

THE WORKS OF SHAKESPEARE

EDITED FOR THE SYNDICS OF THE
CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

BY

SIR ARTHUR QUILLER-COUCH
AND JOHN DOVER WILSON

THE TEMPEST

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

C. F. CLAY, MANAGER

LONDON : FETTER LANE, E.C. 4

BOMBAY
CALCUTTA } MACMILLAN AND CO., LTD.
MADRAS }

TORONTO : THE MACMILLAN CO. OF
CANADA, LTD.

TOKYO : MARUZEN-KABUSHIKI-KAISHA

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MR. WILLIAM
SHAKESPEARES

COMEDIES,
HISTORIES, &
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Martin Droeshout Sculptor London

L O N D O N

Printed by Isaac Iaggard, and Ed. Blount. 1623.

*The Droeshout Portrait
from the First Folio. 1623*

THE UNIVERSITY



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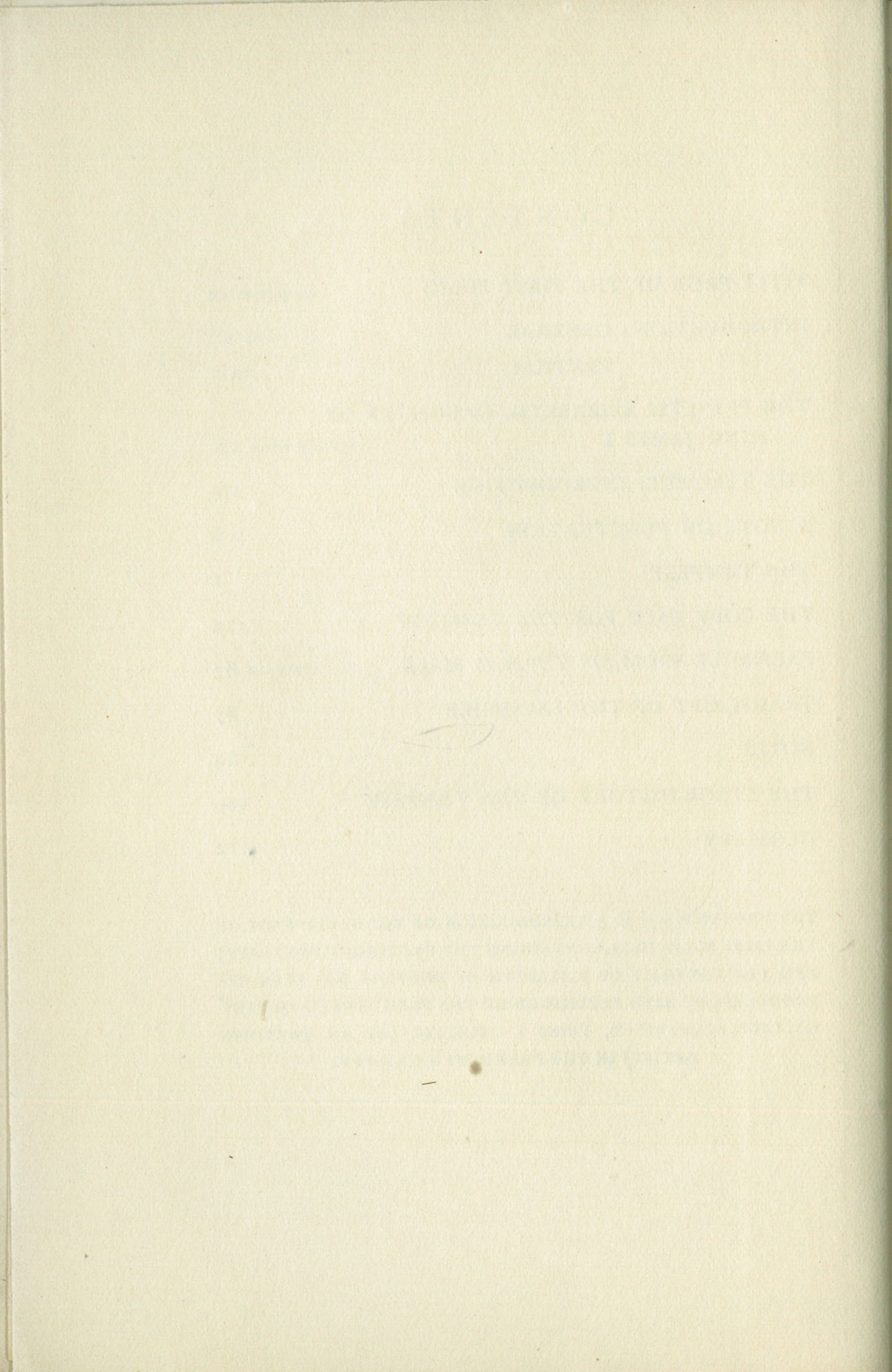
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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

I

Editions of Shakespeare multiply; but it is now many years since the last attempt was made at a complete re-cension of Shakespeare's text, based upon a study and comparison, line by line, of the existing materials. In the interval scholars have made many discoveries, and not a few worthy to be called illuminating; since the new light they shed on these materials exhibits them (as we believe) in truer proportions with truer relative values.

We shall indicate, by and by, the most important of these discoveries, as justifying a belief that since the day, some three hundred years ago, when preparations were begun in the printing-house of William Jaggard and his son Isaac for the issue of the First Folio, no moment has been more favourable for auspicing a text of the plays and poems than that which begets the occasion of this new one. But no time must be lost in assuring the reader that we enter upon our task diffidently, with a sense of high adventure tempered by a consciousness of grave responsibility; and that at the outset we have chosen for phylactery these wise words by one of Shakespeare's wisest editors, William Aldis Wright—'After a considerable experience I feel justified in saying that in most cases ignorance and conceit are the fruitful parents of conjectural emendation.' To have done with excuses, we desire lastly that the reader will not take offence at this or that which seems at first sight an innovation upon the 'Shakespeares' to which he is accustomed: that he will refrain at any rate from condemning us before making sure that we are not cutting Shakespeare free from the accretions of a long line of editors.

II

But we have designed these volumes also for the pocket of the ordinary lover of Shakespeare, because time alters the catholic approach to him, if by insensible degrees, no less thoroughly than it deflects that of the esoteric student. 'What mankind have long possessed they have often examined and compared: and if they persist to value the possession, it is because frequent comparisons have confirmed opinion in its favour.' So wrote Samuel Johnson in the Preface to his edition of the Plays of Shakespeare, published in 1765; adding that these plays have 'passed through variations of taste and changes of manners, and, as they devolved from one generation to another, have received new honours at every transmission....The sand heaped by one flood is scattered by another, but the rock always continues in its place. The stream of Time, which is continually washing the dissoluble fabricks of other poets, passes without injury by the adamant of *Shakespeare*.'

'In the fine arts'—writes a later critic, Professor Barrett Wendell, also of Shakespeare—'a man of genius is he who in perception and in expression alike, in thought and in phrase, instinctively so does his work that his work remains significant after the conditions in which he actually produced it are past. The work of any man of genius, then, is susceptible of endless comment and interpretation, varying as the generations of posterity vary from his and from one another.'

Thus, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, two critics among many have echoed the line which Ben Jonson penned for the First Folio of 1623, prescient and yet (one may assert) not fully awake to his own prescience

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

For, obscure and mostly insignificant as are the collected details of Shakespeare's life and career, the vicissitudes

of his reputation have never lacked evidence from the first, and in later times have rather suffered from a cloud of witness. In the beginning, having come up from Stratford-on-Avon to London (about 1586) to try his fortune, this youth managed to open the back door of Burbage's Theatre and gain employment as an actor. Burbage must soon have set him the additional task of furbishing and 'bumbasting out' old plays for revival—with results at which the original authors very naturally took offence: for as early as 1592 Robert Greene utters (from his death-bed) his famous invective upon our young man as 'an upstart Crow beautified with our feathers'; warning his literary fellow-playwrights, 'it is pittee men of such rare wits should be subject to the pleasures of such rude groomes.' Greene's contemptuous language may pass. Its vehement anger pretty plainly proves that, even so early, our dramatic apprentice had learnt to make himself formidable.

We may start from the previous year 1591, and take the ensuing twenty as the period covering Shakespeare's career as a dramatist. Did his fame grow as nowadays in retrospect we can see his poetical power maturing from *Love's Labour's Lost* up to *King Lear* and on to *The Tempest*? The little contemporary evidence is curious, and tells us at once that it did and that it did not. For example in 1598 we have Francis Meres, a learned graduate of Cambridge, asserting that 'among the English he is the most excellent in both kinds [Tragedy and Comedy] for the Stage,' rivalling the fame of Seneca in the one kind and of Plautus in the other. As against this we find, at the same date and in Meres' University, the authors of *The Pilgrimage to Parnassus* attempting more than one laugh at him as belonging to a tribe of playwrights fashionable but unlettered. Vaguely, yet with some certainty, the early Elizabethan dramatists fall for us into two opponent camps; the University wits and 'literary' tribesmen coming to

recognise (or being bullied into recognising) Ben Jonson for their champion, while Shakespeare almost at unawares grows to his stature as chief challenger on behalf of the theatre-men who worked for the stage and its daily bread, with no hankering side-glance after the honours and diuturnity of print. His election to this eminence is nowhere, in so many words, asserted. When the two parties became publicly and violently embroiled in the wordy stage-war—which started between Jonson on the one side and Dekker and Marston on the other, and lasted from 1599 to 1602—he neither lent his name to the battle nor apparently deigned to participate in it. As we interpret the story, he could not help being intellectually head-and-shoulders above all who made his party: but he enjoyed no quarrel, and was, in fact, by nature too generously indolent, and withal too modest, and yet again too busy with his work, to worry himself with contention. Gentle and ‘sweet’ (his own favourite word), or some equivalent for these, are steady epithets of all who knew him or had heard his contemporaries talk about him. *De forti dulcedo*—‘a handsome well-shaped man’ Aubrey tells us of report; ‘very good company and of a readie and pleasant smooth witt.’ There is no evidence at all that he set an exorbitant price on himself: rather, out of silence and contrast, we get a cumulative impression that he claimed a most modest one. There are hints enough that the generation for which he worked recognised him for a man of parts and promise; but again out of silence and contrast we insensibly gather the conviction that it never occurred to his fellows to regard him as a mountainous man, ‘out-topping knowledge’; and that he himself, could he have foreseen Matthew Arnold’s famous sonnet, would have found in it a modest gratification combined with something like amazement. His death (in middle age) provoked no such general outburst of lamentation as Sidney’s did; his life no such running fire of detraction as did

Jonson's. He retired and died, moderately well-to-do, in the country town of his birth. The copyright (as we call it) of his plays belonged to the theatre or Company for which they were written: and he never troubled himself or anybody to collect, correct, and print them. They were first gathered and given to the world by two fellow-actors, John Heminge and Henry Condell, late in 1623, or more than seven-and-a-half years after his death.

Again we must not make too much of this: for one only of the Elizabethan dramatists had hitherto sought what fame might come of printing his plays for a secondary judgment by the reader; and not one in Shakespeare's life-time. The exception of course was Ben Jonson, who in 1616 had brought together and issued nine pieces in a folio volume.

Some may argue that between the date of his death and that of the First Folio of 1623 Shakespeare's fame had vastly grown, quoting Jonson's splendid and expressly written encomium which follows the Folio Preface, with its allusion to Basse's elegy lamenting that our 'rare Tragedian' had not been laid to rest beside Chaucer and Spenser and Beaumont in Westminster Abbey:

Renowned Spenser lye a thought more nye
 To learned Chaucer, and rare Beaumont lye
 A little neerer Spenser, to make roome
 For Shakespeare in your threefold, fowerfold Tombe.
 To lodge all fowre in one bed make a shift
 Vntill Doomesdaye, for hardly will a fift
 Betwixt y^s day and y^t by Fate be slayne
 For whom your Curtaines may be drawn againe...

upon which Jonson retorts in apostrophe:

My Shakespeare, rise; I will not lodge thee by
 Chaucer or Spenser, or bid Beaumont lye
 A little further, to make thee a roome...
 Thou art a Monument, without a tombe,
 And art alive still, while thy Booke doth live,
 And we have wits to read, and praise to give.

But dedicatory verse in that age had a proper and recognised pitch: and if a reader in 1623 found the praise not extravagant, as we find it not extravagant to-day, his reason for it and ours would be different. It seems safer to turn for Jonson's real opinion to the famous passage in *Timber or Discoveries*, frank as it is and familiarly spoken, with its confession that he 'loved the man' and its characteristic glance at 'the players' (Heminge and Condell) for their praise of Shakespeare's facility:

His mind and hand went together: And what he thought he uttered with that easiness that wee have scarce received from him a blot on his papers.

Upon this Jonson retorts vivaciously but with some justice:

I remember, the Players have often mentioned it as an honour to Shakespeare that in his writing (whatsoever he penn'd) hee never blotted out line. My answer hath beene, would he have blotted a thousand, which they thought a malevolent speech. I had not told posterity this, but for their ignorance, who chose that circumstance to commend their friend by, wherein he most faulted...

III

Milton's

What needs my Shakespeare for his honour'd Bones was prefixed anonymously to the Second Folio of 1632; and he, too, while praising the 'unvalu'd Book' for its 'Delphick lines,' dwells on Shakespeare's easiness:

For whilst to th' shame of slow-endeavouring art
Thy easie numbers flow...

Shakespeare, in sum, is still a warbler of 'native Wood-notes wilde,' and yet already a Book, or in process of becoming one. He was a book to Suckling (*ob.* 1641, aged thirty-two) who 'supplemented' a passage from *Lucrece*, and had his own portrait painted by Vandyke with a copy of the First Folio under his hand, open at

the play of *Hamlet*. He was a book, again, to King Charles I, whose copy of the Second Folio (still preserved at Windsor) may be the one that went with him in his last distressful wanderings and was, as Milton tells us in *Eikonoklastes*, 'the Closet Companion of these his solitudes.' By this time, indeed, Shakespeare had become a book perforce—a book or nothing—through the closing of the theatres in 1642, and a book he remains for eighteen years or so.

With the Restoration the theatres re-open and he starts up at once again as a playwright in favour and sufficiently alive to be bandied between fervent admiration and nonchalant acceptance. Samuel Pepys goes to the theatre and notes that *Macbeth* is 'a pretty good play' (but he comes to 'like it mightily,' 'a most excellent play in all respects, but especially in divertisement though it be a deep tragedy; which is a strange perfection in a tragedy, it being most proper here and suitable'). *Romeo and Juliet* is 'a play of itself the worst I ever saw in my life,' *The Midsummer-Night's Dream* 'a most insipid ridiculous play,' and *Twelfth Night* 'but a silly play,' 'one of the weakest plays I ever saw on the stage.'

1660, August 20.—To Deptford by water reading *Othello*, *Moore of Venice*, which I ever heretofore esteemed a mighty good play, but having so lately read *The Adventures of Five Hours*, it seems a mean thing.

But *Hamlet* conquers him, and he witnesses four performances by Betterton with a rising rapture.

Yet Dryden, although he will play any conceivable trick in 'adapting'—witness *All for Love* and his misdeed, with D'Avenant's aid, upon *The Tempest*—never speaks of Shakespeare but as a classic. In practice Shakespeare is so little sacrosanct to him that to except him from any verdict passed on Cibber and Garrick for their impertinences in a later age would be hypocrisy—the homage paid by cowardice to a great name. But when he talks as a critic, his voice never falters. 'Shakespeare's

sacred name,' 'Shakespeare, who many times has written better than any poet,' 'the poet Æschylus was held in the same veneration by the Athenians of after ages as Shakespeare is by us'—*that* is Dryden's way of talking. Here, in a sentence, is his manly apology:

Therefore let not Shakespear suffer for our sakes: 'tis our fault, who succeed him in an Age which is more refin'd, if we imitate him so ill that we copy his failings only and make a virtue of that in our Writings which in his was an imperfection,

and here, in another, is his summary:

Shakespear had a Universal mind, which comprehended all Characters and Passions.

IV

With Nicholas Rowe, the first general editor (1709), we open the second period of Shakespeare's progress towards canonisation. We may call it as we list the Eighteenth Century period or the period of criticism and conjectural emendation, in both of which arts, within somewhat strict limits, our Eighteenth Century men excelled. Their criticism walked within a narrow and formal conception of the poetic art—or, we may say, a fixed idea of it to which the loose magnificence of Shakespeare was naturally abhorrent. Pope (1725) finds him (as Matthew Arnold¹ found him in a later age) a sad sinner against art, and we may see the alternate fascination and repulsion which agitated Pope reproduced in long exaggerating shadows across the evidence of Voltaire; who during his sojourn in England (1726–9) read Shakespeare voraciously, to imitate him sedulously; and went home to preach Shakespeare to Europe: until conscience constrained him to denounce the man for a buffoon and his

¹ 'He is the richest, the most powerful, the most delightful of poets: he is not altogether, nor even eminently, an artist'—*Mixed Essays*.

works for a vast and horrible dunghill in which the Gallic cock might perchance happen on some few pearls.

For their conjectural emendation these men of the Eighteenth Century had not only the nice aptitude of a close literary set nurtured upon the Greek and Latin Classics: but, to play with, a text admittedly corrupt and calling aloud for improvement—considered as belonging to a semi-barbarous age, and so as material upon which any polite taste had free licence to improve: a text, moreover, upon which the tradition of scholarship as yet enjoined no meticulous research. Roughly speaking, any scholar of the Eighteenth Century was acquitted if he familiarised himself with one or another of the Folio versions and restored any doubtful passage ‘out of his own head.’ The marvels they accomplished by this simple process remain an enormous credit to them and no less a wonder to us: and, in particular, no editor should pass Lewis Theobald without a salute—‘*splendid-emendax.*’ Upon Theobald follow Hanmer (1743-4)—a polite country gentleman, retired from the Speakership of the House of Commons and enjoying his leisure, Bishop Warburton (1747), Doctor Johnson (whose eight volumes, after long gestation, came to birth in 1765), Capell (1768), Steevens (1766 and 1773), the indefatigable Malone (1790), Isaac Reed, editor of the First Variorum, published in twenty-one volumes in 1803. Thus, starting from Rowe, we cover a fair hundred years in the course of which we may fairly say, conjectural criticism did all it could upon its knowledge—with the qualification, perhaps, that our author never tempted Bentley to delight mankind by improving his poetry.

But when a poet is acknowledged to be pre-eminent by such a succession of the first class as Dryden, Pope and Samuel Johnson, his throne as a classic is secure, and doubly secure because Dryden, Pope and Johnson, all differently and all in turn, belonged to an age which had

to acknowledge his greatness against all prejudice of more or less rigid rule.

V

So we pass to a third stage when, with all this curious guesswork heaped upon Shakespeare's text and all this tribute superimposed by the greatest critics of a reluctant age, the Romantics lay hold on him and exalt him for a demigod. Coleridge, Schlegel, Hazlitt, Lamb take their turn (Swinburne belatedly continuing the tradition up to yesterday), and all—but Coleridge most of all—have wonderful interpretations to give us. The mischief is not only that Shakespeare becomes a sort of national idol against whom a man can offer no criticism save timidly (as one standing between a lion and a unicorn), but that every second-rate or third-rate 'Elizabethan' with a grip on Shakespeare's skirt is lifted to a place beside him; with the result that Shakespeare loses his right eminence above his contemporaries, while his age enjoys above the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries an exaltation which the sober mind cannot accept as just. Moreover in the intervals of over-estimating, we make these contemporaries Shakespeare's whipping-boys. We cannot accept the plain fact that Shakespeare had often to do odd jobs, was often careless, and sometimes wrote extremely ill. As W. E. Henley put it:

Our worship must have for its object something flawless, something utterly without spot or blemish. We can be satisfied with nothing less than an entire and perfect chrysolite, and we cannot taste our Shakespeare at his worst without a longing to father his faults upon somebody else—Marlowe, for instance, or Greene or Fletcher—and a fury of proving, that our divinity was incapable of them.

Through the nineteenth century, and even to this day, the volume of laudation swells and rises, ever with a German guttural increasing in self-assertion at the back

of the uproar; until many an honest fellow, conscious of loving letters in a plain way, must surely long for the steadying accent of someone who can keep his head in the tumult; not, perhaps, for another Johnson, but at least for an outspoken utterance on the lines of Johnson's famous Preface, which Adam Smith styled 'the most manly piece of criticism that was ever published in any country.' Surely, as Ben Jonson laughed at Shakespeare for saying it of Caesar, it is high time we laughed at those who keep saying of Shakespeare that he 'did never wrong but with just cause.' Few, in Plato's phrase, are the initiate, many the thyrsus-bearers; and the effect of the Shakespearian thyrsus upon a crowd of its carriers would seem to be quite peculiarly intoxicant. It has been computed that of the lunatics at present under ward or at large in the British Isles, a good third suffer from religious mania, a fifth from a delusion that they belong to the Royal Family, while another fifth believe either that they *are* Shakespeare, or that they are the friends or relatives or champions of somebody else, whose clothes and reputation 'that Stratford clown' managed to steal; or, anyhow, that Shakespeare did anything imaginable but unlikely, from touching up the Authorised Version to practising as a veterinary surgeon.

Yet these extravagances deserve pity rather than laughter: for what they reveal is but the unbalanced side of a very human and not ignoble craving. We cannot help wanting to know more of the *man* who has befriended our lives so constantly, so sunnily; to whom we have owed so many spirited incentives of our childhood—'enrichers of the fancy'—in Charles Lamb's phrase:

Strengtheners of virtue, a withdrawing from all selfish and mercenary thoughts, a lesson of all sweet and honourable thoughts and actions, to teach you courtesy, benignity, generosity, humanity...

with whose sword at hip we have walked lovers' path;

to whom we have resorted so confidently in dark or in solitary hours.

Doubtless it were a counsel of perfection to accept his works gratefully and let the man go. Doubtless that word should be enough for us in which Homer said farewell to the Delian maidens—"Good-bye, my dears: and hereafter, should any traveller happen along and ask you "Who was the sweetest singer ever landed on your beach?" make answer to him civilly—"Sir, he was just a blind man, and his home (he said) in steep Chios.""

Doubtless, we say, it were a counsel of perfection to accept the writings of Shakespeare even so simply, so gratefully, and to let the man go. But he has meant so much to us! We resent the idea of him as 'out-topping knowledge' derisive of our 'foiled searchings.' We demand, as Jacob, after wrestling all night with the angel, demanded:

Tell me, I pray thee, thy name. And the man answered, Wherefore is it that thou askest my name? And he blessed him and departed.

But out of the cumulative labour of nineteenth century students innumerable to tell—all devoted, all persistent, the most of them with scarcely a critical gift beyond patience and arithmetic (but we must except Collier, Gervinus, Delius, Furnivall, and the Cambridge editors)—arose among them, as an atoll grows out of Ocean, by infinite verse-countings and other tests, that century's great discovery—of the chronological order in which Shakespeare wrote his plays.

VI

Now the one priceless and irrefragable boon of this discovery is the steady light it throws upon Shakespeare's development as an artist: with its pauses, breaks, try-backs, hesitations, advances, explain them how we may. But also, and less legitimately, it flatters the curiosity of those who want to know about the man and his private

life by persuading them that from the Plays and the Sonnets—but especially the Sonnets—thus set out in right chronological order, can be expressed a continuous and even a detailed biography.

There seems no good reason why scholars and men of letters should decry one another's work just because the ways of it differ. All our roads may lead to Shakespeare in the end. Yet we may protest, or at least enter a warning, that personal gossip based on nothing more secure than internal evidence interpreted through a critic's own proclivities of belief, may easily stray through excess into impertinence. When, for example, we are told that 'every one who has read Shakespeare's works with any care must admit that Shakespeare was a snob of the purest English water,' and find that, apart from the ascertained fact of his father's having applied more than once, and at length with success, to Herald's College for a coat of arms, the evidence consists in little more than assertions that 'aristocratic tastes were natural to him: inherent indeed in the delicate sensitiveness of his beauty-loving temperament' and that 'in all his writings he praises lords and gentlemen and runs down the common people,' we cannot help telling ourselves that it may be so indeed, or again it may not, but we require more assurance than this before constructing or taking away any man's character, be he living or dead. Nor is the argument reinforced by bidding us count and note the proportion of kings, lords and men of title in Shakespeare's *dramatis personae*: since in the first place almost all the Elizabethan playwrights have a similar preference for grandees, and this (apart from the actors' liking to be seen and the public's liking to see them, in fine raiment) for the simple economic reason that the theatrical wardrobes of that time held a limited stock of expensive costumes: and secondly because (in writing their tragedies at any rate) these playwrights know by instinct what Aristotle had long ago pointed out from induction—that your

tragic hero on the stage should preferably be a person of high worldly estate; and this again for several reasons but chiefly for the elementary one that the higher the eminence from which a man falls the harder he hits the ground—and our imagination. When, above Dover cliff, blind Gloucester turns to the accent of old demented Lear:

The trick of that voice I do well remember:
Is't not the King?

And Lear catches himself up to answer:

Ay, every inch a king!

When Wolsey gets his soul ready to fall like Lucifer:

I have touched the highest point of all my greatness;
And from that full meridian of my glory,
I haste now to my setting: I shall fall
Like a bright exhalation in the evening,
And no man see me more.

When 'royal Egypt' lifts the dirge over Antony, who, but for her, were living and held the sceptre of the world:

O, withered is the garland of the war,
The soldier's pole is fallen: young boys and girls
Are level now with men; the odds is gone,
And there is nothing left remarkable
Beneath the visiting moon—

are we to believe it was by snobbery—by the worship of eminence for that which true eminence disdains—that Shakespeare crawled into the hearts of princes and governors? that he learned this so grand utterance through servility, to reproduce it by a trick?

VII

We should be cautious, too, in listening to those who, all so variously, utilise the Sonnets to construct fancy histories of Shakespeare's personal life and actual experiences. Most of us, at one time or another, have

played with these guesses more or less seriously, and must admit their fascination. Even when they draw us close to abhorrent ground we feel like the man in Plato, who coming near the city wall, saw in the distance the corpses of certain malefactors laid without it and, after a long time fighting between unholy temptation and decent repulsion, yielding at length, ran towards the carrion prizing his eyes wide and crying 'Feed your fill, you wretches!' We must admit, too, how much of insight some casual, recovered touch (as it were) of the real man's hand may give. Moreover who can doubt that every true man, small or great, leaves some print of himself on his work, or indeed that he *must* if his work be literature, which is so personal a thing. As Sir Walter Raleigh puts it, 'No man can walk abroad save on his own shadow.' Yes, but as another writer, Mr Morton Luce, well comments 'an author may be—perhaps ought to be—something inferior to his work.'

We may make yet one more admission. The most of us are to some degree potential poets, but have not the gift to express ourselves. When a great poet happens along, his work, as Johnson said of Gray's *Elegy* 'abounds with images which find a mirror in every mind, and with sentiments to which every heart returns an echo.' Benedetto Croce would tell us that this power of genius over the aesthetic in ordinary man—over you or me—is quantitative, is but a matter of degree. But whether we consent with Croce or insist that the difference is a difference of quality, it remains a fact that while the poet, being human, is undoubtedly shaped by such joys and woes as befall you and me, and Cluvienus, their effect on him may be as wayward as human intelligence can conceive, and that therefore it is mere guesswork to say that, because Shakespeare writes this or that in *Lear* or in the *Sonnets*, therefore this or that must have happened in his private life to account for his writing *just so*.

VIII

But—to hark back—surely the true use to which we should put the grand discovery of our fathers in the last century—the right chronological order of the Plays—is to trace his development as an artist rather than to hunt down the man who enjoined to be written over his grave:

Good friend, for Jesus sake forbear...

For many another man has come to sorrow before now over a dark lady, as many another has owned a second-best bed; but only one man has progressed from *Love's Labour's Lost*, on to *As You Like It*, to *Twelfth Night*; only one has proceeded from these comedies to *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *Lear*, *Antony and Cleopatra*; only one has filled up the intervals with *Henry IV*, Parts i and ii, with *Julius Caesar*, with *Coriolanus*; only one, in years of physical weakness, has imagined for us an Imogen; only one has closed upon the woven magic of *The Tempest*. It may be asked, and reasonably, Why, believing the discovery of the true chronological order to be so important, we have not arranged our edition in accordance with it? To this we answer simply that the old arrangement has an historical value and some consecration of ancient sentiment, with neither of which we thought it worth while to interfere, seeing that a chronological list, occupying but a page or so, will serve the purpose more handily; and, for the rest, the original date of each separate play is almost impossible to fix: so many of them being, as they have reached us, revisions of revisions. Our prefatory notes will *attempt* to assign its date to each play. But here is a tentative inventory:

Before 1595 Henry VI (other men's work, revised).
 Richard III (part only).
 Titus Andronicus (a few touches only).
 The Comedy of Errors.
 The Two Gentlemen of Verona.

- Venus and Adonis (1593).
 The Rape of Lucrece (1594).
 ?Sonnets (begun).
- 1595-1597 Love's Labour's Lost (final form).
 ?All's Well That Ends Well (first form).
 A Midsummer-Night's Dream.
 Romeo and Juliet.
 King John.
 The Taming of the Shrew (?part only).
 Richard II.
 The Merchant of Venice.
- 1598-1600 Henry IV. Part I.
 Henry IV. Part II.
 The Merry Wives of Windsor (?part only).
 Much Ado About Nothing.
 Henry V (?final form).
 As You Like It.
 Twelfth Night.
 Julius Caesar.
- 1601-1604 Hamlet.
 Troilus and Cressida.
 All's Well That Ends Well (final form).
 Measure for Measure.
 Othello.
- 1605-1608 Macbeth.
 King Lear.
 Antony and Cleopatra.
 Timon of Athens (part only).
 Coriolanus.
 Pericles (part only).
- 1609-1613 Cymbeline.
 The Winter's Tale.
 The Tempest.
 Henry VIII (part only).

Although, for reasons given, the dates of several plays *in their earliest form* cannot yet, and may never, be finally determined, the above list gives a rough chronological order of the final forms in which we have received them. It claims to no more: but this much is, so far as it goes, invaluable. For if, as our younger critics hold, almost with one accord, the true business of criticism be

to interpret and elucidate for other men an artist's 'expression,' this compass of the last century's invention should guide them to many new discoveries. Helped by yet later inventions (to be discussed in the second part of this Introduction) it may carry them across seas hitherto uncharted. Even by itself it gives us invaluable guidance in tracing Shakespeare's development as a playwright and a poet; which is surely better worth our while than speculation on his private affairs.

As we join the words 'playwright' and 'poet,' our memory connects two stray sentences overheard at different times in the theatre—a man's voice muttering between the third and fourth Acts of *Hamlet*, 'And he turned off plays like this, while he was going, at the rate of two a year!'—and the voice of an artless maiden in the stalls, responsive to Juliet's passion: 'I do like Shakespeare, don't you? He has such a way of putting things!'

IX

A wise reader will constantly remember that Shakespeare was an indefatigable playwright, and find endless reward of curiosity in tracing the experiments by which he learned to master the craft of the stage. Nevertheless to consider Shakespeare primarily as a playwright, and to contend that his verse should be treated on the stage as 'material for an actor to juggle with and use to the best advantage of the drama' is to miss Shakespeare's true stature altogether. We hope, indeed, that our text will make him more intelligible theatrically in not a few places. For a single example—the Folio prints *Romeo and Juliet* straight through without break of Act or Scene. If we turn to any modern edition, at the beginning of Act II we shall find two scenes: the one placed in a lane outside Capulet's orchard, the other within the orchard overlooked by Juliet's balcony: and this second

scene opens with *Enter Romeo*, and with Romeo's remark 'He jests at scars that never felt a wound'—quite as if he had barked his shins in climbing over the wall, and his romantic amorous ardour was making nothing of it. But we have only to read carefully to convince ourselves that these two scenes are one scene: that the lane and its wall should come just athwart one corner of the stage: that Romeo, having climbed the wall, crouches close, listening, and laughing to himself while he overhears his baffled comrades discussing him; and that when they give up the chase and their footsteps die away, it is as instant comment upon Mercutio's loose cynical talk about love, King Cophetua, 'poperin pears,' etc., that he dismisses it with:

He (*scilicet* Mercutio) jests at scars that never felt a wound and so turns to the light breaking from Juliet's window. In all the standard texts the line is pointless.

This for a specimen. We must ever bear in mind that Shakespeare wrote for the stage: but men's eyes nowadays read his page a thousand times for any once they see it enacted. It were a feeble compliment to-day to call him merely our 'great national Playwright.' He is that: but he is much more—he is very much more—he is more by difference of quality. He is our great national Poet.

X

By keeping—as with fair ease we can—a mental list of the plays in their right chronological order—we can trace the Poet as he attains mastery through operation. We watch the young experimenter in *Venus and Adonis* at play with words, intent on the game of elaborate phrase-making as ever kitten was intent on chasing her own tail. We note, even so early, an extraordinary gift of concreteness—of translating idea into visible images—which comes naturally to him and

differentiates him from his elders and compeers—from Marlowe for instance:

Upon this promise did he raise his chin
 Like a dive-dipper peering through a wave
 Which, being look'd on, ducks as quickly in...
 Lo! here the gentle lark, weary of rest,
 From his moist cabinet mounts up on high...
 Or, as the snail, whose tender horns being hit,
 Shrinks backward in his shelly cave with pain...

We trace up this word-play through such lines as

The singing masons building roofs of gold,
 and

Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubins,
 to the commanding style of

Sleep that knits up the ravelled sleeve of care
 or of

Men must endure
 Their going hence even as their coming hither,
 Ripeness is all—

and from command to tyranny: until—in *Antony and Cleopatra* for example—nouns scurry to do the work of verbs, adverbs and adjectives form fours, sentences sweat and groan like porters with three thoughts piled on one back, and not one dares mutiny any more than Ariel dares it against Prospero's most delicate bidding. Prospero himself, in his narrative of how he reached the island, throws all grammar to the winds, as does Imogen in her panting haste to find Milford Haven. Shakespeare in fine, and at the utmost of his quality, sinks all grammar in the heave and swell of speech under emotion. And in the end we are left to question, How did this man learn to make sentences mean so much more than they say? how contrive his voice so that four quite simple words, 'Think, we had mothers!' or 'The rest is silence' chime with overtones and undertones that so deepen all the space and meaning of life between hell and heaven?

XI

Concurrently we watch him a craftsman busy on the day's work, tinkering upon old plays, old chronicles, other men's romances; borrowing other men's inventions, not in the least scrupulous over pillaging his own; learning to take any ordinary page of North's Plutarch or of Holinshed and transmute it, by just a frugal touch, into gold; in his later years essaying about the hardest technical difficulty a dramatist can propose to himself, and, beaten thrice—in *Pericles*, in *Cymbeline*, in *The Winter's Tale*—with a fourth and last shot, in *The Tempest* bringing down his quarry from the sky.

And meanwhile he is creating Falstaff and Mistress Quickly; Hamlet, Iago, Lear and Lear's fool; Rosalind and Imogen and Cleopatra; with the moonshine of *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, the mirk of *Macbeth*, the scents of Juliet's garden, the frozen platform of Elsinore, the rainbow surf of Prospero's island; and above all interpreting, for refreshment of heart and mind, that miracle of miracles—his native England in early summer.

An editor, engaged to clear the text of such a poet should be as happily devout as young Ion sweeping out the shrine of Apollo himself.

Q.

TEXTUAL INTRODUCTION

Within this last decade the study of Shakespearian texts has been given a new trend by three distinct though closely related discoveries.

The first is that of Mr A. W. Pollard, originator of a new scientific method—critical Shakespearian bibliography. In a series of works (*Shakespeare Folios and Quartos*, 1909; *King Richard II, a New Quarto*, 1916; *Shakespeare's Fight with the Pirates*, 1917, etc.) Mr Pollard has demonstrated that dramatic MSS which reached the printer's hands in Shakespeare's day were generally theatrical prompt-copy; that many of these are likely to have been in the author's autograph; and that, therefore, the first editions of Shakespeare's plays—the quartos in particular—possess a much higher authority than editors have hitherto been inclined to allow them.

The second discovery, originally made by Mr Percy Simpson (*Shakespearian Punctuation*, 1911), though since developed by Mr Pollard, affects the vitally important question of the stops in the Folio and Quartos, which are now seen to be not the haphazard peppering of ignorant compositors, as all previous editors have regarded them, but play-house punctuation, directing the actors how to speak their lines.

The third and most sensational discovery of all came to light in 1916, when Sir Edward Maunde Thompson boldly claimed, in his *Shakespeare's Handwriting*, that one of several hands found in the confused and partially revised manuscript play *Sir Thomas More*, now in the British Museum, was that of Shakespeare himself, and that therefore we now have three pages of authentic Shakespearian 'copy' in our possession. Not all scholars are as yet prepared to accept this ascription unreservedly: but none question Sir Edward Maunde Thompson's thesis

that these three pages are written in a hand of at least the same class as that seen in the six Shakespearian signatures; and this is enough to make the 'Shakespearian' addition to *Sir Thomas More* an instrument of the highest value for an editor of Shakespeare.

In short we believe that we know how Shakespeare wrote; we have a definite clue to his system of punctuation; we feel confident that often nothing but a compositor stands between us and the original manuscript; we can at times even creep into the compositor's skin and catch glimpses of the manuscript through his eyes. The door of Shakespeare's workshop stands ajar.

1. *Classification and Selection of Texts.*

A modern editor of Shakespeare has to reckon with three distinct groups of textual material. First in importance comes the Folio of 1623. Save for a haphazard set of reprints of nine plays, by or attributed to Shakespeare, brought together without any general title-page in 1619, this is the earliest collected edition of Shakespeare's works and includes all the plays now in the canon except *Pericles*, which was added in the third Folio (1664). A number of plays, however, had seen light, as individual publications, before the First Folio appeared, and Mr Pollard has provisionally sorted out these Quartos, as they are called, into two species: the 'good' and the 'bad.' The Good Quartos form our second group of textual material, and are fourteen in number, viz.:

Titus Andronicus	1594
Richard II	1597
Richard III	1597
Love's Labour's Lost	1598
Henry IV i	1598
Romeo and Juliet	1599
Merchant of Venice	1600
Much Ado about Nothing	1600
Henry IV ii	1600
Midsummer-Night's Dream	1600

Hamlet	1604-5
Lear	1608
Troilus and Cressida	1609
Othello	1622

To these may be added *Venus and Adonis* (1593), *The Rape of Lucrece* (1594) and the *Sonnets* (1609), thus bringing the number up to seventeen. They are called Good Quartos because they give us on the whole 'good' texts, which often formed the basis for the corresponding texts of the Folio. They possess, moreover, the hall-mark of respectability, inasmuch as all but two were regularly entered, previous to publication, in the Stationers' Register, and such entries carry with them the presumption that the printer came by his 'copy' in the honest way of business. The two exceptions (*Love's Labour's Lost* and *Romeo and Juliet*) are more apparent than real; since here the absence of entry may be explained by the fact that a 'bad' text had already been issued, though only one of the 'bad' texts has survived as evidence. The mention of 'bad' texts introduces us to the third group, a small one of five plays, known as the Bad Quartos, none of which was regularly entered in the Stationers' Register before publication, a circumstance suspicious in itself and made more so by the patent imperfections of the texts they present. They comprise:

Romeo and Juliet	1597
Henry V	1600
Merry Wives	1602
Hamlet	1603
Pericles	1608

The current explanation of the first four of these texts is that they were based upon theatrical abridgments of full-length manuscripts, partially revised by Shakespeare, and were touched up for publication by a pirate-actor who played in the completely revised versions.

With the exception of *Richard II* (1608), which con-

tained for the first time the previously excluded Parliament Scene, and perhaps of *Othello* (1630), the foregoing texts are all with which an editor of Shakespeare need seriously concern himself, since other Folios and Quartos are simply reprints, for the production of which it is highly improbable that the printers had recourse to any manuscript authority. Variant readings, therefore, in later Folios and in Quarto-reprints can claim no recognition beyond that due to the guess of a more or less intelligent compositor or printer's reader. As the work of craftsmen accustomed to proof-reading in Shakespeare's day, they are of interest; but they should be accepted with the greatest caution.

An editor's first business is to select his text. With plays which only appear in the Folio, he has of course no alternative. Nor is the choice difficult when there exists a Bad Quarto version of a Folio play; for the Folio here obviously claims priority, though where the Bad Quarto presents variant readings, strongly suggestive of Shakespeare, they should be considered, and, provided good reason can be shown, may even be accepted. The task, however, is more ticklish when both Folio and Good Quarto versions exist. Here we have to reckon with the possibility that the Good Quarto was printed direct from Shakespeare's autograph copy; and, in any event, where the Folio text, as often happens, is demonstrably derived from a late edition of the Quarto, it is clearly necessary to go back to the *editio princeps* of that Quarto, which brings one into the closest proximity now possible with the manuscript of the author. The real difficulty arises when the Folio and Good Quarto texts differ in such a way as to suggest that they are taken from different manuscript sources. Then the editor has to decide, if he can, which of the two sources is the more authoritative. Such a decision involves a preliminary bibliographical analysis of the printed texts, to define the character of the printer's 'copy.'

2. *Definition of the 'Copy.'*

The 'copy' is the manuscript (or book) delivered to the printer and used by the compositor in setting up the lines of type. It is, as we shall see, highly important for an editor constantly to bear the compositor in mind. It is still more important to realise the nature of the particular 'copy' which the compositor has before his eyes in setting up the text. Now most dramatic manuscripts which reached the printing-houses in Shakespeare's time were of play-house origin. Probably they would be prompt-copies; and prompt-copy might be of two kinds: author's manuscript or a transcript of it. But a play would seldom be transcribed in full for an acting company, since this would cost time and money and increase the risk of piracy. The idea that our printed texts are separated from the author's original by an indefinite series of intervening transcripts, an idea which has haunted editors from Dr Johnson's day to this, may therefore be dismissed. The chances are that it was prompt-copy which came to the printer's hand, and that often the prompt-copy was, as the First Folio puts it, the 'true original.'

It must be remembered, however, that prompt-copy was subject to many chances and changes. The author is perhaps working over an old play, and his reconstruction may here and there be careless. The play when drafted became the property of the company, and they were free to make what alterations they chose. When it came to 'plotting' the play for a special cast, some rearrangement might be found necessary. Most important of all, plays were liable to be revived, which means that the original author, or some other dramatist, would probably be employed to revise the manuscript; and revision, with its accompanying marginal additions and imperfect deletions, may leave strange traces in the printed text. Occasionally such revision would take the form of more or less drastic abridgment, as when a full-length play had to be cut down for a court performance.

Bearing all this in mind, an editor should generally be able to discover from the printed text a good deal about the nature of the 'copy' from which it was set up. He will be aided by literary considerations. For example, a chance reference to a character who does not elsewhere appear, a passage of 'verse' which refuses to scan, a violent and impossible dramatic *dénouement*, these and similar phenomena will excite his interest and arouse his curiosity. But a far more secure basis for his investigation is to be found in bibliographical analysis, which is scientific and independent of all questions of 'taste.' Roughly speaking a printed text is a faithful reproduction of the manuscript. The compositor's duty is to follow his 'copy'; and generally he does. When he finds 'Enter Will Kemp' therein, he prints it, without enquiring how this Kemp came to be walking about in Verona or Messina. If two versions of the same speech occur, because the author, in revising, has neglected to delete the older, both are likely to appear in print. Above all, the compositor has no means of distinguishing between verse and prose except by the line-arrangement in the manuscript. When therefore the verse-lining of a given passage is disturbed, it is fairly safe to assume that the 'copy' itself is to blame, and usually the best explanation is that the passage has been revised, cramped additions being written in the margin where lack of space forbade correct verse-lining. Eccentric line-arrangement, whether of verse or prose, is indeed a clue of great value to the bibliographer; and when it is found with a number of half-lines or broken lines of verse it is a certain sign of manuscript revision. For revision will generally involve, not merely marginal addition on some pages, but the complete re-writing of others; and the reviser is likely to betray his hand by leaving broken lines at the beginning or end of old speeches, when followed or preceded by additions. The necessary preliminary, therefore, to any definition of the printer's 'copy' is the collection of all bibliographical

peculiarities which occur in the text. When this has been done, the editor will turn to the literary puzzles and consider how they fit in with his bibliographical findings.

But the 'copy' need not always be prompt-copy. After a play had been 'plotted' and the characters assigned, each player received his 'part,' with the cues, transcribed from the prompt-copy. If the prompt-copy were lost, or were for some other reason not available, it would be possible to reconstruct some kind of text for the printer by stringing together the 'parts.' At least one or two of the Folio texts suggest such an origin. At any rate it would be a grave error to regard the Folio as a unity in respect of the 'copy' employed. It is a *corpus Shakespearianum* made up of plays drawn from various sources, and each text therein must be judged on its merits, the merits being determined by the application of the principles of critical bibliography. As he proceeds, the textual editor of the present edition will attempt some provisional definition of the 'copy' for each of the original Shakespearian texts, in accordance with the foregoing principles. It will not always be possible, within the limits of his space, to give a complete account of the faith which is in him. But a brief statement of his general conclusions will be found at the end of every volume; the bibliographical and literary data upon which these conclusions rest will be brought out in the textual notes; and, at the conclusion of the edition, an exposition of the results of the survey will be attempted.

3. *Act and scene division: Line-numeration.*

None of the Quartos published during Shakespeare's life-time contains the conventional divisions which now appear in all modern texts. It would seem, therefore, that he did not work in acts and scenes; and the probability that most if not all these Quartos were printed from prompt-copies suggests that as long as he was at the Globe his plays were performed without breaks. On

the other hand, only six undivided texts are to be found in the Folio, which was printed seven years after Shakespeare's death and a dozen years after his retirement to Stratford. The causes of this marked contrast between Folio and Quartos cannot be fully discussed here; but it is not difficult to discover at least a partial explanation. Act-divisions, which are of course classical in origin, are found in many sixteenth century dramatic texts, while some of the extant 'plots,' most of which belonged to the Admiral's men, prove that act-pauses were a recognised feature at certain theatres in Shakespeare's day. When therefore these divisions occur in Shakespeare's early plays, more especially when, as in *The Taming of the Shrew*, *King John* and *1 Henry VI*, they crop up in a very irregular and haphazard fashion, they may be taken as evidence that he was revising other men's work and omitted to delete the act-headings. But, further, we have ten plays, previously published as Quartos, which the Folio has cut up into acts. Here the divisions are almost certainly due to the players, the stage-direction 'They sleepe all the Act' (i.e. the interval) which appears at the end of act III. of *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* being an important clue, and one eloquent of the shifts which a curtainless stage imposed upon those who attempted to divide the seamless texture of Shakespeare's dramas. And an explanation which fits these ten plays may be extended to other texts which exist in Folio version only. In short, it seems likely that such act-divisions are theatrical in origin, and arose from the practice of making four pauses during a performance, which were presumably introduced into Shakespeare's prompt-copies after he had left the Globe. Lastly, we have twelve Folio texts divided into scenes as well as acts. It is difficult to conceive any theatrical necessity for the insertion of scenes into a prompt-copy, but there was theatrical material which, if furnished with such prompt-copy, would render the introduction of scene-

divisions into a printed text a very easy matter, though they might not, and in the Folio often do not, correspond with a modern editor's sense of literary or dramatic fitness. This theatrical material was the manuscript 'plot' of the play, which gave the entries and exits of the actors, and across which a line was drawn when the stage was left empty by one group of players to make room for another. With 'copy' in which the acts were marked, and with the 'plot' on which the 'exeunt omnes' lines were ruled, scene-division would present no difficulty to Jaggard.

That the divisions in the Folio are 'void of authority' and that Shakespeare wrote his plays 'in one unbroken continuity' was admitted by Dr Johnson in his preface of 1765, and Capell three years later pleaded for reformation. But they still persist in modern texts, though they are often dramatically absurd. In this edition they are wholly discarded, changes of place alone being marked by a space on the page. As however all modern glossaries, concordances, etc. employ line-numeration based on the traditional divisions, it has been found necessary, for purposes of reference, to adhere to it in the figures at the head of the page, which give the number of the first line. To the same end, the numerals in square brackets in the margin will indicate where the traditional acts and scenes begin. These numerals, it is hoped, will not only assist the reader in his references, but also serve, placed as they are alongside of a continuous text, to show how much or how little such breaks are in keeping with the intentions of Shakespeare.

4. *Punctuation and Stage-directions.*

The old texts were prompt-copy, more akin to operatic score than to modern literary drama. This explains the ungrammatical punctuation which, hitherto neglected or despised by editors, is now recognised as of the highest dramatic importance. The stops, brackets, capital letters

in the Folio and Quartos are in fact stage-directions, in shorthand. They tell the actor when to pause and for how long, they guide his intonation, they indicate the emphatic word, often enough they denote 'stage-business.' The system was a simple one, though it became in Shakespeare's hands so delicate an instrument that it is very difficult to translate its finer touches into symbols which will commend themselves with ease to the modern eye. An attempt however has been made, and if the reader will glance through the note (pp. lvii-lx) in which details are explained, he will be able, when he comes to the text, to handle at least the more obvious ventages in Shakespeare's recorder and to catch something of the *tempo* of the verse as it sounded first of all in the poet's ear. If, on the other hand, he cares for none of these things, the punctuation we have adopted will not unduly disturb him.

The stops in the old texts, we have said, frequently stand for stage-business. As the original stage-directions are generally of the scantiest possible description, it is probable that 'business' was orally transmitted in Shakespeare's theatre. Indeed, a dramatic text with elaborate stage-directions lies under the suspicion of having been written by an author who was either not a player or unable to be present during the preparation for performance. With the aid of the dramatic punctuation it is now possible, in many places, to make at least a guess at the 'business' required. Where it has been felt that it would be of real help to the reader—and sometimes the text is unintelligible without it—such 'business' has been indicated by stage-directions. The bulk of the stage-directions which appear in modern editions are the creation of editors and critics, and we are therefore only carrying the process a step further—to what we believe to be its logical conclusion. While we are fully aware of the risks we run in such an undertaking, the attempt has so greatly deepened our own appreciation of Shakespeare's

purposes that we are encouraged to hope that the results may not be found altogether impertinent.

A strong and healthy reaction has recently set in against superfluity of scenery at performances of Shakespeare's plays, and it is possible that objection may be taken to another of our innovations, viz. the *mise-en-scène* stage-direction. It should be remembered, however, that this edition is intended not for the Elizabethan actor but for the modern reader, and that a play-book is a very different thing from a moving audible pageant. In our opinion the almost complete absence of stage-directions in the printed text is one of the chief obstacles to the appreciation of Shakespeare by his own countrymen. It would appear from the doctrines of some extremists that they believe Shakespeare never thought of any background except the theatre-boards at the Globe. But as a matter of fact he almost always formed a clear-cut and definite picture of the surroundings amid which his characters moved, and it is generally possible to reconstruct this scenery from incidental references in the play. In attempting this, we shall again only be completing the process already begun by previous editors.

Stage-directions taken from the original texts will be placed in inverted commas, so as to distinguish them from our additions.

5. *Spellings and Abbreviations.*

In this edition the spelling of the old texts has been modernised, save for a few Shakespearian forms which seemed worth preserving either for the sake of their quaintness or because the original gives help to the meaning, ease to the scansion or grace to a rhyme. Little is lost by modernisation, for the simple reason that the spelling of the Folio and Quartos is normally not that of Shakespeare. The faithful compositor followed his 'copy' it is true; but he was bound to alter his authors' spelling if he was to get through his day's work at all, seeing that

every author in that age spelt as he liked and it would have been infinitely laborious to set up each word exactly as it appeared in the 'copy.' Yet if a word in the manuscript happens to catch the compositor's eye, the author's spelling is likely to get into print through inadvertence. Thus by observing spellings which are unusual for reputable compositors of Shakespeare's day, it is possible to learn a good deal of an author's orthographic habits. A collection of such abnormal spellings as are to be found in the seventeen Good Quartos has been made by the textual editor, and has proved of considerable value in the preparation of this text.

Shakespeare had his own spelling; he also abbreviated freely, the old texts being full of contracted forms, which modern editors have generally treated in a half-hearted and inconsistent fashion, though they are clearly of great importance as regards verse-scansion. Thanks to a recent attempt by the advocate of a new prosody to get rid of them altogether, we have been led to examine them closely in the light of contemporary usage and to weigh carefully the bibliographical and philological evidence in their favour. Our conclusion is that they are undoubtedly Shakespearian in origin, and that it is therefore an editor's duty to retain them all, except where they are obvious misprints. Since however final *-ed* has long ceased to be syllabic in modern English pronunciation, except after *d* and *t*, it seemed superfluous to contract here. We have therefore always printed it in full, accenting it where poetic or obsolete syllabification is required.

6. *Misprints, Shakespeare's handwriting, Emendation.*

It is a cardinal principle of critical bibliography that when anything is wrong with the text, the blame should be laid rather on the 'copy' than on the compositor. This principle applies to most forms of misprint. But there are certain types of misprint for which compositors may be held responsible. Such are: (1) The omission

of single lines. (2) The omission of words. (3) The alteration of a word by assimilation to a neighbouring word of like sound or spelling. (4) Small verbal alterations due to an attempt to carry too many words in the head. Closely connected with this class is the large quantity of grammatical errors occurring in the texts, which no editor of Shakespeare has yet faced squarely. That Shakespeare's grammar was always in accordance with modern usage no one will be bold enough to maintain. But it can hardly be doubted that many solecisms were introduced by his printers which he would not have countenanced.

We pass to misprints for which Shakespeare must be held at least partly responsible; and their name is legion. No less instructive to an editor than the abnormal spellings are the obvious misprints which occur by the hundred in the Good Quartos, misprints which have been corrected in all modern editions. A list of these has been made and classified by the textual editor, and such a list shows us the kind of slips to which Shakespeare's pen was most prone. The principal types are as follows: (1) A large class of misprints due to confusion set up by the malformation of minim-letters, especially when they occur in combination. In the 'English' hand, which Shakespeare wrote, minim-letters are *m, n, u, i, c, w, r*, and it is clear that he frequently neglected to count his strokes when writing these. (2) A closely related class due to a confusion of *a* with *n, u*, and other minim-letters. This is to be explained by Shakespeare's habit of neglecting to close the top of the *a*, thus leaving it a virtual *u* or *n*. (3) What may be called *e:d* misprints. These are very common, and are important as proving that Shakespeare wrote the 'English' and not the 'Italian' hand which we now employ, since the only difference between *e* and *d* in the 'English' style was one of size, a difference which Shakespeare was not careful to observe. It is probable that something like half the corruptions in

the Shakespearian texts may be attributed to this cause. (4) *e: o* misprints. The chief difference between these two letters, in 'English' script, is that the *e* is linked with the letter following and the *o* is not; they are therefore very liable to be confused when a writer is working quickly. (5) *o: a* misprints. Most of these occur in cases where a minim-letter follows the *a* or *o*, and are probably due to a trick of the pen by which the upright of the *a* became detached from the body of the letter, so as to give something which might be taken for *oi* or *or*.

To these main classes should be added mistakes due to confusion between long-headed letters of various kinds (e.g. *f*, long *s*, *l*, *t*), and between tailed letters such as *g*, *y*, *b*, errors likely to occur in printing from any 'English' hand, as indeed are some of those mentioned above.

All this has an important bearing upon the question of textual corruption; and our lists of spellings and misprints give us a scientific instrument for dealing with it. The spellings are quite as useful as the misprints since unless we have some idea of the letters which Shakespeare actually wrote on paper, it is often impossible to see how the compositor went wrong. When a passage in the text lies under strong suspicion of corruption, the suspect word or phrase should first of all be written out in Shakespearian script and Shakespearian spelling. This done, the right reading will quite often leap to the eye, since the trouble is generally caused by a simple minim or *e: d* misprint, or perhaps may be just a question of misdivision of a word. If the corruption proves a stubborn one, other classes of misprint must be brought to bear upon the problem, and various combinations of letters tried. Finally the results of this application of the principle of the *ductus litterarum* must be put to the literary test, by reference to the context, and by the aid of the *New English Dictionary* which will supply, or withhold, contemporary support for the suggested reading. But the literary criterion, though of

course essential, should not be brought in until the last stage, when bibliography and palaeography have done their work. The basis of the whole business, in short, is the handwriting of Shakespeare; and that it is now possible not only to imagine but actually to write this hand is due to the researches of Sir Edward Maunde Thompson.

By the aid of these new tools, time-honoured textual cruxes have been attacked and fresh ones brought to light in the present edition, so that a number of emendations will be suggested in the notes to each play. As, however, the method is here employed for the first time, and has therefore yet to receive the general approval of scholars, no emendations have been admitted into the text itself, unless (*a*) the original reading makes nonsense of a crucial dramatic passage, so that there is virtually a hole which requires filling up; (*b*) the editors feel assured that no alternative to the reading they propose is possible; or (*c*) the reading which appears exceedingly likely on palaeographical or bibliographical grounds has already been suggested by some previous critic of repute. Corrupt passages of importance, whether emended or otherwise, will be marked with an obelisk in the text, the original spelling being given in some cases to enable the reader to follow out the problem for himself. Every departure from the original text will be recorded in the notes at the end of the volume. And the facsimile of a passage from the 'Shakespearian' scene in the *Sir Thomas More* manuscript is given in this volume to illustrate the kind of writing in which the plays were first penned.

7. *Verse-arrangement.*

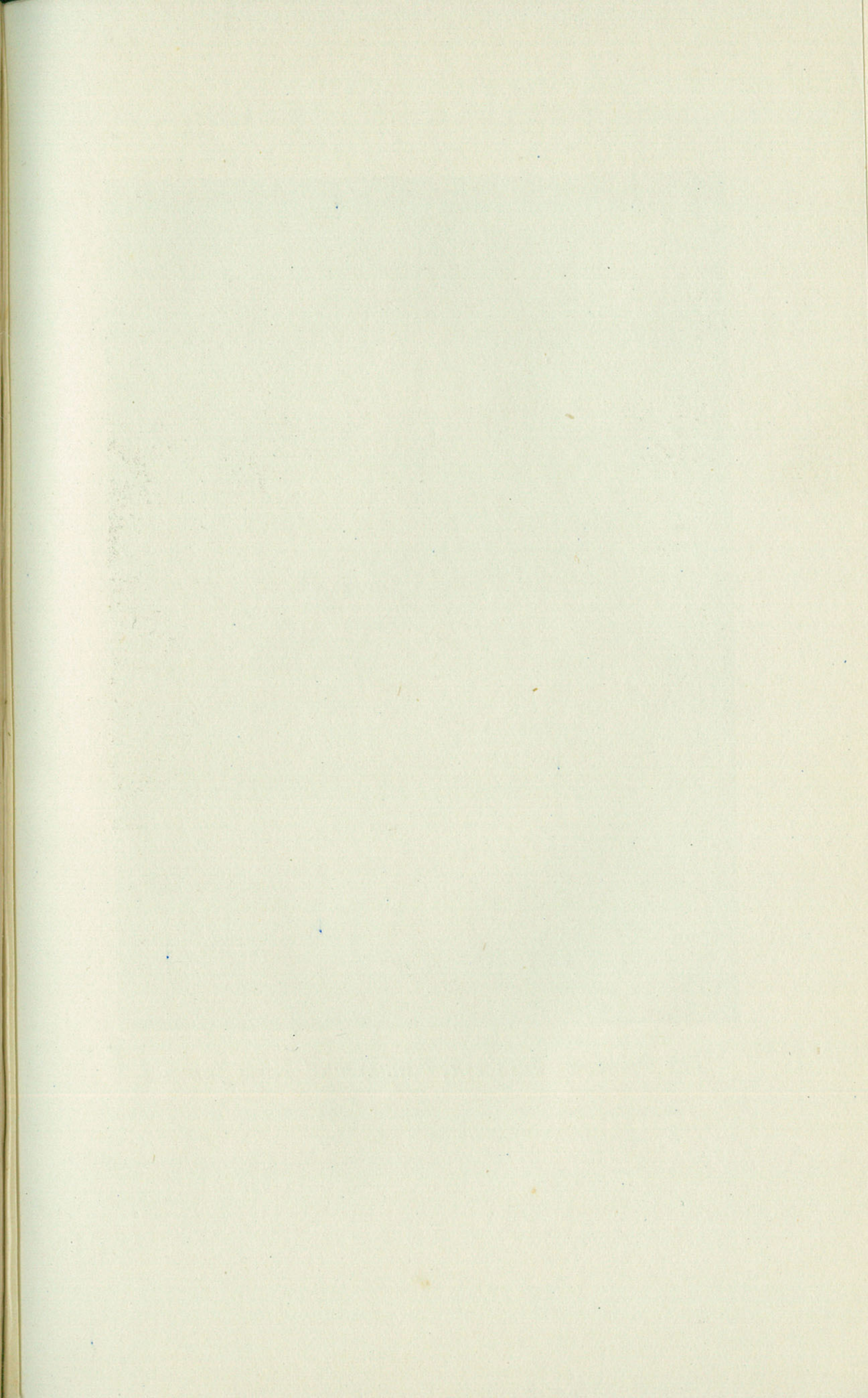
Owing chiefly to the practice of marginal revision the old texts frequently give us passages of verse incorrectly divided or printed in prose. Many of these passages have been rectified by previous editors, but we have found that a certain amount still remains to be done. On the other

hand, the reviser is not always Shakespeare, and lines of prose (generally designed to cover a 'cut') are liable to be found embedded in the verse. Not infrequently editors have tinkered at these in the vain effort to fit them into the metrical context. We have left them alone, as prose, or with the line-arrangement which the original gives them; for, lament them as we may, they are of interest as bibliographical evidence.

8. *Notes and Glossary.*

The notes at the end of each volume will be mainly textual, though occasionally they will deal with the elucidation of quibbles (to which special attention has been given) and of other passages which cannot conveniently be grouped alphabetically in the glossary. In preparing both notes and glossary the editors have attempted to take full advantage of the opportunities now open to Shakespearian scholars in those two noble compilations, issued by the University of Oxford, *Shakespeare's England* and *The New English Dictionary*.

D. W.





The Princess Elizabeth, daughter of King James I

THE TEMPEST

The Tempest is the first play in the First Folio of 1623; and this, for aught anybody knows—indeed almost certainly—was its first appearance in print. The Folio, at any rate, supplies our only text. Chronologically it is almost the last, if not the very last, that Shakespeare wrote. The Folio editors, Heminge and Condell, old friends of his and fellow-actors, may have given it pride of place for this pious reason, or possibly because it had won a striking success at Court when presented there in the winter of 1612-13, among many entertainments that graced the betrothal and nuptials of the Princess Elizabeth with the Prince Palatine Elector. John Heminge, as foreman of Shakespeare's old Company, was paid by Lord Harrington, Treasurer of the Chamber of King James I, 'upon the councells warrant, dated at Whitehall xx^o die Mai, 1613' his bill for producing 'foureteene severall playes' in the course of these festivities which were numerous and so costly as to embarrass His Majesty's exchequer. The entry (*Vertue MSS*) specifies these plays, and *The Tempest* comes sixth on the list¹.

¹ In 1842 Peter Cunningham, a clerk in the Audit Office, discovered (or professed to discover) in the cellars of Somerset House two Account Books of the Revels Office, for 1604-5 and 1611-12, and in the latter an entry that *The Tempest* was presented at Whitehall before the King on Hallowmas night 1611. The document, subsequently impounded by the British Museum and long suspected for a forgery, has been well vindicated by Mr Ernest Law (*Some Supposed Shakespeare Forgeries*, 1911), though we understand that a few scholars yet doubt its authenticity. Authentic or not, the entry leaves us free to believe that, *as we have it*, *The Tempest* was designed for the winter festivities of 1612-13. That there is good reason to suppose its existence in previous form (or forms) we attempt to show on pp. 79-85 of this volume.

It is pleasant and certainly not impossible to believe that, as Heminge and Condell have preserved it for us, this play was written-up expressly for the betrothal—and presented on Dec. 27, 1612, the betrothal night—of the incomparable Queen of Hearts whose name in story is Elizabeth of Bohemia,

design'd
Th'eclipse and glory of her kind.

For 'beauty vanishes, beauty passes,' but the charm of this woman still fascinates the imagination almost as in her life-time it won and compelled the souls of men to champion her sorrowful fortunes. That it did this—that it laid on the nobler spirits of her time a spell potent to extravagance and yet so finely apportioned as almost to serve us now for a test and gauge of their nobility—no reader of early seventeenth century biography will deny. The evidence is no less frequent than startling. It would almost seem that no 'gentleman' could come within the aura but he knelt to Elizabeth of Bohemia, her sworn knight: that either he followed thenceforth to the last extremity, proud only to serve, or, called away, he departed as one who had looked upon a vision which changed all the values of life, who had beheld a kingdom of the soul in which self and this world were well lost for a dream. We may see this strange conversion in Wotton; we may trace it in the careers of Donne, of Dudley Carleton and (with a postscript of morose disillusion) Lord Herbert of Cherbury. We may read it, youthfully and romantically expressed in this well-authenticated story:

A company of young men of the Middle Temple met together for supper; and when the wine went round the first man rose, and holding a cup in one hand and a sword in the other, pledged the health of the distressed Princess, the Lady Elizabeth; and having drunk, he kissed the sword, and laying hand upon it, took a solemn oath to live and

die in her service. His ardour kindled the whole company. They all rose, and from one to another the cup and sword went round till each had taken the pledge.

We may see this exuberance carried into steady practice by Lord Craven, a Lord Mayor's son, who having poured blood and money in her service, laid his last wealth at her feet to provide her a stately refuge and a home. Through all the story she—grand-daughter of Mary of Scotland, mother of Rupert of the Rhine—rides reckless, feckless, spendthrift, somehow ineffably great; conquering all hearts near her, that

—Enamour'd do wish so they might
But enjoy such a sight,
That they still were to run by her side
Thoro' swords, thoro' seas, whither she would ride,

lifting all those gallant hearts to ride with her, for a desperate cause, despising low ends, ignoble gain; to ride with her down and nobly over the last lost edge of the world.

We may take it almost for a certainty that—in whatever previous form or forms presented—this play *as we have it* was the play enacted at Court to grace the Princess Elizabeth's betrothal. No argument from internal evidence conflicts with this. Gonzalo's description of his ideal Commonwealth (2. I. 146 *sqq.*) comes out of Florio's translation of Montaigne, first published in 1603¹: and the name 'Caliban' suggests the essay 'Of the Canniballes' from which Gonzalo derived his wisdom. Ben Jonson most likely has a side thrust at *The Tempest* (and at *The Winter's Tale*) in his Introduction to *Bartholomew Fair* (acted in October, 1614): 'If there be never a Servant-monster i' the *Fayre*, who can help it, he sayes; nor a nest of *Antiques*? Hee is loth to make nature afraid in

¹ The British Museum once supposed itself to contain Shakespeare's own copy of this book, but found the autograph to be a forgery.

his *Playes*, like those that beget *Tales*, *Tempests*, and such like *Drolleries*.' Further, we can easily allow the play to contain many passages suggested by the misadventure of the Virginian voyage of 1609, when a fleet of nine ships and five hundred colonists under command of Sir Thomas Gates and Sir George Somers was dispersed by a gale and the flagship, the *Sea-Adventure*, went ashore on the coast of Bermudas, her crew wonderfully escaping. That Shakespeare used at least one or two out of several pamphlets dealing with this wreck (by Silvester Jourdain, by William Strachey, and by 'advise and direction of the Councell of Virginia'—to mention no others) stands above question. But nothing of this is inconsistent either with the play's having been presented by the King's Players on Hallowmas, 1611, or with its having been recast and 'revived' for the festivities of the Princess Elizabeth's betrothal.

Nothing forbids our imagination to repeople the Banqueting House and recall this bride, this paragon, to seat her in the front rank of the ghostly audience: to watch her, a moment before the curtain opens, a little reclined, her jewelled wrists, like Cassiopeia's, laid along the arms of her chair; or still to watch her as the play proceeds and she—affianced and, by admission, in love with her bridegroom—leans forward with parted lips to follow the loves of Ferdinand and Miranda.

Those who must always be searching for a 'source' of every plot of Shakespeare's (as though he could invent nothing!) will be disappointed in *The Tempest*. Thomas Warton (or rather, Warton misunderstood by Malone) started one false hare by a note in his *History of English Poetry*, vol. III. (1781), that he had been 'informed by the late Mr Collins of Chichester'—that is, Collins the poet—that Shakespeare's *Tempest* was formed on a 'favourite romance,' *Aurelio and Isabella*, printed in 1586 (one volume) in Italian, French

and English, and again in 1588 in Italian, Spanish, French and English; the Spanish of Flores being the original. But Collins' mind was darkening towards madness at the time: and *Aurelio*, when found, contained nothing in common with *The Tempest*. Others have followed the clue of a German play, *Die Schöne Sidea*, written by one Jacob Ayrer, a notary of Nuremberg, who died in 1605. There is a magician in this drama who is also a prince—Prince Ludolph: he has a demon or familiar spirit: he has an only daughter too. The son of Ludolph's enemy becomes his prisoner, his sword being held in sheath by the magician's art. Later, the young man is forced to bear logs for Ludolph's daughter. She falls in love with him, and all ends happily. The resemblances to *The Tempest* are obvious: and that there was some actual thread of connexion appears the likelier when we note that 'mountain' and 'silver,' two names of the spirit hounds which Prospero and Ariel set upon the 'foul conspiracy' (4. 1. 256), occur in an invocation of Prince Ludolph's in the German play. It may be that Shakespeare used Ayrer's play; for the English Comedians were at Nuremberg in 1604, where they may have seen *Die Schöne Sidea*, to bring home the story. But it is just as likely that Ayrer's is a version of one they took from England to Germany. And, after all, what fairy-tale or folk-tale is commoner, the world over, than that which combines a witch, or wizard, an only daughter, an adventurous prince caught and bound to carry logs, etc., with pity and confederate love to counteract the spell and bring all right in the end?

When we turn to Shakespeare's handling of this story, we first admire that which all must admire, the enchantment wherein he clothes it, the poetic feeling wherewith he suffuses it. Magic and music meet in *The Tempest* and are so wedded that none can put them asunder.

THE TEMPEST

That was the chirp of Ariel
 You heard, as overhead it flew;
 The farther going, more to dwell
 And wing our green to wed our blue;
 But whether note of joy, or knell,
 Not his own Father-singer knew;
 Nor yet can any mortal tell,
 Save only that it shivers through;
 The breast of us a sounded shell,
 The blood of us a lighted dew.

But when we have paid homage to all this, on second thoughts we may find the firm anatomy beneath the robe—the mere craftsmanship—scarcely less wonderful. For *The Tempest* accepts and masters an extreme technical difficulty. No one can react Shakespeare's later plays in a block without recognising that the subject which constantly engaged his mind towards the close of life was *Reconciliation*, with pardon and atonement for the sins or mistakes of one generation in the young love of the children and in their promise. This is the true theme of *Pericles*, *Cymbeline*, *The Winter's Tale*, *The Tempest*, successively. But the process of reconciliation—especially when effected through the appeal of sons and daughters—is naturally a slow one, and therefore extremely difficult to translate into drama, which handles 'the two hours' traffic of our stage' and therefore must almost necessarily rely on the piling of circumstance and character upon one crisis and its swiftest possible resolution. In attempting to condense such 'romantic' stories of reconciliation as he had in his mind, Shakespeare was in fact taking up the glove thrown down by Sir Philip Sidney in his pretty mockery of bad playwrights.

Now of time they are much more liberall. For ordinary it is that two young Princes fall in love. After many traverses she is got with child, delivered of a faire boy, he is lost, groweth a man, falls in love, and is ready to get

another child, and all this in two hours' space; which how absurd it is in sence, even sence may imagine, and Arte hath taught, and all ancient examples justified.

The time supposed to be occupied by the action of *Pericles* is about sixteen years. *The Winter's Tale* has an interval of about sixteen years between its third and fourth Acts. The chronology of *Cymbeline* is baffling and in places absurd; yet it must cover many months. The once famous Unity of Time is certainly no 'law': but it *is* a grace of drama. And after falling back on such make-shifts as ancient Gower in *Pericles* and Father Time himself in *The Winter's Tale*, of a sudden in *The Tempest* our artist triumphantly 'does the trick.' The whole action of the play, with the whole tale of ancient wrong unfolded, the whole company of injuring and injured gathered into a knot, the whole machinery of revenge converted to forgiveness—all this is managed in about three hours of imagined time, or scarcely more than the time of its actual representation on the stage.

The *clou* of this feat of stage-craft lies in the famous *protasis* of the second scene, where Prospero so naturally unfolds all the preliminaries to his daughter. For exquisite use of *protasis* this may be compared with the second scene of *Hamlet*. Many critics have praised it: but we hope that by a few simple stage-directions we have managed to suggest a beauty which the most of them have missed—the abstracted mind of Miranda as she listens with a kind of *feyness* to the story so important on which her father, having chosen and prepared the moment, so impatiently insists. It is, to our thinking, most necessary to realise that Miranda is all the while less absorbed by this important story than by the sea, out of which her fairy prince is surely coming, though his coming be scarcely surmised as yet. We shall not understand this play, lacking to understand how young

impulse forestalls and takes charge, outrunning our magician's deliberate contrivance. When Ferdinand and Miranda actually meet

At the first sight
They have changed eyes.

For another point, not over-subtle, which the critics would seem to have overlooked: It is clear to us that the enchantment of the island purposely makes its appearance correspond with the several natures of the shipwrecked men who come ashore. Gonzalo, the 'honest old councillor,' finds 'our garments rather new dyed than stained with salt water.' But Antonio and Sebastian cannot see them so. To him 'how lush and lusty the grass looks! how green!' Antonio, the total jaundiced villain, sees it 'tawny,' the half-corrupt Sebastian detects 'an eye of green in't'—and so on throughout. Gonzalo indeed is one of Shakespeare's minor triumphs. He is not left—as Antigonus, his counterpart in *The Winter's Tale* was left—to perish after his kind deed. It was done long ago: but he survives, still in his character of loyal-hearted servant, still active in loyalty, which in its turn advances the action of the play. Is it not a delicate stroke that, when Miranda first hears the story of her casting away, of all the shipwrecked company near at hand, though she knows it not, this old councillor is 'the man she (being heart-whole yet) most desires to see? So in the end he is not only one of the company that awakes Miranda's cry of

O wonder!

How many goodly creatures are there here!
How beauteous mankind is! O brave new world,
That has such people in't!

But for him is reserved the final blessing,

Look down, you gods,
And on this couple drop a blessed crown!

so unmistakably echoing Hermione's invocation in *The Winter's Tale*,

You gods, look down,
And from your sacred vials pour your graces
Upon my daughter's head!

Caliban has been over-philosophised by the critics (with Renan and Browning to support them). The truth would seem to be that Shakespeare, like a true demiurge, had a tendency to love his creations, and none the less those whom he shows us as gross, carnal, earthy. If it be not unfair to drag Falstaff into the comparison, then even as none of us can help loving Falstaff, so few of us shall we say?—if Caliban came fawning about our legs, would be disinclined to pay him on the head with a 'Good dog! Good monster!' Our sense of justice, too, helps this instinct: for, after all, Caliban has the right of it when he snarls,

I must eat my dinner.

This island's mine, by Sycorax my mother,
Which thou tak'st from me:

—and we must remind ourselves that in 1611 and thereabouts this dispossession of the aborigine was a very present event, however feebly it might touch the imagination, to trouble the conscience, of our valorous circumnavigators and colonists. Shakespeare, as we conceive him, differed from Rousseau in most ways, and not least in immunity from any temptation to construct an ideal portrait of the 'noble savage.' But no man can be catholic as Shakespeare was without being fair, and so (as Hazlitt noted) while the nature of Caliban is the essence of grossness, there is not a particle of vulgarity in it. Few have remarked how admirably significant as a set-off to Caliban is Stephano, type of his predestined conquerors, the tarry, racy, absolute British seaman, staggering through this isle of magic with a bottle, staring, hiccoughing back against Ariel's invisible harp—

The master, the swabber, the bos'n and I...

in extremity to be counted on for the fine confused last

word of our mercantile marine, 'Every man shift for all the rest.' It is hard to over-estimate the solidarity of Stephano and the 'value' it gives to the whole fairy picture¹.

Many critics have lost their hearts to Miranda and no one has excelled Coleridge's praise in delicacy of insight. Let us add but this—Shakespeare has contrived to mould her of frank goodness and yet present her as fascinating, captivating by touches so noble that one can hardly conceive the part adequately rendered save by a princess in real life as noble as she—an Elizabeth of Bohemia, for example. She moves to her appointed happiness with fairies and music about her; but she sees no fairies, sings no song, simply walks straight as the dictate of her heart directs, and, so walking, steps straight beyond the magic her father has woven. This incomparable play contains nothing more subtly simple than her unconscious, quite fearless, outstripping of all Prospero's premeditated art. He has drawn around the island a magic circle as that which Ferdinand cannot step across. The play, like *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, plainly celebrates a betrothal and marches to the fruition of marriage joy. There is much music in both: in both the fairies are made abettors. But whereas in *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* the fairies were Warwickshire elves, playing their pranks anarchically, at their own sweet fancy, to befool mortals, the more rarefied spirits of *The Tempest* obey, under threat, a mortal's compulsion. But Miranda is for the world, gently but fearlessly; on the primal instinct that makes homes, builds and

¹ In the list of *dramatis personae* Stephano is merely 'a drunken Butler,' and plainly he does not belong to the working crew of the ship, all of whom Ariel has stowed under hatches. But that he was a seaman his opening song and the general saltiness of his language make pretty plain. He would seem to have been withdrawn and given a livery (as the custom was) as superintendent of the King's temporary cellar on shipboard.