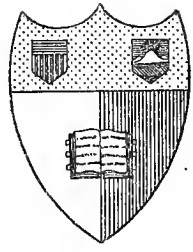


The Grimaldi Shakspere.

NOTES AND EMENDATIONS

ON THE PLAYS OF

SHAKSPERE,

FROM

A RECENTLY-DISCOVERED ANNOTATED COPY

BY THE

Late *JOSEPH GRIMALDI*, Esq.,

COMEDIAN.

N.B.—These Notes and Emendations are Copyright, and must not be used by any Editor in any future Edition of Shakspere.

Shakspere's and Nature's words lay hid in night,
Anon Grimaldi comes, and—"all is right!"

LONDON:

Published by J. RUSSELL SMITH, 36, *Soho Square.*

M.DCCC.LIII.

The Grimaldi Shakspere.

THE discovery of the important volume which, I believe, is destined to give its name as a prefix to all future editions of Shakspere, was the result of a happy accident. It has peculiar value at the present time, inasmuch as it exhibits new and original readings of the poet, which have never been hinted at before—readings which are so singularly correct, emendations displaying such great judgment, and corrections so obviously proper, that they have only to be promulgated to be received and welcomed by all but prejudiced scribblers, who dare not use them. The *new lines*, which appear as manuscript insertions here only, must be accepted with unfeigned joy and deep gratitude as the heaven-born inspirations of the greatest genius the world ever saw. No future edition of Shakspere can ever dare to appear without all these additions and corrections; and as they are all copyright, and may not be used by any one but me, it follows that the Bard is in future my private property, and all other editors are hereby "warned off;" but it is not very likely such misguided labourers will appear after this warning; if they do, they will be stigmatized as all such "trespassers," deserve.

I feel that I have but one rival, and that one is Mr. Thomas Perkins, who lived about 1660, "there or thereabouts;" and who must have been a Scotsman, as he evidently possessed the power of "second sight," looking into futurity so wondrously

that he wrote with his own hand emendations in the text of his folio which were first invented by the scholars of the succeeding century. I have no enmity towards this clever man; on the contrary, I believe I shall be found a staunch supporter of his new readings and general views; and I only hope I shall obtain the same support from his admirers that I so willingly accord this gentleman.

Taking a leaf from the book of the learned man who has consented to act as his dry-nurse in the world of letters, I first announced my discovery in the pages of an eminent literary journal.* It is like Mrs. Inchbald's, "a simple story," and may be thus repeated.

The plays of our immortal Bard, banished from the fashionable part of our metropolis, had found a home among "the wise men of the east," and I had determined to see what sort of lodging Mr. Phelps had given them at Sadlers Wells. My zeal "outran the pauser reason," and I reached the theatre much too early; I therefore strolled towards Islington to occupy the hour which must elapse before the doors would open. Pausing at a book-stall, my eye fell upon a grim old folio, a mere bundle of dirty leaves, without a beginning or end. I took it up—could it be?—my heart leaped at the hope!—yes, *it was*—the players' edition of Shakspere. I asked the price. "Two and sixpence," replied the bookseller, "as it's a biggish book." It was plain he could not read, and knew not its value. That, however, was not my business; giving him no time for reflection I paid the money, seized the book, rushed into the first cab unhired, and got safe off with my prize. Sadlers Wells was forgotton—the Globe on the Bankside filled my imagination. I blundered to my study in the darkness, lit my lamp, and then for the first time discovered that the book had been the property of the late Joseph Grimaldi, for many years resident in Spa

* See the 'Literary Gazette,' July, 1853, *not* the 'Fourpenny Exterminator,' which is rabid in defence of my rival, and regularly burkes opponents.

Fields, where he died. There, in the original handwriting of the great clown was the inscription which I here copy in facsimile.

Dear reader, are not the letters positively *riant!* do they not bear impress of the joy with which the volume has been owned—of the pleasure taken in the labour bestowed upon it! Turning over the leaves, what sunbeams seemed to shine from them! Grimaldi, with true sympathetic genius, had corrected the typographical blunders left and made by the players. Here, in the writing of old Joe, were ten thousand emendations that had puzzled all previous commentators. I commence my specimens with the two I have already published. *Mercutio* describes the chariot of Queen Mab, as

"Drawn by a team of little atomies."

The corrupt text is thus corrected in the Grimaldi folio:—

"Drawn by a team of little *attornies*."

And when we remember how attornies can and will draw, the correction flashes on us with the light of conviction.

Again, in *Macbeth*, one of the witches says—

"The rump-fed ronyon cries."

But who can doubt the integrity of Grimaldi's pen?—

"The rump and onion fries."

There is a very curious variation in our copy of the same play, the propriety of which cannot possibly be doubted. The first line, instead of being

"When shall we *three* meet again?"

is printed thus:—

"When shall we *thee* meet again?"

or, in other words, when shall we meet again with thee?

This seems better grammar than the old reading; though, on the other hand, it may be said that the letter *r* has dropped out at the press. It is easy to account for it in this way, but who is to prove the fact? We repeat that our copy reads *thee*.*

As a specimen of the strong common-sense of the comments by immortal Joe, and of the elisions which he has made in the text with an amount of taste and judgment only equalled by "Perkins" himself, I give the dialogue between Malcolm and the Doctor in *Macbeth* (act. iv, sc. 3), which alludes to the mysterious royal gift of healing diseases by touch.

"*Malcolm.* Comes the king forth, I pray you?

Doctor. Ay, sir; there are a crew of wretched souls,
That stay his cure: their malady convinces
The great assay of art; but at his touch,
Such sanctity hath heaven given his hand,
They presently amend.

Malcolm. I thank you, Doctor. [*Exit* Doctor."

This passage is altered in our amended copy by the substitution of *gulls* for *souls*.

"There are a crew of wretched *gulls*
That stay his cure."

The blundering confusion in the next sentence is at once got rid of, as well as the rest of the speech, by drawing the pen vigorously through the whole; and so ending the scene with Malcolm's polite acknowledgment to the medical practitioner of Macbeth's household. The long speech which follows his exit, and in which is contained a tiresome descant on this foolish and exploded belief, is treated in the same summary manner; the pen-marks across the lines are remarkably strong and vigorous, and can only be properly understood by a facsimile of the entire page, which I had at one time an intention of giving. I content, myself, however, with the marginal remark appended to these important castrations,

* It is highly important to note these kinds of variations. A similar curious instance is pointed out by Mr. Collier on the word *lands* in the *Comedy of Errors*, where he observes:—"In Lord Francis Egerton's copy of the first folio the word is printed *lans*, as if the letter *d* had dropped out; but it is inserted in the Duke of Devonshire's first folio, having been corrected in the press."—*Collier's Shakespeare*, vol. ii, p. 153.

which conveys with singular terseness and force the corrector's estimate of the passage.

Macbeth has received much attention from Grimaldi. He has not only corrected the text but has added minute stage directions, of the most important and elucidatory nature. Thus in the famous scene where the Thane exclaims

"— is this a dagger which I see before me?"

Grimaldi has written in the margin, opposite that line, "Dagger hanging, O. P.;" which, for the benefit of non-professional readers, I may say means that a dagger must be suspended above Macbeth and opposite the side where the prompter is stationed, and where the actor stands, in order that the meaning of his alarm may be at once apparent. I trust our eyes will never more be offended by staring at vacancy when this scene is acted at the theatres; for why are we not to see the dagger as well as Banquo's Ghost, both being equally the result of the Thane's "evil conscience;" and common-sense requires that the audience should see what Macbeth sees, to fully comprehend and appreciate histerrors.

In *Hamlet* we have another valuable instance of the attention paid to stage effect, and again feel the great value of the commentator's practical mind. In act iii, sc. 4, where the Prince is surprised by the sudden appearance of his father's spirit, the following piece of what is technically called "stage business" is noted for his use,—

i.e., throw the chair down upon which Hamlet has been seated, which will add to his apparent consternation, and produce a startling effect upon the audience. It is remarkable that this is an antique stage-tradition, and the frontispiece to *Hamlet*,

in Rowe's Shakespeare, 1709, exhibits the practice, so that we have no doubt it was handed down from the time of the dramatist himself, who may also have taught the grave-digger to "make the groundlings laugh," by pulling off twenty waistcoats, a practice which has improperly ceased of late years, but which we hope our indignant remonstrance may again revive.

We have noted many other alterations in *Hamlet* of a very important and voluminous kind; but their nature requires that they be given *in extenso*, inasmuch as they tend entirely to remodel the character. One line may be a clue to the whole: in the fencing scene, the Queen exclaims,

"Our son is fat and scant of breath;"

it is therefore evident, says Grimaldi, that the part should be played like that of Falstaff with "stuffing," or else what becomes of the sense of these words—the mere *common-sense!* There is little doubt that the great success which attended the Dramatist's creation of the part of Falstaff, induced him to repeat the character in a new light, and the many and judicious alterations made by Mr. Grimaldi in the play, as well as some few private notes in the margin, go to prove, that he had been carefully studying the part, hoping one day to give his version to the public. This would indeed have been a novelty—*une grande solemnité théâtrale*—as our French neighbours say of such events; nor, would it be without a precedent; Lord Lansdowne altered the *Merchant of Venice* in the reign of William the Third, and gave the part of Shylock to the famous comedian Dogget, who was always received in it with shouts of joyous laughter. We hope to see a similar restoration of *Hamlet* to Thalia, "a consummation devoutly to be wished;" and we can imagine the rich treat that awaits an audience who will have the chance of seeing a first-rate comedian like Paul Bedford rolling about the stage in this absurd fencing-match, puffing like a grampus as Laertes pursues him, pricking his fat-sides with a rapier. Then the grimaces over the poisoning, and the general death of all the characters—*à la Bombastes*—will be the *acmé* of comicality.

Indeed, the only fault, if it be fault, in these emendations, results from the naturally cheerful temper of Mr. Grimaldi: the *vis comica* peeps out ever and anon throughout the volume. Thus, when Ophelia is singing her snatches of song,

> "How should I your true love know,
> From another one?
> By his cockle hat and staff,
> And his sandal shoon,"

he has altered the verse thus,—

> "How should I your true love know,
> From another lady's *beau?*—
> Oh, by his cockle hat and staff,
> *Which when you see will make you laugh.*"

Ophelia, probably, in her distracted state of mind, has mixed up in her imagination a real pilgrim, with some absurd representation of the said genus in a *bal masqué*, at which she may have heartily laughed in happier hours. We should, however, have had some objection to receiving this emendation as final had it not been singularly elucidated in the "Perkins" Shakspere as edited by Collier, a volume that singularly corroborates Grimaldi, as the great pantomimist sometimes corroborates it. There, in the midst of a tragic scene of the utmost solemnity occurs a grotesque line, spoken by the Duke of Gloucester to King Henry,—(*King Henry VI*, Part 2, act ii, sc. 3)—

> "*K. Henry.* Stay, Humphrey, duke of Glo'ster: ere thou go,
> Give up thy staff; Henry will to himself
> Protector be: and God shall be my hope,
> My stay, my guide, and lantern to my feet;
> And go in peace, Humphrey; no less beloved,
> Than when thou wert protector to thy king.
> *Qu. Margaret.* I see no reason, why a king of years
> Should be to be protected like a child.—
> God and king Henry govern England's helm:
> Give up your staff, sir, and the king his realm.
> *Glo.* My staff?—here, noble Henry, is my staff:
> As willingly do I the same resign,
> As e'er thy father Henry made it mine:
> And even as willingly at thy feet I leave it,
> As others would ambitiously receive it."

The two latter speeches Mr. Perkins imagines, and Mr. Collier declares, ought to be arranged as rhyme by a series of what he terms "judicious changes," including an "important addition," and so we get the passage thus:

"*Qu. Mar.* I see no reason why a king of years
Should be protected, like a child, *by peers*,
God and king Henry govern England's helm:
Give up your staff, sir, and the king his realm.
Glo. My staff?—here, noble Henry, is my staff:
To think I fain would keep it makes me laugh.
As willingly I do the same resign,
As e'er thy father Henry made it mine."

This noble line, which we print in italics, we ought, in Mr. Collier's words, "to welcome with thankfulness, as a fortunate recovery and a valuable restoration!" of a line written by Shakspere himself!!

Fortunately the Grimaldi Shakspere gives another instance of the use of this line, which has hitherto unaccountably been omitted in every edition of the Poet's works, but which must have been a favorite with him. In Prospero's speech, *Tempest*, act v, sc. 1, in which he determines to give up his "rough magic," he says—

"——— I'll break my staff;
Bury it certain fathoms in the earth.
And deeper than did ever plummet sound
I'll drown my book."

The whole of this passage is properly a stage "tag," and ends the simple action of the early part of the scene with four lines of rhyme, thus:—

"——— I'll break my staff;
To think I fain would keep it makes me laugh.
Bury it certain fathoms in the *ground*,
Much deeper than did ever plummet sound."

We recommend with confidence and pleasure this important restoration of a lost line of England's greatest bard; and so opposed are we to any desire to keep it to ourselves, that we cheerfully offer it to Mr. C. or any other editor of Shakspere, hoping that no future edition may appear without it, and no editor be rash enough to omit the line wherever it occurs

either from prejudice or fear. We give this up cheerfully, though, unlike Lear, we cannot "give up all."

We hope, however, it is distinctly understood that Mr. Grimaldi had no desire to improperly make Shakspere's characters "amusing." Far from it! Like Mr. Perkins, the great annotator of 1660, he frequently tried the contrary. Any violation of sense was painful to the distinguished pantomimist who gave meaning to "Tippety Witchet." Mr. Perkins (Collier, p. 44), very properly objects to Froth's nonsense (*Measure for Measure*, act ii, sc. 1), about "an open room being good for winter,"* but he does not attempt to correct Elbow's absurd *parlance* deficient alike in grammar and common sense. This Mr. Grimaldi does, with much judicious labour, and with singular propriety, when we consider the solemn nature of the drama which is totally unfitted for buffoonery of this kind. As we have the noble play now "emended," it goes on in stately monotony to the end, and is a very strong proof of the good taste of the corrector, who, though so fond of his joke, that his name was felicitously punned upon as "Mr. Grin-all-day," was evidently prepared at any time to sacrifice his leading propensity at the altar of propriety.

The famous curds-and-cream emendation of Mr. Perkins (Collier, p. 35), which has excited some stupid ridicule from the thoughtless, is corroborated also by Mr. Grimaldi, who has restored a lost line in another play of the Bard's. In the *Merry Wives of Windsor*, act ii, sc. 3, the Host says to Dr. Caius:—

"I will bring thee where Mistress Anne Page is at a farm-house a feasting, and thou shalt woo her. Cried I aim, said I well?"

This passage has been thoughtlessly taken as a common conversational phrase well understood by Shaksperian critics.

* He proposes to read "good for *windows*," that is, having plenty of such articles. But does this not suggest another reading? Might not such a room be considered "good for *glaziers*." Shakspere is often fond of verbal jingles.

Not so. Mr. Collier has discovered that the error "is at once set right by the manuscript-corrector;" and he remarks:

"The truth seems to be, that the Host, having said that Anne Page was feasting at a farm-house, in order still more to incite Dr. Caius to go there, mentioned the most ordinary objects of feasting at farm-houses at that time, *viz.*, *curds and cream;* 'curds and cream' in the hands of the old compositor, became strangely metamorphosed into *cried game*—at least this is the marginal explanation in the corrected folio, 1632. The Host, therefore, ends his speech about Ann Page's feasting at the farm-house, by the exclamation, 'Curds and cream! said I well?'"

In the *Winter's Tale*, singularly enough, the great Joe furnishes us with an important line where one is wanted to complete the sense, and in which this rural delicacy is named. The Old Shepherd (act iv, sc. 3) blames Perdita for not playing the hostess at the feast as his "old wife" used to do, who

> ——— "welcom'd all; serv'd all:
> Would sing her song, and dance her turn: now here
> At upper end o' the table, now i' the middle;
> On his shoulder and his; her face o' fire
> With labor; and the thing she took to quench it,
> She would to each one sip."

But "the thing" itself is never mentioned, and the characteristic prolixity and perspicuity of the speech destroyed by the omission. Happily this can never occur again, unless the copyright act deter poachers from the Shakspere preserve which our annotated copy makes our own private property. This is the way we have the passage, and we may again hint that it is our own copyright:

> "——— the thing she took to quench it
> Was *curds and cream*, which in a flowing bowl
> She would to each one sip."

This noble line is unquestionably Shakspere's, and is another proof added to the many of his simple tastes, and ardent relish for country life and farm-house pleasures, which he always possessed throughout his career; getting money in London merely to spend it in Stratford, and gladly exchanging the metropolitan sky-blue for the curds and cream of the Warwickshire farm-houses, where the last news from London

conveyed by his lips would be a welcome return for the primitive delicacies he loved so well.

We think it will now be clear that such readings as these must in future appear in all editions of Shakspere, except those edited by such persons as have "no right" to use them, and thus "*adhere of necessity to the antiquated blunder, and pertinaciously attempt to justify it.*"

There is a passage in *Richard III.* which has hitherto been received as the genuine reading. The "First Gent." says to Gloucester when he stops the funeral cortege of Henry VI,

"My lord, stand back, and let the coffin pass."

A few moments consideration will show that this cannot be a correctly expressed line. Coffins are denied volition, and he must have used other words to make his meaning clear—such as "let the *bearers* pass"—but we are fortunately saved all conjecture, by the true reading appearing in our Grimaldi folio of 1816, by which it appears the entire line as it generally stands is a printer's error. The line of type has dropped out in moving the form (no uncommon occurrence in a printing office) and the ignorant mechanic in trying to repair his fault has made it what it is. This is what it should be:

"My lord, stand back and let the parson cough."

This new reading fortunately requires no defensive arguments when we remember that the clergyman had been walking bareheaded and slowly through the streets of London; and that common politeness required the "First Gent." to save Gloucester, also a gentleman, from an unguarded approximation to his explosive lungs.

There is another passage in this play, which by the simple omission of a comma has been much altered in its significance. It occurs in the speech of Ratcliff (act v, sc. 3), when he abruptly enters the tent of Richard and answers his query "who 's there" by

——— 'tis I. The early village cock
Hath twice done salutation to the morn."

The query, when once put by Kemble, was answered thus:

My lord 'tis I the early village cock.

The actor who thus replied has been subjected to much absurd odium. Like many a thinking man, he was in advance of his time. Grimaldi restores the passage, and points it as we print it, omitting the next line, and making all easy. It is in fact an appropriate and beautiful bit, quite in character with the alternation from grave to gay, so characteristic of the great bard, and which was never better displayed than in this instance. Richard has started full of the horrible remembrance of the ghosts, and with looks of utmost alarm has interrogated the abrupt intruder; who at once, with amiable presence of mind, reassures the King that "all is serene" by the cheerful jocularity of his response. We put it to the theatrical world whether the effect of this undoubtedly correct reading might not be considerably heightened if Ratcliff's face was whitened, but that is a point for managers to settle.

I have just said that this is the "undoubtedly correct reading." I should not have used so strong a term had I not taken much pains, in every way, to confirm my view. I have not depended on books alone, or on the fact of this reading having once appeared upon the stage; but have inquired through a living channel of stage tradition, which puts it past a doubt. Mrs. Mary Ann Smith, an aged "dresser" at the Victoria Theatre, has been introduced to me as one of "the oldest inhabitants" of any modern playhouse. She is the relict of a minor actor, who was celebrated for a long life devoted to little parts. He once played Ratcliff, but was deterred from speaking the speech as we propose in future that it should be spoken, by the managers. Mrs. S. distinctly recollects that he would have done so, because his grandmother knew that his grandfather, who remembered Betterton, always said it was fit and proper. I mentioned to her the fact of a full stop appearing after "'tis I," but she at once ingeniously and convincingly replied, "there could be no such

thing, because the speech was not ended;" adding that she "never heard of stops, except to stop when somebody else was talking."

It is astonishing, recollecting, as Mr. Collier observes, how many learned hands the works of the great dramatist have passed through, that the important topographical allusions in his plays should have escaped notice. One play alone, *Twelfth Night*, is replete with important references to London topography; witness the allusions to the "bells of St. Bennet—one, two, three," and to that remarkable passage in the third act,—

> "In the south suburbs, at the Elephant,
> Is best to lodge;"

where the newly discovered MS. reads, with unquestionable authority,—

> "In the south suburbs, at the *Elephant and Castle*,
> Is best to lodge."

It is unnecessary to say that the hostelry known as the Elephant and Castle, is in the south suburbs; a fact which proves the correctness of the reading beyond a doubt.

The line in *Henry the Fifth*, act i, sc. 1,—

> "The strawberry grows underneath the nettle,"—

a line which is botanically wrong, is admirably corrected into

> "The strawberry grows *to fill the market pottle*,"—

the ear doing for us what the eye would fail to correct. In the same speech we have another important amendment: the Bishop of Ely declares that—

> "——— the prince obscur'd his contemplation
> Under the veil of wildness; which no doubt
> Grew like the summer grass, fastest by night."

The new reading is—

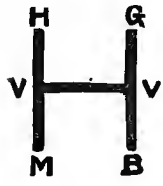
> "Grew like *a modern gent*, 'fastest' by night;"

a much more appropriate line; this abbreviation of the word gentleman being a genuine characteristic of the Shaksperian era.

In concluding my series of specimens, I may be pardoned for offering one correction of my own in the poet's text, inasmuch as it proves that the word "ache" should be pronounced *aitch*. There is a play upon the word in the exclamation of Scarus, in *Anthony and Cleopatra*, act iv, sc. 7:

> "I had a wound here that was like a T;
> But now 'tis made a H."

The accompanying diagram will explain this clearly. He had received in battle a sword cut, as at H M, and had afterwards another at right angles with it, V V; with unconquered energy he still continued fighting, till another downward cut, G B, had formed the great H, "aitch," or *ache*, that the dramatist makes the brave fellow joke upon, and exclaim that he has still



> "Room for six scotches more!"

This obscure and difficult passage is, by the aid of this note and diagram, made entirely clear by following the line I point out, which is H · V M · B · V G.

I have now said enough to establish my claim to attention, and to ensure the world an edition totally unlike all previous ones. I shall work diligently at it, and give the reading public the benefit of the whole three thousand corrections, for there are as many, and all nearly as valuable as any I have given, or are given in "the Perkins Shakspere." I have no ill-feeling to that humourous work, nor do I wish to rival it: I only hope that "Grimaldi" and "Perkins" may go hand in hand to posterity, as the two ablest of the modern lights which have clarified the darkness of the Swan of Avon.

Printed by E. Tucker, Perry's Place, Oxford Street.