REMARKS

ON THE

DIFFERENCES IN SHAKESPEARE'S VERSIFICATION

IN DIFFERENT PERIODS OF HIS LIFE,

AND

ON THE LIKE POINTS OF DIFFERENCE IN POETRY GENERALLY.

LONDON:
JOHN W. PARKER AND SON, WEST STRAND.
1857.

PRINTED BY
JOHN EDWARD TAYLOR, LITTLE QUEEN STREET,
LINCOLN'S INN FIELDS.

REMARKS ON

SHAKESPEARE'S VERSIFICATION.

SECT. 1.

GENERAL.

IT must have been remarked by most readers of Shakespeare who are not very unobserving, that his versification, in respect of the cæsura, as it is called, or division of the pauses, differs most exceedingly in different places. This difference is not as between one passage and another, or one scene and another, but generally, and in its extremes always, as between one play and another; and it depends on the time of his life.

My object is, to illustrate this fact; and to inquire after the source or sources of the change: an object which could never have been so fully pursued, without the additional extrinsic evidence as to the dates of his plays, which has been lately afforded by his commentators.

I wish most earnestly that an edition of Shakespeare might be printed, in which the plays should appear according to their order of time; now that the order has been ascertained, though by no means with certainty as to all, yet with a greater general approach to it than heretofore.

The evidence of the date of a play may be said to be of three kinds:—

1. A positive statement that it came out, or was in existence, in such a year.

2. Some passage in it which is considered to allude to an event or circumstance of which the date is known. This is a proof, if the allusion is true, that the play was after the event, but not always that it was immediately after.

3. And lastly, that which is derived from the style, when the transitions of style have been to a sufficient extent ascertained in general, by induction from the two first kinds. For I consider, that though the changes of style in different periods of his life must not be assumed, but proved from actual dates, yet when the fact of such changes in general is well established, we may infer some few individual dates backwards, from those general rules.

I shall go over the arguments for the date, in the case of each play, summarily, before I apply to the chronology my remarks on the metre.

The great and primary point in which I conceive Shakespeare's versification altered, was the change from unbroken to interrupted verse.

By interrupted verse, I do not mean so much that there is a pause or break in the middle, as that you cannot dwell upon the end. And that, of course, may be true in different degrees. It is plain that such an alteration could not be very distinct and definite; hardly any writer ever confined himself entirely to unbroken lines, much less is it likely that any would, by rule or practice, exclude them altogether. But few readers are aware how very much the poetry of different writers, compared with one another, and that of Shakespeare compared with itself, differs in this particular. Shakespeare's readers would have observed it more if the plays had not been arranged without the least reference to their dates, or probable dates.

But the interruption of the verse was carried, in the latter part of his life, to an extreme, or rather, he fell into a further peculiarity, in making the verse end upon a perfectly weak monosyllable—such as *if* or *and*. This is capable of happening, where the first verse is in itself unbroken.

Another change, which certainly increased in the latter part of his life, on the whole, was the use of double endings, like the Italian metre. Between the very first and simplest style of Shakespeare's verse and the very last, the difference is almost as great and as striking, in these respects, I mean, as can be found between the versification of two different authors.

The following extracts will show the two styles in their greatest extremes:—

> There be some sports are painful, and their labour
> Delight in them sets off: some kinds of baseness
> Are nobly undergone; and most poor matters
> Point to rich ends. This my mean task would be
> As heavy to me, as odious, but
> The mistress which I serve quickens what's dead,
> And makes my labours pleasures. Oh! she is
> Ten times more gentle than her father's crabbed,
> And he's composed of harshness.—*Tempest.*

> The sailors sought for safety by our boat,
> And left the ship, then sinking-ripe, to us.
> My wife, more careful for the latter-born,
> Had fastened him unto a small spare mast,
> Such as seafaring men provide for storms:
> To him one of the other twins was bound,
> While I had been like heedful of the other.
> The children thus dispos'd, my wife and I,
> Fixing our eyes on whom our care was fix'd,
> Fasten'd ourselves at either end the mast;

> And floating straight, obedient to the stream,
> Were carried towards Corinth, as we thought.
> *Comedy of Errors.*

But still, as Ovid says, it may be true that

> Usque adeò quod tangit idem est, tamen ultima distant.

I have thought it convenient, and indeed necessary, to make four classes, or periods; though their limits must be somewhat arbitrary.

The first is not so much distinguished from the second in the nature of the verse, as in the general incompleteness of the style, or at least, however beautiful many passages may be, the absence of that entire boldness and freedom, which so singularly, according to common ideas, goes with quite unbroken passages, not unfrequently, in what I have marked as his second style. To this last *King John*, for instance, and *Romeo and Juliet*, belong.

In what I call the third style, his peculiar manner of unbroken verse is altered, but without as yet falling into the opposite peculiarity of his later plays, which will form his fourth style. *Measure for Measure* will serve for a specimen of the third; *Anthony and Cleopatra*, and *The Winter's Tale* remarkably, of the fourth style.

It is, I believe, generally supposed, that in this and other languages, verses which break the sense only at the end must be dull and stiff; and that the opposite practice, of running verses into one another, can hardly be too much cultivated, with a view to spirit and variety. I mean to give some instances, therefore, in other poets, and that not merely in our own language, to show that this is far from true, and that we sometimes find passages by no means unpleasing to the ear, and actually flowing and spirited, in which the verses are not broken; and

sometimes, passages which are very disagreeable, and even very tiresome and uniform in their sound, exactly because they are constructed too much on the contrary principle. But all these things must depend very much on the individual talents of the writer. No rules or receipts will give spirit; and where it exists, none will altogether take it away.

There is some analogy between the distinction I am here treating, and the case of monosyllabic verses. Pope has decried these, by one line in his *Essay on Criticism*, more than they deserve. In good hands they are not unfrequently compatible with lightness and spirit; as in Spenser,—

> For all we have is his; what he list do, he may.

And, where they fall in with the particular effect of the sentiment, may be continued for several lines together without being felt as a source of heaviness, or perhaps being noticed; as in John's speech to Hubert.

The unbroken style seems particularly to suit what may be called passages of enumeration, and repetition of synonymous words; and consequently, those poets who are apt to introduce such passages, such as Spenser sometimes, and the old Latin poets often. But it does not necessarily arise out of what may be called the enumerative style. Catullus and Lucretius, where the one translates the symptoms of love from Sappho, and the other the description of heaven from Homer, imitate their originals in running the lines into one another. And the circumstances of the tempest in Æschylus, at the end of the *Prometheus*, are expressed in broken verses, though the reverse is the case with the description of the storm in Pacuvius, which destroyed the Grecian fleet.

It seems natural that short verses should more commonly be unbroken. Their shortness produces variety enough. And on the other hand, perhaps, that very long metres, being invented for the sake of a sort of continued roll and flow, as the French Alexandrines, should also be unbroken. But there are considerable exceptions to both. The lyrics of Horace are frequently broken; and the metre called Aristophanic is so sometimes, even in passages of enumeration, as in the scene between Poverty and the old men.

I hold that in metre, Shakespeare changed very nearly regularly and gradually, always in the same direction; but in sense, not so altogether. The conceitful, imaginative, rambling style of his youth always remained in him, and was sometimes brought out later in life. Several things might prevent it from appearing in the intervening time. It exerts the mind; the mind is not always in the humour to be exerted, or not in the same way; he might be careless or in a hurry—he might be uneasy, uncomfortable. But he might, also, have a different aim and object and turn of mind in view; one of which in his youth he did not know himself capable—his high, dramatic, passionate powers. And in his Histories, on the other hand, he seems to have thought it a duty to keep down this meditative turn which belonged to him; *κρύψαι τὸ συγγενὲς ἦθος.*

In comedy, Shakespeare came out at first fully complete, as far as the proof of that humorous turn, which afterwards belonged to him; though not carrying it to the same extent. In serious scenes, he did not at first show the dramatic spirit and action which he did during his second period, in which those qualities seem very nearly

complete, as a capability at least, in *John* and *Richard the Third*. Afterwards he added more passion and poetry. It seems odd that a greater display of passion and poetry should have been shown in the later part of his life, belonging, as they did, so much to his character at all times. But I take it that the absence of these qualities in his first plays of the more dramatic character was owing to his docility, or perhaps timidity too. His historical manner is founded on Marlow chiefly, who probably led him to history; and Marlow, though much more dramatic than his predecessors, was still dry. Before that, Shakespeare founded himself on more dramatic writers, a good deal, as Spenser. Shakespeare was possibly ridiculed too, for his dreamy, poetical style, at first; for instance, in *Midsummer Night's Dream*. And catching dramatic spirit from the stage itself, and from more knowledge of life, it might really put him on another beat, and he would consider, from practice, what his friends the actors would like, and would really be able to represent, and to give effect to. Yet in his Sonnets he was always going back to his first taste. *Henry the Eighth*, I think, was purposely *thinned* of poetry (ἰσχνανα, as Euripides in Aristophanes says), from fear of Jonson and his admirers, rather than from mere imitation; that is, so far as Shakespeare wrote it himself.

In the first period, the *Comedy of Errors* and *Midsummer Night's Dream* especially, show occasionally most excellent dramatic qualities in the serious and pathetic; but still, slow and quiet, compared to the Histories in the second time.

Shakespeare evidently, from his Poems, and later, his Sonnets, was originally devoted with an exceeding attach-

ment to rhyme, and rhyme as such. His ear dwells on the termination of the line. His mind hovers within the limits of one line at a time. Though there are long passages of connected lines, and sometimes enumerative, each line is generally a unit in the series.

His love of verbal resemblances, which are by no means always puns, that is, which by no means always contain the same word used in different senses, seems to me to be connected with this love of rhyme.

> Disturb his hours of rest with restless trances,
> Afflict him in his bed with bed-rid groans;
> Let there beehance him pitiful mischances,
> To make him moan, but pity not his moans;
> Stone him with harden'd hearts, harder than stones,
> And let mild women to him lose their mildness,
> Wilder, to him, than tigers in their wildness.
>
> Let him have time to tear his curled hair,
> Let him have time against himself to rave,
> Let him have time of time's help to despair,
> Let him have time to live a loathed slave,
> Let him have time a beggar's orts to crave,
> And time to see one, that by alms doth live,
> Disdain to him disdained scraps to give.
>
> Let him have time to see his friends his foes,
> And merry fools to mock at him resort;
> Let him have time to mark how slow time goes
> In time of sorrow, and how swift and short
> His time of folly, and his time of sport.
>
> *Tarquin and Lucrece.*

Here is some little introduction of the broken style; and do not these passages foreshow most strongly the prodigious strength of dramatic passion, of which he was afterwards to be among all mankind the most remarkable model?

'A book of criticism,' says Hume, 'ought to consist chiefly of quotations.' Many points of criticism, however, may be largely considered without them; those, for instance, which relate to the conduct of the plot in plays, to the characters, the moral, etc. But a book like the present cannot possibly subsist without a very large admixture of extracts. I have endeavoured to choose such instances to illustrate the metre, as are also interesting on account of the poetry, or at least may be entertaining from the extremeness of their peculiarities.

SECT. 2.

THE PARTICULAR PLAYS OF SHAKESPEARE.

IT appears from the valuable labours of his recent biographers that Shakespeare was baptized 17th April, 1564. In 1586 or 1587 he came to London. The passage from Nash, 1587, where he speaks of '*noverints* (that is, attorneys, or clerks) writing whole Hamlets,' etc., though it seems very probable that Shakespeare had a law education, is too early to apply to him. In 1589 he had a share in the Black Friars Theatre. In the end of 1590, probably, or 1591, Spenser, by the mouth of Thalia, and therefore speaking of comedy only, says, with great expressions of praise—

> Our gentle Willy, ah! is dead of late;

explaining by *dead*, that he does not choose to write; and that his loss is very ill supplied. This cannot allude to the stoppage of the Theatre altogether in 1589. If he had written *Love's Labour's Lost*, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, and *The Comedy of Errors*, these would justify such a complaint, compared to other writers; and, in short, no other Willy is known to whom the observation could apply.

In September, 1592, N.S., comes the complaint of Greene, published by Chettle, in which he speaks of 'an upstart crow, beautified with our feathers, who can bombast out blank verse, with his *tiger's heart wrapped in a player's hide*, and is in his own conceit the only

Shake-scene in the country.' The line he alludes to is in Henry VI. part 3, probably retained or stolen (for that is Greene's complaint) from the old play. It is therefore to adaptations of former plays, and those in blank verse, that the passage alludes. It is interesting that Chettle soon afterwards expresses his regret for having suffered this to appear; and mentions Shakespeare's 'civil demeanor, and uprightness of dealing,' as well as his 'facetious grace in writing;' not indeed expressly naming him.

Marlow died in 1593.

Venus and Adonis was printed the same year, *Lucrece* the next.

In 1608 he ceased to act. November, 1614, he is last mentioned as being in London. He died in 1616.

TITUS ANDRONICUS

Was acted and printed in the beginning of 1594. There is not the least reason to suppose it existed earlier, except Collier's inference, that because *it was* Shakespeare's, and is bad (though he does not say that more than some of it was Shakespeare's), therefore it must have been an *early* work of Shakespeare's.

The expression in Act iii. scene 1, 'engine of her thoughts,' for tongue, as in *Venus and Adonis*, is important; and the whole speech, three or four lines, is quite capable of being Shakespeare's.

Collier says, the early works of Shakespeare are not so good as his later ones. But are they like *Titus Andronicus?* I think totally opposite; especially if we reject Henry VI. Part 1.

I beg to be allowed to reject the whole of this play. I wish I had never read it.

TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA.

Unbroken verses, almost always. But here is an exception :—

> Thou hast beguil'd my hopes: nought but mine eye
> Could have persuaded me. Now I dare not say,
> I have one friend alive: thou would'st disprove me.
> Who should be trusted now, when one's right hand
> Is perjur'd to the bosom? Proteus,
> I am sorry I must never trust thee more,
> But count the world a stranger for thy sake.
> The private wound is deepest. O time most accurst,
> 'Mongst all foes, that a friend should be the worst!

and what follows.

There is a beautiful passage of alternate verse :—

> Oh, how this spring of love resembleth
> The uncertain glory of an April day,
> Which now shows all the beauty of the sun,
> And by and by a cloud takes all away!

This play was certainly written very early.

> But Silvia is too fair, too true, too holy,
> To be corrupted with my worthless gifts.
> When I protest true loyalty to her,
> She twits me with my falsehood to my friend;
> When to her beauty I commend my vows,
> She bids me think how I have been forsworn,
> In breaking faith with Julia whom I loved;
> And, notwithstanding all her sudden quips,
> The least whereof would quell a lover's hope,
> Yet, spaniel-like, the more she spurns my love,
> The more it grows, and fawneth on her still.

> Nor need'st thou much importune me to that
> Whereon this month I have been hammering.
> I have consider'd well his loss of time,
> And how he cannot be a perfect man,

Not being tried and tutor'd in the world.
Experience is by industry achiev'd,
And perfected by the swift course of time.
Then, tell me, whither were I best to send him?

LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST.

Much rhyme. Alternate rhymes. Very unbroken, unless in one place. Few double endings. Some rough, long lines; and some long, but regular; as quotations, not in the dialogue; both Alexandrine and seven-foot. A speech wholly of trisyllable lines. Here are two instances of weak endings.

Meantime, receive such welcome at my hand,
As honour, without breach of honour, may
Make tender of to thy true worthiness.
You may not come, fair princess, in my gates;

Or groan for Joan? or spend a minute's time
In pruning me? When shall you hear that I
Will praise a hand, a foot, a face, an eye,
A gait, a state, a brow, a breast, a waist,
A leg, a limb?

The comic parts of this play are not to my purpose. They are exceedingly good, and show a great force, and knowledge of human nature, for a play so early in his series. There are four fools, or dull persons in it, completely discriminated from each other. The parts in verse are certainly too much loaded with conceits and ideas of some sort; and the subject of the play leads to that. It is like a French play, a play of conversation, rather than a drama. The speeches are either too long, or else there is too much of the short dialogue of repartee, common in those times.

Another of these students at that time
Was there with him; if I have heard a truth,
Biron they call him; but a merrier man,
Within the limit of becoming mirth,
I never spent an hour's talk withal:
His eye begets occasion for his wit;
For every object that the one doth catch,
The other turns to a mirth-loving jest;
Which his fair tongue (conceit's expositor)
Delivers in such apt and gracious words,
That aged ears play truant at his tales,
And younger hearings are quite ravished;
So sweet and voluble is his discourse.

Honest plain words best pierce the ear of grief;
And by these badges understand the king.
For your fair sakes have we neglected time,
Play'd foul play with our oaths: your beauty, ladies,
Hath much deform'd us, fashioning our humours
Even to the opposed end of our intents.
And what in us hath seem'd ridiculous,—
As love is full of unbefitting strains,
All wanton as a child, skipping, and vain,
Form'd by the eye, and therefore, like the eye,
Full of strange shapes, of habits, and of forms,
Varying in subjects, as the eye doth roll
To every varied object in his glance:
Which party-coated presence of loose love,
Put on by us, if, in your heavenly eyes,
Have misbecome our oaths and gravities,
Those heavenly eyes, that look into these faults,
Suggested us to make. Therefore, ladies,
Our loves being yours, the error that love makes
Is likewise yours; we to ourselves prove false,
By being once false for ever to be true
To those that make us both,—fair ladies, you:
And even that falsehood, in itself a sin,
Thus purifies itself, and turns to grace.

A time, methinks, too short
To make a world-without-end bargain in.
No, no, my Lord, your grace is perjur'd much,
Full of dear guiltiness; and therefore this.—
If for my love (as there is no such cause)
You will do aught, this shall you do for me.
Your oath I will not trust; but go with speed
To some forlorn and naked hermitage,
Remote from all the pleasures of the world;
There stay, until the twelve celestial signs
Have brought about their annual reckoning.

Oft have I heard of you, my Lord Biron,
Before I saw you, and the world's large tongue
Proclaims you for a man replete with mocks;
Full of comparisons and wounding flouts,
Which you on all estates will execute,
That lie within the mercy of your wit:
To weed this wormwood from your fruitful brain,
And, therewithal, to win me, if you please,
Without the which I am not to be won,
You shall this twelvemonth term from day to day
Visit the speechless sick, and still converse
With groaning wretches; and your task shall be,
With all the fierce endeavour of your wit,
To enforce the pained impotent to smile.

COMEDY OF ERRORS.

Besides the rough long lines, there are abundance of alternate rhymes. No want of double endings, in rhyme or blank. It is a dwelling style; some enumerative passages.

It is by no means what the title would import, a mere entertaining piece of confusion. There are several excellent dialogues—and a good deal of very natural feeling well expressed.

Ad. Who is that at the door, that keeps all this noise?
D. of I. By my troth, your town is troubled with unruly boys.
A. of E. Are you there, wife? You might have come before.
Ad. Your wife, sir knave? go, get you from the door.
D. of E. If you went in pain, master, this knave would go sore.
An. Here is neither cheer, sir, nor welcome, we would fain have either.
Bal. In debating which was best, we shall part with neither.

Not know my voice? O, time's extremity!
Hast thou so crack'd, and splitted my poor tongue,
In seven short years, that here my only son
Knows not my feeble key of untun'd cares?
Though now this grained face of mine be hid
In sap-consuming winter's drizzled snow,
And all the conduits of my blood froze up;
Yet hath my night of life some memory,
My wasting lamps some fading glimmer left,
My dull, deaf ears a little use to hear;
All these old witnesses (I cannot err)
Tell me, thou art my son Antipholus.

HENRY VI.

There is no proof that it must have been written before the Comedies. That Meres does not mention it, is a reason, against the authority of the players, for thinking that Shakespeare did not write the whole of it. I quite agree with Malone, that he wrote none, or next to none, of Part 1. Neither part was printed till the folio of 1623. There was a '*Harey the VI.*' acted March, 1592. Part 2 succeeds Part 1 very soon in respect of the events. Part 3 is still more immediately after Part 2, but the events differ. In Part 2, Clifford is killed by York; in Part 3, he is related to have been killed by common soldiers. *Richard III.* seems to have been written not long

after Part 3. See the long soliloquy in the third act. His power in enriching the old play is very extraordinary.

It is quite unbroken verse. The soliloquy of Henry VI. in Part 3, 'So many hours,' etc., *starred* by Malone, is very like *Richard II.* Those starred lines, I think, differ a good deal in themselves. Some are Shakespearian, some not; and there are some Shakespearian parts, I think, which are not starred. Hardly ever broken; double endings are not wanting: no rhymes: some learned allusions, which I entirely deny for Shakespeare's, as contrary to the analogy of his other plays, and which are like those in other writers.

In the 3rd Part Lewis is one syllable. So it is uniformly in *King John*. Was it spelt Lois, as Rouen Roan? which, I believe, is monosyllabic too in *Henry VI.* The first folio spells Lewis.

1st Part. I do not see why Collier doubts that *Harie Sixt* was this play. Some have said that the metre of the first speech was unlike Shakespeare. If that merely means that the lines are unbroken, it shows that the discrimination I wish to point out had not been observed; but they are also hard and rough. The great difference is in the dull pompous matter.

Part of Act 4 Malone thinks might be his; it is partly in rhyme. It is curious, that the old 2nd Part of *Henry VI.* has the verse broken sometimes, and well.

Malone's stars etc. I think quite wrong; but the extreme self-confidence of supposing it possible to arrive at such certainty is, as Adam Smith observes on another subject, the very best proof that he who felt it was unfit for the task. But another objection is in the nature of the subject itself. There may be writers whose genuine-

ness may be judged in this manner line by line; but to do so with Shakespeare shows an ignorance of his style and nature altogether. The merit of his passages is certainly sometimes found in the force with which every word swells and accumulates the effect of the preceding; but that is only in the very finest places. In general, the genuineness must be collected from the whole passage, and this would be much more the case in his early plays, where his individuality, full strength of genius, and confidence, had not yet arrived, and still more in dramatic plays, as I have elsewhere observed. Lastly, it is peculiarly rash in the case of his first productions, of which we have no type to enable us to judge how he was likely to have written at that time.

> Then since this earth affords no joy to me,
> But to command, to check, to o'erbear such
> As are of better person than myself,
> I'll make my heaven—to dream upon the crown,
> And, whiles I live, to account this world but hell,
> Until my misshap'd trunk that bears this head,
> Be round impaled with a glorious crown.

> Gives not the hawthorn bush a sweeter shade
> To shepherds looking on their silly sheep,
> Than doth a rich embroidered canopy
> To kings that fear their subject's treachery?
> O yes, it doth! a thousand-fold it doth!
> And to conclude,—the shepherd's homely curds,
> His cold thin drink out of his leather bottle,
> His wonted sleep under a fresh tree's shade;
> All which secure and sweetly he enjoys,
> Is far beyond a prince's delicates,
> His viands sparkling in a golden cup,
> His body couched in a curious bed,
> When care, mistrust, and treason wait on him.

TAMING OF THE SHREW.

In the *Taming of the Shrew*, all that story which is denoted by the name of the play is very strong, lively, and full of character; the character of Katherine, quite as much as Petruchio, is well marked and well kept up. The scenes at Petruchio's country-house are richly comic. The other part of the play, which has no relation to those characters, is dull; till at the end it connects with the other, in the delightfully good-natured scene which winds up the whole and wears out all unpleasant feelings, shows the man, after all, in an amiable light, represents the Shrew not only tamed, but converted; fully prepared to offer obedience from feeling and not from fear, and the only one of the three brides, to the surprise of the company, who obeys her husband. All this has a great foundation in nature; the capability of a spirited character to turn right, and of a prim and demure one, when it has gained its purpose, to show qualities which had been kept under. I may add, that though so free, it is decent. The verse is remarkable from being so uniform with so much spirit. There is one instance of the weak ending. There are a few of the long rhyming lines. Double endings may be found, five together.

There are two endings, of the long rhyming verse.

> Fathers commonly
> Do get their children, but in this case of wooing,
> A child shall get a sire, if I fail not of my cunning.

> Now go thy ways: thou hast tam'd a curst shrew,
> 'Tis a wonder, by your leave, that she will be tam'd so.

There is a passage remarkably in the early manner of Shakespeare.

O, monstrous arrogance! Thou lies't, thou thread, thou thimble,
Thou yard, three-quarters, half-yard, quarter, nail!
Thou flea, thou nit, thou winter cricket thou!—
Brav'd in mine own house with a skein of thread!
Away! thou rag, thou quantity, thou remnant,
Or I shall so be-mete thee with thy yard,
As thou shalt think on prating whilst thou liv'st,
I tell thee, I, that thou hast marr'd her gown.

I am not startled at the Latin in the tutor-scene. It is not merely from the grammar, like other quotations; but still it is one of the very first passages that a schoolboy learns.

This play is not in Meres; but I find it impossible to believe that it was not written till after 1598. It is remarkably in the easy, free, style of his early times. The argument that he has made the name Baptista masculine here, when it is feminine in *Hamlet*, proves nothing, I think. No doubt, the former is right; but it would not follow, to Shakespeare's comprehension, that the latter was wrong.

What is most curious with regard to this play is, that there was an older play, acted as early as 1594, and printed in that year. Older, I think, decidedly. The author could not have written as he has done, if he borrowed from Shakespeare's. It is in the utmost degree of the old, formal, epithetical, style.

Should'st thou assay to scale the seate of Jove,
Mounting the subtle airy regions,
Or be snatch'd up as erst was Ganimede,
Love should give wings unto my swift desires,
And prune my thoughts, that I should follow thee,
Or fall and perish, as did Icarus.

The Latin is not in, though he is a learned writer. It

has the speech of Kate at the end, but quite rude, dull, and unlike Shakespeare's. It has the Induction. It has the joke, 'Thou hast faced many things, face not me,'—but not that of 'the mustard without the beef.'

Fie! fie! unknit that threatening, unkind brow,
And dart not scornful glances from those eyes,
To wound thy lord, thy king, thy governor;
It blots thy beauty, as frosts do bite the meads,
Confounds thy fame, as whirlwinds shake fair buds,
And in no sense is meet, or amiable.
A woman mov'd is like a fountain troubled,
Muddy, ill seeming, thick, bereft of beauty;
And, while it is so, none so dry or thirsty
Will deign to sip, or touch one drop of it.
Thy husband is thy lord, thy life, thy keeper,
Thy head, thy sovereign; one that cares for thee,
And for thy maintenance; commits his body
To painful labor, both by sea and land,
To watch the night in storms, the day in cold,
Whilst thou liest warm at home, secure and safe;
And craves no other tribute at thy hands
But love, fair looks, and true obedience.

Here is a weak ending.

But after many ceremonies done,
He calls for wine: "a health!" quoth he, as if
He had been aboard, carousing to his mates
After a storm.——
But for my bonny Kate, she must with me.
Nay, look not big, nor stamp, nor stare, nor fret;
I will be master of what is mine own.
She is my goods, my chattels; she is my house,
My household stuff, my field, my barn,
My horse, my ox, my ass, my any thing;
And here she stands; touch her whoever dare:
I'll bring mine action on the proudest he
That stops my way in Padua.—Grumio,
Draw forth thy weapon; we're beset with thieves:

Rescue thy mistress, if thou be a man.—
Fear not, sweet wench; they shall not touch thee, Kate:
I'll buckler thee against a million.

MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM.

There is no exact evidence; but it is thought to refer to the stormy weather which, it is now known, happened in 1594.

The verse is mostly unbroken, and very beautiful. There are two speeches of enumeration. The passage about the dogs is rather an exception. The play is, I admit, very thin in character, and, except in one scene, in passion; but perhaps, if it had been nearly his first play, he would have—

1. Taken more pains;

2. Not have been so free in imagery—see particularly his description of a poet;

3. Not have been a satirist.

There is much rhyme. Alternate; and a curious passage all on one rhyme. I do not see much double ending.

In the style and taste it is more advanced than the *Taming of the Shrew*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, and *Two Gentlemen*. But much less pains than in *L. L. L.*

My gentle Puck, come hither: thou remember'st
Since once I sat upon a promontory,
And heard a mermaid on a dolphin's back
Uttering such dulcet and harmonious breath,
That the rude sea grew civil at her song,
And certain stars shot madly from their spheres
To hear the sea-maid's music.

Out, dog! out, cur! thou driv'st me past the bounds
Of maiden's patience. Hast thou slain him, then?

Henceforth be never number'd among men.
O! once tell true, tell true, e'en for my sake;
Durst thou have look'd upon him, being awake,
And hast thou kill'd him sleeping? O brave touch!
Could not a worm, an adder, do so much?
An adder did it; for with doubler tongue
Than thine, thou serpent, never adder stung.

Have you not set Lysander, as in scorn,
To follow me, and praise my eyes and face,
And made your other love, Demetrius,
(Who e'en but now did spurn me with his foot,)
To call me goddess, nymph, divine, and rare,
Precious, celestial? Wherefore speaks he this
To her he hates? and wherefore doth Lysander
Deny your love, so rich within his soul,
And tender me, forsooth, affection,
But by your setting on, by your consent?
What though I be not so in grace as you,
So hung upon with love, so fortunate,
But miserable most to love unlov'd;
This you should pity rather than despise.

I understand not what you mean by this.

Ay, do, perséver, counterfeit sad looks,
Make mouths upon me when I turn my back;
Wink at each other; hold the sweet jest up:
This sport, well carried, shall be chronicled.
If you have any pity, grace, or manners,
You would not make me such an argument.
But, fare ye well: 'tis partly mine own fault,
Which death or absence soon shall remedy.

RICHARD II.

This Play, and *Richard III.*, were printed in 1597. There is no other external evidence. In an edition of

1608, 'Additions' were advertised, especially the Parliament scene, and the deposing of Richard. I think this must mean that they were really added in the interval,

1. Because they are parts which, however important, the play might possibly, at first, have done without.

2. Because the printer would certainly not have left them out in the first edition.

But there is no great difference in the metre in these added parts.

It seems to be quoted in both parts of *Henry IV.* In *Henry IV.* there is a speech of Hotspur, giving a long account of Bolingbroke's conduct, not a little more lively, interesting, and good, than what is in this play, where the event itself takes place. This seems to show, if there could be any doubt, that it was written later than *Richard II.* itself.

The subject of *Richard III.* was likely to have occurred first, as being more attractive; but perhaps he would not have felt bold enough, at first, to undertake that; and *Richard II.* might be suggested to him as a subject by Marlowe's *Edward II.*, the reign and the character being similar.

Richard II. is, surely, in a less advanced style than *Richard III.*, as the latter is than *John* and the *Henrys*. It is rather disjointed; the scenes not much put together into a whole; which suits with the statement that there were additions. Part of it is dramatic enough; and with a great deal of truth and reality. The dispute-scene in the Parliament, however, is less active than that in *John*. But most of it is a succession of long speeches, some of them narrative, or meditative, very clear, with none of the crowded style of thought which, as early as *Hamlet*,

shows itself in Shakespeare. One idea is apt to be followed, through several lines, much as in the poems; running on perhaps in a loose rambling way, with conceits, or mere puns. It seems to have been written at ease, not much quickened by ambition, or checked by the fear of criticism. There is very little pains taken; and, on the other hand, very little of that natural escape, as it were, of pure poetry, which we often find in his other historical plays.

It is nearly as prosaic as *Richard III.*, but in general is the very opposite in respect of life and business.

The character of the King is much too poor and weak; especially as he is described as having lost his crown by carelessness, wilfulness, and by allowing favourites to oppress the people; and not as a good, but passive, inactive, spiritless person, like Henry VI. This weakness of the King is the more remarkable, when we have so much of him in the play compared to Bolingbroke, his more active and vigorous rival. Why was he made the principal character, which brings him too much forward, when he has so little to support his place? He speaks indeed with vigour sometimes, but fails when he has to act; and his soliloquy, near the end, is quite bad and poor.

However, it must be observed, once for all, that a play of Shakespeare's, which is less to be admired in itself, has yet its value, by way of variety, among the rest. He is so natural, and so thoroughly understands the human mind, that whatever character he sets himself to represent has some interest.

The duel at the beginning, though not without spirit, is too much spun out; and, by its being put off, we come to hear part of the same story over again. The account

of Bolingbroke's entrance into London is most remarkably beautiful; and the scene with the groom exceedingly natural, and fitted to bring out the feelings of the occasion, in the manner, so peculiar to this great poet.

The conflict between York and his Duchess is lively and natural; and though, as Mr. Hallam says, it contains one grossly absurd expression, the speech of the Duchess which follows is very good, though in rhyme; which rhyme is natural, being a speech of contrast.

There is no comedy in this play.

Richard II. leaves general impressions, tending to give a duller character of the whole than it deserves. *Richard III.* the contrary. The long speeches, of which that of Gaunt has a good deal of merit, predominate in our recollection of the former; the active scenes in that of the latter.

Yet it is difficult to conceive they were written in the same year. In that time of his life, indeed, he would naturally be in the state of most rapid capability of improvement; especially if inspired by great actors, as appears to have been the case in the instance of Burbage. He might be dissatisfied with himself; and start into a different manner, from contrast.

I should put it as early as 1593; as Collier says Malone finally did.

There is much rhyme, and one stanza in alternate verse. Almost always the metre is as unbroken as possible. Twenty-five lines are left out in the folio, in which there is some appearance of a more broken metre; but the speech following, 'Oh who could hold a fire in his hand,' is nonsense, without the omitted part, and it is quite unbroken. Double endings are very scarce.

Setting aside his high blood's royalty,
And let him be no kinsman to my liege,
I do defy him, and I spit at him,
Call him a slanderous coward, and a villain;
Which to maintain, I would allow him odds,
And meet him, were I tied to run afoot
Even to the frozen ridges of the Alps,
Or any ground inhabitable,
Wherever Englishman durst set his foot.
Meantime, let this defend my loyalty:—
By all my hopes most falsely doth he lie.

Pale trembling coward, there I throw my gage,
Disclaiming here the kindred of the king:
And lay aside my high blood's royalty,
Which fear, not reverence, makes thee to except:
If guilty dread have left thee so much strength
As to take up mine honour's pawn, then stoop.
By that, and all the rites of knighthood else,
Will I make good against thee, arm to arm,
What I have spoke, or thou canst worse devise.

Go, say I sent thee forth to purchase honour,
And not the king exil'd thee: or suppose,
Devouring pestilence hangs in our air,
And thou art flying to a fresher clime:
Look, what thy soul holds dear, imagine it
To lie that way thou go'st, not whence thou com'st.

And though you think that all, as you have done,
Have torn their souls by turning them from us,
And we are barren and bereft of friends,
Yet know, my master, God omnipotent,
Is mustering in his clouds on our behalf
Armies of pestilence; and they shall strike
Your children yet unborn, and unbegot,
That lift your vassal hands against my head,
And threat the glory of my precious crown.
Tell Bolingbroke, for yond' methinks he stands,
That every stride he makes upon my land

Is dangerous treason. He is come to ope
The purple testament of bleeding war;
But ere the crown he looks for live in peace,
Ten thousand bloody crowns of mothers' sons
Shall ill become the flower of England's face,
Change the complexion of her maid, pale peace,
To scarlet indignation, and bedew
Her pastures' grass with faithful English blood.

What must the king do now? must he submit
The king shall do it. Must he be depos'd?
The king shall be contented. Must he lose
The name of king? i' God's name, let it go;
I'll give my jewels for a set of beads,
My gorgeous palace for a hermitage,
My gay apparel for an alms-man's gown,
My figur'd goblets for a dish of wood,
My sceptre for a palmer's walking staff,
My subjects for a pair of carved saints,
And my large kingdom for a little grave,
A little, little grave, an obscure grave.

Give me the glass, and therein will I read.—
No deeper wrinkles yet? Hath sorrow struck
So many blows upon this face of mine,
And made no deeper wounds? O, flattering glass!
Like to my followers in prosperity,
Thou dost beguile me. Was this face the face
That every day under his household roof
Did keep ten thousand men? Was this the face,
That like the sun did make beholders wink?
Was this the face, that fac'd so many follies,
And was at last outfac'd by Bolingbroke?

So proud that Bolingbroke was on his back?
That jade hath eat bread from my royal hand;
This hand hath made him proud with clapping him.
Would he not stumble? Would he not fall down,
(Since pride must have a fall) and break the neck

Of that proud man, that did usurp his back?
Forgiveness, horse! why do I rail on thee,
Since thou, created to be aw'd by man,
Wast born to bear? I was not made a horse;
And yet I bear a burden like an ass,
Spur-gall'd, and tir'd, by jauncing Bolingbroke.

RICHARD THE THIRD.

There was an older play upon this subject, printed in 1594. It is written in a very old, and either bald or inflated, style.

I hope, with this lame hand of mine, to rake out that hateful heart of Richmond, and when I have it, to eat it, panting hot with salt, and drink his blood lukewarm, tho' I be sure 't will poison me;

and with other peculiarities, which might entitle it, as Mr. Collier thinks, to be the oldest of our historical plays, for the stage at least. It is in a somewhat active and bustling style; and represents the King as vulgar and violent with his subordinates, calling them *villain*, as Shakespeare does; but except in one instance, it is astonishing to see how entirely Shakespeare has cast it over, so that the classical motto of the recent editor is very applicable,

Tam prope, tam proculque.

That instance is very remarkable indeed. It was from this dull old play that Shakespeare caught the idea of Richard calling for a horse in the battle: but nothing can be more instructive, towards showing the difference between a bare idea and the way of conceiving and managing it, in which the whole spirit and merit consist. Everybody knows the passage in Shakespeare, perhaps the very finest, for force and nature, that he has written.

I cannot but insert a portion of the corresponding scene in the old play:—

K. A horse, a horse, a fresh horse.—
C. A, flie my lord, and save your life.—
K. Flie villaine, looke I as tho' I would flie,
No, first shall this dull and senseless ball of earth
Receive my bodie cold and void of sense,
You watery heavens rowle on my gloomy day,
And darksome cloudes close up my cheerful sownde.

The recent Editor has left two passages 'unintelligible,' one of which is easily cured:—

And done imparshall past by dint of sword,

It should be 'doom impartial.'

The other is,—

King. Did not yourselves in presence see the bondes sealde and assignde?
Lou. What tho' my lord, the vardits own, the titles doth resign.

'The vardit's own' probably means the party who has the verdict for him, the speech being a question.

Richard III. is a curious play, singularly devoid of poetical richness, except, perhaps, in the first speech. The great spirit and truth (though dry and often unpoetical, and never excursive or pleasant) of most of it, is, perhaps, somewhat cramped down by his notion of following his model in history.

The absurdity, though indispensable for the effect required, of placing the tents of the two rival commanders on the stage together, had its excuse in the old play, on which the latter part of *Henry VI.* was founded, where Mr. Collier praises Shakespeare for not following that circumstance in his recast.

I cannot but think, however, that all the encouraging

and blessing of Richmond, by the ghosts, would never have been thought of, if it had not been an object to exalt the Tudor family. It is dull, it breaks the spirited scene, and the effect of it upon Richard: and the ghosts, after all, have nothing to do with Richmond.

There is no extraneous, distinct comic, any more than in *Richard II.;* but the serious itself, from the nature of Richard the Third's character, often affords it. I hope it is not a duty to admire the scene with Lady Anne. The cursing scene is something like *Lucrece.* Its vulgarity, as applied to queens, has a parallel in *John;* where it includes the part, afterwards so dignified, of Constance herself. The introduction of such conversation on the stage cannot be approved; though we learn, from the 'Memoirs of the Margravine of Bareith,' that royal manners sometimes approach very nearly to those of the lowest people.

Shakespeare expressly tells us, that less than three months intervened between the last events in *Henry VI.* and the first in this play; but whether that is any guide as to the interval between writing the plays, is quite another question.

The excellent comparison between *Richard III.* and *Macbeth,* by Whately, is one of the best specimens of particular criticism ever written; besides containing so much that is valuable, as is the case in almost everything that can be said about Shakespeare's characters, with regard to human nature in general. Mr. Kemble administered some valuable qualifications, perhaps, to the extremity of the contrast, but without at all destroying the truth of the general principle.

Lord Chatham said once in Parliament, when he was

told that he had misquoted old English history, that he took it from Shakespeare; and from Shakespeare we generally take, or used to take, our erroneous idea of the figure, and for the most part the history, of this king, though Hume, the most sober of writers, has also followed the impression given by the violent, and probably tutored, partisanship of Sir Thomas More. In the Life, by Miss Halsted, the materials for this question are largely collected, though, as usual in such cases, the conclusion may be somewhat overstrained the other way.

The double endings are not uncommon. There are eight in sixteen lines, at the beginning. One weak ending, no rhyme, or next to none.

This incomparably fine speech is excellent in verse as it is in matter. But is a remarkable proof how easy, flowing, and spirited, the uninterrupted metre in such hands can be. The first speech in the play is well known, in the same style. It is remarkable, even in the night-scene.

> Have I a tongue to doom my brother's death,
> And shall that tongue give pardon to a slave?
> My brother kill'd no man, his fault was thought,
> And yet his punishment was bitter death.
> Who sued to me for him? who, in my wrath,
> Kneel'd at my feet, and bade me be advis'd?
> Who spoke of brotherhood? who spoke of love?
> Who told me, how the poor soul did forsake
> The mighty Warwick, and did fight for me?
> Who told me, in the field at Tewkesbury,
> When Oxford had me down, he rescu'd me,
> And said, "Dear brother, live, and be a king?"
> Who told me, when we both lay in the field,
> Frozen almost to death, how he did lap me
> Even in his garments; and did give himself
> All thin and naked, to the numb-cold night?

All this from my remembrance brutish wrath
Sinfully pluck'd, and not a man of you
Had so much grace to put it in my mind.
But when your carters, or your waiting-vassals,
Have done a drunken slaughter, and defac'd
The precious image of your dear Redeemer,
You straight are on your knees for pardon, pardon;
And I, unjustly too, must grant it you.

We may observe the good effect of several double terminations coming nearly together at the end. Here is an instance of the weak monosyllabic termination:—

Sorry I am, my noble cousin should
Suspect me, that I mean no good to him:
By heaven, we come to him in perfect love.

MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR.

We now arrive at the plays in which Falstaff is concerned; and which are, through that character, connected together in respect of date; in a way which, however, leads to some uncertainty. One of these, the *Merry Wives of Windsor*, though containing so little *verse* as to be on that account of no importance to the question I am considering, is of more importance than any of the others on account of a circumstance, which is considered as positively fixing its *date*. Most curious researches have shown that it was in 1593 that the German Duke, mentioned in that play, was at Windsor. We may be sure that Shakespeare had been residing there when he wrote the play (the part of the Host is of course taken from real life), and would not otherwise have alluded to a circumstance so local in its interest, though connected with the Court. If so, Shakespeare's abilities, as a comic writer at least, were very great thus early; and he was then capable of

writing with a good deal of regularity. We have the first edition lately reprinted; and I can by no means agree with its editor, that it is a 'meagre sketch.' On the contrary, it contains the greater part of what is good in the play; and as it is very ill brought out, it is possible that some further small touches may have escaped its printer. It purports to have been often acted. Another edition came out in 1619, not reprinted: no other, except as part of the great folio of 1623. The play is not in Meres. We are to consider that the first edition was not *printed* in 1593; the play only fixed to that date by the circumstance above mentioned. Many additions or alterations might have been made between that time and the printing.

With regard to Mr. Halliwell's dissertation, I quite agree that Falstaff is the same Falstaff, in the *Henrys*, and in the *Merry Wives of Windsor*. If the character itself is not enough to prove it, there is his Bardolph and Pistol, and his Page. There is Quickly. I yield to the notion that Falstaff, in some of the plays at least, had first been Oldcastle. The curious place, in the Second Part of *Henry IV.*, where 'Old.' had still been retained, by mistake apparently, after the name had been changed elsewhere, is well known; and the expression, 'Old lad of the Castle.' As the first edition of the First *Henry IV.*, in 1598, contains the name Falstaff, the Second Part, says Mr. Collier, must have been *written* before that time. But in either case, Shakespeare took little but the name, or, at any rate, did not inquire into the truth of history. He might have heard or read of reports against Oldcastle by the Catholic party. But as the real historical Sir John Fastolfe does not tally with his Falstaff (whose name is

in one place written *Falstalffe*), so neither did he mean, or at least care, to make his Oldcastle tally with the historical Oldcastle. Fastolfe, however, is already made a coward in *Henry VI.*

From the Epilogue to the Second Part of *Henry IV.* it is plain that *Henry V.* was all but written, but not yet out. The 'ill opinions,' since no character was ever so popular as that of Falstaff, mean the fault found by the Protestants for having called him Oldcastle. Then, 'for Oldcastle died a martyr,' means the real Oldcastle; and that therefore he, or his duplicate, Falstaff, could not die of a sweat; or rather, it is as if he had said, 'which will the more prove to you that this character was never meant for the real Oldcastle, since he died a martyr.'

The most remarkable discovery is that of a passage in a play of the date of 1618, which mentions another play in which 'the fat Knight, hight Oldcastle, talks about honour;' evidently the First Part of *Henry IV.*

In *The Famous Victories*, which includes Henry the Fifth's former life, Sir John Oldcastle is introduced as a companion in the Prince's robberies, and is called Jockey; but has nothing else of the character of Falstaff.

That play has nothing that suggested any ideas to Shakespeare of the smallest value or entertainment; but merely incidents which its author did not know how to turn to any purpose, as the Crown scene, the Chief Justice, and even the sleepiness of the King.

The old edition of the *Merry Wives* contains a passage, 'That Falstaffe, varlet vile,' etc., which will not admit of Oldcastle, but must always have been Falstaff.

The same thing is true of three passages in the Second Part of *Henry IV.*, as printed 1600.

> Now, Falstaff, where have you been all this while?
>
> Well, you must now speak Sir John Falstaff fair.
>
> Go, carry Sir John Falstaff to the Fleet.

As to the Companions,—

1st *Henry IV.* has Bardolph;
2nd *Henry IV.* Bardolph and Pistol;
Henry V. Bardolph, Pistol, and Nym;
Merry Wives, Bardolph, Pistol, Nym.

He could not have left off Nym or Pistol again if he had once introduced them; if so, *Henry V.* and the *Merry Wives* ought to come together, after the second *Henry IV.* In the *Merry Wives*, indeed, Pistol and Nym are both turned off; and in the first edition. But if we argue from that, it would show that the three last, or the two last, plays come before the First *Henry IV.;* but the three Henrys must have followed in order, and soon after one another; for the Second *Henry IV.* is as much a sequel as if it was in the same play, and more so than different parts of the same play often are in Shakespeare; and *Henry V.* as already observed is promised in the Epilogue to the Second *Henry IV.*

When he had killed Falstaff, he would hardly have brought him up again.

Quickly is very difficult, after the two parts of *Henry IV.;* for when Falstaff is introduced to her, in the *Merry Wives*, he does not know her. She is quite a different personage, she is unmarried. In Second *Henry IV.* she is a widow; in *Henry V.* she is the same as in *Henry IV.* Shallow is irreconcilable, either way. In *Henry IV.* Falstaff has not seen him since they lived at Clement's Inn; yet after *Henry IV.*, where he borrows a thousand pounds

of him which he cannot pay, he would not have robbed his park. I cannot solve all this.

When we think of the full richness of comedy in the parts of Quickly and Falstaff in *Henry IV.*, compared to the same in the *Merry Wives*, it is difficult to avoid considering that they have not yet, especially in the latter, grown to their full size, and—what is a somewhat different and more material way of considering it—that the mind of the author had not. Much of Falstaff, in the *Henrys*, is not merely true and entertaining humour, but rich burlesque, showing continually, in a way that is quite astonishing for a man of so little original education, materials for wit and the ridiculous just such as a learned person would avail himself of, and applied as such a person would apply them. His comic is like the comic of Congreve, for instance, rather than of Farquhar.

In *Love's Labour's Lost*, indeed, there is an extraordinary proportion of work; but we have there, when he is most at ease, rather a crowd of ideas, sometimes trifling, than an intensity of thought; or else an endless succession of, often strained and studied, conceits, rather than an abundant wit, and a strong, cultivated, judgment. It is the author of Falstaff, displaying the fulness of his nature in the comic or entertaining, in youth; but, as Milton says of an eagle, 'mighty youth.'

The mind of Shakespeare is so multifarious and unlimited, that whatever we write about him, we are in danger of being found fault with. When we have attended to a play in one point of view, or perhaps, as we think, in a good many, there are still so many other, sometimes almost opposite, directions in which it might have been considered, that the reader, if he happens to be more fa-

miliar with the latter, will tell us that we have fallen quite short of the truth, if not gone almost directly against it.

If this is the first play in which Falstaff is mentioned, the question, whether it was written at the command of Queen Elizabeth, dies of itself; but otherwise I never could think that a play, so free and lively as this, could have been *written to order*. I have heard a very excellent person say, he once recommended a subject to Gainsborough, the painter, with whom he was intimate, and that he answered, 'I should have made something of that if it had occurred to me of my own head, but it will be of no use now.'

The verse, where any occurs, is little broken: it is in his very natural and quiet style. There are several instances of the weak endings, but they are not in the old edition: a very remarkable circumstance.

> And mock him home to Windsor. *Ford.* The children must
> Be practis'd well to this, or they'll ne'er do't.

> Her father hath commanded her to slip
> Away with Slender, and with him at Eton
> Immediately to marry.

> Straight marry her: to this, her mother's plot,
> She, seemingly obedient, likewise hath
> Made promise to the Doctor.

HENRY IV.

If we suppose the *Merry Wives* to have been written the first, how long shall we allow before the *Henrys* were written? The contradictions would lead us to ask a long interval; but Falstaff, once invented, was not likely to have been long left without further employment. Among

the difficulties should be mentioned, that in the First Part of *Henry IV.* the personage of Falstaff seems to be regularly introduced to us at the beginning, with Shakespeare's usual skill, as if before unknown; whereas he appears in the *Merry Wives* quite unprepared, though so unusual a character.

The First Part was printed in February, 1597-8; written, I should think, some time earlier. There are allusions in it (Malone) to events, etc. down to 1596,—allusions to it in *Every Man out of His Humour*, 1599. It was printed in 1600.

The incomparable comic of this play turns us too much away from the serious. No doubt, there is nothing of the force and depth of his great tragedies; but a better play on the whole cannot well be found, nor a completer model to study. It is lively, full of character; it is careful, without being in the least cramp or stilted. The power of sustaining long speeches is quite admirable: and therewith goes the language, never dry nor stiff; and the verse, which is generally unbroken, and a proof what spirit may go with that form. It is so; even in that ultra-spirited, but characteristic, rant of Hotspur about 'honour.'

The same style is in the Second Part; not so strong or entertaining, but with great nature, and some sense of feeling. We have in it one beautiful instance of an *excursive* topic, in that most popular, and poetical, soliloquy of the King upon sleep.

There are very few weak endings in the two Parts. Double endings are scarce.

> Nay, rather damn them with
> King Cerberus, and let the welkin roar.

Evidently verse.

When, on the gentle Severn's sedgy bank,
In single opposition, hand to hand,
He did confound the best part of an hour
In changing hardiment with great Glendower.
Three times they breath'd, and three times did they drink,
Upon agreement, of swift Severn's flood;
Who then, affrighted with their bloody looks,
Ran fearfully among the trembling reeds,
And hid his crisp head in the hollow bank,
Blood-stained with these valiant combatants.
Never did base and rotten policy
Colour her working with such deadly wounds;
Nor never could the noble Mortimer
Receive so many, and all willingly:
Then, let him not be slander'd with revolt.

Yea, on his part, I'll empty all these veins,
And shed my dear blood, drop by drop i' the dust,
But I will lift the down-trod Mortimer
As high i' the air as this unthankful king,
As this ingrate and canker'd Bolingbroke.

By heavens, methinks it were an easy leap
To pluck bright honour from the pale-fac'd moon;
Or dive into the bottom of the deep,
Where fathom-line could never touch the ground,
And pluck up drowned honour by the locks,
So he that doth redeem her thence might wear,
Without corrival, all her dignities:
But out upon this half-faced fellowship!

And yet, in faith, 'tis not: his present want
Seems more than we shall find it. Were it good
To set the exact wealth of all our states
All at one cast? to set so rich a main
On the nice hazard of one doubtful hour?

She bids you on the wanton rushes lay you down,
And rest your gentle head upon her lap,

And she will sing the song that pleaseth you,
And on your eyelids crown the god of sleep,
Charming your blood with pleasing heaviness;
Making such difference 'twixt wake and sleep,
As is the difference betwixt day and night,
The hour before the heavenly-harness'd team
Begins his golden progress in the east.

My Lord of York, it better shew'd with you,
When that your flock, assembled by the bell,
Encircled you, to hear with reverence
Your exposition on the holy text,
Than now to see you here, an iron man,
Cheering a rout of rebels with your drum,
Turning the word to sword, and life to death.
That man that sits within a monarch's heart,
And ripens in the sunshine of his favour,
Would he abuse the countenance of the king,
Alack! what mischiefs might he set abroach
In shadow of such greatness. With you, lord Bishop,
It is even so. Who hath not heard it spoken,
How deep you were within the books of God?
To us, the speaker in his parliament;
To us, the imagin'd voice of God himself;
The very opener and intelligencer
Between the grace, the sanctities of Heaven,
And our dull workings; O, who shall believe
But you misuse the reverence of your place,
Employ the countenance and grace of Heaven,
As a false favourite doth his prince's name,
In deeds dishonourable? You have taken up,
Under the counterfeited zeal of God,
The subjects of his substitute, my father,
And both against the peace of Heaven and him,
Have here upswarm'd them.

And read particularly the speech of Hotspur to Vernon, in Part I.

HENRY V.

Is not in Meres. It is certainly difficult to conceive that Meres should omit it, when he mentions *Henry IV.* The last Chorus alludes to Essex in Ireland; and must have been *acted* in the middle of 1599. The play, therefore, was mostly written before that time. This passage is not in any of the quartos, of which the first is in 1600. Mr. Collier thinks the publishers of the quartos did not think it worth while to print the Choruses at all: though he thinks, too, that the play was first written without many parts and scenes afterwards added. I should not, *à priori*, think this. No play looks more as if written, or the greater part of it, at once, in the same spirit. Double endings are not uncommon. There are variations in the editions. The verses have much more leaning to the unbroken style, of the two.

It is all flow, whether the matter is spirited or reasoning; unconfined, and, on the other hand, not artificially expanded. There is one speech of much feeling. There are long speeches. There is a sweetness and simplicity, the more remarkable where the subject is wholly war and politics. There is nothing pompous, strained, ranting; all in perfect ease; only too natural; but not dull, except the arguments at the beginning, and that, I think, is not like the dullness of other preceding poets, for it is thin, but natural; not heavy and stiff. It is dull, because he thought it his business to give the historical discussions. The Chorus is a very peculiar feature; descriptive and excellent; more of imagery and the abstract conception usual in his later plays. We seem to see that this play was written

Τὸ πρὶν ἐπ' εἰρήνης, πρὶν ἐλθεῖν νῖας Ἀχαιῶν.

[I do not mean merely before rivals came, but the ill fame, whatever it was, mentioned in the Sonnets. I do not like to think that it was so late as 1599, either from the style, or from the considerations arising from the connection between the several Falstaff-plays.]

You know, how apt our love was to accord
To furnish him with all appertinents
Belonging to his honour; and this man
Hath, for a few light crowns, lightly conspir'd,
And sworn unto the practices of France,
To kill us here in Hampton: to the which,
This knight, no less for bounty bound to us
Than Cambridge is, hath likewise sworn.—But O!
What shall I say to thee, lord Scroop? thou cruel,
Ingrateful, savage, and inhuman creature!
Thou that didst bear the key of all my counsels,
That knew'st the very bottom of my soul,
That almost might'st have coin'd me into gold,
Would'st thou have practis'd on me for thy use?
May it be possible, that foreign hire
Could out of thee extract one spark of evil
That might annoy my finger?

Who with a body fill'd, and vacant mind,
Gets him to rest cramm'd with distressful bread,
Never sees horrid night, the child of hell,
But, like a lackey, from the rise to set,
Sweats in the eye of Phœbus, and all night
Sleeps in Elysium.

Her vine, the merry cheerer of the heart,
Unpruned dies; her hedges even-pleached,
Like prisoners wildly overgrown with hair,
Put forth disorder'd twigs; her fallow leas,
The darnel, hemlock, and rank fumitory,

Doth root upon, while that the coulter rusts,
That should deracinate such savagery.

Upon his royal face there is no note
How dread an army hath enrounded him,
Nor doth he dedicate one jot of colour
Unto the weary and all-watched night;
But freshly looks, and overbears attaint,
With cheerful semblance and sweet majesty;
That every wretch, pining and pale before,
Beholding him, plucks comfort from his looks.

O God of battles! steel my soldiers' hearts:
Possess them not with fear: take from them now
The sense of reckoning, if th' opposed numbers
Pluck their hearts from them!—Not today, O Lord!
O! not today, think not upon the fault
My father made in compassing the crown.
I Richard's body have interred new,
And on it have bestow'd more contrite tears
Than from it issued forced drops of blood.
Five hundred poor I have in yearly pay,
Who twice a day their wither'd hands hold up
Toward heaven, to pardon blood; and I have built
Two chantries, where the sad and solemn priests
Sing still for Richard's soul. More will I do;
Though all that I can do is nothing worth,
Since that my penitence comes after all,
Imploring pardon.

You are too much mistaken in this King.
Question your Grace the late ambassadors,
With what great state he heard their embassy,
How well supplied with noble counsellors,
How modest in exception, and, withal,
How terrible in constant resolution,
And you shall find, his vanities forespent
Were but the outside of the Roman Brutus,
Covering discretion with a coat of folly;

As gardeners do with ordure hide those roots
That shall first spring, and be most delicate.

Bloody constraint: for if you hide the crown,
Even in your hearts, there will he rake for it:
Therefore, in fierce tempest is he coming,
In thunder, and in earthquake, like a Jove,
That, if requiring fail, he will compel:
And bids you, in the bowels of the Lord,
Deliver up the crown, and to take mercy
On the poor souls for whom this hungry war
Opens his vasty jaws: and on your head
Turning the widows' tears, the orphans' cries,
The dead men's blood, the pining maidens' groans,
For husbands, fathers, and betrothed lovers,
That shall be swallow'd in this controversy.

ROMEO AND JULIET.

A quarto, 1597, seems imperfect, but has things not in the quartos of 1599, not of 1609, nor in the folio. 1599 says, 'corrected, augmented, and amended.'

Mr. Halliwell thinks a book, in which it is mentioned as Shakespeare's, was written as early as 1596. I have put it thus late, merely in order to keep the Falstaff-plays together.

It is mostly in the earliest style; steady and loaded, like Marlowe; quiet, like the *Comedy of Errors*. Its delightfulness is greatly owing to the unchecked flow of each verse. Even the highly agitated and tragical soliloquy, where she takes the draught, is but little broken. The line that is most so,

Is it not like that I,
So early waking—what with loathsome smells, etc.,

is added in 1599 to the edition of 1597; but most of

those additions (which make twenty-seven lines in the whole) are unbroken in the verse.

There is very much rhyme, some alternate. There are bad and frequent conceits, or mere puns.

The verses in the speech about Queen Mab are well known: they are little broken. The following extracts are generally more so. Some seem in a much more modern manner; excursive. A speech in Act iii. scene 2, of Benvolio, 'Tybalt here slain,' is almost in the fourth style. It varies in different editions.

Malone thinks this was his first tragedy after *Henry VI.*

The date is supposed by some to be fixed to the year 1591 by the earthquake which is mentioned, and which happened eleven years before; and I cannot but think that Shakespeare had in mind the earthquake in his own country. But did he himself remember the date exactly? If he did, I have no doubt he meant to put it. It is to no purpose to say that the old woman makes confusions, if indeed she does. But she does not contradict herself, as between the child standing and walking, she merely corrects and enlarges her statement. And as to the weaning, it is very common that children should not be weaned till *two* years old.

Another curious point is, that the words 'first and second cause,' seem to be taken from a book on duelling, called *Vincentio Saviolo, his Practice*, printed in 1594. Mr. Collier observes, that the same words are mentioned in *Love's Labour's Lost*, which is not so likely to have been as late as 1594. But the words might have been common among duellists, possibly, before that book appeared; and as it seems to have been a translation (I do

not find an original in *Brunet*), the phrase might be known in conversation, before the book came out.

Pope, who had a notion that Shakespeare's text was spoilt in the folio, and that many low and bad passages there found were absent from the old editions, mentions particularly the ribaldry in *Romeo and Juliet*. But this occurs in the old editions printed or collated by Steevens. In the old edition of *Lear*, 1608, a speech of the Fool is retained, which some have thought spurious, as not to be matched for coarse and unnecessary indecency by anything else in the plays. The dialogue of Hamlet and Ophelia, the French in *Henry V.*, are also in Steevens's old copies.

Is it possible that Pope alluded partly to the speech of Juliet?

I am not I, if there be such an I; etc.

It is not in the first edition, 1597, but it is of a character different from his supposed interpolations (as he describes them), and decidedly original. It has a permanent, wilful, dwelling absurdity, which I think we can hardly suppose belonged to any but a very early period; not after the great good sense of the *Henries;* and it is just in the most serious occasion of the play, where she supposes Romeo to be dead. Yet we have tragedy, in some parts of this play, equal to anything that even he has produced. Her soliloquy when she takes the potion; and the dreadful forecast, or preparation, which runs through it, so opposite to the taste of many poets, and which is also seen in her speech immediately after her contract in the garden. The soliloquy, indeed, is not altogether in the first plan, though the outline of the grandest part of it is; and the general idea of her apprehensiveness (and, indeed, in Brooke's poem, 1562). And as is the end of

Romeo's speech afterwards, which has so much poetical force.

Rebellious subjects, enemies to peace,
Profaners of this neighbour-stained steel,
Will they not hear? what ho! you men, you beasts,
That quench the fire of your pernicious rage
With purple fountains issuing from your veins,
On pain of torture, from those bloody hands
Throw your mis-temper'd weapons to the ground,
And hear the sentence of your moved prince.
Three civil brawls, bred of an airy word,
By thee, old Capulet, and Montague,
Have thrice disturb'd the quiet of our streets,
And made Verona's ancient citizens
Cast by their grave beseeming ornaments,
To wield old partizans, in hands as old,
Canker'd in peace, to part your canker'd hate.
If ever you disturb our streets again,
Your lives shall pay the forfeit of the peace.
For this time, all the rest depart away.
You, Capulet, shall go along with me;
And, Montague, come you this afternoon,
To know our farther pleasure in this case,
To old Free-town, our common judgment-place.
Once more, on pain of death, all men depart.

Such comfort as do lusty young men feel,
When well-apparel'd April on the heel
Of limping winter treads, even such delight
Among fresh female buds shall you this night
Inherit at my house: hear all, all see,
And like her most, whose merit most shall be.

O, speak again, bright angel! for thou art
As glorious to this night, being o'er my head,
As is a winged messenger of heaven
Unto the white upturned wond'ring eyes
Of mortals, that fall back to gaze on him,

When he bestrides the lazy-pacing clouds,
And sails upon the bosom of the air.

R. What shall I swear by?
J. Do not swear at all;
Or, if thou wilt, swear by thy gracious self,
Which is the god of my idolatry,
And I'll believe thee.
R. If my heart's dear love——.
J. Well, do not swear. Although I joy in thee,
I have no joy of this contract to-night:
It is too rash, too unadvis'd, too sudden;
Too like the lightning, which doth cease to be,
Ere one can say it lightens. Sweet, good night!

These violent delights have violent ends,
And in their triumph die: like fire and powder,
Which as they kiss consume. The sweetest honey
Is loathsome in his own deliciousness,
And in the taste confounds the appetite.

Tybalt, here slain, whom Romeo's hand did slay:
Romeo, that spoke him fair, bade him bethink
How nice the quarrel was; and urg'd withal
Your high displeasure:—all this, uttered
With gentle breath, calm look, knees humbly bow'd,
Could not take truce with the unruly spleen
Of Tybalt, deaf to peace, but that he tilts
With piercing steel at bold Mercutio's breast;
Who, all as hot, turns deadly point to point,
And, with a martial scorn, with one hand beats
Cold death aside, and with the other sends
It back to Tybalt, whose dexterity
Retorts it. Romeo he cries aloud,
"Hold, friends! friends, part!" and, swifter than his tongue,
His agile arm beats down their fatal points,
And 'twixt them rushes; underneath whose arm,
An envious thrust from Tybalt hit the life
Of stout Mercutio, and then Tybalt fled;

But by and by comes back to Romeo,
Who had but newly entertain'd revenge,
And to 't they go like lightning ; for ere I
Could draw to part them was stout Tybalt slain :
And as he fell did Romeo turn and fly.
This is the truth, or let Benvolio die.

Accurs'd, unhappy, wretched, hateful day!
Most miserable hour that e'er time saw
In lasting labour of his pilgrimage!
But one, poor one, one poor and loving child,
But one thing to rejoice and solace in,
And cruel death hath catch'd it from my sight.

P. Beguil'd, divorced, wronged, spited, slain!
Most detestable death, by thee beguil'd,
By cruel, cruel thee quite overthrown!—
O love! O life!—not life, but love in death!
C. Despis'd, distressed, hated, martyr'd, kill'd!
Uncomfortable time, why cam'st thou now
To murder, murder our solemnity?

For fear of that I still will stay with thee,
And never from this palace of dim night
Depart again : here, here will I remain
With worms that are thy chamber-maids ; O! here
Will I set up my everlasting rest,
And shake the yoke of inauspicious stars
From this world-wearied flesh.—Eyes, look your last ;
Arms, take your last embrace ; and lips, O! you
The doors of breath, seal with a righteous kiss
A dateless bargain to engrossing death!
Come, bitter conduct, come, unsavoury guide!
Thou desperate pilot, now at once run on
The dashing rocks thy sea-sick, weary bark!

Then gave I her (so tutor'd by my art)
A sleeping potion ; which so took effect
As I intended, for it wrought on her

The form of death: meantime, I writ to Romeo,
That he should hither come, as this dire night,
To help to take her from her borrow'd grave.

All this I know, and to the marriage
Her nurse is privy; and, if aught in this
Miscarried by my fault, let my old life
Be sacrific'd some hour before his time,
Unto the rigour of severest law.

KING JOHN

Is in Meres; and there is little or nothing else known about it, except that it is later than 1591, as we should know by the style. The old play was printed in that year.

It is a most remarkable instance of his making much use of a former play in the general matter, and rising totally above it in the style and merit. Nothing that is good in Shakespeare's play is to be traced in the old one. He has written more freely and naturally than in most of his histories. The character of this play is strong, sometimes rich. Where it is not at its best, it is heavy, not thin. Of course I speak of it as compared with his other early plays; not those which abound with thought and speculation. This play yet retains much of the character of the old haranguing tragedies. Yet none more shows the capability of the author to get out of it, and give truly dramatic scenes of character, activity, and spirit. Unless I am fanciful, it does not manage those long political speeches with a turn of mind suited to them by system and practice, so much as in *Henry IV.* and *V.*; but more unwillingly. This might lead us to fancy it to be earlier than they are. There is conceit,

apt to be drawn out in a long pursuit of an idea, as sometimes in his poems; excursiveness; parenthesis. It flows, but not from simplicity and lightness, like *Henry V.*; nor from softness, as *Richard II.* often does; but from a forward force of matter.

It is in his second style of verse, admirably strong and free, but mostly, not always, unbroken.

The incomparable speech of Constance,—

> If thou, that bid'st me be content, etc.;

and that in the same part,—

> Grief fills the room up of my absent child,

are partly in the *enumerative* style.

Though it be true that enumerative passages lead more naturally to unbroken versification as a consequence, yet, perhaps, it is also true that the turn for the enumerative way of writing goes naturally with that kind of taste, and forms part of it, which would also delight in the unbroken form of verse for its own sake, and where the matter is not enumerative. Shakespeare's taste, perhaps, changed somewhat in both these respects, and not in one of them only, in the course of his life.

Double endings are not common. Alternate rhymes occur more than once. One weak ending. It is unnecessary to observe, that to the unbroken style belongs the dialogue in single entire lines, as between one speaker and another.

That *John* is as early as *Richard II.* no evidence, I think, would make me believe.

> War! war! no peace! peace is to me a war.
> O, Lymoges! O, Austria! thou dost shame
> That bloody spoil: thou slave, thou wretch, thou coward;

Thou little valiant, great in villainy!
Thou ever strong upon the stronger side!
Thou fortune's champion, that dost never fight
But when her humorous ladyship is by
To teach thee safety! thou art perjur'd too,
And sooth'st up greatness. What a fool art thou,
A ramping fool, to brag, and stamp, and swear
Upon my party! Thou cold-blooded slave,
Hast thou not spoke like thunder on my side?
Been sworn my soldier? bidding me depend
Upon thy stars, thy fortune, and thy strength?
And dost thou now fall over to my foes?
Thou wear a lion's hide! doff it for shame,
And hang a calf's skin on those recreant limbs.

The better act of purposes mistook
Is to mistake again: though indirect,
Yet indirection thereby grows direct,
And falsehood falsehood cures; as fire cools fire
Within the scorched veins of one new burn'd.
It is religion that doth make vows kept,
But thou hast sworn against religion,
By what thou swear'st against the thing thou swear'st,
And mak'st an oath the surety for thy truth
Against an oath: the truth, thou art unsure
To swear, swears only not to be forsworn.

If thou, that bidd'st me be content, wert grim,
Ugly, and slanderous to thy mother's womb,
Full of unpleasing blots, and sightless stains,
Lame, foolish, crooked, swart, prodigious,
Patch'd with foul moles, and eye-offending marks,
I would not care, I then would be content;
For then I should not love thee; no, nor thou
Become thy great birth, nor deserve a crown.
But thou art fair; and at thy birth, dear boy,
Nature and fortune join'd to make thee great:
Of nature's gifts thou may'st with lilies boast,
And with the half-blown rose. But fortune, O!

She is corrupted, chang'd, and won from thee.

I will instruct my sorrows to be proud,
For grief is proud, and makes his owner stoop.
To me, and to the state of my great grief,
Let kings assemble ; for my grief's so great,
That no supporter but the huge firm earth
Can hold it up : here I and Sorrow sit ;
Here is my throne, bid kings come bow to it.

O husband, hear me !—ah, alack ; how new
Is husband in my mouth !—even for that name,
Which till this time my tongue did ne'er pronounce,
Upon my knee I beg, go not to arms
Against my uncle. *Con.* O ! upon *my* knee,
Made hard with kneeling, I do pray to thee,
Thou virtuous Dauphin, alter not the doom
Fore-thought by heaven.

Thy grandam loves thee, and thy uncle will
As dear be to thee as thy father was.

Good Hubert ! Hubert—Hubert, throw thine eye
On yond' young boy : I'll tell thee what, my friend,
He is a very serpent in my way ;
And wheresoe'er this foot of mine doth tread,
He lies before me. Dost thou understand me ?
Thou art his keeper. *Hub.* And I'll keep him so,
That he shall not offend your majesty.
K. J. Death. *Hub.* My lord ? *K. J.* A grave.
Hub. He shall not live. *K. J.* Enough.
I could be merry now. Hubert, I love thee.

Have you the heart ? When your head did but ache,
I knit my handkerchief about your brows
(The best I had, a princess wrought it me),
And I did never ask it you again :
And with my hand at midnight held your head,
And, like the watchful minutes to the hour,

Still and anon cheer'd up by the heavy time,
Saying, what lack you? and where lies your grief?
Or, what good love may I perform for you?
Many a poor man's son would have lain still,
And ne'er have spoke a loving word to you,
But you at your sick service had a prince.

Alas! what need you be so boisterous-rough?
I will not struggle; I will stand stone-still.
For heaven's sake, Hubert, let me not be bound.
Nay, hear me, Hubert: drive these men away,
And I will sit as quiet as a lamb;
I will not stir, nor wince, nor speak a word,
Nor look upon the iron angerly.
Thrust but these men away, and I'll forgive you,
Whatever torment you do put me to.

Therefore to be possess'd with double pomp,
To guard a title that was rich before,
To gild refined gold, to paint the lily,
To throw a perfume on the violet,
To smooth the ice, or add another hue
Unto the rainbow, or with taper light
To seek the beauteous eye of heaven to garnish,
Is wasteful and ridiculous excess.

Indeed, your drums, being beaten, will cry out;
And so shall you, being beaten. Do but start
An echo with the clamour of thy drum,
And even at hand a drum is ready brac'd
That shall reverberate all as loud as thine;
Sound but another, and another shall,
As loud as thine, rattle the welkin's ear,
And mock the deep-mouth'd thunder; for at hand
(Not trusting to this halting Legate here,
Whom he hath us'd rather for sport than need)
Is warlike John; and in his forehead sits
A bare-ribb'd death, whose office is this day
To feast upon whole thousands of the French.

Poison'd—ill-fare ;—dead, forsook, cast off,
And none of you will bid the winter come,
To thrust his icy fingers in my maw ;
Nor let my kingdom's rivers take their course
Through my burn'd bosom ; nor entreat the north
To make his bleak winds kiss my parched lips,
And comfort me with cold.—I do not ask you much ;
I beg cold comfort ; and you are so strait,
And so ingrateful, you deny me that.

Let him come back, that his compassion may
Give life to yours.

Now powers from home, and discontents at home,
Meet in one line : a vast confusion waits,
As doth a raven on a sick-fallen beast,
The imminent decay of wrested pomp.
Now happy he, whose cloak and cincture can
Hold out this tempest.—Bear away that child,
And follow me with speed : I'll to the King.
A thousand businesses are brief in hand,
And heaven itself doth frown upon the land.

Wherein we step after a stranger, march
Upon her gentle bosom, and fill up
Her enemies' rank (I must withdraw, and weep
Upon the spot of this enforced cause),
To grace the gentry of a land remote,
And follow unacquainted colours here ?

And come ye now to tell me, John hath made
His peace with Rome ? What is that peace to me ?
I, by the honour of my marriage-bed,
After young Arthur, claim this land for mine ;
And now it is half-conquer'd must I back,
Because that John hath made his peace with Rome ?
Am I Rome's slave ? What penny hath Rome borne ?
What men provided, what munition sent,
To underprop this action ? is 't not I

That undergo this charge? who else but I,
And such as to my claim are liable,
Sweat in this business, and maintain this war?

That hand, which had the strength, even at your door,
To cudgel you, and make you take the hatch;
To dive like buckets in concealed wells;
To crouch in litter of your stable planks;
To lie like pawns lock'd up in chests and trunks;
To hug with swine; to seek sweet safety out
In vaults and prisons; and to thrill, and shake,
Even at the crying of your nation's crow,
Thinking this voice an armed Englishman:
Shall that victorious hand be feeble here,
That in your chambers gave you chastisement?

MERCHANT OF VENICE

Is in Meres; and was entered at Stationers' Hall, 1598.

It is very natural, sometimes excursive, not ratiocinative. The verse, generally, uniform and flowing. One weak ending. Some breaks. The speeches, where the speakers change, fit into the verse, but not always.

It is, remarkably, one of those plays which were written when his mind was at ease, original, and independent. Neither disturbed by the rivalship of others, nor stimulated to take pains to write in a more active and dramatic style than naturally occurred to him in the course of his composition. He never, as I conceive, took pains, in the cool, deliberate way in which most other writers of merit have done; but he certainly 'lashed his sides with his tail,' as Longinus says, out of Homer, as to Euripides, in such plays as *Macbeth*, and others of his highest class.

The character of Portia is just that which Shakespeare loved, and well understood. Playful spirit, modest but

decided affection, the most simple humility, in the speech,

> You see me, Lord Bassanio, what I am,

the readiest and most zealous kindness, and, in the end, the most manly vigour and good sense. In the last scene alone, how striking is the contrast, yet how natural is the consistency, between her gentle expostulation for mercy, and the steady firmness with which she checks all the offers made to Shylock, and pronounces his doom!

It is not common, I believe, to have strong tragic feeling, in Shakespeare, expressed in prose; but we have one in this play, expressing the deepest spirit of revenge.

This play does not, perhaps, force or drive us into admiration, so much as some, but wins, in a remarkable degree, our constant liking and admiration.

These instances are where most interrupted:—

> He may win,
> And what is music then? then music is
> Even as the flourish when true subjects bow
> To a new crowned monarch: such it is.

> Not one, my lord.
> Besides, it should appear, that if he had
> The present money to discharge the Jew,
> He would not take it. Never did I know
> A creature, that did bear the shape of man,
> So keen and greedy to confound a man.

These quite the reverse:—

> A kinder gentleman treads not the earth.
> I saw Antonio and Bassanio part.
> Bassanio told him he would make some speed
> Of his return: he answer'd, 'Do not so:
> Slubber not business for my sake, Bassanio,
> But stay the very riping of the time;

And for the Jew's bond, which he hath of me,
Let it not enter in your mind of love.
Be merry, and employ your chiefest thoughts
In courtship, and such fair ostents of love
As shall conveniently become you there.'
And even then, his eyes being big with tears,
Turning his face, he put his hand behind him,
And with affection wondrous sensible,
He wrung Bassanio's hand, and so they parted.

The law hath yet another hold on you.
It is enacted by the laws of Venice,
If it be prov'd against an alien,
That, by direct or indirect attempts,
He seek the life of any citizen,
The party 'gainst the which he doth contrive
Shall seize one half his goods: the other half
Comes to the privy coffer of the state;
And the offender's life lies in the mercy
Of the Duke only, 'gainst all other voice.
In which predicament, I say, thou stand'st:
For it appears, by manifest proceeding,
That indirectly, and directly too,
Thou hast contriv'd against the very life
Of the defendant, and thou hast incurr'd
The danger formerly by me rehears'd.
Down, therefore, and beg mercy of the Duke.

The extract from Meres is as follows:—

Shakespeare, among the English, is the most excellent in both kinds for the stage: for Comedy, witness his *Gentlemen of Verona*, his *Errors*, his *Love Labour's Lost*, his *Love Labour's Wonne*, his *Midsummer's Night Dream*, and his *Merchant of Venice;* for Tragedy, his *Richard the 2nd*, *Richard the 3rd*, *Henry the 4th*, *King John*, *Titus Andronicus*, and his *Romeo and Juliet*.

From the style of this passage, we are by no means entitled to suppose that Meres included all the plays which had then been acted; rather, indeed, the contrary.

The *Merry Wives of Windsor*, here omitted, seems to be quite established as existing before this date.

Meres was not bound to be infallible; he might be ignorant of some plays of Shakespeare. He might erroneously ascribe to him something that was not his. This may be the case as to *Love's Labour's Won*, which we have no right, as Mr. Halliwell observes, to translate into another, known, title.

This year of 1598 is something like an epoch, I think; partly, on account of Meres's list, however uncertain; partly because, as appears to me, there is really a material change of style about this time; but also, because it was in this year that Ben Jonson came out, and with a play of great force and popularity, *Every Man in his Humour*, which was likely to have an effect upon Shakespeare, both directly, and indirectly, as influencing the public taste.

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

Was extant in 1600, and is not in Meres. It is in the second style, chiefly flowing; with some breaks, and even weak endings; alternate rhymes; one instance of the long verse.

As to the general character of the play, as I have no concern with prose scenes, I must not dwell upon the incomparable comedy, and the sprightly dialogues, amidst which the very high character of Beatrice breaks out: one of the most interesting of his female characters, and connected with two others, probably of near the same period—Portia and Rosalind. This part is a fine specimen of the knowledge of Shakespeare: how much that

is serious and steady, especially in young women, lurks under a character which, in ordinary circumstances, seems to be remarkable only for a quick and almost sharp cleverness in conversation; the strength of character, when wanted, being rendered only the more useful, the feeling showing itself only the more hearty, for that very quickness. Her simple honesty is also remarkable. When asked whether she had slept with her cousin, she answers at once, and even adds to the question, though she must know the consequence that will be drawn from it.

The manner in which Hero takes the accusation against her is beautiful, suited to a very young and simple girl, though of high education. In different parts, Shakespeare has shown his usual great talent in distinguishing between one character and another, in respect of the manner in which women conduct themselves under such circumstances. Compare Desdemona, Hermione, Imogen, with this part, and observe that they differ, not for the sake of variety, but as they ought to differ, from what we know of their different natures and situations.

Hear me a little,
For I have only been silent so long,
And given way unto this course of fortune
By noting of the lady: I have mark'd
A thousand blushing apparitions
To start into her face; a thousand innocent shames,
In angel whiteness, beat away those blushes;
And in her eyes there hath appear'd a fire,
To burn the errors that these princes hold
Against her maiden truth.—Call me a fool,
Trust not my reading, nor my observations,
Which with experimental seal doth warrant
The tenour of my book: trust not my age,
My reverence, calling, nor divinity,

If this sweet lady lie not guiltless here
Under some biting error.

Friar. Lady, what man is he you are accus'd of?
Hero. They know, that do accuse me: I know none.
If I know more of any man alive
Than that which maiden modesty doth warrant,
Let all my sins lack mercy!—O, my father!
Prove you that any man with me convers'd
At hours unmeet, or that I yesternight
Maintain'd the change of words with any creature,
Refuse me, hate me, torture me to death.

The following is remarkable in metre, and as resembling the Sonnets in style:—

What fire is in mine ears? can this be true?
Stand I condemn'd for pride and scorn so much?
Contempt, farewell! and maiden pride, adieu!
No glory lives behind the back of such.
And, Benedict, love on: I will requite thee,
Taming my wild heart to thy loving hand.
If thou dost love, my kindness shall incite thee,
To bind our loves up in a holy band;
For others say thou dost deserve, and I
Believe it better than reportingly.

Disdain and scorn ride sparkling in her eyes,
Misprising what they look on: and her wit
Values itself so highly, that to her
All matter else seems weak.

But there is no such man; for, Brother, men
Can counsel, and speak comfort to that grief
Which they themselves not feel; but tasting it,
Their counsel turns to passion, which before
Would give preceptial medicine to rage,
Fetter strong madness in a silken thread,
Charm ache with air, and agony with words.
No, no; 'tis all men's office to speak patience

To those that wring under the load of sorrow,
But no man's virtue, nor sufficiency,
To be so moral when he shall endure
The like himself.

This speech is one of the very finest that was ever written, and is almost entirely in the unbroken, and indeed enumerative style:

If they speak but truth of her,
These hands shall tear her: if they wrong her honour,
The proudest of them shall well hear of it.
Time hath not yet so dried this blood of mine,
Nor age so eat up my invention,
Nor fortune made such havoc of my means,
Nor my bad life 'reft me so much of friends,
But they shall find awak'd in such a kind,
Both strength of limb, and policy of mind,
Ability in means, and choice of friends,
To quit me of them throughly.

HAMLET.

It is known, from a MS. entry in a book which Mr. Malone had seen, that a *Hamlet*, as Shakespeare's, had been acted in 1598. In June, 1594, a *Hamlet* was acted (according to Henslowe's diary), apparently, from the manner it is mentioned, not a new play. This is much more likely to have been the old play alluded to by Nash, than that of Shakespeare.

In July, 1602, a *Hamlet* was entered at Stationers' Hall 'as it was lately acted.' This, in strictness, does not well suit with 1598; but it may well mean, 'as it has been acted of late years.' This book was never actually printed. It is by a different printer from the following, the first edition known. This bears the name

of Shakespeare, and came out in 1603, 'as it hath been divers times acted.'

Another quarto edition came out in 1604, 'enlarged to almost as much again as it was, according to the true and perfect copy.' Others followed, with the same description, and then the folio of 1623. The 1603 quarto is evidently a careless short-hand copy, Mr. Collier says. The 1604 contains much that is not in the folio, and the folio contains matter that is not in the 1604; but some of which was in the 1603.

The advertised 'additions' appear to be not very many in quantity. Some of them were probably real additions; one of them is the speech about drunkenness, which is not in an antiquated style, and is likely to have been written, though not perhaps with the best taste, for stage effect, to make the entrance of the ghost more striking. These additions would be left out afterwards by the players, to shorten so very long a play; and that already mentioned, also, as Mr. Collier observes, to avoid displeasing King James, and the King of Denmark, our Queen's uncle, who, when here, drank enormously.

The beginning of the first speech of the King, 'Though yet of Hamlet,' down to 'thus,' would have been an odd passage to have added afterwards; nor would it have been a very wise omission; the speech begins very awkwardly without it in the first folio, considered as a first speech, and addressed to an assembly. It is in an old-fashioned style, but not un-Shakespearian.

We must consider that the earliest of these editions is not, therefore, the first state of the play. There are five years, still, between.

Some allusions admit of being additions; children,

mentioned in the scene of the actors, flourished, we are told, in the beginning of James I., and end of Queen Elizabeth; and the 'innovation' mentioned in the same scene, alludes to proceedings in 1600 and 1601.

The play of *Hamlet* is, I believe, nearly the most interesting of any, on the whole. It is so to the people, on account of the strong dramatic effect; though of a comparatively small part, compared to what is in *Macbeth* and *Richard*. That part, however, is much more unusual and striking in its character than what we have in any other plays. To all those above the vulgar, there are very interesting speeches, both in dialogue and soliloquy. But persons of greater refinement, principally readers, find, in the part of Hamlet himself, an interest which nowhere else occurs; greatly increased by the notion, which it is impossible to avoid, that here, in a peculiar degree, Shakespeare has painted himself; his general turn of mind, but, possibly, too, an humour, or state of feeling, in which he was at the particular time. It shews itself to be the work of a man of some knowledge of life and its disappointments, large observation of mankind, of valuable friends, and hollow enemies. One would be glad to think that he had ever found an Horatio; but, from his Sonnets, it does not appear to have been the fact. On the other hand, we do not find, in this play, so much of those general meditative reflections upon life, of that rich and varied versatile excursiveness, as in several others; but that difference makes it the more interesting; the effect of that meditation comes out, in what the one principal character says in the course of his own transactions. Didactic passages occur, however, in the earlier scenes, and out of the part of Hamlet; as the speeches of advice to, and by, Laertes.

There is a notion of Mr. Hallam's, which I have repeatedly considered, though not very minutely, but cannot convince myself of: that you may trace in the Plays, what the Sonnets prove, a depressed and unhappy period in his life. Certainly this is very distinctly shown in one Sonnet in particular. But there is only one genuine Play, to which I should give that character. It might be thought to be sufficiently accounted for by the subject; *Timon of Athens*. But that is *idem per idem*. Why did he choose that subject? I am apt to think it was chosen for him; the old play given him to recast. It has a very *run-up* air; and if he was hurried, and partly directed, that of itself, too, would check and lower his spirit. But I see no resemblance between *Timon of Athens*, and *Hamlet*, which Mr. Hallam couples with it. The dates, as matter of evidence, and the style, differ widely. In the latter, the *dwelling* style, as I may call it, of Shakespeare, is remarkable. There is no play in which his own mind is more fully brought out before us. But though it springs from a melancholy mind, he must have taken great pleasure in writing it; at least, all the principal, and earlier, part of it. The two plays resemble one another in one respect, indeed, remarkably; the *protagonistic* character, the quantity of business thrown upon the principal part, in soliloquies and otherwise.

The melancholy of Hamlet is the melancholy of that very fine Sonnet,

> Tir'd with all these, for restful death I cry;

enumerating, very much as is done more shortly in Hamlet's celebrated soliloquy, the injuries of the world.

We see in his incomparable speech to Guildenstern,

equal to anything in prose that we have in the language not the affliction, sharp, perhaps, but capable of relief from present misfortunes, but the entire lowering and beating down of the spirit within itself. The lines,

> How weary, stale, flat and unprofitable
> Seem to me all the uses of this world!

and the way in which he says, "Now I am alone," when relieved of the company of his acquaintance, show the melancholy of his mind very strongly, its deep possession with the dreadful ideas and duties that have been impressed upon it. Still more, perhaps, the following:—

> You are merry, my lord.
> Who? I? O God! your only jig-maker.

He would be open to an occasional disposition to ridicule persons who come before him, as Polonius and Osrick. There is a remarkable instance of the delicacy of Shakespeare in what relates to the former, speaking to the players,

> Follow that lord, and look you mock him not.

After the scene with the Queen, all, or almost all, that follows, except what relates to Ophelia, and the prose scenes of Osrick and the gravedigger, I still think active, indeed, and dramatical, but hard and disagreeable in matter and style. The blustering speeches in the grave are flowing and free; poetical, indeed, but rather for the stage, I think, than for his own satisfaction. This part seems to me to be the work of a writer pressed for speed; and of a mind, as compared with the usual state of Shakespeare's, especially in all the preceding plays, uneasy within itself. This is a very different feeling from the melancholy of Hamlet (or Shakespeare) in the former part of the play; the thoughtful but proud contempt of the world.

There is great skill in inventing the madness and death of Ophelia, to fill up the interval, while Hamlet is out of the country; but all that follows about her brother is unpleasing and unnatural—that having, as he is taught to believe, a strong cause of quarrel against Hamlet, and having in one sense forgiven him, he suffers himself to be made a tool by the King to murder him; for to fight with a poisoned weapon is murder. But Laertes is uninteresting as well as disagreeable. Shakespeare, with a skill very common in his plays, has indeed introduced us to him before, and made him give some good advice to his sister. But so it is, that, I believe, we never care at all about him; while Ophelia immediately inspires an interest. It is impossible to endure the direct lie which Hamlet tells, that he was mad when he killed Polonius; having told his mother, at the same time, that he was not, and told his friends, at the beginning, that he was going to pretend to be mad. To support this pretence, he behaves to Ophelia in a way that is not very justifiable; but he suspected, what was the truth, that she was set on as a spy upon him; and that, though not indeed with her knowledge, his life was in danger. This latter part of the play, Johnson remarks, is further contaminated by the idea of Hamlet's forging letters to have Rosencrantz and Guildenstern put to death; 'not shriving time allowed;' and it is entertaining to see that Shakespeare himself felt it; though Horatio does not exactly find fault, Hamlet answers him, defending what he has done, as if he saw his friend looking as if he did not altogether approve of it.

The conduct of Hamlet, when he sees the King praying, is also condemned by Johnson. The idea is natural;

but there was no necessity for introducing the King praying at all, which gives occasion for it. When a villain is to be killed in a play, if the thought, what is to become of him after death, is to come into the mind, let it be in the hottest blood, and not with cool deliberation, as in this instance. Whether Shakespeare laid this work aside for a time, and finished it with a diminished interest, and spirit, would be a curious inquiry. It was not for any long time; the earlier part is not in so early a style as the *Henries*.

A good deal has been written on the character of Hamlet, in respect of his irresolution. He charges it upon himself, more than once; most violently, where he says, that he is

Pigeon-liver'd, and lacks gall.

His speech after meeting the Captain, dwelt on by Schlegel, is remarkably in the manner of Shakespeare, both in the general observations, in his reflective style, and in the application to Hamlet himself, as in the case of the actor before. What is most valuable, is Coleridge's remark, or something like it, that this want of practical resolution was owing to over-refinement of feeling.

But it may be said for him,—

1. That he was young. Youth is more resolute than old-age; but not than maturity, for want of experience; especially where the thing to be done is very unusual and strange; and has to be done alone, and in secret, except as to the consultation with one friend.

2. He was a scholar, and fond of his college; not a man of the world, or a soldier. A man, as we should say now, of taste in literature.

3. He had doubts, not unreasonable till after the Play;

and then he really was going to act, till checked by a motive very different from delicacy of character; and just after, he believes himself to have killed the King, suddenly indeed, but quite intentionally;—

I took thee for thy betters.

The Ghost, however, seems not to enter into these excuses. He comes (at an inconvenient time, but that is for the sake of a most powerful stage-effect) "to whet" his son's "almost blunted purpose."

In what other author, of any time or place, do we inquire into the character of fictitious persons in this manner, as if they were real? But we must not consider Shakespeare's management as absolute perfection; much less, expect of him to produce characters whom we can perfectly understand, when we so seldom understand the characters of our actually existing fellow-creatures.

Probably the real primary reason, after all, was, that it was necessary to lengthen out the play.

The play, acted by the players before the King, is at first in a bad, and antiquated, style. I thought it might be really taken from an old play; but it is impossible he could have lit upon a composition which suited his purpose; and in the last speech but one there is a resemblance to Shakespeare's fancies, about grief, love, etc., and elsewhere to his words; and great neatness and care in the composition. It is all in rhyme. I do not see symptoms of the lines which Hamlet was to insert.

The speeches, recited by the player to Hamlet, about Troy, on the other hand, are in a flowing style of verse, nearly or quite as modern as the entire play; but in an inflated taste of composition, which is not like it. Pro-

bably these speeches are a fragment, or part of some other unproduced composition. It is most ridiculous to suppose that they were meant to be a burlesque. They have some little connection with the old play of *Dido and Æneas*. Had he touched up that play for repetition? and is this one of his insertions and alterations? From the praise bestowed on it, I should be led rather towards the belief that it was not his own; but that the opinions of *others* are called in aid, savours again of modesty, as if it was. It is curious that, with the over-wrought expressions we find in some of the lines, he says it was complained of as not ornamented enough.

The story printed in *Shakespeare's Library* as that from which *Hamlet* is supposed to be taken, is dated 1608. It is a translation. Malone thinks it was certainly a re-impression.

It actually contains the very words of Hamlet, 'A rat, a rat!' Also,

The counterfeiting madness;

Something like the setting on Ophelia to try him;

The counterplot against Rosencrantz and Guildenstern;

The censure of Danes for drunkenness.

But little else like: or rather, quite different; except the main fact, of the King's brother killing him, and marrying his wife, and being killed by Hamlet. In the story, the brother had previously adulterated with the Queen. Hamlet is represented as of a most savage and 'subtle' disposition. It is possible that this impression still stuck with Shakespeare in some degree, in parts, though so opposite to his own conception in general.

The play, on the whole, is in the second, or nearly in

the third style. One passage, at least, which approaches to the style of *All's Well that Ends Well*, the speech of Hamlet after meeting the Captain, is not in the first edition, 1603.

The verse in the latter part is entirely in the later, but not latest, style. There is one nearly weak ending,—

> All this can I
> Truly deliver.

It may be fanciful, but I think the pauses are generally after the accented syllable; not after the unaccented, which is the more spirited and flowing form, and prevails most, I believe, in the former part.

Unbroken verse is in Ophelia's speech, a small part of which is enumerative; and, as everybody knows, in Hamlet's first speech to his mother, which is mostly so.

The two soliloquies are broken, passionate. The verse leaves off often in the middle, both at the end, and in the course of speeches. Several lines are too long. The short speeches of half lines, in the dialogue about the Ghost, fill up the verse.

> O! that this too, too solid flesh would melt,
> Thaw, and resolve itself into a dew;
> Or that the Everlasting had not fix'd
> His canon 'gainst self-slaughter. O God! O God!
> How weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable
> Seem to me all the uses of this world!
> Fie on 't! O fie! 'tis an unweeded garden,
> That grows to seed; things rank, and gross in nature,
> Possess it merely. That it should come to this!
> But two months dead!—nay, not so much, not two:
> So excellent a King; that was, to this,
> Hyperion to a satyr: so loving to my mother,
> That he might not beteem the winds of heaven
> Visit her face too roughly. Heaven and earth!

Must I remember? why, she would hang on him,
As if increase of appetite had grown
By what it fed on; and yet, within a month,—
Let me not think on't.—Frailty, thy name is woman!—
A little month; or ere those shoes were old
With which she follow'd my poor father's body,
Like Niobe, all tears;—why she, even she
(O God! a beast, that wants discourse of reason,
Would have mourn'd longer), married with my uncle,
My father's brother, but no more like my father,
Than I to Hercules: within a month,
Ere yet the salt of most unrighteous tears
Had left the flushing in her galled eyes,
She married.

A figure like your father,
Armed at point, exactly, cap-à-pié,
Appears before them, and with solemn march
Goes slow and stately by them: thrice he walk'd,
By their oppress'd and fear-surprised eyes,
Within his truncheon's length; whilst they, distill'd
Almost to jelly with the act of fear,
Stand dumb, and speak not to him.

O, all you host of heaven! O earth! what else?
And shall I couple hell?—O fie;—Hold, hold, my heart;
And you, my sinews, grow not instant old,
But bear me stiffly up!—Remember thee?
Ay, thou poor ghost, while memory holds a seat
In this distracted globe. Remember thee?
Yea, from the table of my memory
I'll wipe away all trivial fond records,
All saws of books, all forms, all pressures past,
That youth and observation copied there,
And thy commandment all alone shall live
Within the book and volume of my brain,
Unmix'd with baser matter: yes, by heaven!

Nay, do not think I flatter;
For what advancement may I hope from thee,

That no revenue hast, but thy good spirits,
To feed and clothe thee? Why should the poor be flatter'd?
No; let the candied tongue lick absurd pomp,
And crook the pregnant hinges of the knee,
Where thrift may follow fawning. Dost thou hear?
Since my dear soul was mistress of her choice,
And could of men distinguish, her election
Hath seal'd thee for herself; for thou hast been
As one, in suffering all, that suffers nothing;
A man, that fortune's buffets and rewards
Has ta'en with equal thanks: and bless'd are those,
Whose blood and judgment are so well commingled,
That they are not a pipe for fortune's finger
To sound what stop she please. Give me that man
That is not passion's slave, and I will wear him
In my heart's core, ay, in my heart of heart,
As I do thee.

Such an act,
That blurs the grace and blush of modesty;
Calls virtue, hypocrite; takes off the rose
From the fair forehead of an innocent love,
And sets a blister there; makes marriage vows
As false as dicers' oaths: O! such a deed,
As from the body of contraction plucks
The very soul; and sweet religion makes
A rhapsody of words: Heaven's face doth glow,
Yea, this solidity and compound mass,
With tristful visage, as against the doom,
Is thought-sick at the act.

Sure, he, that made us with such large discourse,
Looking before and after, gave us not
That capability and godlike reason
To fust in us unus'd. Now, whether it be
Bestial oblivion, or some craven scruple,
Of thinking too precisely on th' event,—
A thought, which, quarter'd, hath but one part wisdom,
And ever three parts coward,—I do not know

Why yet I live to say, "This thing's to do;"
Sith I have cause, and will, and strength, and means,
To do't.

The following might almost have occurred in *Midsummer Night's Dream*:—

There is a willow grows ascaunt the brook,
That shows his hoar leaves in the glassy stream;
Therewith fantastic garlands did she make
Of crow-flowers, nettles, daisies, and long purples,
That liberal shepherds give a grosser name,
But our cold maids do dead men's fingers call them:
There on the pendent boughs her coronet weeds
Clambering to hang, an envious sliver broke,
When down her weedy trophies, and herself,
Fell in the weeping brook. Her clothes spread wide,
And, mermaid-like, awhile they bore her up;
Which time she chanted snatches of old lauds;
As one incapable of her own distress,
Or like a creature native and indu'd
Unto that element: but long it could not be,
Till that her garments, heavy with their drink,
Pull'd the poor wretch from her melodious lay
To muddy death.

What is he, whose grief
Bears such an emphasis? whose phrase of sorrow
Conjures the wandering stars, and makes them stand,
Like wonder-wounded hearers? this is I,
Hamlet the Dane.

AS YOU LIKE IT

Is not in Meres. It quotes *Hero and Leander*, 1598. The passage, 'Weep for nothing, like Diana in the fountain,' Malone thinks alludes to a statue of Diana, 'which had water prilling from its breast.' Stowe's *London*,

1598, says it was just put up; and in the edition 1603, that the water had stopped.

It is entered in the Stationers' Company as 'stayed,' without date; but with *Much Ado about Nothing*, which was printed in 1600. It is in a more advanced style of metre than that play; see particularly, the speech of Jaques about the Fool, Orlando's speech, 'If you have,' etc. Double endings not unusual. Rhymes at the end of speeches occur. One speech is in alternate rhymes, Act iii. scene 1.

The 'Seven Ages' are well known. The verse is there broken, though it is an enumerative passage. Weak endings—

> Swearing that we
> Are mere usurpers.

> For 'tis
> The royal disposition of that beast.

The speeches often end on a half-line, which is always, I believe, regularly taken up.

This is perfectly the reverse of an historical or political play.

I would put it as early as possible. So say 1598 or 1599. It is the very pleasantest and sweetest of plays, sprinkled with a good deal of seriousness; and some unhappiness, but none of it cuts deep. The elder Duke has long been banished, and is quite contented with his situation. The distress of Orlando and Adam is speedily relieved. Rosalind and Celia, happy, from the first, in each other's company, are quite gay and cheerful when they get into the forest. Even the bad brother partakes of the general sunshine, and is let off very easily, kindly, and pleasantly, though not with any great probability.

The cheerfulness of this play is delicate, however, and gentle. There are not the coarse gaieties (if anything Shakespeare did can be called coarse) of Falstaff and his companions, or of the people in Olivia's house: nor the bad conceits of *Romeo and Juliet*.

It is a play of conversation more than action, on the whole, and of character. Some of the characters, as Jaques and Touchstone, are shown in what they say, merely; not what they do.

There is in Lodge's *Rosalind*, the story from which *As You Like It* is taken, a proof that *Much Ado* did not then, necessarily, bear a trivial or ridiculous meaning. 'Much ado there was between these two brethren, S. in craving pardon, and R. in forgiving and forgetting all former injuries.'

The Celia, in that story, *is* banished by her father with her cousin. The resemblance, as to the principal story and characters, is very considerable. Adam is introduced; but he does not fill the very interesting position which he does in Shakespeare's play; who, we are told, acted that part himself.

The style of the story could not have inspired Shakespeare. It is elegantly written; but tediously, and with over-ornament, and long speeches.

> I thought that all things had been savage here,
> And therefore put I on the countenance
> Of stern commandment. But whate'er you are
> That, in this desert inaccessible,
> Under the shade of melancholy boughs,
> Lose and neglect the creeping hours of time,
> If ever you have look'd on better days,
> If ever been where bells have knoll'd to church,
> If ever sat at any good man's feast,

If ever from your eyelids wip'd a tear,
And know what 'tis to pity and be pitied,
Let gentleness my strong enforcement be.
In the which hope, I blush, and hide my sword.

Then, but forbear your food a little while,
Whiles, like a doe, I go to find my fawn,
And give it food. There is an old poor man,
Who after me hath many a weary step
Limp'd in pure love: till he be first suffic'd,
Oppress'd with two weak evils, age and hunger,
I will not touch a bit.

When last the young Orlando parted from you,
He left a promise to return again
Within an hour; and pacing through the forest,
Chewing the food of sweet and bitter fancy,
Lo, what befell! he threw his eye aside,
And, mark, what object did present itself!
Under an old oak whose boughs were moss'd with age,
And high top bald with dry antiquity,
A wretched ragged man, o'ergrown with hair,
Lay sleeping on his back: about his neck
A green and gilded snake had wreath'd itself,
Who with her head, nimble in threats, approach'd
The opening of his mouth; but suddenly,
Seeing Orlando, it unlink'd itself.
And with indented glides did slip away
Into a bush; under which bush's shade
A lioness, with udders all drawn dry,
Lay couching, head on ground, with cat-like watch,
When that the sleeping man should stir; for 'tis
The royal disposition of that beast,
To prey on nothing that doth seem as dead.
This seen, Orlando did approach the man,
And found it was his brother, his elder brother.

If that you were the good Sir Rowland's son,
As you have whisper'd faithfully, you were,

And as mine eye doth his effigies witness
Most truly limn'd, and living in your face,
Be truly welcome hither. I am the duke,
That lov'd your father. The residue of your fortune,
Go to my cave and tell me.—Good old man,
Thou art right welcome, as thy master is.
Support him by the arm.—Give me your hand,
And let them all your fortunes understand.

But, mistress, know yourself; down on your knees,
And thank Heaven fasting for a good man's love;
For I must tell you friendly in your ear,
Sell when you can: you are not for all markets.
Cry the man mercy; love him; take his offer:
Foul is most foul, being foul, to be a scoffer.

JULIUS CÆSAR.

Collier shows that a passage in Drayton's *Baron's Wars*, 1603, has a clear coincidence with the last speech in *Julius Cæsar*, and such as shows that Drayton was the imitator; and that it is wanting in the former form of that poem, in 1598. From the verse, I should say positively that it is not so late as 1602. It is mostly unbroken, like the Histories. Antony's speech, 'Oh pardon me,' is remarkably unbroken and antiquated in the metre. His speech, 'Oh mighty Cæsar,' much the reverse. Between the two, we have instances of the weak ending: and so in Brutus's soliloquy,—

All the interim is
Like a Phantasma.

It is worth while to compare the last speech with that of *Antony and Cleopatra, in pari materiâ.*

This play does not contain so much of high poetical

passages, delicate descriptions, nor tender touches of feeling, as often occur in many of his plays; but then it has very little that is not quite easy to understand; it is full of active business; of spirit in the dialogue; contains a good deal of dignity without being stiff or tiresome, and very considerable expression of character; besides the extraordinary merit of one long speech, that of Antony to the people, which alone would be sufficient to attract us to the play. Shakespeare in this play, as in some others, was taken out of his usual turn and taste by founding a play strictly upon history. This makes him more regular.

This speech is almost like *Henry IV.*, or, in its verse, even *Richard II.*

Wherefore rejoice? What conquest brings he home?
What tributaries follow him to Rome
To grace in captive bonds his chariot wheels?
You blocks, you stones, you worse than senseless things!
O! you hard hearts, you cruel men of Rome,
Knew you not Pompey? Many a time and oft
Have you climb'd up to walls and battlements,
To towers and windows, yea, to chimney-tops,
Your infants in your arms, and you have sat
The live-long day, with patient expectation,
To see great Pompey pass the streets of Rome:
And when you saw his chariot but appear,
Have you not made a universal shout,
That Tiber trembled underneath her banks,
To hear the replication of your sounds
Made in her concave shores?
And do you now put on your best attire?
And do you now cull out a holiday?
And do you now strew flowers in his way,
That comes in triumph over Pompey's blood?
Be gone!

Run to your houses, fall upon your knees,
Pray to the Gods to intermit the plague
That needs must light on this ingratitude.

I, as Æneas, our great ancestor,
Did from the flames of Troy upon his shoulder
The old Anchises bear, so from the waves of Tyber
Did I the tired Cæsar. And this man
Is now become a God; and Cassius is
A wretched creature, and must bend his body,
If Cæsar carelessly but nod on him.

Ye Gods, it doth amaze me,
A man of such a feeble temper should
So get the start of the majestic world,
And bear the palm alone.

I know not, gentlemen, what you intend,
Who else must be let blood, who else is rank:
If I myself, there is no hour so fit
As Cæsar's death's hour; nor no instrument
Of half that worth, as those your swords, made rich
With the most noble blood of all this world.
I do beseech ye, if you bear me hard,
Now, whilst your purpled hands do reek and smoke,
Fulfil your pleasure. Live a thousand years,
I shall not find myself so apt to die:
No place will please me so, no mean of death,
As here by Cæsar, and by you cut off,
The choice and master spirits of this age.

O, pardon me, thou bleeding piece of earth,
That I am meek and gentle with these butchers!
Thou art the ruins of the noblest man,
That ever lived in the tide of times.
Woe to the hand that shed this costly blood!
Over thy wounds now do I prophesy,
(Which, like dumb mouths, do ope their ruby lips,
To beg the voice and utterance of my tongue)

A curse shall light upon the limbs of men;
Domestic fury, and fierce civil strife,
Shall cumber all the parts of Italy:
Blood and destruction shall be so in use,
And dreadful objects so familiar,
That mothers shall but smile, when they behold,
Their infants quarter'd with the hands of war;
All pity chok'd with custom of fell deeds;
And Cæsar's spirit, ranging for revenge,
With Até by his side, come hot from hell,
Shall in these confines, with a monarch's voice,
Cry "Havoc!" and let slip the dogs of war,
That this foul deed shall smell above the earth
With carrion men, groaning for burial.

Here the verse has no peculiarity either way, and is as perfect as the sentiment and language —

Come, Antony, and young Octavius, come,
Revenge yourselves alone on Cassius,
For Cassius is aweary of the world:
Hated by one he loves; brav'd by his brother;
Check'd like a bondman; all his faults observed,
Set in a note book, learn'd and conn'd by rote
To cast into my teeth. O, I could weep
My spirit from mine eyes.—There is my dagger,
And here my naked breast; within, a heart
Dearer than Plutus' mine, richer than gold:
If that thou be'st a Roman, take it forth;
I, that denied thee gold, will give my rote;
Strike, as thou didst at Cæsar, for I know,
When thou didst hate him worst, thou lov'dst him better
Than ever thou lov'dst Cassius.

Here we have weak endings:—

Why didst thou send me forth, brave Cassius?
Did I not meet thy friends? and did not they
Put on my brows this wreath of victory,
And bid me give it thee? Didst thou not hear their shouts?

Alas, thou hast misconstrued everything.
But hold thee, take this garland on thy brow:
Thy Brutus bid me give it thee, and I
Will do his bidding.

OTHELLO

Is of the date of 1602, which agrees well enough with the style of the verse. This is the date of *Twelfth Night*. It seems strange to find any similitude between them. *Twelfth Night*, the most delightful play that ever was written, and which the author took the utmost possible pleasure in writing. Into *Othello* he put wilfully and willingly, and of his own choice, the whole power of his mind; uncramped too by any borrowed story. But there is hardly any part of it in which he could have taken pleasure, properly speaking, except the speech of Othello to the Senate. The many beauties in the part of Desdemona only make the horror the more dreadful. The parts of Iago and Othello are of unmixed pain; and the first is utterly mean, unredeemed by the spirit and dignity of Richard III., Lady Macbeth, or even Shylock; more unmixed with any sort of good, than any other character except Lady Macbeth; and perhaps more devoid of motive than even hers: for the jealousy, though twice thrown in, was evidently a mere afterthought for an excuse. The character of Othello, though we hear much of his noble nature, and though he is sufficiently shown to be naturally affectionate, full of feeling, confiding (for his very suspicions arise out of over-confidence, *i. e.* in Iago), full of military honour, yet is too inexcusably stupid to be dignified. Except in the passage of the farewell, Leontes, wickedly absurd as he is, is a king; he thinks for him-

self, and operates through others. Every person who sees the play, from the lowest to the highest, feels that Othello had no sufficient right to entertain such violent suspicions, much less to persist in them, with that obstinate hardness, after two interviews, alone, with his wife. The flexibility of his character, in one direction, should have been accompanied with some flexibility in the other. Shakespeare could not sit still, like a cooler poet, and take the small trouble of inventing stronger circumstances than the handkerchief, and better conducted than the scene with Bianca, to make the jealousy probable. And he is so excessively natural, more so perhaps in this play than in any other, that we find fault with everything. We judge as of real persons. We do not say, as in other poets, this is a play; it is not very likely; but we must bring about the plot some way or other. In them, the characters are apt to be generic types, mere machines for producing a great event.

The only comic character is dull and trifling in the extreme. There is one part, that of Emilia, which affords thorough gratification. It does not mitigate or relieve, but it counterbalances, the horror of the rest. She vents *our* feelings, in the most hearty, downright, daring, manner possible; such as could only have proceeded from an artless, subordinate, uneducated personage. Another dreadful fault in this play, is the unnecessary and extravagant coarseness. It pervades the whole; it is not merely in the scenes of jealousy, we have it in the beginning. It is not confined to the part of Iago; we have some of it in that of Othello. This is not the case, that I remember, in his other characters of jealousy; not even in comedy. In general, compared with

other writers of those times, though indelicate from a sort of carelessness, from imitation of nature, or to please, as we should say, the *gallery*, he never seems to take delight in it; but I am afraid we cannot say so here; nor altogether in *Hamlet*, where it is much more improper. If you are to measure the merit of a play by the amount of self-imposed obstacles to success, which it has got over, this must be reckoned quite his first.

But even without that consideration, the play is fully equal in force, spirit, and in tragic and pathetic effect and nature, to any other. And so the public seem to think. The irresistible effect of it upon our feelings is greatly increased by the purely domestic nature of the story. From the tragical style, it cannot be mistaken for a low, every-day occurrence; yet it is only removed from this by historical distance and by the elevation of rank, in the manner which critics have well pointed out, so as to enable us to contemplate horrors with complacency, like rocks and precipices afar off, without the too painful pressure of present reality.

But I came here to write about the sound, and not the sense. In my view, however, the state of his mind, in this play, bears upon the style and versification, especially as compared to the contemporary play. Some speeches are mere *verse*, without seeming to aim at poetry at all. There are none of his passages of dreamy, excursive imagination, none of flowing sweetness, nor even of high, heroic spirit, except that already mentioned of the "farewell." Of passion, there are several. And as usual, when his wheels are heated, these are rather less cramped, more free both in ideas and metre, than the cooler scenes at the beginning of the play.

Of what I call his fourth style of metre, there is not a grain. In the first part of the play, there is some of the cramp expression and metaphysical thoughts, which belong to his second half at least. And a very bad speech in prose, by the Duke. It is curious that Shakespeare is sometimes more artificial in prose, than he hardly ever is in verse. But what he is in prose, when he gives way to his own sense and feeling, the scene, here, of Cassio after his drunkenness, will sufficiently show.

Mr. Halliwell thinks it conclusive of an earlier date, that there is a poem in 1600, containing a passage like that "who steals my purse, steals trash;" and I think the coincidence is not accidental; but cannot see why Shakespeare must be the original. On the contrary, where Shakspeare and another man have the same idea, unless there is some decided merit in it, or in its expression, I should say, from all we know of Shakespeare, that the probability was, that he was the borrower. And this will apply still more to a coincidence between another passage, in the same book, and the speech of Shylock upon antipathies.

Here I kneel:—
If e'er my will did trespass 'gainst his love,
Either in discourse of thought, or actual deed;
Or that mine eyes, mine ears, or any sense,
Delighted them in any other form;
Or that I do not yet, nor ever did,
And ever will,—though he do shake me off
To beggarly divorcement,—love him dearly,
Comfort forswear me! Unkindness may do much;
And his unkindness may defeat my life,
But never taint my love. I cannot say——,
It does abhor me, now I speak the word;
To do the act, that might the addition earn,
Not the world's mass of vanity could make me.

Be thou assured, good Cassio, I will do
All my abilities in thy behalf.

Look where he comes! Not poppy, nor mandragora,
Nor all the drowsy syrups of the world,
Shall ever medicine thee to that sweet sleep
Which thou ow'dst yesterday.

O! now, for ever,
Farewell the tranquil mind, farewell content;
Farewell the plumed troop, and the big wars,
That make ambition virtue! O, farewell!
Farewell the neighing steed, and the shrill trump,
The spirit-stirring drum, th' ear-piercing fife,
The royal banner, and all quality,
Pride, pomp, and circumstance, of glorious war!
And O! you mortal engines, whose rude throats
The immortal Jove's dread clamours counterfeit,
Farewell! Othello's occupation's gone!

Had it pleas'd Heaven
To try me with affliction; had he rain'd
All kinds of sores and shames on my bare head;
Steep'd me in poverty to the very lips;
Given to captivity me and my utmost hopes,
I should have found in some part of my soul
A drop of patience; but alas, to make me
A fixed figure, for the time of scorn
To point his slow unmoving finger at:
Yet I could bear that too; well, very well:
But there, where I have garner'd up my heart,
Where either I must live, or bear no life,
The fountain, from the which my current runs,
Or else dries up; to be discarded thence,
Or keep it as a cistern, for foul toads
To knot and gender in!—Turn thy complexion there,
Patience, thou young and rose-lipp'd cherubin,
Aye, there, look grim as hell!

The utmost depth of Tragedy cannot go beyond this high-strained and amplified imagination of impossible patience, in order to heighten the intolerable suffering of the actual infliction.

But it is difficult always to attend to the verse, where the matter is so deep and interesting. Churchill might say,

> I can't catch words, and pity those who can.

> No, when light-winged toys
> Of feather'd Cupid foil with wanton dulness
> My speculative and active instruments,
> That my disports corrupt and taint my business,
> Let housewifes make a skillet of my helm,
> And all indign and base adversities
> Make head against my reputation.

> Why, how now, ho! From whence ariseth this?
> Are we turn'd Turks, and to ourselves do that
> Which heaven hath forbid the Ottomites?
> For christian shame, put by this barbarous brawl:
> He that stirs next to carve for his own rage,
> Holds his soul light; he dies upon his motion.—
> Silence that dreadful bell! It frights the isle
> From her propriety.—What is the matter, masters?—
> Honest Iago, that look'st dead with grieving,
> Speak, who began this? On thy love, I charge thee.

TWELFTH NIGHT.

I believe about 1602. Acted at the Temple, February, 1602, N.S. Not in Meres.

It is in the perfect, or middle, style of metre, with rather a leaning to the older unbroken.

In one speech, seven lines out of twenty-one have

double endings. Except the priest's speech near the end, no passage of enumeration (like that about Dr. Pinch, or Hamlet's on grief), no monosyllables at the end, a little continued rhyme; verses somewhat broken, but often not (chiefly at the end of speeches, which in the *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, e. g., they scarcely ever are,) but not broken, in general, to much effect. The speeches sometimes consist of, oftener end in, rhymes, very naturally.

Me nunc denique natum, Gratulor.

I must have drowned my book

Deeper than did ever plummet sound,

if this play had been his last, or the *Winter's Tale* had been written in 1604, as was once believed.

It is a pity he could not have written more plays in such verse as this has. It contains the most beautiful description of music, ("It came o'er my ear,") and it might so describe itself. As to the ideas, they are delightfully clear, though never prosaic. There is a disposition to excursiveness, and most beautiful; or rather, perhaps, such excursiveness springs naturally from the character of the two principal personages, who are made for each other; and of their condition of mind, being in love. This is the play, of which love is peculiarly the subject; not *Romeo and Juliet*, where the love is mere commonplace love. Even a sovereign Prince is brought in, merely to be in love. Shakespeare makes him express very strongly that love of music, which the poet himself felt most strongly, as we often see elsewhere. The way in which the girl who is in love with him, and who expresses in that incomparably beautiful manner her own feelings, under the pretended history of a sister, gradually

wins his heart, when he finds that the original object of his love certainly will not have him, is thoroughly natural and true.

Olivia has no great character; which is the better suited to her destination, of being turned over from one person to another, though probably like in mind, and not merely in face, yet quite unknown to her before. And Sebastian, who is to drop in for a husband by accident, we know nothing about at all; which is the more proper and suitable to his situation.

Twelfth Night is the play which Shakespeare wrote most at his ease, and in which the characters, whether serious or comic, seem to be most at their ease too. They do not appear to be taken out of their places to form a drama; though there is a sufficient amount of interest in the story.

> Make me a willow cabin at your gate,
> And call upon my soul within the house;
> Write loyal cantons of contemned love,
> And sing them loud even in the dead of night;
> Halloo your name to the reverberate hills,
> And make the babbling gossip of the air
> Cry out, Olivia! O! you should not rest
> Between the elements of air and earth,
> But you should pity me.

> Love make his heart of flint, that you shall love,
> And let your fervour, like my master's, be
> Plac'd in contempt! Farewell, fair cruelty.

> Too old, by heaven. Let still the woman take
> An elder than herself; so wears she to him,
> So sways she level in her husband's heart:
> For, boy, however we do praise ourselves,
> Our fancies are more giddy and unfirm,

More longing, wavering, sooner lost and won,
Than women's are.

Antonio never yet was thief or pirate,
Though, I confess, on base and ground enough,
Orsino's enemy. A witchcraft drew me hither:
That most ungrateful boy there, by your side,
From the rude sea's enrag'd and foamy mouth
Did I redeem: a wreck past hope he was.
His life I gave him, and did thereto add
My love, without retention or restraint,
All his in dedication, for his sake
Did I expose myself, pure for his love,
Into the danger of this adverse town;
Drew to defend him, when he was beset:
Where being apprehended, his false cunning
(Not meaning to partake with me in danger)
Taught him to face me out of his acquaintance,
And grew a twenty-years-removed thing,
While one would wink; denied me mine own purse,
Which I had recommended to his use
Not half an hour before.

A contract of eternal bond of love,
Confirm'd by mutual joinder of your hands,
Attested by the holy close of lips,
Strengthen'd by interchangement of your rings;
And all the ceremony of this compact
Seal'd in my function by my testimony:
Since when, my watch hath told me, toward my grave
I have travell'd but two hours.

LEAR.

Written between 1603, when Harsnet's book about demons came out, and Christmas 1606, when acted.

There is no room for much imagery, except in the storm, where the subject calls for it. It is not obscure,

where active, nor anywhere, much, compared with some as early.

It seems to me that it is not the nature of the *play* to be excursive, but of Lear himself, when mad.

It is wholly in the third style, perhaps least broken where there is most feeling. It is certainly not come to the crowding of ideas, that is only found in the fourth style,—unless in the speech of Goneril to Lear about his train.

Many double endings, and some weak endings. There are rhymes, and a very curious rhyming speech of Edgar, Act iii. scene 6.

An excellent speech of general reflection is remarkable, as being put into the mouth of a bad man, and not really meant by the poet to be applicable to the person of whom it is spoken. It is well known, I suppose, but will illustrate the versification of the play.

> This is some fellow
> Who, having been prais'd for bluntness, doth affect
> A saucy roughness, and constrains the garb
> Quite from his nature: he cannot flatter, he;
> An honest mind and plain—he must speak truth.
> An they will take it, so—if not, he 's plain;
> These kind of knaves I know, which in this plainness
> Harbour more craft, and more corrupter ends,
> Than twenty silly ducking observants
> That stretch their duties nicely.

The character of Lear is remarkably suited to tragedy, and highly original. Weak and strong at the same time, capable of the tenderest overflowing affection, of the most violent resentment, and the most sudden and absurd dislike; kind and considerate in the midst of eager passion and complaint; credulous in the midst of fierce and un-

bounded hatred; threatening he knows not what; trusting he knows not whom; wise in madness, as he had been foolish in power; cursing and imploring in a breath; he seems a compound, in one person, of everything that might be interesting and affecting in many. A great part of this astonishing combination of character depends on the bringing together of his past state, and his present. I do not mean merely his station; that he was a king, and is now without any real power at all; but his former force of passion, and hotness of spirit, with the depression and helplessness of old-age.

Madness has never been so represented, or near it. I hope his deep knowledge of it was not derived from any consciousness of the kind, at any time, in himself; melancholy as he often was.

Lear has a distinct and decided underplot, which no other of the great tragedies have, though none was less in want of it. It is very well connected with the main subject in many ways. Out of it arises the very valuable part of Edgar in the hovel. A real mad beggar would not have had half the interest.

> I pr'y thee, daughter, do not make me mad;
> I will not trouble thee, my child; farewell.
> We'll no more meet, no more see one another;
> But yet thou art my flesh, my blood, my daughter;
> Or rather, a disease that 's in my flesh,
> Which I must needs call mine; thou art a hell,
> A plague-sore, an embossed carbuncle,
> In my corrupted blood. But I 'll not chide thee;
> Let shame come when it will, I do not call it;
> I do not bid the thunder-bearer shoot,
> Nor tell tales of thee to high-judging Jove.
> Mend, when thou canst, be better, at thy leisure;
> I can be patient, I can stay with Regan
> I and my hundred knights.

The following extracts show weak endings.

To shake all cares and business from our age,
Conferring them on younger strengths, while we
Unburden'd crawl toward death.

Good my lord,
You have begot me, bred me, lov'd me: I
Return those duties back as are right fit,
Obey you, love you, and most honour you.

Approach, thou beacon to this under globe,
That by thy comfortable beams I may
Peruse this letter.—Nothing, almost, sees miracles,
But misery:—I know, 'tis from Cordelia;
Who hath most fortunately been inform'd
Of my obscured course; and shall find time
From this enormous state,—seeking to give
Losses their remedies.

Methought, thy very gait did prophesy
A royal nobleness. I must embrace thee:
Let sorrow split my heart, if ever I
Did hate thee, or thy father.

He hath commission from thy wife and me
To hang Cordelia in the prison, and
To lay the blame upon her own despair,
That she fordid herself.

MEASURE FOR MEASURE.

Acted December, 1604. Collier.

The style is difficult, but not generally ratiocinative, so much as *All's Well*.

The speeches, generally, fit into one another. The play ends with rhymes; and the soliloquy of the Duke, in short rhyme, is curious.

This is the very best specimen of the broken, yet flowing, metre, in its best scenes; but it has a few weak endings.

As to the matter, its high and solid kind of poetry and feeling, according to our present general notions of verse, would naturally lead to that partly interrupted metre. Perhaps it more resembles Milton's frame of versification, than any other of Shakespeare's plays.

A great part of it is a sustained model of the highest degree of excellence; but there are no small number of passages too crabbed in style, and, as we may always pretty safely infer in such cases, in thought.

The end of the play is oddly and disagreeably managed, (and the same may be said of *All's well that ends well*, which turns upon a similar circumstance,) but in substance it is a great improvement upon the story, or play, upon which it is founded.

A great many of the speeches in the latter division of Shakespeare's time, are written without any reference to verse at all. There is a business to be transacted, or a course of thought to be followed up, as matter of cool reasoning or observation, not dramatic argument or feeling. For these, the intention, upon systematic principles even, of stopping in the middle of the line, is not unfit, but more natural. But where he first departs from the more uniform undivided verse, it is rather by allowing himself, in speeches really dramatic, passionate, or at least *expostulative*, and decidedly poetical, to stop wherever the sense stops: and often, beyond this, to cultivate the effect, which an occasional pause in the middle, especially on the half-foot, produces on the ear.

In *Measure for Measure*, the account of the character of

Angelo, here extracted, is, I think, of the former kind; and the description of death, so well known, of the latter.

Our city's institutions, and the terms
For common justice, y' are as pregnant in
As art and practice hath enriched any
That we remember.

Or whether that the body public be
A horse whereon the governor doth ride,
Who, newly in the seat, that it may know
He can command, lets it straight feel the spur;
Whether the tyranny be in his place,
Or in his eminence that fills it up,
I stagger in.

Merciful heaven!
Thou rather, with thy sharp and sulphurous bolt,
Split'st the unwedgeable and gnarled oak,
Than the soft myrtle; O but man, proud man!
Drest in a little brief authority,
Most ignorant of what he's most assur'd,
His glassy essence, like an angry ape,
Plays such fantastic tricks before high heaven,
As makes the angels weep: who, with our spleens,
Would all themselves laugh mortal.

For which I would not plead, but that I must;
For which I must not plead, but that I am
At war 'twixt will, and will not.

I have seen
When after execution judgment hath
Repented o'er his doom.

Not with fond shekels of the tested gold,
Or stones, whose rates are either rich or poor
As fancy values them; but with true prayers,
That shall be up at heaven, and enter there

Ere sunrise: prayers from preserved souls,
From fasting maids, whose minds are dedicate
To nothing temporal.

And that there were
No earthly mean to save him, but that either
You must lay down the treasures of your body
To this supposed.

There is a kind of character in thy life,
That, to th' observer, doth thy history
Fully unfold. Thyself and thy belongings
Are not thine own so proper, as to waste
Thyself upon thy virtues, them on thee.
Heaven doth with us, as we with torches do,
Not light them for themselves; for if our virtues
Did not go forth of us, 'twere all alike
As if we had them not. Spirits are not finely touch'd,
But to fine issues; nor nature never lends
The smallest scruple of her excellence,
But, like a thrifty goddess, she determines
Herself the glory of a creditor,
Both thanks and use.

Why, all the souls that were, were forfeit once;
And He that might the vantage best have took,
Found out the remedy. How would you be,
If He, which is the top of judgment, should
But judge you as you are? O, think on that;
And mercy then will breathe within your lips
Like man new made!

O! I do fear thee, Claudio; and I quake,
Lest thou a feverous life shouldst entertain,
And six or seven winters more respect
Than a perpetual honour. Dar'st thou die?
The sense of death is most in apprehension,
And the poor beetle that we tread upon,
In corporal sufferance finds a pang as great
As when a giant dies.

A passage in it seems imitated, in Daniel's *Civil Wars*, 1609.

It seems to be later than Middleton's *Witch*. There are fragments of songs with 'etc.,' which, in that, are at length. There are other resemblances. Hecate is not likely to have been dragged in by Shakespeare, without precedent. I should give it against Shakespeare even generally, as likely to be the borrower; most of his plays are founded upon some former ones.

Now the *Witch* seems to be in or after 1603; for its Dedication says, 'Witchcraft is condemned by law;' which it was, by Act of Parliament, in that year.

Macbeth was acted in 1610; Foreman's *Diary* says 'in *Macbeth* etc., it is to be observed etc.,' not at all as if new. I can hardly guess it to be later than 1607, and should wish to think it earlier.

Macbeth is a distinct play; with all its deep and tremendous tragedy, there is much luxury of poetry, versification, and excursive thought; and that, in the mouth of the tyrant and murderer himself, and his more murderous wife.

The verse is, in some places, almost or quite of the second character; in many places much broken, and admitting, though not seeking or delighting in, weak endings; but generally, as the memory of all readers will tell them (and the fact of such memory shows it), it is of the best possible composition, in the most interesting parts.

The two beautiful soliloquies of Macbeth at the end, are meditative, excursive, and rather in the more regular style of metre, suited to such subjects.

Of his two great soliloquies, before the murder, the first is a good deal broken, and rather ratiocinative; the metre seeming to follow from the meaning, which, as we all know, is rather harsh, though not quite such '*horror*' as Ben Jonson describes it.

The dagger soliloquy is much more flowing and poetical. It is written with interrupted pauses, but quite good; and the same thing may be said of his soliloquies at the beginning, and of the speeches of Lady Macbeth, which are as perfect specimens of versification, without peculiarity either way, as can be found. The ends of speeches now and then slide into rhyme. In the beginning, after the Witches, there are passages coming very near to the fourth style.

And the character of the ideas agrees with much the same period as that of the verse;—sometimes obscure, but not purposely travelling into regions where obscurity and complication were to be expected.

One or two conceits, even puns, occur.

> Sons, kinsmen, thanes,
> And you whose places are the nearest, know,
> We will establish our estate upon
> Our eldest, Malcolm; whom we name hereafter,
> The Prince of Cumberland: which honour must
> Not, unaccompanied, invest him only,
> But signs of nobleness, like stars, shall shine
> On all deservers.—From hence to Inverness,
> And bind us farther to you.

> The raven himself is hoarse,
> That croaks the fatal entrance of Duncan
> Under my battlements. Come, you spirits
> That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here,
> And fill me, from the crown to the toe, top-full
> Of direst cruelty! make thick my blood,

Stop up th' access and passage to remorse;
That no compunctious visitings of nature
Shake my fell purpose, nor keep peace between
Th' effect and it! Come to my woman's breasts,
And take my milk for gall, you murdering ministers,
Wherever in your sightless substances
You wait on nature's mischief! Come, thick night,
And pall thee in the dunnest smoke of hell,
That my keen knife see not the wound it makes,
Nor heaven peep through the blanket of the dark,
To cry, 'Hold, hold!'
Great Glamis! worthy Cawdor!
Greater than both, by the all-hail hereafter!
Thy letters have transported me beyond
This ignorant present, and I feel now
The future in the instant.

What beast was 't, then,
That made you break this enterprise to me?
When you durst do it, then you were a man;
And, to be more than what you were, you would
Be so much more the man. Nor time, nor place,
Did then adhere, and yet you would make both:
They have made themselves, and that their fitness now
Does unmake you.

What, sir! not yet at rest? The king's a-bed;
He hath been in unusual pleasure, and
Sent forth great largess to your officers.

Then comes my fit again: I had else been perfect
Whole as the marble, founded as the rock,
As broad, and general as the casing air;
But now, I am cabin'd, cribb'd, confin'd, bound in
To saucy doubts and fears.

It will have blood, they say; blood will have blood:
Stones have been known to move, and trees to speak;
Augurs, and understood relations, have

By magot-pies, and choughs, and rooks, brought forth
The secret'st man of blood.

Though you untie the winds, and let them fight
Against the churches; though the yesty waves
Confound and swallow navigation up;
Though bladed corn be lodg'd, and trees blown down;
Though castles topple on their warders' heads;
Though palaces, and pyramids, do slope
Their heads to their foundations; though the treasure
Of nature's germins tumble all together,
Even till destruction sicken, answer me
To what I ask you.

Devilish Macbeth
By many of these trains hath sought to win me
Into his power, and modest wisdom plucks me
From over-credulous haste; but God above
Deal between thee and me, for even now
I put myself to thy direction, and
Unspeak mine own detraction; here abjure
The taints and blames I laid upon myself,
For strangers to my nature.

I have liv'd long enough: my way of life
Is fall'n into the sear, the yellow leaf;
And that which should accompany old age,
As honour, love, obedience, troops of friends,
I must not look to have; but, in their stead,
Curses, not loud, but deep, mouth-honour, breath,
Which the poor heart would fain deny, and dare not.

Canst thou not minister to a mind diseas'd,
Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow,
Raze out the written troubles of the brain,
And with some sweet oblivious antidote,
Cleanse the stuff'd bosom of that perilous stuff,
Which weighs upon the heart?

This supernatural soliciting
Cannot be ill; cannot be good;—if ill,
Why hath it given me earnest of success,
Commencing in a truth? I am Thane of Cawdor.
If good, why do I yield to that suggestion
Whose horrid image doth unfix my hair,
And make my seated heart knock at my ribs,
Against the use of nature? Present fears
Are less than horrible imaginings.
My thought, whose murder yet is but fantastical,
Shakes so my single state of man, that function
Is smothered in surmise, and nothing is,
But what is not.

HENRY VIII.

The versification of *Henry VIII.* is, beyond any other, remarkable. The peculiarities in these respects were partly pointed out, a century ago, by Mr. Roderick, in Edwards's *Canons of Criticism*. They are, the double endings, the break in the words in the course of the line coming after the accented syllable,

Which time shall bring to ripeness,—she shall bè,

and the counter-accentuation,

Her foes shake, like a field of beaten corn.

But he does not take any pains to show that the two last are more usual than in other plays of Shakespeare. The first certainly is. The weak ending he does not mention; but it is excessive.

This play has raised much controversy; and several critics have observed, that the character of James I. at the end is interpolated into the middle of the character of Elizabeth by Cranmer; and this notion seems quite

undeniable. For after speaking of the successor, he returns to tell us that the Queen must die. But it does not absolutely follow that it was interpolated by another hand; nor after having been acted in its former state. The Queen might have died while it was bringing out, and that agrees not ill with its supposed date. But it is, in some respects, a strange play for anybody to have thought of writing in Queen Elizabeth's time. There is no pointed praise of Anne Boleyn; whereas Catherine may be called the heroine; in Johnson's opinion, the whole centre of interest. Elizabeth, too, in the prophecy, is called 'an aged Princess.' That could not, as is observed, please her, however old she might really be at the time. James I., on the other hand, would not like any praise of her. Lord Bacon left out his praise of Elizabeth, in his *Advancement of Learning*, for this reason.

Returning to the versification, I cannot agree with Mr. Roderick that such great dissimilarity would be the effect of some principle or reason in Shakespeare's mind. Either it was owing to external influence, or the play was in great part written by another. That other has been supposed to be Fletcher. It would be extraordinary that a writer, who had produced nothing of his own, or with his friend Beaumont, till some time after, should have been admitted, by so great a poet as Shakespeare, as a coadjutor. Nor much more likely, perhaps less, that Shakespeare should have assisted *him*. Shakespeare is said to have assisted Jonson, but not till after Jonson had produced one play, at least, of very decisive merit.

The play differs, too, from most or all others of Shakespeare's, in the small amount of poetical style and feeling. His plays, it is true, differ among themselves very much

in this particular. He seems to have thought that 'histories' should not be too exuberant in this respect; and he has extended this principle, if principle it was, to an historical play not English. *Julius Cæsar* is rather plain and prosaic, on the whole, for a work of his. But the same thing cannot be said of *Antony and Cleopatra*, though equally historical. *Richard III.*, though full of dramatic spirit, is, in the same sense, prosaic. It is far from the taste of his richer poetic dramas, not merely the meditative, as they may be called, as *All's Well* and *Cymbeline*, but some of the active plays, as *Macbeth*. The next question will be, whether the peculiarities of *Henry VIII.* can be confined to certain *scenes* only; and whether, if so, it must be supposed to be divided scene by scene: whether the hand might not change within the same scene: whether scenes were added by Fletcher: whether Shakespeare came in upon the parts which the other had written, and interpolated them, or touched them up; as seems evidently to have been done in *Henry VI.*; but, perhaps, upon a play given into his hands, without co-operation with the author.

It would be a question what the style of Fletcher at that time would really have been; there being no known play of his so early.

Double endings, as Roderick says, are absurdly common, at least in the parts ascribed to Fletcher; and of the sort which these later writers particularly affect,—as 'Hear her,' 'Shall be.' They are excessive in the speech to Cromwell. In Fletcher's *Wife for a Month* there are forty lines together, with double endings in at least thirty of them.

Of weak endings, Roderick has said nothing. They

abound here; and even in the part given to Shakespeare. But not in the Farewell, and the speech to Cromwell.

One of Roderick's points, the inverted accent, is, I should think, common in the Poems; but that, perhaps, is the very reason why we should not expect it in such a play as this. It is in *Romeo and Juliet*.

> And spread her sweet leaves to the morning air.

The part now ascribed to Shakespeare is better than the other, except in refusing him the Farewell; but it is still odd, for Shakespeare; though not as compared to the other scenes; thin of thought, language, and poetical images. It is worth observing, that Buckingham gives an account of his father's ruin, which does not appear in *Richard III.* 'Archbishop' is accented on the first syllable, in the supposed Fletcher scenes; but so it is in *Henry IV.*

The scene in *Antony and Cleopatra*, where Ventidius comes in, contains two expressions which are in *Henry VIII.*

> Learn this, Silius.
> Learn this, brother.—*Henry VIII.*

> The captain's captain.
> To be her mistress' mistress, the Queen's queen.—*Henry VIII.*

The first of these passages is in a scene in *Henry VIII.*, which is given to Fletcher (and of which, by the bye, it may be observed that, like the scene in *Anthony and Cleopatra*, it has nothing to do with the business of the play). The other is in a scene which is given to Shakespeare. But there may be doubts whether rightly. But here is an expression which occurs twice in that scene, and which, I believe, is more conformable to the practice of Fletcher.

A heed was in his countenance.
And force them with *a constancy*.

There is very great stiffness in the versification; one instance is quite extraordinary.

Yet I know her for
A spleeny Lutheran: and not wholesome to
Our cause, that she should lie i' the bosom of
Our hard-rul'd king: Again there is sprung up
An heretic, an arch one, Cranmer; one
Hath crawl'd into the favour of the King.

It may be observed, that the disposition to compliment the Queen and King, is brought in most forcedly in this scene.

She (*i. e.* A. Boleyn) is a gallant creature, and complete
In mind and feature. I persuade me, from her
Will fall some blessing to this land, which shall
In it be memoriz'd.

I gladly accept the idea that a very large part of it was not written by Shakespeare. In several parts (and they cannot be confined to Katharine) there is his spirit in a great degree; and in some of them, with much freedom. But we do not, I think, find that love of individual, fanciful, incident; such as is even in *Julius Cæsar*; about the exhalations, for instance, and the book in the pocket, and elsewhere. Here he seems to be always *on his good behaviour*.

An '*interlude*' called *Henry VIII.* was licensed Feb. 1604–5; but conditionally only: and it does not appear that it was printed. In 1613, a play, called by Sir H. Wotton, *All is True*, and described as a new play, was acted at the Globe, at the moment when it was burnt; but Stowe calls the play *Henry VIII.* Hence it is sup-

posed to have been a *rifacimento* of the former play, or of some play of *Henry VIII.* Now the Prologue to our *Henry VIII.*, in three places, suits remarkably with the title *All is True.*

Henry VIII., as it now stands, is not extant earlier than the first folio, 1623.

It is not unreasonably supposed that the Coronation was introduced while the interest excited by the coronation of James and his Queen, in the summer of 1603, was still rife: and yet, I should say, not too soon after the reality; of which the imitation, 'Within this wooden O,' must have been but a poor reminiscence.

I must own, though I put it here, I have doubts whether the play, as we now see it, existed much before 1613.

Q. Lord Cardinal,
To you I speak. *W.* Your pleasure, Madam? *Q.* Sir,
I am about to weep; but thinking that
We are a queen (or long have dream'd so), certain
The daughter of a king, my drops of tears
I 'll turn to sparks of fire. *W.* Be patient yet.
Q. I will, when you are humble; nay, before,
Or God will punish me. I do believe,
Induc'd by potent circumstances, that
You are mine enemy, and make my challenge:
You shall not be my judge; for it is you
Have blown this coal between my lord and me
Which God's dew quench.—Therefore I say again,
I utterly abhor, yea, from my soul,
Refuse you for my judge; whom yet once more
I hold my most malicious foe, and think not
At all a friend to truth.

Cromwell, I did not think to shed a tear
In all my miseries, but thou hast forc'd me,
Out of thy honest truth, to play the woman.

Let's dry our eyes, and thus far hear me, Cromwell:
And when I am forgotten, as I shall be,
And sleep in dull cold marble, where no mention
Of me more must be heard of,—say I taught thee,
Say, Wolsey, that once trod the ways of glory,
And sounded all the depths and shoals of honour,
Found thee a way, out of his wreck, to rise in;
A sure and safe one, though thy master miss'd it.
Mark but my fall, and that that ruin'd me.
Cromwell, I charge thee, fling away ambition;
By that sin fell the angels; how can man, then,
The image of his Maker, hope to win by 't?
Love thyself last: cherish those hearts that hate thee:
Corruption wins not more than honesty.
Still in thy right hand carry gentle peace,
To silence envious tongues: be just, and fear not.
Let all the ends thou aim'st at, be thy country's,
Thy God's, and truth's: then if thou fall'st, O Cromwell,
Thou fall'st a blessed martyr.

I have no further gone in this, than by
A single voice, and that not pass'd me, but
By learned approbation of the judges. If I am
Traduc'd by ignorant tongues, which neither know
My faculties, nor person, yet will be
The chronicles of my doing, let me say,
'Tis but the fate of place, and the rough brake
That virtue must go through.

The law I bear no malice for my death
It has done upon the premises but justice;
But those that sought it I could wish more Christians:
Be what they will, I heartily forgive them,
Yet let them look they glory not in mischief,
Nor build their evils on the graves of great men:
For then my guiltless blood must cry against them.

Sir, I desire you, do me right and justice,
And to bestow your pity on me; for

I am a most poor woman, and a stranger,
Born out of your dominions; having here
No judge indifferent, nor no more assurance
Of equal friendship and proceeding.

There must I be unloos'd, although not there
At once and fully satisfied, whether ever I
Did broach this business to your highness, or
Laid any scruple in your way, which might
Induce you to the question on't?

Though all the world should crack their duty to you,
And throw it from their soul; though perils did
Abound as thick as thought could make them, and
Appear in forms more horrid—yet my duty,
As doth a rock against the chiding flood,
Should the approach of this wild river break,
And stand unshaken yours.

I stood not in the smile of Heaven, who had
Commanded nature, that my lady's womb
If it conceiv'd a male child by me, should
Do no more offices of life to't than
The grave does to the dead, for her male issue
. . . . . .
This was a judgment on me, that my kingdom
Well worthy the best heir o' the world, should not
Be gladden'd in't by me. Then follows, that
I weigh'd the danger which my realm stood in
By this my issue's fail; and that gave to me
Many a groaning throe. Thus hulling in
The wild sea of my conscience, I did steer
Towards this remedy, whereupon we are
Now present here together; that 's to say,
I meant to rectify my conscience,—which
I then did feel full sick, and yet not well.—

The several parcels of his plate, his treasure,
Rich stuffs, and ornaments of household, which

I find at such proud rate, that it outspeaks
Possession of a subject.

You are full of heavenly stuff, and bear the inventory
Of your best graces in your mind, the which
You were now running o'er: you have scarce time
To steal from spiritual leisure a brief span,
To keep your earthly audit. Sure, in that
I deem you an ill husband, and am glad
To have you therein my companion.
W. Sir,
For holy offices I have a time; a time
To think upon the part of business, which
I bear i' the state; and nature does require
Her time of preservation, which perforce,
I, her frail son, amongst my brethren mortal,
Must give my tendence to.

SONNETS.

The Sonnets are of immense value in enabling us, as the readers of his plays are most of them constantly desiring, to see Shakespeare as a poet, entirely distinct from what he is as a dramatic writer. Reflections, feelings, the richest expressions founded on a boundless store of images in the mind, we constantly find piercing through the business of the stage, and either diverting us from it, interesting as it usually is, or heightening and illustrating it in the characters of those who are engaged in it. Here we have it alone. Here is no stir or bustle; no events; no characters but his own; no hurry in the composition; no constraint; no comic, of course; and what is remarkable, a great similarity in the turn of thought, compared to the wonderful variety, which, in his plays, is so great that he seems to be always beginning again, learning his

art anew, or rather, drawing fresh from the fountain of nature, as in a constantly recurring youth; so differently from the practice of most artists of all kinds, who seem in a great degree to establish a habit, on which their succeeding productions are built. Coming from the plays, it was not wonderful that readers in general neglected the Sonnets; many of which certainly have the faults of repetition, conceits, and thin, if not trifling, matter. But others are among the very finest poems that can be produced; the very sweetest in versification, the richest in language, the deepest and most original in feeling and thought.

But the Sonnets possess a great additional interest, quite independent of their merit. They give us a picture, and a very extraordinary and unexpected picture, of his mind and disposition; of the history and vicissitudes of his life. In a general and mysterious way only, as was natural; and leading to speculations, which cannot be fully realized now.

The first point which we are struck with in them is, that a melancholy character, and, as it should seem, general character, predominates, in the best of them. Yet he must have been continually (the accounts of him as well as his works show it) the most joyous of mankind. He was not surely, like the Italian comic actor mentioned by Zimmermann, a burden to himself within, while he was delighting all others by his gaiety without. It must have been that he was liable to great changes of temper: some spontaneous, some brought on, no doubt, by external circumstances. His Sonnets are all, in form, I think, addressed to another person. But there is enough of *soliloquy* about them, to make it natural that they should be

the vent of his own feelings; and, if so, of his more serious, rather than of his more cheerful, feelings. Sometimes it is a general, Hamlet-like, discontent with the world, sometimes with himself, sometimes sorrow for friends. Sometimes his sadness finds relief in the thought of his friend.

> Tir'd with all these, for restfull death I cry;
> As, to behold desert a beggar born,
> And needy nothing trimm'd in jollity,
> And purest faith unhappily forsworn,
> And gilded honour shamefully misplac'd,
> And maiden virtue rudely strumpeted,
> And right perfection wrongfully disgrac'd,
> And strength by limping sway disabled,
> And art made tongue-tied by authority,
> And folly (doctor-like) controuling skill,
> And simple truth miscall'd simplicity,
> And captive good attending captive ill:
> Tir'd with all these, from these would I be gone,
> Save that to die, I leave my love alone.—66.

And so in 29. and 30.

Sometimes it is caused by circumstances connected with that friend's actual or anticipated treatment of him.

Another most surprising fact is, that he thought himself eclipsed by later writers, or almost extinguished; not only in public esteem, but, as it appears, in his own opinion, to a considerable extent.

But when could this have happened? Even in 1609, when the Sonnets were printed, Beaumont and Fletcher had barely begun; and if he alluded to Jonson, his merit was not in serious drama, or poetry. Yet in some places he boldly promises himself immortality, even for the Sonnets themselves.—55. 101.

Another, equally interesting, is that he was at some

part or parts of his life, blamed and disgraced; and, as he evidently admits, not altogether undeservedly.

If thou survive my well contented day
When that churl Death my bones with dust shall cover,
And shalt, by fortune, once more re-survey
These poor rude lines of thy deceased lover;
Compare them with the bettering of the time,
And though they be outstripp'd by every pen,
Reserve them for my love, not for their rhyme,
Exceeded by the height of happier men.—32.

Then hate me when thou wilt, if ever, now,
Now when the world is bent my deeds to cross.—90.

O, for my sake, do thou with fortune chide,
The guilty goddess of my harmful deeds,
That did not better for my life provide
Than public means which public manners breeds.
Thence comes it that my name receives a brand,
And almost thence my nature is subdued
To what it works in, like the dyer's hand.—111.

And 110.

The style is founded on Spenser, but more enriched; and a more *dwelling*, slow, full, softness of verse.

It is natural to inquire into the style of the Sonnets, whether any change is perceivable in them, and during what extent of time they may be supposed to have been written. 'Sugared sonnets to his private friends' are praised by Meres, 1598. Three years had elapsed, in Sonnet 104, since he began.

From the connection of subjects, they are, for the most part, evidently in order; though not, as has been said, in the nature of continuous stanzas of entire poems. He is 'old' in 22. More decidedly, 62. 63. 73. He con-

sidered forty as old, speaking prospectively of his friend. —2.

I see no change in the *matter*. All, beautiful verse, flowing, almost entirely unbroken. They go more with the Poems, than with the early Histories.

76, where he speaks of his verse as so constantly the same, and not changing with the fashion, is so curious, with reference to the subject of my inquiry, that I extract from it.

> Why is my verse so barren of new pride,
> So far from variation or quick change?
> Why with the time do I not glance aside
> To new found methods, and to compounds strange:
> Why write I still all one, ever the same,
> And keep invention in a noted weed,
> That every word doth almost tell my name?
> Showing their birth, and whence they did proceed?

This is exactly the contrary of the fact, if we take the whole of his life; and is some proof that this was written long before his later time.

The following lines, in the *Comedy of Errors*, are remarkably in the style of his Sonnets:—

> And may it be, that you have quite forgot
> A husband's office? Shall, Antipholus,
> Even in the spring of love, thy love-springs rot?
> Shall love, in building, grow so ruinous?
> If you did wed my sister for her wealth,
> Then, for her wealth's sake, use her with more kindness:
> Or, if you like elsewhere, do it by stealth,
> Muffle your false love with some show of blindness,
> Let not my sister read it in your eye;
> Be not thy tongue thy own shame's orator;
> Look sweet, speak fair, become disloyalty;
> Apparel vice like virtue's harbinger:

Bear a fair presence, though your heart be tainted;
Teach sin the carriage of a holy saint;
Be secret-false; what need she be acquainted?
What simple thief brags of his own attaint?

Teach me, dear creature, how to think and speak:
Lay open to my earthly gross conceit,
Smother'd in errors, feeble, shallow, weak,
The folded meaning of your words' deceit.
Against my soul's pure truth, why labour you
To make it wander in an unknown field?

TROILUS AND CRESSIDA

Was printed 1609, and then first acted. The play is not all his; part of the battle for instance; but undoubtedly the greater part; and that would suit the style tolerably. There are many double endings, one or two weak endings; but generally very good, and flowing, not unbroken, verse. The style is hard. He seems to follow his ideas, with no ambition, and no fear of blame; and thus is very often tiresome. Very long speeches; little of his quiet meditative style, nor of his excursive imaginations. But there are passages of great thought, others of highly spirited poetry. The comic part, which relates to the main subject, is very clever.

The play of 1602 is not Shakespeare's, but probably is the origin of those parts of the present play which Shakespeare did not write. Mr. Collier says, that Decker and Chettle were writing a play under this name, in April and May, 1599.

The fineness of which metal is not found
In fortune's love; for then, the bold and coward,
The wise and fool, the artist and unread,

The hard and soft, seem all affin'd and kin:
But, in the wind and tempest of her frown,
Distinction, with a broad and powerful fan,
Puffing at all, winnows the light away;
And what hath mass, or matter, by itself
Lies rich in virtue, and unmingled.

Even so,
Doth valour's show, and valour's worth, divide
In storms of fortune: for, in her ray and brightness,
The herd hath more annoyance by the brize,
Than by the tiger; but when splitting wind
Makes flexible the knees of knotted oaks,
And flies fled under shade, why then, the thing of courage,
As rous'd with rage, with rage doth sympathize,
And with an accent tun'd in self-same key,
Returns to chiding fortune.

And underwrite in an observing kind
His humorous predominance; yea, watch
His pettish lunes, his ebbs, his flows, as if
The passage and whole carriage of this action——

PERICLES.

A very curious play. Collier shows that it was about 1608 or 1609, which last is the date of its first printing. As Malone denied it to Shakespeare, it is not in his list.

Some part is unbroken and old-fashioned; but the choruses in rhyme, so bad and pedantic in taste, are modern in the structure of the verse; and so are the best speeches, as, towards the end. But the invocation 'Celestial Dian, goddess Argentine' is very antiquated. Much rhyme in the dialogue.

This has been very positively divided, by some, between

Shakespeare and some other writer. Mr. Collier says, no man can mistake a line between Shakespeare and another poet. Yet, in *Henry VI.*, he is not quite so bold.

Though I do not see any part that we are bound to attribute to Shakespeare, it seems probable that it was written at different times, and by two different persons. The beginning is in very bad taste, as to the nature of the subject, which, though sometimes a favourite with eminent writers after Jonson, the mind of Shakespeare would have looked upon with simple disgust and contempt. But it is silly as well as offensive.

TIMON OF ATHENS.

There is no evidence at all.

It is quite in the broken metre, and scarce ever good of the kind; weak endings here and there; but I see nothing wholly of the *fourth* style. The epitaph, in long rhymes, is copied from the English Plutarch. There are some ill-measured lines; too long, or too short.

Except the part of Flavius, there is no real melancholy; not a grain of feeling anywhere. There is no female character. It is dry; the style is clear. It is strong, but hard. It is not ill called, by Coleridge, a dramatic satire. It was probably written at once, and without so much consideration as most of his later plays: it is uniform. Yet he has entered into the character very well.

There are many instances of rhymes, at the ends of speeches, and otherwise. There is a shocking pun, about the 'spotted die.' It is the hand of Shakespeare; but of Shakespeare not at ease; thinking, indeed, but not letting himself out, for some reason or other, into the

usual indulgence, or stimulated into the usual exertion, of his great and delightful powers. The subject did not afford much. If it is not like any other whole play of Shakespeare, is it not like what may be found in parts of many others, in the latter time, whenever moral or intellectual thought was more his object than either action, passion, or poetry; and not without some affectation of ideas and expressions, merely as unnecessary and uncommon? It is not heavy; there is always something going on; there is a story; but it is not a pleasant play. There is nothing absolutely comic. We have too much of Timon himself. It is sometimes disagreeable, for the sake of being so. For one does not see why Timon and Apemantus should quarrel quite so violently. The arguments of each against the other, however, have a great deal of sense. Its connection with the other play of *Timon* cannot well be doubted. The valuable part of the Steward, and the false banquet, are taken from it. And it has been, I think, conclusively observed, that the line,

> One day he gives us diamonds, next day stones,

does not apply to Shakespeare's play, where the dishes are warm water; but does, to the dinner in the other play, where painted stones are served up. The other play was never printed till lately; so it has no date, nor does it positively appear to have been acted; though evidently intended to be. It is learned, pompous, and very bad.

> His promises fly so beyond his state,
> That what he speaks is all in debt; he owes
> For every word; he is so kind, that he now
> Pays interest for 't; his land 's put to their books.

When all our offices have been oppress'd
With riotous feeders; when our vaults have wept
With drunken spilth of wine; when every room
Hath blaz'd with lights, and bray'd with minstrelsy,
I have retir'd me to a wasteful cock,
And set mine eyes at flow.

And, in some sort, these wants of mine are crown'd,
That I account them blessings; for by these
Shall I try friends. You shall perceive, how you
Mistake my fortunes; I am wealthy in my friends.

Why this
Is the world's soul; and just of the same piece
Is every flatterer's sport. Who can call him
His friend, that dips in the same dish? for, in
My knowing Timon has been this lord's father,
And kept his credit with his purse,
Supported his estate; nay, Timon's money
Has paid his men their wages: he ne'er drinks,
But Timon's silver treads upon his lip;

You see how all conditions, how all minds,
(As well of glib and slippery creatures, as
Of grave and austere quality,) tender down
Their services to lord Timon: his large fortune,
Upon his good and gracious nature hanging,
Subdues and properties to his love and tendance
All sorts of hearts; yea, from the glass-fac'd flatterer,
To Apemantus, that few things loves better
Than to abhor himself: even he drops down
The knee before him, and returns in peace
Most rich in Timon's nod.

Humbly I thank your lordship. Never may
That state or fortune fall into my keeping,
Which is not ow'd to you!

Painting is welcome.
The painting is almost the natural man;

For since dishonour traffics with man's nature,
He is but outside: these pencil'd figures are
Even such as they give out. I like your work.

Common mother, thou
Whose womb unmeasurable, and infinite breast,
Teems, and feeds all; whose self-same mettle,
Whereof thy proud child, arrogant man, is puff'd,
Engenders the black toad, and adder blue,
The gilded newt, and eyeless venom'd worm,
With all the abhorred births below crisp heaven,
Whereon Hyperion's quickening fire doth shine;
Yield him, who all the human sons doth hate,
From forth thy plenteous bosom, one poor root!
Ensear thy fertile and conceptious womb;
Let it no more bring out ingrateful man!
Go great with tigers, dragons, wolves, and bears;
Teem with new monsters, whom thy upward face
Hath to the marbled mansion all above
Never presented!

Throw thy glove,
Or any token of thine honour else,
That thou wilt use the wars as thy redress,
And not as our confusion, all thy powers
Shall make their harbour in our town, till we
Have seal'd thy full desire.

Timon hath made his everlasting mansion
Upon the beached verge of the salt flood,
Whom, once a day, with his embossed froth
The turbulent surge shall cover.

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL.

This is a very singular play, in style. It is a pity that there is no evidence of its date, else it would have been a valuable guide to the progress of the poet's mind. But

it only confirms the impression, that he was so versatile, that we can hardly, at any time, fix on him one style and no other. The story (and matter) hangs together remarkably well. So far, it should seem to have been written at one time, on one plan. But certain differences in the style, and, in some degree, in the verse, have led to the notion that it is of two dates. I do not see this. The rhymes, which are very frequent, and the *conceits* (puns, I think, there are not) sometimes remind us of *Love's Labour's Lost*, or other early plays. But they are not the same kind of conceits, I think, which we should find there. They are more harsh, more *uneasy*, if I may say so; they do not proceed, as in those early times, 'from a full flowing stomach.' Nor can the parts, where this character is found, be separated from the others. Its peculiarity, compared with other plays, make its consistency within itself the more remarkable. There is great occasional obscurity; very commonly harshness, and laboured ratiocination. There is very great feeling in Helen's part, more than once; and, in one speech, leading to a flow of language, and verse, such as agrees perhaps with the period of *Lear* and *Othello*. But on the whole, it is hardly possible to think it earlier than those. It is quite unlike the flow of the *Henrys*, or *John*. Poetry, in the way of imagery, perhaps only once.

> What 's the matter,
> That this distemper'd messenger of wet,
> The many-colour'd iris, rounds thine eye?

That it was Meres's *Love's Labour 's Won*, is a mere, though probable, guess; and does not suit the style; and the present title is four times alluded to in the play, in rhyming passages.

It has a great deal of rhyme, and some alternate. There is one *sonnet:* but this is merely a dull, dry, letter, in that metre; quite unlike his real sonnets. Once or twice, where there are rhymes, it is plainer and smoother. With this, however, occurs more generally, his obscurity of style, and fulness of ideas, but not of imagery.

Weak endings are by no means common. Double endings quite scarce. The verse almost always interrupted. The speeches, where ending in the middle of a line, do not always fit. It certainly, in the versification, does not quite arrive at the fourth period.

It may be worth observing, that the story, from which it is taken, accounts for Helen having money to make a large offer to the Widow, which does not seem very probable in the play.

> The greatest grace lending grace,
> Ere twice the horses of the sun shall bring
> Their fiery torcher his diurnal ring:
> Ere twice in murk and occidental damp
> Moist Hesperus hath quench'd his sleepy lamp;
> Or four and twenty times the pilot's glass
> Hath told the thievish minutes how they pass,
> What is infirm from your sound parts shall fly,
> Health shall live free, and sickness freely die.

> Be thou blest, Bertram; and succeed thy father
> In manners as in shape! thy blood, and virtue,
> Contend for empire in thee; and thy goodness
> Share with thy birthright! Love all, trust a few,
> Do wrong to none: be able for thine enemy
> Rather in power than use; and keep thy friend
> Under thy own life's key: be check'd for silence,
> But never tax'd for speech.

This speech is very like his oldest style; but it does ot run on so far, as we find in those plays.

There shall your master have a thousand loves,
A mother, and a mistress, and a friend,
A phœnix, captain, and an enemy,
A guide, a goddess, and a sovereign,
A counsellor, a traitress, and a dear;
His humble ambition, proud humility,
His jarring concord, and his discord dulcet,
His faith, his sweet disaster: with a world
Of pretty, fond, adoptious christendoms,
That blinking Cupid gossips.

I would I had that corporal soundness now,
As when thy father and myself, in friendship,
First tried our soldiership. He did look far
Into the service of the time, and was
Disciplined of the bravest.

His honour,
Clock to itself, knew the true minute when
Exception bid him speak; and at this time
His tongue obey'd his hand.

What, pale again?
My fear hath catch'd your fondness: Now I see
The mystery of your loneliness, and find
Your salt tears' head. . . .
. . . . Therefore tell me true;
But tell me then, 'tis so:—for look, thy cheeks
Confess it, th' one to the other; and thine eyes
See it so grossly shown in thy behaviours,
That in their kind they speak it.

O! will you eat no grapes, my royal fox?
Yes, but you will, my noble grapes, an if
My royal fox could reach them. I have seen
A medicine that 's able to breathe life into a stone.

But may not be so credulous of cure:
When our most learned doctors leave us, and

The congregated college have concluded
That labouring art can never ransom nature
From her inaidable estate, I say, we must not
So stain our judgment, or corrupt our hope,
To prostitute our past-cure malady
To empirics; or to dissever so
Our great self and our credit, to esteem
A senseless help, when help past sense we deem.

'T is only title thou disdain'st in her, the which
I can build up. Strange is it, that our bloods,
Of colour, weight, and heat, pour'd all together,
Would quite confound distinction, yet stand off
In differences so mighty. If she be
All that is virtuous (save what thou dislik'st,
A poor physician's daughter), thou dislik'st
Of virtue for the name; but do not so:
From lowest place when virtuous things proceed,
The place is dignified by the doer's deed;
Where great additions swell, and virtue none,
It is a dropsied honour: good alone
Is good, without a name; vileness is so;
The property by what it is should go,
Not by the title. She is young, wise, fair;
In these to nature she 's immediate heir,
And these breed honour—that is honour's scorn,
With challenges itself as honour's born,
And is not like the sire: honours thrive,
When rather from our acts we them derive,
Than our foregoers.

Shall weigh thee to the beam; that wilt not know,
It is in us to plant thine honour, where
We please to have it grow. Check thy contempt:

You must not marvel, Helen, at my course,
Which holds not colour with the time, nor does
The ministration and required office
On my particular: prepar'd I was not

For such a business; therefore am I found
So much unsettled.

Nothing in France, until he has no wife!
Thou shalt have none, Rousillon, none in France;
Then hast thou all again. Poor lord! is 't I
That chase thee from thy country, and expose
Those tender limbs of thine to the event
Of the none-sparing war? and is it I
That drive thee from the sportive court, where thou,
Wast shot at with fair eyes, to be the mark
Of smoky muskets? O, you leaden messengers,
That ride upon the violent speed of fire,
Fly with false aim; move the still-peering air,
That sings with piercing, do not touch my lord!
Whoever shoots at him, I set him there;
Whoever charges on his forward breast,
I am the caitiff that do hold him to it;
And though I kill him not, I am the cause
His death was so effected. Better 't were,
I met the ravin lion when he roar'd
With sharp constraint of hunger: better 't were
That all the miseries which nature owes
Were mine at once.

Sir, it is
A charge too heavy for my strength, but yet
We 'll strive to bear it, for your worthy sake,
To the extreme edge of hazard.

I do presume, Sir, that you are not fallen
From the report that goes upon your goodness;
And therefore, goaded with most sharp occasions
Which lay nice manners by, I put you to
The use of your own virtues, for the which
I shall continue thankful.

Inspired merit so by breath is barr'd.
It is not so with Him that all things knows,

As 'tis with us that square our guess by shows ;
But most it is presumption in us, when
The help of heaven we count the act of men.

CORIOLANUS.

Coriolanus must have been after 1605, according to Malone, from the resemblance, in the speech of Menenius to the people, to certain passages in Camden's *Remains*.

He is evidently stiffened by writing from a history. His art, as he says in his sonnets, is 'made tongue-tied by authority.' The first part of the mother's speech might almost have been another poet's ; though the other part of it, which is separated, could not. He thought that he was bound to the words which he found in the book, and had only to make verse of it. He is also stiffened by having to write on a high political subject. But all this operates quite differently from what it does in his plays on the history of England ; partly from falling upon a different time of his life : partly, because the manners are not English. Instead of thinning off his multitude of ideas, the constraint of the subject seems only to increase the demand for a crowd and complication of them. Ideas, quite as much ratiocinative as imaginative, though there are passages that approach to rant. The subject took his mind in this direction, rather than that of simple feeling. But the four lines on Valeria would be enough to show that he has still the same sweetness of character. The love of thought and knowledge, which he seems always to have possessed, must have immensely increased the stores of his mind, and the materials, either for good or bad illustration, as he lived longer, and in so very learned an age. Perhaps

the example of Jonson led him to require of himself, more of dry thought, (yet Jonson does not think deeply, as he does). In this play there is a good deal of character, and prodigious spirit in many places, but which seems obstructed and kept down by the loaded state of mind I have mentioned, and by the exceedingly over-forced system of metre. With all the interest of the story, it is, to me, an uninviting and unremembered play. I speak of the serious passages in verse, except the last scene of the killing. The scenes of the mob are excessively natural, and spirited, and are among those I have always found to give that impression of reality, when acted, which the works of no other writer can do.

It is a much better play, no doubt, than *Timon of Athens*, which is something of the same class; or *Troilus and Cressida*, which is not. There is a great deal more in it. It is hard: every sentence, almost, asks some pains, to take in its meaning wholly.

The verse of this play is somewhat like that of *Henry VIII.;* but the matter, in *Henry VIII.*, is thin in comparison, and the meaning, consequently, clear; and it is far more prosaic and matter-of-fact. Here we have the fourth style completely.

The speeches, too, break and fit together regularly; and double endings are frequent.

The poetry, and the thoughts, in *Coriolanus*, arise out of the business of the scene; there are not many *excursive* passages; and those are mostly of feeling, not reasoning or imagery.

> Cut me to pieces, Volsces: men and lads,
> Stain all your edges on me.—Boy! False hound!
> If you have writ your annals true, 'tis there,

That like an eagle in a dove-cote, I
Flutter'd your Volscians in Corioli:
Alone I did it.—Boy!

Then let the pebbles on the hungry beach
Fillip the stars: then let the mutinous winds
Strike the proud cedars 'gainst the fiery sun,
Murdering impossibility, to make
What cannot be, slight work.

Then straight his troubled spirit
Requicken'd what in flesh was fatigate,
And to the battle came he; where he did
Run reeking o'er the lives of men, as if
'T were a perpetual spoil, etc.

We must find
An evident calamity, though we had
Our wish, which side should win: for either thou
Must, as a foreign recreant, be led
With manacles thorough our streets; or else
Triumphantly tread on thy country's ruin.

The noble sister of Publicola,
The moon of Rome: chaste as the icicle,
That 's curdled by the frost from purest snow,
And hangs on Dian's temple: dear Valeria!

Say my request 's unjust,
And spurn me back; but if it is not so,
Thou art not honest, and the Gods will plague thee,
That thou restrain'st me from the duty, which
To a mother's part belongs—He turns away:
Down, ladies; let us shame him with our knees.
To his surname, Coriolanus, 'longs more pride,
Than pity to our prayers. Down an end.
This is the last;—So we will home to Rome,
And die among our neighbours—Nay, behold us;

This boy, that cannot tell what he would have,
But kneels and holds up hands for fellowship,
Does reason our petition with more strength,
Than thou hast to deny 't.—Come, let us go.
This fellow had a Volscian to his mother;
His wife is in Corioli, and his child
Like him by chance.—Yet give us our despatch;
I am hush'd until our city be afire,
And then I'll speak a little.

Pray now, no more: my mother,
Who has a charter to extol her blood,
When she does praise me, grieves me. I have done
As you have done; that 's, what I can; induc'd
As you have been; that 's, for my country:
He that has but effected his good will
Hath overta'en mine act.

C. You shall not be
The grave of your deserving: Rome must know
The value of her own: 't were a concealment
Worse than a theft, no less than a traducement,
To hide your doings: and to silence that,
Which, to the spire and top of praises vouch'd,
Would seem but modest.

The fires i' the lowest hell fold in the people!
Call me their traitor?—Thou injurious tribune,
Within thine eyes sat twenty thousand deaths,
In thy hands clutch'd as many millions, in
Thy lying tongue both numbers, I would say,
Thou liest, unto thee, with a voice as free
As I do pray the gods.

For that he has
(As much as in him lies) from time to time
Envied against the people, seeking means
To pluck away their power; as now at last
Given hostile strokes, and that, not in the presence
Of dreaded justice, but on the ministers

That do distribute it : in the name o' the people,
And in the power of us, the tribunes, we
Even from this instant, banish him our city,
In peril of precipitation.

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA.

Entered on the Stationers' books, May 2, 1608. This is a valuable date, for the verse is still more checked and cut up (as in his fourth style) than in Coriolanus.

Put off my helmet to
My countryman, a Roman.

Remarkably so, in the change of person in dialogue; but it is far from having the same load of ideas, nor stiffness. The mind of the reader would flow on more freely, than in *Coriolanus*, if the ear were allowed to do so. It is a far more irregular, varied, play,—more, perhaps, than any he has written. It is carelessly written, with no attempt at dignity, considering what great personages are introduced; but with a great deal of nature, spirit, and knowledge of character, in very many parts, and with several most beautiful passages of poetry and imagination; as, for instance, the dream of Cleopatra. It has passages, where he lets his mind loose, and follows his fancy and feeling freely; particularly, perhaps, in the end; and even the verse breaks delightfully out of its trammels, as in the speech about the cloud.

The subject of the play, in fact, was likely often to lead to this looser and softer character; tenderness, even weakness, is its business. It is historical; but it is chiefly the anecdote of history, not the dignity of it. *Plutarch's Lives*, his only authority, is in fact but, in

great degree, a collection of anecdotes. But there was no occasion to read Plutarch, to understand the part of Cleopatra. The tenderness of feeling, however, extends itself to other parts than those of the lovers; at least it is most remarkable in the death of Enobarbus—a part which, after the manner of Shakespeare, is made to throw great light on the character of Antony himself, which he meant to elevate as much as possible; notwithstanding his great weakness in all that concerns Cleopatra, and unmistakable misconduct with regard to his wife. He represents him as, what he certainly was not, a man of the most noble and high spirit, capable at times, notwithstanding the luxury he afterwards fell into, of a thoroughly soldier-like life, and full of kind and generous feelings. He seems to delight in supposing the melancholy meditations of a great and active character, when losing his power, and drawing to his end.

The character of Cleopatra is fully like that of a queen, in boldness, pride, command. But not at all otherwise. Her passions are those of a mere ordinary woman, who has no respect for herself. This may have been the case in fact with many queens, in private, because they have less to control them than other people; but it certainly ought not to be so represented. Her love for Antony is much inferior in depth, steadiness, and sincerity to his for her: but this was required by the events of the history. However, Shakespeare has put some very fine things here and there in her speeches, has made her interesting throughout, and winds her up at the last, partly by showing the attachment of her attendants to her, most magnificently.

There is, however, still much of the crampness of a

son out of book, in the political parts. With this crampness, in the plays now mentioned, goes correctness of taste. There are not the faults of carelessness or of unchecked want of taste, which are common in the earlier plays. Mere conceits, puns, indelicacy, we do not see much of.

There are many double endings in this play.

> His legs bestrid the ocean; his rear'd arm
> Crested the world; his voice was propertied
> As all the tuned spheres, and that to friends;
> But when he meant to quail and shake the orb,
> He was as rattling thunder. For his bounty,
> There was no winter in 't; an autumn 't was,
> That grew the more by reaping: his delights
> Were dolphin-like; they show'd his back above
> The element they liv'd in: in his livery
> Walk'd crowns, and crownets; realms and islands were
> As plates dropp'd from his pocket.

> You praise yourself
> By laying defects of judgment to me; but
> You patched up your excuses.

> So much uncurbable, her garboils, Cæsar,
> Made out of her impatience (which not wanted
> Shrewdness of policy too) I grieving grant,
> Did you too much disquiet: for that, you must
> But say, I could not help it.
> *A.* I wrote to you,
> When rioting in Alexandria; you
> Did pocket up my letters, and with taunts
> Did gibe my missive out of audience.
> *A.* Sir,
> He fell upon me, ere admitted; then
> Three Kings I had newly feasted, and did want
> Of what I was i' the morning; but, next day,

I told him of myself, which was as much
As to have asked him pardon.

Truth is, that Fulvia,
To have me out of Egypt, made wars here;
For which myself, the ignorant motive, do
So far ask pardon, as befits mine honour
To stoop in such a case.

E. Cæsar? Why he 's the Jupiter of men.
A. What 's Anthony? The god of Jupiter.
E. Spake you of Cæsar? How! the nonpareil.
A. O! Antony! O thou Arabian bird!
E. Would you praise Cæsar, say,—Cæsar;—go no farther.

Sometime, we see a cloud that 's dragonish,
A vapour, sometime, like a bear, or lion,
A tower'd citadel, a pendent rock,
A forked mountain, or blue promontory
With trees upon 't that nod unto the world,
And mock our eyes with air: thou hast seen these signs;
They are black vesper's pageants.
. . . . . .
That which is now a horse, even with a thought,
The rack dislimns, and makes it indistinct,
As water is in water.

Rather, a ditch in Egypt
Be gentle grave to me! rather, on Nilus' mud
Lay me stark naked, and let the water-flies
Blow me into abhorring! rather make
My country's high pyramidés my gibbet,
And hang me up in chains!

Yes, like enough, high-battled Cæsar will
Unstate his happiness, and be stag'd t' the show
Against a sworder.—I see men's judgments are
A parcel of their fortunes; and things outward
Do draw the inward quality after them,

To suffer all alike. That he should dream,
Knowing all measures, the full Cæsar will
Answer his emptiness!—Cæsar, thou hast subdued
His judgment too.

O sovereign mistress of true melancholy!
The poisonous damp of night disponge upon me,
That life, a very rebel to my will,
May hang no longer on me: throw my heart
Against the flint and hardness of my fault,
Which being dried with grief, will break to powder,
And finish all foul thoughts. O, Antony!
Nobler than my revolt is infamous,
Forgive me in thine own particular;
But let the world rank me in register
A master-leaver and a fugitive.

He knows that you embrace not Antony
As you did love, but as you fear'd him! *C.* O!
T. The scars upon your honour, therefore, he
Does pity as constrained blemishes,
Not as deserv'd.

What poor an instrument
May do a noble deed! He brings me liberty.
My resolution 's plac'd, and I have nothing
Of woman in me: now from head to foot
I'm marble-constant: now the fleeting moon
No planet is of mine.

High events as these
Strike those that make them: and their story is
No less in pity, than his glory, which
Brought them to be lamented. Our army shall,
In solemn show, attend this funeral.

CYMBELINE.

For anything which Malone has to show, it may have been written any time after 1603, when the original story in *Westward for Smelts* is supposed to have been printed. But Mr. Collier thinks this book was not printed till 1610. And remarks, that some circumstances do not follow the story as told in *Westward for Smelts*, but as told in other versions of it.

In metre, it is the same as *Antony and Cleopatra*, in all respects. These plays have the *hepthemimer cæsura* spoken of by Roderick. It is very remarkable, in some passages, for the fourth style, in the verse; some of these are suited, for the short turns of passion; but other speeches, equally passionate, are not in the fourth style. It is parenthetical.

It is curious that the Vision (which he could not have been the author of) is in the same fourth style. It is a little like *Pericles*. '*Pallas crystalline*' is like 'Goddess argentine.' We cannot leave it out. The speech of Posthumus, about it, is genuine.

My theory is of use as to settling readings, or at least division of lines; *e.g.* it is observed, I think, somewhere in *Cymbeline*, that 'O' should come at the end of the first of two lines, and not at the beginning of the second. This is very true in *Cymbeline*, but would not be, in *Richard II.*, or in *Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Cymbeline runs the *Tempest* very hard. The wonderful fancy, originality, and liveliness of action, of the latter must carry it. However, *Cymbeline* is all good,—full of feeling and sense, and nature and interest, and beautiful ornament.

In one speech,

> Prythee cease,
> And do not play, in wench-like words, with that
> Which is so serious,

Shakespeare criticizes the kind of words, and turn of thought, or at least the application of it, which he himself so often adopts.

> I would have broke mine eye-strings, crack'd them, but
> To look upon him, till the diminution
> Of space had pointed him sharp as my needle;
> Nay, follow'd him, till he had melted from
> The smallness of a gnat, to air; and then
> Have turn'd mine eye, and wept.

> I did not take my leave of him, but had
> Most pretty things to say: ere I could tell him,
> How I would think on him, at certain hours,
> Such thoughts, and such: or I could make him swear
> The she's of Italy should not betray
> Mine interest, and his honour; or have charg'd him,
> At the sixth hour of morn, at noon, at midnight,
> T' encounter me with orisons, for then
> I am in Heaven for him; or ere I could
> Give him that parting kiss, which I had set
> Betwixt two charming words, comes in my father,
> And, like the tyrannous breathing of the North,
> Shakes all our buds from growing.

> How! of adultery? Wherefore write you not
> What monster 's her accuser? Leonatus!
> O master! what a strange infection
> Is fallen into thy ear! What false Italian
> (As poisonous tongued, as handed) hath prevail'd
> On thy too ready hearing? Disloyal? No:
> She 's punished for her truth; and undergoes,
> More goddess-like than wife-like, such assaults
> As would take in some virtue. O, my master!

Thy mind, to her, is now as low, as were
Thy fortunes. How! that I should murder her?
Upon the love, and truth, and vows, which I
Have made to thy command? I, her? her blood?
If it be so, to do good service, never
Let me be counted serviceable. How look I,
That I should seem to lack humanity
So much as this fact comes to? "Do't: the letter
That I have sent her, by her own command
Shall give the opportunity:"—O damn'd paper!
Black as the ink that's on thee! Senseless bauble,
Art thou a feodary for this act, and look'st
So virgin-like without? Lo! here she comes.

He is at Milford Haven; read, and tell me
How far 't is thither. If one of mean affairs
May plod it in a week, why may not I
Glide thither in a day? Then, true Pisanio,
(Who long'st, like me, to see thy lord; who long'st,—
O let me 'bate!—but not like me;—yet long'st,—
But in a fainter kind:—O! not like me,
For mine's beyond beyond,) say, and speak thick,
(Love's counsellor should fill the bores of hearing,
To the smothering of the sense) how far it is
To this same blessed Milford; and by the way,
Tell me how Wales was made so happy, as
T' inherit such a haven: but first of all,
How may we steal from hence; and for the gap
That we shall make in time, from our hencegoing,
And our return, to excuse:—but first, how get hence.
Why should excuse be born, or e'er begot?
We 'll talk of that hereafter.

And often, to our comfort, shall we find
The sharded beetle in a safer hold
Than is the full-wing'd eagle. O! this life
Is nobler, than attending for a check;
Richer, than doing nothing for a bribe;
Prouder, than rustling in unpaid-for silk:

Such gain the cap of him, that makes them fine,
Yet keeps his book uncross'd.

O thou goddess,
Thou divine Nature, how thyself thou blazon'st
In these two princely boys! They are as gentle
As zephyrs, blowing below the violet,
Not wagging his sweet head; and yet as rough,
Their royal blood enchaf'd, as the rud'st wind,
That by the top doth take the mountain pine,
And makes him stoop to the vale.

A passage, in which Shakespeare completely describes his own genius.

With fairest flowers,
Whilst summer lasts, an I live here, Fidele,
I'll sweeten thy sad grave: thou shalt not lack
The flower, that 's like thy face, pale primrose; nor
The azur'd harebell, like thy veins; no, nor
The leaf of eglantine, whom not to slander,
Out-sweeten'd not thy breath; the ruddock would
With charitable bill (oh bill, sore shaming
Those rich-left heirs, that let their fathers lie
Without a monument!) bring thee all this;
Yea, and furr'd moss besides, when flowers are none,
To winter-ground thy corse.

These gentle princes
(For such and so they are) these twenty years
Have I train'd up; those arts they have, as I
Could put into them: my breeding was, Sir, as
Your highness knows.

THE WINTER'S TALE.

Mr. Collier brings decisive proof, that it was brought out in 1610, or 1611, being stated to have been allowed

by Sir G. Buc, who only became licenser in October, 1610; and elsewhere, to have been acted May, 1611.

A slight circumstance has been relied on, to show that it was later than the *Tempest;* but the difference in time would be so little, that to my purpose it is immaterial.

It is very overloaded in thought, and strained language; and very obscure. Parenthetical.

The metre in the fourth style, to an excessive degree. Double endings. The breaks between the speeches regular and stiff; especially in the (extraneous) scene, between Cleomenes and Dion.

It is a play of immense force; and in some parts, according to the subject, of most delightful tenderness, and pleasant, natural, simplicity of feeling; though not quite of ideas and language. But the verse is the same in all. This enables us to see, how two plays, unlike in matter and turn of feeling, might be of the same date. As *Coriolanus*, and *The Tempest; Othello* and *Twelfth Night.* The versification, then, is a still better internal guide than any other, to the chronology.

The rhyming Chorus is remarkable: still in the same verse.

It ranks very much with *Cymbeline*, but has much more of the strong, not to say harsh, in the serious parts.

It has more good comedy than any other play, I think, of this last class.

I have heard one passage in this play quoted with praise, and recited with a sort of languishing delight, by a person who is still looked up to as an oracle in taste, and especially in what relates to Shakespeare, by a large school of votaries.

I should leave *grazing*, were I of your flock,
And only live by *gazing*.

The same critic, in the same lecture, spoke of the Greek sculptors having the skill 'out of an idol to produce an ideal.'

He who believes, with another of the great directors of the present age as to dramatic criticism, that Shakespeare wrote the *London Prodigal*, *The Puritan*, etc., is capable of believing anything; or rather, has no real feeling of the poet at all.

Go play, boy, play; thy mother plays, and I
Play too, but so disgrac'd a part, whose issue
Will hiss me to my grave: contempt and clamour
Will be my knell.

To do this deed,
Promotion follows. If I could find example
Of thousands, that had struck anointed Kings,
And flourish'd after, I 'd not do 't; but since
Nor brass, nor stone, nor parchment, bears not one,
Let villainy itself forswear 't. I must
Forsake the Court. To do 't, or no, is certain
To me a break-neck.

O! then my best blood turn
To an infected jelly, and my name
Be yoked with his that did betray the best!
Turn then my freshest reputation to
A savour, that may strike the dullest nostril
Where I arrive; and my approach be shunn'd,
Nay, hated too, worse than the great'st infection
That e'er was heard, or read.

O royal piece!
There 's magic in thy majesty, which has
My evils conjur'd to remembrance: and

From thy admiring daughter took the spirits,
Standing like stone with thee.

I witness to
The times that brought them in; so shall I do
To the freshest things now reigning, and make stale
The glistening of this present, as my tale
Now seems to it. Your patience this allowing.

I've trusted thee, Camillo,
With all the nearest things to my heart, as well
My chamber-councils, wherein, priest-like, thou
Hast cleans'd my bosom: I from thee departed
Thy penitent reform'd: but we have been
Deceiv'd in thy integrity, deceiv'd
In that which seems so.

You need not fear it, Sir:
The child was prisoner to the womb, and is,
By law and process of great nature, thence
Freed and enfranchis'd; not a party to
The anger of the King, nor guilty of,
If any be, the trespass of the Queen.
Jailor. I do believe it.
Paulina. Do not you fear: upon mine honour, I
Will stand betwixt you and danger.

O, Proserpina!
For the flowers now, that, frighted, thou lett'st fall
From Dis's waggon! daffodils,
That come before the swallow dares, and take
The winds of March with beauty; violets, dim,
But sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes,
Or Cytherea's breath; pale primroses,
That die unmarried, ere they can behold
Bright Phœbus in his strength, a malady
Most incident to maids; bold oxlips, and
The crown-imperial; lilies of all kinds,
The flower-de-luce being one; O! these I lack,
To make your garlands of, and my sweet friend,

To strew him o'er and o'er. *F.* What, like a corse?
P. No, like a bank, for Love to lie and play on,
Not like a corse; or if,—not to be buried,
But quick, and in mine arms.

I was not much afeard: for once, or twice,
I was about to speak, and tell him plainly,
The self-same sun that shines upon his court,
Hides not his visage from our cottage, but
Looks on alike.

It cannot fail, but by
The violation of my faith; and then,
Let nature crush the sides o' the earth together,
And mar the seeds within! Lift up thy looks:—
From my succession wipe me, father; I
Am heir to my affection.'

He 's irremovable;
Resolv'd for flight. Now, were I happy, if
His going I could frame to serve my turn;
Save him from danger, do him love and honour,
Purchase the sight again of dear Sicilia,
And that unhappy king, my master, whom
I so much thirst to see.

THE TEMPEST.

There is nothing very decisive. There was a great storm in 1609, and a book on Bermuda in 1610; but Bermuda was known before. It copies a passage from Florio's translation of Montaigne, 1603. It was acted before James I. in 1611, and probably as a recent play; it is described as 'a play called *The Tempest*.' In the ensuing year eleven plays were so acted; ten of them new, the other only three years old.

Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair*, 1614, but which may

have been *written* 1613, which satirizes it, would hardly have thought it worth while to do so, unless it was rather new. There are coincidences with a play printed in 1603.

Stephano, says Farmer, is accented on the first syllable, in this play, but on the second in the *Merchant of Venice*. He had learned the correct pronunciation in the meanwhile.

It is in the fourth style in metre, excessively. But we are to observe that the kind of metre does not show itself through every part of a play, in any instance. There are exact breaks, when speeches succeed each other. There is rhyme, in the Mask.

And I think it is in the fourth style in matter and language; but of the imaginative, natural, subdivision, not the ratiocinative, and intricate. In the extraordinary creations, of personages such as cannot exist in nature, he actually seems more at home, than in real men and women; while at the same time there is nothing strained, or improbable, about them. If this was his last play, his dramatic life went out, like the life of Brandimart in Ariosto, in sweet music.

Fra dolce melodia salì nel cielo.

It is quite plain, and most delightful to perceive, that the free, fanciful, rich, natural, mind and style of Shakespeare's youth, still existed again in his age; though sometimes kept back, by various causes. But the *verse* was totally changed in the meantime.

There are parentheses. It is not excursive, except the passage about the 'cloud-capp'd towers.'

It is very extraordinary, after the severe slap which Jonson administered to the violators of the unities, in

the Prologue to his first play, 1598, that Shakespeare should have made himself liable to that accusation much more, in some of his very last plays, than he had ever done before.

If by your art, my dearest father, you have
Put the wild waters in this roar, allay them.
The sky, it seems, would pour down stinking pitch,
But that the sea, mounting to the welkin's cheek,
Dashes the fire out. O! I have suffer'd
With those that I saw suffer: a brave vessel,
Who had, no doubt, some noble creatures in her,
Dash'd all to pieces. O! the cry did knock
Against my very heart. Poor souls, they perish'd.
Had I been any god of power, I would
Have sunk the sea within the earth, or e'er
It should the good ship so have swallowed, and
The fraughting souls within her.

Twelve years since, Miranda, twelve years since,
Thy father was the Duke of Milan, and
A prince of power. *Mir.* Sir, are you not my father?
Pros. Thy mother was a piece of virtue, and
She said, thou wast my daughter; and thy father
Was duke of Milan.

I saw him beat the surges under him,
And ride upon their backs: he trod the water,
Whose enmity he flung aside, and breasted
The surge most swoln that met him: his bold head
'Bove the contentious waves he kept, and oar'd
Himself with his good arms in lusty stroke
To the shore, that o'er his wave-worn basis bow'd,
As stooping to relieve him. I not doubt
He came alive to land.

Our revels now are ended. These our actors
As I foretold you, were all spirits, and
Are melted into air, into thin air;

And like the baseless fabric of this vision,
The cloud-capp'd tow'rs, the gorgeous palaces,
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
Yea all which it inherit, shall dissolve;
And, like this unsubstantial pageant faded,
Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff
As dreams are made on, and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep.

His tears run down his beard, like winter's drops
From eaves of reeds. Your charm so strongly works them,
That, if you now beheld them, your affections
Would become tender. *Pros.* Dost thou think so, spirit?
Ar. Mine would, Sir, were I human. *Pros.* And mine shall.
Hast thou, which art but air, a touch, a feeling
Of their afflictions, and shall not myself,
One of their kind, that relish all as sharply,
Passion as they, be kindlier mov'd than thou art?
Though with their high wrongs I am struck to the quick,
Yet, with my nobler reason, 'gainst my fury
Do I take part. The rarer action is
In virtue, than in vengeance: they being penitent,
The sole drift of my purpose doth extend
Not a frown further.

Methought the billows spoke, and told me of it;
The winds did sing it to me; and the thunder,
That deep and dreadful organ-pipe, pronounc'd
The name of Prosper: it did bass my trespass.
Therefore my son i' the ooze is bedded; and
I'll seek him deeper than e'er plummet sounded,
And with him there lie mudded.

Ye elves of hills, brooks, standing lakes, and groves;
And ye, that on the sands with printless foot
Do chase the ebbing Neptune, and do fly him,
When he comes back; you demi-puppets, that
By moonshine do the green-sour ringlets make,
Whereof the ewe not bites; and you, whose pastime

Is to make midnight mushrooms ; that rejoice
To hear the solemn curfew ; by whose aid
(Weak masters though ye be) I have bedimm'd
The noontide sun, call'd forth the mutinous winds,
And 'twixt the green sea and the azur'd vault
Set roaring war : to the dread rattling thunder
Have I given fire, and rifted Jove's stout oak
With his own bolt ; the strong-bas'd promontory
Have I made shake ; and by the spurs pluck'd up
The pine and cedar : graves, at my command,
Have waked their sleepers, oped, and let them forth
By my so potent art.

Admir'd Miranda,
Indeed the top of admiration ; worth
What 's dearest in the world ! Full many a lady
I have ey'd with best regard ; and many a time
The harmony of their tongues hath into bondage
Brought my too diligent ear : for several virtues
Have I lik'd several women ; never any
With so full soul, but some defect in her
Did quarrel with the noblest grace she ow'd,
And put it to the foil : but you, O you !
So perfect and so peerless, art created
Of every creature's best.

I am in my condition,
A prince, Miranda ; I do think, a king ;
(I would, not so ;) and would no more endure
This wooden slavery, than to suffer
The flesh-fly blow my mouth.—Hear my soul speak :
The very instant that I saw you, did
My heart fly to your service : there resides,
To make me slave to it ; and for your sake,
Am I this patient log-man.

SECT. 3.

SHAKESPEARE, GENERALLY.

THE Fourth style, both of poetry and metre, seems to be not compatible with very deep and active tragedy. In its strongest state, it is too intricate and interrupted for that. *Lear*, *Macbeth*, *Othello*, are not written in that style. In order to act his fourth style, actors must have quite changed their manner.

If he was stimulated by the rivalship towards other men, which he describes, it would not have followed that he should write like them. He might be partly actuated by a spirit of opposition to his own former style. We see this, sometimes, in artists of all kinds.

A passage wholly in *double endings*, if not spirited, I think, is the more dull for being written in that manner: if spirited, it is carried too far. It has, to the ear, a weakening effect, and to the mind, a tiresome sense of uniformity, not justified, as the other form is, by being the rule, and one must say, the more natural rule. I cannot but perceive, however, that the common form, in some of the best speeches of Shakespeare, where constant, is too cramped, and, as we know that the licence does exist, leads us to wish for it, and sometimes most gratefully to accept a single deviation into it; as, in the soliloquy on sleep:—

And hush'd by buzzing night-flies to his slumber.

The two forms are often mingled by Shakespeare, with very great taste, like most things that he does, being the effect of feeling, and not of rule; as in the scene upon the offer of the crown to Glo'ster. And this seems to consist, sometimes, in following the one form in one part of a speech rather continuously, and the other in the other part; as in the celebrated soliloquy of Hamlet.

I think Shakespeare had a preference, where the line is completely stopped in the middle, for a break upon the short syllable, as in *Hamlet*:—

> And lose the name of action.

The double endings are not likely to go *with* the very weak endings, because weak particles are almost always monosyllables.

Double endings, sometimes, are included in a long word; and where the accent is not on the penultima: as, *melancholy, adversaries.*

I have thought that a break on the complete foot goes best with the double ending of the line; and a break upon the middle of the foot, with the regular termination of the line on the accented syllable.

> He shall to Parthia.——Be it art or hap,—
> He hath spoke true: the very dice obey him.

Milton carefully avoids double endings in general; but they suit better with plays. The verses of plays are *sermoni propriora*, and, being cut into speeches, do not require or admit that sustained style and flow which Milton cultivates, and which the double ending seems to interrupt. When you think of a long passage of Milton or Cowper, you cannot conceive how a double ending is ever to get into blank verse at all. In this view it may

seem best suited to the unbroken style, because there each verse depends more on itself.

On the other hand, in one point of view, they seem better to belong to the more irregular style, being themselves an irregularity. We must consider that Shakespeare and his followers have superfluous syllables often in the body of the verse, or sometimes deficient syllables.

It is certain that in passages of unrestrained feeling they have often, in Shakespeare, a great effect, while in Beaumont and Fletcher, and others, who affect them as a system, they add to the coldness.

It seems to me that they have no connection with the double endings in rhyme, often so beautiful, used in imitation of the Italian, and for alternation and variety, down to Prior.

Double endings must not be introduced as a rarity, because then they appear to be unintentional negligence or fault.

It seems to me that a line with a double ending is not a common line with a syllable added on, but has a rhythm of its own.

This line—

> The name of Prosper, it did base my trespass.

It seems to me that if you were to read—

> Did base my crime,

the verse is nearly spoilt. So—

> The poet's eye in a fine frenzy rolling.

Try "roll'd."

It is material to observe, that we know Shakespeare

sometimes added to his plays. The addition in *Henry VIII.*, to compliment James I., requires no external evidence to prove it. Of *Hamlet* there is external evidence; and the different editions show, I believe, some change in those plays where they exist. Wherever, therefore, we rely on single passages as to the date, we must inquire, not when the play was first acted, but when it was first printed, and in what form. This or that passage may have been added, after the play was in existence as a whole.

Another thing to be considered is the argument from imitation. Malone sometimes infers date from similar passages in other books, concluding that Shakespeare must have been the original. But "the thief of all thieves was the Warwickshire thief," in a plainer sense than that of Garrick's song. Uvedale Price says, that if ever there was a great and original genius, it was Handel; and yet that there never was a greater plagiarist. Molière, in like manner, professed to appropriate to himself, as his right, whatever he found anywhere that was good.

Shakespeare was preserved, in two ways, from writing such stuff as the heavy tragedians, his predecessors. His own nature did not lead him to it; but his remarkably strong turn for the ridiculous would make him see through what was dull and pompous; and this we need not guess at, for we see it as a fact in his *Pyramus and Thisbe*, as we do, with regard to the affected prose of his time, in *Hamlet* and *Love's Labour's Lost*. In this last case, however, he did not so completely avoid, himself, what he satirized in others; as in the speech of Brutus. But the faults in the prose of that time were faults of excess, not of deficiency; and it must be owned that Lyly, in parti-

cular, has sometimes great merit. We see repeatedly that Shakespeare was, of all men, the most independent of the taste of the age in which he lived, as such. He constantly satirizes it. This is much more remarkable, since he had no ancient learning to fall back upon as a basis, or to teach him permanent principles in literature or manners; nor yet, originally, any habits of elegant and polished society.

I know not whether it is too fanciful to say—but everything must be in some degree fancy, where the ordinary race of mortals pretend to enter into Shakespeare's mind—that he seems sometimes to have absorbed himself in his subject, and yet his subject also in himself. He loses his own personality, it is true, in the contemplation of that which he is representing; but it is with his own peculiar and remarkable mind, and not by the mere passive process of observation, that he contemplates it. Without knowing it, he creates as he conceives. If we say, this is not the *author*, it is Lear or Macbeth himself; we must also say, Who were Lear and Macbeth? Not real characters, that are ever likely to have existed; but Shakespeare's individual mind, choosing to possess itself with those imaginary situations.

I perhaps should apologize, once for all, for the possibility of having said things which, in this century at least, may have been said before: for I read but little.

There seems to be, at present, a strong disposition to believe that Shakespeare could never write ill. Why should this be thought? Every man's experience of himself will tell him, that whatever he have may done at one time, he will be at another too weak, weary, or occupied, to attend fully to what he is doing, or to accomplish what

he might wish to do. And this is most true of men of the greatest genius. "Genius," says Dryden,

> When th' enthusiastic fit is spent,
> Looks back amaz'd at what he underwent.

"Æqualis liber est," says Martial, "qui malus est." And Longinus, a great authority at one time, argues this upon principle, as a general rule. But a number of persons do not like to notice this in themselves; and another number think it their duty to fancy that Shakespeare was exempted, in this respect, from the laws of human nature. These are dull, second-hand, idolaters, not real votaries, such as he himself would have approved.

> They fool me to the top of my bent.

The faults of Shakespeare are by no means always carelessness.

But exactly in those places where the man of taste is almost ready to leave him, the pedant steps in. The labour of overcoming or inquiring into difficulties, the delightful disputations, the accumulation of learning, the dry metaphysical dogmatism, are unceasing attractions; and in these days, a world of staring followers is ready to admire what they are taught, such as are incapable of entering into high passion, or tender feeling, poetry, or harmony of verse.

Critics who have aimed at showing that he had a *plan* in everything he did, are like the critics of the Sixteen Hundred, who thought every epic poem was a moral or political treatise, to establish some maxim: which is ridiculed in *Martinus Scriblerus*,—"Extract the *moral* afterwards, at your leisure. Be sure you *strain* it sufficiently."

It is absurd to suppose that people did not feel Shakespeare, because they did not talk perpetually, as we do, and write dissertations. Johnson, Sterne, Fielding, Garrick and his audiences, sufficiently show that Shakespeare was felt in those days: Lord Kames more expressly, and Joseph Warton. I admit, not such annotators as Steevens, Malone, or Theobald. They were most useful; but "the body's harmony, the breathing whole," was not so much in their comprehension.

A man who employs himself in writing upon the works of another, is in danger of fancying that he is using his faculties in a second-hand way, and doing nothing, properly speaking, of his own. But Man, according to Pope, is the chief, or peculiar, study for man; a study which may be pursued, in its pre-eminent or extreme degree, in two ways; either by attending to human nature as applicable to the largest number of persons, or in attending to it as exemplified in individuals of the greatest interest and importance. Shakespeare, as a subject, in some degree combines both of these. He was himself a mind of the very highest class, and he employed it in considering human nature in its most extensive range. Though therefore the inquiry into dates, and in some degree into metre, may be a small and confined employment, we may hope that the inquiry into the progress of his own mind, and the truth of the characters he represents, is connected with very enlarged and useful matters of thought.

I shall venture to insert a few lines relating to the character of Shakespeare, from a composition written at Winchester school, in 1771.

> Thee, various bard, beneath the shade,
> (A quivering alder o'er thee laid,

Which Nature twin'd with flow'rets rude,)
The rival Muses whilom woo'd.
Thalia clasp'd the smiling boy,
And tun'd his artless tongue to tales of joy;
But soon the gushing tear
Confess'd, Melpomene, thy lore;
He melts with woes unknown before;
By turns the dubious poet smil'd and sigh'd,
Each was too eloquent to be denied,
Both won the glorious cause, and Falstaff vied with Lear.

SECT. 4.

AUTHORS BEFORE SHAKESPEARE.

OUR earliest blank verse is Lord Surrey's translation of Virgil.

With regard to translation, it may be observed that it naturally leads to the running of lines into one another, especially when it is from a language of which the verses are longer than our own; because the matter not being original, the writer must arrange it with the verse, as he can. So we find in Surrey,

> Or when he threw into the Greekish shippes
> The Trojan flame.

So immediately after—

> He answer'd nought, nor in my vain demands
> Abode.

Each of which passages in the original is but one line.

In his original composition, which is in rhyme, he by no means uniformly confines the sense to the verse. His beautiful sonnet on the spring is well known.

Grimoald succeeded him in blank verse, and seems to have taken pains to break his pauses.

Sackville, in his stanzas in the Induction to *The Mirror of Magistrates*, is by no means always unbroken; but as my object is rather to illustrate the nature of verse than the history of it, I give the following lines, which are an

enumerative stanza, and remarkably strong, without heaviness.

> Thence come we to the horrour and the hell,
> The large great kyngdome and the dreadful raygne
> Of Pluto in his trone where he dyd dwell,
> The wide waste places, and the hugie playne;
> The waylings, shrykes, and sundry sorts of payne,
> The syghes, the sobbes, the depe and deadly groane,
> Earth, ayer, and all resounding playnt and moane.

But his tragedy of *Ferrex and Porrex*, in blank verse, 1561, is stately and heavy; and though not unvaried in pause, yet without any notion of good principles of versification. It has, I believe, no double endings. The lines are very stiff. This is a specimen above the average. They do not run into each other much.

> O, where is ruth, or where is pitie now?
> Whither is gentle hart and mercy fled?
> Are they exiled out of our stony brestes,
> Never to make return? Is all the world
> Drowned in blood and sonke in crueltie?
> If not in women mercy may be found,
> If not, (alas,) within the mother's brest
> To her own childe, to her owne flesh and bloud;
> If ruth be banished thence, if pitye there
> May have no place, if there no gentle hart
> Do live and dwell, where should we seeke it then?

In comedy, *Gammer Gurton's Needle* is not in blank verse; is supposed to have been written about 1566. It has been misconceived, I think. It is not a rude, ignorant performance, but an intentional representation of low life, with a good deal of cleverness.

> First, for master doctor, upon pain of his curse,
> Where he will pay for al, thou never draw thy purse:

And when ye meete at one pot, he shall have the first pull;
And ye shall never offer him the cup, but it be full.
To good wife Chat thou shalt be sworne, even on the same wyse,
If she refuse thy money once, never to offer it twise.
Thou shalt be bound by the same here, as thou dost take it,
When thou maist drinke of free cost, thou never forsake it.
For Gammer Gurton's sake, againe sworne shalt thou be,
To helpe hir to hir nedle againe, if it do lie in thee;
And likewise be bound, by the vertue of that,
To be of good abering to Gib, hir great cat.
Last of all, for Hodge, the othe to scanne,
Thou shalt never take him for fine gentleman.

I think this metre is not meant to be irregular, like Swift's *Frances Harris*, nor yet an ignorant imitation of Plautus; but a loose intentional corruption of our six or seven foot verse. The author was a learned writer, and so was the author of *Ralph Royster Doyster*, which is as old as 1551. The verse of this last is more nearly Alexandrine.

There is a ridiculous joke raised in it, on the footing of a letter written so as to be understood two ways, according as it is read; it is remarkable, as turning on the breaking of the verse in the middle, then so uncommon.

Spenser never wrote blank verse; his rhymes are most commonly unbroken. In his *Mother Hubberd*, some of the verses are much otherwise.

For though to steal the diadem away
Were the work of your nimble hand, yet I
Did first devise the plot by policy.

Here is also much irregularity of accent, of which, in general, he has but little. Probably he thought it a colloquial, irregular poem. The famous passage—

Full little knowest thou, that hast not tried,
What hell it is, in suing long to bide:

To lose good days that might be better spent,
To waste long nights in pensive discontent,
To speed to-day, to be put back to-morrow;
To feed on hope, to pine with fear and sorrow;
To have thy Prince's grace, yet want her peer's;
To have thy asking, yet wait many years;
To fret thy soul with crosses and with cares;
To eat thy heart through comfortless despairs;
To fawn, to crouch, to wait, to ride, to run,
To spend, to give, to want, to be undone:

would, especially being in rhyme, lose its whole force if it were otherwise. It is an *enumerative* passage. Such passages occur in his *Fairy Queen*, and most beautifully written. Even in them, he sometimes shows a taste for variety, by diverging into the broken verse. As in the list of Irish rivers,

Swift Auniduff, which of the Englishman
Is called Blackwater.

In the list of the English rivers, are the following lines; but they are a parenthesis, not part of the enumeration.

And shall see Stamford, though now homely hid,
Then shine in learning, more than ever did
Cambridge or Oxford, England's goodly beams.

It is perhaps remarkable that he broke his ordinary lines so little in his stanzas, when he not very unfrequently ventures to violate the cæsura in the middle of his Alexandrines, contrary to the invariable rule in French, and to the usual practice with us. As

Their clasping arms in wanton wreathings intricate.

But he followed the Italians, and could not keep their metre altogether out of his mind.

The spirited description of the sea, in *Colin Clout's come Home again*, has broken verse.

> So to the sea we came; the sea, that is
> A world of waters heaped up on high;
> Rolling like mountains in wild wilderness,
> Horrible, hideous, roaring with hoarse cry.

Mr. Collier observes of a speech in one of Peele's plays, "It is, in fact, the blank verse of a person accustomed to write rhyme, and whose ear required a ponderous syllable at the end of each line, as a substitute. This will apply to nearly all the blank verse that Peele has left behind him."

And of Lodge, "His blank verse runs with even more monotony than is found in the dramatic pieces of his contemporaries, Peele and Greene: he now and then inserts an additional syllable, for convenience rather than by design; but he seems studiously to avoid the use of trochees at the ends of his lines; as if he considered them a defect, and that the verse ought to close with an emphatic and accented syllable."

He gives instances where Lodge, for this purpose, appears to have adopted unusual forms of words; *resist* and *repent*, for resistance and repentance.

Peele wrote blank verse, he says, 1584, died 1598.

Greene was somewhat later.

The original habit, or predilection for rhyme, in Shakespeare, would not so naturally lead him to short endings in blank verse; because he was fond of the double termination in rhyme. The fact is, I presume, that in the reign of Elizabeth there were two classes, two different tastes, or styles, in rhyme, one derived from the French, and the other from the Italian; and that Spenser, though he translated whole poems from the French, must be considered chiefly as belonging to the latter; and Shake-

speare took him, principally, for a model, as he tells us himself. In fact, Spenser often uses Italian terminations, even in his translations from Bellay.

Tamburlaine, by Marlow, according to Collier, was the first specimen of blank verse on the *public* stage, and came out probably 1585 or 1586.

> Disdains Zenocrate to live with me,
> Or you, my Lords, to be my followers?
> Think you I weigh this treasure more than you?
> Not all the gold in India's wealthy arms
> Shall buy the meanest soldier in my train.
> Zenocrate, lovelier than the love of Jove,
> Brighter than is the silver Rhodope,
> Fairer than whitest snow on Scythian hills,
> Thy person is more worth to Tamburlaine
> Than the possession of the Persian Crown.

Marlow died 1592. The date of *Edward II.* is not known, nor the *Jew of Malta*. *Tamburlaine* was before them. I have no doubt but Shakespeare made Marlow in a great degree his model, and cramped his natural style a little, in thoughts and in versification, in doing so *Richard II.* is certainly imitated (the character) from *Edward II.* It is absurd to say that Shakespeare was not likely to do this. His disposition to follow others is continually remarkable. He aimed at showing originality, less than most people. In this instance the imitation accounts for what is otherwise unpleasant; the dwelling upon a poor-spirited mind, and identifying himself, as it were, with it. It must be owned, he harps on it, and turns it over and over again, greatly beyond what Marlow has done.

But his own easy flow of feeling, and exuberance (often faulty, no doubt) of fancy, and truth of nature, shine out

constantly through his harder and drier model. He is alive, and Marlow is dead. It is Rembrandt copying the drawing of Mantegna, or the Hindoo paintings. Considering the two, I mean, merely relatively to each other. Compared to others, Marlow was very spirited; though some might have more richness in imagery and language.

Thus, like the sad presaging raven, that tolls
The sick man's passport in her hollow beak,
And in the shadow of the silent night
Doth shake contagion from her sable wings,
Vex'd and tormented runs poor Barabas
With fatal curses towards these Christians.
The incertain pleasures of swift-footed time
Have ta'en their flight, and left me in despair;
And of my former riches rests no more
But bare remembrance, like a soldier's scar
That hath no further comfort for his maim.
O! thou that with a fiery pillar ledd'st
The sons of Israel through the dismal shades,
Light Abraham's offspring, and direct the hand
Of Abigail this night, or let the day
Turn to eternal darkness after this!
No sleep can fasten on my watchful eyes,
Nor quiet enter my distemper'd thoughts,
Till I have answer of my Abigail.—*Jew of Malta.*

By earth, the common mother of us all!
By Heaven and all the moving orbs thereof!
By this right hand! and by my father's sword!
And all the honours 'longing to my crown!
I will have heads, and lives for him, as many
As I have manors, castles, tow'rs, and towns.
Treacherous Warwick! Trait'rous Mortimer!
If I be England's king, in lakes of gore
Your headless trunks, your bodies will I trail,
That you may drink your fill, and quaff in blood,
And stain my royal standard with the same,

That so my bloody colours may suggest
Remembrance of revenge immortally,
On your accursed trait'rous progeny,
You villains that have slain my Gaveston.—*Edward II.*

O! hadst thou ever been a king, thy heart,
Pierc'd deeply with a sense of my distress,
Could not but take compassion of my state.
Stately and proud, in riches and in train
Whilom I was, powerful, and full of pomp.
But what is he whom rule and empery
Have not in life and death made miserable?—*Ibid.*

This isle shall fleet into the ocean,
And wander to the unfrequented Inde.

This passage resembles the fancy of Shakespeare a little.

Marlow, Mr. Collier observes, improved verse much in his *Edward II.*, by more frequently varying the accent; or, as he calls it, by a common, but important, confusion, introducing *trochees*. As,

Céntre of áll my blíss! an ye be mén;

which is very good. But this is quite bad,—

Why should I die then, or basely despair.

But he has made remarks upon other points, in that play, which are so exceedingly mistaken, that it is necessary to notice them, from the general principles to which they apply.

He calls the following verses Alexandrines:—

But, for we know thou art a noble gentleman.
Thou com'st from Mortimer and his accomplices.
Yet will I call on him. Oh spare me, Lucifer!

They are interesting specimens of redundant syllables in a foot; which he himself has pointed out, nearly in the same page; but they are not Alexandrines; they are not meant to contain six feet, and it would be impossible, otherwise than ridiculously, to pronounce them as if they did.

He adds two more, as instances of the *judicious* use of Alexandrines; one of which is simply an utterly bad verse, the other an Alexandrine, but therefore improper.

He also quotes this line as an instance of one 'deficient of a syllable, but not therefore defective;' *mounts*, he thinks, is to be pronounced equal to two syllables.

Should drink his blood, mounts up to the air.

It is impossible so to pronounce it. The line, as it stands, would be excused only by dwelling after 'blood,' by means of the pause. But we need not doubt that it is simply a mistake, and that it should be read 'upward to,' or 'up into.'

A third point is, where he quotes the following line from *The Jew of Malta*, as an instance of a 'redundancy of a syllable, which is to be retrenched in the recitation:'—

Thus, like the sad presaging raven that tolls.

The word raven would be softened a little perhaps, but is not bound to be pronounced as a monosyllable. He himself takes it so in another instance,—

These hands were never stain'd with *innocent* blood.

Kyd is mentioned, with Marlow, by Ben Jonson in his verses on Shakespeare, as his two principal predecessors. Kyd was ridiculed for the extravagance of his plays, but he had much spirit. Written 1588.

I will be hard like thunder, and as rough
As northern tempests, or the vexed bowels
Of too insulting waves, who at one blow
Five merchants' wealths into the deep doth throw;
I'll threaten crimson wars.—*The First Part of Jeronimo.*

Ambition's plumes that flourished in our court,
Severe authority has dashed with justice;
And policy and pride, walk like two exiles
Giving attendance, that were once attended;
And we rejected that were once high honoured.—
I hate Andrea, 'cause he aims at honour, when
My purest thoughts work in a pitchy vale,
Which are as different as heaven and hell.—*Ibid.*

Perhaps,—

Aims at honour,
When my pur'st thoughts.

For Andrea appears elsewhere to be two syllables, and accented on the second. This would get rid of the apparent weak ending.

Tancred and Gismunda was written by five authors, in 1568, and acted privately; then somewhat modernized, and printed in 1592, by Wilmot, one of them, 'polished according to the decorum of these daies.' Consequently it could not have much, or perhaps at all, influenced other poets, before that time.

It has only one instance, I believe, of the double ending. It often has lines like this,—

Call my daughter; my heart boils till I see.

One line ends with *women*. The extracts are from the best passages in metre and otherwise.

We cannot venture to say that any given passage, as it now stands, is older than 1592. Part, Mr. Collier

thinks, all, of Wilmot's modernizing, consisted in altering into blank verse.

> Mine own, as I am yours, whose heart I know
> No less than mine, for ling'ring help of woe
> Doth long too long; Love, tendering your case
> And mine, hath taught re-cure of both our pain.
> My chamber-floor doth hide a cave where was
> An old vault's mouth: the other in the plain
> Doth rise southward, a furlong from the wall.
> Descend you there. This shall suffice. And so
> I yield myself, mine honour, life and all
> To you. Use you the same, as there may grow
> Your bliss and mine, mine Earl, and that the same
> Free may abide from danger of defame.
> Farewell! and fare so well, as that your joy,
> Which only can, may comfort mine annoy.

These are rhymes, but the lines more broken than I should have thought any before Jonson were, in blank verse.

The effect of this long speech is much of the flow, which Shakespeare gives us by means of verse, chiefly unbroken.

> Sister, I say
> If you esteem or aught respect my life
> Her honour, and the welfare of our house,
> Forbear, and wade no further in this speech.
> Your words are wounds. I very well perceive
> The purpose of this smooth oration.
> This I suspected when you first began
> This fair discourse with us. Is this the end
> Of all our hopes that we have promised
> Unto ourself by this her widowhood?
> Would our dear daughter, would our only joy,
> Would she forsake us? would she leave us now
> Before she hath clos'd up our dying eyes,
> And with her tears bewail'd our funeral?
> No other solace doth her father crave,

But whilst the fates maintain his dying life,
Her healthful presence, gladsome to his soul;
Which rather than he willing would forego,
His heart desires the bitter taste of death.
Her late marriage hath taught us to our grief
That in the fruits of her perpetual sight
Consists the only comfort and relief
Of our unwieldy age: for what delight,
What joy, what comfort, have we in this world;
Now grown in years, and overworn with cares,
Subject unto the sudden stroke of death,
Already falling like the mellow'd fruit,
And dropping by degrees into our grave?
But what revives us, what maintains our soul
Within the prison of our wither'd breast,
But our Gismunda, and her cheerful sight?
Oh, daughter, daughter! what desert of mine,—
Wherein have I been so unkind to thee
Thou should'st desire to make my naked house
Yet once again stand desolate by thee?
Oh, let such fancies vanish with their thoughts!
Tell her I am her father, whose estate,
Wealth, honour, life, and all that we possess,
Wholly relies upon her presence here.
Tell her I must account her all my joy,
Work as she will. But yet she were unjust
To haste his death that liveth by her sight.—*Ibid.*

Arden of Feversham, printed in 1592, is a play of considerable force, but quite in the early style. The verses exceedingly unbroken. It is more equal than Shakespeare, and more learned; with not much imagery, and still less conceit.

Disturbed thoughts drives me from company
And dries my marrow with their watchfulness,
Continual trouble of my moody brain
Feebles my body by excess of drink,
And nips me, as the bitter north-east wind
Doth check the tender blossoms of the spring.

Well fares the man, howe'er his cates do taste,
That tables not with foul suspicion:
And he but pines amongst his delicates,
Whose troubled mind is stuff'd with discontent.
My golden time was when I had no gold;
Though then I wanted, yet I slept secure.
My daily toil begat me night's repose;
My night's repose made daylight fresh to me.
But since I climb'd the top bough of the tree,
And sought to build my nest among the clouds,
Each gentle stary gale doth shake my bed,
And makes me dread my downfall to the earth.

I will do penance for offending thee,
And burn this prayer-book where I here use
The holy word that hath converted me.
See, Mosby, I will tear away the leaves,
And all the leaves; and in this golden cover
Shall thy sweet phrases and thy letters dwell;
And thereon will I chiefly meditate,
And hold no other sect but such devotion.
Wilt thou not look? Is all thy love o'erwhelm'd?
Wilt thou not hear? What silence stops thy ears?
Why speak'st thou not? What silence ties thy tongue?
Thou hast been sighted as the eagle is,
And heard as quickly as the fearful hare,
And spoke as smoothly as an orator.
When I have bid thee hear, or see, or speak.
And art thou sensible in none of these?

Henceforth I 'll be thy slave, no more thy wife,
For with that name I never shall content thee.
If I be merry, thou straightways think'st me light,
If sad, thou say'st the sullens trouble me.
If well attired, thou think'st I will be gadding;
If homely, I seem sluttish in thine eye.
Thus am I still, and shall be while I die,
Poor wench! abused by thy misgovernment.

SECT. 5.

WRITERS OF SHAKESPEARE'S TIME.

THE question now is, whether the example of any, and what, other poets, led Shakespeare to make the alteration in his verse: that is, the great and extreme alteration in his later time: for the partly interrupted style of *Measure for Measure*, for instance, was what a man of poetical genius would probably fall into of himself.

The earliest poet, that could have been in any way a model for Shakespeare, when already formed as a writer, was Jonson. He was born in 1574. His first play appeared in 1598. It has great merit, and must have been much admired. It seems strange that a poet so popular, as Shakespeare was when Jonson first appeared, and that in the way in which popularity is most felt, dramatic writing,—nay, who lent his own influence to bring Jonson into notice,—should, in one respect, materially change his style in imitation of other authors younger than himself. But we must look into his *Sonnets*, to see his real feelings with regard to them: his repeatedly expressed sense of inferiority; of being outdone. His character was the reverse of insolent or self-confiding. *Gentle* he was always called. We see enough, in the use he makes of the materials for his plots, to lead us almost to describe him as docile and humble.

Jonson was likely to have influence over him. He was

learned. He was original; followed his predecessors very little. They were personally intimate.

Jonson was but little of a poet, and, at least, was certainly not likely to make any innovations in verse, from any real feeling for the effect, which a poetical turn of mind produces upon the metre. He was almost an anti-poet, in more ways than one. I have no doubt that many of the finest passages of imagery and fancy in Shakespeare, he would have found simply ridiculous, and called bombast or rant.

But he was in great measure a satirist. This took him away from the style of poetry, and into the style (being a scholar) of Horace's *Satires;* of which, though he was quite incapable of seizing the ease and freedom, he could cultivate the irregularity. Here he learned the practice of weak endings; and not merely as others might have done, and as Shakespeare himself did in some degree, from a love of variety, and from following the accidental leading of the thought. I cannot but think it was chiefly in following Jonson, that Shakespeare caught this practice in the greatly increased degree which we find in his later plays; but in which he seems to outrun his guide, both when it does produce a good effect, and when it does not.

Broken verse, especially from one speech to another, is Jonson's practice, as compared to the contrary; for prosaic, not poetical, purposes: but also, because he found the old fashion pretty well worn out when he began to write, and had no taste for that flow of ideas and feeling which Shakespeare found it fitted for.

Seneca's plays must have been partly a model for him.

Double endings, in him, are by no means prevalent.

Though Jonson has too little spirit to be called a great dramatist, he was much more of a *dialogist*, perhaps, than Shakespeare; at least, though he might run on with tiresome specifications, in a long speech, sometimes, he had no turn for *excursive* passages, of either kind.

The extracts are partly to show instances where weak endings occur; partly as general specimens of his writing in long speeches, perhaps where best.

I took him of a child, up, at my door,
And christen'd him; gave him my own name Thomas;
Since bred him at the Hospital; where proving
A toward imp, I call'd him home, and taught him
So much, as I have made him my cashier,
And giv'n him, who had none, a surname, Cash.
Every Man in his Humour.

A new disease? I know not, new or old,
But it may well be called poor mortal's plague:
For like a pestilence it doth affect
The houses of the brain. First, it begins
Solely to work upon the phantasy,
Filling her seat with such pestiferous air
As soon corrupts the judgment; and from thence,
Sends like contagion to the memory.—*Ibid.*

Age was authority
Against a buffoon, and a man had, then,
A certain reverence paid unto his years,
That had none due unto his life. So much
The sanctity of some prevail'd, for others.
But now, we all are fall'n.
. . . . . .
But this is in the infancy; the days
Of the long coat; when it puts on the breeches,
It will put off all this. Ay, it is like,
When it is gone into the bone already.
No, no; this dye goes deeper than the coat,

Or shirt, or skin. It stains unto the liver,
And heart, in some. And rather than it should not,
Note what we fathers do; look how we live.

. . . . . .

Taste of the same provoking meats with us,
To ruin of our state. Nay, when our own
Portion is fled, to prey on their remainder
We call them into fellowship of vice.

. . . . . .

Well, I thank Heaven, I never yet was he
That travell'd with my son before sixteen
To show him the Venetian courtesans;
Nor read the grammar of cheating, I had made,
To my sharp boy at twelve: repeating still
The rule, "Get money; still, get money, boy."—*Ibid.*

Thomas, you may deceive me, but I hope,
Your love to me is more. *Cash.* Sir, if a servant's
Duty with faith, may be call'd love, you are
More than in hope, you are possess'd of it.
K. I thank you heartily, Thomas; gi' me your hand;
With all my heart, good Thomas. I have, Thomas,
A secret to impart unto you,—but
When once you have it, I must seal your lips up.
(So far I tell you, Thomas.) *Cash.* Sir, for that—
K. Nay, hear me out. Think I esteem you, Thomas,
When I will let you in thus, to my private.
It is a thing, sits nearer to my crest
Than thou art 'ware of, Thomas. If thou should'st
Reveal it,—but— *C.* How? I reveal it? *K.* Nay,
I do not think thou would'st; but if thou should'st,
'T were a great weakness. *C.* A great treachery,
Give it no other name. *K.* Thou wilt not do 't then?—*Ibid.*

It is too much, these ceremonies need not.
I know thy faith to be as firm as rock.
Thomas, come hither, near: we cannot be
Too private in this business. So it is,
(Now he has sworn, I dare the safelier venture).—*Ibid.*

Catch at the loosest laughters, and affect
To be thought jesters; such as can devise
Things never seen, or heard, t' impair men's names,
And gratify their credulous adversaries;
Will carry tales, do basest offices;
Cherish divided fires, and still increase
New flames out of old embers; will reveal
Each secret that 's committed to their trust;
These be black slaves: Romans, take heed of these.
Poetaster, 1601.

The air respires the pure Elysian sweets,
In which she breathes: and from her looks descend
The glories of the summer. Heaven! She is
Prais'd in herself above all praise: and he
Which hears her speak, would swear the full-tun'd orbs
Turn'd in his zenith only.—*Ibid.*

But Sosia, Silius' wife would be wound in
Now, for she hath a fury in her breast,
More than hell ever knew; and would be sent
Thither in time. Then is there one Cremutius
Cordus, a writing fellow they have got
To gather notes of the precedent times.—*Sejanus*, 1603.

Look'd it of the hue
To such as live in great men's bosoms? Was
The spirit of it Macro's? *N.* May it please
The most divine Sejanus.—*Ibid.*

Sir, I have been so long train'd up in grace;
First with your father, great Augustus; since
With your most happy bounties so familiar.—*Ibid.*

O, my most equal hearers! if these deeds,
Acts of this bold and most exorbitant strain
May pass with sufferance, what one citizen
But owes the forfeit of his life, yea fame,
To him that dares traduce him? Which of you
Are safe, my honour'd fathers? I would ask

(With leave of your grave father-hoods) if their plot
Have any face or colour like to truth?
Or if, unto the dullest nostril, here,
It smell not rank, and most abhorred slander?
I crave your care of this good gentleman,
Whose life is much endanger'd by their fable;
And as for them, I will conclude with this,
That vicious persons when they 're hot and fleshed
In impious acts, their constancy abounds:
Damn'd deeds are done with greatest confidence.

The Fox, 1605.

Most of your doctors are the greater danger,
And worse disease t' escape. I often have
Heard him protest that your physician
Should never be his heir.—*Ibid.*

Son, I doubt
You 're covetous, that thus you meet your time
I' the just point: prevent your day, at morning.
This argues something worthy of a fear
Of importune, and carnal appetite.
Take heed, you do not cause the blessing leave you,
With your ungovern'd haste. I should be sorry
To see my labours, now, e'en at perfection,
Got by long watching, and large patience,
Not prosper where my love and zeal hath plac'd them,
Which (heaven I call to witness, with yourself,
To whom I have pour'd my thoughts, in all my ends,)
Have look'd no way but unto public good,
To pious uses, and dear charity,
Now grown a prodigy with men. Wherein
If you, my son, should now prevaricate,
And to your own particular lusts employ
So great and catholic a bliss, be sure,
A curse will follow, yea, and overtake
Your subtle, and most secret ways.—*The Alchemist*, 1610.

Donne was born in 1573. According to Izaak Walton,

he wrote a great number of verses in his youth; many of them before he was twenty, which, though they were handed about, were not published till long after. Jonson says, all his best things were written before he was twenty-five. The date would be that of Shakespeare's early good plays. To some few, the date of 1603 is affixed. He was an admirer of Jonson, but may nevertheless have fallen into the bad, broken, style, before him. It appears in what must have been quite his early poems, but double endings do not; if we may call anything *style*, that relates to a writer who seems to have had so little idea of sound and versification at all; as he avows in his lines to J. W. and T. W.

I will not extract any of what he calls verses.

The expression of Mason, 'hew out the line,' applies to his satires only, of course. In satires, he might be influenced by the imitation of Horace's verse. When these were published I do not know. After Hall's, which came out in 1597; for Hall calls himself the first English satirist. All this, however, is curiosity.

One can hardly suppose that his poems influenced Shakespeare directly, if he read them. They may have helped to form Jonson.

Marston began to write plays soon after 1600, being probably about thirty years old. He was intimate with Jonson. He is a writer of great vigour and spirit, and a good deal of poetry; but with feelings more frequently of the violent, than of the delicate kind. His verse is almost entirely of the older fashion, and suits the downright unstudied flow of his ideas.

> Sailing some two months with inconstant winds,
> We view'd the glistening Venetian forts,

To which we made; when lo, some three leagues off,
We might descry a horrid spectacle;
The issue of black fury strew'd the sea,
With tattered carcases of splitted ships,
Half sinking, burning, floating topsyturvy;
Not far from these sad ruins of fell rage,
We might behold a creature press the waves;
Senseless he sprawl'd, all notched with gaping wounds.
To him we made, and (short) we took him up;
The first word that he spoke was "Mellida,"
And then he swoon'd.

The First Part of Antonio and Mellida.

Shall I, whose very hum struck all heads bare,
Whose face made silence, creaking of whose shoe
Forc'd the most private passages fly ope,
Scrape like a servile dog at some latch'd door?
Learn now to make a leg; and cry, "Beseech ye,
Pray ye, is such a lord within?" be aw'd
At some odd usher's scoff'd formality?

The Malcontent, 1604.

My cell 't is, lady; where, instead of masks,
Music, tilts, tournées, and such court-like shews,
The hollow murmur of the checkless winds
Shall groan again; whilst the unquiet sea
Shakes the whole rock with foamy battery.
There usherless the air comes in and out;
The rheumy vault will force your eyes to weep,
While you behold true desolation.—*Ibid.*

There were about ten years, after Ben Jonson began, before the appearance of Beaumont and Fletcher. Several authors, of course, sprang up in this interval. Here are some extracts, extending also to a later time.

Frantic young man,
Wilt thou believe these gentlemen? pray speak.
Thou dost abuse my child, and mock'st the tears

That here are shed for her: if to behold
Those roses wither'd that set out her cheeks,
That pair of stars that gave her body light,
Darken'd and dim for ever,—all those rivers
That fed her veins with warm and crimson streams,
Froz'n and dried up; if these be signs of death,
Then is she dead.—*Early in* 1603, *Decker, H. W.*

If ever whilst frail blood through my veins run,
On woman's beams I throw affection,
Save her that's dead; or that I loosely fly
To th' shore of any other wafting eye,
Let me not prosper, heaven! I will be true,
E'en to her dust and ashes: could her tomb
Stand, whilst I liv'd so long, that it might rot,
That should fall down, but she be ne'er forgot.—*Ib.*

These are in a perfectly good style of verse, without *manner*, answering to the corresponding style of Shakespeare. As Decker satirized Ben Jonson, we may infer that he was not likely to imitate him.

How ruthless men are to adversity!
My acquaintance scarce will know me; when we meet,
They cannot stay to talk, they must be gone;
And shake me by the hand as if I burnt them:
A man must trust unto himself, I see;
For if he once but halt in his estate,
Friendship will prove but broken crutches to him
Well, I will lean to none of them, but stand
Free of myself: and if I had a spirit
Daring to act what I am prompted to,
I might thrust out into the world again,
Full-blossom'd with a sweet and golden spring.
It was an argument of love in her
To fetch me out of prison; and this night,
She clasp'd my hand in hers, as who should say,
Thou art my purchase, and I hold thee thus.
The worst is but repulse, if I attempt it.

I am resolv'd; my genius whispers to me,
Go on, and win her; thou art young and active,
Which she is apt to catch at; for there 's nought
That 's more unsteadfast than a woman's thought.
Greene's Tu Quoque, by Cooke; acted in the Queen's Time.

A Woman Killed with Kindness, by Heywood, early in 1603, is flat in some parts, and very good, but quiet in others. The verse is sometimes broken; a speech often ends in rhyme.

Go tell your husband; he will turn me off,
And I am then undone; I care not, I,
'T was for your sake. Perchance in rage he 'll kill me:
I care not, 't was for you. Say I incur
The general name of villain through the world,
Of traitor to my friend; I care not, I.
Beggary, shame, death, scandal and reproach,
For you I 'll hazard all: why, what care I?
For you I 'll love, and in your love I 'll die.

She was an angel in a mortal's shape,
And ne'er descended from old Mountford's line.
But soft, soft, let me call my wits together.
A poor, poor wench, to my great adversary
Sister; whose very souls denounce stern war
Each against other. How now, Frank, turn'd fool
Or madman, whether? But no; master of
My perfect senses and directest wits.

O, never teach them, when they come to speak,
To name the name of mother; chide their tongue
If they by chance light on that hated word;
Tell them 't is naught: for when that word they name,
(Poor pretty souls) they harp on their own shame.

In the following strong lines, 1608, the metre, I think, decidedly goes back; though there are a few instances, in the same play, of the weak ending of the verse.

Roll on, the chariot-wheels of my dear plots,
And bear mine ends to their desired marks;
As yet there's not a rub of wit, a gulf of thought,
No rocky misconstruction, thorny maze,
Or other let of any doubtfulness:
As yet thy way is smooth and plain,
Like the green ocean in a silent calm.
Blessed credulity, thou great God of error,
That art the strong foundation of huge wrongs,
To thee give I my vows and sacrifice;
By thy great deity he doth believe
Falsehoods, that falsehood's self could not invent,
And from that misbelief doth draw a course
T' o'erwhelm e'en virtue, truth, and sanctity.
Let him go on, blest stars, 't is meet he fall,
Whose blindfold judgment hath no guide at all.

Machin's Dumb Knight.

How the good hermit seems to share his moans,
Which in the day-time he deplores 'mongst trees,
And in the night his cave is filled with sighs,
No other bed doth his weak limbs support
Than the cold earth; no other harmony
To rock his cares asleep, but blustering winds,
Or some swift current, headlong rushing down
From a high mountain's top, pouring his force
Into the ocean's gulf, where being swallow'd,
Seems to bewail his fall with hideous words.

Taylor: The Hog hath Lost his Pearl, 1614.

Webster seems to have been a better poet, than he was a constructor of plays.

O thou soft natural death! that art joint-twin
To sweetest slumber!—no rough bearded comet
Stares on thy mild departure: the dull owl
Beats not against thy casement; the hoarse wolf
Scents not thy carrion. Pity winds thy corse,
Whilst horror waits on princes.—*Vittoria Corombona*, 1612.

You are deceived;
For know that all your strict combined heads,
Which strike against this mine of diamonds,
Shall prove but glassen hammers, they shall break;
These are but feigned shadows of my evils.
Terrify babes, my lord, with painted devils,
I am past such needless palsy. For your names
Of whore and murd'ress, they proceed from you,
As if a man should spit against the wind;
The filth returns in 's face.— *Ibid.*

From these extracts it should seem that Shakespeare's latest style was very far indeed from being the general style of the time.

Beaumont was born in 1586. Fletcher in 1579.

The earlier plays of Beaumont and Fletcher may have helped to influence Shakespeare's style. The greater part are only connected with the present subject, as being the most important specimens of the style of dramatic verse which immediately followed him.

The first certain specimens of Beaumont and Fletcher, however, are not plays, but commendatory verses to Ben Jonson on *The Fox*, in 1607.

If it might stand with justice to allow
The swift conversion of all follies, now
Such is my mercy, that I could admit
All sorts should equally approve the wit
Of this thy even work, whose growing fame
Shall raise thee high, and thou it, with thy name:
And did not manners and my love command
Me to forbear to make those understand
Whom thou, perhaps, hast in thy wiser doom
Long since firmly resolved, shall never come
To know more than they do,—I would have shown
To all the world the art which thou alone

Hast taught our tongue, the rules of time, of place,
And other rites, deliver'd with the grace
Of comic style, which only is far more
Than any English stage hath known before.—*Beaumont.*

Forgive thy friends; they would, but cannot praise
Enough the wit and language of thy plays.
Forgive thy foes; they will not praise thee; why?
Thy fate hath thought it best, they should envy.
Faith, for thy *Fox's* sake, forgive, then, those
Who are not worthy to be friends nor foes;
Or, for their own brave sake, let them be still
Fools at thy mercy, and like what they will.—*Fletcher.*

The first of these is decidedly a specimen of the broken style by choice. The other contains it, but is perhaps rather a specimen of a writer beginning to put prosaic ideas into verse, without any feeling of poetry, or particular taste as to style, one way or the other. That the lines are broken, I think, in general, is always the more remarkable when they are in rhyme. It may be observed that commendatory verses upon an author would be somewhat likely to follow his taste.

'*The Woman Hater*, in all probability the unassisted composition of Fletcher, came out either in 1606 or 1607' (Dyce). There are some rhyming passages. The verse of this play is often unbroken, never artificially and systematically cut into pieces; but there is not a great deal of it: more than half the play is prose.

We have no positive means of knowing the individual style of Beaumont in plays. That any play of the collection was solely written by Beaumont, stands upon loose report, or on conjecture founded upon internal evidence; and such conjectures differ so widely, that I take the liberty to discard them altogether, and merely to mention

plays written while Beaumont was living, and which have not been ascribed to Fletcher singly.

Of these, the first is *Philaster*, as is supposed, though there is nothing certain but that it was before 1611. In the admired speech of the girl discovering herself, there is a most delightful purity and simplicity, but, I think, some want of freedom, in the verse at least. The following, on the contrary, has a fulness, spirit, and flow, worthy of Shakespeare.

> King, you may be deceiv'd yet;
> The head you aim at, cost more setting on
> Than to be lost so lightly. If it must off,
> Like a wild overflow, that swoops before him
> A golden stack, and with it shakes down bridges,
> Cracks the strong hearts of pines, whose cable-roots
> Held out a thousand storms, a thousand thunders,
> And so made mightier, takes whole villages
> Upon his back, and in that heat of pride
> Charges strong towns, towers, castles, palaces,
> And lays them desolate! so shall thy head,
> Thy noble head, bury the lives of thousands,
> That must bleed with thee like a sacrifice,
> In thy red ruins.

And this other.

> This earth you tread upon
> (A dowry as you hope with this fair princess)
> By my dead father (oh, I had a father,
> Whose memory I bow to!) was not left
> To your inheritance, and I up and living—
> Having myself about me, and my sword,
> The souls of all my name and memories,
> These arms, and some few friends besides the gods—
> To part so calmly with it, and sit still,
> And say, 'I might have been.' I tell thee, Pharamond.
> When thou art king, look I be dead and rotten,
> And my name ashes.

It is a curious remark that the use of parenthesis, instead of denoting crampness and entanglement, appears to arise from natural spirit and freedom, not stopping to arrange the words regularly.

The Maid's Tragedy. About 1610. The well-known speech of Aspatia, pathetic as it is, is rather cold, and the verse is so. In other parts, there is much of a forward eager spirit. There is an extraordinary instance of weak ending in a speech whose subject is the utmost boldness and spirit.

> Your subjects have all fed by virtue of
> My arm.

There are other instances in *A King and no King.* But here is a delightfully natural passage from the same.

> 'T is such another strange ill-laid request,
> As if a beggar should intreat a king
> To leave his sceptre and his throne to him,
> And take his rags to wander o'er the world
> Hungry and cold.

The Knight of the Burning Pestle contains speeches, in the love part, of a quiet and unaffected feeling and style. The comic is exceedingly natural, too.

Both these plays are assigned to 1611.

> 'Go' said she 'to my lord (and to go to him
> Is such a happiness I must not hope for,)
> And tell him that he too much priz'd a trifle
> Made only worthy in his love, and her
> Thankful acceptance, for her sake to rob
> The orphan kingdom of such guardians as
> Must of necessity descend from him.'—*Thierry and Theodoret.*

'Generally considered as an early composition of Fletcher's, but both the date, and the singleness of author-

ship, are doubted.' (Dyce.) In a page accidentally taken, there are twenty-seven double endings in thirty-four lines.

'*The Faithful Shepherdess* is undoubtedly Fletcher's only. It was brought out in 1610. Perhaps before.' (Gifford.) The breaking of the verse in it is extreme; which seems the more remarkable from being wholly in rhyme, did we not see that the practice was affected in rhyme, quite as much as otherwise, in those days. It is interesting to see, further, that where feeling is greatest, this practice breaks down. Double endings, of course, cannot occur much in English rhyme. They do not in this play.

Then hear me, Heaven, to whom I call for right,
And you, fair twinkling stars, that crown the night;
And hear me, woods, and silence of this place,
And ye, sad hours, that move a sullen pace;
Hear me, ye shadows, that delight to dwell
In horrid darkness, and ye powers of hell,
While I breathe out my last! I am that maid,
That yet untainted Amoret, that play'd
The careless prodigal, and gave away
My soul to this young man, that now dares say
I am a stranger, not the same, more vild;
And thus with much belief I was beguil'd:
I am that maid, that have delay'd, denied,
And almost scorn'd the loves of all that tried
To win me, but this swain; and yet confess
I have been woo'd by many with no less
Soul of affection; and have often had
Rings, belts, and cracknels sent me from the lad
That feeds his flocks down westward; lambs and doves
By young Alexis; Daphnis sent me gloves;
All which I gave to thee: nor these nor they
That sent them did I smile on, or e'er lay

> Up in my after memory. But why
> Do I resolve to grieve, and not to die?
> Happy had been the stroke thou gav'st, if home;
> By this time had I found a quiet room,
> Where every slave is free, and every breast
> That living bred new care, now lies at rest;
> And thither will poor Amoret.—*Faithful Shepherdess.*

We find Fletcher again, undoubtedly single after Beaumont's death, first in the *Loyal Subject* and the *False One.* In these plays the verse is not absurdly broken. Double endings are exceedingly common. Weak, and preposition, endings occur. The accumulation of words in a line, which we find in writers of this period, is carried to an extravagant length in some instances in these plays.

The *Loyal Subject* is one of the worst instances, and in more parts than one, of the strange taste, so unlike Shakespeare, for overstrained character and feeling, and for the false assumption of indecent manners by women. The loyalty of Archas is carried so far as to be the reverse of honest duty. It is mean, false, flattering, and degrading.

I have fancied that the complete failure of two plays, *The Faithful Shepherdess* and *The Knight of the Burning Pestle,* in which there was a great deal of pure natural simplicity of different kinds, let out, as it were, in unsuspecting confidence, to the world, spoiled Fletcher's temper, and thereby his taste.

The prodigious spirit of Edith's speech to Rollo, in *The Bloody Brother* (one of his last plays) overflows all dykes. No peculiarities of verse appear in that, but the double endings, which are the more natural form in passages of passion. In a speech of Valentinian, not particularly of this character (the play is Fletcher's alone),

I have counted twenty-six double endings in twenty-nine lines; and there are twenty-five consecutive lines of that kind in the beginning of the scene of Edith and Rollo.

There cannot be a more remarkable instance of breaking the verse, than in the following passage from Fletcher's *Honest Man's Fortune*, 1613.

> Oh my lord,
> How has your nature lost her worthiness?
> When our affections had their liberty,
> Our kisses met as temperately as
> The hands of sisters or of brothers, yet
> Our bloods were then as moving; then you were
> So noble, that I durst have trusted your
> Embraces in an opportunity
> Silent enough to serve a ravisher,
> And yet come from you undishonour'd. How
> You think me alter'd, that you promise your
> Attempt success, I know not; but were all
> The sweet temptations that deceive us set
> On this side, and on that side all the wants,
> These neither should persuade me, nor they force.

SECT. 6.

AFTER SHAKESPEARE, TO THE RESTORATION.

THE Editors, even to the present time, of the dramatic authors after Shakespeare, including Mr. Dyce, have not sufficiently attended to the difference between verse and prose, or at least have not completely succeeded in ascertaining that distinction. They confound them both ways. But I cannot help thinking that part of the difficulty is created by the authors themselves, and that after the introduction of the broken style of verse, or rather, as part of that system, it was intended by many poets, or in many scenes at least, to break down in a great degree that distinction. I know not whether there is any evidence of the manner in which those broken verses were pronounced, but we find in plays, much later than that time, there is an affectation, which in them is absurd, of introducing verses, two or three perhaps at a time, even in the serious part of comedies. There is a ridiculous instance in *The Busybody*.

Tomkis's *Albumazar*, 1614:—

> 'T is true.
> And as from nights of storms the glorious sun
> Breaks from the east, and chaseth thence the clouds
> That choak'd the air with horror, so her beauty
> Dispels sad darkness from my troubled thoughts,
> And clears my heart.

Here are extracts from *The Heir*, by May, written in 1620, which I think remarkably good specimens of the *unmannered* style; and I mention them the rather, because Carew, himself a very good poet, particularly praises it for its numbers.

You shall observe his words in order meet,
And softly stealing on with equal feet,
Slide into even numbers, with such grace
As each word had been moulded for that place.

Sir, I am poor, I must confess;
Fortune has blest you better: but I swear
By all things that can bind, 't was not your wealth
Was the foundation of my true-built love;
It was her single uncompounded self,
Herself without addition, that I lov'd,
Which shall for ever in my sight outweigh
All other women's fortunes, and themselves:
And were I great, as great as I could wish
Myself for her advancement, no such bar
As fortune's inequality should stand
Betwixt our loves.

An such an angel call, I should forget
All offices of nature, all that men
Wish in their second thoughts, ere such a duty.
Commend my service to her, and to you
My thanks for this kind message.
I never breath'd till now, never till now
Did my life relish sweetness; break not, heart;
Crack not, ye feeble ministers of nature,
With inundation of such swelling joy,
Too great to bear without expression.
The lady writes that she has known me long
By sight and lov'd me, and she seems to thank
Her stars, she loves, and is belov'd again.
She speaks my very thoughts! How strange it is,

And happy, when affections thus can meet!
She further writes, at such an hour today
Her father's absence, and all household spies
Fitly removed, shall give access to me
Unmarked to visit her: where she alone
Will entertain discourse, and welcome me.
I hope 't is truly meant; why should I fear?
But wisdom bids me fear: fie, fie, 't is base
To wrong a creature of that excellence
With such suspicion; I should injure her.
I will as soon suspect an angel false;
Treason ne'er lodg'd within so fair a breast.
No, if her hand betray me, I will run
On any danger; 't is alike to me
To die, or find her false; for on her truth
Hangs my chief being. Well, I 'll lose no time,
No, not a minute; dearest love, I come,
To meet my sweetest wishes I will fly,
Heaven and my truth shield me from treachery!

There is no creature here, I am the first.
Methinks this sad and solitary place
Should strike a terror to such hearts as mine;
But love has made me bold. The time has been
In such a place as this I should have fear'd
Each rolling leaf, and trembled at a reed
Stirr'd in the moonshine; my fearful fancy
Would frame a thousand apparitions,
And work some fear out of my very shadow.
I wonder Philocles is tardy thus;
When last we parted, every hour, he said,
Would seem a year till we were met again;
It should not seem so by the haste he makes.
I 'll sit and rest me; come, I know, he will.

Ford, who began about the time of Shakespeare's death and went on to the civil wars, has little of the peculiarities of verse in his time.

Massinger (born 1585) in his matter is no exception from the bad taste of his age in artificial feelings and conduct, strained affectation of bad, still more than of good: and he has the same faults of verse. But his own real nature constantly shows through in both. His verse is very often, perhaps generally, natural and varied, and yet founded upon a purposed principle. He is apt to crowd the verse with syllables, especially in comedy, or as some would call it, to measure feet by accents. But, a poet who does this, should not also be so irregular in the accents, as he not seldom is.

That may make it the study of her life—

is beyond allowance.

It is not known when he began to write plays. Mr. Gifford supposes, at first, chiefly in connection with others. The earliest printed is 1622: he died 1640.

Giovanni. Greatness, with private men
Esteem'd a blessing, is to me a curse:
And we who, for our high births, they conclude
The only freemen, are the only slaves.
Happy the golden mean! had I been born
In a poor sordid cottage, not nurs'd up
With expectation to command a court,
I might, like such of your condition, sweetest,
Have ta'en a safe and middle course, and not,
As I am now, against my choice, compell'd
Or to lie grovelling on the earth, or rais'd
So high upon the pinnacle of state,
That I must either keep my height with danger,
Or fall with certain ruin. *Lid.* Your own goodness
Will be your faithful guard. *Giov.* O, Lidia!
Cont. (*aside*). So passionate! *Giov.* For had I been your equal,
I might have seen and liked with mine own eyes,

And not, as now, with others'; I might still,
And without observation, or envy,
As I have done, continued my delights
With you, that are alone, in my esteem
The abstract of society: we might walk
In solitary groves, or in choice gardens;
From the variety of curious flowers
Contemplate nature's workmanship and wonders:
And then, for change, near to the murmur of
Some bubbling fountain, I might hear you sing,
And from the well-tun'd accents of your tongue,
In my imaginatiön conceive
With what melodious harmony a quire
Of angels sing above their Maker's praises.
And then with chaste discourse, as we return'd,
Imp feathers to the broken wings of time:
And all this I must part from. *Cont.* You forget
The haste impos'd upon us. *Giov.* One word more.
And then I come. And after this, when, with
Continued innocence of love and service,
I had grown ripe for hymeneal joys,
Embracing you, but with a lawful flame,
I might have been your husband. *Lid.* Sir, I was
And ever am your servant; but it was,
And 't is, far from me in a thought to cherish
Such saucy hopes. If I had been the heir
Of all the globes and sceptres mankind bows to,
At my best you had deserved me; as I am,
Howe'er unworthy, in my virgin zeal
I wish you, as a partner of your bed,
A princess equal to you; such a one
That may make it the study of her life,
With all the obedience of a wife to please you.
May you have happy issue, and I live
To be their humblest handmaid!—*Duke of Florence.*

Let Allworth love, I cannot be unhappy.
Suppose the worst, that in his rage he kill me;
A tear or two by you dropt on my herse,

In sorrow for my fate, will call back life
So far as but to say, that I die yours;
I then shall rest in peace: or should he prove
So cruel, as one death would not suffice
His thirst of vengeance, but with lingering torments,
In mind and body I must waste to air,
In poverty join'd with banishment; so you share
In my afflictions, (which I dare not wish you,
So high I prize you,) I could undergo them
With such a patience as should look down
With scorn on his worst malice.

New Way to Pay Old Debts.

And so I cast him off, scorn'd his submission,
His poor and childish whinings, will'd my servants
To shut my gates against him: but when neither
Disdain, hate, nor contempt could free me from
His loathsome importunities, (and fired too,
To wreak mine injured honour) I took gladly
Advantage of his execrable oaths
To undergo what penance I enjoin'd him;
Then, to the terror of all future ribalds,
That make no difference between love and lust,
Imposed this task upon him.—*Parliament of Love.*

Shirley professed an idolatry for Ben Jonson, and that perhaps led to his insufferable use of broken lines and weak endings in general, which give his metre a stiffness quite at variance with his natural flowing turn of thought and expression. He is a careless writer; but even otherwise, does not appear to have been capable of the rich fulness of style of Massinger, or the original and sustained force of Beaumont and Fletcher. But he is by no means incapable of spirit, often excels in imagery, and, especially in the parts of women, abounds in tender feeling.

Amidea. I have done; pray be not angry
That still I wish you well: may Heaven divert
All harms that threaten you; full blessings crown
Your marriage! I hope there is no sin in this;
Indeed I cannot choose but pray for you.
This might have been my wedding day. *Oriana.* Good heaven,
I would it were! my heart can tell I take
No joy in being his bride, none in your prayers;
You shall have my consent to have him still:
I will resign my place, and wait on you,
If you will marry him. *Amid.* Pray do not mock me,
But if you do, I can forgive you too.
Ori. Dear Amidea, do not think I mock
Your sorrow; by these tears, that are not worn
By every virgin on her wedding day,
I am compell'd to give away myself:
Your hearts were promis'd, but he ne'er had mine,
Am I not wretched too? *Amid.* Alas, poor maid!
We two keep sorrow alive then; but I prithee,
When thou art married, love him, prithee love him.
For he esteems thee well, and once a day
Give him a kiss for me, but do not tell him
'T was my desire: perhaps 't will fetch a sigh
From him, and I had rather break my heart.
But one word more, and heaven be with you all.
Since you have led the way, I hope, my lord,
That I am free to marry too? *Pis.* Thou art.
Amid. Let me beseech you then to be so kind
After your own solemnities are done,
To grace my wedding: I shall be married shortly.
Pis. To whom? *Amid.* To one whom you have all heard talk of.
Your fathers knew him well: one who will never
Give cause I should suspect him to forsake me;
A constant lover, one whose lips, though cold,
Distil chaste kisses; though our bridal bed
Be not adorn'd with roses, 't will be green;
We shall have virgin laurel, cypress, yew,
To make us garlands; though no pine do burn,
Our nuptial shall have torches, and our chamber

Shall be cut out of marble, where we 'll sleep,
Free from all care for ever. Death, my lord,
I hope shall be my husband. Now farewell;
Although no kiss, accept my parting tear,
And give me leave to wear my willow here.—*The Traitor.*

When we walk,
The winds shall play soft descant to our feet,
And breathe fresh odours to re-pure the air:
Green bowers on every side shall tempt our stay,
And violets stoop to have us tread upon them.
The red rose shall grow pale, being near thy cheek,
And the white blush, overcome with such a forehead.
Here laid, and measuring with ourselves some bank,
A thousand birds shall from the woods repair,
And place themselves so cunningly behind
The leaves of every tree, that while they pay
Us tribute of their songs, thou shalt imagine
The very trees bear music, and sweet voices
Do grow in every arbour.—*The Lady of Pleasure.*

And doth the Duke, my father, think I can
Take comfort either in restraint, or in
The sight of these, that every moment do
Present it to me?—*Bird in a Cage.*

Unless they can recover him; it shall be
Death to save any man hereafter, if
They suffer him to perish.—*Ibid.*

Oh, hear me,
And after let your anger strike two dead,
So you would let us dwell both in one grave:
And did you know how near we were in life,
You would not think it fitting that in death
Our ashes were divided. You have heard
When the poor turtle's ravish'd from her mate,
The orphan'd dove doth groan away her life.—

In widow's solitude let me call him husband,
And tell yourself the rest.—*Ibid.*

Now with a horrid circumstance death shall
Make thy soul tremble, and forsaking all
The noble parts, it shall retire into
Some angle of thy body, and be afraid
To inform thy eyes, lest they let in a horror
They would not look on.—*Ibid.*

And I durst add, and smile upon your anger,
Though as you frown, death stood in every wrinkle,
My soul's above your tyranny; and would
From torturing flame receive new fire of love,
And make your eye faint to behold the brightness
Of my poor body's martyrdom; and, if ever
Love show'd a miracle, my heart should bear
The characters of him you have torn from it,
With beams about it, like a saint that suffer'd.
But as you are my mother, thus I kneel,
And beg a pardon for my innocence,
If that offend you. Live you happy still,
And be the mistress of your vows! live to
Enjoy whom you affect! May every hour
Return new blessings on you both, renew
Your spring, and let him think you young again!
And let me beg but this for all my duty;
Against that day you marry him, to provide
My coffin, for I fear I shall not have
Breath many minutes after to pray for you.
The herbs that shall adorn your bridal chamber
Will serve my funeral, and deck my herse;
Beneath which you should say, There lies your daughter,
That dies to show obedience.—*The Constant Maid.*

What I call weak endings admit of degrees, if not of being divided into quite distinct classes. Prepositions and articles are by no means to be tolerated at the end

of a line; but there are some words on which it is possible to dwell, in pronouncing, just enough to hint (and a slight hint is sufficient where it is in the course of a long speech) that there is the end of the line. The following fine speech in Shirley has some instances of this:—

> *Duke.* You promis'd, Sir, a secret. *Montalto.* It will come
> Too fast upon your knowledge. Have you never
> Look'd from the prospect of your palace window,
> When some fair sky courted your eye to read
> The beauties of a day; the glorious sun
> Enriching so the bosom of the earth,
> That trees and flowers appear'd but like so much
> Enamel upon gold; the wanton birds,
> And every creature but the drudging ant,
> Despising providence, and at play; and all
> That world you measure with your eye, so gay
> And proud, as winter were no more to shake
> His icy locks upon them, but the breath
> Of gentle zephyr to perfume their growth,
> And walk eternally upon the spring!
> When, from a coast you see not, comes a cloud,
> Creeping as overladen with a storm,
> Dark as the womb of night, and with her wings
> Surprising all the glories you beheld,
> Leaves not your frighted eyes a light to see
> The ruins of that flattering day?—*Royal Master.*

The worst form of these weak endings is when the syllable that precedes them is naturally strongly accented, so that the metre is disagreeably inverted, as in Massinger—

> Did I force these
> Of mine own blood, as handmaids, to kneel to
> Thy pomp and pride?

Brome. *A Jovial Crew*, 1641:—very good verse.

Can there be no means found to preserve life
In thee, but wand'ring like a vagabond?
Does not the sun as comfortably shine
Upon my gardens, as the opener fields?
Or on my fields, as others far remote?
Are not my walks and greens as delectable,
As the highways and commons? Are the shades
Of sycamore, and bow'rs of eglantine
Less pleasing than of bramble or thorn hedges?
Or of my groves and thickets, than wild woods?
Are not my fountain-waters fresher than
The troubled streams where ev'ry beast does drink?
Do not the birds sing here as sweet and lively
As any other where? Is not thy bed more soft,
And rest more safe, than in a field or barn?
Is a full table which is call'd thine own,
Less curious or wholesome than the scraps
From other trenchers, twice or thrice translated?

With regard to the very broken style in plays, if verse was meant to be preserved, nothing can be so bad. If not, why was it written? Somewhere in Shirley, a person having made a speech in this kind of metre, is ridiculed for having run off so much *blank verse;* a proof that it was meant to sound like verse.

There is a beautiful specimen of broken metre in Habington, in rhyme, though rather extreme:—

Pass on immortal in thy glorious way,
Till thou hast reach'd thy destin'd seat; we may,
Without disturbing those auspicious spheres,
Bathe, here below, thy memory with our tears.

But the effect here is exactly because it is single, introduced into remarkably flowing lines. As in music, the sparing modulation of the older masters made each instance effective. Where the change is perpetual, there is nothing left to change from.

In the same author's *Queen of Arragon*, there is sometimes shocking weakness of ending.

> He happily supplied the office of
> Our general. Howe'er, your city had
> Been ours. For though our Spanish forces may
> At first seem beaten, etc.

Elsewhere, there is a speech of such remarkable merit for verse as well as poetry, that I cannot but give it

> Madam, you haply scorn the vulgar earth
> Of which I stand compacted: and because
> I cannot add a splendour to my name
> Reflective from a royal pedigree,
> You interdict my language. But be pleased
> To know, the ashes of my ancestors,
> If intermingled in the tomb with kings,
> Could hardly be distinguished. The stars shoot
> An equal influence on the open cottage,
> Where the poor shepherd's child is rudely nurs'd,
> And on the cradle where the prince is rock'd
> With care and whisper.

The imitation (probably) of Perdita's speech in Shakespeare, will easily occur.

> She falls
> Prostrate at 's feet, to his remembrance calls
> Her dying mother's will; by whose pale dust
> She now conjures him not to be unjust
> Unto that promise, with which her pure soul
> Fled satisfied from earth, as to control
> Her freedom of affection, rather she
> Desires her interest in his crown might be
> Denied her, then the choice of one to sway
> It in her right, she urges how it may
> Be by his virtue far more glorified,
> Whom she had chose, than if by marriage tied
> To any neighbouring prince, who only there
> Would rule by proxie, whilst his greater care

> Secur'd his own inheritance: she then
> Calls to remembrance who reliev'd him, when
> Distrest within Alcithius' walls, etc.
>
> *Chamberlayne's Pharonnida.*

This poem came out the year of the Restoration. It shows that kind of style, as to the breaks at least, run mad.

I need not extract from Milton.

The speech of Satan to the sun; both the farewells to Paradise; the speech of Adam on the fall of Eve; and, I think, above all for argumentative and dramatic force, bold spirit, and compactness, the retort of the angel to Satan in the fourth book;—all these, on various subjects, and in various turns of feeling, are quite perfect, showing a thorough knowledge of dramatic and oratorical talent and style, and consummate excellence and variety in the verses as well as in the language. But a man could hardly be expected to write often in that manner. These passages are worked as if he was never to write anything else. And when Milton is not at his best, from his seriousness of mind and learned, academical habits, he becomes stiff and heavy. It is for this reason that I think it is better to derive a general notion of blank verse chiefly from Shakespeare and the other old plays. Milton, I think, founded himself quite as much upon the Greek tragedians; and, as he was a prose writer himself, upon Plato and the orators, and the high and flowing prose style of the English. Lord Monboddo praises his speeches for combining the effect of verse with that of sustained, and, as he would say himself, linked and drawn-out prose.

The versification of *Comus* I think is beautiful, but not

dramatic, as neither indeed is the matter. It is remarkably unbroken, for the time; but there is an instance of weak ending:—

> I cannot halloo to my brothers, but
> Such noise as I can make, etc.;

as there is in *Il Penseroso*:—

> Forget thyself to marble, till
> With a sad leaden downward cast, etc.

Milton, I think, where he does fall back on a system, it is one of which breaks are too much a requisite, and one by which he is *gêné*, and which leads him on to the long periods that tire one's breath and attention. An excellent specimen of *Paradise Regained* is ii. 407. It and *Samson*, I think, have in general this misfortune, that the *quantity* of the syllables, and variety, and sweetness, do not swell up the rhythm as in *Paradise Lost*.

SECT. 7.

SINCE THE RESTORATION.

DRYDEN'S *Rival Ladies*, his first play, was much in the later style of Shakespeare's metre; which was that of Shirley. The succeeding plays much the reverse, —in purposed opposition, I presume, to the former, and from following the French; for mere rhyme would not, according to the practice of the English immediately before him, have necessarily led to uniform pauses. Of those predecessors, however, Wither (a very harmonious writer) is more flowing; and so is Sandys. As to blank verse, *Don Sebastian*, near the end of Dryden's time, is not in unbroken metre. *All for Love*, earlier, is much more so; but stiffly, like most modern poets.

Here are specimens of it in his poems:—

> The fiend's alarm began; a hollow sound
> Sung in the leaves; the forest rock'd around;
> Air blacken'd—roll'd the thunder—groan'd the ground.

> As when some great and gracious monarch dies,
> Soft whispers, first, and mournful murmurs rise
> Among the sad attendants; then the sound
> Soon gathers voice, and spreads the news around,
> Through town and country, till the dreadful blast
> Is blown to distant colonies at last.—*Eleanora.*

> A man so various, that he seem'd to be
> Not one, but all mankind's epitome.

She knew the virtue of her blade, nor would
Pollute its temper with ignoble blood.

The following model of elegant and flowing English verse is actually *excused*, if I mistake not, by Johnson, for running the verses into one another, as a practice *not objectionable*, for the sake of variety and freedom.

Yet had she oft been chas'd with horns and hounds,
And Scythian darts; and many cruel wounds
Aim'd at her side; was often forc'd to fly;
And doom'd to death, though fated not to die.

There is another principle (in Prior much, and Dryden), of running the sense and sentence from one line, or couplet, into another. The modern fashion of Pope, etc., is not only unbroken lines, but short sentences. Lee's principle of verse is the unbroken; but with that he is sometimes very flowing and spirited. That Rowe was unbroken, was not because he had been used to write rhyme; for his *Lucan* was not an early work.

Mitford, in his *Harmony of Language*, tells us that an Italian, to whom he read the first lines of the *Fair Penitent*, was delighted with the sound, on account of the continued redundant syllable, as in Italian verse.

Otway and Southerne (before him) had beautiful capacities for verse.

You took her up, a little tender flower,
Just sprouted on a bank, which the next frost
Had nipp'd, and with a kind and loving hand
Transported her into your own fair garden,
Where the sun always shines. There long she flourish'd,
Grew sweet to sense, and lovely to the eye;
Till at the last the cruel spoiler came,
Cropp'd this fair rose, and rifled all its sweetness,
Then cast it, like a noisome weed, away.—*The Orphan.*

> Oh, let me hunt my travell'd thoughts again;
> Range the wide waste of desolate despair;
> Start any hope! Alas! I lose myself,
> 'T is pathless, dark, and barren all, to me.
> Thou art my only guide, my light of life,
> And thou art leaving me. Send out thy beams
> Upon the wing; let 'em fly all around,
> Discover every way. Is there a dawn,
> A glimmering of comfort?—*Oroonoko.*

But they seem to set out from the principle of dismounted rhyme. Blank verse, unbroken, is still totally separate from complete rhyme, as having no tendency to stop at every other line.

Prior seems rather to have cultivated, in his *Solomon*, the interrupted style, as against the writers of his age; and, at that time of his life, we may add also, as against Pope, and against himself: for his *Henry and Emma*, written earlier, is decidedly in an unbroken kind of verse and beautifully flowing. It was from the same affectation of freedom, that he imitated, in *Solomon*, the half lines of Virgil. However, Dryden had once, at least, done this.

The uniformity of Pope, in this respect, was only a natural part of his general system of evenness and regularity. He is remarkable also for confining the sense very much to the one couplet. He must have written his verses often in quite a different way from Dryden; making particular passages first, before he knew where to insert them. Even, if we take the French writers, who are generally considered as having cramped and confined our freedom of verse, Corneille, with his *tirades*, was Dryden's model; but Boileau, Pope's.

Thomson, in metre and everything else, wrote from his

own taste and nature, without regular system; and as he probably had not much reading, it was therefore a part of his nature to follow what he was accustomed to hear in his own time; and his blank verse has sometimes little more than the simple freedom of being relieved from the trouble of rhyme, like that of Rowe. In the well-known and popular passage,

> Ah! little think the gay, licentious crowd,
> Whom pleasure, pow'r, and affluence surround;
> They, who their thoughtless hours in giddy mirth,
> And wanton, often cruel, riot waste;
> Ah, little think they, while they dance along,
> How many feel this very moment death,
> And all the sad variety of pain!

Thus far, at least, there is no break: and it is interesting, in a modern writer, to show that there is, notwithstanding, not one grain of stiffness or heaviness. The style is tender, flowing, and meditative; not spirited and eager; and when, as is usually the case, he has not this uniformity, there is a kind of slowness in his manner, which, though the sense may be continued, enables us to dwell at the end of the line.

It was otherwise with Glover and Akenside. Akenside was a pedant and imitator. Glover seems to have been guided by a positive opposition to Pope's numbers. His breaks are frequently hard and bald, and his language too, as may be seen at the very beginning of *Leonidas*, which was made much worse after the first edition.

> The Hellespont they pass'd,
> O'erpow'ring Thrace. The dreadful tidings swift
> To Corinth flew. Her Isthmus was the seat
> Of Grecian council. Alpheus thence returns

> To Lacedemon. In assembly full
> He finds the Spartan people with their kings;
> Their kings, who boast an origin divine,
> From Hercules descended.

But when poetical feeling takes its course, as in the speech of Leonidas himself, there is no fault to find.

Other blank-verse writers of that time were more natural; as Armstrong and Dyer. Armstrong, in an essay, inveighs much against the monotony of the verse in the tragedies of his time.

Blank verse requires a spirit to support it. It is like flying, or swimming, not walking. If it fails, it drops flat.

In the middle of the last century, and in rhyme, Churchill, a writer of great popularity in his time, and who, thereby, left traces behind him, in the way of imitation, beyond what his own merit enables us to account for, professedly introduced a style of verse in opposition to the school of Pope. This is not very apparent in his *Rosciad;* but it is extreme in a passage, quoted from him by Dugald Stewart, with more disapprobation, as to its metre, than I think it deserves.

> 'T is the last keystone
> That makes the arch: the rest that there were put
> Are nothing till that comes to bind and shut.
> Then stands it a triumphant mark: then men
> Observe the strength, the height, the why and when
> It was erected, and still, walking under,
> Meet some new matter to look up and wonder.

Upon him the versification of Cowper was, in its beginning, chiefly and professedly founded: but his fine taste and cultivated mind soon led him to discard everything that was absurd, artificial, or in extreme, and to

leave only what was, if I may use such a combination, at once original and classical; free from manner; and impossible to be described. And there is only one passage, and that in his first poem, that can be charged with a weak and loose over-broken effect of verse.

> Then genius danc'd a bacchanal; he crown'd
> The brimming goblet, seiz'd the thyrsus, bound
> His brows with ivy, rush'd into the field
> Of wild imagination, and there reel'd
> The victim of his own lascivious fires,
> And dizzy with delight, profan'd the sacred wires.
>
> *Table Talk.*

In his blank verse he does not break with a full stop much. His sentences are remarkably long. But he runs the lines into one another, nearly as often as not. He is remarkable for not having double endings; and that certainly conduces to the continuation of the sense: but it is, in itself, a little tiresome. His breaks are generally on the short syllable. I do not mean to apply this to his *Homer*. The constraint of translation, and the awe in which he stood of his original, as well as his decaying powers, and the additional constraint of a work, produced piece by piece under contract, have made it an artificial production; and here the verse is broken too often.

I must mention Bowles, a poet of very great merit, and quite set free from the school of bad imitators of Pope. Perhaps he affects a style which runs the verses continually on into one another, so much as to incur sometimes the imputation of *manner;* but as he is never hard, and his matter always natural, there is no disposition to find fault. As he is not, I think, sufficiently admired, I add an extract.

How blest with thee the path could I have trod
Of quiet life, above cold want's hard fate,
(And little wishing more) nor of the great
Envious, or their proud name! But it pleas'd God
To take thee to his mercy: thou didst go,
In youth and beauty go, to thy death-bed;
E'en whilst on dreams of bliss we fondly fed,
Of years to come of comfort—Be it so.
Ere this I have felt sorrow, and ev'n now
(Though sometimes the unbidden thought must start,
And half unman the miserable heart)
The cold dew I shall wipe from my sad brow,
And say, since hopes of bliss on earth are vain,
"Best friend, farewell, till we do meet again."

There was, I think, in the last century, something like a continued school of taste, amongst the Westminster scholars, deducible from the time of Prior. Lloyd, Colman, Bonnel Thornton, Cumberland, belonged to it, besides Cowper. In Latin, Markham, and other writers in the second *Carmina Quadragesimalia*, well deserve to be mentioned; though they are not known as specimens of English verse. These had in common, a separation from the prim, exact, sententious, style; and a great turn for classical simplicity. And there was another school, of Winchester writers, to which the Wartons, Crowe, and Bowles, belonged. These were founded very largely upon Milton, and our old poets; of which one of them, Headley, printed a book of extracts.

The extreme and absurd practice of Lord Byron, in running his lines into one another, both in rhyme and blank verse, so as sometimes to end a stanza, even, upon a monosyllable going on to the next, seems to be owing to affected imitation; for his lines upon Parnassus, and Greece, are rather remarkably in the opposite, and more natural, kind of verse.

SECT. 8.

FOREIGN.

HERE is an extract from (apparently) the second tragedy written in Italian, 1508, the *Pamphila*.

> Tardo ahimè adveduto mi sono
> Della mia crudeltà; fuss' io digiuno
> D' aver mandato il cruciato dono.
> Non mi bastava aver di questi l' uno
> Posto in cattività: per fin che l' ira
> Fusse placata: e l' animo importuno.
> Ma quel che nel principio ben non mira
> A quel che advenir può, se 'l fine è poi
> Cattivo, indarno ne piange, e sospira.

The first models of comedy in verse were Ariosto's. His lines run into one another very much.

He had the bad taste to write them wholly in the verse called *sdrucciolo*, which has not a double ending, as usual in Italian metre, but a triple; and he sometimes makes a most extraordinary kind of break at the end, in adverbs, such as *massima-mente;* keeping the termination *mente* to begin the following line.

These comedies are said to have been first written in prose, which would make it less easy to frame the verse uniformly.

In the first Italian tragedies it seems to have been otherwise. Trissino's *Sophonisba* never changes the speeches but at the end of the line, in imitation of the

Greek poets. In the body of the speeches themselves however, there is a considerable degree of irregularity but, from the character of the writer, producing little freedom.

These Italian plays, I need not say, were long before our dramatic period in this country. In succeeding Italian tragedies there is, before we come to Tasso, rather less freedom in the pauses than more, compared to Trissino. In Alamanni's translation of the *Antigone* of Sophocles, the flow of the Greek verse is not unhappily rendered.

Ariosto's *poems* sometimes exhibit much breaking, and weak ending.

> Così i miei versi avessin forza, come
> Ben m' affaticherei con tutta quella
> Arte, che tanto il parlar orna e come,
> Si che mille e mill' anni, e più, novella
> Avessi il mondo di tuo santo nome.

But this is, perhaps, owing to the versatility of his genius. The reverse is much more common.

But in Latin, there is a terrible instance, in his own epitaph:

> Sub hoc marmore vel sub hâc humo, seu
> Sub quicquid voluit benignus hæres:

which Dr. Johnson reasonably describes as *tuneless lines*. He loved Horace; and his endings sometimes occurred to him to imitate, casually.

The stiffness of the modern Italian tragedy, in its determination not to look like rhymed verse, is very repulsive. Yet Alfieri, in one of his most remarkable passages, has the rhythm unbroken for a few lines.

O quanto sono,
Quanto infelice men di te, Filippo!
Tu, di pietà più che d' invidia degno,
Tra vane pompe e adulazion mendaci,
Sacra amistà non conoscesti mai.

His usual measure is the more remarkable in a great admirer and follower of Dante; for Dante is most commonly unbroken. It seems as if the *terza rima*, and the effort, which we so often see in him, to find a rhyme and a thought with it (as Dryden says), produced this. Yet the *terza rima*, in others, does not appear to necessitate this so much.

Felicitate istima alcun, che cento
Persone t' accompagnino in palazzo,
E che sia il mondo a riguardarti intento.
Io lo stimo miseria; e son si pazzo,
Che se c' è a perder libertà, non curo
Il più ricco cappel, che in Roma stia.—*Ariosto.*

The inscription over the gate of Hell, nine lines, is quite unbroken. He might reasonably think this the proper inscriptional style.

In this passage, full of passion, there is but little break in the verse:

Ma s' io vedessi quì l' anima trista
Di Guido, o d' Alessandro, o di lor frate,
Per Fonte Branda non darei la vista.
Dentro c' è l' una già, se l' arrabbiate
Ombre, che vanno intorno, dicon vero:
Ma che mi val, ch' ho le membre legate?
S' io fossi pur di tanto ancor leggiero,
Ch' i' potessi in cent' anni andare un' oncia,
Io sarei messo già per lo sentiero.

But the mind of Dante himself was constantly a burst

of spirit, accompanied with a studied force of self-com pression.

As to dramatic blank verse, there is sometimes th same hardness of break in Tasso that appears in Alfieri.

> Se Silvia è semplicetta, come pare
> Alle parole, agli atti. Jer vidi un segno
> Che me ne mette in dubbio.

Schlegel's remarks on Alfieri's verse are rather curious In the frequent transition of the sense from verse t verse, according to every kind of division, the lines flo into one another without its being possible for the ear t separate them. Alfieri imagined that he had found ou the genuine dramatic manner of treating his verse, cor responding to his dialogue, which consists of nothing bu detached periods, or rather of propositions entirely un periodical, and abruptly terminated.

It is possible that he carried with him into his work a personal peculiarity; for he was exceedingly laconic i speech.

Metastasio used very broken verse. In his lyrics he is highly praised by Baretti for his versification, bu it may be doubted a little whether, justly, in his dia logue. It is remarkable that these Italian writers, wh break their verse, are so apt to break it upon the ac cented syllable. Probably they endeavour to obtai there the variety which they could not have at the end In the airs of Metastasio the same thing is almost inva riably done in the last line of the stanza. Afterwards, more flowing and *national* Italian style certainly existe before Alfieri, as in Pindemonte.

> La generosa aita tua m' è grata,
> Perchè da rea calunnia il mio pudico

Onor difeso sia: non perchè salva
Sia la mia vita. Io vita abborro, e certo,
Qualora a donna disperata manchi
Altra via di morir, di lunga morte
M' ucciderà l' ambascia. Or se alla tua
Dolce pietà, magnanimo guerriero,
Vuoi porre il colmo, e de' miei negri giorni
L' affanno alleggerir, combatti, vinci,
Salvami dall' infamia, e poi m' uccidi.

And I should say the same of the *Aristodemo* of Monti, though more vigorous than they were. It must have been written after the appearance of some of the best plays of Alfieri.

I am sorry that the great Italian poet of our times, for I may call him so, both in prose and verse, Manzoni, approaches too much, in his tragedies, to the harsh taste of Alfieri. His plan of verse is broken and divided, often most suitably to the animation of the subject, but sometimes, intentionally, too much cut up; and he has also an unintentional ruggedness, most painful, in his odes; one would think from real want of ear, were it not that in several passages there is, if not absolutely a flow, a remarkably grand effective elasticity, peculiar to himself.

Si, quel sangue sovr' essi discenda, (the Jews)
Ma sia pioggia di mite lavacro;
Tutti errammo; di tutti quel sacro
Santo sangue cancelli l' error.—*Ode on the Crucifixion.*

Dai guardi dubbiosi, dai pavidi volti,
Qual raggio di sole da nuvoli folti,
Traluce dei padri la fiera virtù;
Nei guardi, nei volti, confuso ed incerto
Si mesce e discorda lo spregio sofferto
Col misero orgoglio d'un tempo che fù.—*Adelchi.*

The first of these stanzas is not much like the easy sweetness of Metastasio in the same metre.

Se mai senti spirarti sul volto
Lieve fiato, che lento s'aggiri,
Dì, son questi gli estremi sospiri
Di quel fido, che muore per me.—*Tito.*

It may be observed, that the weak monosyllabic endings in our verse are more perceived than in Latin, because the last syllable in an English line is naturally accented. In Italian there can hardly be a monosyllabic ending at all. I know not whether the French ever allow a weak ending. A strong monosyllabic ending is well known—

Contre tant d'ennemis que vous reste-t-il? Moi!

in Corneille's *Médée.*

Delille, author of the *Jardins*, broke the uniformity of French verse in some degree, partly by allowing a sentence to end with the first line of a couplet; but it is doubtful whether that particular change was an improvement. Where a system of verse does not allow of graduating into freedom, a marked and considerable departure from regularity is a start, which has no effect but to make the stiffness the more remarkable.

The rule of the French poetry, as stated by Boileau, that not only the words, but to a great extent the sense, must be divided in the middle of the verse, is broken as follows by Regnier his predecessor, in a passage quoted by M. Guizot; but of which the *object* is to express rebellion against the then recent strictness of rule.

Espier des vers, si la rime est brève ou longue.

This is exactly what I have called a weak ending, only in the middle of a verse.

SECT. 9.

ANCIENT.

I THINK the good Greek poetry is hardly ever remarkable for *manner*, either on one side or the other in this respect. There is a well-known instance in Homer, in the answer of Achilles to Ulysses, of the spirited effect produced, in a passionate speech, by breaking the verse into short portions. Pindar sometimes runs one stanza into another upon a single word, in a remarkable way, but his natural disposition was for flow, eminently.

Among the Latin poets, Virgil's verse is of the middle or indifferent form. But the older writers of Latin hexameters had certainly a tendency to the unbroken style; and so, on the whole, the tragedians appear to have had, though as most of their works were merely translated from Greek authors, they would constantly be drawn by imitation out of this taste, if it was their taste.

When we go back to Ennius it is difficult to say that he practised generally the uniform style of metre. One passage has it.

The three or four others that are of any length are, in some parts, rather remarkably and spiritedly broken.

> Nec mi aurum posco, nec mi pretium dederitis:
> Nec cauponanteis bellum, sed belligeranteis;
> Ferro, non auro, vitam cernamus utrique,
> Vos ne velit, an me, regnare Hera, quidve ferat, Sors,
> Virtute experiamur; et hoc simul accipe dictum;

Quoium virtutei belli fortuna pepercit,
Horundem me libertatei parcere certum est:
Dono, ducite, doque, volentibu' com magneis Diis.—P. 62.

Hocce loquutu' vocat, qui cum benè sæpe libenter
Mensam, sermonesque suos, rerumque suarum
Comiter impertit: magna quòm lapsa dies jam
Parte fuisset, de parveis summeisque gerendeis
Consilio endo foro lato sanctosve senatu.
Quoi res audacter magnas, parvasque, jocumque,
Eloqueret, quæ tincta maleis, et quæ bona dictu
Evomeret, si quid vellet, tutoque locaret.
Qui cum multa volup, ac gaudia, clamque palamque
Ingenium quoi nulla malum sententia suadet,
Ut faceret facinus: lenis tamen, haud malus; idem
Doctu', fidelis, suavis homo, facundu', suoque
Contentus, scitu' atque beatu' secunda loquens in
Tempore, commodus, et verborum vir paucorum.
Multa tenens antiqua sepulta, et sæpe vetustas
Quæ facit, et mores veteresque novosque tenentem,
Multorum veterum leges, divumque hominumque
Prudentem, qui multa loquive, tacereve posset.
Hunc inter pugnas compellat Servilius sic.—Pp. 74–7.

Infit, O civeis! quæ me fortuna ferox sic
Contudit: indigno bello confecit acerbo.
Nunc est ille dies, quòm gloria maxima sese
Ostendant nobeis, si vivimu' sive moriamur;
Omneis occisi, obcensique in nocte serena.—P. 106.

Whether the long hexameter poem of Catullus was written earlier than his others I know not, but it certainly wants their lightness.

Has postquàm mæsto profudit pectore voces,
Supplicium sævis exposcens anxia factis,
Annuit invicto cœlestium numine rector,
Quo tunc et tellus, atque horrida contremuerunt
Æquora, concussitque micantia sidera mundus.

There are some beautiful instances of variety in the speech of Ariadne, but uniformity predominates.

His celebrated simile of the flower owes its popularity certainly to other merits than its versification.

> Ut flos in septis secretus nascitur hortis,
> Ignotus pecori, nullo contusus aratro,
> Quem mulcent auræ, firmat sol, educat imber:
> Multi illum pueri, multæ optavere puellæ:
> Idem cum tenui carptus defloruit ungui,
> Nulli illum pueri, nullæ optavere puellæ.

The incomparably beautiful imitation of it by Ariosto is also nearly in unbroken lines, but how much more sweet, natural, and flowing!

> La verginella è simile alla rosa,
> Che 'n bel giardin, sù la nativa spina,
> Mentre sola e sicura si riposa,
> Nè gregge, nè pastor, se le avvicina;
> L' aura soave, e l' alba rugiadosa,
> L' acqua, la terra, al suo favor s' inchina:
> Giovani vaghi, e donne innamorate,
> Amano averne e seni, e tempie, ornate.
>
> Ma non sì tosto dal materno stelo
> Rimossa viene, e dal suo ceppo verde,
> Che, quanto avea dagli uomini, e dal cielo,
> Favor, grazia, e bellezza, tutto perde.

Of Lucilius there are scarcely any fragments long enough to throw light on this point; and the two which are long, it is curious, are enumerative; they are both unbroken, or nearly so.

> Nunc vero, à mane ad noctem, festo atque profesto,
> Totus item pariterque, die, populusque, patresque,
> Jactare indu foro se omnes, decedere nusquam;
> Uno se atque eidem studio omnes dedere et arti;

Verba dare ut caute possint, pugnare dolose,
Blanditia certare, bonum simulare virum se,
Insidias facere, ut si hostes sint omnibus omnes.

Lucretius is remarkable for the variety and beauty of his pause, or cæsura. But he has passages of unbroken lines, which would not occur in Virgil, and which have sometimes not only a grand force and dignity, but, from being combined in long sentences, great spirit and richness.

Quorum Acragantinus cumprimis Empedocles est:
Insula quem Triquetris terrarum gessit in oris:
Quam fluitans circum magnis amfractibus æquor
Ionium glaucis aspergit virus ab undis:
Angustoque fretu rapidum mare dividit undis
Italiæ terraï oras à finibus ejus:
Hic est vasta Charybdis, et hîc Ætnæa minantur
Murmura flammarum rursum se conligere iras,
Faucibus eruptos iterum ut vis evomat igneis:
Ad cœlum que ferat flammaï fulgura rursum:
Quæ cum magna modis multis miranda videtur
Gentibus humanis regio, visendaque fertur,
Rebus opima bonis, multa munita virum vi,
Nil tamen hoc habuisse Viro præclarius in se,
Nec sanctum magis, et mirum, carumque videtur:
Carmina quin etiam divini pectoris ejus
Vociferantur, et exponunt præclara reperta;
Ut vix humana videatur stirpe creatus.

Lines which may well apply to the subject of this Essay himself.

Ergo Regibus occisis subversa jacebat
Pristina majestas soliorum, et sceptra superba;
Et capitis summi præclarum insigne cruentum
Sub pedibus volgi magnum lugebat honorem:
Nam cupidè conculcatur nimis ante metutum.

Weak endings occur in him.

Qui princeps vitæ rationem invenit eam, quæ
Nunc appellatur sapientia.

According to Bentley, this is suited to didactic poetry, but was not therefore an authority for Horace in an ode:

Muniant angues caput ejus, atque
Spiritus, etc. etc.

Tenebræ conduplicantur, noctisque et nimbûm occæcat nigror;
Flamma inter nubes coruscat; cælum tonitru contremit;
Grando mixta imbri largifico subita precipitans cadit;
Undique omnes venti erumpunt, sævi existunt turbines;
Fervit æstu pelagus.—*Pacuvius.*

The constant taste of those old Latin writers to accumulate synonyms,

Frigore, illuvie, imperfundie, inbalnitie, incuriâ,

Video sentum, squalidum, ægrum, pannis annisque obsitum,

seems to lead to accumulating lines of similar meanings in what I have called enumerative passages.

There is a fragment of Attius (Ribbeck, 239) a good deal broken.

I believe the Comic writers were much less disposed to this unbroken style. Beautiful instances to the contrary will readily occur.

Lucan appears to have done in Latin poetry what Jonson did in English; introduced a harsh, dry, artificial system of dividing the verses; and, what made it worse, generally stopping after the long syllable. But he does not end on the weak syllable like Horace.

Virgil had gone no further than to break the verse more in degree than was the practice of Lucretius, and also, injudiciously, to throw away, as too bold and irregular, some of the beautiful instances of cæsura which Lu-

cretius practised, and to cast over the whole of his verse too spondaic an air. Horace probably somewhat affected, in his satires, an unpoetical colloquial kind of verse; and wrote differently in his epistles, rather from allowing himself ease and freedom, than in consequence of greater care and pains.

I need not say that Persius, in general, cared less for sound and flow in his verse than Horace; but Juvenal more.

C. B.

FINIS.

Foolscap octavo, 5*s*.

LECTURES
READ AT A MECHANICS' INSTITUTE
IN THE COUNTRY.

By CHARLES BATHURST, Esq.

By the same Author.

LETTERS TO A NIECE. 3*s*. 6*d*.

A NEW INTRODUCTION TO LOGIC. 1*s*.

SELECTIONS FROM DRYDEN. 4*s*. 6*d*.

SELECT POEMS OF PRIOR AND SWIFT. 3*s*.

London: John W. Parker and Son, West Strand.

Annotated Edition of the English Poets.

By ROBERT BELL.

Ancient Poems, Ballads, and Songs of t
Peasantry.
With Biographies and Notes. 2*s.* 6*d.*

Early Ballads.
With Introductions and Notes. 2*s.* 6*d.*

Poems of Greene and Marlowe.
With Notes and Memoir. 2*s.* 6*d.*

Ben Jonson's Poems.
With Notes and Memoir. 2*s.* 6*d.*

Chaucer's Poetical Works.
With Introduction, Notes, Memoir, and Glossary. Eight Volumes. 20*s.*

Butler's Poetical Works.
With Notes and Memoir. Three Volumes. 7*s.* 6*d.*

Thomson's Poetical Works.
With Notes and Memoir. Two Volumes. 5*s.*

Shakespeare's Poems.
With Notes and Memoir. 2*s.* 6*d.*

Dryden's Poetical Works.
Three Volumes. 7*s.* 6*d.*

Cowper's Poetical Works.
Three Volumes. 7*s.* 6*d.*

Poetical Works of the Earl of Surrey, o
Minor Poets, and of Lord Buckhurst.
With Notes and Memoirs. 2*s.* 6*d.*

Songs from the Dramatists.
2*s.* 6*d.*

Wyatt's, Oldham's, and Waller's, Poetica
Works.
With Notes and Memoirs, complete in single Volumes, 2*s.* 6*d.* each.

London: JOHN W. PARKER and SON, West Strand.

Bathurst, Charles
Remarks on the differences in Shakespeare's versification