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This letter is in reply to
"General Richardson" of
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A
L E T T E R

T O T H E

REV. RICHARD FARMER, D.D.

MASTER OF EMANUEL COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE;

RELATIVE TO THE EDITION OF

S H A K S P E A R E,

PUBLISHED IN MDCCXC.

AND SOME LATE CRITICISMS ON THAT WORK.

BY EDMOND MALONE, Esq.

*Alter rixator de luna sæpe caprina
Propugnat, nugis armatus; scilicet, ut non
Sit mihi prima fides, et vere quod placet, ut non
Acriter elatrem, pretium ætas altera sordet. HOR.*

— QUEM OPINIO PROPRIÆ PERSPICACIÆ, QUA SIBI
VIDETUR ERRORES QUOSDAM ANIMADVERTISSE, DE
STATU MENTIS DETURBAVIT. B. Jonson.

L O N D O N :

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A
L E T T E R

T O

The Rev. DR. FARMER, &c.

MY DEAR SIR,

THOUGH you have long left the *primrose* path of poetry and criticism, for more grave and important studies, you will, I am confident, very cheerfully spend an hour with me in traversing the old Shakspearian field, where we have so often expatiated on “the ever-fruitful subject” of our great dramattick poet and his Commentators.

When I first undertook to give an edition of his Works, it did not appear to me so arduous a task as I found it. After devoting several years to their revisal and elucidation, I had the honour to present my edition to the publick in November, 1790, and immediately afterwards set

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out

out on a visit to some very dear friends in Ireland, whom I had not seen for a long time. During my stay there, I was not a little pleased to learn from every quarter that my work had not been disapproved of by the publick; and on my return to England last summer was still more highly gratified by your warm, and I fear too partial, approbation of my labours; by that of Mr. Burke, whose mind is of such a grasp as to embrace at once the greatest and the minutest objects, and who, in the midst of his numerous and important avocations, has always found time for the calmer pursuits of philosophy and polite literature; by that of the most amiable and judicious friend whom we and the publick have lately had the irreparable misfortune to lose, Sir Joshua Reynolds; of that excellent critick and profound scholar, Dr. Joseph Warton; and of many others, whose encomiums would stamp a value on any literary performance. When I mention these respected names, let me shelter myself under the example of the great poet who preceded me in this undertaking:

“ Well-natured Garth inflam’d with early
praise,

“ And Congreve lov’d, and Swift endur’d
my lays.”

With

With this detail, I am sensible, the publick has very little concern; nor is it obtruded on them from any idle vanity, but merely as a necessary introduction to the following pages.

The subject on which I am now to trouble you, has one very unpleasing circumstance attending it; that I cannot discuss it without introducing myself as a principal figure on the canvas. It is, I trust, unnecessary to assure you, who have known me so long, that it is the last subject which I should have *chosen*; it has, as you will see, been forced upon me. However, though from the nature of the disquisition it is impossible for me to keep where I wish to remain, in the back ground, I will promise not to detain you long from much more important and interesting topicks.

Almost all the copies of my edition having been sold, an anonymous writer, at the end of fifteen months, finding it a subject of sufficient notoriety to procure some attention to an invective against it in the form of a pamphlet, has lately thought fit to issue one from the press, fraught with the usual materials of hypercriticism; that is, duly furnished with unblushing cavil, false argument, and false quotation;

with

“ ——— captious art,
 “ And snip-snap short, and interruption smart,
 “ And demonstration thin, and theses thick,
 “ And major, minor, and conclusion quick.”

Our late excellent friend, Dr. Johnson, used to say, that an author might be satisfied with the publick approbation, when his name was able to *carry double*. In this respect therefore this writer should seem to have intended me a compliment, and as such I accept it; though I have not vanity enough to suppose that I can sustain such a heap of rubbish as has been raked up, to furnish the number of pages necessary for the occasion.

I will not stain my paper by transcribing any part of the vulgar ribaldry with which this production abounds. Let it rest with the low societies among whom it has been picked up, and in the bookseller's warehouse, where, with other neglected trash, it will long remain in undisturbed repose. But as two or three *facts* have been mentioned, which, however distorted or discoloured, have something like the semblance, though nothing of the reality, of truth, I shall detain you for a short time, solely with a view of obviating the effect which is sometimes produced by silent contempt and unrefuted misrepresentation. Our
 inimitable

inimitable poet, who on most occasions is our best instructor, you remember, advises us, not to “ give advantage

“ To stubborn criticks, apt, *without a theme,*
“ For depravation.”

The first fact that I shall take notice of, is contained in the following paragraph :

“ MR. MALONE, in the year 1780, when publishing a *Supplement to Shakspeare* of plays which he never wrote*, modestly remarked, that

* This SUPPLEMENT contained several additional comments on the author ; a correct edition of all his poems, then for the first time faithfully printed from the original copies, and illustrated with notes ; and seven plays which had been *imputed* to him. These I was so far from publishing as Shakspeare’s, that I expressly declared in the preface that of five of them I did not believe a single line to have been written by him ; and my decision has been fully confirmed by the manuscripts which I have since discovered in Dulwich College, in which the names of the four authors of *Sir John Oldcastle* (a play printed in 1600, with Shakspeare’s name at full length in the title-page,) are luckily preserved.— See the late edition of Shakspeare, Vol. I. P. II. *Emendations and Additions*, p. 317.—The writer’s meaning, however, as honest *Sir Hugh Evans* says, *was good* ; for from the words— “ A Supplement to Shakspeare of plays which he never wrote,” the reader would naturally conclude, 1. that this Supplement contained plays only ; and 2. that the editor was weak enough to believe them to be the productions of our author, and to ascribe to him *what he never wrote*.

‘ by a diligent collation of all the old copies *thiberto** discovered, and the judicious restoration of ancient readings, the text of this author seemed then finally settled.’ Since that period, however, he has been labouring ‘ with unceasing solicitude,’ for the space of ‘ eight years,’ to convince the publick that he had, if not directly asserted the thing which was not, at least gone a little further than was consistent with the exact state of the case. For, if the text had been already diligently collated with all the old copies, why should he make such a parade of having collated it himself? If it had not been so collated, why should he say it had? This fact is therefore manifest, upon Mr. Malone’s own evidence, that the text of Shakspeare had never been collated, whether diligently or not, with all or any of the old copies, by any person before Mr. Malone.”

Twenty six years have now elapsed since Mr. Steevens issued out proposals for publishing the plays of Shakspeare, of which in that period he has given the publick three editions, each of them elaborated with his utmost care and diligence. The year 1766, in which his proposals first came forth, should be doubly dear

* To this *quaintness* a line of Martial may be well applied:
 “ — male cum recitas, incipit esse tuus.”

to every intelligent reader of this poet; not only as the era when that gentleman first undertook the arduous task of illustrating his dramas by the contemporary writers, a task which he executed with great ability, but because the most conclusive Essay* that ever appeared on a subject of criticism, was then written, and the long-agitated question concerning the learning of Shakspeare was for ever decided. In the year 1780, fourteen years after Mr. Steevens's work was first undertaken, and two years after the second edition of it had appeared, I published a Supplement to that edition in two volumes, in the preface to which is the paragraph above quoted. Having a very high opinion of the diligence, acuteness, and learning of Mr. Steevens, to whom all the admirers of Shakspeare have great obligations, I in common with the rest of the publick considered myself as much indebted to his labours; and therefore did not then hesitate to say that the text of the author on which he had been above twelve years employed, *seemed* to be finally settled. If I had used a still stronger phrase, some allowance might be made for the partiality of friendship, and for that respect which is due from every scholar to ac-

* *An Essay on the Learning of Shakspeare*, by the Rev. Richard Farmer; published in January, 1767; reprinted, with great additions, in the same year.

knowledged abilities and learning. But I claim no such allowance; for I said only what I strictly and sincerely thought. Not choosing however to speak confidently and positively of a matter concerning which I could not be certain, I used the words—“*seems* now finally settled.” I had not then undertaken to publish an edition of Shakspeare, nor regularly collated a single play of that author with the authentick copies. When my admiration of his innumerable beauties led me to undertake an edition of his works, I then thought it my duty to exert every faculty to make it as perfect as I could; and in order to ensure a genuine text, to collate word by word every line of his plays and poems with the original and authentick copies; a task equally new and arduous. By this laborious process I obtained ONE THOUSAND SIX HUNDRED AND FIFTY FOUR EMENDATIONS of the text; that is, I found that the text of this author, notwithstanding all the well-employed diligence and care of the late editors in correcting the errors of former copies, and rejecting the adulterations introduced in the second folio and the subsequent impressions, still remained corrupted in sixteen hundred and fifty four places, and I corrected it accordingly; not as that word is sometimes understood, by capricious innovation, or fanciful conjecture, but by the restoration

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tion of the poet's words, as they are found in the only copies of authority.

We are now, however, told, that from this collation but little advantage has been derived ; and, as a *proof* of this assertion, it is stated, that in collating ONE HUNDRED THOUSAND LINES (for such nearly is the number of lines in these plays) I have not always been equally attentive ; that in this tedious labour (wonderful to tell !) I have been guilty of *eight* errors !! so that it appears, that I have only corrected the plays of this author in *one thousand six hundred and fifty-four* places, and might have corrected them in *one thousand six hundred and sixty-two*. Of these eight additional restorations I shall very gladly avail myself in the quarto edition of this poet's works, which I am now about to put to the press* ;
and

* While foreign countries can boast of magnificent impressions of the works of their celebrated authors, a splendid edition of the Plays and Poems of our great dramatick poet, with the illustrations which the various editors and commentators have furnished, is yet a *desideratum* in English literature. I had ten years ago sketched out a plan for such an edition, and intend immediately to carry a similar scheme into execution. It is almost unnecessary to add, that the same gratuitous zeal which induced me to undertake the former edition, will accompany this revival of it ; and that no diligence

and if from any quarter, however unrespectable, others shall be added to that number, they shall be accepted in like manner; but I do not expect that will be the case; as it is probable, if any further discoveries of the same kind could have been made, they would have been pointed out. *Dum silent, clamant.*—Dr. Johnson has justly observed, that a discursive mind cannot be always kept steadily fixed on evanescent truth. I never flattered myself so far as to suppose, that in this long work “the indisposed and sickly fit” should not sometimes render me unequal to the task; that what happens to all mankind, occasional languor and temporary inability, should not affect me like other mortals: I resolved, however, to make the best exertions in my power; and sometimes flattered myself that by this process, which had never before been attempted, and a long acquaintance with the writers of Shakspeare’s age, I should be able to improve on all the former editions of this author; but in the moment of the most sanguine hope I could not suppose that in this col-

gence or care of mine shall be wanting to render this new edition of my work, which is to be ornamented with engravings, and to be printed in fifteen volumes, royal quarto, worthy of our greatest English poet.—The first two volumes are intended to be published next year.

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lation my vigilance should have been over-watched only in eight instances; nor, without so decisive a proof as the malignant industry of a petty adversary has furnished, could I have believed it. I say *eight* instances; for though *thirteen* over-sights have been enumerated, *five* of them *have no foundation in truth*.

1. The first of these is in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, Vol. I. p. 154.

Speed. Item, she can *sew*.

Launce. That's as much as to say, can she *so*?

“*Both* the folios,” says this redoubted critic, “read—*sew*, which is manifestly requisite. Probably, however, the editor may suppose *sew* and *so* to have the same pronunciation.”

With the second folio, here cited, or any other corrupted copy of our author, I have no concern. The first and *only* authentick copy of this play printed in folio, in 1623, (for there is no quarto,) reads, if letters are to be enumerated, not *sew*, but *sowe*. When a quibble is intended, the word in the old copy is often intentionally mispelt, in order

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to mark it more plainly to the reader. In the present instance, however, this may not have been the case, for the word *sew* was variously spelt in Shakspeare's time, and Milton writes it, though improperly, *sow*. Throughout my edition, as is mentioned in my preface, I have not adhered to ancient spelling, but adopted that which is now generally used, and which I considered as just. I have done so in this instance. With respect to the similarity of sound between *sew* and *so*, there can be no doubt, from the passage before us, but that the two words were pronounced alike in Shakspeare's days, as they are at present by all who do not deviate from received modes from affectation or ignorance.

2. Vol. II. p. 71. *Measure for Measure*.

“ Let me hear you speak *further*.” “ Both editions — *farther*, a word entirely different from *further*, though too frequently confounded with it by ignorant persons.”

Here is a question merely of propriety in spelling, and whenever I have any doubts on that subject I shall take counsel from some other preceptor than this critick. In the authentick copy of 1623, the word is very frequently
spelt

fpelt *farther*, for which, on the ground already mentioned, I have given *further*, because that appears to me to be the true mode of spelling this word; and Dr. Johnson, whose authority is somewhat higher than this anonymous writer's, was of this opinion*. The two words were undoubtedly used indiscriminately by Shakspeare, who certainly did not give himself much concern about grammatical disquisitions.

3. The third supposed error, for which I am not answerable as an oversight in collating the old copies, is in Vol. II. p. 151. *The Comedy of Errors*.

“ If it be, fir, pray eat none of it.”

It is a mere error of the press. The pronoun *I* (I pray, eat none of it,) I find, on looking into my papers, was inadvertently omitted by the compositor at the press, as the metre of the line shews.

4. Vol. II. p. 190. *Ibidem*.

“ And much different from the man he was.”

“ The folios (we are told) read—And much, *much* different.”

* See his *Dict.* in v. *further*.

The single remark here necessary to be made is, that *the fact is not so*. The only authentick copy of this play, the folio of 1623, which is now before me, exhibits the line as I have printed it.

5. Vol. II. p. 477. *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*.

“ Through the forest have I gone,
“ But Athenian *found* I none.”

“ *All* the old editions (we are again instructed) read—*find*.”

Here we have another instance of dogmatical and presumptuous ignorance ; and the same short answer will serve. *The fact is not so*. The copy of *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, printed by Fisher, which is in some places preferable to that printed by Roberts, which last appears to have been followed in the folio, reads—“ *found* I none,” as I have printed the line.

The *eight* restorations which I am now enabled to add to those I have already made in the text, are these : In Vol. I. p. 80, I have inadvertently followed former editors in printing “ if *thou* be pleas'd,” for—“ if *you* be pleas'd ;” in p. 140 of the same volume, “ *more* precious,” for—“ *most* precious ;” in p. 155, “ *I cannot help,*”
for

for—“ *cannot I help;*” in p. 174, “ *this paper,*” “ for *bis* paper;” in Vol. II. p. 70, *should*, for *shall*; in p. 143, *dispos'd*, for *bestow'd*; in p. 157, “ Ay, let none enter,” for—“ Ay, *and* let none enter;” and in p. 190, *therefore*, for *thereof*.

It is not an incurious speculation to consider how many errors the writer to whom I am indebted for the above list, would have been guilty of in collating and printing one hundred thousand lines. He tells us himself that some remarks which he published a few years ago, “ have been represented as the most incorrect publication that ever appeared, and that, from the list of *errata* in the book itself, and the additional one given in another pamphlet, the charge does not seem to be without foundation.” We have seen that in collating *thirteen* passages he has committed, if not *three*, certainly *two* errors; if therefore he had undertaken to collate one hundred thousand lines, his inaccuracies according to the most moderate calculation would only have amounted to about FIFTEEN THOUSAND.

The next high crime and misdemeanor with which the late editor of Shakspeare is charged,
is,

is, that in his preface he has *proved* the editor of the second folio, printed in 1632, to have been entirely ignorant of Shakspeare's phraseology and metre, and the book itself of *no AUTHORITY whatsoever*; yet most strangely and inconsistently he has adopted some emendations of the text from that corrupted copy. To the first part of this charge I plead guilty, but am at a loss to know under what penal statute it should be classed. To this minute critic indeed, who also published in 1783 some remarks on Mr. Steevens's edition of Shakspeare, (in which that gentleman, Dr. Johnson, and others, were treated with just as much decency and respect, as our late ingenious and learned friend Mr. Warton had been in another forgotten pamphlet,) to him it was a very serious grievance; for he appears to have set up for a hypercritick on Mr. Steevens, without a single quarto copy of our author's plays, and, I suspect, without being possessed of the only authentick folio edition. If that was the case, to depreciate the vitiated folio on which he was generally obliged to depend, was to rob him of the only tool with which he could carry on his trade, and to place him in the state in which poor Parson Adams would have found himself, if his host had convinced him that his solitary half-guinea was a counterfeit.

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With respect to the other part of the charge, it is certainly true that while almost every page of the second folio is disfigured by printer's blunders, and arbitrary and capricious deviations from the original copy, the editor of that book has in a few places corrected such manifest errors of the press in the elder copy, as could not escape a person of the most ordinary capacity, who had been but one month conversant with a printing-house. Of these corrections, such as they are, (to the knowledge of which the objector was led by my own notes,) a pompous list has been made from the late edition, for the purpose of shewing an inconsistency in the editor: but in the course which I have followed, when the matter is truly stated and examined, the smallest inconsistency will not be found.

To ascertain whether the second complete edition of our author's plays was authentick, which had never been attempted before, was, in forming the text of those plays, of the highest consequence. Hence it was that I employed a good deal of labour on that point, as may be seen by turning to my preface, where the examination of that question takes up no less than twenty-three pages*; and I may ven-

* Pref. pp. xix—xlii.

ture to say, without any fear of being refuted, that I have *proved*, not by dogmatical assertion, but by a minute enumeration of particular passages, that book to be of no *authority* whatsoever. How so wild a notion as that it was of any authority, should ever have been entertained by any one but the writer whose misrepresentations I am now exposing, is perfectly unaccountable. The second edition of a printed book can only derive authority from its being printed with the author's last corrections, or from some more correct manuscript of his work than that from which the first edition was printed. From whence should the authority of the second folio be derived? We know that Shakspeare did not correct his manuscripts for the press, even for the first edition which was published in 1623:—where then were the corrections which were made in the second, found? Can it be believed, that the printer or editor, who did not, as I have proved incontrovertibly, examine one of the quarto printed plays*, which were then common in every hand, should have hunted after the manuscripts from which the first folio was in some cases

* Pref. to the late edition of Shakspeare, p. xxvii.
note 4.

printed, and which it is highly probable were destroyed at the press; or that any diligence should at the end of nine years have recovered their soiled and mutilated fragments? Such a supposition is as wild and chimerical, as many of that editor's arbitrary interpolations. This fancy should seem to have originated from its having been thrown out in some modern publication, the title of which I have forgotten, that Heminge and Condell, the editors of the first folio, were *probably* likewise editors of the second, which appeared in 1632; an assertion which, before the two books had been minutely examined and compared, and before the time of their respective deaths had been ascertained, might pass current enough; but unluckily for this theory, after a long search in the Prerogative Office, I discovered the wills of both these actors, and have shewn that Condell died in 1627, and Heminge in the year 1630*.

On this subject, however, we are not obliged to have recourse to inferences from dates, or to conjecture, in order to prove that all the corrections, emendations, or interpolations of that copy (by whatever name they may be called) were arbitrary and capricious. The nume-

* *Historical Account of the English Stage*, pp. 190. 199,

rous proofs which I collected for this purpose, were given *ex abundantia*. If instead of shewing that the editor, not knowing that the double comparative was the common phraseology of Shakspeare's time, had substituted for it a more grammatical form, giving us *more safe, more worthy* and *more rich*, for *more safer, more worthier* and *more richer*; that he did not know that the double negative was the common and authorized language of that age*; that when the beginning of a line in the elder copy was accidentally omitted at the press, instead of attempting to cure the defect in the right place, he added some words at the end of the line, and by his addition made the passage nonsense†; that he was utterly ignorant of his author's elliptical language, as well as of his metre;—if instead of all these proofs and many others to the same point, I had produced only one of them, it would have been sufficient for my purpose, and the old adage—*ex uno disce omnes* would have supplied the rest.

* As in *The Comedy of Errors*, Act III. sc. ii.

“*Nor to her bed no homage do I owe;*”
instead of which we have in the second folio,

“*Nor to her bed a homage do I owe.*”

† Pref. to the late edit. p. xxxi.

Notwith-

Notwithstanding, however, all that I have now stated, you know there are some men in the world, who will not relinquish their old *mumpsimus*; who when once they have taken up a particular notion, adhere to it with unconquerable pertinacity, and cannot be argued out of it: With such men, neither the decisive circumstance I have just now mentioned, (the death of our poet's friends, Heminge and Condell, before the end of 1630,) nor the unanswerable proofs which I have accumulated of the ignorance and temerity of the editor of the second folio, will have the smallest weight, or at all depreciate its credit: and if they should ever be allowed to scribble in the margin of Shakspeare, notwithstanding these accumulated proofs we should without doubt be reminded, whenever occasion offered, that "Such is the reading of that most excellent and invaluable book the second folio edition of our author's plays; a reading which Mr. M. has not been ashamed to own that he has adopted, though he has expressly denied the authenticity of the book".

And now let me add a word or two on the subject of inconsistency. Though I proved this book of no *authority* whatsoever, does it therefore follow that I was precluded from

adopting the few emendations of manifest errors of the press, which, amidst some thousand innovations and corruptions, were made by the editor; and which, if they had not been made by him, would unquestionably have been made by some other person? The plan which I adopted for my edition, as far as relates to the text, was very simple. I began by ascertaining what were the authentick copies. I then formed my text upon those copies; from which (with the exception mentioned in my preface) I never knowingly deviated without apprizing the reader by a note. All emendations therefore which were admitted, from whatever quarter taken, are regularly ascribed to him by whom they were made; a piece of justice which had not been done in former editions: and neither the caprice of an editor or commentator, or his general inability for his task, prevented me from adopting corrections suggested by him, if they were manifestly right. Thus, some emendations have been taken even from Pope and Hanmer, as well as from the editor of the second folio; though all these editors have with almost equal licentiousness corrupted the author's text; but they are adopted, not because their books are of any *authority*, but because the emendations themselves are evidently just; for

for the editor of the second folio, as soon as his book is proved not to be authentick, can rank only by the side of any other conjecturer, commentator, or verbal critick. And on the same ground, if the most obscure and contemptible pamphleteer should suggest a happy correction of any desperate passage, manifestly corrupt, to the propriety and rectitude of which every intelligent reader must at once assent, it would have a claim to attention, however little respect should be due to the quarter from whence it came. With how much caution however I have proceeded in this respect, my book will shew.

If the second folio had been of any *authority*, then all the capricious innovations of that copy (in which description I do not include the innumerable errors of the press) must have been adopted; but being once proved not to be authentick, then in the case of a passage undoubtedly corrupt in the original and authentick copies, we are at liberty to admit an emendation suggested by any later editor or commentator, if a neater and more plausible correction than that furnished by the second folio; and this I have done more than once.

On comparing two of the quarto editions of *King Richard III.* I found that there were in the latter no less than twenty-six errors of omission; and indeed errors of omission are, I believe, more frequent than almost any other in the ancient copies of this author. I have proved in various instances, that when a word was omitted or corrupted in the first folio, the editor of the second either left the passage as he found it, or cured the defect at random, and according to his fancy, in those plays of which we have quarto copies, where the true word, which in fact was omitted or corrupted, may be found.* There cannot therefore be the smallest doubt that all the emendations made by this editor in the other plays also, of which there are no quarto copies, were merely conjectural. Being such, they stand precisely on the same ground with the emendations suggested by any later editor or commentator; and as they are often very injudicious in consequence of the editor's extreme ignorance of Shakspeare's phraseology and metre, they stand frequently on a worse ground, and have a less title to be adopted.

* Pref. to the late edition, pp. xiv. xv. xxvii. n. 4; xxx. xxxi.

The few corrections which have been taken from that copy, on the principle just now mentioned,* have been pompously displayed ;
a list

* Such as, in *The Tempest*,

“ — such *islanders* ;”
instead of the erroneous reading of the authentick copy,—
“ such *islands*.”

In *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*,

“ — and I a sheep.”
for “ — and I *sheep*.”

Ibidem. “ — you have *testern'd* me.”
for “ — you have *cestern'd* me.”

In *Measure for Measure*,

“ The *princely* Angelo.”
for “ The *prenzie* Angelo.”

Ibid. “ — ache, *penury*, and imprisonment.”
for “ — ache, *perjury*, and imprisonment.”

Ibid. “ — was affianced to her *by* oath,”
for “ — was affianced to *her* oath.”

In *The Comedy of Errors*,

“ Gave *helpful* welcome —.”
for “ Gave *healthful* welcome —.”

Ibid. “ And as a *bed* I'll take thee, and there lie.”
instead of “ And as a *bud*, &c.”

Ibid.

a list of them having been collected from my own volumes, without the aid of which it does not

Ibid. “ Master, if *you* do —.”
instead of “ Master, if *do* —.”

In *As you like it*,

for “ — that which had too *much*.”
“ — that which had too *must*.”

Ibid. “ Let me *be* better acquainted with thee,
for “ Let me better acquainted with thee.

In *The Taming of the Shrew*,

for “ Were she as rough —.”
“ Were she *is* as rough —.”

Ibid. “ As much news as *thou wilt*.”
for “ As much news as *wilt thou*.”

Ibid. “ Whither away, and *where* is thy abode.”
for “ Whither away, and *whither* is thy abode.”

In *All's well that ends well*,

for “ — captious and *intenable* sieve—
“ — captious and *intemible* sieve.”

In *Twelfth Night*,

for “ Let thy tongue *rang* with arguments of state.
“ Let thy tongue *langer*, &c.

In *Macbeth*,

for “ — before *thy* here-approach.”
“ — before *they* here approach.

not appear that it could have been made, at least it never was made before the late edition was published.

In *King John*,

“ — to hurt his master, no *man* else.”
instead of “ — to hurt his master, no *mans* else.”

In *King Henry VIII.*

“ Good man, those joyful tears shew thy true
heart.”
instead of “ Good man, those joyful tears shew thy true
bearts.”

A few more emendations of nearly the same kind might be added, which together with the above are regularly noticed in the late edition. The interpolations, omissions, and corruptions of every kind in the second folio, (of which the fiftieth part has not been noticed) amount, on the other hand, to *several thousands*.

I may add, that of the very few emendations somewhat less obvious than the above, which I have admitted, and which do not, I think, amount to six, I find every day some reason to doubt. Just as my edition was issuing from the press, I found that with the other modern editors I had improperly adopted a word which had been unnecessarily supplied by this editor, from his not attending to Shakspeare's elliptical language. The passage is in *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, Act I. sc. i.

“ Ere I will yield my virgin patent up
“ Unto his lordship, whose unwished yoke
“ My soul consents not to give sovereignty.”

i. e.

published. By turning over the pages of my work, as I have constantly noticed from whence every emendation was taken, this list was easily formed ; but it has been exhibited with that inaccuracy which might have been expected ; for in *The Merchant of Venice*, Act II. sc. iii. I am represented as having adopted a corrupt reading found in the second folio, (“ If a christian *did* not play the knave, and get thee,” &c.) though I have expressly written a note to shew that this reading was the offspring of ignorance in the

i. e. to give sovereignty *to*. See APPEND. to the late edition, p. 577. Here the second folio reads—*to* whose *unwissh’d* yoke, &c. and we are told it is a most valuable correction.—So I have incautiously, with the other modern editors, accepted, from the same book, “ *beady* murder,” in *K. Henry V.* instead of “ *headly* murder,” the corrupt reading of the old copy ; but the true reading is undoubtedly—*deadly* murder. So, in *Macbeth* :

“ With twenty *mortal* murders on their crowns.”

And in *Titus Andronicus* a word which has been supplied by the same editor, and too hastily accepted, has this moment caught my eye :

“ Was there none else in Rome to make a stale of—.”

Of, which is not found in the old copy, was introduced from the same inadvertence which led to the corruption of the passage above quoted from *A Midsummer-Night’s Dream*. See late edit. Vol. VII. p. 128, n. 8 ; Vol. VIII. p. 472, n. 3 ; and Vol. IX. p. 469, n. 3.

editor

editor of that book ; in *K. John*, Act II. sc. ii. I am represented as having adopted a corrupt reading introduced by the same editor, —“ *run on*,” instead of the authentick reading—*roam on* ; in a passage in *King Henry V.* Act III. sc. i. I am untruly represented as reading with the same copy,—“ You *noblest* English ;” and still *further*, (save reverence, as our author says, of the word,) to shew the amazing acuteness and unerring accuracy of this hypercritick, the passage is stated as being in the First Part of *King Henry IV.* as another passage which is quoted from *Measure for Measure*, is to be found in *The Comedy of Errors*.

As a few trifling emendations made by the ignorant editor of the second folio, have been adopted, so on the principle already stated the very few observations of this Remarker that were entitled to any notice, have been admitted into the late edition. These adopted remarks are to be found, says their author, “ in Vol. II. 11, 256, 491, 507 ; III. 27, 77, 316, 394 ; IV. 497, 504 ; VI. 146, 273 ; V. 459 ; [*which is correctly placed after Vol. VI.*] VIII. 634.” And here we have another specimen of this Remarker’s extraordinary accuracy ; for lo ! neither in p. 256 of Vol. II. nor in p. 316 of Vol.

Vol. III. is there any thing of his; and in p. 27 of Vol. III. I am so far from adopting his comment, that I have maintained a position directly subversive of it.

I shall now, my dear Sir, trouble you with a very few more words.—In *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, p. 120, I have inserted two notes of my late most respectable friend Mr. Tyrwhitt, in which he proves that Shakspeare sometimes takes a liberty in extending certain words to complete the measure.* Thus, in *The Comedy of Errors*,

“ These are the parents to these *children*.”

“ where, (says he,) some editors, being unnecessarily alarmed for the metre, have endeavoured to help it by a word of their own,—

“ These *plainly* are the parents to these children.”

“ So, (he adds,) *country* is made a trisyllable.

T. N. Act. I. sc. ii.

“ The like of him. Know’st thou this *country* ?”

Remembrance, quadrisyllable.

T. N. Act. I. sc. i.

“ And lasting in her sad *remembrance*.”

* Mr. Upton had made the same remark. See his *Critical Observations on Shakspeare*, 2d edit. p. 372.

Angry, trisyllable.

Timon, Act III. sc. v.

“ But who is man, that is not *angry*.”

Henry, trisyllable.

Rich. III. Act. II. sc. iii.

“ So stood the state when *Henry* the Sixth—”

2 Henry VI. Act. II. sc. ii.

“ Crown’d by the name of *Henry* the Fourth.”

And so in many other passages.

Monstrous, trisyllable.

Macb. Act. IV. sc. vi.

“ Who cannot want the thought how *monstrous*—”

Othello, Act. II. sc. iii.

“ ’Tis *monstrous*. Iago, who began it?”

England, trisyllable.

Rich. II. Act. IV. sc. i.

“ Than Bolingbroke return to *England*.”

Nobler, trisyllable.

Coriol. Act. III. sc. ii.

“ You do the *nobler*. Cor. I muse my mother—.”

It would be quite unnecessary to add that Shakspeare intended that the words *children*, *country*, *monstrous*, should in these places be pronounced *childeren*, *countery*, *monsterous*, if the oppugner of this doctrine had not had the folly to represent such a notion as chimerical and absurd; imagining himself (as it should seem) supremely comical, when

he exhibits words of this kind at full length,—*Engle-and, noble-er, wrangle-ing, swor-en, a-rums, bow-ers, &c.* Had he been at all acquainted with our elder poets, he would have known that this pronunciation was so common, that, words formerly having been frequently spelt by the ear, we often find these words written as Shakspeare used them ; *sower, bower, fier, &c.*

The instances given above are but a few of those which Mr. Tyrwhitt has collected, to prove a position which is incontrovertible. He might have produced many more. Thus, in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, Act. II. sc. iv.

“ And that hath *dazzled* my reason’s light ;—”
where the ignorant editor of the second folio, not perceiving that *dazzled* was used as a trisyllable, (*dazzle-ed*) has departed from the original copy, and reads—

“ And that hath *dazzled so* my reason’s light.”
Again, in *Coriolanus*, Act. I. sc. ix.

“ As you have been ; that’s for my *country.*”

And had he not chosen to confine himself to words in which *l*, or *r*, is subjoined to another consonant, the following instances of words extended for the sake of the metre, might have been added :

In *The Comedy of Errors*, Act. v. sc. i.

“ This week he hath been heavy, *four*, fad.”

(where in the original copy we find the word *four* written as Shakspeare intended it to be pronounced,—*fower* :) and in the same play,

“ I’ll meet you at that place some *hour*, hence.”

for which in the second folio we have

“ I’ll meet you at that place some hour, *sir*, hence.”

Again, in *K. John*, Act. I. sc. i.

“ Kneel thou down, Philip, but rise *more* great.”

Again, in *All’s Well that Ends Well*, Act. II. sc. iii.

“ And is not like the *fire*. Honours thrive—”.

In all these cases, this hypercritick thinks he has completely overturned the doctrine contended for, by writing the words at full length,—*dazzle-ed*, *counte-ry*, *fou-er*, *fi-er*, &c. a species of confutation entirely new. Chaucerizing *more*, and exhibiting it thus,—*mo-ré*, he seems to think extremely humorous. The old English name, *Gore*, and the surname of a noble family, *Gower*, might have taught him
D better.

better. *More* and *pour* as easily become *mo-er* and *pow-er*, as *sour* and *hour* become *sow-er* and *bow-er*; and *arm*, by a vulgar provincial pronunciation not yet wholly disused becomes *a-rum*, as easily as *alarm* is converted into *ala-rum*; two words that undoubtedly had the same etymology.—But of these verbal disquisitions enough.

Let us now examine the complaint to which these notes of Mr. Tyrwhitt's have given birth. "The editor" [i. e. Mr. M.] we are told, "has inserted both Mr. Tyrwhitt's notes, without taking notice of the conclusive reply already made to the latter." This reply, I must inform you, appears to have been made by this sagacious remarker himself. *Hinc illæ lacrymæ.*—But how stands the fact? The comedy of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* was printed in the year 1786. It should seem therefore not to have been a crime of very great magnitude not to have subjoined to Mr. Tyrwhitt's note a reply to it which was made two years afterwards, viz. in 1788. It might however, we shall perhaps be told, have been inserted in the Appendix. But unluckily to this there was an unfurmountable objection; which was, that the editor had originally resolved not to encum-

ber his page with any ufelefs comment, and the *conclufive* reply in question appeared to him unworthy of notice.

Mr. Tyrwhitt's remark, which I have in part recited, makes it unnecessary for me to take any further notice of the unfounded observations that have been made relative to the licence which Shakspeare has occasionally taken in his metre. For that licence, which it should be remembered he has taken in common with his contemporaries, he alone is answerable. If an editor in exhibiting his works has religiously adhered to the original and authentick copies, admitting with the greatest caution occasional corrections of manifest errors, he has done his duty, as far as concerns the text; and need give himself little concern about the illiberal censures of those who, like the present hypercritick, from ignorance of the poet's metre arraign his editor, for not having in various instances "*endeavoured to help it by a word of his own,*" or by that which would have been equally improper, an interpolation of Pope or Hanmer, or the editor of the second folio.

The anonymous writer, who has occasioned my present address to you, seems to think that

he has an exclusive privilege to all the nonsense to which the commentaries produced by the late editors of Shakspeare have given rise. On this ground, a remark in answer to one of Dr. Johnson's in the first act of *Troilus and Cressida*, having been slightly noticed in the late edition, this monopolizer will have it that *he* must have been meant; and no such remark being in fact found in his book, with his wonted decorum he charges the editor with *forgery*. But strange as it may appear, most true it is, that there are others now living capable of writing remarks on Shakspeare and his editors, beside himself, though not with such a total disregard of decency; and that the observation in question appeared among some REMARKS on Mr. Steevens's edition, which were published in a miscellaneous volume, in 1785.

One other passage only of this *elegant* and *modest* performance remains to be noticed. In the first volume of the late edition of Shakspeare I have mentioned that a pamphlet, which is now avowed by this writer as his production, was suppressed after its original publication, from *modesty* as it should seem; and that afterwards it was once more given to the world by its author. *Nothing*, says the fond parent

parent, can be more incorrect than this statement. The truth is, that after a few copies had got abroad, the further sale was delayed, for special purposes, for a week, at the end of which the publication was continued.—Such, I think, is the substance of this *Quip*, for so this writer chooses to denominate some of his shrewd and sagacious remarks, though he does not deal much either in *cranks* or *wanton wiles*. The difference between being *suppressed for a certain time*, and *the sale being delayed, after the original publication, for a week*, is not very easily discovered. The *modesty*, however, ascribed to the author, it must be owned, he utterly disavows.—The grievance stated on this occasion must immediately remind you of that complained of by the well-known Edmund Curl, who said Mr. Pope had treated him very unfairly in telling the publick that he had been tofs'd in a *blanket*, when all the world knew that he had only been tofs'd in a *rug*.

Though from a very careful perusal of many contemporary writers, I was enabled to make very large additions to the former comments on our author, and took at least as much pains in illustrating his obscurities as in ascertaining his text, you will observe that

I have

I have not taken notice of any remarks that have been made on the commentaries which I had the honour of submitting to the publick in my late edition. While I was employed in preparing them for the press, I gave the various subjects treated of, the strictest attention. They are before the publick, and by its judgment they must stand or fall. I shall not enter into any discussion or controversy with "occasional criticks" or "criticks by profession," in order to support them.—It is curious that what Dr. Warburton said near fifty years ago, should be still true of the *greater part* of the criticisms to which the labours of his successors have given rise: "—as to all those things which have been published under the titles of *Essays, Remarks, Observations, &c. on Shakspeare,*"—they "are absolutely below a serious notice.*"

I have many apologies to make for having taken up so much of your time, and will now release you. I cannot, however, conclude, without noticing one other charge brought against the late editor of Shakspeare, which is

* Mr. Tyrwhitt's *Observations* published in 1766, and Mr. Mason's *Comments* in 1785, are an exception.

perfectly

perfectly novel. "The reciprocal good opinion" (we are told) "which the publick and Mr. MALONE appear to entertain of each other, does both parties infinite honour." It is, I believe, the first time that the good opinion of the publick has ever been stated as a matter of reproach to him who has had the good fortune to obtain it. If by my humble labours I had any title to suppose the publick had been pleased and benefited, I should consider myself as having obtained the best reward which it has to bestow, or the sons of literature ought to aspire to.—To have merited publick approbation, must to an ingenuous mind ever afford a pleasure which the cavils of criticism cannot diminish; and which nothing can so much augment as the disapprobation of the ignorant, the envious, the petulant, and the vain.

I am, my dear Sir,

Your very affectionate friend,

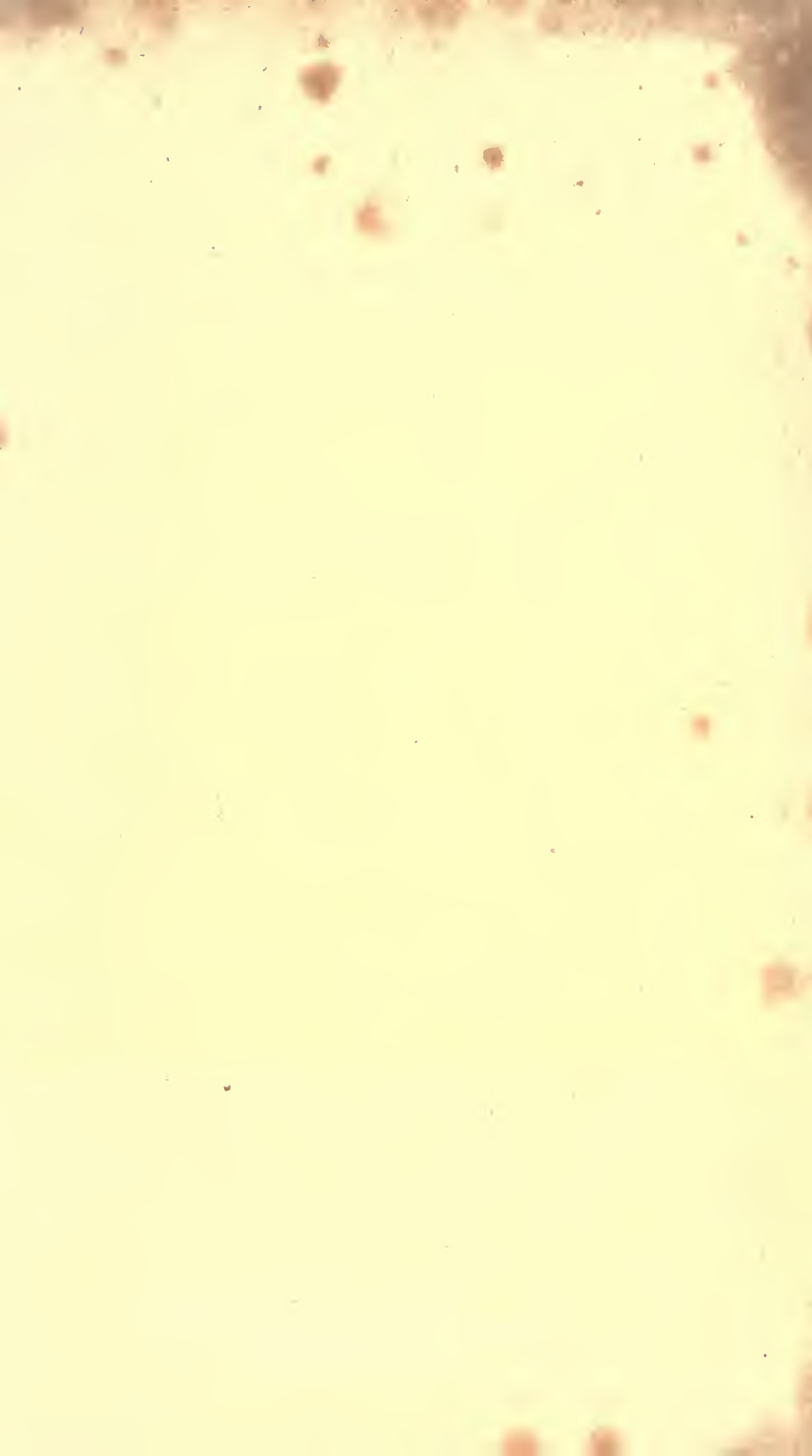
And humble servant,

EDMOND MALONE.

QUEEN-ANNE-STREET, EAST,
April 23, 1792.

I have been reading "The Jew" very
 carefully. (The one who) I have
 read the story of the Jew in the
 "Jewish Encyclopedia" and I have
 been struck by the fact that the
 Jews of the Middle Ages were
 not a nation of traders as we
 are accustomed to think of them
 but a people of scholars and
 scientists. I have read the
 story of the Jew in the "Jewish
 Encyclopedia" and I have been
 struck by the fact that the
 Jews of the Middle Ages were
 not a nation of traders as we
 are accustomed to think of them
 but a people of scholars and
 scientists.

I am, my dear Sir,
 Yours very truly,
 And in the future,
 FRIEND PATRICK



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