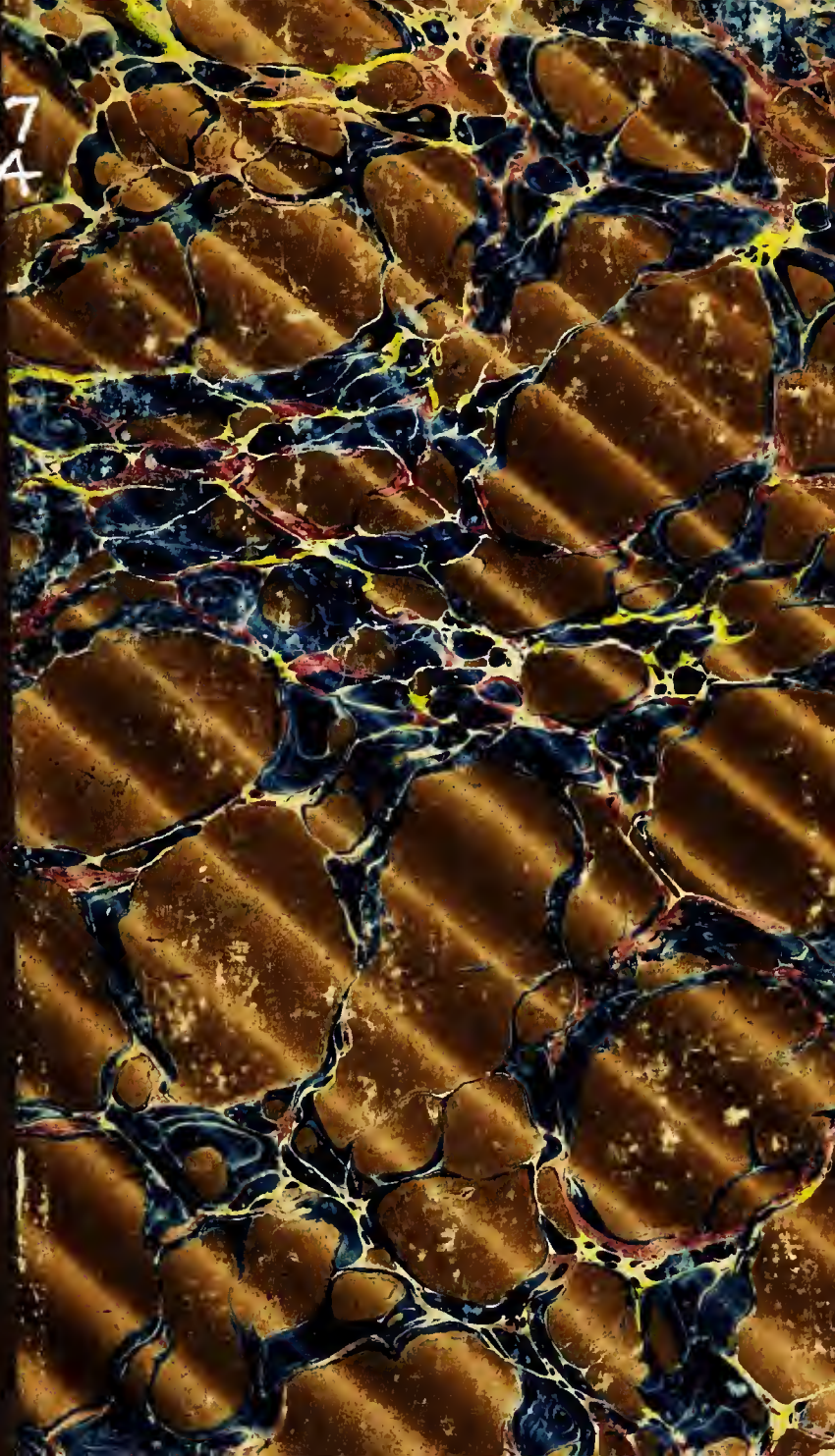


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*Shakespearean
Commentary*





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Shakespearean
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SHAKESPEAREAN

COMMENTATORS

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SOME SHAKESPEAREAN COMMENTATORS.

IF William Shakespeare is to go—there go with him lofty societies patronized by Royalty, with long lists of titled Vice-Presidents; vested rights in archaeological picnics, commemorative dinners and junketing tours to Stratford-on-Avon; volumes of learned “transactions,” “discoveries,” papers read and ordered printed; not to mention whole copyrights and stocks in trade of hundreds of eminent commentators! A few forgeries more or less, like Ireland’s, Collier’s, or Cunningham’s can be hushed up. But if everybody is to be allowed to rummage around, asking troublesome questions about this Stratford boy, there is no knowing what may turn up. The interests are too immense to be jeopardized by a few “crakit folk.” No wonder there is panic among the authorities: that they have issued their ukase that William Shakespeare is not to be looked into too closely! But the world outside—that hug to their hearts this Shakespearean Drama—tremble not at the prospect. To these, each consideration of the genesis and origin of that Drama, is an interest the more, instead of an interest the less, in its study; a contribution to, rather than a subtraction from the great body of its exegesis. Nor will they be loth to clear away the laborious rubbish which indiscriminate conjecture and commentary have piled up—covering Dramas, Text, authors, and editors alike, under a dusty mass of dilettante guesswork and silly surmises.

THE MIRACLE.

The very few critics of an anti-Shakespearean theory who succumb not to the temptation of popping off yet once more the antique ordnance kept shotted and primed for destruction of "Baconians" and "Baconian Theories"—the very few who appear to recognize that History and Facts can not be silenced by demonstrating that Francis Bacon could not or did not write certain random morsels of the plays—insist that the whole Shakespearean phenomena is so marvelous that we should accept it as a Miracle; that is, as a miracle undoubtedly should be accepted—standing and in silence. This sort of cloture has been often worked before, and often successfully. You are not to examine miracle B. because it is a part of miracle A. You must not ask how stars shine and snows fall, because those phenomena are parcel of the great miracle of the universe, of life, and death and reproduction. The trick is something rusty. It is beginning to work clumsily.

This English Renaissance was not a revival of letters merely. It was much more. It was a revival of Thought. Art, Philosophy, Science, Commerce, Society, all partook of the afflatus, as well as Letters. All these and their subdivisions shared in the marvelous reaction of this marvelous Elizabethan age. Of this great Renaissance, what we call "Shakespeare" was and is the most permanent expression. And Ben Jonson may compete forever with Marlowe, or Nashe with Greene, or Beaumont with Dekkar for front rank as playwright or dramatist, without affecting the calm of that majestic epitome of Elizabethan Thought we call the Shakespearean Drama. Mere literature is

not and can never be a thing to stir and shake the human heart. The history of mere literature shows that it has been invariably a thing ruled by the transient taste of a day or cycle: the "tune of the time," as Hamlet said of Osric's flourishes. Often the temporary taste of the cycle has been put in the custody of one man or one clique, whose firmans were ratified, and whose bulls respected by the mass in thankful silence. The thing is even now and then attempted in this nineteenth century. Some months ago I read a paper by Mr. Frederic Harrison on "The Choice of Books." I read it to the end, and laid it down with the feeling that there could be no such thing as "a choice of books" if the advice of gentlemen like Mr. Harrison was to be followed. We would simply have to read the books they selected and be done with it. I may be doing Mr. Harrison an injustice, but, at this moment, the capital impression I remember to have received by his advice, was—that we were simply to go on reading Walter Scott indefinitely. I once had an edition of Walter Scott on my shelves for seventeen years, and the only use ever made of it to my knowledge, was, on one occasion, when a gentleman disagreed with me as to whether a certain incident occurred in "Guy Mannering" or "the Antiquary." My friend took down one of those volumes and I the other, and we flipped over the leaves for a catchword, exactly as we would have used an encyclopedia. I could not help contrasting Mr. Harrison's effort with Carlyle's address, "On the Choice of Books," on the occasion of his installation as Lord Rector of the University of Edinburgh in 1866, in which that incomparable old man

mentioned no books at all, but insisted that, under healthy conditions, whatever a man's appetite most craved, *that* he should read the most of.

I think a paper "On Sham Admiration in Literature," by Mr. James Payn, which appeared somewhat later than Mr. Harrison's effort, in the *Nineteenth Century*, comes much nearer than Mr. Harrison's to the truth in these matters. Mr. Payn writes of those excellent people who, having heard that "Paradise Lost" is magnificent, and "Rasselas" charming, are fond of diverting conversation to literary subjects in order to advance those opinions respectively. Most of us would be ashamed to confess that our knowledge of "Paradise Lost" is mainly derived from the selections in the "Fourth Reader" and "Sixth Reader" of our schoolboy-hood. My own familiarity with "Rasselas" entirely consists of the first paragraph (repeated to me long ago by an old gentleman of seventy, who declared it the finest sentence in the English language) and of the tradition that it was written to defray the expenses of somebody's funeral. I suppose a man could not be acquitted of murder on the ground of hereditary insanity on it being established that his grandfather read "Rasselas;" but how if the accused himself could be proved to have read it? And so with Pope, Addison, Crabbe, Young, and the rest of those volumes which no gentleman's library should be without. We are not perhaps honest enough to admit that nothing less than a mental aberration would find us opening one of them, but I am inclined to believe that such is the case. To tell us what to admire is the cant of the mutual admiration society. The society where A. edits the works of B., and B. edits

the works of A.; where C. apostrophises the genius of D. and D. apostrophises the genius of C.; where A., B., and C. write anecdotes of and "evenings with" D. E. and F., while D., E., and F. write anecdotes of and "hours with" A., B., and C.; where each compiles selections from the writings of all the others, and where the young lady friends of the whole alphabet prepare from their volumes "birth-day books" and "leaflets," and moral maxims for the kindergarten press. Even the soil of free America is not unconscious of specimens of the like of these to-day; and no soil or cycle yet has been entirely free from them.

But there was once—not one nor two, but near three centuries ago—a book written that does not sleep quietly inurned on our bookshelves, with its epitaph in the Catalogue of English Classics. A book that no schoolmaster advises us to read and no censor tells us to admire. It did not catch the temporary ear of its day and century. It overshot the century after it. The "ladies of quality" of Mr. Joseph Addison's day yawned over Hamlet, and simpered over Macbeth "When will the dear witches enter?" But to-day this book is our horizon, "the horizon beyond which, at present, we do not see." The indifference of the seventeenth century was bad enough. The impudent patronage of the eighteenth century was bad enough. The homage of the nineteenth is well enough. But the curiosity of the nineteenth!—that must be stifled at all hazards! But I doubt if it can be stifled by the cry of "Miracle." The world has a habit of moving in this last quarter of the nineteenth century. We have a way of cross-examining witnesses and of demanding proof before yielding assent even to what

our ancestors implicitly believed. The days of the solar spectrum and stored electricity are scarcely days for accepting the fact that a thing was believed in our nursery times as competent warrant for never disturbing it. Is all progress, improvement and light to be monopolized by the physical sciences, while every other department of human reason remains chained to the pillar of authority?

This call for the previous question, at an early stage of the debate, is really reducible to two propositions, both of which have been fired at us before—viz :

1st. If there is any ground for disturbing the presumption as to William Shakespeare now, it has always existed and would have been discovered before.

2d. There is no use in raising the question at this late day. We have the Great Book, that is enough.

1. As to the first proposition, it might suffice to remind this gentry that there was a time when even gravitation waited to be discovered. But it may be as well to dispose of their position more explicitly. If these Plays were real estate they would undoubtedly have long since belonged, by the common-law rule of adverse possession, to their claimant. But there is no statute of limitations as to matters literary; no lapse of acquiescent time, after which one must cease to gaze for the font of inspiration. The presumption that the world was flat did not quiet Galileo. And the presumption—for a time “so long that the memory of man runneth not to the contrary”—cannot quiet the title of even William Shakespeare to a literature not his, if it should, by any chance, be found not to be his. The myths of William Tell and Pope Joan and Prester John and the man in the moon “passed

unquestioned" for quite as many centuries as the Shakespearean title was "passed unquestioned." But it would be traveling backward to begin making oath to them to-day.

2. Those who believe that there is no use in asking for the author or authors of the foremost literature of the world have no call indeed to pursue the question. For those who believe differently, no task is so congenial, even if they go solitary and alone in the pursuit.

The closest examination of this Shakespearean question need not injure the character and standing of William Shakespeare. A butcher's apprentice, who ran away from poverty and the village constable; entered a profession the law abhorred as vagabondage; and, in the days when money was scarce and accumulation slow—with a wife and growing family on his hands to support meanwhile—became, by toil and thrift, rich and prosperous; dying the local great man of the village whence he stole away in breach of ban—would have been a man of character and standing if he had never written a line.

HEMINGES AND CONDELL.

It was the publication of the first folio in 1623 which actually raised a Shakespearean Myth. The question dates from the day that volume left the press. That it was not agitated then, but lay dormant for two hundred and thirty-seven years, is certainly remarkable. But it may be accounted for. The contemporaries of Heminges and Condell were not literary controversialists or textual critics. They and the ages that followed were entirely indifferent to the Shakespearean treasury. They did not debate the

origin of a diamond they supposed a bit of broken glass. If our motives for investivating the genesis of the Plays had existed in 1623, the controversy would have begun then. We need not doubt that.

There was certainly incongruity enough on the face of Heminges and Condell's selection. Of thirty-six Plays known as William Shakespeare's in his lifetime, they printed only twenty, or scarcely more than half. Of seven plays contemporary with this list (to only one of which, on its appearing in a second edition, was William Shakespeare's name ever attached) they included all. They added one play which belonged to a rival company to Shakespeare's (Lord Strange's Players) and which was performed in his lifetime at "The Rose" theater, an establishment that competed with the Globe; one that first appeared five years after Shakespeare's death, and eight that were never known before their appearance in this First Folio. (The discrepancy between these figures and those of the Table on page 289 of the "Shakespearean Myth" arises from my following here later authority than Mr. Grant White, to whom I am indebted for the figures tabulated there. The result of each is the same. Thirty-six plays in the First Folio, and sixteen rejected or doubtful.) Heminges and Condell thus bring their list up to thirty-six, the number of Plays claimed, or suffered to be called Shakespeare's, in his lifetime. But it is nothing like the same list. "William Shakespeare" had been a well-known name in London seven years before. It had been signed to a dedication addressed to a noble Lord. Had there been an *Athenæum* or a *Saturday Review* in those days, we need not doubt that they would have called on

Heminges and Condell to give their reasons for discarding substantially one-half of what had passed current as "Will Shakespeare's Plays," for so many years. Nevertheless, this Heminges and Condell list of thirty-six plays begins and continues to "pass unquestioned." It certainly does contain, has always been admitted to contain, the *best* of the plays included in the lifetime list of Shakespeare. Are not the Shakespeareans, then, entitled to claim, as proved, the proposition that this selection of Heminges and Condell was accepted by contemporaries and has stood the closest application of modern textual criticism—in other words—that it stands sustained by both the INTERNAL and the EXTERNAL evidence?

If the Shakespeareans are permitted to plead a Literary statute of limitations (perhaps overlooked by Littleton and Noy), then unquestionably the answer is Yes. But let us see what the answer would be should this plea be overruled. If the limitation be overruled, it will appear:

I. That the plays REJECTED by Heminges and Condell HAVE "passed unquestioned" as William Shakespeare's from that day to this.

II. That the plays RETAINED by Heminges and Condell HAVE NOT "passed unquestioned" as William Shakespeare's from that day to this.

These propositions sound bold. To demonstrate them completely would be to write a history of Shakespearean criticism from 1623 to 1882. But the truth of the first proposition appears from the fact that, in order to make the Shakespearean canon thirty-seven plays instead of thirty-six, the Shakespeareans themselves have invariably drawn from this rejected list the

extra Shakespearean play required. Sometimes this play is "Sir John Oldcastle," sometimes "The Two Noble Kinsmen," but usually it is "Pericles." Indeed it would require considerable search to find a modern edition of "Shakespeare" that does not contain the "Pericles" at least. Mr. Hudson's new "Harvard" edition retains both "The Pericles" and "The Two Noble Kinsmen," making Mr. Hudson's particular "canon" thirty-eight plays. The truth of the second proposition appears from the fact that no Shakespearean has yet arisen willing to accept the Heminges and Condell list as final. Almost unanimously they have rejected one of the list, the Titus Andronicus. Even Theobald and Malone rejected one of the three parts of Henry VI., in which their successors mostly agree with them. Mr. Spedding and the new Shakespeareans reject the Henry VIII. In this way five have succumbed to criticism, while some of the latest editors have declared that at least six of the First-Folio list must be forever discarded.

WILLIAM J. ROLFE.

Mr. William J. Rolfe disposes of the Shakespearean Myth as follows: (1.) "These works were published as his (William Shakespeare's) and were generally believed to be his both in his lifetime and after his death." And again, (2) "That this man's name was William Shakespeare we have no good reason to doubt." (We have transposed the order of these two sentences.—*Literary World*, February 25, 1882, p. 59.)

(1.) Admitted. (2.) It would not be very difficult to prove that Mr. William J. Rolfe for one, has (or claims to have) "good reason to doubt." For he is

the editor of a most excellent expurgated edition of the Plays, in which he throws out, expurgates, and discards not only words and sentences, but whole scenes included in the Heminges and Condell first folio. And it is equally apparent that Mr. Rolfe unhesitatingly accepts the two propositions we have noted in Roman numerals above; for not only does he reject whole handfuls of the first folio's text—showing that the plays retained by Heminges and Condell *have not* “passed unquestioned” as William Shakespeare's (which was Proposition II.) with himself at least; but he says (in a review of his fellow-commentator—Hudson's Edition of 1882 (*Literary World*, December 5, 1881, p. 400): “The editor has done well to include the ‘Two Noble Kinsmen,’ which has a better claim to a place than ‘Titus Andronicus’ to say the least. ‘Pericles’ he gives in full.” Whence it appears “that the plays rejected by Heminges and Condell *have* ‘passed unquestioned’ as William Shakespeare's” (which was Proposition I.) with Mr. William J. Rolfe, at all events. But Mr. Rolfe knows that he has the utmost right to query and disbelieve, and to select a “Shakespeare” for himself. All his predecessor commentators have done the same, and he is entitled to the perfect license of his school. What editor yet has felt under any conscientious obligation to accept either the Lifetime List or the Heminges and Condell List as “Shakespeare?” Not one. The Second Folio was a revision of the First. The Third, in 1663, contained “seven plays never before printed in Folio.” The Fourth, in 1685, also included them. Rowe, in 1709, did the same; but his publisher, Tonson, added a volume of poetry (edited by Sewall, containing

“Venus and Adonis, “Tarquin and Lucrece,” but no sonnets) to Rowe. Pope, in 1725, throws out the seven Plays but retains the poetry selected by Tonsen. In 1766, Stevens printed twenty Plays plus the Sonnets and “The Lover’s Complaint:” that is *his* “Shakespeare.” Neither Johnson, in 1765, nor Johnson and Steevens, 1773 (a second edition in 1778), nor Malone, in 1790, include either these seven “doubtful” plays or the poems or sonnets. Malone subsequently became the greatest manufacturer of “Shakespeares” ever known. (We have only to scratch a Shakespearean fact to-day to find—Edmund Malone.) As a beginner—and timid, he added a supplement to Steevens’s edition of 1778, containing the seven “doubtful” plays, and all poems and sonnets. He was willing Steevens should have them, though, as yet, delicate about standing their sponsor himself. (Steevens himself accepts “Pericles” as a compromise, in his edition of 1803.) But, in 1821, Mr. Malone has waxed bold. His “Variorum” of that year (known, par excellence, as “THE Variorum,”) contains EVERYTHING.

Long before this date (1821) the editors had become legion. We have not mentioned Theobald (whose honest and discriminating work is yet appealed to), Hanmer, Warburton, Capell, and others. Since that date it would require a volume to enumerate them, and several to follow the vagaries of their selections among the two lists of plays. Not only have more modern editors drawn and rejected from each at will, but have taken from the Second Folio of Beaumont and Fletcher (1679) a play, “The Two Noble Kinsmen,” which they declare “a good enough

‘Shakespeare’ till after election” at least; and unhesitatingly bind up in standard editions.

If there is any such thing, then, as a Canon List of Shakespearean Plays it is a periodical Canon List. Nor is there yet any intimation of its becoming final. When the average student of Shakespeare comes to understand that the volume before him is—not what William Shakespeare suffered to be called his; not what the two fellow-actors named in Shakespeare’s Will declared was his; but simply what the particular editor of that particular volume chooses to label “Shakespeare”—then this average student, we say, will be well on the road to comprehension of the fact that this “Shakespearean Myth” is not a sick man’s dream, or a midsummer madness; nor yet a nineteenth century chimera; but a doubt dating from the days of William Shakespeare himself. The Shakespearean genesis will then become to him a study collateral with the study of the Text itself; and he will be unable to pursue either study without the other, with either safety or profit.

Instead of insisting that Shakespeare and the Shakespearean authorship have “passed unquestioned,” and that there “is no good reason to doubt,” in the premises—in the teeth of their own acts and admissions, and when every step they take is a confession of the very doubt of which they deny the existence—would it not be better and more honest for the Shakespeareans to admit—what almost everybody knows already; viz: that “Shakespeare” is simply the label they have agreed to attach to whatever their commentators shall from time to time pronounce to be the *best* of the Elizabethan plays?

COMPARATIVE CRITICISM.

Mr. Rolfe thinks my failure to grasp the Internal Evidence of Authorship is due to a sort of color blindness. Perhaps it is. ~ But I fail, at this moment, to recall any very startling successes of comparative criticism. Comparative criticism does not point with pride to its performances in the Ireland case; and, had it not been for Mr. Hamilton's microscope and acids, it might be still in doubt as to the Perkins folio, and the labor of "the old corrector." Nobody denies the proposition that a letterless clown could not successfully forge the style of a master of English. But we are not yet convinced that the converse is not true, and that the master of English could not successfully forge the style of the letterless clown. Thackeray did clever work in this latter line in joke; and it might be possible in earnest. At any rate, the list of services rendered exact truth by the unsubstantiated verdicts of comparative critics is not yet so extended as to warrant us in accepting their own assertions as to the final character of their pronouncements. I do not understand Mr. Rolfe to assert that the Instrument of Evidence, known as "cross-examination," is "mere trickery and sophistry" (though his words admit of that construction); but only that upon application to a Shakespearean question—this Instrument becomes "mere trickery and sophistry." I have no doubt that, if Mr. Rolfe were ever accused of larceny, he would be very grateful for, and speak very respectfully of, the cross-examination that would expose the perjury of his accusers. Further down (*Lit. World*, Feb. 25, 1882), Mr. Rolfe quotes the opening sentence of one of my paragraphs to prove my "con-

tempt" for "internal evidence." If it had happened to be Mr. Rolfe's purpose to show that my "contempt" (the word is his, I should have chosen one less strong) was—not for "internal evidence," but for the inconsistent readings of it by Shakespeareans—each Shakespearean construes it for himself and no two of the constructions agree—they elect no spokesman—he would have quoted the remainder of my paragraph. But that did not happen to be his purpose at the time.

THE POEMS.

The same inequality appears among the poems assigned to William Shakespeare, that so puzzles among the plays.

The space between Hamlet and Titus Andronicus is not greater than that between the magnificent "Venus and Adonis" and "Lucrece" (published in 1593 and 1594 respectively), and the "Passionate Pilgrim," "A Lover's Complaint," "Lampoons," "Epitaphs," etc., which followed them—all assigned to William Shakespeare. The dedication of "Venus and Adonis" and "Lucrece," by their putative author, to Southampton, raised a ray of hope. Southampton was a well-known name in the chronicle and record of these time, and the continued connection of that name with the shadowy name it was sought to localize, was a most welcome foothold of solid ground from which to survey plays as well as poems, and nail a name to each. But, unfortunately, after these two dedications, Southampton's name disappears forever from any neighborhood in which William Shakespeare figures, and the closest historical scrutiny fails to trace any relations or negotiations between them.

The next poetical matter under the name "William Shakespeare," however, does appear under circumstances which give us at once a presumptive clue to the character and value of the name "William Shakespeare" attached to any literature of this age. In 1599 is printed a collection of disconnected short poems, sonnets, or verses, under the title "The Passionate Pilgrim, by William Shakespeare." Among the verses are one or more by Thomas Heywood, a verse by Marlowe, three sonnets by Barnefield, and another by Griffin. Heywood appears to have been the only one of them who cared to complain of the piracy. He did protest, however, and upon a third edition (the second cannot be found) the name of "William Shakespeare" was removed from the collection. Such a transaction, to-day, would suffice to throw a reasonable doubt over anything bearing the detected name, and it is difficult to believe that it did not suffice then. Griffin, Barnefield, and Marlowe, or their friends, appear to have acquiesced in the matter, and Mr. Grant White, though forced to admit that "no evidence of any public denial on Shakespeare's part is known to exist," does not appear to see that the performance throws the slightest doubt or question upon a name associated with the fraud. But Mr. Grant White is no more artless than his fellow-commentators, none of whom—so far as we know—lay any stress upon, or suggest any explanation or "white-wash" for this affair of the "Passionate Pilgrim." We shall see by how simple a process Mr. Malone recovered himself from this stumbling-block, later on. In 1609, other poetical matter, consisting of one hundred and fifty-four stanzas, in sonnet form, is printed

under the name, "Shakespeare's Sonnets, never before imprinted." Two of these stanzas or Sonnets had been, however, "before imprinted" in this very "Passionate Pilgrim" as to which such grave charges of piracy were made at the time. This collection of Sonnets is printed by one Thomas Thorpe, who makes the entry, "20 May, 1609. *Tho. Thorpe, a book called Shakespeare's Sonnets,*" in the Register of the Stationer's Company. Mr. Thorpe dedicates this collection to Mr. W. H., over his own initials, "T. T." From 1609 until 1838, Mr. Thorpe's word was taken for it that these were "Shakespeare's Sonnets." But in or about that year, on reading them, it was discovered that these Sonnets were not Sonnets at all, but stanzas forming one connected poem. Up to that time the dozens of learned gentlemen who, since 1766, had "edited" these "Sonnets," do not seem to have believed it necessary to read them!

BEN JONSON.

As to Ben Jonson's poem, the contradiction lies, not in the fact that he related certain familiar anecdotes of Shakespeare to Drummond, of Hawthornden, as Rolfe (*Literary World*, February 25, 1882, p. 59), seems to infer, but that, in his "Discoveries," Ben enumerates all the great authors of his time, and never once mentions Shakespeare. Surely it can not long escape remark that Ben's deliberate enumeration of his illustrious contemporary writers, not only does not include even the name of "William Shakespeare," but deliberately hands over to another (Francis Bacon), the laurels he had once hung on Shakespeare's brow; laurels which people who only read Ben's poetry believe are hanging there yet.

EDMUND MALONE.

If there was anything in the nature of a doubt as to William Shakespeare, Mr. Edmund Malone was the man to clear it up. No difficulty could daunt him, and he saw nothing that he did not conquer. To prove that William Shakespeare, of Stratford, and he only, wrote the plays and poems, it is only necessary to prove *when* he wrote them. When you know the year in which a man wrote a thing, you know at once that he *did* write it. Mr. Malone proceeds at once to construct his celebrated "Chronology," with the result we partially append. That it may be appreciated at a glance we suggest that the reader group it in a tabulated form, of which the second column shall give the year in which William Shakespeare wrote the play named, and the third, the way in which Mr. Malone discovered that year. As for example :

NAME OF PLAY.	DATE ASSIGNED BY MR. MALONE.	MR. MALONE'S REASONS FOR ASSIGNING THAT DATE.
Merry Wives of Windsor.	After Raleigh's Return from Guinea, in 1596.	Because in Act II., Scene 3, occur the words, "Sail like my pinnacle to these golden shores."
Tempest.	1609.	Because Sir George Somers was wrecked on the Bermudas in July, 1609.
Merchant of Venice.	1594.	Because Portia says, "Even as a flourish, when true subjects bow before a new-crowned monarch."
All's Well that Ends Well.	1606.	Because of a (fancied) allusion to the fanaticism of the Puritans.
Henry V.	Between April and Sept., 1599.	Because of an allusion to Essex's advance in Ireland, in the chorus to Act V.
Coriolanus.	1609 or 1610.	Because most of the other plays have been reasonably referred to other years, and therefore this play might naturally be ascribed to a time when he (S.) had ceased to write, and was probable unemployed; and partly from the mention of the mulberry tree by Volu- mina—the white variety of which was introduced into England in 1609—though other varieties had been introduced previously.
Henry VIII.	A short time previous to the death of Elizabeth.	From the prophetic eulogium on Elizabeth in the last scene; and from the imperfect manner in which the panegyric on her successor is connected with the foregoing.

The curious reader, armed with Mr. Malone's works, can construct such a table at his leisure, and will enjoy the results. This Malone chronology has been something pieced and clipped by commentators since, but those familiar with the subject know that it is still substantially the one quoted and accepted by them all.

Mr. Malone disposes of the "Passionate Pilgrim" affair by the still simpler process of quietly removing the verses by Heywood, Marlowe and Barnefield, and restoring William Shakespeare's name to the whole, where it remains to this day. By an oversight, it is true, he neglected removing the sonnet by Griffin; which likewise remains to this day, a part of the "Passionate Pilgrim by William Shakespeare." But it makes no sort of difference to anybody. Mr. Malone explains to us that, since the sonnets were dedicated to "Mr. W. H." (which, every body can see, stands for "Earl Southampton") the sonnets also were written by William Shakespeare. And so every thing is lovely, and there is no discrepancy anywhere.

Mr. Malone's efforts to set every thing right have always been most ably seconded by gentlemen like Mr. Grant White and Mr. Dowden, who write histories of William Shakespeare's "Mind and Art;"—and who show (by intricate analysis of their subject) the easy stages of that Mind, from Titus Andronicus up to Hamlet. Mr. Dowden's, especially, is a most delightful book. He shows the development of William Shakespeare's mind and character, and his "moral progress," as traced in the plays thus chronologically arranged. "When Hamlet was written, his will had been tested; he had been reached and

touched by the shadows of some of the deep mysteries of human existence. Somehow a relation between his soul and the dark and terrible forces of the world was established," etc., etc. We venture to suspect that Mr. White and Mr. Dowden are gentlemen who keep bank accounts and collect their rents, and regulate their worldly affairs by common sense, and reason sometimes backward from effects to causes. Perhaps it is not to be expected that one should bring to bear on a Shakespearean question quite the same quality of "horse sense" by which he governs his daily and household affairs. If it were, it might have occurred to some of this gentry that a man, who, prior to 1593, had written "Venus and Adonis," was not quite the man—some five years later, in 1598—to have perpetrated the blood-thirsty drivel of "Titus Andronicus"—and even less could have (as some of the more artful of the Commentators suggest) consented to "touch it up," and allow his great name—the honored and ambitious name of the author of "Venus and Adonis" and of the "Lucrece"—to stand sponsor for a farrago of trash.

JAMES FREEMAN CLARKE.

The moral of Mr. Malone's career is, evidently, that Dates are terrible things. But even his frightful example has not deterred other gentlemen from attempting to write history without them. The very last of these appears to be Mr. James Freeman Clarke, who was so unfortunate as to contribute to the *North American Review*, in February, 1881, a paper entitled: "Did William Shakespeare write Lord Bacon's Works?"

Poor Mr. Clarke probably would never wish to hear of his unfortunate essay again: would be thankful if he could only accelerate its oblivion. Nor can we blame him. It was bad enough to be misled by a quotation at second hand of one of Bacon's letters (for that Mr. Clarke would garble the letter to suit his own purposes nobody imagines) and to make Bacon confess that he was writing his own works in 1623 "by the help of some good pens that forsake me not;" whereas, if Mr. Clarke had been at the trouble to turn to Bacon's letter (Bacon writes it to Tobie Mathew in 1623) he would have discovered that the "certain good pens" (they were Thomas Hobbes, George Herbert, Ben Jonson and Dr. Rawley), were not *writing*, but *translating* Bacon's works into Latin, under his supervision in that year. This, we say, was bad enough; but to rush into print with the conjecture that William Shakespeare could have been one of the "good pens" employed by Bacon in 1623, seven years after his (William Shakespeare's) funeral in 1616, was a blunder that must be terrible for Mr. Clarke to look back upon. We will let Mr. Clarke's mare's nest die as gently as he himself could wish. But it is a frightful example indeed of what may happen to the man who forgets his Dictionary of Dates, in writing of accessible men and times.

HENRY N. HUDSON.

Mr. H. N. Hudson gives four reasons why Bacon could not possibly have had any hand in the text of the Plays, viz:

1. Bacon's ingratitude to Essex was such as the author of *Lear* never could have been guilty of.

2. Who ever wrote the Plays of Shakespeare was not a scholar. He had something vastly better than that—but he had not that.

3. Shakespeare never philosophizes. Bacon never does anything else.

4. Bacon's mind, great as it was, might have been cut out of Shakespeare's and never been missed.

As to No. 1. I once had the temerity to exclaim—"Conceive of the man who gave the wife of his youth an old bedstead, and sued a neighbor for malt delivered, penning Antony's oration above Cæsar, or the soliloquy of Macbeth debating the murder of Duncan; the invocation to sleep in King Henry IV. or the myriad sweet or noble or tender passages that only a human heart could utter!" But I was speedily silenced by a Shakespearean critic, who assured me that men often wrote down their best sentiments and acted on their worst.

As to No. 2. Most of Mr. Hudson's contemporary Shakespeareans not only claim that the author of the plays was "considerable of a scholar," but show us exactly how he became one. That he knew, or guessed something of the law of gravitation, of the circulation of the blood; had studied the Geneva translation of the Bible, owned a "Florio" and so on.

As to No. 3. Most of us were under the impression that the author of the plays did sometimes philosophize, at any rate, that he made some of his fools (Lear's perhaps) philosophize.

As to No. 4. If the question should happen to be "Who was Shakespeare?" or "Who was the author of the Plays?" Mr. Hudson's No. 4 would be a very transparent begging of that question.

DR. INGLEBY.

To Mr. Hudson's four reasons, Dr. Ingleby adds a fifth, viz:

No. 5. Bacon excelled all writers of his day in prose. But the very best of the verses attributed to him (not all his, by the way) are fourth rate; while Shakespeare's verse is every-where incomparably better than his prose, and he thus excelled where Bacon most faulted.

This is another thrust at that unhappy "Paraphrase of the Psalms." This paraphrase is indeed doggerel. Is it altogether impossible to suppose that Bacon INTENDED it to be doggerel? Bacon believed in bringing all things to all men, and in the good of everything. The smallest atom of investigation, the least incident in life or manners, was considered in his philosophy. That was his *Novum Organum*, his new method. He believed in the Drama, he laid down rules for planting kitchen gardens. He neglected no details, however trivial. These Psalms were to be sung by congregations in churches. They were, being doggerel, more nearly "up" to the comprehension of the congregations they were written for, than if they had been in the elegant and sententious English of which Bacon was master. At any rate he did not write them for the court. He did not lock them up in Latin, and leave them by his testament "to the next ages," nor give any reasons for believing that he thought them immortal. But even suppose that he did not intend them to be doggerel! They are, as they stand, no worse doggerel than Sternhold and Hopkins, and their successors made, in attempting to put the stately idiom of the Hebrew

Scriptures into jingle it was never expected to fit. I confess that, for one, I can discover no reason—in what we know to-day of Francis Bacon—for believing that he could not see the difference between the style of his “Essays” and the style of his “Paraphrase of the Psalms,” quite as clearly as those comparative critics, the Shakespeareans, can see it. And, if there is any doubt as to whether he could or not, then I think that Francis Bacon’s contributions to the world’s stores, and his services to science, at least entitle him to the benefit of the doubt. Mr. Tennyson has not scorned to write much that has been pronounced most abject doggerel (such as “Hands all Round”), and to print it side by side with all the magnificent poetry that has preceded it from his pen. Very few great men have lived who have not nodded sometimes, as well as “bonus Homerus,” and it is only matter of speculation whether they nodded “a purpose,” or because they could not help it. At any rate, we do not let their nods destroy their godlike moods. The Shakespearean commentators spend their lives in telling us that “absolute” means *complete*, and “definement” *definition*—that “trace” means *follow*, “nomination” *naming*; that “bonnet” means *a cap*, “meed” *merit*, “fit” *convenient*, and so on by the hundred pages.* They are so emaciated by

* These “commentaries” are taken at random from Mr. Rolfe’s edition of Hamlet. But, as that edition is prepared for schools, perhaps it would be fairer to select some other. In the Valpy edition of Macbeth before us, we find the following:

“In the great hand of God I stand.” } NOTE.—“*Hand*” means “*power*.” (Act II, scene I.)

“Our fears in Banquo * * * and in his royalty of nature.” } NOTE.—“*Royalty of nature*” means “*nobleness of nature*.” (Act III, scene I.)

microscopic analysis of the "tune of the time" which Osric sung, that the atmosphere of a theory as to the sources of the thought and insight of Hamlet is too tonic for them. As a rule, Shakespearians answer all anti-Shakespearean arguments by looking the other way. But, now and then, some of the bolder commentators, like Mr. W. J. Rolfe and Professor Taverner, peep through their fingers into Delia Bacon, or Smith, or Holmes: absorb an atom or so of their objections (say about one-eighth of one per cent): rush into print, confute that atom, and assure mankind that they have exploded the anti-Shakespearean case. Accordingly, Mr. Rolfe has assured us that any contemporary testimony against Shakespeare was "ill-natured;" and Professor Taverner has demonstrated that the songs in the plays and Bacon's edition of the Psalms of David scan quite differently—cannot be sung to the same tunes—and that the cœsura occurs in different places in each. No doubt these gentlemen suppose they have settled matters forever. But to anybody who has ever had occasion to weigh probabilities and look facts in the face, their labors are scarcely worth smiling at.

If Bacon had any hand in the Plays, it was undoubtedly with their Text that he had to do. Nobody, so far as I can learn, has ever suspected him of their stage editorship. It is said that, if he ever had anything to do with the plays, he was most

"Of sorriest fancies your companions making." } NOTE.—"Sorriest" means "most melancholy." (Act III, scene II.)

And where Macbeth calls his wife "dearest chuck," we are told by the learned editor in his foot note, that "dearest chuck" is "a term of endearment!"

astoundingly indifferent to them afterwards. He could not well have been more indifferent to them than William Shakespeare was, if *he* had any thing to do with them. The author and proprietor of thirty-six plays, grown rich by their presentation, seems to have had no personal effects in his great house at Stratford, at his death, save a second best bed and bedclothes.

THE WASHINGTON POST.

The *Post* (Washington, April 24th, 1882) says:

“The author makes the gigantic and incomprehensible blunder common to the controversialists, of reasoning by analogy. When it is remembered that the forty-two plays are without parallel in any literature; that the author, whoever he was, showed a profound unconsciousness of their stupendous value, it may be assumed that the workings of that mighty intelligence can have no parity with any writer or any mode with which the world is acquainted. * * * The result of his (my) labor is that the author, like the plays, has no parallel, which is cheerfully conceded.” I might retort that, if these “forty-two plays are without parallel in any literature,” it is hard that the Shakespeareans will only allow us to call thirty-seven of them “Shakespeare:” and I might claim that the premiss rather than the “result” of my labors was “that the author like the plays, has no parallel.” But, since the gravamen of this criticism is evidently that I reason “by analogy,” let us look a little into this statement.

The work is devoted to an examination of such records of the Ages of Elizabeth and James as run into any neighborhood of William Shakespear, his

theaters, his witnesses, or the plays called his. The only analogies I remember in the work are those drawn between William Shakespeare and Bunyan and Burns respectively. Each of these two latter was a genius. But, in each of them, it is claimed that there can be traced—nay, has been traced—the color given to his genius and his work, by his individual circumstances, studies and surroundings. Since we do know pretty accurately the circumstances and surroundings, if not the studies, of William Shakespeare, I am tempted to quote a few lines from Mr. Herbert Spencer's "Study of Sociology" (p. 34) for the benefit of the *Post's* accomplished critic, rather than attempt a demonstration of my own. "True, if you please to ignore all that common observation, verified by psychology teaches," says Mr. Spencer, "if you assume that two European parents may produce a Negro child, or that from woolly-haired prognathous Papuans may come a fair, straight-haired infant of Caucasian type, you may assume that the advent of the great man can occur any-where and under any circumstances. If, disregarding these accumulated results of experience which current proverbs and the generalizations of psychologists alike express, you suppose that a Newton might be born in a Hottentot family; that a Milton might spring up among the Andamanese, that a Howard or a Clarkson might have Fiji parents, then you may proceed with facility to explain social progress as caused by the actions of the great man. But if all biological science, enforcing all popular belief, convinces you that by no possibility will an Aristotle come from a father and mother with facial angles of fifty degrees; and that out of a tribe of cannibals,

whose chorus in preparation for a feast of human flesh is a kind of rhythmical roaring, there is not the remotest chance of a Beethoven arising—then you must admit that the genesis of the great man depends on the long series of complex influences which has produced the race in which he appears, and the social state into which that race has slowly grown. If it be a fact that a great man may modify his nation in its structure and actions, it is also a fact that there must have been those antecedent modifications, constituting national progress, before he could be evolved. Before he can re-make his society, his society must make him. *So that all those changes of which he is the proximate imitator have their chief causes in the generations he is descended from.* If there is to be any thing like a real explanation of these changes it must be sought in that aggregation of conditions out of which both he and they have arisen. But if we were to grant the absurd supposition that the genesis of the great man does not depend on the antecedents furnished by the society he is born in, there would still be the quite sufficient facts that he is powerless in the absence of the material and mental accumulations which his society inherits from the past, and that he is powerless in the absence of the co-existing population, character, intelligence and social arrangements." The sentence I have put into italics seems to meet the difficulty the *Post* experiences with my "analogy."

THE TRIBUNE.

The *Tribune* (New York, November 25, 1881) says:
"It would require a very diligent search to find anywhere in literature a better example than this work

(‘The Shakespearean Myth’) affords of which Mr. Herbert Spencer calls ‘Bias.’” I incline to believe that what Mr. Spencer means by “Bias” is the sort of incubus which a man’s particular creed or party, caste or special education may be allowed to raise, to squat upon and weigh down his reason, so that it cannot perform its functions; rather than that particular ex-parte function which an advocate uses in summing up the merits of one side of a case. But, if the latter is the sense in which the *Tribune* prefers the word, then I may reply, that I think it would require a still more “diligent search” among the methods laid down for ascertaining the facts on any given case, to find one surer and safer than this very same “bias.” We fail to see of what value the decision of the most competent tribunal could well be, unless preceded by the fullest and most exhaustive argument of each side. An honest advocate must necessarily possess a “bias” for his own side. He can well leave the other side to the “bias” of his learned and courteous opponent; and both will contribute quite as much, and be quite as entitled to their share of the merit of the righteous outcome of the trial, as the judge who delivers the judgment or charges the jury for its verdict. It seems to me that the only indictment the honest advocate need fear, is that of a slovenly, or half-hearted or feeble presentation of the side assumed by him or entrusted to his care. Let him only be faithful and diligent, and he can well afford to leave the responsibility of the decision to the court that have heard the “bias” of each side and weighed between them. I do not think the Shakespeareans should raise this cry. They certainly have had ample

time to present their side. Their "day in court" has lengthened out to over two centuries. They surely do not propose to confess, at this late day, that they have half-heartedly, feebly and imperfectly presented their own case, or feel incompetent to be entrusted with it further!

The statement of the *Tribune*, that "nothing can be more obvious than that Mr. Morgan really believes his book to be an essay in criticism," when that book not only contains no word of criticism, but expressly, and in so many words, waived any attempt at criticism, awakens, in a sincere mind, a doubt as to whether the ninth commandment has any jurisdiction over the book reviewer who, to quote Mr. Huxley, "acquires his knowledge from the book he judges—as the Abyssinian is said to provide himself with steaks from the ox which carries him."

THE AMERICAN.

The *American* (Philadelphia, November 26, 1881), says: "Mr. Morgan's solution is the heroic one. He can not untie the knot, so he cuts it. He believes that William Shakespeare availed himself of the work of playwrights, which reached the stage door in those times as now, and adapted them for representation. They were not the work of a single hand; but through ingenious handling, much as Mr. Bouccault has worked in his day and generation, they acquired a family likeness." This is the suggestion of an Editorial Theory. But why "A Theory?" Does anybody, in his senses, believe that these plays were never "edited" until the commentators took hold of them? That they passed instanter from the author's hands to

the boards of the playhouse and the mouths of the actors? Plays, to-day, in the United States, where there is no stage censorship, can hardly reach the stage without at least a re-reading or a rehearsal, either by their authors or by somebody else. But in Elizabeth's day it was not only improbable, but *impossible* for a play to reach, even its first rehearsal, without the very closest official scrutiny.

Indeed, it is difficult to see how—as they stand in our modern editions—these particular plays could have been performed at all in Elizabeth's day. One of Elizabeth's first enactments decreed that no plays were to be performed wherein “either matters of religion or of the Government of the Estate of the Commonwealth shall be handled or treated,” a statute which would seem very effectually to shut out the presentation of the Shakespearean Drama. And, in this policy, Elizabeth, in whatever else she wavered, persisted to the end of her reign. She would not allow her own preachers to dwell on topics on which she was not consulted beforehand;—and there is a well-known story of Dean Knowell, who preaching before her majesty at St. Paul's, touched severely on the subject of the use of images in public worship. “To your text, Mr. Dean,” shouted the Queen, “to your subject.” These plays, as we now have them, to have flourished under Elizabeth's eye, must have received some very judicious lopping and pruning at their earlier rehearsals. Not only the politics, but their other abstruse speculations, must have been kept in the background for Elizabeth's audience. To suppose that Elizabethan audiences went to their theaters to listen to philosophical and classical discussions,

or to doubt that they would have hooted the metaphysicians off the boards, and tossed the learned Thebans in blankets, is to misread the history of the English stage. That several of the plays did go through a stage-editor's hands is apparent enough, even from our popular editions. In "Measure for Measure," "Love's Labor Lost," "As you Like It," "Merry Wives of Windsor," etc., we find songs inserted that are readily traceable to sources outside of the text. And these were probably not the only plays that underwent stage preparation. Many of the anachronisms, historical and geographical blunders, suggest themselves as blunders occurring in the course of this editorship rather than as belonging in the text. For example: in "Julius Cæsar," Act II, Scene 1, the conspirators at Brutus's house are made to disperse at the striking of a clock. This is cited as an anachronism of Shakespeare's, and perhaps it was. But the striking clock is a stage exigency, and is evidently introduced as a signal for the dispersion of the conference. For, in the text, a few moments before, Brutus is seen endeavoring to ascertain the time by the position of the stars—

"I cannot, by the progress of the stars,
Give guess how near to day,"

which he certainly would not have done if there had been a clock in the room. The same hand, probably, did not write both text and stage direction. And so the gunpowder at the siege of Troy is a stage effect (a mere discharge of musketry, behind the scenes, to indicate, at the proper place in the text, that a battle was in progress). And these,

too, are evidently to be distinguished from the learned errors of the text. Such errors might be committed by a scholar writing hastily from memory, but are not mistakes of an ignorant man. When, in the "Midsummer's Nights Dream," for example, the classical king Theseus is confounded with the mediæval duke of that name—that is the pen-slip of at least a reader of history, quoting from memory—just as Bacon wrote "moral philosophy" when he meant "political philosophy," or "Moses's rod that budded" when he meant Aaron's rod, as any other man might slip with his pen. A compiler, with a book of reference at his side, would have put it down correctly. In "Antony and Cleopatra," Charmian suggests a game of billiards. But this is not, as is supposed, an anachronism, for the human encyclopedia who wrote that sentence appears to have known—what very few people know now-a-days—that the game of billiards is older than Cleopatra.

A few years ago Mr. Boucicault brought out, at Booth's Theater in New York, a play he called "Venice Preserved." It was a modern play, in which, indeed, Otway had a great share. But, if I recollect aright, besides Otway, Mr. Boucicault had very skillfully interpolated a soliloquy from Manfred, and numerous points from writers more nearly contemporary. Is there not a suggestion here of how William Shakespeare might have worked? In the days when members of Elizabeth's parliament, coming from different countries, could not comprehend each other's dialect; when the recruits for Elizabeth's armies could not understand the word of command unless pronounced by officers from their own neigh-

borhood;—a Warwickshire peasant lad writes two poems in the purest and most limpid English—the English of the court to-day. If textual criticism could show that the author of the plays was a native of Warwickshire, that would be only a small step towards proving his name to have been William Shakespeare. It is sometimes claimed that this step has been securely taken; because Warwickshire names and the Warwickshire dialect has been found in certain passages of certain of these plays. For example: In the “Merry Wives of Windsor,” and in the “Induction” to the “Taming of the Shrew,” a large proportion of the characters are made to bear Warwickshire names: such as Ford, Page, Evans, Hugh, Curtis, Ely, Oliver, Sly, “Marion Hackett the fat alewife of Wincott” and the like; and that certain expressions—such as “make straight” (meaning make haste), “quoth” (meaning “went”), “me” (meaning “for me”), “old” (for frequent), and the like, are Warwickshire usages and known in no other part of England. But, most unfortunately for this discovery, these wonderful plays are quite as rich in all the other British dialects, argots and provincialisms, as they are in Warwickshire. And these argots and dialects are, as a rule, used in the proper localities. “The Merry Wives of Windsor” use Warwickshire words, indeed; and the names of the personages in the plays are Warwickshire names, but it is because Windsor is in Warwickshire, not because William Shakespeare was a Warwickshire man. In this very “Induction,” where one of the Commentators, (Mr. King) fondly insists that only Warwickshire is spoken, Sly says to the hostess “I’ll pheeze you, i’ faith.” “I’ll pheeze”

is Norfolk for "I'll torment or harass you," "I'll put you in a passion." And not only do these plays deal in all the English dialects, but if their author or authors had had one of our modern "Dictionaries of the Provincialisms used in Shakespeare" at their elbows, they could not have been more accurate in distinguishing nice shades of meaning in these argots. For instance: the Scotch have a local word "*braid*," meaning "impudent," "forward"—and quite another, "*braided*" meaning "wrinkled or creased," as when kept folded on a shelf or in a closet (whence, naturally, *second-hand* and, afterwards, *cheap*). This distinction is used most accurately in the plays. Diana uses the first in "All's Well that Ends Well" when she says:

"Since Frenchmen are so braid
I'll live and die a maid—"

while the clown in "Winter's Tale" uses the second, when he asks Autolycus if he "has any *unbraided* wares." This phenomena of the dialect (as to which treatises and dictionaries have been—and are yet to be—written), is only one more of those constantly recurring features in this Drama which forces this editorial theory to the front, to aid—if it can—in the solution of the mystery before us. That it satisfies more of the difficulties than any other so far suggested, is, some think, apparent. But, whether William Shakespeare did or did not speak Warwickshire, he probably did not speak all other known British dialects. The condition in life implied by a man's employment of one patois, would seem to shut out the probability of his possessing facilities for acquiring half-a-dozen others. And to suppose that the

rich owner of the Globe theater, in enjoyment of an income fast approximating to \$25,000 a year, wrote every line, exit, entrance, dot, comma and pen stroke of the plays mounted on his boards, is to harbor, at least, some very crude and simple notions of men and of affairs.

THE WESTMINSTER, SATURDAY, AND BRITISH QUARTERLY
REVIEWS.

These three Reviews seem to agree that "The Shakespearean Myth" proves too much; since, if the anti-Shakespearean case fails as to Bacon, it fails altogether.

The question is, however, not what "The Shakespearean Myth" proves, but what facts and the record prove. These Reviews do not allege that the "The Shakespearean Myth" contains a misstatement of fact or an erroneous citation of the record. Even if it did, it could hardly be more unreliable than the Shakespearean biographies, which—while complaining of the scantiness of contemporary material—will not print what there is, but only such selections as make for their own ideal Shakespeare: as, for example, when they give us an item from Dominic Ward's diary to the effect that William Shakespeare in retirement furnished his theater with "two plays a year," but draw their pens through the next entry on the page, to the effect that he died of over drink. Neither is it apparent how, if the anti-Shakespearean case fails as to Bacon, it fails altogether—unless the process is as follows: If William Shakespeare did not write every word of the Dramas, then Francis Bacon wrote them. But Francis Bacon did not write some

of them—ergo, Shakespeare wrote every line of them—Q. E. D.—which may be satisfactory to some minds, but does not appear to be pure syllogistic reasoning. Surely, our Protean Shakespeareans can not be allowed to accept the Baconian theory to fight off anti-Shakespeareans, and the anti-Shakespearean theory to fight off the Baconians. The anti-Shakespearean theory, to be exact, ought to precede the Baconian or any other unitary or positive theory. Before the name of Bacon or of anybody else can be placed on the title page of the Plays, destructive criticism must remove the name of William Shakespeare. I am not a Baconian and never can be. But when these Shakespearean authorities announce that a penniless and briefless young barrister, with a fluent and an itching pen, could not, by any possibility, have had any hand in the anonymous literature of his town and time—it still seems to me a most ridiculous assumption of Infallibility.

MR. HALLIWELL-PHILLIPPS' "OUTLINE."

It is gratifying, so soon after appearance of "The Shakespearean Myth," to find the greatest living Shakespearean (a gentleman who, in forty-five years, has printed two hundred and twenty-one monographs on Shakespearean themes) rejecting, for the first time, at least three of the propositions attacked in my work. But Mr. Halliwell-Phillipps (in his "Outlines of the Life of Shakespeare," just published), assumes that these three claims—never before omitted by a biographer—are groundless, viz:

(1.) That the "Venus and Adonis" could have been the first heir of the invention of a raw rustic

from Warwickshire, or could have been written by such an one, in Stratford-on-Avon, where the pronounced Warwickshire patois was exclusively employed. (Page 71.)

(2.) That the collection of Sonnets, published in Shakespeare's lifetime, could have been authorized by him, or was dedicated by him to anybody—to Southampton or to anybody else. (Page 150.)

(3.) That Chettle's apology for Green's expression of opinion on Shakespeare, was not in Chettle's interest, but in Green's, and affects whatever historical value attaches to Green's charges. (Page 68.)

Besides which, by preserving a complete silence as to the other stories shown, in "The Shakespearean Myth," to be baseless, viz: the autograph letter of King James; the Southampton loan of £25,000; Elizabeth's appearance on Shakespeare's stage; the volume of Montaigne's "Florio," and the like—Mr. Halliwell-Phillipps has had the honesty and courage to admit that not one of them has any contemporary foundation.

In the appended matter to his "Outlines," Mr. Halliwell-Phillipps gives the documents whose production was challenged in "The Shakespearean Myth." Here are the pleadings in all William Shakespeare's lawsuits; the bonds given and taken; the conveyances, deeds, leases, assignments, entries in the stationers' books; every item of record as to himself, his houses, investments, neighbors; from the minutes made of his baptism to the probate of his Will. Will any student of the Elizabethan remains—who has scoffed at a question as to the Shakespearean authorship as too baseless for investigation—read anew, as gathered

here, this chronicle of William Shakespeare, the man of affairs, of lawsuits, and of investments, and point out a hint of William Shakespeare, the poet, philosopher, and seer—the man who read the deepest mysteries of the human heart and reported them, in imperishable verse, for every age and clime?

THE IMPEACHED WITNESSES.

No cross-examination—not even that whose prospect so paralyzes Mr. Rolfe—could so effectually dispose of the Shakespearean witnesses as the Shakespeareans themselves dispose of two of them—John Heminges and Henry Condell. The Shakespeareans had already convicted them of falsehood, *i. e.*, in asserting that they printed the first folio from “the true original copies” (Shakespeare’s own unblotted manuscripts, in their own exclusive possession), when what they did in fact print from were the identical “stolen and surreptitious copies” against which they warned their readers—old fragments of quartos and tattered remnants of playhouse scores. And now Mr. Rolfe, and his authorities, Fleay, Furnivall & Co., charge them with the boldest and most unblushing forgery, in deliberately employing hack writers, to pad out the “Timon of Athens,” to fill gaps in the pagination of their First Folio—which padding Mr. Rolfe believes to amount to something more than three-sevenths of the play, as they printed it. (Rolfe’s *Timon of Athens*, Int. pp. 10–14.) But I cannot find that this rascality anywhere deters Messrs. Fleay, Furnivall, or Rolfe from accepting the testimony of this very firm of forgers and falsifiers whenever it tallies with their purpose to do so. If, as Mr. Rolfe complains, I have

ever shown any "contempt" in this business, it is for the procedure of gentlemen who will accept the deposition of a witness in one line and impeach it in the next, and then threaten with the straight-jacket and the mad-house, anybody who declines to swallow whole the product they manufacture out of this selected evidence (*Literary World*, Oct. 21, 1882). Fortunately for the Philistines, Mr. Rolfe and his friends do not control the mad-houses of the country, and could not send a kitten to one of them. But the threat is interesting, as showing the logical bent of their minds. To lock up those one cannot answer, is a happy thought, familiar as long back as Galileo and Giordano Bruno.

Mr. Rolfe is perfectly right in calling the Shakespearean witnesses "worthless fellows." There are not a dozen of them, all told; their written testimony would not fill one of these pages; it is impossible to verify it as quoted, or to find out whether they said it themselves, or whether somebody else said it for them. Still, such as it is, it is all the evidence we have. But it cannot be accepted (as Mr. Rolfe imagines) when pro-Shakespearean, and rejected as "ill-natured" when anti-Shakespearean. It must stand or fall by the rules which every nation, savage or civilized—which the whole world insists on; namely, that the witness who swears falsely in one thing, is apt to swear falsely in all; and that evidence is to be construed in accordance with, rather than dead against, human experience and the phenomena of Nature. If I have sometimes accepted the evidence of these "worthless fellows," as against Shakespeare, it is because it follows, as an irresistible corollary from the two above rules,

that the testimony of a man of bad reputation for veracity is preferable, when in conformity with experience, to the testimony of a better man, as against it. I make no doubt that even Mr. Rolfe would prefer to believe the veriest liar in his neighborhood, who swore that the sun set at the proper hour last evening, rather than the parson himself that it staid up all night.

It seems to me that only those who are afraid or ashamed to look into it, deny the existence of a reasonable doubt as to the Shakespearean authorship. But, if there is such a doubt, nothing can be clearer than that it will never be solved by the mutual admirationists, whose idea of Shakespearean research is to hail every guess of their predecessors and associates as a revelation, and who think the compilation of an inventory of these revelations down to date, plus one original surmise of their own, constitutes them writers of biography and Shakespearean authorities.

I believe that we are happily coming to the end of these gentlemen; that William Shakespeare is slipping out of their custody; and that a school of critics is arising who have the courage to look, and to say what they find. In Mr. Brander Matthews' "French Dramatists of the Nineteenth Century," which is, much more than its title implies, a careful Essay in dramatic criticism, I find, on page 282, this sentence: "Shakespeare and Moliere owed no small share of their success to their complete mastery over the tools of their trade; besides being the hack dramatist of his company, each was actor and manager, and had a share in the takings at the door." This is not, perhaps, as exhilarating reading as Dr. Ingleby's saxon, or Mr. Freeman Clarke's aerostatics, or Mr. Rolfe's

artless prattle as to the enormity of cross-examination, and general crookedness of lawyers. But I believe it is a shadow of what good things we may yet realize, if we live until the reign of Gush shall entirely yield to the reign of facts, of reason, and of common sense.

THE NEW YORK HERALD.

Contrasting with the efforts of those literary and other newspapers which propose to burke any question as to the authority of the works called "Shakespeare," and to freeze out the doubters at any cost, is the action of the New York *Herald*. That great daily devoted its columns for an entire month (September 6th to October 5th, 1874) to a discussion of the complete field. The *Herald* deserves nothing but praise from Shakespearean scholars, at least for its recognition of the truth, that it is no answer to an argument to say that similar arguments have been heard before—or that anybody can deny a proposition—and the like; and of the existence of a doubt as to whether the Shakespearean heretics can be dispersed by reading them the Riot Act to-day, however it might have silenced them twenty-five years ago.

APPLETON MORGAN.

ROBERT CLARKE & CO., PUBLISHERS.

Morgan's The Shakespearean Myth.

The Shakespearean Myth; or, William Shakespeare and Circumstantial Evidence. By Appleton Morgan, A.M., LL.B., author of "Law of Literature," "Notes to Best's Principles of Evidence," "Legal Maxims," "Anglo-American International Copyright," etc., etc. 12mo. pp. 342. \$2 00

Sent Postpaid on Receipt of Price.

This volume is devoted to an examination of the contemporary records, legal instruments, public documents and traditions of the years covered by the life and career of William Shakespeare. That the work is worthy of study and capable of consideration from any standpoint, we believe will appear from the following extracts from its reviewers :

"The book is a notable and interesting one, and we shall be greatly surprised if many of our readers are not smitten with curiosity to possess it, when we tell them the nature of its contents. . . . We invite our readers to see how much can be said on the tabooed question of the Shakespearean authorship by those who approach the question with competent knowledge and judicial impartiality. Mr. Appleton Morgan's examination of the question differs in some essential respects from that of Judge Holmes. The latter has written a work full of interest, partly critical, partly speculative, on the relation of Bacon to the Shakespearean drama, and he endeavors to prove that these dramas form a part of the great scheme of philosophy of which another part was given in the *Novum Organum*, and that the complete expression of Bacon's mind must be sought for in the pictures of life and character contained in these 'feigned histories' of dramatic poetry, as

well as in the more didactic and scholastic prose writings. Mr. Morgan looks at the question as one of evidence, as a lawyer accustomed to weigh facts and probabilities, and leaves larger questions untouched."—Mr. R. M. Theobald, in *The Nonconformist*, June 1, 1882.

"The theory certainly has grown in importance of late years. It is no longer flouted as impossible. It is admitted as ingenious, as possible, and even as highly probable by many persons who have gone carefully into the question. It is one of the many puzzles of history and literature which are full of attraction to certain minds. It is very doubtful whether the question can ever be definitely settled. Those, however, who feel inclined to make some little investigation for themselves into the matter, will find Mr. Appleton Morgan's volume exceedingly interesting. Whoever takes the trouble of going through it will find practically all the facts necessary to enable him to form his own judgment in the matter."—*Westminster Review*, April, 1882.

"Such works can be read only as strange examples of entertaining paradox; but we must say that in the present instance the paradox is well worked out and cleverly sustained, and persons who, in this age teeming with books really worth attention from educated men, have leisure for such amusements, may occupy some hours profitably in studying the theory of the 'Shakespearean Myth.'"—*London Saturday Review*, January 28, 1882.

"Under the title 'The Shakespearean Myth,' Mr. Appleton Morgan, who is known as a writer on the 'Law of Literature' and the 'Principles of Evidence,' has collected a large amount of evidence of various kinds to prove that Shakespeare did not write the plays attributed to him. He discusses the theory that they were written by Bacon alone, and the theory that they were written by Bacon and other literary men of that age. The decision to which he comes, and to which he brings facts, satire, criticism, and strong feeling, is that Shakespeare was the editor, and not the author, of the plays. The authors are unknown, but in all human probability Bacon was the chief of the group who wrote them. Shakespeare, the rough, uneducated wit, added the coarser and more popular characters and scenes, and it is doubtful whether these liberally edited works can ever be apportioned among the true authors. Mr. Morgan is an enthusiastic admirer of the Shakespeare plays; it is because they are to him the greatest work in all literature, the work 'that will be close to the hearts of every age and cycle of man, till time shall be no more,' that he can not believe

that they were written by one unlettered man, of whom so little is known. He declares that if William Shakespeare wrote the plays, it was a miracle. But he does not believe in such a miracle, and he finds that the miraculous element, and Shakespeare with it, disappears in the light of external evidence and historical research. The book is interesting, whether one agrees with it or not, summing up, as it does, all the doubts in the question that have for a hundred years been made public."—*Boston Daily Advertiser*, Vol. 38, No. 123.

“The book will interest Shakespearean students, whether they regard its paradox as honest or merely as an exhibition of the author's wide reading and controversial acuteness. It is in a measure a bibliography of Shakespearean literature.”—*Cincinnati Gazette*, November 15, 1881.

“Such an addition as this volume to the evidence in the case against Shakespeare is a noteworthy event in the literary world. . . . Mr. Morgan's book, gathering up in lawyer fashion the scattered threads of inconsistencies and improbabilities, is a valuable and welcome addition to the evidence in this controversy. . . . The questions raised long ago and now presented in form, make up an indictment which the Shakespeareans must break down by cogent explanations, or yield to the growing belief that, whether the “myriad minded” Shakespeare be metaphor or fact, he never wrote all that has come down the centuries as his, to rank his name with those of the immortals.”—*Pioneer-Press*, St. Paul, November, 1881.

“It must rank among the most notable of the attempts to prove that Shakespeare did not write Sbakespeare.”—*The Literary World*, Boston, December 3, 1881.

“It is part and parcel of the skepticism of the age which would pull down without the power of raising any thing of equal good in its place.”—*Inter Ocean*, Chicago, November 19, 1881.

“We repeat that those desirous of knowing something of the ‘Shakespearean Myth,’ now engaging the attention of literary men can not do better than to avail themselves of the aid which Mr. Morgan's book will give them.”—*The Register*, Sandusky, O., November 19, 1881.

“The volume before us excites in us no sentiment of resentment at what Shakespearean worshipers may think the ‘flat blasphemy’ of the

author, but only a feeling of mingled admiration and regret; admiration for the laborious research and ingenious argument; regret for the unavoidable failure attaching to such an enterprise."—*Sacramento Record-Union*, November 19, 1881.

"The key-note of Mr. Morgan's work, which seems to sum up his whole Shakespearean difficulty, is a sentence on page 114: 'The story that this boy (Shakespeare) ever stole deer is rejected as resting on insufficient evidence. But no evidence is required to prove his authorship of the topmost books in the history or the literature of England.'"—*Toledo Blade*, December 3, 1881.

"'The Shakespearean Myth' has bothered a good many people besides Mr. Appleton Morgan, but by none has it been examined more thoroughly and, we may say, candidly than by him in his work with that title published by Robert Clarke & Co."—*The Dial*, Chicago, January, 1882.

"A very concise, terse and decided style, that must be attractive to all readers who love to follow a man of strong convictions, with ability to give a reason for the faith that is in him."—*Intelligencer*, Wheeling, December 16, 1881.

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"A new reading of the old riddle. . . . Mr. Morgan does not use the study and comparison of the text as an argument, inasmuch as there are no other known writings of Shakespeare, and as he is trying to demonstrate, not who did, but who did not write the plays."—*Journal*, Indianapolis.

"No matter on which side of the controversy you stand, this work of Mr. Morgan is worthy of study. The author is an enthusiastic admirer of the great bard, and his book is an interesting addition to Shakespearean literature, as it examines and expounds the various speculations as to what Shakespeare really was."—*Dramatic Notes, Turf, Field and Farm*.

"It is an ex-parte examination into purely external evidence, such as history still affords us of Shakespeare's life and habits. The work has been cleverly if not convincingly done, and a perusal of Mr. Mor-

gan's work shows how well a skillful writer can mystify his readers on most any subject and make them almost question their own sanity. The subject is debatable. Mr. Morgan sums up all the arguments that can be advanced on his side of the question."—*Chicago Tribune*.

"Mr. Morgan's argument is ingenious throughout, and people fond of speculations of the kind can hardly fail to be entertained by it. . . . How many minds he may unsettle on one of the cardinal points of literature is problematical; possibly—the book has a pesky sense of reality—he may do a considerable work in that way." . . . —*The American*, Philadelphia, November 26, 1881.

. . . "An appeal to history . . . has led Mr. Morgan to the conclusion that what little is known neither substantiates the authorship nor indicates any qualities of head or heart which by any possibility could be the foundation for such a claim. . . . The Jonsonian testimony is made to read quite differently from what most readers suppose. . . . Every Shakespearean scholar should get the book and read it. . . . It has the further quality of presenting afresh, and concisely the substance of all the destructive arguments going before, slightly modified."—*The Interior*, Chicago, January 26, 1882.

"The admirer of Shakespeare, as well as the disbeliever in his authorship, will find pleasure in these pages, free and candid as they are in argument and agreeable in manner of diction. The different theories are all faithfully and fully reviewed."—*Alta California*, San Francisco, November 28, 1881.

"There is doubtless ingenuity, research and close writing in this volume. . . . The author aims, with a greater degree of logical—we might almost say legal—acumen, to establish, though with some modifications, the theory of Miss Delia Bacon, that the plays of Shakespeare were not really written by him, but that, as an astute theater manager, he obtained work from other hands and cunningly fathered it. Miss Bacon pushed her argument too rashly in favor of the complete authorship for Lord Bacon. Mr. Morgan is wider in his scope." . . . —*British Quarterly Review*, July, 1882.

"For cool literary impudence and effrontery Mr. Morgan's whistling down the wind Shakespeare's poems, "Venus and Adonis," "Lucrece," and the sonnets, is unsurpassed."—*The Critic*, January 14, 1882.

"A lawyer's argument against Shakespeare's authorship of the plays

which bear his name, not without cleverness and ingenuity. Such heretics as Mr. Morgan we would not answer. Were they not *in partibus infidelium*, America and Australia, we would have them conveyed away, secretly tried by a tribunal of the orthodox, when, unless reconciled, they might look for the *san benito* and the faggots.'—*The Academy*, London, September 16, 1882.

"As a matter of fact this work of Morgan's does not, except incidentally, belong in a biography of the Shakespeare-Bacon controversy. Logically it precedes any such literature. It should be studied before, rather than after, the works of Bacon, Smith, Holmes and Thomson, all of whom believed that Lord Bacon had the lion's share in the composition of the plays."—*Madison State Journal*, July 22, 1882.

"A brief against Shakespeare. . . . If we dwell upon the lawyer-like attitude of Mr. Morgan toward the question he discusses, it is only because that attitude determines the whole character of his work. . . . Mr. Morgan examines the several 'extra Shakespearean' theories, and expounds each at some length, defending all of them in their denial of Shakespeare's capacity to write the plays, and ends by suggesting the superiority of what we may call the editorship theory, namely, that William Shakespeare was the editor, not the author, of the plays, whether originally they came from one or from many hands."—*The Tribune*, New York, November 25, 1881.

"To those who are not posted on the true nature of these apparently wanton attacks on the fame of Shakespeare, Mr. Appleton Morgan's papers may command an historic interest apart from their no less distinctive character as curiosities of literature."—*Kinderhook Rowlyh Notes*.

