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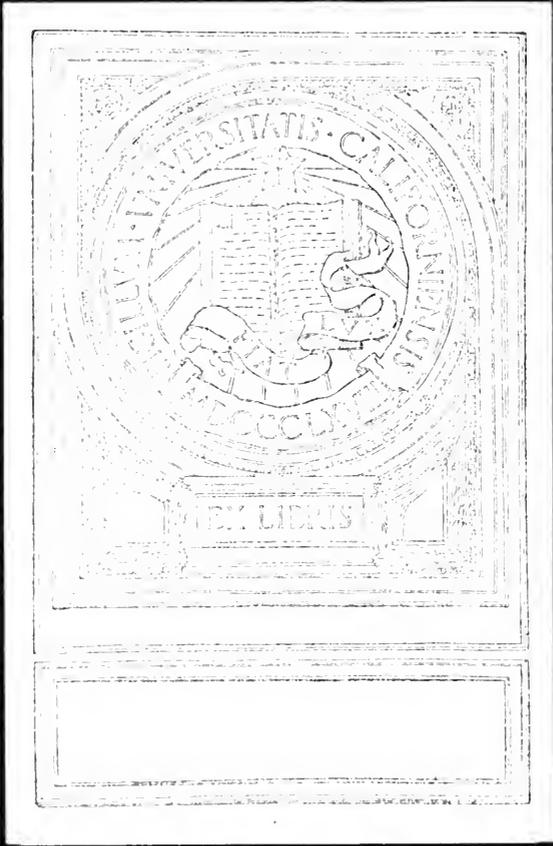
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-The Poet's - Shakespeare's - Writings

# WAS THE SHAKESPEARE AFTER ALL A MYTH.

"THERE IS NO ROYAL ROAD TO LEARNING."

*"How knoweth this man letters, having  
never learned."*

"I shall not attempt it in this letter, [to prove, *How Shakespeare's plays were written,*] but will present some considerations which convince me that Shakespeare did not write the plays that bear his name and *that no one person ever wrote them.* From all the evidences which I examined some three years ago, I arrived at the conclusion that these plays were written by several different persons. I. The plot of all or nearly all of them is founded upon some old romance, story, historical sketch or tradition, which, it is well known were written many years before Shakespeare's birth. II. Shakespeare himself never claimed to be the author of his plays, and it was never so claimed until nearly half a century after his death. They were called his plays because it was at his theatre where they were first brought out. \* \* III. The varied and perfect knowledge of science, history and art, and the habits and customs of different classes of society which these dramas exhibit, all show that each one was written by some person who had made a specialty of knowledge and experience in that particular line. This is the only satisfactory answer to the questions of, was Shakespeare a lawyer, or surgeon, or botanist, or sailor, or artisan, or soldier, or linguist, or historian, or *litterateur* of the day, or only a poet, or a priest, or a monk? Ah! now we are getting near it. We all know he was an actor. He knew what kind of plays he wanted on his boards. He, therefore, went to the monks and priests, as they were the best acquainted with literature, language and science, and told them what kind of a play he wanted, and, after they had furnished the subject containing the outline of the plot, he would decide upon it, and then, if favorable, the play would be written, and, perhaps, revised by others, as well as by himself, and, perhaps, several different persons would write on the same plot for a prize as to the acceptance of it. When we consider that nearly all the learning of that day was among monks and priests, and that from the Church confessional they would also be the best judges of the language and familiar phrases of sailors, artisans and people in menial employments, as well as those in high life, and would thus become versed in human nature in all its phases, it does not at all appear improbable that he did this, and did not trust alone to his own unaided judgment. Very likely Lord Bacon, or some other lawyer or judge, did write or revise some of his plays. \* \* IV. He undoubtedly caused them to be written, and they were brought before the world by him. So much for what he did about them, and now for what he did not do about them, and who did that which he did not. 1. As an enterprising stage-manager he naturally sought the best authors of the day, and perhaps suggested that he wanted a play written in some particular line in which they were most familiar. (*"How Shakespeare's plays were written,"* by R. S. GUERNSEY, "Reprinted from N. Y. Herald, of September 14, 1874.")

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# LIST OF PUBLICATIONS.

## J. Watts de Peyster :

L. L. D.

Master of Arts, Columbia College, of New York. 1872.—Hon. Mem. Clarendon Hist. Soc., Edinburgh, Scotland; of the New Brunswick Hist. Soc., St. John, Canada; of the Hist. Soc. of Minnesota, Montana, New Jersey, &c.; Life Mem. Royal Hist. Soc. of Great Britain, London, Eng.; Mem. Maatschappij Nederlandsche, Letterkunde, Leyden, Holland, &c., &c.—Colonel N. Y. S. I., 1846, assigned for "meritorious conduct" to command of 22d Regimental District, M. F. S. N. Y., 1849, Brigadier General for "important service" [first appointment—in N. Y. State—to that rank, h. heretofore elective], 1851, M. F. S. N. Y.—Adjutant General, S. N. Y., 1855.—Brevet Major-General, S. N. Y., for "meritorious services," by "Special Act" or "Concurrent Resolution," N. Y. State Legislature, April, 1866 [first and only General officer receiving such an honor (the highest) from S. N. Y., and the only officer thus brevetted (Major-General) in the United States.]

### AUTHOR OF

- REPORTS—1st. On the Organizations of the National Guards and Municipal Military Institutions of Europe, and the Artillery and Arms best adapted to the State Service, 1852. (Reprinted by order of the N. Y. State Legislature, Senate Documents, No. 74, March 26, 1853.) 2d. Organizations of the English and Swiss Militia, the French, Swiss, and Prussian Fire Departments. Suggestions for the Organization of the N. Y. Militia, &c. 1853.
- Life of (the Swedish Field Marshal) Leonard Torstenson (rewarded with three splendid Silver Medals, &c., by H. R. M. Oscar I., King of Sweden). 1855.—Thirty Years War, and Military Services of Field-Marshal Generalissimo Leonard Torstenson (Series), N. Y. Weekly Mail, 1873; A Hero of the XVII. Century (Torstenson).—The Volunteer, Weekly Mag., Vol. I., No. I., 1869.—The Career of the celebrated Condottiere Fra Moreale, Weekly Mail, 1873.—Frederic the Great. (Series.) Weekly Mail, 1873.—Eulogy of Torstenson, 4to., 1872.
- The Dutch at the North Pole, and the Dutch in Maine. 1857.
- Appendix to the Dutch at the North Pole, &c. 1858.
- Ho, for the North Pole! 1860.—"Littell's Living Age."—The Dutch Battle of the Baltic. 1858.
- The Invincible Armada. (Series.) 1860.—Examples of Intrepidity, as illustrated by the Exploits and Deaths of the Dutch Admirals. (Series.) 1860-1. Military Gazette.
- Gems from Dutch History. (Series.) 1855.—A Tale of Leipsic, Peabody's Parlor Mag., 1832.
- Carausius, the Dutch Augustus, and Emperor of Britain and the Menapii. 1858.
- The Ancient, Mediæval and Modern Netherlanders. 1859.
- Address to the Officers of the New York State Troops. 1858.
- Life of Lieut.-Gen. (famous "Dutch Vauban"—styled the "Prince of Engineers") Menno, Baron Cohorn. (Series.) 1860.—Military Lessons. (Series.) 1861-3.—Winter Campaigns, 1862.
- Practical Strategy, as illustrated by the Life and Achievements of a Master of the Art, the Austrian Field-Marshal, Traun. 1863.—Personal and Military History of Major-General Philip Kearny, 512 pp., 8vo. 1869.—Secession in Switzerland and the United States compared; being the Annual Address, delivered 20th October, 1863, before the Vermont State Historical Society, in the Hall of Representatives, Capitol, Montpelier. 1864.
- Incidents connected with the War in Italy. (Series.) 1859.
- Mortality among Generals. (Series.) 1861.—The Battle of King's Mountain. (Series.) 1861-2, 1880. Oriskany, 1878—Monmouth, 1878—Rhode Island, 1878.
- Facts or Ideas Indispensable to the Comprehension of War; Notions on Strategy and Tactics. (Series.) 1861-2. Eclaircur, Military Journal. (Edited.) 1854-8.—In Memoriam. (Edited.) 1st, 1857; 2d, 1862.
- The Bible in Prison. 1853.—A Discourse on the Tendency of High Church Doctrines. 1855.
- A Night with Charles XII. of Sweden. A Nice Young Man. Parlor Dramas. 1860-1.
- Aculco, Oriskany, and Miscellaneous Poems. 1860.
- Genealogical References of Old Colonial Families, &c. 1851.
- Biographical Notices of the de Peyster Family, in connection with the Colonial History of New York. 1861.—Biographies of the Watts, de Peyster, Reade, and Leake Families, in connection with Trinity Churchyard. 1862.—Military (1776-1779) Transactions of Major, afterwards Colonel 8th or King's Foot, B. A., Arent Schuyler de Peyster and Narrative of the Maritime Discoveries of his namesake and nephew, Capt. Arent Schuyler de Peyster, N. Y., 1870.—Local Memorials relating to the de Peyster and Watts and affiliated families. 1881.—In Memoriam, Frederic de Peyster, Esq., L.L.D., Prest. N. Y. Historical Society, St. Nicholas Society, St. Nicholas Club, &c., &c. 1882.





## Was THE Shakespeare, after all, a Myth?

“NO ROYAL ROAD TO LEARNING.”

I have long believed that Shakespeare, according to the world's acceptance of the “Divine William,” is a myth—a phantasm—and that, possessing a bright mind, he simply absorbed, refined down and finished the coarser labors of other men. “There is no royal road to learning.” A man may be a genius, gifted with marvellous ability, who can apply what he has learned to greater advantage than his contemporaries, but still is ignorant of branches which cannot be acquired without study or exceptional opportunities. Now, the worshippers of Shakespeare claim that he understood classical lore, law, theology, medicine, art, science; in fact, foresaw discoveries which afterwards aroused the wonder of the world; one, for example, the circulation of the blood, which is credited to Harvey in 1619, after the death of the poet. The plays of Shakespeare show that whoever wrote them was very learned in many and varied directions. The strolling player and hard-worked manager had no chance whatever to attain proficiency or even a smattering of the vast lore displayed in the writings attributed to him. Though it may not be proven that “Bacon was Shakespeare,” there is enough evidence adduced to show that the Shakespeare of a crowd of worshippers like Hudson and Grant White, was not the Shakespeare who lived and played, and there is much more likelihood, judging a priori, that Shakespeare was rather only an able editor, adapter, or compiler. To accept the Shakespeare of the Shakespearians is like faith without reason.

In my first monograph of two pages was worked out, printed many years ago, the results arrived at in different ways by divers writers and before any of the works founded on the Baconian theory had seen the light. The revolt of mind or common sense to dethrone the *impossible* Shakespeare, had not as yet organized and sounded the assault upon a citadel of error, before which, as yet, only a few malcontents had appeared and threatened the war for which matured reflection was marshalling forces for a complete investment and overthrow. Hart's declaration of hostilities, in 1848, is almost unknown. It was an episode inserted in a work entirely foreign to such a subject, commencing with the journal of a sea-voyage and ending with a dictionary of nautical terms. Very few had heard of it or knew of its existence.

It is not even referred to in later works upon the subject. Like a faint meteor it had shone upon the ordinary sky and was lost in the superior light of the permanent constellations; was regarded as something unworthy the consideration of the acutest observer of the golden patines alluded to by Lorenzo in one of the greatest dramas credited to a genius which did *not* conceive them; was not a sufficient genius for such conceptions. If any one had reflected upon the Book of books he would have found therein a question which in itself dissipates the myth of Shakespeare. "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned." This truth was ignored by the unreflecting in the case of the play-actor, and manager, transmuted into an unsurpassed and unsurpassable genius by blind imagination and credulity, and finally idolatry. The iron rule "There is no royal road to learning" has never had an exception. The Warwickshire butcher-boy, adventurer and thrifty money-getter, could not—even with the transcendent gift of inventive perspicacity—have mastered the knowledge, art, science, philosophy and language displayed in his poetry and plays. Such a genius would be more than a miracle, because human after all,—without a transcendent miracle greater than any which the world has yet witnessed, and without the personal exertion of divine powers by divinity a sheer impossibility.

J. W. DE P.

"★Oh, Shakespeare—Immortal bard—Mighty genius—Swan of Avon—thou unapproachable! Are there no more fish, no more krakens in that wondrous sea from which thou wert taken? Shall there be no more cakes and ale? \* [as poor ARTEMUS WARD said, "N. B. *This is Sarkassum!*"]

How prone the English people are to kill off their great men! They first raise them up to the loftiest pinnacle of fame, and then, like the eagle with the tortoise, or the monkey which mounts the highest tree with his cocoa-nut, they dash their victims "all to pieces" upon the rocks below. Thus, also, they play the game of nine-pins with all their great statesmen. They set them up, ay, "set them up, my boy!" for the pleasure of knocking them down. And then, again, they drink to the full, at the Castalian fount and the inclination is irresistible to demolish the vessel that has served them:

"Sweet the pleasure  
After drinking—to break the glasses!"

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\* This and what follows from ★ Page 2, to ★★ Page 24, is quoted with notes by J. W. de P. from "The || Romance of Yachting; || Voyage the First." || By Joseph C. Hart, || Author of "Miriam Coffin" &c., || New York, || Harper and Brothers, Publishers, || 82 Cliff Street, || 1848. Pages 209 to 243.

It is thus they have raised up Shakespeare; and now they are demolishing him, without remorse.

Was he not in our own time, the "unapproachable," the "immortal bard," the "not for a day but for all time," the glorious," the "*Sweet Swan of Avon*," the "poet of true genius and invention," the "modest," the "heaven-born," the "creator," the "poet of all climes," the bard who "stole the Promethean fire," "the glass of fashion and the mould of form," the "man on whom each god did seem to set his seal," in short the "top-sawyer" of all the poetical geniuses of all ages? Ay, all this and much more. But where is he now? Alas!—where? How the ghosts of old authors would pitch into him, among the infernal, if Dante had to do with him!

After "THE bard" had been dead for one hundred years and utterly forgotten, a player and a writer of the succeeding century, turning over the old lumber of a theatrical "property room," find bushels of neglected plays and the idea of a "speculation" occurs to them. They dig at hazard and promiscuously and disentomb the literary remains of many a "wit" of a former century, educated men, men of mind, graduates of Universities, yet starving at the door of some theatre, while their plays are in the hands of an ignorant and scurvy manager, awaiting his awful fiat. They die in poverty and some of absolute starvation. Still their plays, to the amount of hundreds, remain in the hands of the manager, and become in some way or other his "property." A "*factotum*" is kept to revise, to strike out, to refit, revamp, interpolate, disfigure, to do anything to please the vulgar and vicious taste of the multitude. No play will succeed without it is well peppered with vulgarity and obscenity. The "property-room" becomes lumbefed to repletion with the efforts of genius. It was the fashion of the day for all literary men to write for the theatre. There was no other way to get their productions before the world. In the process of time, the brains of the "*factotum*" teeming with smut and overflowing all the while with prurient obscenity, the theatre becomes indicted for a nuisance, or it is sought to be "avoided," by the magistrate for its evil and immoral tendency. The managers are forced to retire; and, *one, who "owns all the properties,"* leaves the hundreds of original or interpolated plays to the usual fate of garret lumber, some with the *supposed mark* of his "genius" upon them. They are useless to him, for he is a player and a manager no longer. A hundred years pass, and they and their reputed "*owner*" are forgotten and *so are the poets who wrote and starved upon them.*

Then comes the resurrection—"on speculation." BETTERTON, the player, and ROWE, the writer, make a selection from a

promiscuous heap of plays found in a garret, *nameless as to authorship*. "I want a hero!" said BYRON, when he commenced a certain poem:

[ I want a *hero* : an uncommon want  
 When every year and month sends forth a new one,  
 Till after cloying the gazettes with *CANT*  
 The age discovers he is not the true one ;  
 Of such as these I do not care to vaunt,—

*Don Juan, Canto 1, Stanza 1.]*

"I want an author for this selection of plays!" said Rowe.

"I have it," said Betterton "call them Shakespeare's;" and Rowe, the Commentator, commenced to puff them as "*THE Bard's*," and to write *a history of his hero in which there was scarcely a word of truth that had the foundation to rest upon*.

*This is about the sum and substance of the manner of setting up Shakespeare*: and the manner of pulling him down, may be gathered from the succeeding commentators—not one of whom, perhaps, dreamed of such a possibility while he was trying to immortalize his idol. But each one, as they succeeded one another, thought it necessary to outdo his predecessor in learning and research, and developed some startling antiquarian fact, which, by accumulation, worked the light of truth (?) out of darkness; until, one after the other the leaves of the chaplet woven for Shakespeare "the immortal," fall, withered, to the ground; his monument, high as huge Olympus, crumbles into dust, and his apotheosis vanishes into thin air.

Alas, Shakespeare! Lethé is upon thee! but if it drown *THEE*, it will give up and work the resurrection of *better men and more worthy*. Thou hast had thy century; they are about having theirs. "*A singular and unaccountable mystery*," says REES, "*is attached to Shakespeare's private life*; and, by some strange fatality, almost every document concerning him has either been destroyed or still remains in obscurity. "The *FIRST* published Memoir of him was drawn up by NICHOLAS ROWE in 1709, *nearly one hundred years after the decease of the poet*, and the materials for this, were furnished by BETTERTON the player. And it is not a little remarkable, that Jonson seems to have maintained a higher place in the estimation of the public in general, than our poet (SHAKESPEARE), for more than a century after the death of the latter. Within that period Jonson's works are said to have passed through several editions and to have been read with avidity, while SHAKESPEARE'S [works attributed to him] were comparatively neglected till the time of ROWE. "At the time of his becoming in some degree a public character, we naturally expected to find many anecdotes recorded of his *literary* history: but, strange to say, *the SAME DESTITUTION of AUTHENTIC incidents MARKS EVERY STAGE of HIS LIFE*."

“Even the date at which his first play appeared is unknown; and the greatest uncertainty prevails in respect to the chronological order in which the whole series were written, exhibited, or published.”

SHAKESPEARE was born on the 23d of April, 1564, and died on the 23d of April, 1616. His age was therefore 52 years at the time of his death. In 1589, he had been some time, it is supposed, about four years in London.

In the latter year he was one of the 16 shareholders in the “*Black-friars*” Theatre, his name being the 12th on the list. In 1603, his name appears among others in a license of James I., to perform not merely in London but in any part of the Kingdom. “These actors,” says a commentator, “rendered themselves justly obnoxious to the citizens of London by their satirical, we might truly say, their *licentious* representations.” “The wisdom of men and the fidelity of women,” were openly and wantonly attacked on the stage.” “A complaint was formally made to the Royal Council” accordingly. Instead of abating the nuisance, at once, a petition is received from managers and entertained by the authorities having charge of the complaint. Compensation for the establishment threatened with demolition, and for its “properties” is prayed for with earnestness, and a negotiation ensued, in the course of which the following fact appears:

In an estimate “for avoiding the play-house in the precinct of the Black-friars,” or abating it as a *nuisance*, the following item occurs:

“*Item.* W. SHAKESPEARE asketh for the *wardrobe* and *properties* of the same play-house £500, and for *his* fourshares the same as his fellows, BURBIDGE and FLETCHER, *viz.* £933 6s. 8d.—£1433, 6s., 8d.”

HEMINGES and CONDELL had each two shares; JOSEPH TAYLOR one share and a half; LOWING one share and a half; and “four more players with one-half share to each of them.”—Total 20 shares. “Moreover the hired men of the companie demand some recompense for the great losse, and the widows and orphans of playeres, who are paid by the shares, at divers rates and proportions, so as in the whole it will coste the Lo. Mayor and the citizens at least £7000.”

From this document the material fact is obtained, that Shakespeare was the owner of all the “*properties*” of the theatre, which includes the *plays* possessed by the establishment. They necessarily have been very numerous, as will be made manifest by what shortly follows.

“Of Shakespeare’s youth we know nothing,” says one commentator. “Of Shakespeare’s last years we know absolutely nothing,” says another “The whole, however,” says ALEXANDER

CHALMERS, commenting upon ROWE, Malone and Steeven's labored attempts to follow Shakespeare in his career, "is unsatisfactory. Shakespeare in his private character, in his friendship, in his amusements, in his closet, in his family, *is no where before us.*"

Yet, notwithstanding all this mystery, and the absence of any positive information, learned and voluminous commentators and biographers, in great numbers, have been led to *suppose* and *assert* a thousand things in regard to Shakespeare's history, pursuits and attainments, *which cannot be substantiated by a particle of proof.* Among these is the *authorship* of the plays grouped under his name, which they assume *as his* for a certainty and beyond dispute. This egregious folly is beginning to react upon those who have been engaged in it, and some of them are placed in a very ridiculous position—especially POPE, the poet, who, on the score of the supposed great learning of Shakespeare, has contributed not a little to the delusion concerning him.

A writer in LARDNER'S *Cabinet Cyclopædia* undertakes to give us the history of his family; from which I gather that JOHN SHAKESPEARE, the father of WILLIAM, was very poor and very illiterate, notwithstanding what the ambitious commentators may say to the contrary. So says LARDNER, and *he proves it beyond dispute.* The *coat-of-arms* and the heraldry obtained for the family, afterwards, was *procured by fraud*: and was pronounced discreditable to "the bard" who had a hand in it. But the poverty of the family is nothing in this case, except to show that William Shakespeare must necessarily have been an uneducated boy. He grew up in ignorance and viciousness, and became a common poacher—and the latter title, in literary matters, he carried to his grave. He was not the mate of the literary characters of the day, and no one knew it better than himself. *It is a fraud upon the world to thrust his surreptitious fame upon us.* He had none that was worthy of being transmitted. The inquiry will be, *who were the able literary men who wrote the dramas imputed to him?* The plays themselves, or rather a small portion of them, will live as long as English literature is regarded worth pursuit. The *authorship* of the plays is no otherwise material to us, than as a *matter of curiosity* and to enable us to render exact justice; but *they should not be assigned to Shakespeare alone*, if at all. From the *Cabinet Cyclopædia* already referred to, conducted by the Rev. Dr. LARDNER, assisted by eminent Literary and Scientific men, Vol. II, London edition, 1837, we may gather many particulars concerning this subject which I [Joseph C. Hart] have condensed below.

The writer commences by observing that our ancient Drama is, indeed, a rich mine; but the dross outweighs the ore in the proportion of at least a thousand to one. A person may dig long days before he discovers anything worth the trouble of picking up. Of the stage and dramatic writers immediately preceding the appearance of Shakespeare, and contemporaneously with him, the writer observes:—The custom, indeed, of later dramatists—Shakespeare among the rest—was to adopt old pieces as the bases of their labors, to add or curtail, to condense or expand, as might seem best suited to the time. The tragedy of "*Taucred and Gismund*," which was exhibited (1568) before ELIZABETH, at the *Inner Temple*, was the first play in our language founded on an *Italian* original:—a source soon to become fruitful enough. It was taken from one of the BOCCACCIO novels, and was the composition of *five* different persons. Another play, "*The Misfortunes of Arthur*," was written by THOMAS HUGHES, and seven others persons, one of whom was LORD BACON. The "*Yorkshire Tragedy*," some critics have not hesitated to ascribe to Shakespeare, and also many others which he probably never heard of even by name. Two plays, notoriously *not his*, were published with his name on the title page in his lifetime, and no effort appears to have been made on his part to set the matter right. It is evident that the intellectual activity, so conspicuous in the latter half of the sixteenth century, has never been surpassed. We (the writer continues) have already alluded to *fifty-two* pieces, of which no vestige now remains, unless the substance of them lives in more recent productions: and these arose and fell in twelve years viz.: from 1568 to 1580. That the later years were not less prolific, may be proved by the instances of ANTHONY MUNDAY, HENRY CHETTLE, ROBERT GREENE, CHRISTOPHER MARLOWE, GEORGE PEELE, and others, wrote innumerable dramas, though most of them have not come down to our days.

But the most striking illustration of this subject is afforded by the fact that from 1591 to 1597, *one hundred and ten* new pieces were performed, and that from 1597 to 1603, *one hundred and sixty* more were added to the list. This places at least 270 manuscript plays in the absolute possession of the theatre at the time Shakespeare was one of its managers, and *the owner of its "properties."*

We have now arrived (says the writer) at Shakespeare's dramatic contemporaries—men who began to write before he did, who not only lived at the same time, but divided with him the attention of the play-going world.

ROBERT GREENE is mentioned, who, at one time, was one of the Queen's chaplains, and had taken the Master's degree at a

University. It was sufficient for the world to know that he was a popular writer. In a letter which Greene wrote in his last illness, in fact on his death-bed, to his boon-companions and brother play-writers, or dramatists, as they were called, MARLOWE, LODGE, and PEELE, appears the first authentic information we have of Shakespeare's literary thievery. The youthful propensity for stealing deer and game, which drove him from Stratford, seems to have remained in the bone and ripened into a confirmed habit. "To those gentlemen," the letter of the dying Greene begins, "his quondam acquaintance, that spend their wit in making plays, Robert Greene wishes a better exercise. Wonder not (for with thee will I first begin), thou famous "gracer of tragedies," etc. This allusion is to Marlowe, "with thee," continues Greene. "I join young *Juvenal* (LODGE), that biting satirist, that lastly with me together writ a comedy. Might I advise thee," etc. The letter then proceeds, "And thou no less deserving than the other two (PEELE), in some things rarer, in nothing inferior. driven (like myself) to extreme shifts," etc.—"Base minded men, all three of you, if by my misery ye be not warned: for unto none of you, like me, sought those burs to cleave—those puppets I mean, that speak from our mouths, those antics garnished in our colors. Is it not strange that I, to whom they all have been beholding, shall be left of them at once forsaken? Yes, trust them not; for there is *an upstart crow, beautified with our feathers*, that with his *tiger's heart wrapped in a player's hide*, supposes he is as well able to bombast out a blank verse as the best of you! And, being *an absolute John Factotum*, is, in his own conceit, the only *Shake-scene* in a country. Oh that I might entreat your rare wits to be employed in more profitable courses: and let these apes imitate your past excellence, and never more acquaint them with your admired inventions." By the "upstart crow, beautified with our feathers," and "he is, in his own conceit, the only *Shake-scene* in a country," a Mr. TYRWHITT thinks (and the facts prove it) Shakespeare is meant.

The commentator then proceeds: "But in what manner, the inquisitive reader may inquire, was Shakespeare indebted to Greene and his dramatic friends? To understand the subject more clearly, we must observe, that in the beginning of his (Shakespeare's) career, *for years, indeed, after he became connected with the stage*, that extraordinary [?] man was satisfied with reconstructing the pieces which others had composed; he was *NOT the author but the ADAPTER* of them to the stage. Indeed, we are of the opinion that the number of plays which he thus re-cast, as well as those in which he made very slight alterations, is *greater than any of his commentators have supposed.*"

“The second and third parts of King Henry VI. were, we all know, founded on two old pieces viz.: ‘*The two famous Houses of Yorke and Lancaster,*’ and ‘*The true Tragedie of Richard Duke of Yorke.*’ Hence the allusion of Greene has been thought confirmatory of the suspicions that he or some of his friends had written one, at least, of these tragedies; and that Shakespeare, *more suo* [and a manner peculiar to himself it turns out to be], had adapted them to the stage. This may very well have been the case: and it is also probable that Greene may allude to another fable of his, which the bard of Avon dramatised. ‘*The Winter’s Tale*’ is entirely founded on ‘*Pandosto, or the Triumph of Time*’ which Greene published in 1588. Sufficient is the fact that the play scrupulously follows the tale, so closely indeed, as to make Bohemia a maritime country, and vessels to reach the capital.

“But this is not all:—*Sixteen, at least, of the dramas ascribed to Shakespeare, are, beyond all question, derived from more ancient pieces!*”

There were also “*Six Old Plays*” in which Shakespeare founded his Measure for Measure—Comedy of Errors—Taming the Shrew—King John—King Henry IV.—King Henry V.—and King Lear. They were afterward gathered into two volumes and published in London in 1770.

“MARLOWE is positively said by CHALMERS to have written ‘*The true Tragedy of Richard Duke of Yorke,*’ which Shakespeare remodelled and transferred into one of the parts of Henry VI. He may also have written (so says the commentator), *The History of Henry the Sixth and the whole contention between the two famous houses, Lancaster and York.* All these were in existence before Shakespeare began to write for the stage, and his (Shakespeare’s) additions are few.”

THOMAS KYD was the author of two plays, one called at first “*Jeronimo,*” and afterwards “*The Spanish Tragedy.*” Some additions were made to this play, after the author’s death, by no less a writer than BEN JONSON. “These additions were considered of greater value than the original. The fable of the tragedy is not founded in history: it is entirely a creation. A resemblance between this play and the *Hamlet* attributed to Shakespeare has been discovered. In both, a ghost appears to urge revenge on the procrastinating relative; in both, there is a play within a play. It shows that Shakespeare was not so much a creator as is supposed. He was frequently satisfied with improving the conceptions of others. HENSLOWE, as we find in his old Diary, recently dug up from obscurity, paid the sum of X. s. (probably for refreshments) to DRAYTON, WILSON, MUNDAY and HATHAWAY, the joint authors of the play of “*Sir John*

*Oldcastle*," after its first performance. This play was printed as one of Shakespeare's, and is the original of all the "*Sir John Falstaffs*" *improperly said to be the creations of Shakespeare.*

There were four partners, as it appears, in the above play, so pertinaciously claimed for Shakespeare from its "*internal evidence*," upon which those, who have imposed the *Shakespearean fraud* upon us, always affect to rely. They know Shakespeare by instinct.\* [*"Sarkassum."*]

DRAYTON, CHETILE and DECKER wrote the "Famous wars of Henry I."

BEN JONSON and DECKER wrote the "Page of Plymouth," for which the very highest price of that day was given, namely eleven pounds.

These facts I gather from Henslowe: and it appears from another authority that BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER wrote in conjunction, or in partnership; one furnishing the funds and the other the brains [like Chancellor Livingston & Fulton towards the first American steam navigation], this was the taste of the age. During the last thirteen years of ELIZABETH'S reign, and during all that of JAMES I., partnerships of two, three, or four, and even five writers, in the same dramatic piece, were more common than single labors of the kind. One authority asserts *that Shakespeare wrote in that way.* It is very likely. We can easily discover the part he wrote by its filth. By that mark you may invariably know where his hand has been at work.

CARTWRIGHT, who wrote thirty years after Shakespeare's death, is the only early writer who has said anything of Shakespeare's peculiar quality; that quality for which alone he is celebrated, namely, vulgarity and "obscene wit." Here is the

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\*["Horace & Aristophanes! are fitting ushers for MOLIÈRE, *who is the greatest of all writers of comedy, holding his own by the side of SHAKESPEARE even.* For the dramatist of to-day MOLIÈRE is a sounder example than Shakespeare, as the theatre of our time has broken away from the traditions of Shakespeare, while it has been developed along the line which Moliere traced. Before they can be acted now, Shakespeare's plays *require rearranging to an extent not suspected by those who have not compared the latest acting edition with the author's text*; but Moliere's comedies call only for a cut or two here and there, and not always even for this. *No doubt SHAKESPEARE was as adroit in stage-craft as any man of his age*; but the best stage-craft of his age is now outworn." Between the age of Elizabeth and that of Louis XIV. the technicalities of play-making—technicalities which are of vital import when the conditions of the theatre are considered—were improved rapidly, and with Moliere's help stage-craft was so far elaborated that the "*Precieuses Ridicules*" and "*Tartufe*" may still serve as models for the comic dramatist, whereas the comedy of Shakespeare is a most unsafe guide for the poet of the present who wishes to see his play performed." Page 317 "*The Forum*" for November, 1887, Art. IX., "Books that helped me," by Brander Matthews.]

only true and tangible record of Shakespeare's character, as an author extant, written by one almost his contemporary :

"Shakespeare, whose best jest lies  
I' the lady's questions and the fool's replies;  
Whose wit our nicer times would *obscureness* call,  
And which made the *barodry* pass for *comical*."

The whole literary history of Shakespeare is thus written, without compression, in four lines.

GEORGE PEELE was one of the persons to whom Greene addressed his impressive farewell letter. "And thou, no less deserving than the other two" (MARLOWE and LODGE). He took his degree at Oxford in 1577. He is the author of "The famous Chronick History of King Edward the First," which Shakespeare is supposed to have borrowed "*more suo*." He also wrote "The Old Wives' Tale," from which MILTON borrowed his "*Comus*." Nash calls Peele an "Atlas in poetry;" and Thomas CAMPBELL says of him that "we may justly cherish the memory of PEELE as *the oldest genuine dramatic poet of our language*."

HENRY CHETILE died in 1610. He was concerned in 38 plays within the short space of seven years.

THOMAS LODGE, who died in 1626, was a voluminous writer. He is the "Juvenal" to whom Green refers in his letter. Lodge deserves to be known and remembered from the fact that one of his works, "Rosalinde," was pirated by Shakespeare, and forms the basis of "*As You Like It*." It is more than likely that it is the same play.

The facts above stated will serve to illustrate the state of the Drama when the commentators *suppose* Shakespeare to have flourished as a writer. There were ample materials, certainly, for a person of the very moderate talents he possessed, and the pirating propensity he evinced, to luxurate in. They will also account for the circumstance, that puzzles all his biographers, namely, that he should have left no record of his literary labors. With many of these dramatic cotemporaries around him, I suppose it would have been dangerous to claim their labors as his own which afterwards were attributed to him.

"The indifference of cotemporaries, and even the generations after the death (observes one commentator), to the *personal* history of Shakespeare, has often been matter of astonishment. Nobody, indeed, so much as cared for the knowledge. SIR WILLIAM DUGDALE, a native of *Coventry*, about twenty miles from Stratford upon Avon, who published the antiquities of Warwickshire, thirty years only after the poet's death, and who might have seen a score of persons once familiar with him, did not trouble himself to make a single enquiry on the subject. FULLER was equally careless. EDWARD PHILLIPS, author of "*Theatrum Poetarum*," just condescends to mention such a man. LANGBAIN and BLOUNT and GILDON copy their predecessors. ANTHONY

á WOOD, one of the most industrious writers England ever produced, who was born fourteen years after Shakespeare's decease, and who lived within thirty-six miles of the place where so much information might have been obtained, has not a syllable about the dramatist, though he found room for many other writers who never saw Oxford. Even Shakespeare's family might have been consulted. In short, there never was a person of whom more might *have been*, of whom so little *was* collected, until the attempt was vain. Whence arose this indifference?" Had the editor who furnished the foregoing extract, recurred to his own writings, immediately before him, he might easily have found the reason for the indifference he complains of. He has told up pretty satisfactorily where nearly all the Shakespeare (not *Shakspeare's*) plays came from originally, and it is hardly to be expected that a man who merely adapted other people's works to the *playing stage*, like a *Theatrical Factotum*, as GREENE calls him (and he was nothing else), is worthy of any further remembrance than such fact would warrant. He has shown us conclusively that he scarcely deserves the name of *author*. But the lame answer of this editor, insulting to the intelligence of the age about which he writes, is as follows: "The causes of this neglect are obvious. *The great body of readers are incapable of comprehending a master.*" How would this writer rank BEN JONSON. The great body of readers comprehended *him then*, and comprehend *him now*; and many, not without good reason, suppose that he has no equal as a dramatic poet. But, perhaps, the logical point of the above writer consists in a man's being a master only in proportion to the difficulty of understanding him. It certainly has taken a hundred commentators to elucidate Shakespeare, where scarcely one has been needed to tell us what the undefiled English of JONSON means. Even MILTON studied Jonson's style intently as the most perfect of any then existing in the English language. The singular and pertinacious endeavors of POPE to work out a fictitious literary reputation for Shakespeare by declaring that he must necessarily have been well versed in classic lore, and citing the authors which he *must* have read to produce some of his plays, is thus summarily and conclusively disposed of by the writer in LARDNER: "All this, he says, "shows what we did not expect to find in POPE, namely, *an almost entire ignorance of our early literature*"—whence, in fact, the plays were mostly *derived*, sometimes without alteration or emendation. BYRON, it appears, regarded the Shakespeare mania as a sort of periodical epidemic :

"To be, or not to be! That is the question."  
Says Shakespeare who *just now*, is much in fashion!

BYRON had not read PLATO in the original, or he would have substituted that philosopher's name for Shakespeare's, perhaps.

"To speak the language of Shakspeare," is a common expression. That expression applied to Americans, was uttered by one interested in England on the occasion of a public dinner at which he was a guest. The words used were that the "Americans speak the language of Shakespeare;" intended, doubtless, to convey the idea that we speak the English in its purity. But under favor, he did us great injustice, and heaped upon us an egregious wrong; for who ever speaks the language which Shakespeare used, speaks in the language of the Five Points, or of the obscene Fish Women of England.\* If however, he had said that Americans speak the language of "RARE BEX JONSON" he would have given us the idea of perfect pruity of style and elegance of diction. BEX never descended from the high position of a true poet, except perhaps to utter some invective like the following. Hear him, in the most poetical and indignant words, while he speaks of the stolen wares of his vulgar cotemporary from Stratford:

"I can approve  
The state of poesy, such as it is,

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\* After reading a great deal lately about SHAKESPEARE, any one having a common-sense mathematical mind must arrive at the conviction that there was no more possibility of the generally accepted Shakespeare ever having existed than there is of making a silk purse out of the auricular appendage of a female member of the porcine genus. After gathering together quite a little library on the subject, nothing is found to convince the student that Bacon, *aione*, was Shakespeare, but an immense amount to prove that the Shakespeare accepted by most people, never wrote what has been attributed to him. Just in the same way that Burns, even at the end of his life, could not write King's English but always Scotch-English, even so it was impossible for an uneducated young man to come up from Warwickshire, a country where a rude dialect was spoken, and at once compose a poem in the choicest English of the time which he dedicated to an English Lord; who, in return for his poetry, presented the author with £1,000 equivalent at this day to ten or twelve times that amount. The whole thing is assertion without proofs and to a candid mind, superlative "Bosh," supremely ridiculous. If Lord Southampton did give Shakespeare such an enormous sum, it is more likely it was as a brokerage or reward for the kind of services alluded to by Appleton Morgan in his "The Shakespearian Myth," Page 273. And soon throughout the narration of Shakespeare's life and doings. Almost every statement except that he was born, lived and died is without proof. One more consideration excites the question: Would you reader, would any educated man, possessed of property, having a position in society sufficient to entitle you to the possession of a coat-of-arms, granted to you,—which certainly presupposes some superiority—would such a person allow his children to grow up in such gross ignorance as not to be able even to sign their names. Shakespeare himself, with all his alleged ability as a writer nevertheless signed in several (5?) different ways—if he ever signed anything at all. Does it stand to reason?

Blessed, eternal, and most true divine :  
 Indeed, if you will look on poesy,  
 As she appears in many, poor and lame,  
 Patch'd up in remnants and old worn out rags,  
 Half starved for want of her peculiar food,  
*Sacred Invention*; then I must confirm  
 Both your conceit and censure of her merit."

\* \* \* \*

Nor is it any blemish to her fame,  
 That such lean, ignorant, and blasted wits,  
 Such brainless gulls, should utter their *stolen* wares,  
 With such applauses in our vulgar ears ;  
 Or that their slubbered lines have current pass,  
 From the fat judgments of the multitude ;—  
 But that this barren and infected age  
 Should set no difference twixt these empty spirits,  
 And a true poet :—than which reverend name  
 Nothing can more adorn humanity.

O, rare BEN JONSON! Can any one doubt that "Big Ben" [ "Honest Ben," Dryden's "Father Ben" ] meant Shakspeare, that smallest of poetasters, in these his forcible and manly censures? The greatest dramatic poet of England, speaking of the meanest and the least: "Of Shakspeare's moral character we know nothing," says the commentator, and then shortly informs us that he kept a mistress in London. In fact he never went back but twice to Stratford to see his wife (Anne Hathaway, who was eight years older than himself), whom he married when he was eighteen. The same writer then asks the following question—to which he applies an answer of unquestionable truth:—"But is there nothing in the works of this celebrated man to justify the *suspicion* of immorality? Who ever has looked into the *original editions* of his dramas, will be disgusted with the obscenity of his allusions. They *absolutely teem with the grossest impurities—more gross by far than can be found in any cotemporary dramatist.*" Another writer says, and with equal truth, that Shakspeare's obscenity exceeds that of all the dramatists that existed before him, and cotemporaneously with him; and he might have included all that ever came after him. This was the secret of his success with the play-goers. The plays he purchased or obtained surreptitiously, which became his "property," and which are now called his, were never set upon the stage in their original state. They were just spiced with obscenity, blackguardism and impurities, before they were produced; and this business he voluntarily assumed and faithfully did he perform his share of the management in that respect. It brought *money* to the house. No wonder the "Lord Mayor and the Citizens" wished to "avoid" the play-house in which he was concerned.

WHALLEY speaks of Shakespeare's "*remarkable modesty.*" But GIFFORD, the best critic England ever had, observes, "*we shall be at a loss to discover it.*"

"His offensive metaphors and allusions," says STEEVENS, "are undoubtedly more frequent than those of *all his predecessors or cotemporaries.*"

His profanity is thus noticed by Gifford—"He is, in truth, the Coryphæus of profanation."

"All his sonnets are licentious," says another, and quotes the libidinous lines to his mistress. Many of the plays attributed by the moderns to Shakespeare were acted at a rival Theatre of which old HENSLOWE was treasurer or proprietor. A most singular discovery of facts, tending positively to disprove the authorship of Shakespeare to several of the dramas imputed to him, is found in HENSLOWE'S *Diary*. It was discovered but a few years ago (1845), and is now in possession of the Shakespeare Society of London, but is the property of Dulwich college. The orthography of Henslowe is exceedingly "cramp"—but it is sufficient evidence to be brought into court. Its date runs from 1591 to 1609. The name of Shakespeare is not mentioned therein while those of nearly all the writers of mark of that day are repeatedly spoken of. I have extracted several passages from it.

"If Shakespeare," observes the commentator in *Lardner*, "had *little* of what the world calls learning, he had *less* of invention, so far as regards the fables of his plays. *For every one of them he was indebted to a preceding piece.*"

1. *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*.—The writer of this play is indebted for many of its incidents to two works, the *Arcadia* of SIDNEY, and the *Diana of Montemayor*, the latter work translated into English during the latter part of the 16th century. By some commentators this drama is held *not* to be Shakespeare's. The commentator adds, "we should by no means contend that he wrote the whole, or even the greater part of this drama. During the earlier years of his professional career, he rather improved the inventions of others than invented himself. It was *easier* for him to remodel *old* pieces, than to write *new* ones. Hence the reproach of GREENE that he was beautified by the feathers of others."

2. *The Comedy of Errors*.—Whoever wrote this play was indebted to the *Menæchmi* of PLAUTUS, which was translated into English some years before Shakespeare left Stratford. Yet whether Shakespeare (if he is the author) was immediately indebted to it, or to a Comedy founded upon it, entitled the "History of Error," and performed before Queen Elizabeth in 1576, is doubtful. It is supposed he did no more than slightly

retouch the old Comedy; and some commentators reject the play as being Shakespeare's altogether. "He retouched it" says one "probably at the request of the manager!" This commentator has hit the fact exactly, not only in regard to this play but to all the others attributed to him, except perhaps one, "The Merry Wives of Windsor," which is probably Shakespeare's from its obscene "internal evidence." In a note at the bottom of the page where some of the above facts are stated, the following words appear:

"Six old plays, on which Shakespeare founded his *Measure for Measure*, *Comedy of Errors*, *Taming the Shrew*, *King John*, *King Henry IV.*, *King Henry V.*, *King Lear*."

3. *Love's Labor Lost*.—"We read of an old play of *Holofernes*, acted before the Princess Elizabeth as early as 1556; and on this the comedy before us was based. In fact there is no one drama of our author prior to 1600, perhaps not one after that year, that was not derived from some other play!" "During the earlier years of his dramatic career he did little more than alter a piece that had become obsolete."

4. *The Merchant of Venice*.—"This play was derived partly from the *Pecorone* of GIOVANNI FIORENTINO; partly from the *GESTA ROMANORUM*, an old English ballad, and MARLOWE'S *Jew of Malta*. In GOSSON'S *School of Abuse*, published as early as 1579, there is a distinct allusion to a play containing the characteristic incidents in this Merchant of Venice.

5. *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.—The fable of this play is not now considered Shakespeare's. Mr. TYRWHITT, supposes one part of it to be taken from *Pluto and Proserpina* of CHAUCER: but GREENE'S *James the Fourth* is doubtless the foundation of the play; and both Chaucer and Greene are supposed to have had some common current legend of the day from which they derived their materials.

6. *The Taming of the Shrew*.—This play is founded entirely on an old comedy of the same name, inserted in the published book of the "Six Old Plays," which existed before the day of Shakespeare.

7. *Romeo and Juliet*.—The story of this play was first related by a *Novelist of Vicenza*, as early as 1535. It also formed the subject of a novel of BANDELLO, printed in 1554. BRISTEAU, a French novelist, soon gave it a French form; and BROOKE, in 1562, transferred it into English verse. PAINTER, also, in the *Palace of Pleasure*, took his story of *Rhomeo and Julietta* from the French, and not from the Italian novel. The writer of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* followed Brooke, but availed himself of some things from Painter. With all this knowledge before one commentator, who is determined to hear nothing

against the "genius" of "the bard," he says—"The genius of Shakespeare cannot suffer from the fact that he borrowed the foundation of all his plots. What others left unfinished, he perfected: he turned the dross of others into fine gold. "I am forced to the opinion that he, or the one who wrote the play in question, took the gold itself ("more sub"), without resort to the process of transmutation by the crucible of his "genius."

8. *As you Like It*.—This play has no greater originality than the preceding. It is taken from a novel of THOMAS LODGE, entitled *Rosalinde*. The "crow in borrowed feathers," spoken of by Greene, refers to this piracy as well as to others. "Shakespeare," says MALONE, "has followed Lodge's novel more exactly than is his general custom." "Whole sentences, besides the plot, are taken from it."

9. *Much Ado About Nothing*.—The original is from ARIOSTO; but Shakespeare knew nothing of Italian, and it is therefore to be presumed that this play is written by some other hand. A novel of *Belleforest* translated from BANDELLO, contains the same story of the play, and in default of a reference to these, the *Genevra* of TUBERVILLE could well furnish the material. The story is an old one; and dramatising a novel, using the material freely, was as common a thing then as now. But who at this day thinks of claiming credit, or laying claim to "genius" for such paltry "literary fishery?"

10. *Hamlet*.—With the exception of the grave-digger's scene, inserted to catch the groundings, which may possibly be the production of the "genius of Shakespeare," this play owes its paternity elsewhere. The foundation of Hamlet is notoriously to be found in SAXO GRAMMATICUS, which Shakespeare could not read, notwithstanding Mr. POPE supposes he *must* have been a great scholar. If he wrote Hamlet, Pope was probably near the truth; and it is upon the supposition that he wrote all the plays attributed to him, that Pope says he must have been conversant with the classics, familiar with Plautus, Dares Phrygius, and Plutarch, and he might have added Plato. What confiding men biographers and historians are, when they have a favorite theory to carry out! In addition to a printed story called *The Historie of Hamblet* then extant, there was a play called *Hamlet* (acted as early as 1589); and another play of Hamlet was also acted at a rival Theatre in London, in the year 1594, at which old HENSLOWE was treasurer. His entry is thus:—"Received at Hamlet viii s." "A poor night's receipts, that! Shakespeare probably got this play afterwards, and inserted the grave-digger's scene to render it popular with the play-goers. That was his vocation. At any rate the soliloquy of "TO BE, OR NOT TO BE," is a literal translation from PLATO, and

judging from that and the deep philosophy of the whole piece (always excepting the Shakespearian blot upon it), it must have been the creation of an educated man, which Shakespeare was NOT. It is probably a partnership concern. The only man of that day, of poetical power sufficient to write the higher parts of this tragedy, was BEN JONSON, the greatest Dramatic Poet England ever produced. LANGHORNE, in his preface to Plutarch, referring to the time of Shakespeare, says—"The celebrated soliloquy '*To be, or not to be,*' is taken almost verbatim from that philosopher (PLATO); yet we have never found that Plato was translated in those times." Montaigne is the base of Hamlet.

11. *The Merry Wives of Windsor*.—If any play of the whole catalogue is Shakespeare's, this comes nearest the mark. The impress of his vulgar and impure mind is upon every page. Tradition asserts that it was composed at the express command of Queen Elizabeth, who "wished to see Falstaff in love." It is probably, like all the other traditions relating to the "genius" of Shakespeare, without foundation, except in the brain of his admiring commentators. But he has no originality even in this revolting piece of trash. The author was indebted to a translation of PECORINO, and to TARLETON'S *News out of Purgatory*, for his plot and incidents; and his *Sir John Falstaff* is the *Sir John Oldcastle* of DRAYTON, WILSON, MUNDAY and HATHAWAY.

12. *Triolus and Cressida*.—Whoever wrote this play took the plot and materials from the Italian, and from CHAUCER, and from LYDGATE'S *Boke of Troye*. The authorship is settled by an entry in Henslowe's Diary on the 7th of April, 1599, in these words: "*Lent unto THOMAS DOWNTON, to lende unto Mr. DICKERS and HARREY CHEATELL, in earneste of their boockes called Troyeles and Creassedaye, the some of iij li.*" [This, if his, is one of Shakespeare's best pieces of work.]

13. *Measure for Measure*.—Founded on and taken from WHETSTONE'S play of *Promos and Cassandra*, one of the Six Old Plays already referred to.

14. *Othello*.—Was derived entirely from the Italian of one of CINTHIO'S novels: but Shakespeare knew nothing of Italian, even the translation could not be his, independent of the structure of the play. A French translation appeared in 1584; but of the French Shakespeare was as ignorant as of the Italian.

15. *King Lear*.—The story of Lear is drawn from GEOFFERY OF MONMOUTH; but the play is one of the Six Old Plays, to which something was contributed by way of amendment, perhaps, from the *Arcadia*, and the *Mirror of Magistrates*. HENSLOWE had the play at his Theatre, as is evident from an entry in his book: "8th of April, 1594, received at *King leare* XXVI S." It is therefore not Shakespeare's—for he had no interest in the

rival play-house, and Henslowe must have owned the play as his "property."

16. *All's Well that Ends Well*.—May be found in BOCCACCIO. In PAINTER'S *Palace of Pleasure* the story is called *Giletta of Narbon*. This play may have been among the "properties" of the Theatre to which Shakespeare was attached, upon the suppression of that dramatic nuisance, by the Lord "Mayor and citizens." The only wonder is that BETTERTON and ROWE, in getting up their "Shakespeare Speculation," did not give us a second series of a like number of plays while they were about it, and call them new discoveries. Who does not remember the "*Shakespeare forgeries*" of IRELAND, which deceived the very elect—!

17. *Macbeth*.—The incidents of the story, founded on Scottish history, are all in *Hector Boece*! "but of HECTOR, observes one critic, "Shakespeare knew as much as he did of HESIOD." Could he read Hesiod, think you? The writer of the play probably consulted HOLLINSHED for a guide. BUCHANAN thought the subject a fit one for the stage, and some of the "Wits" of the day took his hint and produced it. Part of this play is borrowed from MIDDLETON'S production entitled *The Witch*. So says STEEVENS, or rather he says the "bard of Avon" was not the originator.

18. *Twelfth Night*.—Derived remotely from the Italian of BANDELLO and more immediately from BELLEFOREST: and partly from *The Historie of Appolonius and Silla*, a tale in the collection of BARNABY RICHE.

19. *Julius Cæsar*.—From Plutarch, inaccessible to Shakespeare's "genius." He could not read it in the original, nor in the French translation of it by AMIOT. The EARL OF STRILING had already written a tragedy of that title. The *Julius Cæsar* attributed to Shakespeare is undoubtedly the following, as noticed by old HENSLÖWE, the theatrical treasurer: "22d of May, 1602, lent unto the companie to geve unto Antony Monday and Mikell Drayton, Webster, Mydleton and the rest, in earneste of a Boocke called *sesers Falle*, the some of V li." It is possible that Shakespeare's managers purchased this play and set it upon *their* stage.

20. *Antony and Cleopatra*.—The foundation of this play is derived from the same sources as *Julius Cæsar*—namely, the classic historians. There were two tragedies in being when the above was produced, one called *Antony*, by LADY PENBROKE, and the other *Cleopatra*, by DANIEL. Both Daniel and her ladyship were indebted to a translation of Garnier, whose tragedy had great celebrity. The writer of *Antony and Cleopatra*, is greatly indebted to all three of the above-named authors.

21. *Cymbeline*.—This play is derived from three sources, a novel of BOCCACCIO, an English tale called *Westward for Smelts*, and GEOFFERY'S *British Chronicle*. The common remark of the commentators; when a poor thing turns up, which is to be Shakespeare's, is a stereotype phrase. Here is one: "Cymbeline is a poor drama, and perhaps one that Shakespeare did not compose, but merely improved." Very likely.

22. *Timon of Athens*.—The commentator says this play is of the "same stamp" as the foregoing. It was certainly indebted to a former tragedy of the name, never printed, but well known in MS. The incidents are taken from PAINTER'S *Palace of Pleasure*, and PLUTARCH."

23. *Coriolanus*.—This play is also derived from Plutarch. It is therefore none of Shakespeare's—not because it was derived from Plutarch, but because it must have been written by some writer of classic mind and education, who could look into the original. *It is as far beyond SHAKESPEARE'S powers as Hamlet.* Shakespeare was a vulgar and unlettered man—or his commentators and biographers belie him in their facts. What they *suppose* is another thing.

24. *The Winter Tale*.—The paternity of this play belongs to ROBERT GREENE; the obscenity to Shakespeare. The commentator, seeing that the play is unworthy of a passing thought, except unmitigated contempt, says "it is unworthy of Shakespeare's genius." He is wrong there, it smells of his "genius" all over. "The substance of it," he continues, "must have appeared in some earlier drama."

25. *The Tempest*.—Founded on an Italian novel; and on ROBERT GREENE'S *Alphonisus*. The commentator says "there is more invention in this piece than in any other that Shakespeare has left us." Doubtless—but Shakespeare was no inventor, nor did he write this piece, though he may have had it among his "properties."

26. *King John*.—Founded on a former play of that name, and, in fact, written by ROWLEY. If it ever was the "property" of Shakespeare, he paid the usual fee for it, to wit from 5 to 10*l*. "It is founded on one of the six old plays" of that name.

27. *Richard II*.—There was a play of this title, which is referred to by CAMDEN, long prior to the time of Shakespeare. The commentator gives this play up also, thus: "probably Shakespeare did no time more than alter the one already in possession of the stage. This supposition is confirmed by *internal evidence*. It is decidedly inferior to some of his other historical plays; and the *manner* seems to be different." As to "manner," all of the series may be said to differ from each other; they were all written by different hands.

28. *Henry IV.*—“The two parts of Henry IV. were certainly founded on preceding dramas: the old play of *The famous Victories of King Henry V.*, which appeared in 1519, furnished one author with many of his characters and incidents and secondly the play of *Sir John Oldcastle.*” Thus much for the confession of the critic. FULLER says, “Stage poets have been very bold with, and others very sorry at the memory of Sir John Oldcastle, whom they have fancied a boon companion, a jovial royster, and a coward to boot. The best is, Sir John Falstaff has *relieved* the memory of Sir John Oldcastle, and of late is *substituted* buffoon in his place.” The play of Sir John Oldcastle, referred to before, was printed and claimed as one of Shakespeare’s, with as much pertinacity as the rest; but was withdrawn and given up to the owners, DRAYTON and company, notwithstanding the “internal evidence of Shakespeare’s genius,” with which it was thought to be imbued. Let Falstaff change his name to Oldcastle, and he is no longer Shakespeare’s. Oh, those “Six Old Plays!” “Sir John Oldcastle” ceased to receive encomium, as soon as it ceased to be claimed for Shakespeare.

29. *King Henry V.*—Founded, by universal concession, on preceding dramas with the same title. NASH refers to one as early as 1592, well known on the stage, which had been represented prior to 1588. In 1594 was another—“probably the same,” several others appeared afterwards. In the “Six Old Plays” there is a drama with the same title, “probably the one to which Nash alluded.” Henslowe records having “*received at hary the V.*,” several sums of considerable amount, on its representation at *his* theatre. That fact alone is quite sufficient to show that it was none of Shakespeare’s.

30. *King Henry VI.*—“The three parts of King Henry VI. were assuredly not the work of Shakespeare, though he retouched all of them, except *perhaps* the first,” so says his commentator. They were founded on the old dramas of the “*First part of the contention of the two Houses of Yorke and Lancaster;*” and the “*True Tragedy of Richard Duke of York, and the Death of good King Henry the Sixth.*” The former of these old dramas was printed in 1594, and the latter in 1595, but both were represented long before. To GREENE, PEELE and MARLOWE, their authorship is attributed. Hence GREENE’S expressions, on his dying bed, already referred to, in his letter to MARLOWE, LODGE and PEELE, of “upstart crow beautified with our feathers” and a parodied quotation from the First Part of the Contention of the two Houses, “O tiger’s heart, wrapt in a players hide!” Shakespeare had used their plays probably without paying for them, “*more suo*,” and they still form part of Shakespeare’s list of plays; at least his editors print them as such.

31. *King Richard III.*—This great drama, one that has kept the stage longest and with the greatest popularity, seems to be given up without a struggle, notwithstanding the “internal evidence.” “Here,” the commentator says, “Shakespeare had also prior dramas \* before him, some of them are enumerated in the last edition of MALONE by BOSWELL: and a mutilated copy of one, *which our dramatist had certainly in view*, is printed in the 19th volume of that laborious work.” Henslowe has this entry in his diary: “*Lent unto benjamy Johnsons, in earneste of a Boocke called Richard Crookbake, and for new odicyons for Jeronymes, the sum of X li.*”

It should be remembered, however, that the playing copy of *Richard*, now used, is greatly altered from the original. *All the most striking and beautiful passages are the work of modern hands.* GARRICK first undertook to remodel it, and several professional hands have since been at work at it. Indeed this is the case with all the “Shakespeare” acting dramas. The originals, with their obsolete and obscene defects and blemishes, would not be tolerated for a moment upon the present English or American stage. The authors that wrote them originally, could not, by any possibility, recognize them in the present text.

32. *King Henry VIII.*—It has heretofore been believed, upon pretty good grounds, that ROWLEY was the author of this play, or at least furnished the foundation and material for its construction. The title of his drama is *The Famous Chronicle History of King Henry the Eighth.* Rowley was cotemporary with

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\*“*The True Tragedie of Richard, Duke of Yorke, and the Death of good King Henrie the Sixth.* “With the whole contention betweene the two Houses of Lancaster and Yorke As it was sundrie times acted by the Right Honourable, the EARLE of PEMBROKE, his Servants.”

“Printed at London, by P. S. for THOMAS MILLINGTON, and are to be sold at his Shoppe, under Saint Peter’s Church, in Cornwall, 1595.

“This is in Duodecimo. It is, in the eyes of Collectors, invaluable. Mr. Chalmers purchased it for something more than six pounds, at the sale of Dr Pegge’s books: but if it were now exposed to sale, it would not improbably produce fifty.

“Mr. Chalmers in his Supplemental Apology, has produced some most extraordinary and convincing proofs, that Shakespeare copied much of this (his) play from one of Marlow’s on the same subject. I shall only produce two lines, and refer the curious reader, for other particulars, to Mr Chalmer’s volume, above referred to, p 293 et. seq.

“MARLOW. *Glos.* “What! will the aspiring blood of Lancaster Sink into the ground, I had thought it would have mounted.”

SHAKESPEARE. *Glos.* “What! will the aspiring blood of Lancaster Sink in the ground, I thought it would have mounted”

Anecdotes of Literature and Scarce Books by the Rev William Beloe, Translator of Herodotus, &c., In two Volumes, Vol I. London, 1807, pages 364-5.

Shakespeare, but, recently, a partnership with Rowley in its authorship has been discovered. Henslowe's Diary has the following entry: "5th June, 1601. Lent unto SAMWELL ROWLYE to pay same unto MARYE CHETTELL, for writinge the Boocke of Carnall Wolseye lyfe the sum XX s." The inference is irresistible, that Shakespeare is as innocent of the production of this play, as of those which are more plumply denied because they are "unworthy of his genius." It is idle to speculate in the face of such positive testimony. He was the mere "factotum" of a theatre—a copyist for the prompter—and an arranger of the parts with the cues copied out for the actors: a very responsible and laborious station, certainly—but it does not make an author nor give him any title to the authorship of the pieces he sets upon the stage.

33. *Pericles*.—The "bard's" chronicler says that "*Pericles* is certainly not the offspring of Shakespeare's genius. No ingenuity can show that there is the least affinity between the mind which produced it and that of our author. It would disgrace even the third rate dramatist of Shakespeare's age." [The dirt in some of Shakespeare's dramas is simply atrocious. Without attempting to specify scenes it is glaring in the *Two Gentlemen of Verona*; wherever *Falstaff cum suis* is introduced; in *Measure for Measure*; in *Lear*, *Hamlet*, *Timon of Athens*, *Troilus and Cressida*; even in *Romeo and Juliet*, but is most atrocious in *Pericles*. There is no need however of dwelling further upon this subject. The refined reader is often startled that even a rude age should have tolerated such Aristophanic nastiness.]

This is no proof one way or the other. But the denial of his chronicles would seem to establish the fact, if assertion goes for anything, that it was absolutely Shakespeare's, except that Shakespeare does not come up to the level of a third rate dramatist of any age. When his admirer asserts that a play belongs absolutely to Shakespeare, he finds himself negated by positive proof: and it is fair to presume if there is the usual "internal evidence" of blackguardism in *Pericles*, it is Shakespeare's or at least that part, which is thus marked, is his.

34. *Titus Andronicus*.—The same remarks precisely, both of chronicler and underwriter, as above given, apply here. This play, however, like that of *Pericles*, continues to be presented as Shakespeare's, and is claimed for Shakespeare. The following entries, however, in the books of the rival Theatre or rather in old Henslowe's diary, settle the question as to its *not* being Shakespeare's "1594" at several dates, "received at titus and ondronicus, 3l. 8s.;—2l.;—XX xi is;—7s." [The drift of this play is for the most part simply brutal without redeeming beauties.]

The audiences must have been slim in those days! Verily that "speculation" of ROWE and BETTERTON has been the cause of mighty contention among the learned commentators of this age. How much good Christian ink has been spent in writing up a worthless subject, I mean Shakespeare in person, and how much scholarship and research have been exhausted to furnish the means of sending him to "*quod!*" The question put into the mouth of *Lady Betty's* waiting maid in *High Life below Stairs*, "*Who wrote Shakespeare?*" was laughed at, as a good theatrical joke, some years ago; but, *when it is now asked, there is "not so much laughing as formerly."* And the theatrical pleasantry of playing one of Shakespeare's plays without speaking a word from Shakespeare, was actually carried out by JOHN KEMBLE, who, in setting *Hamlet* upon the stage, left out the *grave-digger's scene* [which in some respects, if not in all, may be due to Lord Vere] as unworthy of the play; and thus the play was played, and well played too, doubtless, without a word being uttered from Shakespeare—for that scene is all that is his. Upon the same principle that the Shakespeare series of plays selected by ROWE and BETTERTON are called Shakespeare's, might we call the rare old tracts and papers of the Harleian Miscellany, the *Earl of Oxford's*, because they were found in his library, and some of them copied in his handwriting. If they had been buried a century or two, he certainly would have been their author with the commentators of the calibre of those, generally, who have written upon Shakespeare.

About a century hence, when our old *Metropolitan Theatre* of the PARK [on Park Row] shall be turned into a brewery of beer, or a huge manufactory of some future Solomon's Balm of Gilead, or some life-preserving Panacea of an unborn Swaim, those who come after us may find its "properties" barrelled up and stowed away in some lumber garret. Then will some "speculating Rowe and Betterton" gloat over the tons of plays and operas that have been acted in our day, and the chirography of our industrious and respectable Mr. PETER RICHINGS (\*) will be recognized, in perhaps an hundred plays prepared by him for the prompter; and perhaps the music of a score of operas copied in his own handwriting, will be found as well. Then.

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\* One of the smartest and most genial stage managers and most versatile, favorite, popular actors and warblers and "general utility" members of a company whom the New York stage has ever known. The writer remembers him well and knows the high appreciation felt for him by the select and critical audiences of the preceding generation. Few could set or control a company upon the stage, with more discretion or effect, better than he. He is ever present like a speaking picture to the memory, especially in parts requiring silent humor or dignified fun.

will the forgotten play-writers of our day have a resurrection and Mr. Richings an uncovered immortality.

MOZART and ROSSINI, too, sunk perhaps in the night of the intervening age, will come forth anew, and the handwriting of that useful attaché of the Park, will be enquired about, and identified after long and indefatigable research. The operas and the manuscript plays *will be his* by the same token, and that "internal evidence" (the handwriting), will be the proof by which to test the identity and authorship of all those cotemporary productions.

RICHINGS!—Your fate is posthumous fame, by this process—And even little OLIFFE, the keeper of the "property room" and player of all the big soldier parts, will have a glorious run for immortality!

HERE ENDS HART!

From ★ Page 2 to ★★ 25 is quoted from "The || Romance of Yachting : || Voyage the First." || By Joseph C. Hart, || Author of "Miriam Coffin," &c., || New York, || Harper & Brothers, Publishers, || 82 Cliff Street, || 1848. Pages 209 to 243. The remarks or sentences, etc., between [ ] and notes are by J. W. de P. The Ninth Edition of the Encyclopædia Britannica concedes that HART's book was "*FIRST work containing DOUBT of SHAKESPEARE'S Authorship,*" and here let it be remarked that the whole article on Shakespeare in the Encyclopædia Britannica is what might be termed sensational or, perhaps more properly, emotional—gush—certainly not biography or trustworthy authority: and such also to as great a degree, although to less extent as to power of influencing opinion, is the article in Pierre Larousse's French Universal Lexicon of the XIX century. The editor, so often grandly independent, in this case appears to pin his faith on the opinion of Victor Hugo, who may in some respects be termed a genius but is often what calm or cold Anglo-Saxon minds consider as verging on the charlatan, realizing the expression of Napoleon that "there is but one step from the sublime to the ridiculous."

Even in regard to the PORTRAITS of Shakespeare, we have nothing that is trustworthy. If JONSON's eulogistic lines were written to go with Shakespeare's portrait to which they are appended,—then the reputed likeness represents "as stupified, stultified, and insignificant a human countenance as was ever put upon an engraver's surface,"—*i. e.*, paper—and those lines stamp the poet as a miserable perverter of the truth, positively mendacious. Such lines and such a portrait do not belong to each other. The probability is that Jonson wrote the lines for an entirely different portrait, that of another man—and they were

altered to suit the case of Shakespeare "*for a consideration.*" What is more, comparing the favorable verses, which Jonson *is said* to have written in regard to Shakespeare, with the vast aggregate that it is well-known, he wrote adversely to him, honest criticism is placed in the dilemma, either to grasp one horn of it and believe that *Honest BEN* was *Dishonest BEN* and wrote pro or con with a hireling pen, or else that other parties stole or otherwise appropriated Jonson's praises of some other poet and used, or rather misused them, to assist or insure the sale of the works attributed to Shakespeare. Moliere has been highly lauded for his wholesale appropriation of the wit and wisdom of others and justified on his plea, that "he took his own (*i.e.*: stole what suited him) wherever he found it." This is all very good as regards the effect upon the public—its gratification; but it certainly does not go far to establish the original genius or even the honesty of a writer who, like Moliere, omits quotation marks and references to the authors from whom he purloined gems of thought. However tasty and astonishing the setting may be, gems derive no intrinsic value from the jewelry work around them. Take them out of the metal and they will sell just the same as when set and they are often taken out and weighed before sold—and therefore an honest man qualifies a collection of brilliant thoughts from others, "as an Anthology" or else gives it some other title which does not carry with it the idea that it is the offspring of the editor or compiler's own brain. An honest critic should truly be invested with the legs of one of the *Wading* tribes of birds to venture into the shallows of the idolatrous twaddle of the usual commentators on Shakespeare and to have a very broad spread of toes to avoid sinking into the thin mud of their brains. Or, else the critic should belong to the tribe of *Divers*, to plunge down into the depths of the abstractions and imaginations of what are termed Shakespearian scholarship, to pull up, like the *Canvas-backs*, the wild celery on which such birds fatten; too often to be robbed of it by the more sagacious *Red-heads*, who quietly remain on the surface in the full light of the sun (of Truth) to snatch the pabulum acquired with such difficulty and then digest it for their own immediate benefit and the future pleasure of the many. While there are so many wild probabilities and possibilities and babble and manufactured testimony and even traditions, of the same kidney and respectability as the *PSEUDO-ISIDORE Decretals* \* on which and more

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\* See Dr. Theodore Griesinger's "Mysteries of the Vatican," London, Wm. H. Allen & Co., 1864, Vol. I., Chapter I. "Development of the Papal Idea," Chapter. II. "The Papacy in its glory,"—Pseudo-Isidore—Pages, 159-164.

such, the Papal Church founds its false claims—yes, while Shakespearian scholars have little or nothing whereon to found their visionary creations, there are plenty of facts to prove incontestably where Shakespeare found his Hippocrene; (Fountain of the Muses) viz: in the brains, real geniuses, of such rare aves as Plato, Plutarch, Bacon, Montaigne, Sidney (from whom Shakespeare is said to have derived his inspiration), while he ladled up or received into his bowl the clear and invigorating liquid, in so doing he unfortunately either scooped up some of the sand or weeds at the bottom or added dirt to it afterwards.

Rogniat, one of the most philosophical of military writers, commenting on the character of the most successful generals who have shown extraordinary ability in various directions, says that the genius of the greatest men is always very limited and their success is due to the happy employment of two or three new ideas exactly applicable to the circumstances of the time. If such be the case with generals, how much more is it to be the fact in regard to every other class of eminent men. Superiority in war is often a matter of simple intuition. It is not so in any one of the lines of superiority attributed to Shakespeare. Poujoulat justly remarks, that "circumstances are as indispensable to the development and success of genius as the wind for the sails of a vessel. Genius has to be supported and even pushed to fulfill its complete destiny." This very striking remark is exactly applicable to the case of Shakespeare. To be what his admirers and the multitude deluded by them, believe him to have been, needed all the support and impulse of circumstances *which did not exist in his case*, and, in his time, could not have existed. There is a vulgar expression but very forcible which exactly expresses the truth with regard to the *psuedo* "bard of Avon," whose is a "cooked up" reputation. If ever there was a *manufactured greatness* it is his. It belongs to the class of all successful fanaticisms and bigotries. They are not of mushroom growth but of development. Like the Papacy once, however, that they have taken hold of a faction or the multitude, it would seem that reason and truth have little or no effect in shaking the delusion. The "veiled Prophet of Khorassan," even when he reveals his real hideousness still finds believers.

"There ye wise Saints, behold your Light, your Star,—  
Ye *would* be dupes and victims, and ye *are*."

"And they believe him!—No, the lover may  
Distrust that look which steals his soul away;—  
The babe may cease to think that it can play  
With Heaven's rainbow;—alchemists may doubt  
The shining gold their crucible gives out;  
But *Faith, fanatic FAITH, once wedded fast*  
*To some dear falschood, hugs it to the last.*"

There are some kinds of delusion that can be instantly detected by scientific tests, while they, equally apparent to the adept, cannot always be reached by the touch-stone of truthful demonstration. Some are not worth the labor of disillusionization. The frauds and assumptions of the Papacy have lasted over one thousand years in full force and Mahomedanism almost as long. Any one who will read that remarkable pamphlet of—Andrew Dickson White, President of Cornell University, “The Warfare of Science” will be convinced that Truth has a harder fight for acceptance than Error, particularly if the latter is more acceptable to the masses. Considering the shortness of human life, it requires the faith of the true believer to find consolation in the promise of the New Testament, that the truth will sooner or later be made manifest. In the writer’s very extensive and valuable Library, in the compartment assigned to “Precious Stones,” is a work not as old as the *myth* of Shakespeare which states that “a diamond can be dissolved in goat’s blood.” This assertion had been repeated as a fact in successive treatises, as an acknowledged fact, when the first sceptic, who should try the experiment could have discovered the falsity. For centuries it was believed that goblets of Venetian glass and cups made out of rhinoceros horn would, by splintering, reveal the presence of poison. Neither of these assertions like that in regard to the diamond, could have stood the test of actual honest experiment. How many centuries were people convinced that the Salamander could exist amid flames and rather enjoy such a fiery residence. When the naturalist threw an unhappy Salamander into the fire he found that the miserable reptile perished at once like any other organization exposed to such a trial. Quite a voluminous work was devoted to the correction of “Popular Errors.” The reputation of the mythical Shakespeare can no more continue to exist under the fiery ordeal of common sense than the Salamander invested with fabulous properties can continue to live in actual fire.

Before medicine and surgery became an exact science, it was asserted that “an headache could be cured by kissing a pretty girl.” In view of the innumerable headaches common in consequence of indiscretions and debauches, it is no wonder that caustic irony observes that “it is difficult to improve on some such old fashioned remedies.” It is doubtful if even Solomon or Sardanapalus in the possession of their hundreds of beauties ever had a headache, consequent upon an orgie, cured by kissing a dozen pretty girls. This pleasant remedy is about as true as the senseless idea that the Shakespeare of common acceptance could have existed except through a miraculous gift of understanding such as was bestowed upon Solomon.

In the course of this world's story there have been a few individuals to whom has been ascribed the title of "Universal Geniuses." Among these two stand preeminent. Of one, formerly the subject of almost universal belief, "*the admirable CRICHTON*," his very existence is almost disproved. It is, at best, most questionable even in a comparatively small degree. Of the other, PICO DELLA MIRANDOLA, it is now known that his abilities, however great, even if great at all, were only astonishing for his time, whereas those of the *reputed* Shakespeare "are for all time." There have been *infant* prodigies but none of them survived to become great men.

"So wise, so young, did ne'er live long"

"Early Springs make short Summers"

If Shakespeare was a youthful prodigy, he outlived the ordinary length of his generation, a period of defective hygiene and of little medical science. Nevertheless he lived to be 52 and died of one of those "*WET-combats* which his admirers have kindly transmuted into "*WIT-combats*." MAGLIABECCHI and MEZZOFANTI were what men esteem miracles of knowledge but they were only *such* in particular lines and both of them had passed the *whole* term of Shakespeare's life before their knowledge was developed seriatim—i. e., according to the laws which govern such development as theirs. In fact they were examples of the absolute proof that "*There is no Royal Road to Learning*," because their increment in knowledge was gradual and they acquired their strength progressively—*vires acquirit eundo!*

In conclusion to change the line of argument; how is it possible for the idolaters of Shakespeare to explain why the charge of "*literary theft*,"\* under so many different shapes, can be explained away in face of the fact that what is claimed for him as *original* is to be found in the works of so many authors who wrote in English and preceded him. In the works reputed to belong to Shakespeare, are *Thoughts* almost actually, textually, taken from Chaucer, Sidney, Lord Vere, notably the grave-digger's song in "*Hamlet*"—Beaumont and Fletcher,—the witches' incantation in Macbeth, Montaigne, Bacon, Marlowe; also a number of others which are all mentioned and proved by critical investigation. To fanatic admirers it would perhaps be utterly useless to accumulate the direct and circumstantial evidence of facts and of common sense, for it is not likely they would listen even if one arose from the dead to testify against

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\* Read carefully || "*The Shakespearean Myth*" || "*William Shakespeare* || and circumstantial Evidence" || By Appleton Morgan, A.M. LL.B. || Cincinnati || Robert Clarke & Co., 1881, || also "*The* || *Authorship of Shakespeare*" || by Nathaniel Holmes, Hurd & Houghton, || New York. 1886.

their idol. They would even then attribute his testimony to "envy, hatred, malice and all uncharitableness," if they did not assign it to the domain of utter ignorance or falsehood. These few pages which might be swelled into hundreds, must draw to a close with almost a repetition of the incontrovertible axioms with which they commenced: *First*: it would be difficult to "exactly tell" what any writer actually penned whose works have undergone so much patching, overhauling, improvement and glosses as those assigned to William Shakespeare. Take the original of the most famous monologue "TO BE OR NOT TO BE." It was originally almost a rough log which different planes have smoothed and other tools have subsequently polished. In this and many other cases the "divine (*sic.*) William" would not know the work attributed to him.\* How much belongs to Socrates, how much to Plato, how much to Montaigne and how much to somebody else unknown and how much to Shakespeare? "that no feller can find out." But stronger than all such reasoning is the opposition of the *imputed*, almost boundless knowledge of Shakespeare and his circumstances, coupled with the conceded, inexorable fact "There is no Royal Road to learning." Again, when the Jews carried away by their astonishment at the vast capacity and doctrines of the Divine Exemplar they asked the reasonable question "How knoweth this man letters, having never learned?" For the real Shakespeare to have been the supposititious Shakespeare would involve an extra exertion of nature, and nature never wastes force, nor would it perform a miracle, almost without parallel, simply in favor of a play-actor or manager certainly among the least valuable or beneficial constituents of this world's economy or machinery.

There is an all sufficient answer and complete explanation *in regard to the Divine Exemplar*. THE TEACHER WAS DIVINITY. *Now it is hardly possible that the wildest enthusiast for the reputation of the WARWICKSHIRE "ALE TESTER'S SON, play-actor and manager would dare to claim for him (Shakespeare) the GIFT WHICH GOD VOUCHSAFED TO SOLOMON or the POSITIVE INSPIRATION and undwelling of DIVINITY.*

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\* See page— "SHAKESPEARE AND MONTAIGNE; || and endeavor to explain the tendency of "Hamlet" from allusions || in contemporary works. || By Jacob Feis, || London: || Kegan, Paul, Trench & Co., Paternoster Square || 1884.

Appended to, and constituting part of an attractive little work "Shakespeare's Insomnia, and the Causes Thereof," by Franklin H. Head, Boston and New York, Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1887, are a number of letters printed from copies furnished by the British Museum, purporting to have been written to, NOT BY, Shakespeare. Without questioning the authenticity of these but judging from what the Shakespearians style "*internal evidence*" i. e. style, etc.,—the writer feels without seeing the originals,— that they were all written by the same person.

## A BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH,

BY RICHARD GRANT WHITE,

*Un fanatico per la Dramma*" ed il *Genio di Shakespeare* constitutes an article on the "Divine (*sic.*) William" in Johnson's New Universal Cyclopaedia, and as the Doctor was limited in space, his work may be considered a concrete of all that a "*fanatico*" knew on the subject. To analyze his life-long studies, he commences by "supposing" the date of Shakespeare's birth and except as to his parents' names, their actual position in society is to a great degree surmise "Of Shakespeare's early life until he married, *we know nothing*," White observes, adding, "*it is probable*," as to his education, occupation, his mode of living, etc. His wife unquestionably received very little attention while he lived and less consideration in his will. After Shakespeare made his way to London, "ere long we find him engaged as an actor and as a playwright!" This became his profession. On the stage, he made no figure, filling "minor parts" and was rated no higher than an actor with "a position of what is known as 'general utility'." White conceded that the various companies of players kept "several playwrights in their pay, who, working together, produced new plays and patched up old ones;" that there is good reason for believing that Shakespeare wrote "in conjunction with Marlowe, Greene, Peele and others;" that Greene characterized Shakespeare as a "pretentious plagiarist;" and that the "divine (*sic.*) William" was "facetious," which White asserts meant "skilful and of a delicate fancy and 'of worship'" significant "of social rank and consideration" This is sheer assumption and reminds a close historical student of the various applications of "*gloriosus*" in connection with Bothwell,—not the evil-genius but the victim of Mary Stuart. According to the enemies of the great Earl, who, great through his genius and graces was a *white crow* among the flock of *black ones*, the Scottish nobility—*black* in every sense, morals and mode of life—*GLORIOSUS* signified "vain-glorious or boastful;" whereas friends and neutrals applied it in speaking of Bothwell, in its *primary* sense, "renowned, full of glory, or illustrious;" *i. e.* exactly as Cicero uses it and as it conveys the meaning of its Greek synonym, *Kleitos*, "renowned or famous," or that of the other Greek term *Kudimos*, "glorious, a fitting epithet to her heroes." How aptly the panegyrist can cunningly wist a term: "facetious" a man of worship!!!

Of the assertion that Lord Southampton gave Shakespeare "£1,000, quite equal to \$30,000 in this day and country" (the United States), White adds "the story is probable." *It is most improbable*. That nobleman was not in circumstances to make such a donation, unless the insinuation of Appleton Morgan is accepted; that the "divine (*sic.*) William" served his patron in a way which would now be accepted as a stigma, namely for services which have made one of the most prominent characters of Shakespeare's "wisest play"—if his—*Troilus and Cressida*, known by an epithet to which the prototype feelingly alludes in the concluding lines of the drama. White further on observes that his prodigy "produced his plays only in the way of business," and is honest enough to concede that his *Sonnets* "remain a literary puzzle to this day" and "although inferior to the plays, they are far superior to the other poems," and yet it is asserted, that for two of the latter, one *Venus and Adonis*, "the first heir of his invention," Lord Southampton, bestowed upon him a small fortune. All these "probabilities" not only do *not* amount to possibility but indubitably do not even approach the boundaries of fact. White, even amid his supreme admiration, his "blind worship," acknowledges that Shakespeare had a share only in a number of the dramas attributed to him and that in almost all the best known, another mind or other minds must share the credit, exhibiting the "the marks of another hand."

"In this [White's] order of production" [of the plays attributed to him Shakespeare] "we see evidence that although Shakespeare was a miracle, like the sun and the stars in their daily rising and setting, his mind developed and his power grew like that of any ordinary mortal." It has been stated as a fact, in the foregoing pages, that nature never wastes its forces and would never have performed a miracle to create a "theatrical factotum" at a time when play actors were regarded as vagabonds, tramps. But, conceding Shakespeare was a miracle of intuitive force, such a gift would not have conferred knowledge or science, the inevitable result of study and opportunities which latter did not then exist. It almost seems ridiculous to talk about the *writings* of any man when "not a line of his has come down to us—not even a word, except his own signature." Is it a matter of possibility or probability that if Shakespeare wrote so well in every sense of the word and such a vast amount, that no manuscript of his, good, bad or indifferent, has been preserved, when the writings of so many men of far lesser note, conceding any greatness to Shakespeare, should not only exist but abound. Finally general opinion concurs in the correctness of the story that Shakespeare lost his life through a fever brought on by one of those drinking-bouts or WET-combats—which his blind worshippers insist were *wit-combats*—which, the wet-combats, were so common in his day and generation.

If any writer devoid of bias and free from prejudice, possessed of sufficient means and pleasant manners and with ample means and proper introductions, with leisure and power of investigation and analysis, and master of a clear and agreeable style, would go to England and examine every source of *licit* information and authority, and then communicate nothing else but facts to the world, then, indeed, those interested in the subject, might have something worthy the title of a biography of Shakespeare and a history of his doings, sayings and compositions. As it is, the actuality of the Shakespearian story holds the same proportion to legend or tradition, sentiment or gush, probability or possibility, buncombe or high-for-Newtonism, that Falstaff's half-penny worth of bread did to the two gallons of sack, the capon and sauce, the anchovies and the sack, after a supper, costing 10s. 10d.—which led Prince Henry to exclaim "Oh monstrous! but one half-penny worth of bread to this intolerable deal of sack" *i. e.* sherry (?) wine. The superstition which elevates Shakespeare into a philosophical god is preposterous.



ARTICLES published in *United Service Magazine* (equal in matter to 12mo. volumes): Torstenson and the Battle of Janikau, July, 1879; Joshua and the Battle of Beth-horon—Did the Sun and Moon stand still? February, 1880; Hannibal, July, 1880; Gustavus Adolphus, Sept., 1880; Cavalry, I., Sept., 1880; Cavalry, II., Nov., 1880; Cavalry, III., Dec., 1880; Army Catastrophes—Destruction of Pharaoh and his host; how accomplished, &c., &c. February, 1881.—Hannibal's Army of Italy, Mar., 1881; Hannibal's Last Campaign, May, 1881; Infantry, I., June, 1881; Infantry, II., Aug., 1881; Battle of Eutaw Springs, 1781, Sept., 1881; Siege of Yorktown, 1781, Nov. 1881; Infantry, III., April, 1882; Waterloo, July, 1882; Vindication of James Hepburn, Earl of Bothwell, Sept., 1882, Oct., 1882; From the Rapidan to Appomattox Court House, July, 1883.—Burgoyne's Campaign, July-Oct., 1777, and Appendix, Oct., 1883.—Life and Achievements of Field-Marshal Generalissimo Suwarrow, November-December, 1883.—Biographical Sketch of Maj.-Gen. Andrew Atkinson Humphreys, U. S. A., March 1884.—Address, Maj.-Gen. A. A. Humphreys, before the Third Army Corps Union, 5th May, 1884. Character and Services of Maj.-Gen. A. A. Humphreys, U. S. A., Manhattan, N. Y., Monthly Magazine, August, 1884.

Suggestions which laid the basis for the present admirable Paid Fire Department in the City of New York, in which, as well as in the Organization of the present Municipal Police of New York City, Gen. de Peyster was a co-laborer with the Hon. Jas. W. Gerard, and G. W. Matsell, for which latter Department he caused to be prepared and presented a Fire Escape, a model of simplicity and inestimable utility. Republished in the *New York Historical Magazine*. Supplement, Vol. IX., 1865. John G. Shea, Editor and Proprietor.

The Pearl of Pearls, or the "Wild Brunswicker" and his "Queen of Hearts:" a novel, founded on facts. 1865.—Mary Stuart: a Study. 1882; James Hepburn, Earl of Bothwell: a Vindication, 1882; Bothwell and Mary Stuart: an Enquiry and a Justification. 1883.—Bothwell, an Historical Drama, 1884.—The Life and Military Services of Sir John Johnson, Bart. 1882.—Notices and Correspondence of Col. A. S. de Peyster and Brig.-Gen. Sir John Johnson, Bart., during and after the American Revolution, 1776, &c. 1884.

State Sovereignty. 1861.—Life and Services of the great Russian Field-Marshal Suwarrow. 1882.—La Royale, the Grand Hunt [or Last Campaign of the Army of the Potomac], Nos. I., II., III., IV., V., VI., 1872; VII., 1873; VIII., 1871.—Battles of Fredericksburg, Chancellorsville and Gettysburg, in *Onward*, a monthly. 1863-70.—And Gettysburg and Williamsport, in the *Soldiers' Friend*, a weekly, 1870.—Col. J. Watts de Peyster, Jr., U. S. V., A Threnody. 1874.—Sir John Johnson, Bart.: An Address delivered before the N. Y. Historical Society, 6th Jan., 1880, with two voluminous Appendices of Authorities.

Centennial Sketches of the American Revolution, which appeared in the N. Y. *Times*, and especially in the N. Y. *Evening Mail*, and *Mail and Express*. 1776-82.—Decisive Conflicts of the late Civil War or "Slaveholders' Rebellion:" I. Shiloh, Antietam, &c., 1867; II. Murfreesboro to Chattanooga, &c., 1866; III. Gettysburg, 1867; IV. Nashville, 1875.—Biographical notices of Major-Generals Philip Schuyler—Address delivered before the N. Y. Historical Society, 2d Jan., 1877; Geo. H. Thomas, (likewise two Addresses delivered on the same subject before the N. Y. Historical Society, 5th Jan. 1875, and Jan. 1876); also, of Bancroft, Burnside, Crawford, Heintzleman, Hooker, Humphreys, McAllister, Mahone, Meade, Edwards Pierrepont, Pleasanton, Sickles, Tremaine, &c., &c.

The Battles of Monmouth and Capture of Stony Point: a series of voluminous and exhaustive articles published in the *Monmouth Enquirer*, N. J., 1879.—Eclaircur (The), A Military Journal, Vols. II. and III., edited 1854-5.

History of the Third Corps, Army of the Potomac, 1861-65. This title, although not technically, is virtually correct, for in a series of elaborate articles in dailies, weeklies, monthlies, monographs, addresses, &c., everything relating to this Corps, even to smallest details, from 1861 to 1865, was prepared with care, and put in print. These articles appeared in the *Citizen*, and the *Citizen and Round Table*; in *Foley's Volunteer*, and *Soldiers' and Sailors' Half-Dime Tales of the late Rebellion*; in Mayne Reid's magazine *Onward*; in Chaplain Bourne's *Soldiers' Friend*; in "*La Royale* or *Grand Hunt* [or the Last Campaign] of the Army of the Potomac, from Petersburg to Appomattox Court House, April 2-3, 1865," illustrated with engraved likenesses of several of the prominent Generals belonging to the corps, and careful maps and plans; in the life of Major-General Philip Kearny; in the "Thlrd Corps at Gettysburg; General Sickles Vindicated" \* \* Vol. I., Nos. xi., xii., xiii. *The Volunteer*: in a Speech delivered before the Third Army Corps Union, 5th May, 1873, profusely illustrated with portraits of Generals who commanded, or belonged to that organization, &c. These arranged and condensed would constitute a work of five or six volumes 8vo., such as those prepared by Prof. John W. Draper, entitled the "Civil War in America," but were never given as bound volumes to the public, because the expense was so great that the author, who merely writes for credit and amusement, was unwilling to assume the larger outlay, in addition to what he had already expended on the purchase of authorities, clerk-hire, printing, &c., &c.

## John Watts de Peyster, F. R. S.

1887.

Master of Arts, Columbia College of New York, 1872.—Hon. Mem. Clarendon Hist. Soc., Edinburgh, Scotland; of the New Brunswick Hist. Soc., St. John, Canada; of the Hist. Soc. of Minnesota, Montana, New Jersey; of the Military Order of the Loyal Legion of the U. S. &c.; of the N. Y. Burns' Club, &c.; Cor. Mem. of the Quebec Lit. and Hist. Soc., Canada, &c.; Life Mem. Royal Hist. Soc. of Great Britain, London, Eng.; Mem. Maatschappij Nederlandsche Letterkunde, Leyden, Holland.—First Hon. Mem. Third Army Corps (A. of the P.) Union; Hon. Mem. Third Army Corps Gettysburg Battlefield Reunion and Mem. of the Honorary Committee; Mem. Amer. Hist. Association, U. S. A.; of the Holland Society, N. Y.; Associate Mem. Military Institution of the U. S., &c., &c.; Member, Life, Honorary and Corresponding Member of over forty State and Local Historical, Scientific and Literary Societies and Associations, &c., at home and abroad.—Colonel N. Y. S. I., 1846, assigned for "meritorious conduct" to command of 22d Regimental District, M. F. S. N. Y., 1849; Brig.-General for "important service" [first appointment in N. Y. State to that rank, hitherto elective], 1851, M. F. S. N. Y.; Military Agent S. N. Y., in Europe, 1851-53, authorized and endorsed by U. S. A., 1851-3; assisted in organization of present Police, N. Y., and first reported in favor of Paid Fire Department with Fire Escapes and Steam Engines, 1852-3; Adjutant-General S. N. Y., 1855; Brevet Major-General S. N. Y. for "meritorious services," by "Special Act" or "Concurrent Resolution," N. Y. State Legislature, April, 1866, [first and only General officer receiving such an honor (the highest) from S. N. Y., and the only officer thus brevetted (Major-General) in the United States].  
Honorary Life Member of the Toledo Soldiers' Memorial Association, 19th April, 1886, Toledo, Ohio.

## —† Supplementary List of Publications †—

SUBSEQUENT TO 1ST JANUARY, 1886, AND NOT HITHERTO NOTED IN PRINT.

BY

JOHN WATTS DE PEYSTER, M.A., LL.D.

Brig.-Gen., Brev. Maj.-Gen., S. N. Y.

- Anthony Wayne, Major-General, Continental and United States Army. [Prominent Men of the Revolutionary Period.] With likeness endorsed as most correct by Wayne's descendants. *Magazine of American History*, February, 1866.
- Anthony Wayne, Major-General, Third General-in-Chief of the United States Army. With likeness endorsed as most correct by Wayne's descendants. (Matter different from, and additional to, that published in *Magazine of American History*.) *United Service Magazine*, March, 1886.
- Anthony Wayne, Major-General, Third General-in-Chief of the United States Army since the Adoption of the Constitution. (Matter different from, and additional, again, to, that in previous sketches already mentioned.) *The College Student*, Franklin and Marshall College, Lancaster, Pennsylvania, October, 1886.
- Andrew Atkinson Humphreys, Major-General U. S. Volunteers, and Engineer-in-Chief, U. S. A., *United Service Magazine*, March, 1884.
- Andrew Atkinson Humphreys, Major-General, U. S. V., Brigadier-General, U. S. A., &c., &c. With likeness and plans, *Magazine of American History* (with new and additional matter), October, 1886.
- Andrew Atkinson Humphreys, Major-General, U. S. V., Chief of Staff, Army of the Potomac, Brigadier-General and Chief of Engineers, U. S. A. *The College Student*, Franklin and Marshall College, Lancaster, Pennsylvania, with entirely new and important considerations not hitherto presented. November and December, 1886.
- Michael Angelo's Statue, "The Thinker" (*Il Penseroso*). With a consideration of comparative master-pieces in sculpture and painting. *The College Student*, February, 1887.
- Michael Angelo and the Tombs of the Medicis. *The College Student*, Franklin and Marshall College, Lancaster, Pennsylvania, April, 1887.
- Gambler. A Doggerel Threnody on a Famous Dog. September, 1886.
- To Holland and the Dutch Nation. A Poetical Address, prepared for the Second Annual Dinner of the Holland Society of New York, at the Brunswick, 27th January, 1887.
- Buddha, or Gotama, or Sakia-Mouni; Buddhism and Romanism Compared. *The College Student*, March, 1887.
- Before, At, and After Gettysburg, and other matter. New York: 1887.
- The Last Ten Days' Service of the Old Third Corps ("as we understand it") with the Army of the Potomac. New York: 5th May, 1887.
- Before, At, and After Gettysburg, 1887.
- Prussia: its Position and Destiny: [due to Frederic II the Great, the Sanspareil,] By N. H. Loring, 1st March, 1834. With INTRODUCTION and BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF FREDERIC the Great, Military Lessons presented by his career; A Comparison of Frederic's Victories with those of Napoleon: The Real Napoleon, not the Mythical Revealed, &c., &c. 1837.
- Alvizzi del Pino, a Novelle of Venice, December, 1873.

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