoreland and Lancaster foully break faith with the disarmed rebels whom they treacherously arrest for high treason ; and those in which the new King and the Chief Justice exhale their noble ideals, we are conscious of either a vulgar or a vile moral standard. When the now sanctimonious Henry V unctuously rejects his old boon companion, and the poor devils of women are haled to jail, we are conscious not only of a bad taste left in our mouths but of a sheer stultification of all the previous play-matter in the interest of propriety. "The theatre" has sat on the penitential stool.

Was Shakespeare, then, actively concerned in this edifying metamorphosis? If so, "the less Shakespeare he." *This* performer will square with no conception of a great soul, innately superior to vulgar standards. And the remarkable thing is that in all those scenes, even when the diction is comparatively good, the versification is always of that short-breathed, end-stopped quality. Even where occasionally the sense runs on, the rhythm does not. The lines are as if cut into lengths by scissors. And as in all of these scenes we have those incongruously high percentages of double-endings (IV, ii: 25 per cent;

IV, iv: 20 per cent; IV, v: over 25 per cent; V, v: 27 per cent) which are so irreconcilable with the evolution of Shakespeare's verse, we are forced to call them alien.

On the other hand, despite the curious incompatibilities in the domestic record of Mrs. Quickly, which also suggest that parts of this play series had been in different hands, the humorous Falstaff-Quickly scenes always seem to tell of Shakespeare's own humour. Thus we are made to feel that *that* was what he most cared about in those two plays. And in fact those are the scenes most likely to have made the plays succeed. The treachery with the rebels, and the sanctimonious reformation and Pharisaism of Prince Hal, must always have disgusted many.

Recognising the special difficulty of tracing the alien hand here, I will merely observe that so far the most likely operator would seem to be Thomas Heywood, whom there is reason to regard as having had a hand in eking out RICHARD III, and whom we know, by his own avowal, to have had "an entire hand or a main finger" in a multitude of plays. His versification almost perfectly answers to that here under scrutiny, though it may have been revised in 2 HENRY IV.

From his EDWARD IV plays, further, we know that he would have defended the King, *qua* King, in any course, even while exhibiting him as detestable. When we contrast his GOLDEN AGE with his WOMAN KILLED WITH KINDNESS, we see how he could

alternately be crudely licentious and blandly righteous, and always a good deal on the surface, with a certain fundamental bias to fatuity. He was not bad or callous; he was an amiable man of the theatre, with a notably large, if lax, vocabulary, a great facility, and even a gift of humour. And he *could* have painted the converted Henry, and the treacherous Westmoreland and Lancaster, without a sign of disapproval.

XIX. More Heresy. The "Shrew"

This of course will be a disturbing suggestion to many good Shakespeareans, because so far there has been hardly a whisper of suspicion as to the entire authenticity of 2 HENRY IV. Men might wince at the meanesses of the later action, but they did not challenge it as unworthy of the Master. More than a hundred years ago there were critics who roundly spoke out when they found matter which they felt to be too poor for Shakespeare. But the Victorian age was one of gathering correctitude; students, troubled by the obvious difficulty of clearing up the problems, rested from their labours instead of becoming doubly industrious in analysis; and Knight, Furnivall, Dowden, Ward, Raleigh, Verplanck, and Grant White, English and Americans alike, rather hindered than helped inquiry.

F. G. Fleay, on the other hand, though he made more true hits than anybody else, made so many misses that he could not gain authority even when

he was right. But when the balance-sheet is one day justly drawn, Fleay will be found to have had a deeper insight (though a precarious one) than his contemporaries. He rightly declared that RICHARD III is primarily a Marlowe play. He rightly saw that TITUS could not have been written by Shakespeare, though, when he named Peele, he made the common mistake of suggesting only one hand where several were involved. He was the first to assign JACK STRAW to Peele, and ARDEN OF FEVERSHAM to Kyd. And although he erred in seeing Shakespeare in EDWARD III, he was not far from the truth when he declared that Shakespeare wrote only the Katherine-and-Petruchio scenes in THE TAMING OF THE SHREW.

Over that play confusion is now being newly confounded. Many critics in the past have denied that THE SHREW can have been written by Shakespeare: Warburton was one of the first; Farmer another; and many more have denied that he can have written the old TAMING OF A SHREW (printed in 1594), on which our play is visibly founded. But Johnson, Steevens, and Malone were satisfied that he wrote THE SHREW. Later students, spontaneously siding with Fleay, often reject it. Henry Sidgwick, after seeing Ada Rehan in it and enjoying her " little squeal of anger," wrote: " But the play is an intolerably bad one; I hope very little of it is Shakespeare's."

Latterly the champions of the Folio, growing desperate over their doomed undertaking, are insisting that Shakespeare wrote not only the Folio

play, THE SHREW, but the old play, A SHREW. Always it had been recognised that in the old play certain passages were lifted bodily from Marlowe; and it was inferred that this was done by other men. Malone thought the play had been written by Greene or Peele. He had not closely studied the old styles, else he might have seen that there are many other eminently Marlovian lines, which are not transcriptions, and which only Marlowe could have written; and that there are signs of Kyd as well as of Greene in the play.

The truth seems to be that there was an old actors' play, in prose and in doggerel, and that Marlowe was invited to put blank verse in place of the doggerel, in this as in other cases. He did it, apparently, with coadjutors, leaving untouched the old prose matter, which Mr. Dugdale Sykes has claimed, probably with justice, as the work of the actor, Samuel Rowley. But the Foliolaters (as we have termed them) can never recognise hands; and they strenuously contend that A SHREW is merely a piracy, in which the pirates trumped up matter with which they replaced the verse of Shakespeare, as it stood in the then actually current stage version of our play.

XX. *Marlowe and Heywood*

Here, it should be clearly noted, orthodoxy is turning back on itself. Till recently, the custom has been to date THE SHREW 1596–7, or even later. In

respect of its percentage of double-endings (17.7) it is just abreast of THE MERCHANT OF VENICE, usually dated 1596; while in the matter of *run-on lines* the SHREW has *the very lowest percentage in the entire Folio*—to wit, 8.1; 3 HENRY VI coming next with 9.5. How came *that* about, if Shakespeare wrote the SHREW after the DREAM, which has 13.2?

On this the Foliolaters have of course nothing to say, any more than on the style. But let the student (passing over, for the moment, the Induction), read the first scene, and ask himself, Whose style is *that?* Surely not Shakespeare's! The rhythm is quite end-stopped, even when the sense runs-on; the syntax at times goes to pieces; the drift of the speaker is rather bewildering. In the forty-seven lines of the first scene-section there are only five double-endings (10.6 per cent); while in the *seven* lines of the first speech of Baptista we have another cluster of five—71 per cent!

Now let the open-minded reader note the lines (3–4):—

> I am arriv'd for fruitful Lombardy,
> The pleasant garden of great Italy,

and proceed to compare them with those in Heywood's FOUR PRENTICES OF LONDON (Dodsley's OLD PLAYS, ed. 1780, vol. vi, p. 491):—

> Even to the midst of fertile Lombardy,
> By writers term'd the garden of the world.

It will hardly be denied that the writer of one of these pairs of lines had seen or heard the other,

unless they were from the same hand. But the FOUR PRENTICES is by Fleay and Dr. Greg dated 1594, and by Sir E. K. Chambers (tentatively) 1592. Heywood himself says that it belongs to his "first practice." And, though of course it may have been touched-up at a later date, before being printed, the circumstances are in favour of the view that our SHREW is to be dated about 1594, and not later.

Now, not only has the versification of Heywood the end-stopped quality of that we are considering, but his work, alike in the PRENTICES and in EDWARD IV, exhibits that feature of *clusters* of double-endings in verse not uniformly marked by them. This, of course, is far from being decisive. A natural hypothesis would be that Marlowe, recasting the SHREW as we have inferred he proposed to do JOHN, rough-hewed it anew as we have it. But then Heywood certainly formed himself a good deal on Marlowe, whom he often echoes; and it would be hard to show that Marlowe has written the whole of THE SHREW, though he appears to have done some of it.

On the other hand, as I tentatively pointed out a dozen years ago, there are a number of phrasal and verbal clues to Chapman, a number of once-used words found in this play being also found in his work. Those clues cannot be overridden unless they can be balanced by a larger mass pointing to Heywood, whose style is certainly as near to that of the SHREW as even the comedy style of Chapman.

In short, the problem calls for a close inquiry,

such as has not been made in this connection. The probabilities seem to be that when Heywood echoes it—as over "fertile Lombardy"—he is echoing Marlowe; and that when again in the FOUR PRENTICES (II, v, 1) he adds "bashful modesty" (SHREW, II, i, 49) to his many pleonasms, he is echoing another and not himself. Certainly he often echoes Marlowe in other lines, as indeed did Chapman. So the one thing clear, so far, is that the style of nine-tenths of the play is certainly not Shakespeare's, but grounds on Marlowe's, which others may have retouched or expanded. And just as we know that there was some connection between Shakespeare and Chapman, we may be sure that he would be interested in young Heywood, perhaps the most promising "new man" in 1594.

Many writers have praised the Induction more than the play, and some still profess to see Shakespeare only in that section. But the Induction is only a rewriting and expansion of that prefixed to the old TAMING OF A SHREW, developing its ideas; and the line-ended verse, with its heavy clusters of double-endings, cannot be his, though he may well have touched it up and inserted the new prose. Fleay held that the present Induction was written in 1596 by Drayton, and later revised by Shakespeare. As verse and as poetry, it might as well be Heywood's as another's, and the dropping of the old epilogue (in which Sly was disposed of), by leaving the Induction in the air, suggests that it was little esteemed by the theatre save as a farcical "curtain-raiser."

XXI. *Origination of "Romeo and Juliet"*

The problems that face us over the SHREW are again insistent in ROMEO AND JULIET, though in that case the presence of Shakespeare is clear enough. What must be faced, however reluctantly, is the demonstrable fact that the famous love-tragedy existed, to a large extent, in its present form, before Shakespeare touched it. This—seen by some critics a century ago, affirmed by Fleay, and denied by academics—is made morally certain by the existence of the old German text, reprinted by Cohn, which in particular presents an opening scene quite different from ours, and much more conformable to the Prologue, which is very obviously pre-Shakespearean, and in fact is not retained in the Folio.

It might, indeed, have occurred to many Victorian students, had they been open-minded, that such a first-rate theme as that of ROMEO AND JULIET *must* have been handled by the pre-Shakespearean group. In the form of Brooke's poem, to say nothing of Painter's prose, both drawing on the Italian sources, the great love-story had literary currency as early as 1562, and had at that time, as Brooke tells us, been actually staged. That in some old form (probably one of "jigging" verse and prose), it was played by travelling companies before Peele or Kyd and others undertook to modernise it, is highly probable.

In any case, modernise it they did; for even in the First Quarto version (printed in 1597), where

already Shakespeare had been at work, we can trace three or four hands. The first scene in our play, as aforesaid, is a recast, and is clearly due to the hand of a realistic dramatist who saw how much better for stage purposes was a scene of lively action than the old one of moralising speeches about the evils of civil strife. No one is more likely to have made that change than Kyd, the most "constructive" of the pre-Shakespeareans.

For the rest, Marlowe must be declared to have had a hand in presenting both Romeo and Juliet; for there is a clear interplay of both phrase and feeling between various poetic passages in the play and a number in HERO AND LEANDER, the poem which he left unfinished in manuscript, and was not published till (some time after Chapman had finished it) the year 1598. What Shakespeareans have to realise is that either Shakespeare drew on the manuscript or Marlowe in the poem used his own dramatic material. The latter is the irresistible inference. It was the great *story* of Romeo and Juliet that raised him, as indeed it raised his coadjutors, to new dramatic power. And I do not see how the draft can be dated later than 1590.

For, by the double-ending test, it is comparatively early work even for the Marlowe group, though Greene's part, it may be, was added between 1590 and 1592. The lamentable laments over the apparently dead Juliet appear to be Peele-work revised, poorly enough, by Kyd. It should be a comfort to the student to realise that they cannot

possibly have been Shakespeare's; and that the wretched puns which disfigure certain declamations of both Romeo and Juliet are in all likelihood Marlowe's, if they are not Kyd's. It will still startle many, doubtless, to be told that even Juliet's "Gallop apace" epithalamium, with its masculine and utterly ungirlish burden, is also by Marlowe, who here uses phrases admittedly his own, though Shakespeare may at a later period have revised it. Marlowe, if should be noted, probably wrote not "run-aways' eyes," but "rumoures' eyes" or "renommée's eyes," meaning the eyes of *Fama*.

Had Shakespeare imitated him in the opening lines it would have been to poor purpose. Even at that age, Shakespeare could have lent a treble to the heroine, and a feminine instead of a masculine rapture, a note of the maiden's tremulous dream, "all a wonder and a wild desire." Still, a bridal speech which has seemed to many to be one of the truly poetic things in the play must count, *pro tanto*, to Marlowe's credit; and a study of the German version makes it clear that he had substantially drafted the figure and the language of Mercutio, however much Shakespeare may have electrified the character, as in the speech on Queen Mab, which seems to be a recast. The fact that in the German version there is no epithalamium speech of Juliet does not guarantee that it was not in the 1590 version, since it might have been dropped by the German theatre as unmaidenly. In any case, it seems to be early Marlowe, since there are no double-

endings, though Shakespeare may at points have improved the rhythm.

XXII. The Hands in "Romeo and Juliet"

Two things are here worth noting, the first having importance in respect of Jeffrey's remark, long ago, on the felicity of the phrase, "night's candles" for the stars. There can be no doubt that the rhythm of the beautiful lines as they stand is Shakespeare's; but as a matter of fact Greene has "the candles of the night" in ORLANDO FURIOSO, and the talk of the dawn is in the German version. It may have been that the phrase as to night's candles was a current one; but as the data stand they go to support the view that Greene had a certain share in eking out the play. He seems to have had a hand in expanding the part of the Friar, of which there is small trace in the German version.

The other point relates to Heywood. At least eight editors, probably more, have unquestioningly followed Douce in stating that the lines:—

> For Jove himself sits in the azure skies,
> And laughs below at lovers' perjuries,

which are the apparent verbal source for the line (II, ii, 92): —

> At lovers' perjuries, they say, Jove laughs,

"occur in Marlowe's translation of Ovid's *Art of Love.*" This is a myth. Marlowe translated, not the *Ars Amandi* but the *Amores*. The lines, of

course, do *not* occur there, nor are they to be found anywhere in the works of Marlowe. But they do occur in a translation of the *Art of Love* which has latterly been demonstrated to be by Heywood.

Had Heywood then a hand in the revision of the intermediate play? If, as the biographers hold, he was born about 1575, he can clearly have had no part in the Peele-Marlowe draft; but he may have had a "finger" in a revision about 1594. The matter calls for investigation; but again the fact may be that the classic phrase, which was proverbial, was really inserted by Marlowe in the original draft (for the speech has HERO AND LEANDER matter in it), whether or not Shakespeare revised it; and that in his translation Heywood had once more echoed the wording of the older poet whom he so often imitates.

On any view, it is clear that ROMEO AND JULIET is a composite play on an old basis, and that Shakespeare did but improve and heighten the diction and the poetry at many points. Even the Nurse's most famous speech, which is printed in the Quartos in italics and in prose, seems to be from another hand, and we may guess at Nashe or Heywood, the latter having some not very dissimilar matter in THE GOLDEN AGE. And it is time we were delivered from the æsthetic wool-gathering which has inspired the suggestion, by one editor, that this old and often told story of love and death was dramatised by Shakespeare about 1595 in order to express something of his own amatory experience. Scholar-

ship here attains to what Hobbes would have called a more excellent folly than that of the ordinary penman.

XXIII. First Successes in Comic Matter

It thus begins to appear that up to the production of his brilliant revision of THE MERCHANT OF VENICE, Shakespeare was probably not reckoned by his company (then known as the Lord Chamberlain's) the masterly playwright they afterwards saw him to be: certainly not as the leading tragic-poet. Some of them, perchance, were still somewhat jealous of him. They played the gory TITUS with popularity and profit; though some actors probably knew as well as he what merely popular stuff that was. Yet in all likelihood they would not have let him completely rewrite Juliet's epithalamium even if he had wanted to. That would be an esteemed " stock piece," though declaimed by a boy in girl's clothing.

On the other hand, even the DREAM and LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST, both apparently written for occasions outside the regular theatre work, could hardly have been popular, apart from the Bottom fooling; and it has even been surmised that the DREAM was the " displeasing play " apologised for in the epilogue to 2 HENRY IV. But it was in comedy that he first shone. Whatever were the " success of esteem " of the tragic side in the HENRY IV plays, the chief " drawing " element there must have been the Falstaff and Quickly scenes. And it must have been

well known that he did not originate ROMEO AND JULIET any more than RICHARD II or RICHARD III. Not for years, save in JOHN, was he to set his mark on tragedy.

XXIV. *"The Two Gentlemen" a Greene Play*

We were taught, of course, to regard THE TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA as one of his early comedy successes. But, however successful, it was no more of his drafting than the COMEDY OF ERRORS. For those who will take the trouble to make a comparative study of the versification, the diction, and the plot, it may gradually become apparent that, even as the ERRORS is mainly Marlowe's, the TWO GENTLEMEN is Greene's—after the first scene-section, which Shakespeare has rewritten in his own verse, but evidently on a Greene basis, for the sentiments are all common in Greene's stories. A few later speeches, such as Valentine's in Act V, scene iv, make up Shakespeare's outstanding contribution.

Anyone who, without a copy of Greene at hand, desires to know how he latterly wrote blank verse, need but turn to the second scene, and especially to Julia's speech about Lucetta and the letter (I, ii, 48). One of the young student's first steps in critical knowledge should be to realise that Shakespeare did *not* write that iambic tic-tac, whatever the Foliolaters may allege. Let the reader turn to Titania's speech, "These are the forgeries of jealousy" (DREAM, II, i, 81), and he will see the vital difference,

if he has at all cultivated the perception of rhythm.

The TWO GENTLEMEN must be one of the very last things Greene wrote, because he here freely uses the double-ending, a thing he had not brought himself to do even in JAMES IV, the faulty best of his accepted plays. Only from occasional scenes there, and from the fragmentary or corrupted GEORGE-A-GREENE, do we know, in the plays published as his, that he had yielded at all to the new fashion.

From his own avowals we know that some four or five years before his death he had even resented the vogue of blank verse, his own previous plays having been presumably in prose or in rhyme. But he is specially to be studied in connection with Shakespeare because only that study can reveal that it was he, and not Shakespeare, who wrote the "Countess scenes" in EDWARD III, which, on the lead of Tennyson, so many critics have sought to ascribe to the Master. It is really because the versification of those scenes is identical with the versification of the TWO GENTLEMEN that this mistaken inference has been drawn.

Just as the TWO GENTLEMEN can be shown to be Greene's (*a*) by versification, (*b*) by plot management, (*c*) by comic scenes, (*d*) by hero-villain types, (*e*) by many vocabulary clues, and (*f*) by a number of uses of special tags and proverbs, so may the Countess scenes be shown to be of his writing, on the basis of a Marlowe draft; the central theme being one actually handled by him many times over in plays and stories. The two echoes from those scenes

in Shakespeare's Sonnets are demonstrably echoes from a play that he had either heard or acted in, and the hasty use there (Sonnet 142) of the "scarlet ornaments" phrase is really wrong and infelicitous. That sonnet, however, like many others in the collection, may not really have been written by Shakespeare, and indeed may reasonably be challenged. The last line contains a "split infinitive," a thing found in the Folio only in JULIUS CÆSAR, II, i, 187, and there traceable to Chapman, who used that form at least ten times.

In the TWO GENTLEMEN, the prattle of the servants is exactly in the manner and taste of the similar characters in JAMES IV, the main point of superiority being Launce's talk (IV, iv) concerning his dog. It is a fair speculation that we have here a clue to the meaning of Greene's deathbed statement, in the GROATSWORTH OF WIT, that "young Juvenal" had "lastly" collaborated with him in a comedy. There used to be dispute as to whether "young Juvenal" was Lodge or Nashe, but it is now clear that the reference is to Nashe, who actually bore that sobriquet. Lodge, who years before had collaborated with Greene in the LOOKING GLASS FOR LONDON, was older than Greene, and was not then in England. It may well be that Launce's account of the dog is from the pen of Nashe, who in his SUMMER'S LAST WILL has written of the dog with racy appreciation.

XXV. The Sonnets and the Poems

The implication of the Sonnets in the discussion at this point raises the question of the poet's private fortunes. The intricate question of the motivation of the Sonnets is still much debated; and it is only as a reasonable hypothesis, accounting for and fitting the bibliographical data, that the present statement is offered. It is fairly clear that the first seventeen sonnets were written in order to induce a young man to marry. This squares with our knowledge of the fact that the young Earl of Southampton, to whom the VENUS and the LUCRECE were dedicated in 1593 and 1594, was from about 1591 onwards urged by his mother to make an advantageous alliance with the granddaughter of Lord Burleigh. A Catholic family, the Southamptons would have much to gain from Burleigh's protection. But young men are apt to reject the marriages planned for them by their elders.

That some sonnets were addressed to Southampton before 1593, and not (as some argue) at a later period to the young Lord Herbert, afterwards Earl of Pembroke, is proved by a piece of literary evidence. In the VENUS, the goddess is represented as urging on the young Adonis that he ought to have a child—the very last form of appeal that could be imagined as likely to be seductively made in the circumstances, either by female to male or by male to female. It is in fact an adaptation from the early sonnets. Just as the young verse-spinner draws in his poem on

the stage, by way of hunting scenes from TITUS, in which play he may have acted, so he fills up a number of stanzas from the material of the sonnets he had lately written.

We cannot understand the VENUS, in fact, until we realise that it was thus written "from hand to mouth," for the market, in a time of need, by a young poet who, in his own words in AS YOU LIKE IT, could "rhyme you so eight years together, dinners and suppers and sleeping hours excepted." His gift for sheer metrical utterance is simply enormous, and at this stage it overbears all the canons of taste, limit, selection, protraction. All is in excess, yet all in metre. In his amazingly rapid composition he had regard neither to propriety of theme, nor originality of phrase, nor congruity of matter, provided he made his innumerable lines easily musical. To pass from the dazzling fluency of LUCRECE to the blinding vision of evil in LEAR is to realise how genius may evolve in a dozen years.

The LUCRECE is a more careful and still more copious, if a less felicitous, performance than the VENUS, but similarly inspired. And there too (lines 1004–5) we have a tag drawn from EDWARD III (II, 434–5); and not only is the scene drawn-upon the one rewritten by Greene, but the tag about wrong-doing greatness is traceable back to Greene's earlier work. Thus EDWARD III as it stands is known to have been completed, and probably staged, *before* 1594, the first form being several years older. It is the more important to establish such minor points

of borrowing *by* Shakespeare, precisely because the borrower is so much the greater poet in potentiality.

Shakespeare, then, had secured as a patron the young Earl of Southampton, to whom, by way of "commission," he had addressed the early sonnets about 1592. A commission he must have had, because the addressing of such sonnets by a young actor to a young Earl is unintelligible without it. But when we find the volume of "Shakespeare's Sonnets" long afterwards printed by a capricious publisher who dedicates them to "Mr. W. H." as their "only begetter," we are led to surmise that Mr. W. H. may have been the William Hervey, or Harvey, who in 1597 became the third husband of the dowager Countess of Southampton. This was long ago urged by Fleay.

If Shakespeare had won the ear of the play-loving and tasteful young Earl in 1591–2 by his inserted matter in the COMEDY OF ERRORS, it would be a natural device on the part of the dowager-countess to enlist the poetic services of the young actor for the purpose of persuading her son, by sonnets, to the desired marriage. That would be in the fashion of the time; and Hervey, as a trusted friend of the family, would be a natural go-between. And if Hervey began an album of transcriptions with the titular line "Shakespeare's Sonnets," adding to it, as time went on, other sonnets by Shakespeare *and by other men* (with blank pages between sections), we should have the sufficient explanation of its ultimate publication, clearly without permission, by a pub-

lisher who somehow got hold of the album, and who knew nothing as to the authorship beyond the original title.

XXVI. *The Personal Story*

There is no present prospect that we shall ever have more than conjectural solutions of the motive and destination of the majority of the sonnets, and much of the speculation on the subject has been haphazard to the last degree. "Dark Lady" theories abound, to small purpose. Mary Fitton is but dubiously identifiable. But a few negative provisos may reasonably be urged. It is not justifiable to infer, as used to be done, that the whole of the first 126 sonnets are addressed to one male person. Some are presumably to women; and the man addressed in the others cannot always be the same, else many become unintelligible. Some seem to have been written *for* others, men or women. And we must keep in view the demonstration by Lee and others that a number appear to be literary exercises, in which other poets are clearly borrowed from.

But, above all, the sonnets are not critically to be regarded as all from one hand. Some are as poor as others are resplendent. Nobody, probably, ascribes *every* sonnet to Shakespeare. That he wrote about a hundred of the 154 is a reasoned estimate. There is, it is true, no such marked rhythmic differentiation in rhymed as in blank verse; but there is always a style-test and a sense-test.

Things could well have happened so. "Shakespeare's Sonnets" is not a title that a publisher would naturally place; but it is one that Hervey might very naturally put at the beginning of his album for the first sonnets to Southampton. Other sonnets by Shakespeare, and sonnets by other men, would as naturally be added, with blank pages between sets, as they were gathered in. The appended LOVER'S COMPLAINT, finally, is clearly not by Shakespeare, but is very likely to be by Chapman, having many of his marks, and none of Shakespeare's.

If it be replied that all this is guesswork, the objector may be reminded that it is really guesswork that has all along been imposed upon us by the interpreters of the sonnets, from the publisher onwards. That the publisher, to begin with, was a flighty and reckless person, can be seen from his egotistic prelude to Marlowe's translation from Lucan. Secondly, it is a necessary guess, to start with, that the earlier sonnets were addressed to Southampton. Thirdly, it is a most arbitrary and unreasonable guess that takes all the sonnets to be addressed to one man. The editor or publisher of the first reprint, in 1640, rearranged them, and represented a number as addressed to women.

As there has been bibliolatry over the Folio, so there has been over the sonnets, a blind assumption being made that the visibly unauthorised publication by one printer fixes the whole for ever on Shakespeare, who never acknowledged them, and who probably got the edition suppressed, since it was never

reprinted till long after his death. It is matter of literary history that in the collection entitled THE PASSIONATE PILGRIM (1599) there were not only poems ascribed to Shakespeare which are known to be other men's, but one poem in particular concerning which Heywood has told us that it was his, and that Shakespeare severely censured the publisher's fraud.

XXVII. *The Poet's Finances*

Turning from the conjectural to the ascertainable, we note that about 1596 the poet had become "passing prosperous," though in that year he was bereaved of his only son, Hamnet, a boy of twelve, of whose promise we know nothing. One sign of financial prosperity was the joint application of the poet and his father to the Heralds' College for a "coat of arms," which was withheld in 1596 but granted in 1599. Whether the application was mainly made by way of gratifying the old father, who had for years past been unprosperous, or partly to protect the actor from the slights often passed on his profession, we cannot tell.

What we actually know is that in 1597 the poet was able to purchase "New Place," one of the largest houses in Stratford-on-Avon, which had latterly fallen badly into disrepair, and naturally went cheap, for £60. His old neighbours were now disposed to borrow money from him. Two great fires in 1594 and 1595 had destroyed in Stratford

one hundred and twenty houses, and they wanted his influence to help them towards relief in taxation. The poet had now land, and made some money by malting corn.

Here it should be said that when we are told Shakespeare is not known to have revisited his family for many years we are offered an obviously unprovable negative. That he revisited Stratford at least every year is as likely as the other view is unlikely.

There is a tradition, which is not unlikely to have some basis, that in making his purchases of house, tithes, and lands he had been assisted by a gift of money from a patron. But we must guard against the obstinate habit of reckoning the purchasing power of money in the Tudor period at from five to eight times greater than in the nineteenth century. The fact that a regular feature of London life was the "shilling ordinary," the midday meal at an eating-house for men of the middle class, and that there was also a "two shilling ordinary" as well as an "eighteen pence ordinary," makes it clear that the cost of living, in money, was in London not much below that of our own age, before the war, when a "shilling ordinary" was common enough.

In country towns, of course, bread and meat and vegetables were relatively cheap, though land was not. But the kind of clothing that professional men had to wear in London was certainly not low priced; and it is important to realise that a dramatist of Shakespeare's day, lacking a share in a dramatic

company, could not earn a subsistence without writing at least four plays in a year, unless, like Greene, he wrote stories. But even that industry would yield small returns; and the indigence of ordinary dramatists is always to be kept in view in considering their probable output. When Chapman is spoken of as "prospering" on the price of nine plays in ten years, we are listening to nonsense. Chapman, by his own showing, was always poor. And Ben Jonson, after twenty years of play-writing, declared that he had not had £200 for all his plays.

What we can reasonably be sure of as to Shakespeare is that after 1597 he had a comfortable income. And his status with his company rose with his means.

XXVIII. Comedy and Tragedy

Sixty years ago critics were debating as to whether Shakespeare wrote comedies while he lived in a comedy mood, and later took to tragedy because life had become for him tragical. Our reasoned opinion must be that such a formula cannot meet the case, even although there is reason to think, in reading the Sonnets, that "the ancient pilot, Pain" took command of Shakespeare's voyage from time to time, as of the lives of most men. Cut-and-dry formulas are not to be trusted in so complicated a thing as a great poet's experience.

An eminent French expert has ventured the theory that in his youth Shakespeare was given to drinking

—this because in the Falstaff scenes and in some of the comedies so much drinking is done—and that the asperity shown against drunkenness in HAMLET and OTHELLO comes of the middle-aged man's repentance for his youthful folly. But already in TWELFTH NIGHT (1599), where drunkenness flourishes, it is spoken of with contempt (I, 5), likewise in the Induction to the SHREW. A reasonable test for such a theory is offered by the Sonnets. Not one line of them suggests any pleasure to be found in drinking; and the word "wine" never once occurs in the Sonnets or in the Poems. The thesis is baseless. Drinking scenes were as natural in comedy as was grave rebuke of drunkenness in tragedy.

For the theory that the poet chose comedy in happy years, and tragedy when life had darkened for him, there are no better grounds. LUCRECE is a tragic poem, and for the Foliolaters Shakespeare was the framer of TITUS and ROMEO in his youth. But though he drafted neither play, it is more likely than not that he began working on HAMLET about 1596. There had been a long run of tragedy on the London stage under Marlowe and Kyd, and after their deaths good and fresh comedy had for the audiences the charm of surprise. That was quite enough to set Shakespeare working on comedy for his company in the second half of the decade, irrespective of his own financial prosperity. It was not poverty that inspired the great tragedies. Tragedy had come again into fashion, and was to remain so until, after a few more years, what we may call

romantic or sentimental melodrama came into vogue, with tragedy still in the foreground.

XXIX. The "Merchant" drafted by Marlowe?

For once we may readily accept the date of 1596 for Shakespeare's *re*-writing of THE MERCHANT OF VENICE. But a rewriting it is. Long ago Sir A. W. Ward tabulated some eight close parallels of language and matter between the dialogue of the MERCHANT and that of Marlowe's JEW OF MALTA. Critical reflection should satisfy us that these must be survivals either from a prior "Joseph the Jew of Venice," by Dekker, assigned by Fleay to 1592, or from a prior text in which Marlowe, having succeeded notably with a JEW OF MALTA, had drafted a play possibly entitled "The Jew of Venice," in which the old story of the caskets was embodied.

That Marlowe often repeated or echoed himself we know. That Shakespeare should in those eight passages have slavishly copied Marlowe is incredible, inasmuch as all men at that day could justly have pronounced it deliberate apery, discreditable even in an age of free borrowing. And this makes it unlikely that Dekker or any of the usual colleagues of Marlowe, drafting this play, would so systematically have repeated him, though they are likely enough to have collaborated. The duplication really tells of Marlowe's own comparative unreadiness in comedy, where we have seen him beginning by lifting whole passages out of his FAUSTUS into the TAMING

OF A SHREW. He was repeating passages which had already been found effective, and which were specially transferable from one Jew play to another. Shylock must have figured in Marlowe's original—a parallel to Barabas, with a difference.

We do not indeed know for certain that Marlowe's "Jew of Venice" was later than his JEW OF MALTA. That there was an old play (before 1579), in which figured the caskets and the usurer with his pound of flesh, is on record: and Marlowe may have been called in to turn the old play into blank verse. But the likelier inference is that his markedly original JEW OF MALTA gave the ground for a rewriting by him of the old play in question; and that he there borrowed some of his own matter, while probably collaborating here as he did in A SHREW.

XXX. *Marlowe Beside Shakespeare*

This is a crux for the Foliolaters. There can here be no pretence that Marlowe in his assigned play was using a Shakespeare text: his JEW OF MALTA is reasonably dated 1589–90; no one doubts its main authorship; and no one dates our MERCHANT OF VENICE before his death (1593). Then, whatever may be pretended as to Shakespeare having written the old plays reproduced in 2 and 3 HENRY VI, the MERCHANT is as certainly a recast of a (probably composite) Marlowe play as KING JOHN is a rewriting of the old TROUBLESOME RAIGNE OF KING JOHN; and in this case there is not a complete rewriting.

Even in the casket scenes there are traces of older work, though there is also early writing of Shakespeare's which must be confessed to exhibit a certain youthful imperfection. We are here led anew, then, to realise that Shakespeare's supremacy lay not at all in "invention" of plots, but first and last in his power to lend a new vividness and beauty to the work of other men by him rewritten. Once for all, it is a substitution of the music of the violin for that of the less subtle and resourceful instruments of others.

To contrast the MERCHANT with the JEW OF MALTA is to perceive in detail the difference of power and genius between the two men. Nothing can be more striking in its own way than Marlowe's forceful projection of the minds of Machiavel, traditionally conceived, and Barabas. No previous work approaches it in sheer power. But these are "ideal" projections of self-willed types of the marked Marlovian kind, variants of Tamburlaine and Faustus and Richard the Third, men who are innately defiant of all moral convention and resolved to impose their will and personality on the world. They are not reflections of known humanity; they are masterful affirmations of Marlowe's audacious fancy.

In Shakespeare we have the profoundly different procedure of the all-perceiving spirit who progressively learns to read all men at a glance, and who either, as in comedy, flings forth convincing figures "from the life," or, as in tragedy, raises the essentials

of true human feeling to a higher power, and creates a Macbeth, an Othello, a Lear, who make us hold our breath, inhibited and almost intimidated.

But in the MERCHANT we are still in comedy. Shylock himself is again and again touched with a pathetic humanity, which Marlowe would never have given him. Antonio was certainly not shaped, even if he were outlined, by Marlowe, though he did outline the dashing and flashing Mercutio. Our Portia he could not have drawn. We have only to set Abigail side by side with Jessica to realise how relatively puppet-like are his women figures. Juliet was the first real woman he had sketched; and she was given to his hand ready made by the old story, inspiring him to go on to HERO AND LEANDER. Portia is one of "Shakespeare's women."

All that is most gracious and most delightful in the MERCHANT, then, is of Shakespeare's doing; and the word-music made in the gardens of Belmont can be from no other hand. That he may have added matter from some other sources than the Marlowe play is obviously possible, but he probably invented little in the plot. It is, in fact, the penalty of the traditionist attitude that those who see in Shakespeare the originator of all the Folio plays miss the appreciation of him that comes from the knowledge of his alchemy of transmutation, the magic touch of the "philosopher's stone" that, in so far as it was applied, turned poorer metal into gold.

XXXI. *The "Merry Wives of Windsor"*

As comedy, the MERCHANT remains youthful in contrast with such dazzling work as the best of MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING, which, with AS YOU LIKE IT and TWELFTH NIGHT, is commonly dated 1599. The interval is supposed to have been filled up by the two HENRY IV plays and THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR, or perhaps also HENRY V. But HENRY V is not named in Francis Meres's list of twelve Shakespeare plays in his *Pallidis Tamia* in 1598; and neither is the SHREW nor the MERRY WIVES—a fact which should be noted.

That the SHREW was not of Shakespeare's drafting has been affirmed above; and that he did not draft the MERRY WIVES can be shown about as clearly. When the editors and commentators are largely agreed in pronouncing the Falstaff of the WIVES markedly inferior to him of the HENRY IV plays, there is obvious reason to inquire how Shakespeare in his prime could have wrought such a deterioration; and the solution will be found to be that the WIVES is not merely a non-Shakespearean play but at bottom an older one than the HENRY IV pair, the second of which we have seen to include non-Shakespearean matter.

All the evidence goes to show that our MERRY WIVES is a recast of the play entitled THE JEALOUS COMEDY, produced in 1593, and apparently at once or soon withdrawn. In our play, in the Quarto version of 1602, which evidently preserves older

matter, there is an allusion to "cosen (= cousin) Garmombles," and in the Folio version we have mention of Germans, cozen-Germans, and the Duke de Jamany, in an obviously mutilated account of an episode of horse-stealing. All this can be reasonably interpreted as pointing to a historic episode of 1592, in which Count Mümpelgart (or Mombeliard), soon to be Duke of Würtemberg and Teck, was granted by Lord Howard an official order giving him free use of post-horses on his journey from Windsor to the seaside, "he paying nothing for the same."

It is fairly obvious that an attempt to make stage fun of this episode in 1593 was likely to call forth an official veto, under which the play had to be withdrawn. And, as it happens, we thus get a reasonable basis for the tradition that our play was produced about 1598 to gratify the wish of Queen Elizabeth to see "Falstaff in love." The obvious likelihood is that she had heard of the old play in 1593, and, having in the interval enjoyed seeing Falstaff in the HENRY IV plays, wanted to see him in the other capacity.

On this view everything explains itself. In the WIVES Mistress Quickly is young and unmarried because she was so at her first appearance in the play of 1593. All the critical proposals of Johnson and Malone and later critics to "read" the WIVES *between* the two HENRY IV plays break down when we seek to apply them, as does the absurd theory that it should be read just before HENRY V, or after it by way of a revival of popular characters. These

unworkable theories all proceed on misinterpretation of the fact that in our play Falstaff is "old" and withered. It can be shown that in the original play he was *not* old.

XXXII. *The Creation of Falstaff*

In our MERRY WIVES there are six passages in which Falstaff describes himself, or is described, as old, fat, cold, withered, and "well-nigh worn to pieces with age." In the Quarto, which is clearly an earlier version, *five of these passages are entirely absent.* Only in two does he address his "old body" and speak of having "lived to these years"; and such phrases give no such notion of real old age as do the others.

Seeing then that in our play Mistress Quickly is quite young, the necessary inference is that the Falstaff of the old play was a presentment of the primary stage form of Falstaff as Sir John Oldcastle, a name which is still to be traced in the first Quarto of 2 HENRY IV, and, less clearly perhaps, in the phrase: "Sir John, there's his Castle," in our Quarto edition of the WIVES. (sc. xvi).

But in the recast of the old play in 1598, whatever was retained or changed of the old action, Falstaff is wilfully aged in respect of his having been made in the interval a familiar figure, and because for the adaptor his great age makes the main ground of the fun. Hence the deterioration so often remarked upon. It has been perhaps exaggerated, for the old

rascal has some witty passages, and there is a probability that these and some touches in Mrs. Quickly's part were inserted by Shakespeare. But the reason for the general inferiority of Falstaff in this play is that the adaptation is the work of another and a less gifted humorist, to wit, Chapman.

That Chapman's hand pervades the play can be shown by a multitude of clues of phrase and vocabulary in both the prose and the verse, and with no less clearness from the extraordinary similarity of the versification to that of his comedies —a versification much more simple and pellucid than that of his tragedies. Samples from his MAY-DAY and the WIVES are "as like as peas in a pod"; and to say this is to say emphatically that neither the diction nor the versification is Shakespeare's, early or late.

So here, once more, we have the traditional canon discrediting Shakespeare by fastening on him inferior work at a date at which he was entering his middle period. He is made to break down in his handling of Falstaff, whom a few years before he had raised to the topmost height of humorous efficiency, and he is made to produce other poor comic matter, as well as a quantity of wholly uninspired verse in another man's style.

Readers who will assent to all this merely because the play is included in the Folio, when even some Foliolaters admit that Heminge and Condell would not have hesitated for a moment to include alien matter, are doing as poor a service to Shakespeare's fame as to the cause of scientific criticism.

XXXIII. *"Henry the Fifth"*

In the current chronology, HENRY V and JULIUS CÆSAR are commonly assigned to the years 1599 and 1600 respectively. Discussion on those dates may be usefully waived by recognising that both plays unquestionably must have existed in some form many years earlier, and that they clearly preserve much old and other non-Shakespearean matter.

Those who affect to look to the history and practice of the theatre for guidance in Shakespeare study would do well to realise that two such themes as those of Henry V and Julius Cæsar *could not* have been left for Shakespeare to handle as new in 1599 and 1600. There were certainly old plays on Cæsar, and the FAMOUS VICTORIES OF HENRY THE FIFTH, which belongs to about 1586, is actually preserved, in a curtailed form, in print. To suppose, then, that the pre-Shakespearean scholarly group of Marlowe, Greene, Kyd, and Peele left these themes for Shakespeare to handle, is to show ignorance of the very nature of the old theatrical life. Some of those performers must have handled the conqueror Henry and Julius Cæsar, even as they handled Romeo and Juliet.

Indeed, the assumption that the "academics" would have ignored Henry V while they handled all three Edwards, and the unkingly Richard II to boot, could only have been made by scholars obsessed by Foliolatry. Nothing is more obvious

than the kinship of HENRY V to EDWARD III: they are twin plays. They begin and proceed in similar fashion, the main difference being that in EDWARD III there is a notable attempt to introduce a strong though quite irrelevant "female interest," in the shape of the "Countess scenes," which, as we have noted, are a recast, showing rewriting by Greene over a draft by Marlowe.

The practical inference is that the mere drum-and-trumpet business had not made the play successful, and that it was recast as I HENRY VI was recast. But in HENRY V, to say nothing of the play given as "new" in 1595, which would *ex hypothesi* be an adaptation of the Marlowe piece, our subsisting play shows the same felt necessity of making a "draw," in this case by adding all manner of comic business and side-scenes, which include nothing so striking for the reader as the Countess scenes in EDWARD III, but might perhaps "draw" better.

A scrutiny of this literary palimpsest suggests that Shakespeare's real work in it may have been done before 1599. The play on the boards in 1595–6 belonged to the Admiral's Company; and when Shakespeare's company (the Chamberlain's men) acquired the HENRY IV plays in addition to the HENRY VI trilogy, they would be likely to buy HENRY V also. In any case, in the passages which we can clearly recognise as Shakespearean, as in the second scene, where he seems to be revising older matter, the percentage of double-endings becomes much lower when we are most sure of his hand;

whereas in the King's speech, "Call in the messengers," and the Marlovian exchange of boastings which follows, it mounts very high.

Again, in the fourth act, where, after the remarkable prose dialogue with Bates and Will, Henry speaks greatly in verse, "Upon the King," we have only five double-endings in fifty-five lines, three of them quasi-accidental, being made by the text-word "ceremony." In sum, all the verse rising to twenty or more per cent of double-endings is traceable either to Marlowe or to a later hand, certainly not Shakespeare's; and the King's feebly-turgid chronicle-speech after the battle is no more from the master-hand than the savagely raucous rant before Harfleur.

As for the bulk of the Pistol and Nym business, and the paltry scenes in French, it seems almost unjust to Chapman to assign them even to him, though his hand is almost certainly to be traced in a good deal of the eking-out matter, and especially in the developed business of the butchery of prisoners, which Marlowe can be seen to have merely hinted at. Of the five Chorus prologues, only the fourth can have been even touched by Shakespeare: in the others, some inspired and probably drafted by Marlowe, there are such strong resemblances to similar work by Dekker and Heywood that their hands cannot be ruled out; while the fifth is apparently an adaptation to the case of Essex in 1599 of a prologue written with a reference to his French expedition in 1591—probably by Peele.

XXXIV. Shakespeare's Taste in Heroes

It is impossible to pass HENRY V without commenting on the critical sciolism which in the last century saw in Henry " the hero of Shakespeare's manhood," as revealed in this and the HENRY IV plays. To begin with, Henry, in his heroism, his snobbery, and his savagery, had been completely outlined by the general taste of the theatre and its caterers before Shakespeare touched the subject. The rakehell and the sanctimoniously reformed Prince ; the impossible hypocrite of the crown-scene ; the unhistorical conqueror who is a modern reflex of Tamburlaine—these had been duly drafted, first in the old FAMOUS VICTORIES, in the old (and lost) HENRY IV, and then in the Marlowe play that twinned EDWARD III.

What Shakespeare has done with the unedifying hero of the old theatre is to humanise him, first in the days of his wild oats, and again at war, while perforce leaving all the rest of the old stuff in the texts and on the boards, even as he had had to do in ROMEO and was to do in HAMLET. Apollo, serving under Admetus, had chosen to live by the theatre ; and he could only at points transfigure, without transforming, the action which for the theatre meant bread and butter.

Those who have been taught to see in Henry the hero of Shakespeare's manhood should ask themselves what congruity there is between the speaker of the great lines beginning ," Upon the King ! " and

the Marlovian declaimer who, before the gates of Harfleur, tells the enemy that if they do not surrender he cannot withhold his licentious soldiers (the "noblest English!") from slaying infants and virgins! To include that vision in the concept of a chosen hero of manhood was possible to the all-defying Marlowe who made Tamburlaine: it was not possible to his greater corrival.

The blind belief that it was, is one of the capital proofs of the power of a doctrinary delusion to paralyse the faculty of moral judgment no less than that of distinguishing literary differences. Men committed to presenting Shakespeare as the master spirit of all poet-dramatists have thus held up for admiration as his manhood's hero "a King of shreds and patches," an offence to free souls that can think, and a just ground of derision to the neighbour land.

But those apathetic to the moral test are not thereby capacitated to show that Shakespeare planned and penned HENRY V in mass. It is by the irreducible tests of versification, diction and style, that we are forced to assign to other hands the bulk of this stage-made medley, and the origination of it to his dramatic predecessors. And though the tests for prose are more difficult, we can reasonably say that we know of only one artist who could have given that strange touch of humorous pathos to Dame Quickly's account of the death of Falstaff. It is another who degrades her.

XXXV. *"Julius Cæsar"*

Nothing is more fixedly rooted in common opinion about Shakespeare than the belief that about the year 1600 he originated, planned, and wrote JULIUS CÆSAR. The belief is quite wrong. A scrutiny of the text reveals some matter in a quite "old" style, going back to about 1590; and much matter in non-Shakespearean styles. In the last century, Fleay, struck by the differences and the incongruities, propounded the theory that the play as it stands is a late reduction of two older Shakespeare-plays to one, and that the curtailing unification was made by Ben Jonson.

This suggestion was of course vehemently resisted by the critics who could not see differences in style, and would not reflect upon differences of treatment. Obviously it was hard to prove; for Fleay admitted that the total style impression was neither of the style of Jonson nor of the style of Shakespeare; though certain important passages point quite clearly to Jonson, who either deliberately reproduced them in his signed work or wrote them in both cases. Other passages raise the question whether Drayton had contributed. Yet others point insistently to Chapman.

What is admitted by the general body of critics is that the play is quite inadequate to its title. Cæsar enters in only about three-elevenths of the text of the first three acts, and this just at the end of his career. He whom Shakespeare in HAMLET

terms "the mightiest Julius" figures only as aged, deaf, and a mere ruin of greatness. One critic writes that "Cæsar, in this play, is a touchy man of affairs whose head is turned," yet conceives the play as of Shakespeare's planning and composition. The fourth and fifth acts are given to the action subsequent to his death.

That all this was planned to make one play under the title of JULIUS CÆSAR is incredible. Two prior plays there must have been, to cover this ground; and it is a reasonable inference from the records that there had been an old "Cæsar and Pompey" play; one leading up to the conspiracy and ending with Cæsar's death; and a third leading up to the fall of Brutus and Cassius, followed probably by an "Antony and Cleopatra."

In any case, the present play reveals not only several hands but two moods or attitudes. In one long speech, Cæsar is disparaged by Cassius, quite unhistorically, as feeble and effeminate; while Brutus views him as a great soul marred only by the ambition to be King. A little later (IV, iii, 22) Brutus declares that the conspirators had attacked him "but for supporting robbers." The critics who champion the tradition seek industriously to explain away these things, and necessarily fail. Franker criticism confesses that the tragedy, despite great passages, is a poverty-stricken and unworthy presentment of the greatest man of action dealt with in the whole Folio.

There are doubtless some who will profess to

conceive Shakespeare as quite capable of such a failure at the height of his powers. For more scrupulous minds, the question is to be settled not by foregone views of him, but by the scientific study of the text, and by rational inference as to the divergent points of view as well as the different ways of writing. Only after that is done can ultimate criticism be sound.

XXXVI. The Hands in "Julius Cæsar"

Fleay's hypothesis was defective in that he did not diagnose a pre-Shakespearean substratum in the play. Many allusions in the plays of Marlowe, Greene and Peele; in the old ALPHONSUS OF GERMANY, in which they seem to have collaborated; and in the Folio itself, point to a current play or plays in which there figured a "triumphing" Cæsar, hook-nosed and "thrasonical," who probably declaimed: "I came, I saw, I conquered," and at his death cried, "*Et tu, Brute!*" In Marlowe's MASSACRE AT PARIS, Guise says: "Cæsar shall go forth," as Cæsar says in our play.

Such evidence can be put aside only by partisans of a tradition. Even in the first scene of our play there is a passage about the Tiber channel being made to swell to its highest banks, which is twice closely paralleled in Marlowe's assigned works. The line: "And dip their napkins in his sacred blood" (III, ii, 138) is a mere duplication of "I dipt this napkin in the blood" in the old RICHARD DUKE OF

YORK (iii, 115). The vicious figure about the wounds "which, like dumb mouths, do ope their ruby lips," occurring *thrice* in the Antony scenes, points straight to the closely parallel passage in A WARNING FOR FAIRE WOMEN, printed in 1599, but certainly staged years before.

Still more striking, on a larger scale, is the parallelism between the prophecy of the Bishop of Carlisle in Act IV, scene i, of RICHARD II, and that of Antony in JULIUS CÆSAR (III, i, 259–276). They are homologous in spirit, purport, style and versification. The criticism which can suppose Shakespeare to write thus archaically about 1593 and again about 1600 is really a defiance to the critical spirit. Both passages tell of one pre-Shakespearean hand, and that Marlowe's. And there are many other clues.

Summarily, we must infer that Marlowe had a main hand in both of the old plays which were cut up and compressed in one, about 1600 or later, by Jonson or another. Shakespeare had inserted only passages, including some of the great strokes expressing Cæsar which still take away our breath, as they did Voltaire's even when he was assailing Shakespeare in a mood of reaction. Even the line "Cæsar did never wrong but with just cause," which we know from Jonson to have stood once in our play, and which Jonson himself may have altered to the present form, points back to a Marlovian passage in the old TROUBLESOME RAIGNE OF KING JOHN. There has certainly been no Shakespearean reconstruction.

Chapman is traceable at various points, one of the

most interesting being the use of the "split infinitive" in II, i, 187, a phenomenon quite missed by the commentators. As before noted, it is one of Chapman's frequent usages. He was the most likely playwright to exalt Portia; and Ben Jonson, who was anti-feminist, was perhaps the most likely to exhibit her as finally a hindrance rather than a help.

But the tracing of the curious clues from the passage V, v, 73–75 to passages in CYNTHIA'S REVELS and SEJANUS and in Drayton's BARONS' WARS; and of yet another important passage to Daniel, is a matter of laborious inquiry; as is the dissecting out of the work of Chapman. And there still remains for special scrutiny the striking and important theory of Mr. William Wells, who has so effectively traced the hand of Marlowe in the play, and who sees the hand of Beaumont in the final revision. Whatever be the ultimate critical conclusion, there can remain little doubt that this is not a play planned by Shakespeare, but one in which even his small contribution has been curtailed. It is the one important case in which, on a subject which must have deeply interested him, he has been withheld from any large renovation. He was to find a better opportunity later, in ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA, in which men of action are treated as realistically as, in JULIUS CÆSAR, Brutus and Cassius are theorised.

XXXVII. The Mid-Time Comedies

To the year 1599 (or the years 1599–1601) have been assigned, for no very clear reason, the composition of the three mid-time comedies, MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING, AS YOU LIKE IT, and TWELFTH NIGHT. These have also been termed "the happy comedies," as distinguished from ALL'S WELL and MEASURE FOR MEASURE, which, coming later, are by some characterised as "bitter." That distinction too we shall find to be misleading; but it is perhaps more important to realise the unfitness of the estimate that the first three named belong to Shakespeare's "period of maturity."

The very assumption that he planned them should have excluded the notion of maturity. Had those three charming comedies survived alone of Shakespeare's product, they would not have been acclaimed as the work of a great but only as that of a delightful dramatist and poet. Such fairy stories, such naïve plots, two of them turning on the dressing of girls as lads in the good old fashion, tell not of a mature mind looking largely at life, but of a masterly trafficker in the popular. None but he could have written the best of the verse. Twenty men could have drafted the plots, and gained thereby no lasting laurels. We are to remember, of course, that the taste for what we here term fairy-tale plots is perennial, and that the hundred thousand samples of our own age are no nearer to a "great" or "mature" literary treatment of life than were the

disguise-plots of the Tudor period, though they are less primitive.

The reasonable inference is that all three of the "happy comedies" were adaptations by Shakespeare of previous plays, probably with different names. The labels under notice, with their felicitous *insouciance* of appeal, have in themselves something Shakespearean, not suggested by the matter-of-fact labels of previous men. The titles "A Midsummer Night's Dream" and "The Winter's Tale" have the same elusive lure, the same graceful suggestion of unpretentiousness. But even the bibliographical analysis of MUCH ADO shows that there *was* a previous text of some kind; and we should be on our guard against supposing that it was Shakespeare's own.

There may even have been two old plays involved. In our text (II, i, 100–3) there remain some old-style "fourteener" lines, which suggest an old "actors' play" on the Hero plot, while some of the old end-stopped blank verse looks like Marlowe's. And there may have been a separate "Beatrice and Benedick." But this is conjecture.

AS YOU LIKE IT, again, being founded on the tale of ROSALYNDE by Lodge, published in 1590, is likely to have been dramatised long before 1599; and though TWELFTH NIGHT is the best constructed comedy of the three, not only is the central plot old-fashioned romance, but the characterisation of the subsidiary personages is not in all cases of the best; and the conception and presentment of Malvolio are not easily to be accepted as worthy of

Shakespeare in his middle period. The part offers, in fact, plain grounds for doubting whether it is a Shakespearean conception at all, being much more in the taste of a number of the figures in the comedies of Chapman.

XXXVIII. Composites, not Originals

The detection of hands or styles in these three comedies is one of the most difficult of our problems. When we compare the primary plots, we must admit that the motive of confused identities in TWELFTH NIGHT belongs to the dramatic plane of the COMEDY OF ERRORS, and might have been sketched by Marlowe. From time to time, indeed, the end-stopped verse curiously suggests him, as in the episode of Sebastian and Antonio, where we rise to such high percentages (30 and 35) of double-endings in verse of the old style. But on the other hand all the delicate and fanciful poetry round the characters of Viola and Olivia and Orsino is rather early-Shakespearean; while the comic background of Sir Toby, Aguecheek (partly a double of Slender, partly of Innocentio in Chapman's MAY-DAY), Maria, Malvolio, and the clown, belongs to the methods of the recast MERRY WIVES, with many aspects of Chapman.

Some recurring phrases, such as " for the love of mockery," and " in the name of jesting "—which we find weakly reduplicated in the use of " for the love of laughter " twice in one scene in ALL'S WELL (III, vi)—raise another question. This tag is in the

spirit of Chapman's whole practice in comedy. It would be a strange weakness in Shakespeare thus to multiply it: whereas for Chapman himself, or for some imitator, it would be in the way of that kind of mechanical comedy in which Chapman indulged, and to which the Malvolio plot belonged. The wit in this play, indeed, is often in his brisk but unsubtle vein, visibly inferior alike to that of the Falstaff scenes and that of the best part of MUCH ADO; and while Shakespeare probably revised and improved some of the other comic scenes which appealed to him, they do not impress us as of his invention.

In MUCH ADO, on the other hand, the flashing wit of the opening scenes is superior to anything in antecedent or contemporary non-Shakespearean drama. But here again there can be no doubt that there had been a revision of a prior play; and the theory that Shakespeare merely revised an earlier play of his own does not recommend itself, though he may well have done later a fresh revision of a play previously adapted by him. It is admitted by a recent editor that at points the revision shows inacquaintance with the very names of the characters. The reasonable presumption is that here again the playwright was adapting an old piece or pieces; and the main plot, in which the (at times) offensive Claudio is pardoned, suggests the methods of Greene, who had part of the story lying to his hand in the FAERIE QUEENE and elsewhere. It is impossible to say whether the idea of the Beatrice and Benedick episode was in the primary play or not.

There is a general tendency to regard Dogberry as a Shakespearean creation; and the types of Bottom and others in the DREAM gave countenance to that view. But the wit of Beatrice stands apart as something riper and more literate than either the fun over the constables or the dialogue of the villains. The curt final handling of Don John tells of a drastic curtailment of old matter, to make room for new.

AS YOU LIKE IT raises new problems. It is now widely recognised to be a recast of an old play, which, it is suggested, belongs to about 1593. What may be one of several recasts is assigned to 1599, with no certainty that additions were not made even later. The theory which supposes Shakespeare to have written the play about 1593 has to suggest that in 1599 he had here again forgotten some of the names of his characters, blundering as to that of the usurping duke, and forgetting whether the banished duke had been in exile for months or for years. It has been reasonably argued, also, that some of the prose, as in MUCH ADO, is visibly a recast of what was originally verse. Whose?

All this is speculation which cannot hide the fact that the play is at many points non-Shakespearean and was probably not of Shakespeare's drafting, though he seems to have worked on it long before 1599. It pleased him, and he painted over it in many places, putting excellent verse, perhaps, for other men's prose, and turning, probably, other men's verse into prose, as in the opening scenes. In the

later parts we can see at times the hand of Chapman. The Hymen scene at the end is visibly his, being closely akin to the Hymen episode in his WIDOW'S TEARS, and in the manner of the latter part of his MASQUE OF THE INNER TEMPLE as well as of the interlude in our TEMPEST—that interlude being very probably by him. It is plausibly suggested that the Hymen scene is a substitution for the mock-magic scene promised by Rosalind. The presence of two persons named Jaques in the last act is sufficient proof that the play had been rehandled again and again. Shakespeare is simply the most pervading and by far the most pleasing presence.

XXXIX. Shakespeare as Poet Comedian

In these comedies we perceive, newly and more fully, how Shakespeare adjusts himself to his work in his first decade of production. He is not only not "mature": he is tactfully handling old plots and plays to which he gives titles that say: "this is but pastime." We are not to suppose that he thought those fairy tales were in themselves pictures of life; his function is to put the spirit of life into them in a poetic form. And already he has strangely succeeded. Whatever be his raw material, it is certain that no previous writer of comedy had given to his work this gracious charm, as of ordered music. Even those who believe that he wrote the whole of the TWO GENTLEMEN must feel that that is thin music beside this.

In MUCH ADO Beatrice and Benedick seem to belong to a more convincing world than the other, with its rhetorical glitter, even though that may have been a little worked over. In TWELFTH NIGHT, through the trite romance, there comes a glow of human feeling in the personages, and the poetry wins us for itself. The comic machinery is on another footing, smacking of the taste of the time, and of an alien and poorer inspiration. In AS YOU LIKE IT, which though very loosely constructed has been as much rehandled as any, the human quality asserts itself from the first scene.

It was partly present, indeed, in Lodge's story, ROSALYNDE, in which Orlando (Rosader), Oliver (Saladyne) and old Adam are crisply " given " at the start. And Oliver, whosoever may have first drafted him in the play, is a sufficiently machine-made villain, a " fellow in buckram," whose moral transformation in the later acts, after having twice aimed at his brother's life, belongs to pre-Shakespearean art. But when Oliver *is* newly presented as a new man, incredible as he remains in the plot, he really talks like a human being ; which Orlando, even if he be a typical romance hero, has done from the start. Everybody likes him ; and when he enters Arden with his faithful and faithfully cherished old Adam, he is made to lift the play into music. All youngsters, again, inevitably fall in love with Rosalind. Greene's good women, the first recognisable creations of that order in the earlier drama, had not that manifold wayward charm. And Celia,

albeit condemned to mate with the incredible Oliver of the prior plot, is curiously real in her way.

What has been done for us is to vitalize a fantastic old plot at once with human sanity, with humour, and with poetry, which outweigh the alien work that remains. Chapman's bustling comedy of intrigue and talk is alternately fantastic and falsetto; and Jonson's comedy of talk is joyless. Shakespeare's is at once joyful and lifelike, poetic and natural. As the writer of the preface to TROILUS says in 1609, "the most displeased with plays are pleased with his comedies."

It is clear that he either was not in a position to insist on rewriting everything, or was not concerned to do so. He added the literary charm of the "seven ages" allocution, which is not late work, and all the good poetry in the play; and he probably turned old matter into new when he handled the pastoral episode of Phebe. But though he gave attraction to Touchstone he does not make us feel that he invented Audrey, any more than the forced "conversions" of Oliver and the usurping duke and the Jaques who is more motley than Touchstone, though he too is made in part Shakespearean.

The allotment of the alien matter remains difficult, apart from the obviously Chapmanese interlude of Hymen, which has no poetic felicity, and, as aforesaid, points straight to the Hymen episode in THE WIDOW'S TEARS and the verse manner of the interlude in the USHER and the singing part of the MASQUE OF THE INNER TEMPLE. Chapman seems

also to be the writer of Act II, scene ii; and scene iii is likewise alien, though more like Heywood. Shakespeare was content to uplift and round off, for his company, a comedy that must have been in its day as enjoyable as it became again in the nineteenth century, after a period in which the taste of the Restoration and the early eighteenth century found it merely old-fashioned.

XL. "Hamlet"

It is in HAMLET that Shakespeare unquestionably passes to a higher plane of drama and thought, revealing a power only partially to be divined from any of his previous tentatives, though even in KING JOHN and I HENRY IV he had dealt in death and sorrow and despair. And here again he is transmuting the work of other men, in a long-current play. For it is one of the facts which even Foliolatry cannot blink that there was a HAMLET on the boards in 1588, not of Shakespeare's writing. That it was the work of Thomas Kyd was long ago inferred and is now not denied, since actual "fossils" of Kyd's diction have been found in even our much revised play.

All the main elements of the old action—murder of the King by his brother, usurpation by the murderer, doubtful complicity of the Queen, the pretended madness of the son, the ghost, the play-scene, the arras-scene, the sending of the two envoys, the grave-scene, and the conclusion, were in the Kyd play, as indeed most of them (barring the ghost)

were in the old story which Kyd followed. Yet out of the machinery of that old tale of blood and barbaric revenge Shakespeare has by sheer alchemy of thought and language, feeling and poetry, created a marvel of reverie which after three hundred years keeps men at gaze, musing, probing, speculating, theorising. Once for all, he has made us feel that the greater the degree of his interest in the possibilities of his theme the greater the energy of his transfiguration. Of the soul of Hamlet, the stricken prince driven by his pain and his penalty to brood on every deep of life and death, he has made the most astonishing transformation of all.

Even Ophelia he has raised from a mainly comic figure for the Elizabethan theatre, which laughed at madness, to one of haunting pathos. Hamlet he has changed from the barbaric avenger, restrained only by his obstacles, to a spirit wounded no less by his mother's acquiescence than by the fratricidal crime; lacerated by wrong, yet, by force of the old machinery, doing the barbarian's deeds. Salvini once wrote, justly enough, that such a man as Hamlet could not have existed. Shakespeare would probably have readily agreed. Yet no stage figure has ever so fascinated men of every literate race. Some who expressly condemn the conserved structure of the old play confess that the mental life poured into it exceeds anything else in the Folio.

This is really the crowning proof of our thesis that Shakespeare's function is not play-making in the old sense but vivifying by the laying on of his hands

all plays that he is free to renovate. And it is only in the light of this perception that we can understand the making of HAMLET, from the First Quarto onwards. Scores of essays and treatises have been written on Hamlet's mystery, often summed up in the dilemma that he unintelligibly delays his vowed revenge. When we note the simple explanation of that, we have solved the dramatic mystery as such.

As for the moralising criticism which lectures him for his unreadiness to assassinate his wicked uncle, it is æsthetically irrelevant even when the solution of the delay is found. Had Hamlet instantly killed his uncle after meeting the Ghost, there could have been no play. Delay is of the essence of the plot. In THE SPANISH TRAGEDY, Kyd delays the revenge of Jeronimo more arbitrarily than he does that of Hamlet; and nobody seems to have complained save the two women *in* the play. Hamlet's abstention from slaying a praying man would by every Elizabethan play-goer have been regarded as a matter of course. It is only in an age which supposes itself to have grown morally scrupulous that Hamlet is reproached with moral weakness because of lack of alacrity in assassination.

XLI. Hamlet's Mystery

In the old Kyd play, as revealed to us in the probably curtailed old German version published by Cohn, Hamlet's delay is quite clearly explained as enforced by the constant presence of the guards who

surround the guilty King. What must have happened in the stage setting, before Shakespeare took hold of the play (which may have been not more than a year or two after Kyd's death at the end of 1594) was the dispensing with those very guards, and the consequent deletion of the lines in the old play alleging their presence. For there were no guards in Elizabeth's court; and the stage setting would naturally follow that usage at a time when the Chamberlain's men frequently played there.

One of the real mysteries of Shakespearean criticism is the fact that Charles Lamb, in the TALES FROM SHAKESPEAR (1807), makes this express statement: "Every hour of delay seemed to him [Hamlet] a sin, and a violation of his father's commands. Yet how to compass the death of the King, *surrounded as he constantly was with his guards*, was no easy matter." No such statement is made in our play as it stands, or in the First Quarto (1603), first reprinted in 1825. The statement is made in the text only of the old German version. Whence then did Lamb derive his idea? In the stage directions of the Folio, the only suggestion of a guard is the "guard with torches" who light the royal party to the play-scene. In the quartos there is not even that. When Laertes leads the insurrection there is no guard to meet him.

Even in the crude old prose "Hystorie of Hamblet" (which Lamb cannot have seen, there being only one copy from which to reprint it after his death), there is no mention of a body of guards

surrounding King Fengon. Nor can Lamb conceivably have seen the old German HAMLET, though he may possibly have heard of it. We seem driven to assume that he simply imagined for himself the detail which had actually been posited in Kyd's play, but had disappeared from that taken up by Shakespeare.

The main fact is that the deletion is the clue to the transformation of the main figure. Shakespeare found a Hamlet ostensibly delaying his revenge for no outward reason, and proceeded to build up the Hamlet who reproaches himself for his delay. The conception is never reduced to unity. Lamb conceives a Hamlet who recoils from all killing; but such is not our Hamlet, who kills Polonius (for Claudius) in the barbarian's fashion. Hamlet remains, as a play-character, a strange composite, and the modern attempt to present him in Freudian terms as a victim of his "unconscious" is wholly chimerical. Could such a fantasy have been propounded to Shakespeare he would probably have stared. In any case, he had a better and a simpler answer: "We are such stuff as dreams are made on." It was his chosen material, so handled that his imagination gives us beings who to us seem more real than the commonplace reality around us. A talking ghost, in complete armour, is the acme of the impossible; but we listen all the same.

XLII. The Influence of Montaigne

There is reason to think that one of the forces which moved him to his new and wonderful creation was the deep impression at once made on him by the thought of Montaigne, in the translation of the ESSAIES by Florio, published in 1603, but probably read-in by Shakespeare in the years in which it was being slowly printed, Florio being under Southampton's patronage. The intensely stimulating reflections of Montaigne pervade alike HAMLET and MEASURE FOR MEASURE, and recur in LEAR; and the well-known extract in the TEMPEST proves the contact beyond challenge.

All such suggestions, of course, are met by the conservatism of habit with the kind of angry resistance made to all the evidence brought to show that the Folio plays are mostly adaptations and transfigurations of other men's work. It seems to be unthinkingly supposed that Shakespeare is dishonoured by being conceived as influenced by other men's ideas. We are even told that had he never read Montaigne his mind would have evolved in exactly the same way. It would be as plausible to say that it would have so evolved if he had never read anything at all. Goethe, studying himself, tells us that he is the outcome of a hundred outside influences; to which we have but to add that, in his case as in Shakespeare's, the genius is still a *sine qua non*. The poet is born *and* made.

Hamlet is what he is for us pre-eminently because

he is a thinking being, steeping in thought and in poetry every phase of his tragic problems; though such piercing touches as "thou would'st not think how ill all's here about my heart" keeps us always intensely aware of him as a suffering man. And Montaigne was the greatest stimulant to "thinking new and thinking true" in Shakespeare's age; even as Shakespeare is the greatest of all who have blended thought and feeling in consummate poetic speech. To realise him on the side of his intellectual growth, then, is a main part of the process of knowing him aright. In a large sense he *is* Hamlet, because the staged Prince Hamlet, free to discourse penetratingly on all things on the stage of life, is the finest mouthpiece that Shakespeare had yet found.

And if it be yet again remarked that Shakespeare's development was late as compared with that of Marlowe, who seems to have reached maturity at twenty-nine, when he died, perhaps it is a sufficient answer to ask the critic to remember how much more, in Shakespeare's case, there was to mature!

XLIII. Alien Hands in the Tragedies

Even after Shakespeare had begun to work on HAMLET, the management of his company seem to have employed the services of others on it at certain points. The scene-section in which Polonius instructs Reynaldo to spy upon Laertes in Paris appears to have been conceived as a piece of "comedy-relief" after the long strain of the ghost-scene; and

its irrelevance to the action has in modern times usually kept it off the boards. This seems to have been the work of Chapman, whom we have reason to regard as having done a long series of odd jobs for the Chamberlain's men, and whom we shall meet with in the so-called "bitter comedies" of the Hamlet period, and later.

The player's speech on "the rugged Pyrrhus" has always been something of a puzzle. It reads like a deliberate exercise in archaic form, and cannot plausibly be ascribed to Shakespeare's hand; but though the vocabulary hints of Chapman it is not confidently to be ascribed to him. In fact, the prefatory words of Hamlet point pretty plainly to a play never acted, and suggest a special compliment to a non-professional author. But the rhymed speeches of the player King and Queen are of another order. The scene opens with a set of lines which curiously echo two sets of similar verse in Greene's ALPHONSUS OF ARRAGON, as if Greene had been concerned in some early redaction of the play; while the remainder of the scene is notably in the style of Chapman, and includes a tag ("None wed the second but who killed the first") used by him elsewhere.

The fooling of Hamlet with Polonius, again, impressed the Clarendon Press editors long ago as partly alien; and here again there are Chapman clues; while the whole presentment of Osric is entirely in that author's taste, and Hamlet's phrase, "spacious in the possession of dirt" pairs with

Chapman's " Men rich in dirt " in ALL FOOLS (I, i), which seems to have been produced in 1599.

In MACBETH, admittedly, there is both survival of older matter and addition of later, apparently from Middleton's WITCH. That there was an early play on Macbeth is suggested by many things, one being the registration of a " ballad " of " Makdobeth " in 1596. But specially significant are the many MACBETH parallels of phrase and figure in A WARNING FOR FAIRE WOMEN, very probably by Kyd, though not printed till 1599. Set beside the facts that in Kyd's SOLIMAN AND PERSEDA (V, iii, 52) we have the line: " What, darest thou not? give me the dagger then! " and that there are also MACBETH parallels in the SPANISH TRAGEDY, they strongly invite the surmise that Kyd had a hand in the early Macbeth play.

When we further compare the diction of the sergeant's speech in MACBETH (I, i), which is now generally admitted to be non-Shakespearean, with the style of Benvolio's and Montague's in ROMEO AND JULIET (I, i), we have some reason to think that the hand is Kyd's in both cases; and that he was the first draftsman here. Some of the rhymed witch-matter, again, seems to implicate Chapman in a later revision.

But all this merely fits into the theorem forced upon us all through this inquiry. Shakespeare was not an originator of plots and plays: he was the transformer and transfigurer of souls. His certain work in MACBETH begins with Macbeth's line, " So

foul and fair a day I have not seen"; and here at once we are in a new dramatic world. The power of utterance in HAMLET is astonishing and fascinating: in MACBETH, in the full tide of action, it becomes startling, electric, terrible. Visibly curtailed as a whole, the play is perhaps the most tremendous concentration of tragic action, passion, and speech, in all drama. Macbeth's "Which of you have done this?" is as new in tragedy as Beatrice's "Kill Claudio" in comedy. The earlier men would have given us twenty lines of declamation. That alien stuff like the porter's speech—a mere stopgap of "comic relief"—could be inserted in this tremendous texture is a fact that invites queries alike as to Shakespeare's royal unconcern and the mentality of the management.

In OTHELLO, where also we have to do with a great recast of a prior play, there is again little of the old matter left; and Shakespeare's, or his predecessor's, rewriting seems even to have unduly telescoped the action; since Othello's jealousy is first worked upon at a moment when Desdemona and Cassio can never once have been in company since the marriage. The action, presumably too long in the first form, has been too much shortened, apparently in order to achieve an impracticable "unity of time." In the opening scene there are visible "cuts," even where Shakespeare appears to be rewriting; yet some crude matter is left where, in that scene, the action begins.

But while many curious "fossils" of vocabulary

protrude in the text from time to time, calling for some attempt at identification, it is only in the earlier acts, as in the diction of the condensed or curtailed speeches of minor characters in Act I; in the line-ended versification of Brabantio's invective against Othello; in the rhyming speeches of the Duke and Brabantio in scene iii; and in Iago's rhyming lines in Act II, scene i (lines 149–161), that the prior play is obtrusive. In the handling of the action to the dreadful close, and in the limning of Othello, Desdemona, Iago and Emilia, Shakespeare has put forth the swift power that no rival ever approached. The identification of the previous workmen is a task that has not yet been undertaken, the problem, in fact, being hitherto unrecognised, though Ingleby long ago insisted that Othello's speech in Act V, scene i, 31–36, is spurious.

XLIV. "King Lear"

While MACBETH may be technically described as unduly curtailed, and OTHELLO as foreshortened in the earlier action, LEAR is, on the contrary, protracted, being, like HAMLET, one of the longest plays in the Folio. This differentiation of form calls for inquiry as to whether the experience of undue length had dictated a recourse to curtailment, or *vice versa*, though perhaps the solution may be that MACBETH was shortened for Court performance, or in order to give time to the spectacular witches.

According to the ordinary chronology HAMLET

dates *circa* 1602; OTHELLO 1604; LEAR 1605; and MACBETH 1606. On this view the lengthened and shortened plays alternate. But Fleay dates HAMLET 1601, and MACBETH also 1601, holding it to have been written in Scotland; while he accepts 1604 for OTHELLO and 1605 for LEAR. Here we have a long play followed by a short, and OTHELLO again by a longer play.

Sir Sidney Lee places LEAR in 1607. Wherever we place it, there is no question that it was suggested by the old KING LEIR AND HIS THREE DAUGHTERS, printed (or reprinted) in 1605, but entered in The Stationers' Register so long before as 1594. And that version appears to be clearly a recast, largely controlled by Kyd (to whom there are many clues), of an older play in which Peele and Greene, and even Lodge, would seem to have shared. It was, in fact, a realistic chronicle drama, in marked contrast to the archaic LOCRINE. The final introduction of the figures of the King of France and Mumford, savouring as they do of up-to-date comedy, makes the LEIR play a kind of chronicle-comedy, in which all ends well for the good people.

The outstanding feature of our LEAR is that it wholly reverses that tendency, and turns the play into inexorable tragedy, in the full-grown spirit of a period in which tragedy had come anew into its own. And those who find the intervening plays ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL and MEASURE FOR MEASURE to be "bitter comedies" thus countenance the view that Shakespeare in the period in question

had developed a predominantly tragic temper, which was to be transmuted back into serenity only in the late WINTER'S TALE, CYMBELINE, and THE TEMPEST.

But again we must eschew facile solutions. The natural assumption that Shakespeare of his own spontaneous motion took up the old LEIR and completely rewrote it in a truly tragic fashion is to be checked by the question whether here again another intervening hand had not been at work in tragedy-making before he grasped it. Certainly the style throughout, even when clearly his, reveals a new irregularity, as it were forcing matter into verse without the old easy control. The verse is in a way the more powerful as a communicator of emotion, as if the overcharge of feeling gave sparks as well as light. There are few or none of the harmonious progressions of verse found in OTHELLO and MACBETH. This perturbed Shakespeare might well plan a hyper-tragic action.

But still there are traces of a basis in the opening prose dialogue, which has a stress of "modishness" not found in the genuine parts of HAMLET, though not without kinship to some of the talk in OTHELLO. The issue is: Did Shakespeare, going to work without some path of reconstruction made for him by another hand, thus begin as it were artificially; or is the complication of plot, thus prepared for at the outset, a design by another, already redacting the old LEIR? It is only when we come to the mad scenes of Edgar, perhaps, that we become sure of another expatiating hand, though Kent's torrent of

invective against Oswald gives the same impression of another voice than Shakespeare's.

Whose this hand was, is one of the many problems of the Folio not yet investigated, and only after close investigation can even a hypothesis be ventured. But it may serve to suggest a line of exploration if we say that whereas there is certainly Chapman matter in TIMON, where we meet some such temper of fierce pessimism as pervades LEAR, there is also, apparently, matter of Middleton's there. In LEAR, then, there may be an element of Middleton. The rhymed lines are in his manner; and he who dug in Reginald Scot's DISCOVERIE OF WITCHCRAFT for material for THE WITCH might well have consulted Harsnet's DECLARATION for the names of imps in Edgar's "mad" talk, which is not like Shakespeare. Furthermore, Middleton's lawless and heedless versification might account for roughness in Shakespeare's swift revision.

But no assignment of subsidiary matter in LEAR to inferior hands can detract from the regnancy of Shakespeare, in whatsoever mood of spiritual perturbation. This is the tragedy that above all others envisages and exhibits evil to the uttermost, with crushing power. At the outset Lear faces us, already morally mad, and destined to be so physiologically, then to be restored to a sanity of which the pathos outgoes tears, and to perish under the last dread stroke of wrong. In this plexus, in which the evil that always seethes around us is gathered up in blasts of appalling action, the types of good, as in

Cordelia, Kent, the French King, the restored Lear, Gloucester, and Edgar, are as firmly posed as in any other action. It is the long and awful clash of it all that makes the play the topmost flight of Shakespeare's tragic sense. To reach that height, he had looked into madness.

XLV. The "Bitter Comedies"

To the period of the four great tragedies are commonly assigned the so-called "bitter comedies," ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL and MEASURE FOR MEASURE, the latter being commonly dated 1604, and the former, in its existing form, 1601–2; though Fleay divines an early form in 1592, and Luce decides for 1595, presumably by way of accounting for the mass of rhyme. The likelihood is that any 1592 version of ALL'S WELL was Greene's, forming a basis for a later version by Chapman, which Shakespeare partially revised; while MEASURE FOR MEASURE, in plot and spirit a companion play, also adapted early from the old two-part PROMOS AND CASSANDRA, was in its turn recast by Chapman, and was more fully than in the other case revised by Shakespeare about 1604.

These inferences are forced on us by the very texture of the plays. Chapman's hand can be closely traced throughout, not only in blank verse and rhyme which Shakespeare has left alone, but in blank verse which he has rewritten. Phrasal clues and vocabulary clues abound; and in ALL'S WELL

certain passages stand out as relics of Greene, to whom such stories of pardon for the unpardonable always came naturally. In ALL'S WELL the root source is admittedly Boccaccio's Italian tale of Giletta; in MEASURE FOR MEASURE the groundwork is obviously given ready-made by Whetstone's PROMOS AND CASSANDRA (1578). Shakespeare handled such plots as he did those of the earlier comedies, with an eye to elevation where it was possible.

Both plays are at bottom unpleasant; but in MEASURE FOR MEASURE the fundamental twist, being less pervasive, leaves many more opportunities for betterment; and again and again, notably in the parts of the Duke and Claudio, Shakespeare writes so greatly and so finely that we return to the noble poetry for itself. Here the thinking constantly savours of Montaigne, as if the poet were living for the time in his atmosphere. The squalid matter which obtrudes itself in other scenes is as like Chapman as anybody; and since he certainly figures often in the verse he is the likely culprit.

But in dealing with Chapman, Shakespeare in general either rewrites the blank verse or leaves it alone, like most of the prose: he does not yield, as he seems to do in a darker mood in LEAR, to the technical disturbance set up by the lawlessly bad versification of another hand which he too rapidly recasts. Chapman's style deserves all that was said of it by Swinburne; but at his worst he is capable of cryptic verse of a perversely tortuous kind, whereas Middleton had hardly the sense of true verse at all.

XLVI. *"All's Well that Ends Well"*

ALL'S WELL, much the worse of the two so-called "bitter comedies," is specially interesting as a test case. Even academic criticism in one case has come to recognise that much of the play cannot be Shakespeare's; while in others a hasty retreat is made to the attitude of arraigning Shakespeare for "uncouthness" and moral stupidity. Such are the penalties of Foliolatry. Sane students can find the right solution by following and recording the obvious differences of hand. And the moral solution coincides.

The fundamental trouble in ALL'S WELL, the sullying and humiliating procedure forced on Helena, who is yet presented as the high-minded heroine, was one that would give no trouble to Greene, and small dissatisfaction to the capricious Chapman, but could not possibly be acceptable to Shakespeare, precisely because he is the true humanist of his age. When then we find items of Greene's rhyme and tag, and slabs of Chapman's fantastically worded couplets, identical in their jarring structure with the manner of his signed poems, we know where we are.

It may be said without hesitation that the whole of the Parolles matter in ALL'S WELL, barring some revision, is by Chapman. That it is a mere excrescence on the plot, strenuously concocted "for the love of laughter," is visible even to some who saddle it on Shakespeare. It is, in fact, a piece of mechanical

mirth-making exactly in the spirit of the long episode of Monsieur D'Olive in Chapman's play of that title. D'Olive is in turn a mere excrescence on the plot, which in that case was certainly unnatural enough to make it necessary to add an obtrusive farcical figure to attract audiences.

It is quite possible that in this way Parolles was a "draw" for audiences who took but a tepid interest in the intrigues of Helena, or even in the curing of the King's fistula, and the blackguardism of Bertram, who for male eyes has not a redeeming quality. And there might conceivably be a touch of "bitterness" in Shakespeare's acceptance of such fourth-rate stuff in the way of business. He knew his world, in its pervading ineptitude as in its persistent proclivities to evil; and he had to rub shoulders with bad art as with bad nature. Yet in Hamlet's advice to the players we have a luminous and memorable outbreak which shows his critical sense to have been as keen-edged as his sense of reality in general, and we can readily divine how it related to the poor stuff with which some of his best had to be associated. Always we must realise him as "the man of the theatre," Apollo in working harness.

When, however, we have realised that he did not plan but merely accepted these plots in the way of the theatre, we must detach the label (framed by Dowden and accepted by Chambers) which finds "bitter comedy" as such to be the self-expression of Shakespeare at a given time. It is the fallacy of

taking effect for cause. The "bitterness" is here not Shakespeare's at all; it inheres in the quality of action which he did not invent, and matter which he did not write. Thus to identify his inner life with the themes of the plays he handled, ascribing ROMEO AND JULIET, for instance, to his personal experience, is merely to elaborate, in the name of criticism, that "misknowledge" of Shakespeare that has dominated so-called "higher criticism" in the past.

Bad criticism, like bad art, when it is not to be dismissed as mere incompetence in action, comes of not thinking patiently enough, or deeply enough—"a malady most incident" to all of us. Careful criticism may well avow that in LEAR Shakespeare faced all evil with a tense awareness of its omnipresence; and we may broadly assent to Darmesteter's account of his 1601–8 period as one of "pessimism." We should err if we accepted Bagehot's picture of him as a well-fed solid Saxon, always humorously tranquil, taking life easily as it comes. Such solid Saxons are not of the stuff of great poets. But while we acknowledge Shakespeare to have responded to every touch of reality, tragic or other, even to the point of hearing at times—as one poet puts it—"the whine of madness" in the cordage of his bark, we must conclude that "pessimist," either in a philosophic or in a practical sense, is not finally the right name for him. For he was to live to propound himself in THE WINTER'S TALE.

XLVII. *Heterogeneous Serious Drama: "Pericles" and "Troilus"*

Three of the Folio plays, TROILUS AND CRESSIDA, TIMON OF ATHENS, and PERICLES, PRINCE OF TYRE, have almost always been admitted to be "enigmatic" as to authorship, even among Foliolaters. They belong to the period between 1599 and 1608. PERICLES, though certainly in part by Shakespeare, and published with his name as author in 1609, was actually excluded from the Folio of 1623, and was admitted into the collection only in the third Folio, 1664. It has been thought that it was put aside by the actor-editors, Heminge and Condell, in 1623, because they knew Shakespeare was not the author. There must have been a stronger reason than that, seeing that Shakespeare has worked over three acts, and that in some of the other plays he had penned not a scene. It was probably a matter of temporary copyright.

PERICLES is primarily dramatised from a "novel" called "The Painful Adventures of Pericles Prince of Tyre," published in 1608, and known to have been written by George Wilkins on the basis of the older "Pattern of Painful Adventures," by Lawrence Twine (1576). That the first two acts of PERICLES were written by George Wilkins was confidently asserted by Fleay over forty years ago, and has in late years been fully established by Mr. Dugdale Sykes. The Gower preludes are mostly, though not all, by Wilkins; and it is a critical scandal that one

academic authority should declare them to be Shakespearean. Shakespeare first takes hold only in Act III, merely revising or recasting, however, the remainder of Wilkins's play. The " Marina " episode is largely of his handling, though the coarsely vigorous brothel scenes in general are not. Mr. Marley Denwood advances the interesting theory that they are by Fletcher, who has stuff of that kind. But in the first speech the Master pens we find a verse, a diction, a phrasing that only he could command.

This is clearly late work ; but it is otherwise with TROILUS AND CRESSIDA, which, though published only in 1609 as not having been previously staged (in the public theatre, that is) must have been handled by Shakespeare in his HAMLET period. The great didactic verse in the third scene and in Acts II, III, and IV, perhaps among the finest of that order he ever penned, in respect of sheer splendour of language and imagery, is clearly earlier than the tense diction of LEAR. It is as if he sought to turn into noble harmony long undramatic and other harangues by some other hand. A scholar has noted the extraordinary abundance, in these speeches, of " Latin " vocabulary not found elsewhere in the plays. A previous draft by Chapman or another would account for the phenomena.

There are certainly various hands in the piece. It has been counted that the story of Troilus and Cressida was dramatised at least twenty-nine times between 1559 and 1599 ; and what older plays are partly borrowed from in Shakespeare's it will be hard

to ascertain. The suggestion of Dekker's prologue-manner in the existing prologue, which is generally admitted to be non-Shakespearean, raises the question whether the play on Troilus and Cressida on which Dekker and Chettle are known to have worked in 1599 may have been drawn upon, seeing that "Agamemnon" was also a title of the play in question. All that is broadly clear is that the opening matter is not originally Shakespeare's, even if touched by him; that Pandarus and Thersites are not creations of his; that the Thersites scurrility is from other hands; and that the huddle of events in the fifth act, and the poor finish, are also alien.

When he takes hold of hero and heroine in earnest, he writes with signal power; and the study of Cressida is as masterly as it is pitiless. But this could not unify the play; and it is quite likely that it was withheld as being ill-fitted for the public stage. Troilus and Cressida are hardly linked to the larger action, which is really the less dramatic. Neither scholars nor townsmen could be satisfied.

And yet this outcast play, condemned by scholars for its adoption of the anti-Achillean view of Achilles as well as for its general disunity and ultimate disorder, remains to show how the Master could spend some of his most wonderful poetic power on a drama which was to be treated as still-born. The actor-editors, it is clear, had not at first intended to include it in the Folio at all, and finally thrust it, mispaged for a few leaves and thereafter not paged

at all, between the Histories and the Tragedies. It is the Cinderella of the Folio.

XLVIII. "Timon of Athens"

Another theatrically abortive play is TIMON OF ATHENS, stamped like the two others by the revising hand of Shakespeare, but certainly not of his original composition. Timon was another legendary and proverbial personage, like Cressida, the subject of many plays. One, of Shakespeare's time, has been preserved and printed, so that we can know that he did not proceed on *that*. It is a literary curiosity, the work of a man of some capacity, but quite immemorable. The Shakespeare play is a composite from other materials to which Shakespeare had only to some extent given his mind.

It belongs to the period and the temper of LEAR. We are not to suppose that Shakespeare had not long before looked the world full in the face; but in and after HAMLET he had been enabled to speak out as he would; and there is no doubt that he had seen in England all the basenesses and littlenesses which drive the ill-balanced Timon over the edge of moral sanity. The legend, the type, the thesis, give him some such liberty as he was able to take to the full in LEAR. But the play came in his way: he did not draft it.

At the outset there seem to be clear signs of the hand of Chapman, the opening speeches being full of his diction, his manner, his sentiment, though

revised by Shakespeare into something like lucidity. But on that view Chapman had either begun a play which he did not finish, or had begun to recast a play by another or others, not Shakespeare. For, as has been shown by Mr. William Wells, followed by Mr. Sykes, the irregular and convulsive versification and the special diction of Middleton enter in a number of the later scenes, Shakespeare only here and there recasting a speech or retouching lines. Further, Mr. Sykes, while accepting the view of Mr. Wells, gives much proof of the presence of John Day in the prose.

There is always, of course, a danger of regarding as peculiar to one writer phrases which are used by others; and Mr. Sykes not only takes as special to Middleton forms of contraction common in Chapman, but states that the verb "to pleasure" does not occur in the Folio in connection with a loan, whereas it actually does so occur in THE MERCHANT OF VENICE (I, iii, 7). But it seems clear that the hands of Middleton and Day are present in TIMON, and the many clues to Chapman are not by Mr. Sykes disposed of.

In view of the apparent practice of Chapman in recasting other old plays, which Shakespeare had to revise, we might suspect a similar practice here, with the inference that Middleton and Day had between them framed a play which seemed unlikely to be a stage success. It had not the necessary elements. There is no "female interest"; and no clear plot; and Timon was not a sympathetic figure for on-

lookers who had seen him throw his money out of the window, as it were.

And neither Chapman nor Middleton had the humanising gift, though both had force and plenty of invective for all occasions. Their stronger figures are ideal projections like Marlowe's, which, even when they took them from history, they could not clothe with that stuff of human nature in which Shakespeare always works, whether in tragedy or in comedy. They do not incarnate; rather they disincarnate. The fiery force of Chapman's tragic heroes flies away finally in sparks and smoke; Middleton tends to handle tragic plots as he handled blank verse, as a raw material or a tool in which he found no human value, manipulating it arbitrarily for mere stage effect. In THE WITCH we seem to move in a nightmare, or a drunkard's dream.

Thus whatever is deeply moving in TIMON is, as usual, Shakespeare's; and again and again we get the thrill of his unmatchable verse: —

> Will these moss'd trees
> That have outlived the eagle, page thy heels,
> And skip when thou points't out? Will the cold brook
> Candied with ice, caudle thy morning taste
> To cure thy o'er night's surfeit?

—lines oddly placed, probably in transfiguration of other matter. The great speech of Timon in the first scene of Act IV (save for the last four lines, which are non-Shakespearean), appears also to be one of his forceful recasts. And yet it is doubtful whether

the piece was ever actually played in the theatre, being, as it stands, much curtailed.

XLIX. Shakespeare and His Audience

It is a memorable fact that of the three plays last discussed PERICLES alone had a stage success. It is not difficult to see why. That motley play has a plot full of action and adventure; it opens on a shocking story, and it has lively brothel scenes. Ben Jonson in vain denounced it, twenty years later, as a "mouldy tale . . . stale As the shrieve's crusts, and nasty as his fish—Scraps out of every dish," in the second ODE TO HIMSELF, which brought upon him many stinging retorts, and in particular an "Invective" by his old friend Chapman. This raises the question whether perchance Chapman had not lent a hand to Wilkins in writing the first two acts of PERICLES, or in writing a "Chorus" or two. In any case, the play went on "drawing."

On the other hand, as we have seen, TROILUS and TIMON had no stage life at all, with all their larger merit. Again it is easy to see why. What is great in TROILUS, apart from the central portraiture of Cressida, is the magnificent writing in the non-dramatic scenes, which could entrance only the cultured minority. The picture of Cressida is "bitter"; the scurrilities of Thersites are mere Billingsgate, leading to nothing; and the "tragedy" matter turns solely on the slaying of Hector in a fashion which defamed Achilles, and so offended the

scholars who knew their Homer. All the attempts at " popular " matter, in short, miscarry; and the great matter, inserted by the Master, is literary, not theatrical.

TIMON is in similar case; yet on both of those plays Shakespeare had lavished not a little of his genius. Probably, with his illimitable faculty of rhythmical utterance, they cost him little conscious effort, and he would find his artistic pleasure in the sheer writing. He had now reached a point, apparently, at which he could work with only a partial regard to the commercial side of his work, esteeming little the suffrages of the crowd, though never, so far as we know, inclining seriously to break away from that servitude to the theatre which he had accepted.

There remained always this broad situation: he would from time to time bestow matchless faculty on a play that could not be theatrically successful, as was to be the case, later on, with one of his greatest constructions, CORIOLANUS; yet he remained ready to handle drafts by other men which he might hope to turn to theatrical account. Sometimes he did this without any sustained enthusiasm, as in the cases of HENRY VIII and CYMBELINE and THE TWO NOBLE KINSMEN; sometimes with a really dominating interest, as in ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA, THE WINTER'S TALE, and THE TEMPEST. His dramatic life thus mirrored, in its vicissitudes, the general life in which he saw his merged—the " mingled yarn " of the whole endless web.

Personally, he had attained the economic security which from the first he had sanely made his objective. In 1605 he was able to buy for £440 a large portion of the tithes of Stratford and the neighbouring district, a very considerable investment for the time; and his pecuniary prosperity would go on mounting with that of his company. In the winter of 1604 it played eleven times before the Court; in the years 1603–1616 it played there some 187 times; and his latest biographer is satisfied that this was due to the superiority of the company as actors, and of Shakespeare as play-maker.

Thus he had duly succeeded in the struggle for existence, and knew that a sufficiency of competent men recognised his supremacy in his chosen field, won by his marvellous vitalising of lesser men's plots. If he cared about such praise he knew that both Elizabeth and James had admired and enjoyed his manifold writing. But being, at the very centre of his mind, a thinker, he saw in the whole universe but a "passing show"; and he would note only as an item in the show any acclamation given to his own wizardry, though honest penmen gave him laud. When undergraduates laughed at the admiration given him by his proud fellow-players in the anonymous play THE RETURN FROM PARNASSUS (1601) Shakespeare doubtless laughed as cheerfully as any. He was content to be the man of the theatre.

L. The Miracle of Genius

It is by reason of this self-surrender that he can be so much greater for us than he was for himself, or for his age. At times we may be moved, with Charles Lamb, to contemn "the theatre" which claims to include him as a kindred soul, and is to such a vast extent unworthy of the connection. But the strange fact remains that what we agree to regard as our greatest literature was in strict fact produced by way of finding entertainment for that largely gross, tumultuous, multi-coloured congregation of every-day people, the London audience of Shakespeare's day.

It would seem to have been everything save commonplace, as we to-day count commonplace, though in Beaumont's KNIGHT OF THE BURNING PESTLE and in a multitude of other plays we meet an infinity of self-complacent commonplace in character. The differentiation would seem to lie in a curious receptiveness to all orders of literary art, the 'prentice having an ear for Hamlet as for Falstaff, and the whole multitude being as docile to poetry in blank verse as to realistic prose.

On the personal side, it seems to have been vitally important for Shakespeare that he had chosen the literary form of drama. In the early poems his obvious gift is one of illimitable expatiation, the possession of a mint that can coin metrical and musical phrase to infinity, every fancy begetting more. We may sum it up as an immense faculty for

verbal extension on the poetic plane. The great virtue of drama, seen even in the tentatives of the pre-Shakespeareans, is to impose on expatiation a law of compression. For the actual theatre, the vast monologues of Senecan drama were by sheer necessity tabu. And it is under that conditioning, that constant compulsion of form, that Shakespeare's utterance grows ever more *intensive*, till he comes to be the most pregnant of all poets.

In 1594 he could outgo all men in the sheer metrical multiplication of utterance, as in LUCRECE. He marshals words in battalions, with imagery in full proportion. In 1609, no man can put in so few words so much meaning, though he can still make Macbeth dilate on the boons of sleep till we are stirred to a new perception. Drama had been his schoolmaster.

That is to say that but for the amorphous, pliant, plastic audience which sought its entertainment in drama, we should not have had Shakespeare at all, as a part of our mental life. For even the poems are the product of the man of the theatre, driven to earn somehow when the theatres are closed by the plague. That pressure over, he shows no more concern for the poetry of mere metrical expatiation, returning to the task of adapting plays, whereby he has his income. And then the drama, year by year, makes him by its own law more and more the thinker, and the condenser of all thought into vivid poetry. External literary influences, albeit vital, are but coincident.

Only for the more rigid minds which cling convulsively to an à priori notion of genius as "something that will out" is it necessary to add, once more, that genius is the *sine qua non*. So far as we know, there was only one available Shakespeare. But genius for utterance is subject to evocation. Great drama, in antiquity, arose only in Greece; yet to infer that only in Greece was there potential faculty for poetic drama is pure paralogism. The scientific truth is that in other lands the lack of the evocative machinery, which was primarily supplied in Greece by demotic ritual custom and need, left a blank as beside the life of Athens. Thus are the "miracles" of literature reducible to causation, so far as regards the environment. The individual endowment is a problem of another order. And, indeed, those who do not know Shakespeare by his rhythm have not fully seen wherein it consists.

LI. "Antony and Cleopatra"

There was probably no lack of stage success with ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA, where Shakespeare was free to do what was not largely done in the first part of JULIUS CÆSAR, to wit, draw men of action as they are, as actual as Brutus and Cassius were doctrinary. This great play is to be dated about 1606, having been entered (without result) for publication in 1607, doubtless to forestal piracy. Here again we have a reconstruction of an old play, or of one rewriting an old subject. For it is practically certain that the old

series of plays on the Cæsar sequence included a treatment of the outstanding episode of Antony and Cleopatra, immortalised by Plutarch.

Samuel Daniel's "argument" to his impossible Senecan tragedy of CLEOPATRA in rhyme (reg. 1593) indicates some of the machinery which would be used by practical craftsmen. Our drama has been recognised as of the order of "chronicle play," which suggests an earlier draft, as do indeed the final acts of JULIUS CÆSAR.

In any case, our play, though Shakespeare begins with the beginning, has many remains of what must have been prior work; the "comic relief," as usual, being the first sign, though Shakespeare touches even that when he makes the soothsayer say in verse:—

> In nature's infinite book of secrecy
> A little I can read.

But the would-be wit of Enobarbus on the dead Fulvia has no Shakespearean quality, and tells of no gifted hand. Here, and throughout the play, we are conscious of a mass of material already accumulated, to such an extent that this, the longest of all the plays (3964 lines; HAMLET has 3924) would seem to be a fusion of *two* previous plays into one. The copiousness is one of scenes and actions: the diction is compact to the last degree.

Hazlitt's fine praise of this drama as a wonderful effusion of genius over its whole field, like the fructifying spread of the Nile over Egypt, tends to obscure the fact of the intense concision of most of

the dialogue. It is all, as the Elizabethans would say, "rammed" with thought. In TROILUS the spacious reasoning proceeds with a splendid freedom; here it is so condensed that what might have made a full-length speech in the other is packed into one rhythmic sentence:—

> We, ignorant of ourselves,
> Beg often our own harms, which the wise powers
> Deny us for our good; so find we profit,
> By losing of our prayers.

It is this close packing of sense in perfect rhythm, through much of the dialogue, that has made the commentating on the mere text of the play so much longer than itself. In the Variorum edition, the final editor had to transfer to the end of the play the copious notes on the two phrases "tended her i' the eyes," "And made their bends adornings," which run to six pages without clearing up the crux. Significantly, the context tells of some non-Shakespearean foundation, although the prose source is Plutarch.

In the absence of record as to any prior stage-play either on the history of the triumvirate or on the fate of Antony and Cleopatra, it is thus far an open question who may have been the author or authors. Externally, Daniel and Drayton are remotely indicated, the former by his CLEOPATRA and his "Letter of Octavia to Antony," the latter by a phrase in his MORTIMERIADOS; though the passage in our play to which it points, the description of Cleopatra in her barge, suggests another hand. The

versification here is not Shakespearean, the double-endings being much overdone and the lines end-stopped to a degree characteristic only of his contemporaries. Various clues here seem to point to Chapman; but Mr. Marley Denwood advances the interesting theory that the style points to Fletcher —an ascription worth investigating.

Yet there can be no question of Shakespeare's general revision. The main action must have interested him greatly; and while Cleopatra and Antony are alike drawn with all his power, a crowd of characters are equally vitalised; and Augustus, Octavia, Pompey, Enobarbus, Iras and Charmian, are made real in a fashion not possible to Jonson and Chapman, whose drama is rhetorical rather than revelatory, or to the descriptive Daniel and Drayton. Nowhere even in the Folio are there more moving touches than :—

> Finish, good lady, the bright day is done,
> And we are for the dark;

or Antony's "Would'st thou be windowed in great Rome," or Cleopatra's swan-song :—

> Give me my robe, put on my crown, I have
> Immortal longings in me; now no more
> The juice of Egypt's grape shall moist this lip. . . .

Every turn of fortune and character is etched with the same strangely impartial certitude; and we end by seeing every character with compassionate eyes. In LEAR the blast of evil leaves us con-

templating many evil ends; in ANTONY, finally, there is for us no villain; evil is so dissolved in penalty. Enobarbus seems at his strongest when he declares that "Men's judgments are A parcel of their fortunes"; yet Enobarbus dies of remorse for his treason. When, then, we remember that LEAR and ANTONY belong to the same year, it becomes impossible to think of the dramatist as having lost centrality and declared evil supreme. For here we have centrality at its completest.

LII. The Last Great Tragedy

It is in CORIOLANUS that Shakespeare consummates that escape from the mere actual theatre which Lamb saw at points in LEAR. TROILUS and TIMON, we saw, missed theatrical effect for different reasons, being fundamentally undramatic in total treatment. But CORIOLANUS, dramatic as it is to the last degree, in its very essence *transcends* the popular stage, in the act of projecting half-a-dozen characters with amazing truth. My old friend William Archer, who argued that the theatrical effectiveness of RICHARD III told of Shakespeare's constructing hand, avowed that on the stage CORIOLANUS had been found "intolerable." The true corollary is that Shakespeare here is over the theatre's head.

For the central figure is one of his greatest incarnations; Volumnia is real to the very bone; Virgilia is made immortal for us by a few supreme touches. "My gracious silence" is a portrait, almost

a biography, in three words; and for sheer terrific force nothing in literature outgoes the explosion of Marcius against the demos who have infuriated him. It is one of the strangest miscarriages of modern criticism to see only rhetoric in a play where rhetoric is so constantly left behind. Rhetoric is indeed a potent instrument, being a chief factor in Corneille and Racine; but, æsthetically speaking, it misses the fusing point which is attained by the highest poetry. And that point is again and again reached in CORIOLANUS.

Remembering that Shakespeare can really be seen to have reached a point of arrest of power before the end, we must hold fast to the fact that in three of the plays of the closing period we find him as it were out-doing himself. If his declension was by way of loss of the creative or dramatic power while the mastery of fine rhetoric remained, his speeches in the TWO NOBLE KINSMEN may rank as his last work for the stage. But CORIOLANUS vibrates with power, passion, pathos, poetry; as does THE WINTER'S TALE with beauty and wisdom, and THE TEMPEST with thought passing into music. And CORIOLANUS reveals a profound interest in a character problem. It cannot be the last play.

Yet the theme is alien to the popular theatre. The hero who is driven by hate to lead the enemy against his own city-state is wholly antipathetic to every normal audience. He is an "energumen" driven on the rocks by his own exorbitant passion. Hence the inept conflict between critics who on the one part

decry him—or the poet—as a blind hater of the people, and on the other part protest against what they see as the poet's unjust view of the aristocrat.

Both parties miss the mark. Shakespeare sees everything: the diverging and clashing elements alike in Marcius and in the proud old mother who has bred him wrong, and who finally commands him to desist, which means, to be slain; in the good old senator; in the plebs, who are very factious, very fickle, and yet very human; in the tribunes, who are themselves tyrants in grain; in the mighty warrior, who can lead only by furious dominance, shouting, "Cowards come on!"; and in the other leader who can get the very best out of his men by sympathy and sagacity. Nowhere in all drama is the dramatic vision more selfless or more impartial than here. Shakespeare takes sides with nobody, yet he spontaneously appreciates all, down to the voluble plebs and the good women who miseducate children. The child is as real as the old man. In this vision science and poetry, the science of the soul and the power to put it in action and rhythmic utterance, blend in one. But that is for the reader, not for the spectator.

Before such a consummation of poetic mind, men have hardly ever suspected an intervening basis. Shakespeare would at first sight seem to have gone straight to the Englished Plutarch for everything, even for the supreme touch which no one else would have thought worthy of poetry—"Oh, mother, mother, what have you done!" But when we read

some of the connecting matter, the "comic relief" supplied by Menenius; the joining of prose with rhyme; the Chapmanesque scenes with the servants in the hall of Aufidius, we infer either collaboration or recast.

And it is to Chapman, once more, that we are led to look for the draft that has been so mightily revised. Here again, many clues of vocabulary involve him. And it was he who was likeliest to know of the French play on Coriolanus by Alexandre Hardy, produced in 1607. On that hint he might well proceed to a play of his own, founded on Plutarch; and his CÆSAR AND POMPEY shows us how he would expatiate on such a theme. To turn his impossible elocution and his rapturous doctrinairism into ringing actuality was a task that had been forced on Shakespeare many times; and never does he seem to have rewritten the pedantic declamation of the other with more zest than here. That in so doing he transcended his medium in another way is the paradox of his triumph.

Shakespeare by this time surely knew his audience. He would know in advance, as well as any, how antipathetic to any audience is the warrior who aims at the overthrow of his own people. Therefore it is that a previous draft by some misjudging idealist can alone explain his handling of such a theme; and the unplayableness of most of Chapman's tragedies is one of the clues to his origination here. Chapman would take to the theme of Coriolanus exactly as he took to that of the French "traitor" Byron. And

Shakespeare, whom we can see to have sympathised in his all-comprehending way with that gifted but wayward and miscarrying publicist, over whose verse he must often have shaken his head when he either lifted or left it in MEASURE FOR MEASURE and ALL'S WELL, saw here that the theatrically impracticable problem was really a great one, "a subject made to *his* hand." So he wrought his great unpopular play.

It was a case of "*Faciamo per noi*," as the leader of the Italian troupe of travelling players said when they found their patron had suddenly been compelled to leave for town with his guests. "Let us do it for ourselves!" Perhaps Burbage and the boys sympathised!

LIII. "The Winter's Tale"

The last two of the great poetic comedies are almost as interesting problematically as æsthetically, though in regard to THE WINTER'S TALE there has been hardly any surmise. It is quite certainly based upon Greene's prose story PANDOSTO: OR THE TRIUMPH OF TIME (1588); and while Greene might have been expected to dramatise his own tale there is no evidence that he or any one had done so before the appearance of our play in 1611, though Francis Sabie in 1595 adapted the story in his poem THE FISHERMAN'S TALE. For the many verbal and phrasal traces of Greene found in our play by Malone may quite reasonably be accounted for as showing

direct resort to his book (reprinted in 1607) by the later dramatist.

But it is really not clear that Shakespeare is the primary adapter. Though the critics and editors never raise the question, apart from the thesis of Professor Thorndike that Shakespeare here is partly influenced by the methods of Beaumont and Fletcher, the prologue to Act IV by "Time, the Chorus" has quite an un-Shakespearean aspect. The "I mentioned," in line 22, further, implies a previous prologue, which has been dropped. Perhaps the clearest ground for suspecting a non-Shakespearean hand is the rhyming of "after" with "daughter," a thing unexampled in Shakespeare's serious work, but emphatically of a kind of perverse rhyming much affected by Chapman. When, further, we find in the opening scene an example of that kind of fumbling or stammering dialogue also affected by him, and traceable to him in the cases of Osric (HAMLET, V, ii, 104) and Lafeu and Parolles (ALL'S WELL, Act II, sc. iii), the suspicion deepens.

Yet again, it is reinforced by the chief æsthetic difficulty of the play. It was justly pronounced by Professor Moorman that "Shakespeare is least happy in his explanation of Leontes' disastrous fit of jealousy." In Greene, though he contrives to make Leontes more odious at the close than at the outset, the jealousy arises gradually and intelligibly. In our play, Leontes urges Hermione to plead with Polixenes to stay, and within a few minutes grows madly jealous because she does so. This is not "like"

Shakespeare, powerfully as the jealousy itself is depicted. We are set wondering whether he meant us to understand that in his view all jealousy is a kind of insanity, a "taking," an "access," a "possession."

But it would be a more satisfying solution if we were entitled to infer that the unnaturally rapid action had been imposed by a previous constructor, of whom we seem to find plain traces. The technical difficulty of showing the jealousy in development is indeed obvious; and even if the truth were that Shakespeare had unduly and faultily shortened the action, that would still give us a previous hand. As to structure, again, we are told to look for Autolycus in Ovid's METAMORPHOSES, B.xi (l. 313), after the elder commentators had told us to turn to Lucian. When, however, Chapman, in his translation of the Odyssey (xix, 545) presents his readers with the true original Autolycus,

> Who th' art
> Of theft and swearing (not out of the heart
> But by equivocation) first adorned,

he would seem to be as likely an originator of the character in our play as Shakespeare, though it needed Shakespeare's touch, perhaps, to make the rogue as refreshing as he is.

It seems the more unlikely that Shakespeare should in a first draft make Leontes inexplicable when we note how he exerts himself to make him pardonable at the close, and how he invents for poor

Antigonus (who with Paulina is an addition to the Greene basis) the sin of believing in Hermione's guilt, as if to balance his sad fate with the bear! But all this is speculation; and it must suffice to repeat that there are actual textual traces of an intervening hand, which seems to be Chapman's.

It is the traditionists who have illicitly taken for granted here, as so often before, that whatever Shakespeare handled he had planned. In point of fact, after the day of the DREAM, all the internal evidence goes to show that he was a transfigurer and not a plotter of plays. Thus the conception of him as voluntarily following the lead of Beaumont and Fletcher in extravagant plot must be gravely called in question. Extravagant plot would come much more readily to Chapman, who began with it in the BLIND BEGGAR OF ALEXANDRIA before Beaumont and Fletcher had appeared, and who was surely likelier than Shakespeare to invent the preservation and resurrection of Hermione, though only Shakespeare could have so carried it off.

As always, Shakespeare's real interest is in persons, not in plots. He ennobles Hermione in spite of the plot, to which she may justly be said to have been made subservient, as is contended by Professor Thorndike. And Paulina, that admirable "windfall" of Shakespeare's last days, is made to help the fairy-tale plot by her own reality. Men would naturally like to make THE TEMPEST the last play, since there the wizard breaks and buries his magic wand, though, taking the plays as wholes, the external evidence

points rather to the composite HENRY VIII as the later. But if we are to make an inference from sheer mental splendour and height of poetic beauty, we must place the WINTER'S TALE before the stage of conscious decline.

For there it is that, in the great fourth scene of Act IV, we have first the exquisite dialogue of Perdita and Florizel up to the encounter with the disguised Polixenes and Camillo, in which we listen in turn to the unanswerable philosophy, in worthily admirable rhythm, that confutes not only Perdita but Bacon, and to the inexpressibly beautiful descant on the flowers of Proserpina, beside which all philosophy seems withered. Long ago, in MUCH ADO (III, i, 7–11)—if the passage be primarily his—the poet's love of flowers made him digress beyond congruity; but here everything flows to music, "like a wave o' the sea," like Perdita dancing. And still the scene goes on, turning from gay to grave again, up to the supreme crisis. "Decay's effacing fingers" have not touched here; and more than ever does it seem incredible that the early miscarriage over Leontes was of the poet's deliberate planning.

LIV. *"The Tempest"*

A bibliographical examination of THE TEMPEST, carefully done, has shown that this play, one of the two shortest in the canon, has been made so by excisions, extending in one case (end of Act IV) to the dropping of a whole scene. It would be distress-

ing to think that Shakespeare had thus mutilated his own work; and the suggestion that he is revising an old play of his own is quite irreconcilable with the aspect of the versification. An old play there may have been, with the magician plot, from which Jacob Ayrer (d. 1605) took the idea for his *Die Schöne Sidea;* but there must have been a later basis for Shakespeare. As usual, he is revising someone else's work; and the Masque in Act IV can be seen to be a later addition, put in place of what had been, as is so cogently shown by Mr. Ernest Law, a mere wordless dance of "island spirits."

The first æsthetic impression made by the play, when we pass from the singularly vivid storm-episode to the long second scene, is that of a quality in the verse which, though not without instances of precedent in previous plays, is (here as there) not at all normally Shakespearean. We have here an unwonted prevalence of end-stopped rhythm, broken often by what we term "weak" or "light" endings, such as we find at the very beginning, with a no less surprising multiplication of double-endings. The general effect is a puzzling monotony of rhythm, emphasised by the double-endings. The just inference appears to be that this versification is that of a previous draftsman, merely modified by Shakespeare.

In point of percentage of double-endings, this play is the second highest in the Folio, the only one exceeding it being HENRY VIII. That has 47.3 per cent; this, 35.4—the percentage of the second scene, which is thus seen to be maintained throughout. As

HENRY VIII is admittedly more than half Fletcher's, it is a natural surmise that in the TEMPEST also Shakespeare is working over a Fletcher draft. And though the hypothesis will need careful verification before it can be stressed, it would be hard to find any verse-movement of the time more like Fletcher's (which was formed on Chapman's) than that of the bulk of this scene.

Alike the obtrusive double-endings and the weak or light endings seem to point to his blank verse, as we have it in plays about 1611 and later, when, outgoing Chapman, he had attained to that fatal solution of overplus of double-endings which makes his serious drama, like that of Massinger, so trying to any reader with the sense of rhythm.

If anything could make Shakespeare impatient, this might; and there is a curious hint of impatience in Prospero's repeated demands of Miranda as to whether she is listening—a procedure not plausibly to be explained save as an attempt to break up a monologue that had been made too long. But the complete analysis of the verse phenomena of THE TEMPEST must be left for a larger investigation; it must suffice in this conspectus to note the Fletcherian aspect of the versification at the outset. In our later chapters we shall find Shakespeare quite certainly associated, as reviser, with Fletcher.

On the other hand the interlude or Masque, added in 1613, for the marriage of Princess Elizabeth, would seem to be assignable to Chapman on many grounds of phrase and vocabulary. When, indeed, we find

in his signed Middle Temple Masque of 1613 clear echoes not only of this but of the "nothing of him that doth fade" in the song of Ariel, and again of the speech of Gonzalo, taken bodily out of Montaigne, the problem becomes rather complicated. It would even seem possible that Chapman may have had a hand in the pre-Shakespearean draft of the TEMPEST, clearly to be dated 1611.

LV. Changes of Style: The Last Words?

In the second act of THE TEMPEST, when the "practical" plot emerges, we have a change in the versification that may mean either a freshened interest or contact with another draftsman, though the high-rate of double-endings continues. The choppy dialogue of the shipwrecked lords at times falls to quite un-Shakespearean levels, indicative of another hand; and the theatrical irrelevance of most of the discussion might suggest Chapman's. All this Shakespeare overwrites, save the cheaper fooling And throughout the play, henceforth, he exerts himself to give it that theatrical effectiveness which seems to have annoyed his friend Ben Jonson.

Be it the plotting of Antonio and Sebastian, or that of the rebellious Caliban, it is handled with old-time energy even while the poet accepts the new fashion of multiple double-endings, which he keeps down to the general percentage, evading monotony in the rhythm. The theatre gets full attention, up to the *dénouement;* even the laboured Masque, from

another hand, is theatrically spectacular. It is after that is over that we have the great parenthesis of sheer poetry, out-going the burst of equally Shakespearean verse beginning "Ye elves of hills," suggested by Golding's translation of Ovid. The duplication of the opening line of that by Heywood in his BRAZEN AGE (1613) raises the question whether he had anything to do with THE TEMPEST, but the versification here is clearly Shakespeare's.

It may have been a primary curtailment for the court that led to the swift conclusion, in which the evil Antonio simply disappears, while Prospero sheds on everything that sunshine of forgiveness which works the happy ending in THE WINTER'S TALE. There we had a fairy tale of the potent oracle of Apollo; here one of multipotent magic. The magician abdicates; the fairy-tale ends; and Miranda remains as incredible as she is adorable. "Our revels now are ended."

But somehow Shakespeare, laying his ageing hands on this melodrama, has with his unfailing wizardry touched it all to lasting charm. If Miranda was introduced by Fletcher, he was allowed to leave on her little of his taint (I, ii, 118–120). Shakespeare would see to that. Prospero is vitalised by the very unevenness of his moods; and Caliban is forever interesting, Ben Jonson notwithstanding. "How strange," wrote that excellent critic, George Darley, "that Caliban, a creature who could not exist, should be more natural than Ordella and Juliana [characters of Fletcher's plays] who could!"

And stranger still, perhaps, is the profound vibration of the great speech of Prospero, a dramatic as well as a theatrical irrelevance, which for us finally lifts the whole play " out of Space, out of Time," leaving us thinking only of those echoing lines. Masson well said that this is one of Shakespeare's " fervours," confessed as such at once by its disregard of the stage situation and by Prospero's own avowal :—

> Sir, I am vexed.
> Bear with my weakness : my old brain is troubled.
> Be not disturbed with my infirmity . . .
> A turn or two I'll walk
> To still my beating mind.

There has been some lax talk of Shakespeare's being, for himself, Prospero. He certainly is so here ; telling us how his mind " beats " after that thrilling exordium, with the ending :—

> We are such stuff
> As dreams are made on, and our little life
> Is rounded with a sleep.

It is a strange perversity of some editors to question whether Shakespeare wrote the first lines of *this* speech, after swallowing the camel of the verse of the play as a whole. The entire passage may possibly be a sudden addition made by him after having read the draft of the inserted Masque ; in any case, it is, as we have seen, one of the singularly rare incursions of his own spirit into his drama. If THE TEMPEST be not his last play, this insertion, if

made in 1613, may have been meant as his last stage utterance. But it must be admitted that the clear critical presumption is, as shown by Mr. Law, in favour of the view that the words:

> These our actors,
> As I foretold you, were all spirits,

were meant to be appended to the original (1611) wordless dance, for which the Masque is but a modish substitute. None the less have they that "ultimate" ring. "Our revels *now* are ended. . . ." And how utterly does the immortal rhythm transcend that of the hybrid verse we have been reading in the first Act! If it be not his last speech, it is still his greatest. Not even he has ever outdone this.

LVI. Declining Power: "Cymbeline"

When we come to CYMBELINE, the general faith in the Folio "begins to droop and drowse." Placed as it is, at the end of the tragedies, the play has evidently been included in the Folio only by an afterthought, since it is not properly a tragedy at all. In recent revivals it has been rudely contemned even by journalists, one pronouncing it "a silly play," another declaring his belief that it is somebody else's performance, sent down to Shakespeare in his retirement at Stratford to be touched-up, and that the touching-up was in many scenes very perfunctory.

That it was not of his drafting may be taken as certain. In its basis, it appears to belong to the

early period when LOCRINE, and the first form of the old KING LEIR, were fished up from the old chronicles. The absurd etymology of *mulier* from *mollis aer* points back to Peele, though it is known to have been a current folly. But some later hand has been at work on the old matter before it was submitted to Shakespeare.

At the very outset, the opening speech :—

> You do not meet a man but frowns ; our bloods
> No more obey the heavens than our courtiers
> Still seem as does the King,

points straight to Chapman's lines :—

> *D'Auvergne.* See, see, not one of them will cast a glance
> At our eclipsed faces.
> *Byron.* They keep all
> To [? So] cast in admiration on the King ;
> For from his face are all their faces moulded—

in BYRON'S TRAGEDY (IV, i, 67–70), which was played in 1607. And there are many verbal clues in our play to Chapman, who also seems to have supplied the " comic relief " of the Cloten scenes. Chapman, however, would never have begun a play with short speeches : there has been at work a curtailing hand, vigilant over his prolixity—if the draft was really his.

Fleay finally thought that the play had been held over for several years, as it well might be in respect of its disunity, and was finally finished off for production in 1610. Some passages, as well as situations, seem connected with Beaumont and Fletcher's PHILASTER, which dates 1611, and these

suggest that one of those young dramatists, of whom the second is so largely represented in HENRY VIII, may have had a hand in our highly composite play. But though the manner and key of the opening verses are curiously like those of Beaumont's opening prose in PHILASTER, we have not Fletcher's verse in our play, though we might at times fancy we had Beaumont's. On the other hand the rhymed Vision in Act V, scene iv, is so poor in execution that Fleay was incensed by the persistence of those who could believe it to be Shakespeare's. In his opinion it was added late by some cheap rhymer for presentation at Court, which seems hard on the Court!

When all is said, Shakespeare has sufficiently laid hands on the play to make us sure that his spirit had not lost its poetic or its dramatic cunning. He would never have grasped at the unpleasant old story adapted in the wager of Posthumus on his wife's fidelity; but he would see in Imogen not only a figure which he could "touch to fine issues," but one that could be made a real centre of human interest in that turmoil of cross currents and inter-acting plots—the thing that his corrivals so generally failed to do. So he rewrote Iachimo. Neither Chapman nor Fletcher, to say nothing of the past generation, could pen verse like this; though it may be Shakespeare is growing tired and "forcing the pace." Thus Imogen is made one of "Shakespeare's women," who, more than ever in these late plays, make us feel how he loved to idealise them. No other man has limned such a gallery.

It has been argued by Professor Thorndike, with *prima facie* justice, that in CYMBELINE Shakespeare had yielded to the new influence of the Beaumont and Fletcher drama, with its multiplied and complicated extravagance of plot. That is one of the grounds for questioning whether either of the partners had a hand here. But when we realise that the framework is not of Shakespeare's making, we in effect decide that he was in no sense carried away by the new mode. Even the mixed plot of CYMBELINE, which he did but revise, remains a long way nearer moral sanity and unity than that of PHILASTER.

It still belongs to the higher plane from which the coming generation so steeply descended. If in form it has passed the edge of the downward slope of dramatic construction on which Beaumont and Fletcher had launched themselves, in point of sound humanity it still belongs to the great time, keeping the human quality of the earlier comedy. To say, as has been said by an English critic, that THE MAID'S TRAGEDY and PHILASTER come nearer Shakespeare than anything else non-Shakespearean, is to evoke the answer that they do not come near him at all. They are "tortive and errant" as he never was. And they are often corrupt and malodorous as nothing in Shakespeare ever is. To the end, his work smells sweet and sane. They could be that only in their character comedy.

When, indeed, Professor Thorndike charges on the figure of Imogen an undue variety of moods and aspects, and on the other hand finds the Evadne of

THE MAID'S TRAGEDY "about as living a piece of human flesh as was ever put upon paper," one is driven to register a respectful protest. Imogen is indeed put in an excessive variety of situations by an over-strained plot; and the scene with the beheaded body of Cloten is ill-conceived by its draftsmen; but in her, nevertheless, spiritual unity is never lost. Evadne, on the other hand, is a violent composite of four deeply divergent aspects, all created by the extravagant plot, and is finally an æsthetic as well as a moral monstrosity. The part can be credited with the merit of vividness in respect only of the violence of the unnatural dissonances. The psychology is unthinkable.

LVII. Shakespeare and Fletcher: "Henry VIII"

As has been already noted, the great majority of students, whatever their nominal faith as to the Folio, have long admitted that of HENRY VIII more than half is from the hand of Fletcher. The dissection was begun by James Spedding in 1850. Moved by Tennyson's remark that the play was very like Fletcher, and struck by the contrast of strong beginning and weak end, he analysed the play first in respect of the quality of thought and style, and then in respect of versification. Hickson independently made a similar research; and Ingram concurred. The result was a clear separation of the two hands, Shakespeare being found to have written

about two-fifths and Fletcher three-fifths of the piece.

As to the presence of Fletcher the case is so clear, and has been so effectually established by Mr. Knox Pooler in the Arden edition, that the critics are practically at one, though logically this finding makes an end of the rigid law of the Folio. Fresh debate, however, was long ago raised by Mr. Robert Boyle, who argued that the second hand is not Shakespeare but Massinger—a view maintained by some in recent years. It is to be feared that Boyle was defective in perception alike of rhythm and of style; and that when the poet Browning passed the judgment that Massinger might have written the non-Fletcher parts of our play he was speaking without careful inquiry.

It may as well be plainly said, here and now, that Massinger's cannot be the hand which wrote, for instance, Act I, and that to ascribe to him that versification is to disregard vital differences. Compared with Shakespeare's, his verse-movement is as it were plantigrade, never reaching greatness by genius, and at its best attaining only sober dignity by careful composition. The essential prosaism of his laboured verse is missed by such eulogists as Hallam and Scott, because they lacked the sense of rhythm; and their didacticism moved them to find Shakespearean quality in his thought where it lacks the very element that in Shakespeare electrifies everything, to wit, the spirit of poetry. Never does he in his serious drama vitalise personalities. Fur-

thermore, he runs about as fatally as Fletcher to surplusage of double-endings. The first hundred lines of THE UNNATURAL COMBAT, an undisputed and probably "early" play, contain 52. The percentage in the first scene of HENRY VIII is 29; and the strong, terse, tense, elliptic diction is no more Massinger's than the versification, or the thought.

HENRY VIII, as a dramatic whole, is a failure, either because it was penned by the slack spirit of Fletcher, who ended it, or because "the theatre" dictated a *dénouement* which stultifies the outset. Indeed, to have finished the play in the spirit of the first act would have been a flout to the whole Elizabethan tradition. That Shakespeare wanted *that*, seems unlikely; and the structural problem of the play is reasonably to be solved in the light of the obvious structure of THE TWO NOBLE KINSMEN.

As Mr. Knox Pooler rightly sums up, HENRY VIII is to be held as planned by Fletcher, not, as others have argued, by Shakespeare. Only the spell of the tradition could have inspired the latter view. What Shakespeare has done is simply to rewrite, in the swift, elliptic manner of his last years, a relatively diffuse and nerveless exposition of the opening situation, in which Wolsey is seen strong but foredoomed; and, after similarly rewriting a good deal more, to leave the futile finish as Fletcher schemed it. That he worked over a Fletcher text is revealed by both style and vocabulary. If Massinger ever enters at all, it is to small purpose. The stock speeches, so long recited in the schools, are just

Fletcher's, and about the best he could accomplish. Hence the acceptance of them as Shakespeare's by Meredith, who was as vague on blank-verse rhythm as anybody.

The certainly non-Shakespearean prologue was thought by Dr. Johnson and Dr. Farmer to come from the pen of Ben Jonson; while Spedding and Boyle assign it to Fletcher. But while Spedding assigned the epilogue also to Fletcher, Boyle gave it to Massinger. Of these four judges, Spedding is most to be trusted.

LVIII. "The Two Noble Kinsmen"

This play, latterly reprinted as "apocryphal," was published in 1634 as the work of Fletcher and Shakespeare, and this it really is. The fundamental and Fletcherian poverty of the central theme and plot is such that after the small Shakespearean element had been recognised long ago by Professor Spalding and others, the former wilted in his allegiance to his thesis. No one who can realise the procedure of Shakespeare's partial recasting of other men's work need so vacillate.

Shakespeare, getting for revision a poor play, by which his deeper interest could not be aroused, was content to rewrite a few portions, beginning with the first scene. Even of that he does not rewrite the whole; but the speech of the First Queen is in a verse and diction that no other man could compass. Fletcher supervenes for seventeen lines; but again

Theseus and the queens weave a nobler strain, which does but decline at times in the rest of the act.

This is a test case. Evidently disliking the opening by Fletcher, but letting his first lines pass, Shakespeare pens twenty lines without one double-ending, completely writing in his own incomparable style the speech of the First Queen, thus silently rebuking and repelling the ungirt, unkempt, Bacchantic muse of Fletcher, and giving a perfect model of clean-limbed verse as against the splay-footed gait of that of his young friend. Those lines, packed with power and beauty, should be read as the true type of the Shakespearean mode against the other :—

> We are three queens, whose sovereigns fell before
> The wrath of cruel Creon ; who endure
> The beaks of ravens, talons of the kites,
> And pecks of crows, in the foul fields of Thebes.
> He will not suffer us to burn their bones,
> To urn their ashes, nor to take th' offence
> Of mortal loathsomeness from the blest eye
> Of holy Phœbus, but infects the winds
> With stench of our slain lords. O, pity, duke !
> Thou purger of the earth, draw thy fear'd sword
> That does good turns to the world ; give us the bones
> Of our dead kings, that we may chapel them ;
> And, of thy boundless goodness, take some note
> That for our crownèd heads we have no roof
> Save this, which is the lion's and the bear's,
> And vault to everything !

Thereafter, he revises little. For what was to be made of such a play in either its main or its secondary

plot? The insensate feud of Palamon and Arcite is one of those familiar old tales which a series of play-makers handle because they cannot discern wherein narrative matter is unfit for drama; and it is only on the hopeless theory of plot-planning by Shakespeare that anyone can assign to him the fourth-rate business of the jailer's daughter, which begins the second act.

He does, in fact, little more in the play, re-entering clearly in Act V only to write the prayer of Arcite and revise that of Palamon, as he does the part of Emilia at the outset of scene iii. Thereafter he seems to let Fletcher go his devious way to his self-appointed end. The jailer's daughter is one of Fletcher's typical aberrations. Shelley was fully justified in dismissing that; but his failure to see Shakespeare's hand in a line of the play is one more proof that criticism must not put its faith in poets.

The critical pother over the assignment of Shakespeare's small share reveals the inhibition laid on inductive judgment by tradition. His work almost always leaps to the eye; but men cannot consent to be simply inductive; they must seek à priori theories —even to the point of suggesting that Shakespeare left some fine fragments which Fletcher here strung together. Some tell us that Massinger wrote the appeal of the queens and Arcite's prayer to Mars— things utterly beyond the rhythmical reach of Massinger. Here we have "the grand style," which he never attained.

Lastly, an editor argues on the one hand that the

great matter is " fine but *unmeaning* poetry," and on the other hand that it is " magnificent " and " lofty poetry." Such self-destroying criticism abdicates its chair. The matter in question is rhetoric so pure and fine that it rivals all but the greatest poetry, and therefore is beyond the flight of the merely rhetorical dramatists, Massinger in particular. But we may perhaps all agree that it is Shakespeare nearing his literary close, his supreme faculty of rhythmic speech functioning without that creative soul of thought and feeling which was his till near the end. These may well be among the last lines he wrote.

It would be a very comforting conclusion if we could be sure that he wrote also the opening song: " Roses, their sharp spines being gone," as Bullen held that he did, though the critics who dispute over the play have given small heed to the problem. But we must in justice remember that Fletcher was a gifted lyric poet, even as he was a happy comedian without the power to be a great or true tragedian. The prologue and epilogue are his—with a vengeance.

LXIX. Fragments

The small contribution of Shakespeare to THE TWO NOBLE KINSMEN might be fitly grouped with two other items under this heading, so little does it constitute play-*making*. But we may put together his differently detachable shares in two other plays, the resurrected SIR THOMAS MORE and Lewis Theobald's much manipulated DOUBLE FALSEHOOD, first

printed in 1727, with the declaration that it was from a manuscript copy of an old play by Shakespeare, arranged for the press by Theobald.

On the most hopeful view, it is but a scanty trace of the Master that attaches to the alien skeleton of Theobald's, salvaged and complacently trimmed to his taste. It is a lasting discredit to his memory that, finding a manuscript purporting to contain something of Shakespeare, he went about to boil his pot with it as any Philistine might. That the play was identical with the CARDENIO registered for publication in 1653 by a bookseller as written by Shakespeare and Fletcher, has been maintained by Mr. G. Bradford, with good probability. Of the playing of such a play by the King's men in 1613 there is actual record.

But what faces us in Theobald's play is a sophisticated performance largely in the taste of his day, yet containing skeletal matter from Fletcher and a few scraps of what may be Shakespearean verse. Mr. Bradford's claim is reinforced by Mr. E. H. C. Oliphant, a convert from the hostile opinion that had so long prevailed. Some of the cited passages are hauntingly appealing: in the very first scene there is a smack of Shakespeare in the lines :—

> Making my death familiar to my tongue
> Digs not my grave one jot before the date.

But some other cited passages are unconvincing, and the relic is rather to be wistfully than reverently regarded.

With regard to the often-discussed "insurrection" speech of the titular character in the preserved MS. of the play SIR THOMAS MORE, the case is very different. Whether or not the actual portion of the MS. in question is in Shakespeare's handwriting—a thing alternately asserted and denied—the speech in question (II, iv) can be affirmed to be ascribable only to one hand. Those who conceive of it as an imitation do but incur disbelief in their power of judgment. If Shakespeare were thus imitable the mimic has strangely eluded notice.

The issue was long obscured by the scholars who, on incidental grounds, dated the writing too early for the style and the double-endings. Mr. Oliphant makes out a strong case for the date 1598–9; and it may be summed up that the insurrection scene was written for insertion in a composite play that, "for reasons of state," never came to the boards, and was thrown aside, to be preserved only by chance. How many such things Shakespeare may have done in his time, making no account of them, we cannot even guess.

The forensic harangue penned for More has its own interest, both as being brilliantly forensic and as conveying the shrewdest home-truths in politics; but the fragment specially concerns the student as revealing the Shakespearean way of verse in contrast with the non-Shakespearean modes around it. If he can profit by the examples, he will note once for all the vital differences. But the very phenomenon of denial of the Shakespearean quality of the scene is

the proof that many readers are not so teachable. The sense of rhythm is evidently far from common.

Yet there can be no pretence that any other man of that age could write such verse. When it comes to the opposition argument that the word "Momtanish" (= Mahometanish, as who should say "heathenish") cannot be Shakespeare's because there is no other example of the term, the negative argument is reduced to absurdity. The only corollary it can carry is that the scene was written by nobody!

LX. The Last Days

Alike in the biographical details that reach us and in the inferences we can draw from the work done in the closing years, Shakespeare remains elusive to the last. Financially prosperous he had been for twenty years up to his death, the prosperity increasing, not declining. His company, known as "the King's," was easily the best in London; and he was its honoured poet, acclaimed by high and low among the lovers of plays and poetry.

In town, nevertheless, he never lived luxuriously. One of the most sensational biographical discoveries made about him for over a hundred years past was Professor Wallace's find, in the Record Office, in 1910, of a stiffened bundle of old papers in a minor law case in which Shakespeare had been a witness. From that record it is to be learned that for years, from 1601–2, the poet had lodged with a French Huguenot, Christopher Mountjoy, who made head-

dresses for women at his house in Silver Street. But all that we learn from the papers of the law suit in 1612 is that Shakespeare knew the main facts concerning a dispute between Mountjoy and his son-in-law about the dowry of Mountjoy's daughter, and had been consulted by the parties, but was not clear as to the amount of money promised!

Thus to the last he is for us impersonal and elusive. We learn little about himself, save that for his housemates in his lodging, as for all other friends, he was a perfectly human, amiable, unpretentious person to whom they might talk freely on their affairs, asking his judgment as that of a man of sound sense. That he was a man of genius without compeer they mostly had not the faintest suspicion.

We do not even know in what sense he could be said to have "retired" to Stratford-on-Avon, as he used to be supposed to have done in 1610. Apparently he did but spend a much larger part of the year there than formerly. But by this time he was near the end of his working period. "Every third thought shall be my grave" is the mood he gives to Prospero at the close of his performance. With the theatre, however, he never broke his connection, though his last addition to THE TEMPEST, in 1613, may have been his swan-song. Like Molière, he had a fraternal feeling for his fellow-players.

That his health had been much impaired in his last years has been the conclusion of many investigators, some seeing in his signatures a sign of nervous trouble. Taine held that the brain which lived

through so vast a range of tragical human experience in his drama must needs have aged the sooner for it all. And one of the few testimonies which, however inadequately vouched, seem to point to him with a special appeal to us, is to the effect that when, latterly, men would have him join in drinking bouts, he would refuse, saying "he was in pain."

Those who will may believe that he died as the result of a merry-meeting with Jonson and Drayton at Stratford. Jonson and Drayton were not fast friends; but if anything could unite them it might be a common affection for Shakespeare, leading them to visit him at Stratford. What is quite certain is that his symptoms were those of a fever, a terribly usual thing in that old town in that day. From the manipulation of his will, as Dr. Tannenbaum has shown, it is to be seen that at the end he was troubled about the prospects of his newly married daughter Judith. For the rest, he made his bequests tranquilly enough, down to the "second best bed" bequeathed to his invalid wife, who appears to have been long bed-ridden, and cared for by their daughter Susanna. The theory that Mrs. Shakespeare married again appears to be quite untenable. The name was common.

Susanna, Mrs. Hall, we learn from her epitaph, was "witty above her sex"; but we know little or nothing of her culture; and there is no later outcrop of genius in the Master's line. Stratford probably remembered him genially, but not reverently: he was but the good neighbour, accessible to all. Dying

in 1616, he might seem to most a quite unhistoric figure. But in 1623 he was made accessible, albeit under an unhappy mystification, to all posterity; and his name has long outshone every other of his age.

Coincident with the editorial mystification is the pictorial. The engraving by the Dutch craftsman, Droeshout, is an abortion, representing no human face; and the Stratford bust is also a poor thing, pronounced by experts to have been "worked off short" at the nose. If among all the mass of unvouched portraits there is one that can be counted satisfactory, it is the so-called "Ely" portrait, so carefully studied and presented by Mr. John Corbin. That has such a remarkable correspondence with the main structure of the Droeshout picture that it is quite conceivably a copy of the original used by the engraver. And in the eyes we may think we can find Shakespeare.

Epilogue

In the unending vicissitude of literary vogue, Shakespeare may seem to recede into the background as we know he did in the age of the Restoration, when men preferred Ben Jonson and Beaumont and Fletcher. The men of the Restoration, glad to be out of the deeps and free to sport in the shallows, gave small heed to the now clouded sun of their fathers' day, though Dryden, their accepted and really gifted literary lawgiver, knew better the last-

ing values of things. But even in our own evanescent age, which at times tempts us to a similar verdict of levity and futility, the light-weights may similarly come to predominate, for a time.

And it is not only a matter of the gravitation of the frivolous mass. Our century, rooting on that side in the last, has its ever-strengthening host of men of science, intensely bent on the quest of reality, and inspiring by their faith, their discipline, and their example, the cultivators of history and even, to some extent, the students of literature. In such a world, mind may conceivably come to resent the devotion and the panegyric given to the great Master of Illusion. And it would be a mere fatuity to reckon such a drift of thought as no more serious than the shallow ebb and flow of what passes as *belles lettres*.

We come here to ultimate valuations of life. When Darwin, in old age, regretfully avows that he has ceased to find pleasure in Shakespeare, we cannot sanely affect to dismiss the fact with disparagement. We do better to remember that Moleschott and Büchner never lost their early adoration; and that Darwin himself had no pride in his loss of joy. The question is whether other men on the scientific plane may come calmly to feel that the world of the wizard of the pen has lost importance for them, and that they belong to a higher order of mental action.

But the scientific men may usefully reflect that the difference of "values" in orders of fact is ultimately quite doubtful. Stevenson, in a lucid

hour, wrote that life is a book in which Chapter nineteen is the Differential Calculus, and Chapter twenty-seven is Hearing the Band Play in the Gardens. Darwin was truly well occupied over *his* great differential calculus; but Shakespeare conducting the band in the gardens is also a great Master, mighty through the ages, "looking before and after," scanning the heavens and the earth with a range of vision equal to that of any cosmographer. Which is the more "ultimate"?

As for the modern men of letters who, "drest in a little brief authority," tell us that they "despise" our far-away master of the revels, or reckon him to have counted for little in the march of mental evolution, they do but compel us to weigh them in the fatal balances, "peising" their tissue-paper of voluble propaganda against his echoing oracles, the final alchemy of ages of human reverie. They need hardly tell us that they are not of his house. The asteroids at best are of a different status from the fixed stars; and the shifting little limelights of our day need trouble no one who is drawn back, after three hundred years, by the golden voice from the "mouth of shade," the magic of the Master who forever eludes our seizure, and who has once for all englobed all the detractors in the totality of life itself seen as

> . . . a walking shadow, a poor player,
> That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
> And then is heard no more.

For the writer who alone is outside all our little

egoisms has somehow best contrived to put his thought into that rhythm which seems to be one of the central facts of the universe, for those who have the sense of central things. The art of fictive illusion has latterly come to constitute the bulk of literature in all languages, and its reputed masters have been numerous for over a century. But either their art palls or their skill is outshone by newer experts, almost to the point of justifying De Quincey's saying that all novels are at all times hastening to decay. Our persistent return, then, to one Old Master, the wizard of rhythm, may be in large measure destined to a survival which they will not share.

It will depend, of course, on the continuance of that love of great rhythm, which we cannot pretend to have been at any time a common property. It is very significant that, though millions read the plays with admiration for the matter without much feeling for the poetry, Shakespeare's praise is most warmly uttered by men who loved and could appreciate great verse; while the reactions against him have for the most part been confined to prosaic periods, or are voiced by men of letters who are outside the poetic field, or who have been turned against Shakespeare by miseducation, or who, like Herrick, had not the ear for blank verse.

Burns had Shakespeare spoilt for him by being given TITUS ANDRONICUS in youth as of his writing—a "document" of the harm that can be wrought by false tradition. Byron may have had a similar misguidance. But the men who in the Caroline

period made light of Shakespeare and glorified Fletcher were for the most part visibly without the rhythmic sense. Thus they could enjoy both Fletcher's erratic tragedy and the happy comedy in which alone, with his lyrics, he excelled. Even concerning him, however, Beaumont has told us how his poetic drama was at first flouted by the many

> Whose very reading verse makes senseless prose.

They did not like THE FAITHFUL SHEPHERDESS, counted by some his most poetical drama: Fletcher himself records that it "was never liked, unless by few": and Ben Jonson indignantly assents, while predicting its resurrection. It was in fact very justly damned as a *play*.

But Shakespeare has the tribute of the versers all along.

> He was not of an age, but for all time!

sings Ben Jonson, after all his cavils, calling him "my beloved"; and soon the young Milton, hailing him as "Dear Son of Memory, great heir of fame," echoing Ben's figure of the monument without a tomb, puts forth his superb hyperbole:

> That Kings for such a tomb would wish to die.

When another generation has passed, with much diminution of his acceptance for a time, it is the voice of Dryden that declares: "he was the man who of all modern and perhaps ancient poets had the largest and most comprehensive soul," a testimony never revoked in any of his minor criticisms,

and endorsed by Hale, in the very age of the fashionable reaction.

When we recall that in the first renascence of modern English poetry it was one of its most inspired mouthpieces, Coleridge, who outwent his age in his adoration of the Master, the lesson becomes clear. It is the most gifted rhythmists, Coleridge, Shelley, Keats, Tennyson, Arnold and Swinburne (to say nothing of Carlyle, Ruskin, Emerson) who thereafter carry the banner; and the latest to write on Shakespeare a great sonnet was (with Henley, perhaps, nearly on a par) the finest rhythmist of his generation, Herbert Trench. Given, then, an end of miseducation, the future apparently lies between the rhythmists and the rest.

END

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