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STEREOTYPERS AND PRINTERS
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Shakespeare, WILLIAM, the greatest of dramatic poets, was born at Stratford-on-Avon towards the close of April, 1564. The birthday is uncertain; tradition points to April 23, O. S., corresponding to our 5th May; on April 26 the infant was baptised. The house in Henley Street which is believed to be the birthplace may still be seen—as restored. The child's father, John Shakespeare, son of Richard Shakespeare, a Warwickshire farmer, was a fell-monger and glover, perhaps also a butcher, and certainly a dealer at times in corn and timber. In 1557 he married Mary Arden, daughter of a wealthy farmer, who on dying had left her a small estate named Asbies, with the reversion to part of another property at Snitterfield. John Shakespeare for a time prospered; in 1561 he became chamberlain of the borough, afterwards an alderman, and in 1568 high-bailiff of Stratford. The boy William was John Shakespeare's third child; two daughters born before him died in infancy. The later born children were five—two daughters, of whom one outlived the dramatist, and three sons, Gilbert, Richard, and Edmund; the last of these became an actor and died in 1607.

Although John Shakespeare was a respected burgess of Stratford, his education was small; he could not write his name. In all probability his eldest son was educated at the free school of Stratford, where beside English he would learn something of Latin, possibly even the elements of Greek. 'Small Latin and less Greek' is Ben Jonson's description of the scholarship of his great contemporary. The Greek, if any, must have been small indeed. At a later time Shakespeare seems to have acquired a little French, and possibly some-

thing of Italian. As a boy he may have seen dramatic entertainments at Stratford, for companies visited the town and performed there on several occasions from the year of his father's bailiffship onwards. In 1575 Leicester received Queen Elizabeth at Kenilworth, and it is possible that John Shakespeare may have taken his eldest son to look at the masques and mummeries; Oberon's description of the 'mermaid on a dolphin's back' (*Midsummer Night's Dream*, II. i. 148–168) has been supposed to be a reminiscence of the occasion. In 1578 the fortunes of John Shakespeare underwent an unfavourable change, and for many years pecuniary troubles pressed upon him; he mortgaged the Asbies estate, and sold his wife's reversionary interests at Snitterfield; he ceased to attend the town council; his taxes were remitted; as late as 1592 it is reported of him that he did not attend church for fear of 'processe for debt.' At what date he removed his son from school we cannot tell. Perhaps, as one tradition has it, the boy was apprenticed to a butcher; perhaps he was for a time an attorney's clerk—a conjecture founded on certain supposed allusions of his dramatic contemporary Nash, and on the fact that the legal references in Shakespeare's plays and poems are very numerous and give evidence of information which is remarkably correct. The blank in our knowledge of this period of his life is thus filled with guesses—guesses not altogether unprofitable. The worldly prudence of Shakespeare's manhood may have come to him as the lesson of these early years of trouble in his father's house. But the lesson of prudence was not learned all at once. A bond given previous to marriage between William Shakespeare and Anne Hathaway, dated November 28, 1582, was found in 1836 in the registry of Worcester. The marriage was to take place after the banns had been once asked. Anne Hathaway was the daughter of a substantial yeoman, lately dead, of Shottery in the parish of Stratford; she was eight years older than the bridegroom, who was only in his nineteenth year; she was socially his inferior, and it is probable that she was uneducated. The marriage may have been pressed forward by Anne's friends in order that a child—Shakespeare's eldest daughter, Susanna (baptised May 26, 1583)—might be born in lawful wedlock. Mr Halliwell-Phillipps argues that the bond was not improbably preceded by a contract, which, according to the customs of the time, would

have given the contracting parties the mutual rights of husband and wife, though as yet unsanctioned by the church. The marriage was doubtless solemnised soon after the date of the bond, but where and on what day is unknown. Two years after the birth of Susanna twins were born, Hamnet and Judith (baptised February 2, 1585). These three were Shakespeare's only children. Hamnet (probably named after a Stratford friend and neighbour, Hamnet Sadler) died in his twelfth year (buried August 11, 1596); both daughters survived their father.

Three or four years, as it is believed, after his marriage Shakespeare quitted his native town. 'He had,' says his first biographer, Rowe, 'by a misfortune, common enough to young fellows, fallen into ill company, and, amongst them, some that made a frequent practice of deer-stealing engaged him more than once in robbing a park that belonged to Sir Thomas Lucy, of Charlecote, near Stratford. For this he was prosecuted by that gentleman, as he thought, somewhat too severely; and, in order to revenge that ill-usage, he made a ballad upon him. And though this, probably the first essay of his poetry, be lost, yet it is said to have been so very bitter that it redoubled the prosecution against him to that degree that he was obliged to leave his business and family in Warwickshire for some time, and shelter himself in London.' It seems likely that in essentials the story thus reported by Rowe is true, and a verse of the ballad—whether genuine or written, as is more likely, to suit the story—has been given by Oldys. In *The Merry Wives of Windsor* Justice Shallow complains of Falstaff's having killed his deer; there are 'luces' in the Shallow coat-of-arms as in that of the Lucy family, which luces in the Welsh parson's pronunciation become 'louses'—a play on words occurring also in the alleged stanza of Shakespeare's offensive ballad.

A tradition, which appears to have come down from Betterton and D'Avenant, relates that Shakespeare's first employment in London was that of holding at the playhouse door the horses of those gentlemen who rode to the theatre unattended by servants. 'In this office,' so Johnson received the tale from Pope, 'he became so conspicuous for his care and readiness that in a short time every man as he alighted called for Will Shakespeare, and scarcely any other waiter was trusted with a horse while Will Shakespeare could be had;' by-and-by

he hired boys to wait under his superintendence, and 'Shakespeare's Boys' continued to be their name long after their master had risen to higher employment. Mr Halliwell-Phillipps holds that the story need not be set aside as an absolute fiction. The date of Shakespeare's flight to London can hardly have been earlier than 1585, and it is not likely to have been later than 1587. Mr Fleay conjectures that in the last-named year he joined Lord Leicester's players during their visit to Stratford, or soon after that visit; but tradition lends no support to the supposition that Shakespeare left his home with a view to trying his fortune on the stage. Except that we find his name joined with that of his father in an attempt made in 1587 to assign the Asbies property to the mortgagee, we know nothing for certain of Shakespeare's life from the date of his twin-children's birth until the year 1592, when he was an actor and a rising playwright. The dramatist Robert Greene, dying in that year, addressed three of his brother-authors, Marlowe, Peele, and Nash or Lodge, in a passage of his pamphlet, *Greene's Groatsworth of Wit bought with a Million of Repentance*, warning them against the ungrateful and inconstant race of players: 'Yes, trust them not: for there is an upstart crow, beautified with our feathers, that with his *Tygers heart wrapt in a players hide* supposes he is as well able to bumbast out a blanke verse as the best of you: and being an absolute *Johannes factotum*, is in his own conceit the only Shake-scene in a country.' The line of verse here parodied,

Oh, tiger's heart wrapt in a woman's hide,

occurs in the *Third Part of Henry VI.* and in the old play, *Richard Duke of York*, on which it is founded. Greene suggests that Shakespeare has been pilfering from a play in which he and Marlowe had each a hand. The editor of Greene's pamphlet, Henry Chettle, soon after, in his pamphlet *Kind-Harts Dream* (December 1592), made a handsome apology to Shakespeare: 'I am as sory as if the originall fault had been my faulte, because my selfe have seene his [Shakespeare's] demeanor no lesse civill than he exelent in the qualitie he professes; besides, divers of worship have reported his uprightnes of dealing, which argues his honesty, and his facetious grace in writting, that aprooves his art.' From these references we infer that Shakespeare had already made himself a valuable member of his dramatic com-

pany, that he was already known as a writer for the stage, that his merit as an actor ('quality' having special reference to this) was not inconsiderable, and that as a man he was honourable in all his acts. High eminence as an actor Shakespeare did not attain, though it appears from Hamlet's advice to the players that he had a just perception of the actor's merits and defects. Rowe assures us that 'the top of his performance was the ghost in his own *Hamlet*.' It is believed that he took the part of Old Knowell in Jonson's *Every Man in his Humour*, and perhaps that of the venerable Adam in *As You Like It*.

In 1593 appeared Shakespeare's first published work, the narrative poem, written in a six-line stanza, *Venus and Adonis*. It is dedicated to the young Earl of Southampton, the poet's patron and friend, who, according to a tradition derived from D'Avenant, on one occasion proved his friendship by a large gift of money to enable Shakespeare 'to go through with a purchase he had a mind to.' *Venus and Adonis* is described by its author as 'the first heir of his invention;' it is an elaborate piece of Renaissance paganism, setting forth ideals of sensuous beauty, male and female, in the persons of the amorous goddess and of the young hunter, whose coldness meets and foils her passion. Close observation of nature and much sweetness of versification characterise the poem; the passages of dialogue are, as it were, studies in the casuistry of passion; elaborate conceits, such as few Elizabethan poets could escape from, abound. The dedication promises a 'graver labour,' and this soon followed in the *Lucrece* (published 1594). The theme of the *Venus* is here, as it were, reversed; the lawless passion of Tarquin is confronted by the ardent chastity of the Roman wife. The stanza is one of seven lines; the dedication is again to Southampton, and its words express strong and deep devotion. Both the *Venus* and the *Lucrece* became immediately popular, and were many times reprinted.

Shakespeare's earliest dramatic exercises consisted probably in adapting to the stage plays by other authors which had grown a little out of date. Many critics have pointed to *Titus Andronicus* as an example of such work, and a tradition put on record in 1687 confirms this view. The play certainly belongs to a moment in the history of English tragedy which we may describe as pre-Shakespearian; it reeks with blood; its effects

are rather those of horror than of dramatic terror and pity; if Shakespeare wrote it we must believe that he wrote it before his genius had discovered its true direction. Another of the early plays in which Shakespeare probably worked upon older material is the *First Part of Henry VI.*; some critics have held that in its construction three hands can be distinguished. However this may be, we accept it as all but certain that the play contains pre-Shakespearian work; we are pleased to think that the ignoble portraiture of Joan of Arc is not of our great dramatist's conceiving; in the Temple-garden scene (ii. 4), which tells of the plucking of the white rose and the red, we have perhaps Shakespeare's chief contribution to this drama.

We dare not say for certain at what precise date Shakespeare's career as a dramatic author began; but 1589–90 cannot be far astray. Among his earliest experiments in comedy were *Love's Labour's Lost*, *The Comedy of Errors*, and *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*; among the earliest historical dramas were the second and third parts of *Henry VI.*, *King Richard III.*, and *King Richard II.*; the first romantic tragedy (setting aside *Titus Andronicus*) was undoubtedly *Romeo and Juliet*. The evidence by which the chronology of Shakespeare's several works is ascertained or inferred with more or less probability is of various kinds, including entries of publication or intended publication in the Stationers' Registers; statements about the plays and poems, or allusions to them, or quotations from them by contemporary writers in works of known dates; facts connected with the history of dramatic companies which presented plays of Shakespeare; allusions in the plays to historical events, and quotations by Shakespeare from publications of the day. We cannot fail also to observe the growth of Shakespeare's imaginative power, his intellectual reach, his moral depth, his spiritual wisdom; with respect to each of these we must needs recognise a profound difference between the earlier and the later plays. At the same time we perceive a gradual change, or rather a group of changes, taking place in the structure of his dramatic verse. In his verse of early date the sense closes with the line far more frequently than is the case in his verse of a later period, and with this growing tendency to carry the sense beyond the line arises also an inclination or a readiness to place as the final word of the line some word such

as *am*, *do*, *I* ('light ending'), or even such as *and*, *of*, *if* ('weak ending'), which precipitates the reader or pronouncer of the passage into the next following line. Thus in its structure the versification becomes more varied and freer, or, if not freer, subject to subtler and less obvious laws. It is part of the same process that Shakespeare gradually ceased from employing rhyme for dramatic purposes, and again that he allowed the decasyllabic line to pass much more frequently into one of eleven syllables ('double ending' or 'feminine ending'). These peculiarities of versification admit of statistical calculations in their process of development, and have formed the subject of much careful study among recent Shakespearian scholars.

In his early comedies Shakespeare is trying, as it were, his 'prentice hand in various experiments. *Love's Labour's Lost* (*c.* 1590) is perhaps his first original play; no source is known; some of the leading characters seem to be named after persons of note in recent or contemporary French history. Learned pedantry, fantastical extravagance of speech, the affectations of amorous poetry are satirised, and the dramatist pleads against artificial restraints on conduct and pseudo-ideals and in favour of nature and healthy passion. The play was partly rewritten about 1598, when it was presented before Queen Elizabeth. *The Comedy of Errors* (*c.* 1591) is a lively tangle of farcical incidents; it is founded on the *Menœchmi* of Plautus, which was translated into English by Warner, but Shakespeare seems to have reached the *Menœchmi* either in the original or through some other rendering. The twin-brothers Dromio are an addition to the twin-brothers of the Latin comedy, and heighten the laughable perplexities of the play. A serious—almost a pathetic—background to the story is invented by Shakespeare, and in his Luciana we get a hint of some of his later beautiful creations of female character. *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* (*c.* 1592), a romantic love comedy, exhibits a marked advance in the presentation of character, though not in the construction of plot. There is apparently a connection between the story of the play and the story of the 'Shepherdess Felismena' in the *Diana* of George of Montemayor, a Spanish piece of Arcadian romance. Shakespeare's humour breaks forth in his portrait of the clown, Launce; Julia is the first of his charming feminine disguisers in male costume. This group of early

comedies may be considered to close with *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (*c.* 1593–94). Hints for the play may have been taken from Chaucer, from Plutarch, from the *Diana*, and from popular superstitions; but it is essentially a new creation of the poet. No other comedy of Shakespeare has so large a lyrical element; the figures of the lovers are faintly drawn, but the exquisite fairy-poetry, and the humours of sweet bully Bottom make sufficient amends.

Meanwhile Shakespeare was also engaged on the English historical drama. In the *Second and Third Parts of Henry VI.* (*c.* 1592) he worked upon the basis of old plays written probably by Marlowe and Greene—possibly also Peele—and in the revision he may have had Marlowe as a collaborator. To come under the influence of that great master, Christopher Marlowe, was no disadvantage for one who could accept gains from every quarter and by the force of his genius could make them his own. In *King Richard III.* (*c.* 1593) he still writes in Marlowe's manner, though the play is wholly his own. As with Marlowe the protagonist everywhere dominates over the secondary characters; as with Marlowe a great criminal is made of fascinating interest, by virtue of his unity of passion and of power. The chief source from which Shakespeare derived the material for his plays from English history was the chronicle of Holinshed. The three parts of *Henry VI.* and the tragedy of *Richard III.* present a continuous view of the rise and fall of the House of York. In *King Richard II.* (*c.* 1594) is set forth the rise of the House of Lancaster. Here, though there are reminiscences from *Edward II.*, the influence of Marlowe is no longer supreme. The contrast between the hectic, self-indulgent, rhetorical Richard, who yet possesses a certain regal charm, and his strong adversary Bolingbroke is a fine psychological study of a kind which is essentially Shakespearian and not Marlowesque. To mould into dramatic form the tough material of history was an admirable exercise in dramatic craftsmanship. The breadth and sanity of history also tended to preserve Shakespeare from the danger of romantic extravagance, such as injures the art of other dramatists who worked chiefly on stories of crime and passion supplied by Italian romance. *King John* (*c.* 1595) stands apart by its subject from both the York and the Lancaster series of plays; but in style it has something in common with *Richard II.* It is

founded not so much on Holinshed as on an old play, *The Troublesome Raigne of King John*, and a comparison of his original, seen in its poverty, crudity, and coarseness, with Shakespeare's creation, where everything is ennobled, purified, and refined, affords a study of no little interest in dramatic art.

In the passage which describes Oberon's vision in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* a magnificent compliment to Queen Elizabeth, 'the imperial votaress,' is introduced. Shakespeare as a member of the Lord Chamberlain's company appeared on several occasions before her majesty. In December 1594 he acted in two comedies at Greenwich Palace. On Innocents' Day of the same year the *Comedy of Errors* was presented in the hall of Gray's Inn. The playhouse in which at first he ordinarily performed was either that known as 'The Theatre' or 'The Curtain' on the Shoreditch edge of London. From 1599 onwards he was connected with the new playhouse, 'The Globe,' which stood near London Bridge on the Southwark side, and here and in the Blackfriars Theatre (1596) his dramas were presented. His good sense and worldly prudence are remarkable; before long he became a theatrical shareholder, and had gathered sufficient wealth to purchase (1597) 'New Place,' a large house in his native town. In 1596 his father, moved perhaps by the wish of the dramatist to occupy a dignified position, applied for a grant of coat-armour, and sought, probably without success, to recover the mortgaged Asbies estate. The year was one of affliction, for in August Shakespeare's only son—Hamnet—died. Yet Stratford remained dear to the sorrowing father; he kept in close relation with his friends and former neighbours, and in 1598 was engaged in negotiating a loan for the corporation of the town. The runaway youth of ten or twelve years since was now a man of consideration and of substance. In September 1601 his father died; his mother lived until September 1608. In the year following his father's death Shakespeare bought for £320, then a large sum of money, 107 acres near Stratford, and enlarged the bounds of his New Place property. In 1605 he paid £440 for the unexpired term of the moiety of a lease of the tithes of Stratford, Old Stratford, Bishopton, and Welcombe. He did not despise small things, for we find him in 1604 proceeding for the recovery of a debt amounting to £1, 15s. 10d. With boundless empire

in the realm of imagination he valued also at its real worth a foothold on this material earth of ours.

Among the earlier creations of his genius one stands apart from the rest—the tragedy of *Romeo and Juliet*. Possibly as we have it now the play is a revision dating about 1596–97 of a work written as early as 1592. It is founded in the main upon a poem, *Romeus and Juliet* (1562), by Arthur Brooke, which versifies the tale taken by the French Boisteau from the Italian of Bandello; but Shakespeare was also probably acquainted with Paynter's prose version of the story in his *Palace of Pleasure* (1567). The play has a lyrical sweetness, swiftness, and intensity such as we do not find elsewhere in its author's writings. It has many signs of early workmanship—much rhymed verse, and many conceits and over-strained ingenuities; but these last are forgotten in the high passions of joy and anguish which find expression in the tragedy. The brilliant Mercutio, the tranquil Friar, the humorous figure of the Nurse form an admirable background from which stand out the persons of the lovers—a youth and a maiden of the south possessed by one all-absorbing emotion. It is strange that Shakespeare did not follow up this early tragedy by any play of a like kind. Near to it in the chronological order probably stands the exquisite comedy of *The Merchant of Venice* (*c.* 1596), which occupies a middle place between the group of Shakespeare's earliest comedies and those which lie around the year 1600. The story of the caskets and the story of the pound of flesh had probably been brought together in an old play now lost which is mentioned by Stephen Gosson in 1579; but a play of that date can have afforded only rude material on which to work. The advance in characterisation from that of Shakespeare's previous comedies is remarkable; no earlier heroine is comparable with Portia, and the gracious brightness of her figure is admirably enforced by its contrast with the dark colours in which the Jew is painted. Something was doubtless derived from Marlowe's Jew of Malta, Barabas; but Shylock, with all his passion of revenge, is human; Barabas is an incredible monster of vices. Shakespeare's mastery of comedy aids him in the historical plays which followed the *First and Second Parts of King Henry IV.* (1597-98) and *King Henry V.* (1599). In these dramas the fortunes of the House of Lancaster are followed to their glori-

ous culmination. The turbulent years from the battle of Homildon Hill (1402) to the death of the usurping Bolingbroke (1413) supply the material for the historical portion of both parts of *Henry IV.* But interwoven with the history is that inimitable comedy of which Falstaff is hero. In the epilogue to the second part a promise is given that Falstaff shall again appear in another play in which the author will continue the story and make the spectators 'merry with fair Katherine of France.' Shakespeare found it impossible to fulfil that promise. In the heroic drama of *King Henry V.* there is no place for the fat knight. The play is inspired by the ardent patriotism, the lofty national enthusiasm of the age of Elizabeth. In the person of the king Shakespeare presents his ideal of a noble ruler of men. The material for *Henry IV.* and *Henry V.* was derived partly from Holinshed, partly from an old play entitled *The Famous Victories of Henry V.* Thus, as it were, with a trumpet-note of patriotic pride and battle-ardour Shakespeare's historical plays of England are brought to a close.

There is a tradition dating from 1702 that Queen Elizabeth commanded Shakespeare to exhibit Falstaff in love, and that in obedience he hastily wrote —in fourteen days it is said—*The Merry Wives of Windsor* (1598–99). The comedy is of special interest as a picture of middle-class English life, and may be well studied in comparison with Jonson's *Every Man in his Humour;* but the fatuous Falstaff of the *Merry Wives* is far different from the ever-detected yet never-defeated Falstaff of the historical plays. The comedy is written almost wholly in prose, and in its incidents approaches farce. It may be that it was about this time that Shakespeare adapted and enlarged the old play, *The Taming of a Shrew,* or perhaps adapted and enlarged a previous adaptation of that play by another hand. In *The Taming of the Shrew* (1597?) Shakespeare's genius shows itself chiefly in connection with the boisterous heroine, her high-spirited tamer Petruchio, and the drunken tinker of the Induction. Conjectural attempts have been made to distinguish the scenes and lines which may be ascribed to Shakespeare; but these must be accepted with reserve. The same animal spirits and intellectual vivacity which characterise the *Merry Wives* and the *Shrew* appear—but now refined and exalted—in *Much Ado about Nothing* (1598–99). The story of Claudio and Hero had probably for its original a tale of Bandello trans-

lated by Belleforest into French. The characters of Beatrice and Benedick, it is supposed, are entirely original creations of the dramatist; there is in them something of his own Rosaline and Berowne, and it was about this time that he rehandled *Love's Labour's Lost*, the play in which we make acquaintance with this earlier pair of lovers. *As You Like It* (1599) and *Twelfth Night* (1600–1) are the last of the wholly joyous comedies of this period. In the former there is indeed a simulacrum of melancholy in Jaques' affectation of that mood as a fashion; but of real gloom, of real sorrow there is not a trace. This charming pastoral comedy is dramatised from a prose tale by Shakespeare's contemporary Lodge, entitled *Rosalynde, Euphues Golden Legacie* (1590), which itself follows the *Tale of Gamelyn*, erroneously introduced as Chaucer's in some editions of the *Canterbury Tales*. In not a few scenes of *Twelfth Night* the mirth is fast and high, but the central comic figure, Malvolio, has something of dignity, almost of majesty, in his extravagant and solemn self-importance. Viola is perhaps the most charming of Shakespeare's maiden masquers in male attire; if she has not the intellectual brilliance of Rosalind, she has even more of maiden sweetness. The plot resembles that of an Italian play *Gl' Ingannati*, and it may also be found in a tale translated into French by Belleforest from Bandello. But the group of jesters and humorists with their victim Malvolio are of Shakespeare's invention.

About the year 1600–1 a change begins to develop itself in the spirit of Shakespeare's writings; his mirth becomes touched with seriousness or infected with bitterness, and soon he ceases to write comedy. Some students have supposed that this transition from a joyous to a sadder temper is connected with events which are shadowed forth in Shakespeare's *Sonnets*. The volume of *Sonnets* was not published until 1609, but Shakespeare's 'sugred sonnets among his private friends' were mentioned by Francis Meres (who gives a very important list of the poet's writings) in his *Palladis Tamia* (1598), and in the following year the *Sonnets* afterwards numbered 138 and 144 were printed in a surreptitious miscellany of verse ascribed to Shakespeare by the bookseller Jaggard, and entitled *The Passionate Pilgrim*. The 1609 edition of Sonnets is dedicated by the publisher T. Thorpe to 'Mr W. H.' as 'the onlie begetter of these insuing Sonnets.' The poems, 154 in number, form two

groups—1–126 addressed to a beautiful young man of high station, 127–154 either addressed to or referring to a married woman not beautiful according to the conventional standard, of dark complexion, highly accomplished, fascinating, but of stained character and irregular conduct. The two groups are connected. Shakespeare's young friend and patron, whom he addresses in words of measureless devotion, seems to have fallen into the toils of the woman to whom Shakespeare was himself attached by a passion which he felt to be degrading, yet which he could not overcome. The woman yielded herself to the younger admirer who was socially the superior of Shakespeare. Hence an alienation between the friends, increased by the fact that the youth was now the favourer of a rival poet; but in the close all wrongs were forgotten and the friendship renewed on a firmer basis. Such is the story to be read in the *Sonnets*, if we take them, as they ought to be taken, in their natural sense. But some critics have imagined that they deal with ideal themes or may set forth a spiritual allegory. Many attempts have been made to identify the persons of Mr W. H., the dark woman, and the rival poet. The happiest guess with respect to the last is that he was George Chapman. It has been conjectured that Mr W. H. was Henry Wriothesley, Earl of Southampton (the initials reversed), and again that he was William Herbert, the young Earl of Pembroke, who was certainly a patron of Shakespeare. An ingenious argument has been set forth by Mr T. Tyler to prove that the woman of the *Sonnets* was Mary Fitton, a mistress of William Herbert. But it is questionable whether the portraits of Mary Fitton and of Pembroke agree with the indications afforded in the *Sonnets*. In truth the persons have not yet been identified; no conjecture has any but the most insecure support; and it is not likely that the facts so long hidden will ever be revealed.

In his earliest plays Shakespeare tried his hand, as an apprentice in the craft, in many and various directions. In the English historical plays and the joyous comedy he exhibits his mastery of the broad field of human life. But as yet he had not searched the profounder mysteries of our being, nor handled the deeper and darker passions of humanity. About the opening of the 17th century, as we have noticed, a change takes place in the spirit of his creations. He still writes comedy, but the gaiety of the earlier comedies is gone.

All's Well that Ends Well (*c.* 1601–2) is least happy in its mirthful scenes; it is at its best where the strong-willed heroine Helena appears, whose task is to seek after and save the unworthy youth to whom she has given her heart. Some critics have supposed that the play as we have it is Shakespeare's rehandling of an earlier version from his own pen originally entitled *Love's Labour's Won*—a play of that name being included in Meres's list of the year 1598. But this theory is incapable of verification. The story came to Shakespeare from Boccaccio through Paynter's *Palace of Pleasure*. *Measure for Measure* (*c.* 1603) hardly deserves the name of comedy; it is a searching of the mystery of self-deceit in the heart of a man, and the exhibition of an ideal of virginal chastity and strength in the person of the heroine, Isabella. The city life represented in the play is base and foul; the prison-scenes are ennobled by profound imaginative speculations upon life and death. It is the darkest of the comedies of Shakespeare. The subject had previously been handled dramatically in Whetstone's *Promos and Cassandra* (1578), and the same author had told the tale in prose in his *Heptameron of Civil Discourses* (1582). Perhaps it is to this date (1603) that *Troilus and Cressida* belongs, but the chronology as well as the purport of the play is perplexing. It has been suggested that different portions of the comedy were written at different dates; but here again we are in the region of conjecture. Certain passages, as, for example, Hector's last battle, are probably by another hand than Shakespeare's. The sources of the play are Chaucer's poem on the same subject, Caxton's translation from the French *Recuyles, or Destruction of Troy*, and Chapman's *Homer*. Some have even fancied that Shakespeare's design was to turn into ridicule the classical heroes of Chapman, the supposed rival poet of the *Sonnets*. But there is nowhere a nobler representative of worldly wisdom, in a high sense of the word, than Shakespeare's Ulysses. It may be called the comedy of disillusion—a kind of foil to *Romeo and Juliet*. The callow passion of the youthful hero is basely deceived by Cressida, a born light-o'-love; but in the end Troilus masters his boyish despair, and grows firm-set in his vigorous manhood. The contrast between worldly wisdom and adolescent enthusiasm is perhaps the most striking thing in the play.

Before he ceased for a time to write comedy

Shakespeare had probably begun that great series of tragedies which occupied him during the opening years of the 17th century. *Julius Cæsar* (1601) and *Hamlet* (1602) are tragedies in which reflection, as a motive-power, holds its own with emotion; in the later tragedies the chief characters are whirled away by passion; here they are misled by thought. In North's translation of *Plutarch's Lives* Shakespeare found admirable material for his Roman plays, and he used it as a true creative poet, and not as a mere antiquary. The Brutus of *Julius Cæsar* is an idealist dealing with practical affairs, constantly in error, yet honoured by us because his errors are those which only a man of noble nature could commit. Cæsar is represented in his decline, with many infirmities, but his presence and power are predominant through the tragedy in the impersonal form of Cæsarism, which sways the spirits of men and compels the catastrophe. *Hamlet* is perhaps founded on an older play, which certainly existed, and produced a great impression on the stage about 1588–89. Shakespeare doubtless read the story, originally derived from Saxo Grammaticus, in the English prose of the *Hystorie of Hamlet* translated from the French of Belleforest. He represents, as Goethe has put it, 'the effects of a great action laid upon a soul unfit for the performance of it.' Hamlet is summoned to avenge his father's murder, but habits of speculation, an excitable emotional temperament, and an untrained will disqualify him for acting the part of a justiciary. He accomplishes his purpose at last, but as it were by chance-medley.

And now tragedy succeeded tragedy, each of surpassing greatness, and all the depths were sounded. *Othello* (*c.* 1604), founded on a tale given in Cinthio's *Hecatommithi*, exhibits a free and noble nature taken in the toils of jealousy, and perishing in the struggle for deliverance. The betrayer, Iago, is the nearest approach to an incarnation of absolute evil to be found in Shakespeare's plays. *King Lear* (1605) derived some of its substance from an old play on the same subject as well as from Holinshed's Chronicle; the episode of Gloucester and his sons is adapted from Sidney's *Arcadia*. The tragedy is the most stupendous in our literature; the bonds of natural affection, of loyalty, of the amity of nations, almost of the laws of nature, are broken or convulsed; but justice asserts itself in the close, and if Cordelia dies, she dies a martyr of redeeming love. *Macbeth*

(*c.* 1606) is the tragedy of criminal ambition. The source is once again Holinshed. A theory of Messrs Clark and Wright that the play, as we have it, is disfigured by the interpolations of another dramatist—perhaps Middleton—must be regarded as of doubtful worth. The tragedy is distinguished by the unpausing rapidity of its action. In *Antony and Cleopatra* (1607) Shakespeare returns to Roman history, but here Roman manhood is sapped by the sensual witchery of the East. The most marvellous of Shakespeare's creations of female character is surely Cleopatra—Antony's 'serpent of old Nilus.' Such materials for the play as were not supplied by the poet's creative imagination he obtained from Plutarch's life of Antony in North's translation. From Plutarch also came the material for *Coriolanus* (*c.* 1608). The poet passes from Rome of the empire to the earlier Rome of the consuls, and from the history of a great nature ruined by voluptuous relaxation of its powers to that of a great nature ruined by self-centred pride. As the Roman wife was shown in the Portia of *Julius Cæsar*, so here is presented the Roman mother in the majestic figure of Volumnia. The series of great tragedies closes perhaps with *Timon of Athens* (*c.* 1607–8), but the play is only in part by Shakespeare. It describes the total eclipse of faith, hope, charity in the undisciplined spirit of Timon, who passes from an easy, indulgent optimism to a wild misanthropy. Nowhere is Shakespeare a greater dramatic rhetorician than in some of the misanthropist's declamatory speeches. The story was taken from Paynter's *Palace of Pleasure*, and certain gleanings were added from Plutarch and from Lucian.

At this point once again a change shows itself in the spirit of Shakespeare. After passion comes peace; after the poetry of revolt comes the poetry of reconciliation; after the breaking of bonds—the bonds of the family, of the state, and even of humanity itself—come the knitting of human bonds, the meeting of parted kinsfolk, the reconciliation of alienated friends. The last plays of Shakespeare are comedies, but they might be aptly named romances, for romantic beauty presides over them rather than mirth, they have in them elements of wonder and delight, their gladness is purified and rarefied, as the happiness might be of one who has had a great experience of sorrow; the characters move amid lovely, natural surroundings; mountain and sea, the inland meadows, the

island shores lend their glory or their grace to these exquisite plays. *Pericles* (1608), or rather Shakespeare's part of that play (Acts III. IV. V., omitting perhaps III. sc. ii. v. vi.), might better be named the romance of Marina, the lost daughter of Pericles. The description of the sea-storm could have come from no other hand than Shakespeare's; the scenes which tell of the recovery by Pericles of wife and child anticipate like scenes in *The Tempest*, *The Winter's Tale*, and *Cymbeline*. The story of Pericles had been told by Gower, who is introduced as 'presenter' of the play, and by Lawrence Twine in his *Patterne of Painfull Adventures* (1607); and there is a novel by George Wilkins (1608) founded upon the play. *Cymbeline* (1609) is also a tale of lost children at length recovered, and of a wife separated from her husband, but finally reunited to him. Something is derived from Holinshed, but with the historical matter is connected a story which in a different form may be found in Boccaccio's *Decameron*. *The Tempest* may have been written late in the year 1610; but it has been ingeniously argued by Dr. Garnett that Shakespeare produced it as a court-play on the occasion of the marriage of the Princess Elizabeth to the Elector Palatine, 1613, and that the enchanter Prospero is an idealised and complimentary representation of the 'wisest fool in Christendom,' King James I. No source of the play has been ascertained, but some of the characters and incidents resemble those of Jacob Ayrer's *Die Schöne Sidea*, and it is believed that this German play and *The Tempest* must have had some common original. *The Winter's Tale* (1610–11) dramatises a novel by Robert Greene named *Pandosto* (1588); that most delightful of roving rogues, Autolycus, is however a creation of Shakespeare. In Hermione and Perdita we have examples of two contrasted groups of characters represented in Shakespeare's last plays—the aged and experienced sufferers, who have been ennobled by sorrow, and the young who are ennobled by their innocence and pure joy of life.

Apart from the other historical English plays both in subject and in date stands *King Henry VIII.* (1612–13). The play is certainly in part by Fletcher, and an attempt has been made to prove that the remainder is from the hand of Massinger. But we may perhaps accept it as most likely that Shakespeare wrote the following portions: Acts I. i. ii.; II. iii. iv.; III. ii. (to

exit king); V. i. The play lacks unity; it has not altogether unaptly been described by Hertzberg as 'a chronicle-history with three and a half catastrophes, varied by a marriage and a coronation pageant, ending abruptly with a child's baptism.' But there is no lack of unity in the conception of those *dramatis personæ* who interested Shakespeare—the king, Wolsey, and above all Queen Katharine, a noble and patient sufferer. Whether we have work by Shakespeare in another play partly written by Fletcher—*The Two Noble Kinsmen*—is more doubtful. Fletcher's collaborator may here have been Massinger, but there are passages which seem beyond Massinger's reach. The play is founded on Chaucer's *Knightes Tale.* If Shakespeare had a hand in *The Two Noble Kinsmen* it was during the last period of his dramatic career. Not so with *Edward III.*, in parts of which some critics believe that they can trace the handiwork of Shakespeare (from king's entrance, I. ii., to end of Act II.); if he was at all concerned with that play it must have been before 1595.

At what date Shakespeare ceased to appear on the stage as an actor we cannot certainly say. He took a part in the representation of Jonson's *Sejanus* at the Globe in 1603 or 1604. In 1610 the Burbages speak of placing him with others as an actor at Blackfriars Theatre; but there are grounds for supposing that he had withdrawn from the stage at that date. In 1607 his elder daughter, Susanna, married a prosperous physician of Stratford, Mr John Hall, M.A., and early next year Shakespeare's grandchild Elizabeth Hall was born. He sold his shares in the Globe probably between 1611 and 1613; but while residing chiefly at Stratford it seems likely that he desired to possess a town residence, for in March 1613 he bought for £140 a house near the Blackfriars Theatre. In the same year the Globe Theatre was burned down while the play of *Henry VIII.* was being enacted, and it may be that stage copies of Shakespeare's plays were destroyed on this occasion. 'The latter part of his life,' says his first biographer Rowe, speaking of his Stratford days, 'was spent as all men of sense may wish theirs may be, in ease, retirement, and the conversation of his friends. . . . His pleasurable wit and good-nature engaged him in the acquaintance and entitled him to the friendship of the gentlemen of the neighbourhood.' In February 1616 his younger daughter,

Judith, was married to Thomas Quiney, a vintner of Stratford. She bore three children, two of whom lived to manhood, but both died childless. Their mother lived on to the days of the Restoration of Charles II. Elizabeth Hall, Shakespeare's first-born grandchild, married Thomas Nash (1626), and secondly, Sir John Barnard (1649). She died without issue in 1670, the last descendant of the poet.

In March 1616 Shakespeare became seriously ill. A draft of his will had recently been made, and now he attached his signature to the several pages of the draft. The bulk of his worldly goods he left to his elder daughter, but Judith was given a considerable sum of money. His sister, Joan Hart, received a legacy of £50 and a life-interest in her house in Stratford. His friends in the country, certain fellow-actors, his nephews, his godson, and the Stratford poor were all remembered. To his wife he left, by an interlineation in the will, and perhaps to indulge some fancy of hers, his second-best bed; she was sufficiently provided for, without special mention, by free bench and dower. On April 23, 1616, which is supposed to be the anniversary of his birthday, Shakespeare died. According to a tradition handed down by Ward, the vicar of Stratford, his last illness was a fever contracted after a merry meeting with Drayton and Ben Jonson. Halliwell-Phillipps supposes that it is as likely to have been caused by the poison of filth and ill-drainage which hung about New Place.

On April 25 the body was laid at rest in the chancel of the parish church, near the northern wall. On a slab which marks the spot are inscribed lines traditionally attributed to Shakespeare.

> Good Friend for Iesus sake forbeare
> To digg the dust encloased heare;
> Bleste be the man that spares thes stones,
> And curst be he that moves my bones.

The removal of bones to the charnel-house was then a common practice. During the life of Shakespeare's widow—who died August 6, 1623—a monument was erected in the church, on the chancel wall hard by the grave. It was sculptured by Gerard Johnson or one of his sons. A bust of blue limestone was placed between Corinthian columns of black marble. The head is massive, the forehead lofty and domed, the face that of a cheerful, prosperous man. The poet is represented

as composing his works, pen in hand. 'The effigy was originally painted in colours to resemble life. The face and hands were of a flesh colour; the eyes of a light hazel; the hair and beard were auburn. The doublet was scarlet, and the loose gown without sleeves worn over it was black.' Besides this somewhat rude portrait, we possess a portrait-print by Droeshout prefixed to the first folio edition of Shakespeare's works (1623). It is an ill-executed engraving, but is of value as confirming the features of the bust in their general characteristics. These are the only certain portraits. A death-mask, known as the Kesselstadt death-mask, presenting a remarkable and noble face, may possibly be genuine; but the evidence leaves much room for doubt. Of many alleged painted portraits that known as the Chandos portrait has found, perhaps, the widest acceptance.

The central impression which his writings and the story of his life leave upon us with respect to the man Shakespeare is that of the completeness of his humanity, and the sanity which results from such completeness. His life in the world of imagination is the widest and deepest on record; but he was not, like so many of the race of poets, indifferent to the practical, material life. He was certainly a man of strong passions; he was profoundly speculative—in the way of an imaginative thinker—with reference to the problems of the soul; but he learned to control his passions, and to master his excessive tendency to speculation; in the close, he looked down on all of human life with sympathy as from the heights; and yet he did not desert the duties of the common road on which men travel side by side.

The name of the poet may be spelt 'Shakspere,' for we have his autograph signature in that form; but 'Shakespeare,' which appears on the title-page of books which he superintended, is also correct. There is less evidence in favour of the form 'Shakspeare."

During his life from 1597 onwards several of his plays were printed in quarto (see Halliwell-Phillipps' *Outlines of the Life of Shakespeare*, vol. i., 'Lifetime editions'). After his death the first collected edition of the plays appeared in 1623, in folio, under the superintendence of his fellow-actors Heminge and Condell. It is dedicated to the brothers, the Earls of Pembroke and of Montgomery. Seventeen of the plays contained in the volume had not been published in quarto. The arrangement of the contents is under the three divisions of comedy,

history, and tragedy. In 1632 this volume was reprinted (second folio), and again in 1663–64 (third folio) and 1685 (fourth folio). The 1664 issue of the third folio gives seven additional plays—*Pericles; The London Prodigal; Thomas Lord Cromwell; Sir John Oldcastle, the good Lord Cobham; The Puritan Widow; A Yorkshire Tragedy; Locrine.* Some critics have supposed *A Yorkshire Tragedy* may possibly be by Shakespeare, or at least contain touches from his hand.

The first critical edition of the plays is that by Nicholas Rowe (1709). He made some judicious corrections of the text, and gathered a few biographical materials, which he embodied in a brief sketch of Shakespeare's life. In 1725 appeared Pope's edition; some of his critical emendations are happy, and his preface contains admirable remarks on the Shakespearian drama. Theobald, whose edition appeared in 1733, though the object of Pope's ridicule in the *Dunciad*, was a better scholar than Pope; he collated early editions, proposed ingenious emendations, and very materially improved the text of his author. Hanmer in the 'Oxford Edition' (1744), and Warburton in his edition (1747), based on Pope's, made small advance on their predecessors. Warburton's text was severely criticised by Upton, Grey, Heath, and Edwards. The edition of Johnson (1765) is chiefly remarkable for its masterly preface; he rightly came to distrust his own skill as a conjectural emender of the text, and he was not qualified by any profound knowledge of Elizabethan literature for the task of an editor. In 1766 Steevens reprinted twenty of the early quartos, and from 1773 onwards Johnson's editorial work was ably supplemented by that of Steevens. In dealing with the text Steevens was learned and ingenious, but somewhat rash and lacking in reverence. Capell's edition (1768) is the work of a true and laborious scholar. His learned Notes, Various Readings, and the School of Shakespeare were published posthumously in 1783. Much was done by Malone to ascertain the chronological order of the plays and to illustrate the history of the English theatre. In 1780 he edited the poems of Shakespeare and the doubtful plays of the 1664 folio. His edition of Shakespeare's works followed in 1790. He was modest, faithful, learned, judicious, but unhappily was not endowed with a feeling for the beauty of verse. Variorum editions, embodying the work of Johnson, Steevens, and Malone, appeared under the editorship of Reed in 1803 and 1813, and under the editorship of James Boswell (the younger) in 1821. Towards the close of the 18th century Shakespearian critics were much occupied with the forgeries of S. W. H. Ireland. In 1796 the forger made his public confession. The criticism of Coleridge, and in a less degree that of Lamb and of Hazlitt, opened up new and better ways for Shakespearian criticism in the early part of the 19th century. Many valuable editions have been issued since the Variorum of 1821, among which may be mentioned those of Singer, Knight, Collier, Dyce,

Staunton Halliwell, the Cambridge Shakespeare, the Henry Irving Shakespeare. Germany has given us the excellent edition of Delius, and America those of Grant, White, Hudson, Rolfe, and the magnificent Variorum edition of certain plays by Furness. The *Sonnets* have appeared in two annotated editions—that of the present writer and that of Tyler. The Shakespeare Society (1841–53) did much to illustrate Shakespeare's writings by reprints from Elizabethan literature; the Collier (q.v.) controversy helped to bring the society to an untimely breakdown. The New Shakspere Society (1874 onwards) has carried on the work, and devoted itself in particular to the study of 'verse-tests' as giving indications of the chronology of the plays. A German Shakespeare Society has published annual volumes since 1865. In the bibliography which follows some of the most important of the recent additions to the study of Shakespeare are named.

Concordances: Mrs Cowden Clarke's *Concordance* (to Plays), Mrs Furness' *Concordance to Poems*, Schmidt's *Lexicon*. Grammar: Abbott's *Shakespearian Grammar*. Verse: W. Sidney Walker's *Shakespeare's Versification* and his *Criticisms on Shakespeare* (textual notes), Bathurst s *Changes in Shakespeare's Versification*. Chronology: Stoke's *Chronological Order of Shakespeare's Plays*. Sources: Hazlitt's *Shakespeare's Library*, Courtenay's *Commentaries on the Historical Plays*, Skeat's *Shakespeare's Plutarch*. Life: Halliwell-Phillipps' *Outlines of the Life of Shakespeare*, Fleay's *Life and Work of Shakespeare*. Portraits: J. Parker Norris' *Portraits of Shakespeare*. Criticism: Coleridge's *Shakespeare Notes;* Dowden's *Shakespeare, his Mind and Art*, and *Shakespeare Primer;* Hudson, *Shakespeare, his Life, Art, and Characters;* Gervinus, *Commentaries;* Lloyd's *Critical Essays on Shakespeare's Plays;* Mrs Jameson, *Characteristics of Women;* Kreyssig's *Vorlesungen über Shakespeare;* Ulrici's *Shakespeare's Dramatische Kunst*. Dramatic History: Collier's *English Dramatic Poetry and History of the Stage;* Fleay's *Chronicle of the English Drama, 1559–1642;* Ward's *English Dramatic Literature*. Bibliography: Bohn's Bibliography, 'Shakespeare' in Lowndes's Bibliography and Allibone's *Dictionary of Authors*, Thimm's *Shakespeariana*, Mullen's Catalogue of the Shakespeare Memorial Library, Birmingham. The literature in all languages is vast and includes thousands of titles.

See also in this work the articles on Alleyn, Delia Bacon, Bowdler, Boydell, Burbage, Collier, Cowden-Clarke, Delius, Drama, Dyce, Elze, Furnivall, Ulrici, S. W. H. Ireland, Johnson, Knight, Halliwell-Phillipps, Staunton, Steevens, Stratford-on-Avon, Theobald, Tieck, Grant White, &c. Of the French translations the best known are those of Victor Hugo fils (1859–62) and Montégut (1868–73); of the German, those associated with the names of Wieland (in prose, 1762–66), Schlegel (1801–10) and Tieck, Dingelstedt (1865–70) and Bodenstedt (1867–71; 3d ed. 1878).

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