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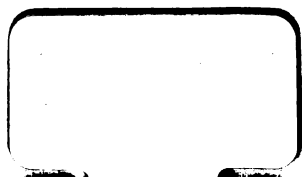
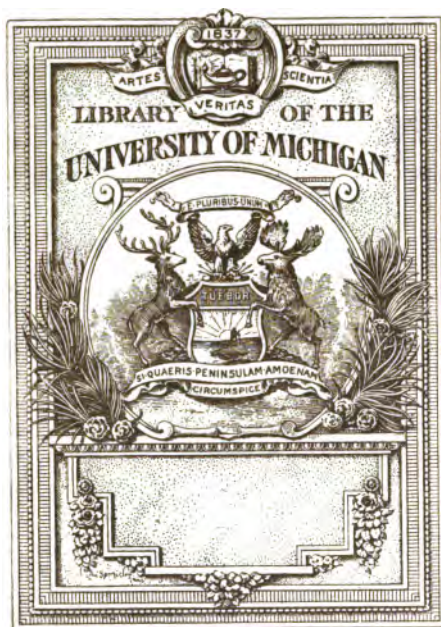
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SHAKESPEARE

(First Series)

HOMER B. SPRAGUE

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Studies in Shakespeare
(*First Series*)

By

HOMER B. SPRAGUE, M.A., PH.D., LL.D.

Sometime Principal of the Public High School,
Worcester, Mass. and the Adelphi Academy,
Brooklyn, N. Y. Nine years Head Master of
the Girls' High School, Boston, Mass. President
of Mills College, California

Also
STUDENT
PROFESSOR
AND PRESIDENT IN
THE UNIVERSITIES OF
YALE, CORNELL AND
NORTH DAKOTA
respectively



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To the
many thousands
of students still using my
annotated texts or who during
the last forty years have listened
patiently to my talks on the higher
English Literature
this little book is
affectionately
dedicated

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Preface

What need of adding another book on Shakespeare to the thousands that already cumber our library shelves? None indeed, unless something should be stated or emphasized that is either not well enough known or not sufficiently appreciated. Both considerations move the present author to offer these four Studies.

1. Of the foundations of Shakespeare's greatness we cannot claim that there have been new discoveries; but a careful grouping of the ascertained facts in regard to his father's family and his own early environment warrants the assertion that the first twelve or fifteen years of the boy's life were passed in the midst of influences calculated to awaken and foster his ambition. Reasoning from effect to cause, we have a right to infer that he was from childhood an intense worker, and soon a book student of extraordinary diligence.

2. Such a youth — a mind omnivorous and all-assimilating — impelled by a threefold motive of knowledge, culture, and expression — moving in a realm of the highest ideals — is especially liable to be fascinated by female beauty. Hence his marriage to a woman seven or eight years his senior, a step proper enough provided either had the means of supporting a family. Incidentally a law student,

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good evidence is given that he became a sort of schoolmaster. The suggestion is made that Anne was his private pupil, matrimonial 'conjugation' supervening as naturally as when Lucentio in *The Taming of the Shrew* taught the beautiful Bianca. No myth nor miracle nor external aid needed in the solution of the Shakespeare problem.

3. The soldier stage comes next after the lover's. The evidence that young Shakespeare was clerk at headquarters and otherwise saw much of military life is cumulative, and the documentary proof is almost if not quite conclusive.

4. The study of the plays reveals the fact that his superiority consists not at all in the originality of the plots, but largely, if not chiefly, in the creation of characters. His skill in making many of these originate or color for themselves a sympathetic environment is unequalled. He appears the keenest, broadest, wisest, best-informed of observers. Few if any are so tolerant as he. Spontaneity and splendor mark his earlier plays; depth and strength his later. Matchless language-form — blended truth, imagery, sentiment, personification — are claimed for him. Vividness and frequency of prosopopœia are a superlative excellence. Superadded to these and perhaps other instances of pre-eminence, are his wit and humor, his philosophic insight, practical wisdom, and power of portraying deep and varied emotion. Milton's eulogium is decisive.

Contents

| | <i>Page</i> |
|---|-------------|
| Preface | 9 |
| STUDIES IN SHAKESPEARE | |
| I. Shakespeare's Cradle and School; a Study of His Early Environ- ment and His Genius for Labor | 13 |
| II. Shakespeare's Early Manhood; a Study of his Marriage, Pedagogy, Law, and Foundations | 55 |
| III. Shakespeare's Sword and Musket; a Study of the Military Element in the Man and His Dramas | 105 |
| IV. Shakespeare's Wand and Sceptre; a Study of His Imagination and Points of Superiority | 159 |
| Index | 209 |

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Study I
Shakespeare's Cradle and School

Far from the sun and summer gale,
In thy green lap was Nature's darling laid,
What time where lucid Avon strayed,
To him the mighty mother did unveil
Her awful face. The dauntless child
Stretched forth his little arms and smiled.
"This pencil take," she said, "whose colors clear
Richly paint the vernal year:
Thine too these golden keys, immortal Boy!
This can unlock the gates of joy;
Of horror that, and thrilling fears,
Or ope the sacred source of sympathetic tears."

—*The Progress of Poesy*, by Thomas Gray (1754).

STUDY I

SHAKESPEARE'S CRADLE AND SCHOOL

A STUDY OF HIS EARLY ENVIRONMENT AND HIS GENIUS FOR LABOR

Many years ago, at the beginning of one of my long summer vacations, I sat down to ascertain if I could what sort of person William Shakespeare in his childhood and youth was, and what foundation, if any, was then laid for his greatness. I discarded preconceived theories, took little or nothing for granted, endeavored to verify, so far as practicable, the truth of every alleged fact, and to weigh, accepting or rejecting, all the customary conclusions. A rather bold, even audacious attitude, some one will say, yet often the correct one for a student—certainly in line with the apostolic injunction, "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good."

In this and other studies of Shakespeare I present some of the results at which I then and subsequently arrived. I shall not be so fortunate as to induce all my readers to agree with me in my findings: I hope many of them will do something better than that. Mrs. Browning well says in *Aurora Leigh*,

"Get work in this world;
Be sure 't is better than what you work to get."

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Right habits of thought, mental growth, discipline, broader horizons, new worlds of truth into which you enter, more joyous appreciation of the wealth of literature; above all, inspiration to higher living — these are better far than any accumulation of facts and formulae. If you gain any of these benefits, even if you do not concur with me at all after testing the authenticity of my facts or the soundness of my conclusions, I ought to be satisfied. Of course I believe both to be correct; but verify is the word; “Prove all things; hold fast that which is good.”

In this regard we are fortunate in our subject; for, as Halliwell-Phillipps affirms, “There is hardly anything in Shakespearian criticism that is settled beyond peradventure.” On many interesting points there is abundant room for differences of opinion.¹ Here, as in almost all history, we have to balance probabilities.

Notwithstanding all the research of scholars and antiquaries — and no man in modern times has been the subject of more investigation — Shakespeare is still a myth to some, a miracle to many, a mystery to all. Certainly the history of literature presents no other instance of a mind beginning so low and climbing so high. It used to be said that neither his father nor his mother could write.² However that may have been, he was

Cradle and School

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certainly of humble birth; yet, in spite of adverse circumstances, by that force of being which we call genius, he somehow rose to an eminence so lofty that few if any of our race stand beside him in royalty of intellect; and from that crowning summit it is perhaps safe to say that with eye at once microscopic and telescopic he directed a more searching glance and commanded a vaster horizon than any other man.

Every item of information in regard to such a person should be of interest, may be of value. This must be my apology, if any be needed, for stating facts which in the case of almost any other author might be deemed trivial.

We are told that he was of pure English blood, and this statement is explained to mean that he was half Saxon and half Norman, or, as Lowell poetically puts it, "One lobe of Shakespeare's brain was Normanly refined, and the other Saxonly sagacious." It has been commonly said that he was Saxon by the father, Norman or French by the mother. It is just possible that the reverse may have been the fact; for critics have arisen who argue ingeniously that, although "Shakespeare" is an old Warwickshire word and looks as if it were of unmistakable Saxon etymology, yet it appears in the reign of Edward III as a corruption of the French "Jacques Pierre" (Jacob Stone, or James Peter), and that the mother's surname

Studies in Shakespeare

“Arden or de Ardern” (Celtic meaning Wood) was adopted by the Turchills, a Saxon family of distinction whose pedigree is alleged to have been traced beyond the Norman Conquest.³

At Stratford-on-Avon, which they made their permanent home, John Shakespeare and Mary Arden, who had been united in marriage in the parish church of Wilmcote in the year 1557, were gladdened by the birth and saddened by the death of two daughters before our poet was born. On the 26th of April, 1564, their first boy was christened William.⁴ Those who have an appetite for etymologies find food for rumination here. “William” is said to signify “he of the good (or resolute or golden) helmet,” and “Shakespeare,” the Greek *engchespalos* (spear-brandishing)⁵ — William Shakespeare they say is the golden-helmeted brandisher of the spear, perhaps the most brilliant and warlike name in our language!

Besides her respectable lineage William's mother brought to the marriage quite a little fortune in houses and lands.⁶ His father, John Shakespeare, seems in business a very Proteus — farmer, grazier, wood-dealer, wool-grower, corn vender, butcher, pelt seller, tanner, glover. Perhaps we may reconcile the accounts of his various occupations by supposing that he owned a farm or two, and so was a farmer; raised sheep and cattle, and so was a grazier or flockmaster; cut and sold wood from his land, and so was a wood dealer; sheared the

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sheep and dealt in wool, and so was a wool-grower; cultivated and marketed grain, and so was a corn vender; butchered the animals and retailed the meat, and so was a butcher; traded off some of the hides, and so was a pelt seller; tanned others into leather, and so was a tanner; manufactured the sheepskins and calfskins into rude gloves, and so was a glover. Such a union of occupations was nothing uncommon in those days, when the division of labor had not been carried far.

Some eight years before William's birth his father was a juror in the borough court. A juror is presumed to have plenty of time at his disposal. He can sit long on juries or curbstones, waiting like Wilkins Micawber for "something to turn up." A year later we find his father filling the office of ale-conner, ale-inspector, a very agreeable office, no doubt.⁷ Six and again five years before William was born, his father was one of the four constables of the borough. What Shakespeare thought of constables may be inferred from several of his plays—*Love's Labor's Lost*, *Measure for Measure* and more especially *Much Ado About Nothing*, in which he makes the beef-witted Dogberry, himself a constable, say to Seacoal, "Neighbor Seacoal, you are thought here to be the most senseless and fit man for constable."⁸ Twice—five and again three years (1559 and 1561) before William's advent—his father is an affeeror, a borough court *attaché* charged with the duty of

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fixing the amount of petty fines for misdemeanors, a position requiring good judgment and a nice sense of right and wrong,

“ To make the punishment fit the crime.”

Two or three years before William came, we find his father holding the office of chamberlain or treasurer of the borough.⁹ Of course this required honesty and business ability. He held it for two years, and was so well-to-do he could several times allow the borough to be indebted to him in a considerable sum. Afterwards he was auditor of municipal accounts.

The summer after William was born his father contributed money to relieve the sufferers by the plague, “ the sweating sickness,” it was called. It struck Stratford in June, and in six months it swept away more than one sixth of the whole population, 239 out of about 1,400 souls.¹⁰ It is a fair inference that the family were then in good pecuniary circumstances and charitably disposed. When the boy was a little over a year old, on the fourth of July, 1565, his father became one of the fourteen aldermen, an office requiring wisdom and integrity. He discharged its duties so well that he held it by successive re-elections more than twenty years. Annually one of the aldermen was elected high bailiff and empowered to hold a court once a fortnight. The office was the highest in the gift of the corporation. The court was one of

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record with a registrar and a clerk. It had jurisdiction of cases in which the property involved did not exceed in value thirty pounds, say \$1,200 to \$1,500. So on the fifth of September, 1568, William's father became the presiding magistrate. He must have been of good abilities and high character with some knowledge of law.¹¹

September 5th, 1571, William being then nearly seven and a half years of age, his father was elected chief alderman, the highest position among the fourteen. He held it till the last day of the following September, quite constantly a rising man in the little world of Stratford. When William was eleven, his father had not only a controlling interest in his wife's property, fifty acres at Wilmcote and two dwelling houses with adjoining buildings and grounds at Snitterfield, but he was also the owner of other pieces of real estate.

The loss of their infant daughters must have made John and Mary Shakespeare feel a deeper and more tender interest in their first-born son, an interest not lessened by the birth of Gilbert some two and a half years younger than William, Joan about two and a half years younger than Gilbert, Ann¹² two and a half younger than Joan, Richard two and a half younger than Ann, and finally Edmund six years younger than Richard. William, then, at the age of fifteen or sixteen was the oldest of six living children. Quite constantly

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they had an infant in that house, and the sweet refining presence of a little child must have produced an impression for good on this most sensitive nature.¹³ Then came the sad experience of his sister's death adding a tinge of seriousness if not of melancholy, such as we may find in his early poems, especially his sonnets.

Yet we may safely assume after this brief survey that the first twelve or fifteen years of his life were passed in the midst of influences calculated to awaken and foster his ambition. During his first five or ten years—years that are often decisive of character and destiny—the family was rising in the social and political scale, growing in importance as in numbers. And this mother of respectable ancestry, this aspiring and successful father, at times the foremost man in Stratford, would of course wish their boy to have a superior education. What more natural than that they should employ private tutors?¹⁴ We do not know that such was the case with the Shakespeares; but it was customary in well-to-do families. With a special instructor of the right sort there is little in learning that is not attainable; few heights or depths that cannot be scaled or sounded.

Whether the boy had this advantage or not, there is no doubt that, like a majority of brilliant Englishmen, he was much indebted to that wisest of secular bounties which founds free institutions of learning. The Stratford free grammar school,

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established in the reign of Edward IV, suppressed by Henry VIII, restored in 1553 by Edward VI, was open to the chief alderman's son at the age of seven.¹⁵ The principal study was Latin preparatory to the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge. Higher English was picked up only incidentally in the "gerund grinding" processes of translation. The rudiments of Greek, and even French and Italian, were sometimes imparted to bright pupils in similar English institutions, and we may be sure none brighter than our hero ever sat on those hard benches. "Toughness plus astucity," to use Carlyle's phrase — bodily endurance and keen discernment — it seemed to me when I visited the school in June, 1882, must surely be gained by those who survived the drill for years.

The latest and best biographers for the most part, like Sidney Lee, T. Spencer Baynes, and Hamilton W. Mabie, are of the opinion that William spent nearly six years in this school.¹⁶ Appleton Morgan, William J. Rolfe and some other eminent Shakespearians have been inclined to believe he was not a diligent and regular student. Here perhaps our views may widely diverge. The vast and multiform learning displayed in the dramas is conceded, though some will have it that the erudition was Lord Bacon's, or that of some other ripe scholar or "syndicate" of scholars, or, to repeat the old joke, "It was not William Shakespeare, but another man of the same name!"

Studies in Shakespeare

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The prevalent impression, perhaps I should call it the current notion, is that the youngster himself was idle, eccentric, irregular, often truant, dissipated, dissolute even. Such depravity, the unthinking say, is characteristic of genius. "The favorite idea of a genius," says Dr. Orville Dewey,¹⁷ "is of one who never studies, or who studies nobody can tell when, — at midnight, or at odd times and intervals, and now and then strikes out 'at a heat,' as the phrase is, some new and wonderful production"; that geniuses are "loose fellows about town or loungers in the country," who "write in ale-houses and sleep in bar-rooms; pick up the pen as a magician's wand to supply their wants, and, when the pressure of necessity is relieved, resort again to their carousals; abhor order, can bear no restraint, eschew all labor," *etc.*

I have little patience with such a theory either of genius in general or that of Shakespeare in particular. Genius, as I understand the term, is the ability to see further and deeper, to feel more keenly, conceive more vividly, originate more rapidly, express more delicately and strongly, but most of all and including all to work very long and very hard. It is never idle: its apparent indolence is that of the whirling top, so swift as to seem motionless! But disturb it! — you see with what tenacity it clings to its place and purpose! Try to thwart or stop it — it flies into a paroxysm of

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power! The sooner we have done with the nonsense that it is any substitute for hard labor, the better. The greatest genius is ever the greatest worker. From his joyous childhood to his early death this brain labored as few have ever done.

Look at some of the undeniable facts. Most men's vocabulary is limited to a few hundred words, or at best two or three thousand badly used and more than sufficient to express their—lack of thought!¹⁸ Language with most men, to use the similes and metaphors of James Russell Lowell, is "that contrivance, hollow as a speaking trumpet, by which breathing and moving bipeds, 'sailing o'er life's solemn main,' are enabled to hail each other and make known their mutual shortness of mental stores!" Milton, perhaps the most learned of great poets, uses in all his verse fewer than eighteen thousand words. Our common English version of the Bible with all its majesty and richness of diction has less than seven thousand five hundred, not including proper names. But Shakespeare employs more than twenty-four thousand.

Whence came this extraordinary mastery? this almost unequalled copiousness of language? These vocables were not all in common use. Good judges affirm that at least five thousand of them could not have been heard by him in conversation either at Stratford or anywhere else; and if he had heard them, how could he have known the meaning of

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hundreds of them? From books and books alone could this familiarity with rare speech have been gained.

More important still is it to observe his correctness in its use. What says that prince of critics just quoted? He declares, "Shakespeare was more supremely incapable of bad sense, uncouth metre, and false grammar than any other man that ever wrote English."¹⁹ Similar is the testimony of one of the most brilliant of critics, De Quincey. In his *Essay on Style* he says, "It makes us blush to add that even grammar is so little of a perfect attainment with us that, with two or three exceptions, (one being Shakespeare, whom some affect to consider as belonging to a semi-barbarous age,) we have never seen the writer, through a circuit of prodigious reading, who has not sometimes violated the accidence or the syntax of English grammar."

Still more to be emphasized is the fact that Shakespeare needed all this vocabulary. No man condenses more. He sometimes seems to put several meanings at once into a word. No man differentiates more nicely.²⁰ The swarming "winged words" are loaded down with honey from many an Eden through which his fancy roamed. Few authors are so much given to the coinage of other parts of speech into what the pedagogues term "active verbs." This reminds of Mark Tapley in Dickens's *Martin Chuzzlewit*. He remembers the old Lind-

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ley Murray grammar definition of a verb. He says, "A verb is a word as signifies to do, to be, or to suffer (which is all the grammar, and enough too, as ever I was taught); and if there's a verb alive, I'm it. For I'm always a bein', sometimes a doin', and continually a sufferin'."²¹

To illustrate this coinage — The beautiful Egyptian queen in *Antony and Cleopatra* foresees that her revels with Mark Antony will in after ages be dramatized and acted in the theatres, and she is disgusted at the thought that some boy will personate and belittle her; for in Shakespeare's time and for nearly fifty years afterward the female characters were represented on the stage by boys, never by girls or women. Disdainfully she exclaims,

The quick comedians
Extemporally shall stage us; Antony
Shall be brought drunken forth, and I shall see
Some squeaking Cleopatra boy my greatness!²²

So "He *godded* me" in *Coriolanus*, that is, idolized me or treated me as a god; "Will you pleasure me?" in *The Merchant of Venice*, that is, "Will you please me, or comply with my pleasure?" "It did *bass* my trespass," in *The Tempest*, uttered the story of my crime in a deep bass voice; "She *Phebes* me," treats me Phebe-like, i. e., cruelly in *As You Like It*, IV, iii, 39. (Sprague's ed.) "It out-herods Herod," in *Hamlet*, III, ii, 13. (Sprague's ed.) "Grace me

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no grace, nor uncle me no uncle," in Richard II; "Thank me no thankings, nor proud me no prouds," in *Romeo and Juliet*.

This turning any "part of speech" into a "verb," vivifying a name or a quality into an act — making the dullest vocable glow with meaning and stir like a thing of life — is more frequent in the Elizabethan age than in any other, and more frequent in Shakespeare than in any other author. It appears to proceed from fulness and intensity of thought. Conceive of the immense distance that separates our dramatist intellectually from portions of the brown races that inhabit some of the islands south or southeast of Asia, of whom we are told by the late Professor W. D. Whitney of Yale that they have no "verb" in their languages. "Their so-called verbs," he says, "are really only nouns used predicatively. . . . To express 'He has a white jacket on' the Dyaks (these are the original and most numerous inhabitants of Borneo) say, 'He with jacket with white,' or 'He jackety whitey.'"²³ What progress in literature, science, or indeed in any phase of civilization, can be hoped for with such?

We continually quote from his verse: look for a moment at his prose, which lies in drifts of gold sand here and there. Disregard for a moment the dramatic effect, and note simply his mastery of English.

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Hamlet suspects that his uncle and mother, the king and queen, have sent his old schoolmates, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, as spies to find out whether he is really insane or only shamming. He appeals to them —

Let me conjure you by the rights of our fellowship, by the consonancy of our youth, by the obligation of our ever preserved love, and by what more dear a better proposer could charge you withal—be even and direct with me, whether you were sent for or no.”—
“My lord, we were sent for.”—“I will tell you why: so shall my anticipation prevent your discovery, and your secrecy to the king and queen moult no feather. I have of late, but wherefore I know not, lost all my mirth, forgone all custom of exercises; and indeed it goes so heavily with my disposition that this goodly frame, the earth, seems to me a sterile promontory; this most excellent canopy, the air—look you, this brave o’erhanging firmament, this majestic roof fretted with golden fire!—why it appears no other thing to me than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapors! What a piece of work is a man! how noble in reason! how infinite in faculty! in form and moving how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god! the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals! And yet to me, what is this quintessence of dust? Man delights not me; no, nor woman neither, though by your smiling you seem to say so. . . . You are welcome; but my uncle father and aunt mother are deceived. . . . I am but mad north northwest: when the wind is southerly, I know a hawk from a hand-saw!²⁴

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It is safe to conclude that his mastery of English, the blended copiousness and felicity of his diction, was never surpassed.

It is certain that his knowledge of Latin was extensive, although we make no claim that he was deep in its literature. Here is one proof: he uses a multitude of Latin words in their root meaning, indicating both that he knows them well and that he has a taste for etymological study. Thus in *Cymbeline* we have not only such obvious etymology as in *Leonatus* (lion-born, or lion's whelp), but the ingenious derivation of *mulier* (woman) from *mollis* (tender) and *aer* (air), not, we trust, an altogether false derivation! In *The Tempest* Ferdinand calls Miranda 'the top of admiration,' a pretty good translation of the word. In *Macbeth* and several other plays he uses "convince" in the root sense of overcome completely. In *Midsummer Night's Dream* and a dozen other plays he has "continent" in the sense of containing or container.²⁵ It would be easy to make a list of a hundred or more Latin words whose radical meaning he has so mastered that he can anglicise them with ease and grace.

In *Love's Labor's Lost*, *Taming of the Shrew*, *Merry Wives of Windsor* and elsewhere, he quotes Latin freely and often. Occasionally he originates it, apparently not less than fifteen times. His *Comedy of Errors* is founded largely upon the *Menaechmi* of Plautus, not found rendered into

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English till after Shakespeare's play was written. Ovid he appears to have at his tongue's end.²⁶ In the *Second Part of King Henry IV* he seems to tell us how he studied languages; for there we find the Earl of Warwick apologizing to the king for Prince Hal's association with Falstaff and other rakes: he says the prince is only studying human nature in these dissolute companions just as one studies indelicate words in a lexicon.²⁷ We have too the testimony of Ben Jonson, who knew him well. In his famous lines to Shakespeare, prefixed to the first folio, he says,

“ And though thou hadst small Latin and less Greek ”;

which may be interpreted, Though we should concede that thou hadst small Latin and less Greek. But take the statement as commonly accepted; it implies that he knew something of both languages. It should be remembered that Ben had, or thought he had, vast knowledge of the classics, and that what seemed to him “ small Latin and less Greek ” might have been a respectable amount of both tongues.²⁸ Some have even suspected that Will had as much of that sort of learning as Ben, but that he didn't over-estimate it and parade it as Ben did his! It has been suggested that Greek in that age was studied with the aid of books annotated in Latin, and by those students only who could fluently write and speak in the other language.

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As to his knowledge of Greek we have not only Jonson's testimony, but we have other evidence; quite a number of Hellenic words, either newly coined into our speech or partly introduced and naturalized by him;²⁹ also many resemblances of that ancient phraseology not till then construed in English print. Some of these resemblances, if we had found them in any other writer of the same date, we should have pronounced palpable imitations or translations. Little stress need be laid upon isolated instances, but the many may force conviction. Lowell points out that in the *Electra* of Sophocles, which, he says, "is almost identical in its leading motive with *Hamlet*," and which at that time had not appeared in English print, the Chorus uses "to console Electra for the supposed death of Orestes" language quite similar to that used by Hamlet's uncle and mother to console Hamlet —

Your father lost a father;
That father lost, lost his;
. but to persever
In obstinate condolement is a course
Of impious stubbornness.

Previously the queen had said

Thou know'st 't is common; all that lives must die,
Passing through nature to eternity.³⁰

It seems to be demonstrated that portions of Shakespeare's *Timon of Athens* are founded in part upon one of Lucian's Greek *Dialogues* not

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translated into English till twenty years after his death. "Sea of troubles" in *Hamlet* is identical with *kakōn pelagos* in the untranslated *Hippolytus* of Euripides and the untranslated *Persai* of Æschylus. "Table of memory" in *Hamlet* is *mnemosin deltois phrenōn* in Æschylus' *Prometheus*. In *Hamlet* and in Shakespeare's one hundred and seventh sonnet we find the phrase "prophetic soul," which exactly renders *promantis thumos* in the *Andromache* of Euripides. "Push us from our stools" (i. e., thrones) in *Macbeth* is *stuphelixai hedeōn* in Homer's *Iliad*. "Digest the venom of spleen" in *Julius Cæsar* is *cholon thumalgea pessei* in the *Iliad*. "Honey-heavy dew of slumber" in *Julius Cæsar* is very nearly *meliphron Hupnos* in the *Iliad*.³¹

Lowell, who made a study of the subject, and whose opinion is of the highest among American authorities, declares that Shakespeare is decidedly Greek in his method. He points out, as Campbell in his *Life of Mrs. Siddons* declared himself able to do, marked resemblances between Shakespeare and Æschylus in the mintage of the brain and particularly in the choice of epithets.³² He concludes that Shakespeare was able to read after a fashion the ancient tragic poets, among the most difficult of all Greek, in the original tongue.³³

He knew French. Scattered through his plays are many passages in that language which, it

Studies in Shakespeare

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seems, he was able to compose in with tolerable facility and correctness. His mastery of Latin etymologies would wonderfully facilitate the acquisition of languages like French, Italian, Spanish, daughters of that prolific mother. Perhaps the quickest way to learn these is to master Latin first. As illustrative of his French, notice the amusing dialogue in *King Henry V* between Ancient Pistol and the servant boy on one side and the captive French soldier on the other.⁴⁴ So the English-French lesson in the same play between the princess Katherine of France and her lady attendant who has been in England. So too the last scene in the play, the delightful courtship scene. King Henry tries to speak French in wooing, and she talks back in broken English. They get along pretty well, though Henry declares it would be as easy for him to conquer the kingdom as to speak so much French!

He knew Italian. How else shall we account for the fact that he imitates passages in Italian of which no English version had been printed? The story of Othello, for instance, appears not to have been translated into English print. True, Shakespeare might have read it in French. But we find in this play the following lines descriptive of the virtue of the fatal handkerchief, the dying gift of Othello's mother to her son, the gift of Othello to his fair bride:

There's magic in the web of it:

A sibyl that had numbered in the world
The sun to course two hundred compasses
In her prophetic fury sewed the work.

This in all probability is taken from Ariosto's *Orlando Furioso*, where similar expressions are used of a tent. Now the only English version of Ariosto in Shakespeare's time, Harrington's, does not have Shakespeare's phrase "prophetic fury," the *furor profetico* of the original Italian. The dramatist, then, it would seem, drew not from the only existing translation, but directly from the Italian original.³⁵ Note also in the same play the famous passage —

Who steals my purse steals trash: 'tis something, nothing:
'Twas mine, 'tis his, and has been slave to thousands:
But he that filches from me my good name,
Robs me of that which not enricheth him
And makes me poor indeed.

This is apparently taken from Berni's *Orlando Inamorato* (recast or remodeled from Matteo M. Boiardo's long poem of the same name), of which there had never been a printed English version.³⁶

A considerable part of Shakespeare's *Cymbeline*, all that relating to Imogen, is taken from Boccaccio's *Decameron*, of which there seems to have been no printed English translation in his age. For the plot of *The Merchant of Venice* he drew from an Italian novel, *Il Pecorone*, which had not,

Studies in Shakespeare

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so far as we can learn, been rendered into English print. Two of his tragedies and five of his comedies are of Italian origin.³⁷ Able scholars have insisted that some of these could hardly have been written by one who had not traveled in Italy. Conversation in Italian, forty or fifty words and phrases, occur in the dramas, such as one ignorant of the language would hardly have ventured upon.

Dr. William Maginn, and a number of others who within a few years past have made a careful study of Shakespeare's learning, and who have effectually confuted the arguments of Dr. Richard Farmer's celebrated essay on the subject (in 1767), are of the opinion that the author of the dramas understood something of Spanish. Certain incidents in Shakespeare's third comedy, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, appear to have been taken from *Diana Enamorada* (Diana in Love), a very celebrated Spanish romance by Jorge de Montemayor, not translated into English print till 1598, several years after the production of the play.³⁸ Some fifteen or twenty Spanish words and phrases are found in the plays, showing that the author had "dipped" into that speech.

If like young Francis Bacon, or the child Milton, or Walter Scott at the age of six, the boy had "taken all knowledge to be his province," he could hardly at that period have ranged over wider fields. Dr. Morgan, President of the late New

York Shakespeare Society, is not sure that Shakespeare had any literary genius; but he is clear in the conviction that there is vast erudition in the plays. He has advanced the idea that, as theatre proprietor and manager, quite probably he kept a ripe scholar or two under pay at his elbow! Judge Jesse Johnson in his *Testimony of the Sonnets* concurs. Bishop C. Wordsworth in *Shakespeare's Knowledge and Use of the Bible*, and other divines have shown the dramatist's familiarity with the Scriptures including the so-called Apocryphal books. The many kinds and extent of information with which his mind teemed, it would seem difficult to account for, except on the theory of a very long and almost passionate pursuit of knowledge for its own sake.⁹⁹

The fact that he was not an Oxford or Cambridge student, if that be conceded, proves nothing against his scholarship. Many a university graduate is no scholar. Many a profound scholar has never been inside college walls. Many a university answers to Dean Swift's sarcastic description, "It must be a very learned place; for every student carries some learning there, and nobody ever brings any away!" The world was our poet's university, as Italy is said to have been Robert Browning's.

To say nothing further at this time of his knowledge of English, Latin, French, Greek,

Studies in Shakespeare

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Italian, possibly Spanish; nothing now of his insight into the secrets of the heart; nothing of his minute and extensive acquaintance with external nature; nothing of his palpable acquired information of the technique of law, medicine, insanity, surgery, religion, art, music, natural science, politics, history, mythology, navigation, astrology, heraldry, falconry, metaphysics, military tactics, soldier talk, Bible lore—a general knowledge so vast that Lowell declares it unparalleled, and Emerson pronounces him “inconceivably wise”—who can believe, for this is what I wish to emphasize,—who can believe that this astounding mass of information, and the clear wisdom that was sublimated from it, were attained without eager and long-continued study? study of books too? Other knowledge passes away with the possessor; but *forma mentis aeterna*, the impress of intellect is everlasting. Science, art, literature, philosophy—much that man has thought, much that man has done, much that he has learned in the toil, the joys, the sufferings of a hundred generations—is garnered indestructible in the world of books.

Dryden declared “Shakespeare was naturally learned, and needed not the spectacles of books.”⁴⁰ “Naturally learned!” a contradiction in terms. “Needed not the spectacles of books!” The solemn ass Dogberry in *Much Ado About Nothing* affirms, “To be well-favored is the gift of fortune; but to write and read comes by nature.” But

Cradle and School

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writing and reading, and the knowledge treasured in books only, do not come by nature, Dogberrys and Drydens to the contrary notwithstanding. We measure the cause by the effect; the blow by the indentation or the recoil. Whatever his natural ability, he must have been a student, a book student, and one of extraordinary diligence.

But evil days came upon this family, and the bright future was hid or struggled faintly through thick clouds. Whether John's official business as ale-taster, the first office he ever held, exercised a fatal influence over him as that of whiskey gauger did upon gentle Robert Burns two hundred years later; or whether, as is more likely, he lived beyond his means in his ambition or extravagance or prodigal hospitality, with this increasing family; or, as likeliest of all, his plans miscarried through his attempting too many vocations at once — farmer, grazier, wood-cutter, wool-grower, corn dealer, malt seller, butcher, pelt vender, tanner, glover, and last, and perhaps worst, office holder — it seems certain that he sank into poverty. When William is about fourteen we notice the beginning of this descent: his father has to part with one of his land interests, presumably to meet pressing obligations: he can pay only half as much as each of the other aldermen to equip militia soldiers, billmen, pikemen, and archers. The other aldermen gave money weekly to relieve the poor; he is

Studies in Shakespeare

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excused by vote of the board from a tax of fourpence a week levied for that purpose. When William is fifteen another realty interest has to be sacrificed, a reversionary property at Snitterfield; and now John Shakespeare contributes nothing to equip militiamen and nothing to relieve the poor. Yet it seems he still endeavors to keep up appearances; for in this year William's little sister Ann dies, and at her burial there are both pall and bell, though other children, buried in the same year at Stratford, are honored with only half the ceremony, the tolling of the bell at half the cost.

The once famous actor, Thomas Betterton, for forty years the chief ornament of the English stage, admired by Addison and Steele, and who used to personate with wonderful skill and power Hamlet, Macbeth, and Othello, and was finally honored by burial in Westminster Abbey (1710), visited Stratford to learn what he could about the dramatist whom he almost worshipped. He picked up a tradition that narrowed circumstances forced John Shakespeare to withdraw his son from school. William Castle, an old parish clerk who was living in Stratford in 1693 learned that William, when a boy, was apprenticed to a butcher. Gossiping old John Aubrey who went up and down England gathering items of interest in regard to distinguished men, and who died in 1697, is more explicit. He visited Stratford and talked with old people who had known William in his "vealy" stage. He

says, "I have been told heretofore by some of the neighbors that when William was a boy he exercised his father's trade (of butcher), but when he killed a calf, he would do it in high style and make a speech!" Very likely. Will was not the boy to have his spirit broken by his father's reverses; not he! It is amusing to think of him in his immaturity delivering an oration, dramatizing the scene, airing his elocution, soaring on rhetorical wings, pronouncing high-sounding Latin or English poetry; while in sublime tragic style, perhaps recalling the legendary sacrificial goat in the dawn of the Greek drama, he invoked the immortal gods to partake in the offering, brandished the sacred butcher-knife, clipped the fateful lock of hair from between the gilded or wreathed horns of the animal, tossed it in the flames as a share for Minerva or Pluto, crumbled and sprinkled, Homeric fashion,⁴¹ the coarse salt-meal cake of consecration upon the head of the devoted calf, or chased the bleating sheep, or held by the ears the squealing pig! Was he thinking of these scenes a few years later when he pictured the fat Falstaff running away from a fight, who, says Prince Hal, "roared for mercy and still ran and roared as ever I heard bull-calf"?⁴²

In the sunny childhood of him as of every boy — every boy that "amounts" to anything, for there⁴³ are boys *and* boys! — we may be sure there were

Studies in Shakespeare

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glorious ideals and high hopes. Had all gone smoothly with his father, these day-dreams as usual might have come to nothing. Of the essence of genius is the ability by incredible industry, "carrying the feelings of youth into the powers of manhood," as Coleridge expresses it — perhaps the best description ever given of genius in action — to build the grandest works from the scantiest materials; nay, to hew obstructions into stepping-stones; as Massinger's *Virgin-Martyr* exclaims,

"The visage of the hangman frights not me;
And all your whips, racks, gibbets, axes, fires,
Are scaffoldings on which my soul climbs up
To an eternal habitation!"

And now at fourteen or fifteen, when he saw his father becoming helpless in the tightening coils, his gentle mother's face furrowed ever deeper and shaded ever sadder, three younger brothers and his still surviving sister likely to be soon barefoot, ragged, hungry, shivering, and the very name of the family a reproach for their poverty; may we not well believe that the spirit of such a boy, conscious of strength, full of the buoyancy of youth and health and hope, saw through the clouds, burned with a determination to uncoil the python that was crushing his father, stop the fingers that were tracing deep lines on his mother's face, to lift with a strong arm Gilbert, Richard, gentle Joan and baby Edmund out of the freezing mire, accumulate wealth to which all men in England

Cradle and School

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seemed to pay absolute homage, and by and by make Shakespeare a name for all the world to swear by and no longer for little Stratford to swear at!

The boy's day dream becomes the man's life work. Would it were oftener so. I fancy him resolving — "I will acquire and maintain a financial competence; better than that, I will achieve by strenuous labor the greatest literary success; I will learn all the wisdom of books, scale the heights and sound the depths of thought, solve if I can the mysteries of life and nature, voice in exquisite English all thought and feeling; recognize and make manifest a thousand analogies, images, symbols; transmute all matter into spirit, all objects and subjects into persons, a multitude of persons into typical characters; I will revive the buried past, paint such beauty, mirth, joy, sorrow, terror, as the world has rarely seen; — to the end that flowers may once more bloom and the sun again shine on the paths of brothers, sister, father, mother."

This was not the highest possible motive; but it was high. Let those who think it improbable assign another adequate to push young Shakespeare on to his splendid but laborious career. Some great impelling force there must have been.

I love to think of such a childhood and youth. At school learning with an avidity rarely paralleled;

Studies in Shakespeare

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or at manual labor by day and hard study by night; finding an unspeakable joy in books; reveling in an ideal world; the humble cabin in whose chimney corner like Abraham Lincoln he pored over pages dimly lighted by the flickering fire, nightly expanding to a palace, a city, a continent; — he was laying in ammunition for a life-long battle; an eagle's wings were growing for a flight above the mountain tops!

Cradle and School

¹ Says Dr. Appleton Morgan, "If any one ever yet made a statement about Shakespeare, or about all or any of his works, which somebody did not immediately rise to contradict, I have yet to hear of it." — *A Study of the Warwickshire Dialect*, Preface, x.

² "There is evidence in the Stratford archives that he could write with facility, though he occasionally made his mark." — Sidney Lee's *Life of Shakespeare*, p. 5.

A writer in *The British Quarterly Review*, July 1875, affirms that in extant registers, charters, leases, *etc.*, the name Shakespeare is spelled in fifty-five different ways.

³ Lee states that the first recorded holder of the name John Shakespeare was living in Kent in 1279. — *Life of Shakespeare*, p. 1.

There was much Celtic blood in middle England in that age. We look to the Celts for fire, poetic fervor, imagination; to the Saxons for industry, thrift, common sense; to the Normans for grace, dignity, elegance. All these seem united in Shakespeare.

⁴ In 1582 Pope Gregory xiii reformed the Julian Calendar by "retrenching" (annulling ten days), calling the tenth of October the twentieth. In 1752 the English Parliament adopted the Gregorian calendar, retrenching by cutting out eleven days, making the third of September the fourteenth. We should therefore fix the date of the christening ten days later than the 26th of April.

⁵ This is the epithet of Mars (*Iliad* xv, 605) and of auxiliaries of the Trojans (*Iliad* ii, 131). But how easily the sublime topples over into the ridiculous! If William is only Will, or as the Yale president and the gamins call the ex-president of the U.S., "Bill," and Shakespeare is but the French Jacques-Pierre (Jake or Jim Pete) — "Bill Jim. Petel" as the street Arabs would have it, we are reminded of the poet Saxe's funny satire —

"Of all the notable things on earth
The queerest one is pride of birth
Among our fierce democracie;
A bridge across a hundred years
Without a prop to save it from sneers —
Not even a couple of rotten peers —
A thing for laughter, fleers and jeers
Is American aristocracy.

Studies in Shakespeare

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" Depend upon it, my snobbish friend,
Your family thread you can't ascend
Without good reason to apprehend
You'll find it waxed at the farther end
By some plebeian vocation.
Or, worse than that, your boasted 'line'
May end in a loop of stronger twine
That plagued some worthy relation! "

The Proud Miss Macbride, xiii and xv.

⁶ The Ardens were among the most influential of the Warwickshire families. Mary's grandfather is supposed to have been "groom of the chamber" to King Henry VII, and a relative of Sir John Hampden, the patriot of a later age, whose memory is dear to Americans. Her father, Robert Arden, was a well-to-do farmer of Wilmcote near Stratford. Besides reversionary estate at Snitterfield, three or four miles from Stratford, he left to his daughter by his will dated Nov. 24, 1556, his "land in Wilmcote called Asbies, and the crop upon the ground"; also 6 pounds, 13 shillings, four pence, in money. Her property has been estimated worth £110. See Halliwell-Phillips' *Outlines of the Life of Shakespeare*, Vol. II, pp. 173-183; also Lee's *Life of Shakespeare*, pp. 6, 7; T. Spencer Baynes' *Shakespeare Studies*, pp. 40, 50-56 (ed. 1894); the magazine *Shakespeareana* for January, 1893; French's *Shakespeareana Genealogica*; and *The Encyclopedia Britannica*.

⁷ Elected in 1557, about the time that he became burgess or councillor. — An office requiring taste — not æsthetic, but of bread and *liquors!*

⁸ Like Dogberry, father of all Malaprops, the constables Elbow (in *M.* for *M.*) and Dull (in *L.L.L.*) have the gift of ludicrous misuse of words.

⁹ Elected one of the two chamberlains in 1561. He delivered his second statement of accounts to the corporation in January, 1564.

¹⁰ In 1603, says Edward Capell, Shakespearian editor and commentator, the "sweating sickness" carried off about one fifth of the population of London. The theatres were closed, as they had been ten years before from the same cause.

¹¹ I suspect we have a glimpse of Justice Shakespeare in the "Seven Ages" of man,

Then the Justice
In fair round belly with good capon lined,
With eyes severe and beard of formal cut,
Full of wise saws and modern instances!

As You Like It, II, vii, 153-156, Sprague's ed.

Cradle and School

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¹² Ann, baptized Sept. 28, 1571, was buried April 4, 1579; leaving sister Joan and brothers William, Gilbert, Richard and Edmund.

¹³ The tenderness of pity is repeatedly compared in Shakespeare to that of a new-born babe. Thus in *Macbeth* — sadly misunderstood by Irving, who thinks the babe strides the air! —

And Pity, like a naked new-born babe,
Striding the blast, or Heaven's cherubin horsed
Upon the sightless couriers of the air,
Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye,
That tears shall drown the wind.

— I, vii, 21–25; Sprague's ed.

See also *Measure for Measure*, II, ii, 78, 79, misinterpreted by Johnson, Malone, Holt White, Rolfe and others. The passage, appealing for pity and mercy, reads,

How would you be,
If He, which is the top of judgment, should
But judge you as you are? O, think on that!
And Mercy then will breathe within your lips
Like man new made! (i.e. with tenderness like that of a babe!)

See also *Hamlet*, III, iii, 70, 71, Sprague's ed.

¹⁴ See Halliwell-Phillipps' *Outlines*, I, pp. 38, 39.

In *The Taming of the Shrew* the wealthy old Baptista of Padua will provide a special instructor in languages and another in music for his two daughters. (I, i, 92–96.)

See the second of this series of *Studies*; viz, *Shakespeare's Early Manhood*, page 76.

¹⁵ The Stratford Grammar School, established in the reign of Edward IV by a priest, Thomas Jolyffe, a "brother" of the ancient guild of The Holy Cross, had been seized by Henry VIII on the dissolution of the monasteries (1636 or 1637). After fifteen years of suspension it was re-founded and re-incorporated in the reign of Edward VI, and thenceforward was known as "King Edward VIth's Grammar School," or "The King's New School."

The masters were noted for their learning and high character. Thomas Hunt was Principal during the six years of William's attendance (1572–1577).

The best authority on the curriculum is probably the late T. Spencer Baynes, editor of the ninth edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica*. In his *Shakespeare Studies and Other Essays* his exhaustive article on Shakespeare is reprinted from the *Encyclopedia*. He affirms as follows: —

Studies in Shakespeare

The pupil entered the school at seven years old, having already acquired the rudiments of reading and writing. During the first year the pupils were occupied with the elements of Latin Grammar, the accidence [inflections], and lists of words committed to memory and repeated two or three times a week. . . . In the second year the grammar was fully mastered, and the boys were drilled in short phrase-books. . . . In the third year the books used were *Æsop's Fables*, Cato's *Maxims*, and some good manual of school conversation. . . . The constant speaking of Latin by all the boys of the most advanced forms was indispensable even in the smallest and poorest of the country grammar schools. . . . The books read in the more advanced forms were the *Edogues* of Mantuanus, the *Tristia* and *Metamorphoses* of Ovid; Cicero's *Offices*, *Orations*, and *Epistles*; Virgil's *Georgics* and *Æneid*; parts of Juvenal; parts of Terence, Plautus, and Seneca. . . . The teaching even in the country grammar schools was as a rule painstaking, intelligent, and fruitful. . . . The masters were university men of at least average attainments and ability, as they rapidly gained promotion in the church." For more details see Baynes' *Shakespeare Studies*, pp. 68-73.

¹⁴ Nicholas Rowe (1674-1718), dramatist, translator, poet-laureate, produced in 1709 the first critical edition of the plays. It was in six octavo volumes, to which he prefixed a memoir of Shakespeare, very valuable so far as it goes. See copious extracts from it in Halliwell-Phillipps' *Outlines*, Vol. II, 72-76. "In all probability William's father removed him from school when he was about thirteen" (*idem*, Vol. I, 57).

¹⁵ *Lowell Lectures* by Orville Dewey, D.D. (1794-1882).

¹⁶ We suspect that, following Dr. George P. Marsh (1801-1882), who in his *Lectures on the English Language* (1861-2) counts only base [stem or root] words, we commonly underestimate the number. Thus Dr. Appleton Morgan, founder and president of the late N. Y. Shakespeare Soc., in his *Warwickshire Dialect* (p. 60) published in 1899, credits "the English peasant" with only 500; "the average tradesman, at most 4,000; Milton, 7,000." Following Prof. Geo. L. Craik (1798-1866), he allows Shakespeare 21,000.

But Prof. Edward S. Holden, ex-president of the University of California and ex-director of Lick Observatory, in an article in the *Washington Phil. Soc. Bulletin* (V, 1, App. I, 1874), and in the *Smithson. Misc. Coll.* (Vol. xx, App. 6, May 30, 1875), and subsequently in a personal letter to me, in which he quotes the late Dr. W. D. Whitney (1827-1904), Editor-in-Chief of the *Century Dictionary*, in approbation of his method of enumeration, says as follows:—"I find that Milton, in his poems alone, uses 17,377 words. His prose would yield a much larger number. . . . In the English Bible there are 7,209 words, exclusive of proper names. . . . Shakespeare's vocabulary contains over 24,000. . . . Marsh (*English*

Cradle and School

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Language, 1862) took only the simple or stem, and not the inflected forms of the vocables. In the sense in which I use the term, "lover," "loveless," and "lovely" are three words, though they have the same simple or stem." Holden relies on the accuracy of Cruden (*Concordance to the Bible*, 1737), Charles and Mary Cowden Clarke (*Concordance to Shakespeare's Plays*, 1845), and Charles Dexter Cleveland (*Concordance to Milton*, 1853). Edwin Reed (in the *Arena*) declares that Shakespeare (meaning Bacon!) introduced 5,000 new words into the English Language.

¹⁹ Lowell's *Among My Books* (Vol. I, pp. 155, 169).

²⁰ Beyond most authors he was an inveterate phrase monger, an experimenter with words, trying all sorts of linguistic gymnastics. We imagine him ever turning, twisting, recasting sentences and selecting the best. His nice adjustments of sound and sense are seen where we should least look for them. For instance, note the alliteration and assonance in the paper which Artemidorus reads in *Julius Caesar*; "Beware of Brutus; take heed of Cassius; come not near Casca; have an eye to Cinna; trust not Trebonius; mark well Metellus Cimber; Decius Brutus loves thee not; thou hast wronged Caius Ligarius." (Sprague's ed., II, iii, 1-4.) — So in Brutus's famous speech, in which Shakespeare admirably reproduces "the sententious laconic style," which Plutarch tells us Brutus affected. "Who is here so base that would be a bondman? Who is here so rude that would not be a Roman? Who is here so vile that will not lose his country? If any, speak; for him have I offended." — *Julius Caesar*, III, ii, 27-31 (Sprague's ed.).

Note his nice discrimination of meanings; e.g. in "opugnancy," "propugnancy," and "repugnancy," respectively, in *Troil. & Cres.*, I, iii, 111; II, ii, 136; *Timon of A.*, III, v, 45.

As to "weight of meaning superimposed on single words," see Lowell's *Among My Books*, Vol. I, p. 173.

For his conception of "words and ideas" as almost if not quite identical, and his laborious verbal ingenuities, see Prof. Barrett Wendell's *William Shakespeare*, pp. 55, 56, 63, 64, 65, 416, etc.

²¹ Page 171, Hurd & Houghton's ed.

²² *Antony and Cleopatra*, V, ii, 216-220. — The first woman actor on the stage was probably Mrs. Margaret Hughes, Prince Rupert's favorite, presenting *Deademona*, Dec. 8, 1660. Afterwards, from 1663 on, the wife of the great actor, Thomas Betterton, personated some of Shakespeare's prominent female characters. — Lee's *Life of S.*, 334, 335.

²³ *Language and the Science of Language*, 338. — See Sprague's notes on "pleasure," *Phebe*, and "out-herods" in the plays.

²⁴ *Hamlet*, II, ii, 279-305; 367, 368 (Sprague's ed.) — For other specimens of his prose see *The Merchant of Venice*, III, i. 33-58, Sprague's ed.; also

Studies in Shakespeare

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King Lear, I, ii, 93-119; 126-130; and especially the astonishing passage in *Lear*, II, ii, 13-21.

²⁶ See *Tempest*, I, ii, 144; III, i, 38; *Macbeth*, I, vii, 64; IV, iii, 142; *Midsummer N. D.*, II, i, 92; and the notes in Sprague's editions.

It is interesting to note how strenuously some pedants fought against the introduction of foreign words into the English language three hundred years ago. Thus in 1619, the year in which young Milton entered St. Paul's School, the Head Master, Alexander Gill, published a book (*Logonomia Anglica*) in which he inveighs against the influx of Latin and French. 'O harsh lips!' he says; "I now hear all around me such words as 'common,' 'vices,' 'envy,' 'malice,' even 'virtue,' 'study,' 'justice,' 'pity,' 'mercy,' 'compassion,' 'profit,' 'commodity,' 'color,' 'grace,' 'favor'! Are our words to be exiled like our citizens? Is the new barbaric invasion to extirpate the English tongue?" But Gill himself in the last two sentences uses five of the class of obnoxious words he so stigmatizes ('exiled,' 'citizens,' 'barbaric,' 'invasion,' 'extirpate').

²⁷ The earliest printed translation of Plautus's *Menaechmi* was that of William Warner in 1595. Dowden and the other recent commentators assign the composition of the *Comedy of Errors* to a date not later than 1591.—On the title page of "The first heir of my invention," as he styles his earliest published poem, *Venus and Adonis*, is an elegant quotation as a motto from Ovid's *Amores*, more advanced Latin than any of the selections from Ovid studied in the Stratford school. It reads,

*Vilia miretur vulgus: mihi flavus Apollo
Pocula Castalia plena ministrat aqua.*

²⁸ Hal, Harry of Monmouth, Prince of Wales, afterwards King Henry V, is evidently one of Shakespeare's most favorite characters. In him, as almost all the critics agree, we see much of Shakespeare himself. Perhaps we may find in Warwick's apology some explanation of William's youthful escapades, if we admit their existence. See note 32 in our *Study of Shakespeare's Early Manhood*, and the quotation there from *2 King Henry IV*, the language of the Earl of Warwick to the king. Note in it the last word, "hated." Taken in connection with Henry's after treatment of these boon companions, it tends to confirm Warwick's estimate. Certainly it throws light upon Henry's, and indirectly upon Shakespeare's character. Each hated indecency. See *Henry V*, I, i, 24-30, 54-59; III, vi, 94, 95; and especially *2 Henry IV*, V, v, 5-66.

²⁹ "A parallel to Jonson's statement is found in a Memoir by Edward Bathurst, B.D. of his friend Arthur Wilson, written before 1646; in which he says that "Wilson 'had little skill in the Latin tongue and less in the Greek'; and yet . . . had been a fellow-commoner at Oxford . . . regular

and studious, and could at a pinch, speak Latin." See Richard Grant White's *Memoirs of William Shakespeare* (in Vol. I of *White's Shakespeare* in 12 vols.), pp. xix, xx.

²⁰ E.g.; *Ate, anthropophagi, anthropophaginian, character, chirurgically, atomy, abyss, apoplex, cataplasm, epitheton, practic, theoretic, thrasonical, threnos, misanthropos*. In *The Tempest*, II, i, 136, and *Julius Caesar*, I, i, 24, 26 (Sprague's editions), he appears to recognize the substantial identity in sense of the three words, *chirurgion, surgeon* and *hand-worker*.

²¹ The literal rendering of lines 1171-1173 (*Electra*, Jebb's ed.) is as follows:

" Reflect, Electra; mortal sire thou'rt sprung from;
Mortal, Orestes too: sigh not too sore, Ælen;
For to us all to suffer this is due."

²² Some of these coincidences I have come upon in my reading and have not found them mentioned. In the only then existing English translation of Homer, that of George Chapman, the original is not so closely followed by him as by Shakespeare. Chapman's translation of "*Seven Books of the Iliads*" (i, ii, vii-xi) appeared in 1598; that of twelve books, in 1610; of all the twenty-four, in 1611; of both *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, in 1616. — Æschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Plato, and Lucian were not Englished till after Shakespeare's time.

Of Greek idioms, Shakespeare has many instances; as of the attraction of the relative into the case of the antecedent; of double comparatives or superlatives. So of a double negative to strengthen the negation; though well aware of the modern rule now universally binding. He says, "If your four negatives make your two affirmatives," *etc.* (*Twelfth Night*, V, i, 18, 19). — In Xenophon's *Anabasis*, I, iii, 21, the literal rendering is, "Not even in this place did nobody hear," *etc.* In *The Merchant of V. Portia* says, "I cannot choose one nor refuse none." See notes in Sprague's ed., I, ii, 23; IV, i, 54. — Ben Jonson approved the use of the double comparative and superlative. He characterized it as "a certain kind of English Atticism, imitating the manner of the most ancientest and finest Grecians!"

²³ An interesting and not unprofitable study would be to examine all the great dramas of antiquity for parallelisms; not to confirm or refute any theory of authorship, but to show how the foremost writers think alike. One familiar with Shakespeare but not with Sophocles will be struck with the curious coincidences of thought, sometimes even of phrase. Compare "cuts to the quick" in *Ajax*, 786 (Jebb's ed., Oxford Translation), with *Hamlet*, II, ii, 587, and *The Tempest*, V, i, 25 (Sprague's ed.); "makes hairs to stand upright" in *Oedipus Coloneus*, 1624-5, with *Hamlet*, I, v, 19 (Sprague's ed.); "Great Jove be my witness" in *Trachiniae*, 399, with

Studies in Shakespeare

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Henry VIII, II, iv, 22, and with *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, II, vi, 25, and with *All's Well That Ends Well*, IV, ii, 24; "Strong necessity compels" in *Philoctetes*, 921-2, with *Antony and Cleopatra*, I, iii, 42. (Of course Vergil's *steterunt comae*; *Aeneid*, II, 774, will be recalled.)

In the choice of epithets Shakespeare will hyphenate words after the manner of George Chapman. A remarkable instance is in *Julius Caesar*. In the first copy, that is in the first Folio (1623), we find the phrase "Tempest-dropping-fire." Here the three words are compound as shown by the hyphens, and they present one of the grandest images the imagination ever conceived, a deluge of mingled fire and tempest dropping from the sky! It has been spoiled by all, or nearly all editors, prior to myself, by striking out the hyphens! See note in Sprague's ed., I, iii, 10.

* Let college sophomores, who from their lofty standpoint are wont to look down with pity and think what heights Shakespeare might have attained, had he possessed their learning, be comforted. He probably knew more Latin than the average college student, except in the second year!

* Because Ancient Pistol in *Henry IV* (Act IV, iv, 19-21) thinks the French soldier says *brass*, when the French word is "bras," it has been argued that the dramatist did not know the *s* to be silent. The sufficient answer is that in the year 1415, either the *s* was sounded, as all silent letters once were, or, if not, the sound was near enough to "brass" to excuse Pistol's blunder, especially as he is thinking of ransom money!

* The original of Shakespeare's "sibyl" is the sad Cassandra, who, Ariosto tells us, gave the embroidered tent to her brother Hector, from whom it came to Helen and Menelaus; thence to King Proteus of Egypt; thence to Cleopatra, and finally to Constantine and Melissa. See the last canto of *Orlando Furioso*. Stanza 80 reads,

Eran de gli anni oppresso che duo milla
Che fu quel ricco padiglion trapunto.
Una donzella de la terra d' Ilia
Ch' avea il furor profetico congiunto,
Con studio di gran tempo e con vigilia,
Lo fece di sua man, di tutto punto.

* Berni's rifacimento is superior to the original of Boiardo. After his death in 1536 it was thrice reprinted in the next ten years. The stanza (St. 1, Canto LI), from which Shakespeare is supposed to have drawn, is thus happily translated by R. G. White:

Cradle and School

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"The man who steals a horn, a horse, a ring,
Or such a trifle, thieves with moderation
And may be justly called a robberling;
But he who takes away a reputation,
And pranks in feathers from another's wing,—
His deed is robbery, assassination,
And merits punishment so much the greater
As he to right and truth is more a traitor."

²⁷ *Merchant of Venice, Taming of the Shrew, Much Ado about Nothing, All's Well That Ends Well, Measure for Measure, Romeo and Juliet, and Othello.*

²⁸ This was written in Spanish in 1542 by the Portuguese poet Jorge. See Hallam's *Literature*, Longfellow's *Poets and Poetry of Europe*, and Ticknor's *History of Spanish Literature*.

²⁹ We can readily believe that this inquisitive and ardent mind, perhaps over-eager at times to eat of the tree of knowledge, would look into all sorts of places, try all kinds of experiences, study all types of characters; but that, even in his escapades, like his favorite prince, under the veil of seeming dissipation he was ever observing, apprehending, comprehending, digesting, co-ordinating; and, unsuspected by his wild companions, was utilizing in solitude and midnight the hours they had lost in thoughtless mirth. See the first half dozen and the last dozen paragraphs in our *Study of Shakespeare's Early Manhood*.

³⁰ "Les gens de qualité savent tout sans avoir jamais rien appris."—*Les Précieuses Ridicules* of Molière (1659).

³¹ For a vivid description see Homer's *Odyssey*, iii, 430-463.

³² *1 Henry IV*, II, iv, 242-3.

³³ Curiously enough the Registry of the proceedings of the court at Stratford for sixteen years (1569-1585), from William's fifth year to his twenty-second, are missing. Possibly some light on his boyhood and youth or on his father's misfortunes has thus been lost.

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Study II
Shakespeare's Early Manhood

HE was not of an age, but for all time!
And all the Muses still were in their prime
When, like Apollo, he came forth to warm
Our ears, or like a Mercury to charm!
Nature herself was proud of his designs,
And joyed to wear the dressing of his lines!
Which were so richly spun and wove so fit
As, since, she will vouchsafe no other wit.
Yet must I not give Nature all: thy art,
My gentle Shakespeare, must enjoy a part;
For, though the poet's matter nature be,
His art doth give the fashion; and so he
Who casts to write a living line must sweat —
Such as thine are — and strike the second heat
Upon the Muse's anvil, turn the same
And himself with it that he thinks to frame;
Or, for the laurel, he may gain a scorn;
For a good poet's made as well as born.
And such wert thou. Look how the father's face
Lives in his issue; even so the race
Of Shakespeare's mind and manners brightly shines
In his well-turnéd and true-filé lines,
In each of which he seems to shake a lance
As brandished at the eyes of ignorance. —

—*Ben Jonson*, London, 1623.

STUDY II

SHAKESPEARE'S EARLY MANHOOD

A STUDY OF HIS MARRIAGE, PEDAGOGY, LAW, AND FOUNDATIONS

One of the most surprising phenomena in the history of Literature is William Shakespeare. How to account for him is the problem. For more than eighteen years from the date of his christening, April 26, 1564, to that of his licence to marry, November 28, 1582, no word or act of his is recorded, nor is there any mention of him by a contemporary. We may be sure that in this period of "darkness visible" great forces were at work within him and deep foundations were being laid.

What were those forces, and what those foundations? Probably this mystery will never be completely cleared up. But whether solved or not, even a slight attempt at its elucidation may prove not altogether uninteresting or unfruitful.

Normally every child hungers to know, to understand. He can say with Francis Bacon, "I have taken all knowledge to be my province."

Some years later a few of the most gifted, like Milton or Goethe, fashion to themselves an ideal of a mind not only thoroughly informed, but also

Studies in Shakespeare

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symmetrical, strong, perfectly disciplined; "a man," to use Hamlet's words, "noble in reason, infinite in faculty, in form and moving express and admirable, in action like an angel, in apprehension like a god!"

Soon a few of these, like Alexander Pope, William Wordsworth, Robert Browning, Alfred Tennyson, take another step, make it a life-work to clothe all in most felicitous poetic dress.

Suppose the boy Shakespeare aimed at this three-fold excellence with special emphasis on the first and last: universal knowledge, highest culture, happiest expression. Given this triple aim — let it be cherished incessantly during forty or fifty years — given all the while perfect health, fair intellect, and a genius for labor, the most indispensable kind of genius, there needs but one thing more to ensure eminence in literature, and that is proper tools and materials, chiefly books. Whether as a source of information, an apparatus for mental gymnastics, or an auxiliary and test with models in expression, books of the right sort would seem to be indispensable.

Our ancestors had few, but they used them well. I sometimes think we have too many. They did less reading, more thinking. Fountains now are multiplied a hundredfold; we sip from many, drink deep of none. Butterflies, not bees, we taste of a thousand flowers; we store up no honey. So did not Shakespeare. Ex-president Eliot's

His Early Manhood

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five-foot shelf would have sufficed to hold his library.¹

But what books they were! A multitude of passages attest his acquaintance with the greatest of our literatures, the English *Bible* including the *Apocrypha*. Evidently, too, he has studied that wonderful compilation sometimes termed "The Bible of Heroisms," *Plutarch's Lives*. He makes much use of Holinshed's *The Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland*. He is in love with Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. I have elsewhere shown in him slight traces of the great Greeks, Æschylus, Sophocles, Euripides; Homer, Xenophon, Lucian, possibly Plato; of the Latin Plautus, Ennius, Vergil, Horace, Terence, Seneca, possibly Cicero; the French Rabelais and Montaigne; the Italian Boccaccio, Cinthio, probably Ariosto and Berni, possibly Dante; very likely the celebrated Spanish romance, *Diana Enamorada*; English Chaucer, Spenser, Bacon. I have named about thirty authors. We can be sure of but few, if any, others. These proved to be enough.

But a youth of eighteen, feeding on books, buoyant with health and hope, eager to acquire all knowledge, discipline all faculties, embalm in musical speech, like insects in amber, all thought, feeling, imagery — such a youth, seeing visions and dreaming dreams and nursing the fire of ambition, is sure to awaken some day to the con-

Studies in Shakespeare

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sciousness of another flame. A glory transfigures the other sex. The more intense and guileless the nature, the more complete the illusion. Bright candle, dazzled moth! Witness keen Sir Thomas More, saintly Richard Hooker, elegant Edmund Spenser, burly Ben Jonson, magnificent John Milton, politic John Dryden, genial Joseph Addison! witness Socrates, Dante, Montaigne, Molière, Rousseau, Shelley, Byron, Landor, Charles Dickens, Charles Sumner, John Ruskin, and a host of other wits, poets, scholars, philosophers, who, so the cynics tell us, lost their brains when they lost their hearts, and thought they courted angels, but found they had married women!

Anne Hathaway was twenty-six, William Shakespeare about eighteen.² They are supposed to have married at these respective ages "upon once asking of the banns," two Stratford farmers signing a bond to save harmless the Bishop of Worcester for licensing this unusual haste.³ The license is to "solemnize." The marriage, as many think, may have existed before, what has been called a "common-law" marriage, without either civil or ecclesiastical ceremonies — not a very solemn affair!

Early in the morning of my first Sunday in England I walked a mile through the fields to the neat cottage of Anne Hathaway.⁴ Entering I faced an old-fashioned fireplace, in opposite corners of which William and Anne are supposed to have sat with a great fire of logs and love between them.

His Early Manhood

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Mrs. Baker, the housekeeper, who died sixteen years ago, claimed to be a descendant of the Hathaways. She graciously greeted us visitors, and politely thanked us for our sixpences. In a room overhead was an heirloom, bed and bedstead, said to have come down from the time of Queen Elizabeth. Shakespeare's "courting chair," if it ever existed, had disappeared. Of what earthly use was a "courting chair," when there was the settle, a long high-backed stout bench much better adapted than a chair or a fireplace for amatory negotiations? I was told there was once a cheap print purporting to show Shakespeare's wooing; but that, too, had vanished. We consoled ourselves with the reflection that it must have been imaginary; for artists were not invited; kodaks, flash-lights, snap-shots had not been invented; reporters and newspaper interviewers with all their forty-auger power were in the distant future; and Peeping Tom had died at Coventry five hundred years before.

Richard Grant White, Sidney Lee and many other eminent scholars will have it that in this matrimonial business William was the sought and not the seeker. With Halliwell-Phillipps we prefer to think differently—that he was a passionate lover.⁵

A passionate lover! He who depicted the sincerity and intensity of so many from Romeo and Juliet to Ferdinand and Miranda, we may rest

Studies in Shakespeare

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assured, was not speaking from hearsay but from personal experience. Let me with reverence illustrate my reasoning. With irresistible logic to prove that our Creator is all-hearing and all-seeing, the Psalmist asks, "He that planted the ear, shall He not hear? He that formed the eye, shall He not see?" Says Emerson, "What lover has Shakespeare not out-loved?" He tells us lovers have "seething brains." He couples them with lunatics! Hear him —

Lovers and madmen have such seething brains,
Such shaping fantasies, that apprehend
More than cool reason ever comprehends!
The lunatic, the lover, and the poet
Are of imagination all compact:
One sees more devils than vast hell can hold;
That is the madman: the lover, all as frantic,
Sees Helen's beauty in a brow of Egypt!
Midsummer Night's Dream, V, i, 4-11. (Sprague's ed.)

To the same effect Rosalind's wise bantering of Orlando in *As You Like It* —

Love is merely a madness, and, I tell you, deserves as well a dark house and a whip as madmen do; and the reason why they are not so punished and cured is that the lunacy is so ordinary that the whippers are in love too! — *As You Like It*, III, ii, 371-375. (Sprague's ed.)

Was Shakespeare, then, inexperienced, guessing, and, except as an observer or reporter, really

His Early Manhood

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ignorant of what he so vividly portrayed? Must it not be that, like poor Troilus, he was for a while fascinated, intoxicated, bewildered, blinded? Can we doubt that he sought the marriage?

Let us not blame him for this. "All the world loves a lover." Must we blame *her*? Surely not for the difference of eight years between their ages. Many appropriate marriages have occurred where there was a greater disparity in this respect. But ought a woman of twenty-six to allow a boy of eighteen to become her husband when there is no property in sight, no income, no means of support? At first blush it looks as if neither had arrived at years of discretion!⁸

What did he think of this afterwards? that his marriage was premature? that a wrong had been done him? that wife should not be older than husband?

After fifteen or twenty years he wrote his *Twelfth Night*. In this drama we may reasonably assume that Duke Orsino was about Anne Hathaway's age, say twenty-five or twenty-six; that the fair Viola was about Shakespeare's age, say eighteen. The Duke is trying to woo and win the Countess Olivia. She does not reciprocate his passion. Viola is enamored of him, but he doesn't know it. To be near him she has disguised herself as a boy and entered his service as a page. Little does he dream that his handsome young attendant is a woman! Melancholy because the Countess rejects

Studies in Shakespeare

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his suit, he calls for music after the fashion of lovers to soothe his sorrow.⁷ Listen —

If music be the food of love, play on.

.

That strain again! it had a dying fall:

Oh, it came o'er my ear like the sweet sound

That breathes upon a bank of violets

Stealing and giving odors. . . . — *Twelfth Night*, I, i, 1-7.

.

Come hither, boy. — If ever thou shalt love,

In the sweet pangs of it remember me;

For such as I am all true lovers are,

Unstaid and skittish in all motions else,

Save in the constant image of the creature

That is beloved. — How dost thou like this tune?

Viola. It gives a very echo to the seat

Where Love is throned!

Duke. Thou dost speak masterly:

My life upon 't, young though thou art, thine eye

Hath stayed upon some favor that it loves;

Hath 't not, boy?

Viola. A little, by your favor.

Duke. What kind of woman is 't?

Viola. Of your complexion.

Duke. She is not worth thee, then. What years, i' faith?

Viola. About your years, my lord. —

Duke. Too old, by heaven! Let still the woman take

An elder than herself: so wears she to him,

So sways she level in her husband's heart:

For, boy, however we do praise ourselves,

Our fancies are more giddy and unfirm,

More longing, wavering, sooner lost and worn

Than women's are.

His Early Manhood

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Viola. I think it well, my lord.
Duke. Then let thy love be younger than thyself,
Or thy affection cannot hold the bent;
For women are as roses, whose fair flower,
Being once displayed, doth fall that very hour.
— *Twelfth Night*, II, iv, 15–39.

Here the Duke's strong opposition to the page's apparent choice of a woman five or ten years older is contrary to what we should naturally expect, and it *may* be a result of Shakespeare's own experience: but note that it is for the *wife's* sake he gives the advice,

Then let thy love be younger than thyself,
lest, as her rose-like beauty fades, she lose

“What alle women most desire —
The sovereignty of mannes love,”

as “Moral Gower” phrased it more than five hundred years ago.⁸

When the dramatist adds that a husband's love is likely to diminish as a wife's physical attractions decrease, it is possible, of course, that he is thinking for the moment of his own case. But it is nearly certain that he cherished permanently a loftier estimate of love and marriage. In his hundred and sixteenth sonnet he tells us so, and that he speaks from personal knowledge —

Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments. Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds,
Or bends with the remover to remove.

Studies in Shakespeare

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Oh no! it is an ever fixed mark
That looks on tempests and is never shaken;
It is the star to every wandering bark,
Whose worth 's unknown, although his height be taken.
Love 's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
Within his bending sickle's compass come:
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.
If this be error and upon me proved,
I never woo'd, nor no man ever loved!⁹

The Duke told Viola that a husband's love for a wife so much older could not "hold the bent," the tension of inclination. But Anne's affection for William did "hold the bent," if we may credit the touching tradition, commonly believed to be genuine, that "she did earnestly desire to be buried in his grave."¹⁰ But did *his* for *her*?

Grant White, Thomas De Quincey, and many others think it did not. They allege that he soon left her. We may answer, his very love for her may have hastened his departure; he must have remunerative employment to support wife and children. They affirm that for twenty-five years there is no evidence that he came to see her. We answer, there is no evidence that he stayed away. Aubrey relates that "he was wont to goe to his native country once a yearé."¹¹ She may have been with him in London a good deal of the time. They assert that he never wrote her a letter. We answer, he may have written her a

His Early Manhood

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thousand: very few letters of so long ago have floated down the stream of time to us.

A more plausible argument to show that he cared little or nothing for her is based upon a dozen words in his last will and testament. In the first draft,¹² though he names many friends, to each of whom he leaves some token of regard; for instance, a ring, a sword, a silver bowl, a hundred pounds, a house or lands — his wearing apparel to his sister, Mrs. Joan Hart; his chattels, leases, plate, jewels, household stuff to his daughter Susannah, or her husband, Dr. John Hall; a hundred and fifty pounds to his daughter Judith, Mrs. Thomas Quiney, *etc.*, in all this he does not once mention her; but finally he interlines the bequest, "Item, I give unto my wife my second-best bed with the furniture." "Second-best bed!" Yes, on sober afterthought, they say, he does conclude to give her not his best bed but his second-best, nothing else! We may answer; the best bed, as was then often the case, may have been an heir-loom like that in the Hathaway cottage, sure to remain in the family in her possession as long as she lived. But Grant White objects, "We may explain 'second-best bed' but how can we explain second-best thoughts; for the 'item' is an afterthought?" Perhaps in this way: He is finishing his will; she is perhaps amply provided for by her right of dower; he knows too that she will be tenderly cared for by their daughter Susannah;

Studies in Shakespeare

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he is finishing his will; he turns to her and asks her if there's anything in the house which she wishes especially to retain for herself: she answers naming that bed, perhaps the bed on which their only boy died, and which had been kept sacred to his memory!¹³

Critics have alleged that he nowhere praises women. This is not strictly true. In his earliest comedy, *Love's Labor's Lost*, he extols them and their influence highly; and never, against women in general nor against any particular class of them, does he speak with half the bitterness with which he speaks against all *men*. Furthermore and most significant is the fact, better than any verbal praise, that though the men outnumber the women eight to one, he holds up for admiration hardly half a dozen men of flawless character, while at least twenty of his women are almost if not quite perfection itself. You can name at least ten of them who are mentally equal and morally superior to any ten of his prominent men! That is what Shakespeare thought of women, married or single! Outside of the Bible where will you find so noble a group?¹⁴

To all this it should be added as bearing on the question of the happiness of Shakespeare's wedded life, that he appears repeatedly to be providing for her a comfortable and even elegant home, the best house in Stratford, with barns, gardens, orchards and extensive lands.¹⁵ And this seems certain:

His Early Manhood

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that he loved her enough to come back from London and spend his last years with her. If, before that, there had been any loss of affection, of which there is no evidence, it was probably his fault, not hers. Certainly he was not a model husband, if the wretched traditions are true, which I do not believe, or if his sonnets are to be interpreted as autobiographical, which is very doubtful.

This marriage, happy or unhappy, premature if not ill-starred, occurred on or about the first of December, 1582, possibly some months earlier. On the twenty-sixth of the following May (O. S.) their first child, Susannah, was christened. A year and a half later twins, Hamnet and Judith, were born (Feb. 2, 1584-5 O. S.) So before William was twenty-one he was the father of three children!

What effect had this matrimonial experience?

A youth of astonishing genius, no doubt, but very likely in affairs of the heart unsophisticated as the sheep upon the meadows of his river Avon — a bookworm it may have been, suddenly carried away by a lover's frenzy — wrongly permitted by a lady eight years his senior to contract a marriage that from poverty might prove a martyrdom — possibly we owe something of his greatness to this very misery, if misery there was. It is sometimes best for the world that the highest intellect stalk through it without visible companionship.

Studies in Shakespeare

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"You have a wife already, whom you love,
Your social theory,"

says Aurora Leigh to her cousin suitor, Romney, in Mrs. Browning's poem.

"My muse is she my love shall be,"

Said the quaint poet Thomas Randolph, Shakespeare's contemporary (1605-1635). "I have espoused my art; my works shall be my children" declared Michael Angelo. Francis, afterwards called Lord Bacon, to whom matrimony was always a matter of money, and who came perilously near not marrying at all and never had any children, solemnly averred at the age of fifty-one, "Certainly the greatest works, and of greatest merit for the public, have proceeded from the unmarried or childless men, which, both in affection and means, have married and endowed the public."¹⁶ Possibly, when his "passion had spent its novel force," the tender love of the great heart of Shakespeare, the time, the pains, the ceaseless attentions, which might have been lavished upon an idolized wife or absorbed in a thousand household cares, went nearly all to the drama instead. Wedded not to a woman, but to immortal verse, as Milton wished his Lydian airs to be —

"And ever against eating cares
Lap me in soft Lydian airs
Married to immortal verse" —

His Early Manhood

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his transient individual sorrow, if sorrow there was, is transmuted into many millions' lasting joy.

But if fancy may dwell for a moment on probabilities, what a struggle must have been his! How fate must have lashed him! To say nothing of his harassed and hunted father in the depths of poverty, his broken-hearted mother, his younger brothers and still surviving little sister, all of whom had begun to look hopefully to bright, strong, brave William; to say nothing of this venerable wife; here were three little mouths to feed, three little backs to clothe, three pairs of little feet to be shod; every avenue to wealth and fame barricaded; neither capital nor inclination to set up like his father in the butcher business; glorious aspirations in his heart, but three babies in his arms; wings of imagination impatient to soar to the skies; his soul singing

Oh for a Muse of fire that would ascend
The brightest heaven of invention!

(— First lines of *Henry V.*)

but solid Anne Hathaway clinging to him like Mrs. Micawber to the ill-fated Wilkins when she lovingly threatened, "I never will desert you, Mr. Micawber,"¹⁷ — and the demon of poverty saddled upon him like the "old man of the sea" astride the neck and shoulders of Sinbad the Sailor, — "The Philistines be upon thee," Shakespeare!

Whither shall he turn? Well — he is perhaps

Studies in Shakespeare

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better fitted for school-keeping than for any other business. It used to be the easiest profession to enter. It required no capital. Henry Ward Beecher, whom I often met at the *Builer Health Lift* in Brooklyn,¹⁸ once remarked to me, as we lay resting side by side, after lifting, that if a learned young man, just graduating from college, full of philosophies and classics, had no property, no income, no other way of keeping the wolf of starvation from the door, he "would either teach or preach!" "I did both," said Beecher. He told me where.

The situation is different now, thanks to the training which is gradually making pedagogy one of the fine arts. But the time was, and not so long ago, when a little scholarship alone was required as an outfit; and no lawless lawyer, no impatient physician, no hungry pastor, no unstudied student, unschooled scholar, illiterate man of letters, but was, in his own and others' estimation, entirely competent to train the immortal mind! And so the one secular business, whose right exercise requires more skill, produces more far-reaching visible results, and is more vital to the prosperity of a free state than any other, was more than any other exposed to the incursions of a horde of adventurers, vagrants, riffraff, fractions of humanity, fools learned and unlearned not fit to train anything above a dog!¹⁹ Yet from Pythagoras to Pestalozzi; from old Homer teaching

His Early Manhood

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school three years at Smyrna, to Whittier playing pedagogue for months at Amesbury; from Plato in the Academy at Athens, to Emerson five years in his brother's seminary in Boston; from Aristotle in the Lyceum to Agassiz in his wife's classes at Cambridge; from Nicholas Udal and Sir John Cheke and Roger Ascham and Jeremy Taylor and John Milton to Daniel Webster and Thomas Arnold and Mark Hopkins and Emma Willard and Mary Lyon and Phillips Brooks and Woodrow Wilson, and others whose names are dear to mankind and familiar as household words, conspicuous among the noble living or sleeping with the illustrious dead; a host of bright and beautiful characters, among them some of the best intellects of the race, have honored this profession and been honored by it; and to this number I think we may add Shakespeare. He certainly was eminently fit for it, his need was great, and entrance upon it was easy.

There is good evidence that he was at one time a schoolmaster. Aubrey records and gives the name of his informant, Mr. Beeston, that Shakespeare "understood Latin pretty well, for he had been in his younger years a schoolmaster in the country."²⁰ This Mr. Beeston, who lived till 1682 and whom Dryden compliments by naming him "the chronicle of the stage," had been a member, even a fellow, of Lord Strange's Company of Players, to which Shakespeare himself belonged.²¹

Studies in Shakespeare

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He therefore would be likely to know the facts. Why should he falsify? What motive could there be for inventing such a statement? The tradition is not one that would be likely to arise out of mere nothing. Unfavorable reports do arise out of mere nothing by a kind of "spontaneous generation" in the "protoplasm" of total depravity. In 'the struggle for existence,' scandalous statements, like infant mosquitoes that have squeezed through a screen, small at first, grow large and strong; and by that psychological law which curiously seems to reverse the biological, the "survival of the" morally "unfittest," they are pretty surely perpetuated.

The evil that men do lives after them,
The good is oft interréd with their bones. —

Julius Caesar, III, ii, 73, 74 (Sprague's ed.)

But this is a favorable tradition with no depravity, no envy, no malice, no distrust, to give it birth or keep it alive. It is stated as a well known fact to account for his mastery of Latin — "He understood Latin pretty well, for he had been in his younger years a schoolmaster in the country."

As corroborative of the statement made by Beeston and Aubrey it is well to note that many pages, especially in his earlier writings, teem with precisely that kind of learning which a schoolmaster, more than any other, was likely to be familiar with. "No man," says Dr. Sam. Johnson,

His Early Manhood

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“forgets his original trade”; and Coleridge remarks that “a young author’s first work almost always bears traces of his recent pursuits.” Not to lay stress upon Shakespeare’s habit which I have elsewhere shown,²² of using words in their root meaning, a habit into which a Latin teacher is especially liable to fall, and the kindred practice of coining words from the classic tongues, we find that the contents of the text-books which he would use daily, the stories of ancient history and mythology, topics familiar in the class room, are evidently running constantly through his head and skipping off the point of his pen.²³

Note, too, the prominence he gives, especially in his earlier plays, to schools and school matters. There are not less than fifty mentions of them, besides some thirty or forty concerning the pupils, the masters, and the exercises. I cite a few, some of which show the importance he attaches to the instruction.

In *As You Like It* Orlando complains of his elder brother Oliver who is defrauding him of the education his father intended for him. “My brother Jacques he keeps at school, and report speaks goldenly of his profit; for my part he keeps me rustically at home.” To Oliver he says, “My father charged you in his will to give me a good education. You have trained me like a peasant, obscuring and hiding from me all gentlemanlike qualities.” Hamlet, who wishes to go back to

Studies in Shakespeare

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school at Wittenberg, will not allow his friend and fellow student to disparage himself by calling himself a truant! He recognizes the seriousness of the charge of truancy, the plague of teachers.

Hamlet. But what, in faith, make you from Wittenberg?

Horatio. A truant disposition, good my lord.

Hamlet. I would not hear your enemy say so,

Nor shall you do mine ear that violence

To make it truster of your own report

Against yourself. I know you are no truant. —

Hamlet, I, ii, 168–173. (Sprague's ed.)

In *Merry Wives of Windsor* he funnily caricatures a lesson in Latin Grammar as conducted by the Welsh schoolmaster parson Sir Hugh Evans.²⁴ In *Twelfth Night* a pedant keeps a school in the church, and has a new wall map showing “the augmentation of the Indies.”²⁵ In *Love's Labor's Lost* the schoolmaster Holophernes is complimented for thoroughness in the *minutiae* of book-learning. He is fastidious about accents, apostrophes, pronunciation, poetic cadences; insists that the letter *b* should be sounded in ‘debt’ and ‘doubt,’ and *l* in ‘calf’ and ‘half’; he says he “smells false Latin”; he affects, like Goldsmith's master in *The Deserted Village* “words of learned length and thundering sound”; shows off his skill in alliteration; and displays his Latin and Italian in true pedagogue-pedant style, as if, to use the description by Moth, the page, he “had been at a great feast of languages and had stolen the scraps!”²⁶

His Early Manhood

www.libtool.com.cn

Significant in *As You Like It* is the picture of the boy going to the hated school of three centuries ago,

Then the whining schoolboy with his satchel
And shining morning face, creeping like snail
Unwillingly to school! —

II, vii, 145-147. (Sprague's ed.)

Still more significant in *Romeo and Juliet* is the comparison,

Love goes toward Love as schoolboys from their books;
But Love from Love, toward school with heavy looks! —

II, ii, 157-158.

In speaking of our poet as possibly having been a teacher, we need not imagine him wielding birch or ferule over ten, twenty, thirty or forty 'urchins,' as Washington Irving would style them. A private tutor in that age was commonly termed a "schoolmaster," though he had but two or three pupils or only one.²⁷ Thus Prospero, one of the most complete all-round characters in the plays, and in whom, as all critics agree, we discern something of the features of the dramatist himself, teaches his daughter Miranda: she is his only pupil: he calls himself her "schoolmaster." In *The Taming of The Shrew* we have two, Hortensio who teaches music, and Lucentio who teaches Latin and Greek: each has but one pupil, yet each is called a "schoolmaster." In *Antony and Cleopatra* Euphronius

Studies in Shakespeare

www.libtool.com.cn

who teaches but two children is styled their "schoolmaster." In this Shakespeare follows Plutarch.

I have often fancied William such a schoolmaster as that, and have even suspected that Anne Hathaway was his sole (s o u l) pupil! He would teach her as Lucentio in *The Taming of the Shrew* taught the beautiful Bianca. You may remember that Lucentio, desiring to make Bianca's acquaintance and to woo her, disguises himself as a teacher, exchanging his costly robes for the humbler garments of his servant Tranio. Dressed as a tutor he gains admission into the stately mansion of Bianca's father, Baptista, at Padua, and is engaged by him to instruct the girl in the classic tongues. Listen as he gives her a lesson in Latin. He reads the text in a loud voice, but translates, or pretends to translate, in an undertone, suspecting some one is eavesdropping!

Bianca. Where left we last?

Lucentio. Here, madam:

'Hic ibat Simois; hic est Sigeia tellus;

Hic steterat Priami regia celsa senis.'

Bianca. Construe them.

Lucentio. *Hic ibat*, as I told you before; *Simois*, I am Lucentio; *hic est*, son unto Vincentio of Pisa; *Sigeia tellus*, disguised thus to get your love; *Hic steterat*, and that Lucentio that comes a-wooing; *Priami*, is my man Tranio; *regia*, bearing my port; *celsa senis*, that we might beguile the old 'pantaloon.'

His Early Manhood

www.libtool.com.cn

Then the fair Bianca tries her skill at translating the same passage.

Bianca. Now let me see if I can construe it.

Hic ibat Simois, I know you not; *hic est Sigeia tellus*, I trust you not; *Hic steterat Priami*, take heed he hear us not; *regia*, presume not; *celsa senis*, despair not!

With such a teacher and such a pupil rapid progress might naturally be expected in *conjugating*, especially the verb *amare!*²⁸

We find then in the plays strong confirmation of Aubrey's and Beeston's statement that Shakespeare "was in his younger years a schoolmaster in the country."

Although this vocation was ready at hand, and, more than most others, might afford leisure for study and experiment, and that was perhaps what he most desired;— the opportunity of investigating and accumulating; of classifying, digesting, practising mental gymnastics; and of mastering the art and mystery of poetic expression;—it was not likely to content him long. It might do for a temporary support, but it could hardly be anything better than that, or a stepping-stone. He was not of the stuff of which martyrs and missionaries and permanent school teachers are made! What more natural than that he should study law? Doubtless

Studies in Shakespeare

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he had often seen his father presiding as magistrate in the court-leet of Stratford; at table had heard law cases stated and knotty legal questions discussed; had known of numerous impending litigations in which his father was to be plaintiff or defendant, particularly the distressing complications in which he was entangled when William was fourteen to eighteen years of age, and on the unraveling of which the happiness of the Shakespeare family depended.

Even if the laws of England and the proceedings of courts of justice had not been thus forced upon his attention during his childhood and youth, they would yet have constituted an important branch of that universal knowledge the attainment of which may have been his earliest ideal.²⁹ He must have known his powers, and what could be more natural than that he should at times dream of a professional career for himself as a lawyer? We need attach no importance to the tradition mentioned by Steevens, Malone, and Rushton, and yet there was such a tradition, that he was once a clerk in an attorney's office. Still less can we concur unreservedly in Lord Chancellor Campbell's sweeping assertion (1859) that, "While novelists and dramatists are continually making mistakes as to the law of marriage, of wills, and of inheritance, to Shakespeare's law, lavishly as he propounds it, there can be neither demurrer, nor bill of exceptions, nor writ of error!" Yet there are

His Early Manhood

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passages which justify the affirmation of the late Senator Cushman K. Davis of Minnesota in his treatise on Shakespeare's legal lore (1899) that "The legalism is structural; it could not be uprooted without taking the thought, blood, rhetoric, and continuity of the whole text along with it."⁸⁰ For instance, let us quote from *Hamlet* a part of the graveyard scene. Even a well-read lawyer needs a dictionary to understand it fully. Two grave-diggers are unearthing bones in the ancient cemetery. Says Hamlet — musing —

There's another: why may not that be the skull of a lawyer? Where be his quiddits now, his quillets, his cases, his tenures, and his tricks? Why does he suffer this rude knave now to knock him about the sconce with a dirty shovel, and will not tell him of his action of battery? — Hum! This fellow might be in 's time a great buyer of land, with his statutes, his recognizances, his fines, his double vouchers, his recoveries: is this the fine of his fines and the recovery of his recoveries, to have his fine pate full of fine dirt? Will his vouchers vouch him no more of his purchases, and double ones too, than the length and breadth of a pair of indentures? The very conveyances of his lands will hardly lie in this box; and must the inheritor have no more? ha?

Horatio. Not a jot more, my lord.

Hamlet. Is not parchment made of sheep-skins?

Horatio. Ay, my lord, and of calf-skins, too.

Hamlet. They are sheep and calves which seek out assurance in that! — *Hamlet*, V, i, 94–110. (Sprague's ed.)

Studies in Shakespeare

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Not claiming, therefore, that he was a practitioner, it is evident that he mastered much of the technicalities of law.

To all this it has been objected by Dr. Appleton Morgan, the gifted president of the late New York Shakespeare Society, and by Mr. William C. Devecmon, a learned member of the Maryland bar, and by many others, that the trial scene in *The Merchant of Venice*, case of "Shylock vs. Antonio," "shows a consummate ignorance of all law and of all legal procedure," and that "every ruling of Portia is the exact reverse of the English law of Shylock's case." To these strictures answer has been made in my *Study of Shakespeare's Greatest Character, a Woman*, and in my essay on *Alleged Blunders in Shakespeare's Legal Terminology*, published some years ago (April, 1902) in *The Yale Law Journal*. In these I show: (1) It would have been improper to conform to modern English law or English court practice, for the scene is laid in ancient Venice five hundred or a thousand years ago; (2) In some of the deviations from English rule and usage, the dramatist is adhering closely to the old story, which, for aught we know, may be true history; (3) In that remote age the highest court in Venice very likely had a fourfold jurisdiction; civil, equity, criminal, and ecclesiastical or probate, and these four are successively and very properly availed of; (4) In the court procedure in the play there are remarkable coincidences with

usages which never existed in England but may have been common in countries under Spanish domination, and which prevailed in the middle of the nineteenth century in the Republic of Nicaragua and other Spanish American states. In *The Overland Monthly* of July, 1886, Mr. John T. Doyle of California, who had been in business for some years in one of those central American states, points out those usages which he had observed in the courts there, and which had evidently been inherited from Spain or Italy.²¹

But the monotony of pedagogue life or incipient butchery by day and hard study by night, varied by cradling in his arms his twin babes Hamnet and Judith and two-years-old Susannah when their triple cries baffled mother Shakespeare's soothing paregoric, seems to have come to a sudden and inglorious end. Nicholas Rowe heard from the famous actor Thomas Betterton a tradition believed to be authentic, that young Shakespeare fell into bad company, and that some of his companions engaged him in the robbery of Sir Thomas Lucy's park of deer at Charlecote, three or four miles from Stratford. In those days, to kill and carry off a wild deer in defiance of the game laws would have been deemed by fast young men about as heinous a crime as it would be thought now to catch fish in our great lakes or Long Island Sound or the English Channel, if some multi-millionaire

Studies in Shakespeare

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owned the whole of those waters and forbade all trespassing.³²

There were special reasons why these madcaps should single out Sir Thomas Lucy for their roguish pranks. He was reputed proud of his wealth and his aristocratic connections; a solemn puritanic person and therefore an object of dislike to young men of velocity and rapidity; as high sheriff of Warwickshire taking notice of John Shakespeare's absence from church; fussy and testy, his family being repeatedly involved in quarrels with the neighboring Stratford folks; a member of Parliament, and to crown all he was pushing forward a bill which he had introduced as chairman of a committee of the House of Commons to enforce the hated game laws, laying new restrictions on poor men's hunting in England, and aiming to save up the wild animals for the amusement of the gentry!

Our young scapegraces thought such a man, his deer, and his keeper's daughter fair game. They 'engaged' William — "engaged" is the word, which shows that William did not originate the plot — "engaged" him in the affair, broke into the enclosure, killed a deer, and were carrying it off, when they were attacked by some of Sir Thomas's men. These they beat. Imagine the gamekeeper's daughter coming up with an inverted, high-lifted broom to her father's defence. She will make a clean sweep of the trespassers!

His Early Manhood

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With Christian meekness worthy of a better cause they receive her with open arms and give back a kiss for a blow! The golden rule, "To do to others as I would," *etc.*, has its exceptions! However ugly the gamekeeper, however beautiful the girl, however fascinating the fun, we cannot justify the boys: they had carried the deer and the joke too far. Sir Thomas did right in causing them to be arrested.

Soon after this, a singular lampoon is said to have been found nailed up on Sir Thomas's park gate. It is coarse, bitter, nonsensical; but not without a certain smartness. It was attributed to young Shakespeare, and Grant White and others are inclined to think a part of it is genuine, and that nobody in Stratford but William was capable of writing a satire so keen.³³

To complete the story of this deer stealing, the first scene in *Merry Wives Of Windsor* strongly corroborates the tradition. Shakespeare seems to be paying off old scores. The thick-headed Justice Shallow is almost universally believed to be Sir Thomas Lucy himself. He is in a rage at Jack Falstaff and his naughty companions for breaking into his park, killing the deer, beating the men, and kissing the girl! Then there is the same coarse punning on the name Lucy.³⁴

Whatever part young Shakespeare acted in all this, clearly he was no longer the person to teach children and youth by precept and example, or

Studies in Shakespeare

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make them repeat according to the good old catechism of the Church of England, "My duty toward my neighbor is . . . to order myself lowly and reverently to all my betters; to hurt nobody by word or deed . . . to keep my hands from picking and stealing, and my tongue from evil speaking!" Farewell to school-keeping now, if not before.

Off to London goes our boy husband, fleeing the wrath of the incensed knight, bidding a hasty good-bye to wife and babes, to sad-eyed mother and bailiff-hunted father. It is perhaps the turning-point in his career. He is a sadder and a wiser man. His "wild oats" are nearly all sown. There is little left in Warwickshire for him to learn.

He is now in London, twenty or twenty-one years of age, penniless but healthy and hopeful. He has eyes of a light hazel color, complexion fair, hair and beard auburn. Thus much was learned of his personal appearance from his bust in Holy Trinity Church, Stratford, placed there about eight years after his death.³⁵ Aubrey tells us he "was handsome, well shaped." So he must have been if, as John Davis of Hereford wrote six years before his death, he played "kingly parts." Tradition, almost universally believed trustworthy, declared that he acted the part of the Ghost in his own tragedy of *Hamlet*; that it was "the top of his acting" and that "he did act exceeding well."³⁶

In my Study of Shakespeare's early environ-

His Early Manhood

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ment I state that he has been a myth to some, a miracle to many, a mystery to all: but have we not uncovered some of his foundations? or suggested a possible key to his success?

Does not the soul sometimes, even in infancy, receive an impulse that never swerves and never ceases? May not this rare genius, of "right happy and copious industry," such as his contemporary, the dramatist John Webster, attributed to him four years before his death—industry, to which his intimate friend Ben Jonson bore strong testimony in the laudatory lines prefixed to the First Folio—may not this rare genius, as suggested, have early formed and steadily cherished during more than forty years a threefold purpose of knowledge, of culture, and of expression? Pardon me if I repeat the suggestion of three processes going on simultaneously;—(1) To acquire all possible information; (2) To train to the utmost all intellectual powers; (3) To clothe all ideas and sentiments in most felicitous poetic language. To know, to cultivate, to express; to accumulate, discipline, formulate; to gather and classify; utilize, digest and drill; idealize, visualize and voice—that is the ideal and the life-work.³⁷

Moving toward such a goal, nothing is commonplace. Every product of nature or art, every mood or movement of body or mind, every phase of matter or force or spirit, every object or subject, yields an inner meaning. By deep introspection

Studies in Shakespeare

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every innate principle or latent tendency shall be revealed; by studious observation every external fact, relation, semblance, analogy, every lesson thereof, shall be stored in memory. By wide generalization and persistent drill, all attainable strength and nimbleness, breadth and keenness, solidity and brilliancy, refinement and nobleness shall be gained. By phosphorescent humor or scintillating wit or burning eloquence, by lucid assertion or fiery interrogation, by gleaming simile or glowing metaphor or radiant unlimited personification, not only the most vital principles, and the most intense passion, but the subtlest thought, the most recondite truth, the most evanescent image, the most elusive sentiment shall be bodied forth in incandescent speech to shine for many ages.³⁸

The world of books is ever opening before him. Face to face with the great souls of the past, he continues his study and acquisition, disciplinary drill, enriching analysis and vitalizing synthesis.

Family prosperity fosters ambition. Family reverses come, and the love he bears to father, mother, sister, brothers is a new stimulus.

He marries: children are born to him: it sobers him. He teaches: it clarifies his vision. He studies law: it sharpens him. He poaches: it ends all boyishness and sends him to London. Elsewhere I have shown that he probably became soon a soldier in the Low Countries under Sir Philip Sidney and the Earl of Leicester.

His Early Manhood

www.libtool.com.cn

He is conscious of strength. He writes of his writings:

Not marble, nor the gilded monuments
Of princes shall outlive this powerful rhyme.

He is now in the heart and brain of England. All around him great truths have been thought out, great deeds wrought, great battles fought, heroic lives lived, glorious deaths died. To him we may well believe the atmosphere tingles with electric memories, flashes with brilliant examples, dazzles with auroral prophecies.

For it is an age such as the world had never seen; an age of wonder, of daring, of startling discovery, of high achievement in many a field, of earthquake upheavals in religion, volcanic struggles for liberty abroad and subterranean mutterings against tyranny at home; the unparalleled age of Elizabeth!

So all things minister to this sensitive soul, intensify this threefold process of acquiring, perfecting, evolving; kindle and keep alive the joy of creating—creating in thought and re-creating in speech, speech plastic as wax but imperishable as diamond.

To crown all, the hour of England's drama has struck. The opportunity has come not only to display a thousand thoughts in glittering phrases, but also to incarnate his conceptions in a hundred human forms forever luminous. Call it genius,

Studies in Shakespeare

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inspiration, or what you will, to this end he was born. Drawn toward it from his early years by a triple magnetism, this keen and comprehensive observer, this tireless intellectual athlete, this wonder-speaking and wonder-building artist has found his mission at last.

A myth no longer, a miracle no longer, he is yet in some degree a mystery still. In the vast accumulations of his knowledge, which Lowell declares was "beyond precedent or later parallel"; in the comprehensiveness of his grasp; in the subtleness of his insight; in the deep minings of his studies; in the towerings of his imagination; in his exquisite word-painting, and above all, in his amazing character-creation; we indeed see the effect, we guess at the cause.

But the cause of that cause, the beginning of the impulse that started him on his shining career, the origin of the force that first upheaved and afterwards steadily lifted toward the skies this loftiest Himalaya peak of the intellectual world — that cause, that beginning, that origin, we may never know; and we still say with Matthew Arnold,

"Others abide our question; thou art free!
We ask and ask; thou smilest and art still,
Out-topping knowledge: for the loftiest hill,
Who to the stars uncrowns his majesty,
Planting his steadfast footsteps in the sea,
Making the heaven of heavens his dwelling-place,
Spare but the cloudy border of his base

His Early Manhood

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To the foiled searching of mortality!
And thou, who didst the stars and sunbeams know,
Self-schooled, self-scanned, self-centred, self-secure,
Didst walk on earth unguessed at! — Better so!
All pains the immortal spirit can endure,
All weakness that impairs, all griefs that bow,
Find their sole speech in that victorious brow!"

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NOTES IN STUDY II

His Early Manhood

¹ It has often been said that Stratford on Avon was "a bookless town." But surely the youth from his seventh to his seventeenth year could have obtained books from the learned masters of the grammar school, Walter Roche (1570-1577), Thomas Hunt (1577-1580), and Thomas Jenkins (1580+). So too from the rectors of the churches.

From Holinshed (pub. in 1577) he drew materials for *Lear*, *Macbeth*, *Cymbeline* and the ten English historical plays; from *Plutarch's Lives* (pub. in 1579), for *Julius Caesar*, *Coriolanus*, and *Antony and Cleopatra*.

² More nearly, say eighteen years and seven months, reckoning from April 26, Old Style. Her age is shown by the inscription on her gravestone in the Stratford church, "Here lyeth interred the body of Anne, wife of William Shakespeare. She departed this life the 6 day of August, 1623, being of the age of 67 yeares." William died April 23d, 1616, O. S.

³ In California some years ago it was held that a marriage might be legal and valid without the intervention of minister or magistrate.

The Shakespeare marriage bond in the Bishop's Registry at Worcester, Eng., was brought to light in 1830 by Sir Thomas Phillipps of Middle Hill, Worcestershire. It is dated November 28, 1582. The bondsmen are held *in quadraginta libris* (in forty pounds) to "defend and save harmless the right reverend Father in God, Lord John Bishop of Worcester, and his officers, for licensing the said William and Anne to be married together with once asking of the bannes of matrimony between them."

⁴ At Shottery. The cottage is said to have been first mentioned as hers by Samuel Ireland in his *Picturesque Views* (1795) and remained in possession of the Hathaways till 1838.

⁵ One of the most illuminating discussions of the marriage and of the matrimonial experiences of Shakespeare is that by Halliwell-Phillipps (1820-1889) in his *Outlines of the Life of Shakespeare*. See especially Vol. I, 62-67; 7th ed. (1887).

⁶ Surely some time limit ought to be fixed. Cassius M. Clay at 83, thinking probably of King David and Abishag the Shunammite, married a girl of 15 without the consent of his parents! The story goes that he asked his colored servant, "What do you think of my marriage?"—"I don't like it, massa,"—"Why not?"—"Too much difference in your ages."—"Sambo, I'm still in my prime."—"Yes, massa; but when she comes to *her* prime about 70 years from now, where'll you be?"

Studies in Shakespeare

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Perhaps the impecuniosity of this couple has been too much emphasized. If, as commonly supposed, Richard Hathaway's daughter Agnes was the same as Anne, then by his will (dated Sept. 1, 1581 and probated July 9, 1582) she was to be paid "at the day of her marriage 61., 13s., 4d." See Sidney Lee's *Life of Shakespeare*, page 19.

⁷ I recall in a song at Yale 65 years ago the lines,

"And his chum who has fallen in love
And so of course bloweth a flutel"

⁸ Chaucer's friend John Gower (1330-1408), who wrote long poems in three languages. In his *Confessio Amantis* he makes Venus say

"And greet well Chaucer when you meet,
As my disciple and my poete."

⁹ In the last line of this sonnet the common reading is

I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

But as the word 'writ' makes no pertinent sense, I venture to change it to *woo'd* or *wist*.

¹⁰ One John Dowdall, in a manuscript account of his travels in Warwickshire in 1693 (pub. in London in 1838) states it thus: "His wife and daughters did earnestly desire to be layd in the same grave with him." Their wish was not complied with. Susannah was buried in her husband's grave. Their gravestones are beside his in front of the altar rails on the second step in Holy Trinity Church.

¹¹ John Aubrey (1626-1697) compiled between 1669 and 1696 his *Lives of Eminent Men*. Halliwell-Phillipps thinks it was completed in 1680.

¹² It was to have been signed Thursday, January 25th, but was not executed till the 25th of the following March. It was presented for probate by Dr. John Hall at the registry of the Archbishop of Canterbury in London June 22d, 1616.

¹³ It is occasionally a manifestation of tender affection to leave a death chamber and its contents in precisely the same condition as when the loved one passed away. On the tablet of my memory were indelibly carved, scores of years ago, the lines on a child's tombstone,

"Here thy toys neglected lying,
Here thy cradle and thy bed;
Here thy little books: O Roscoe!
Can it be that thou art dead?"

His Early Manhood

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The "second-best bed" may have been sacred to the memory of their lost boy Hamnet. Charles Sprague's touching verses in his exquisite lyric, *I See Thee Still*, are re-called —

"This was thy chamber: here each day
I sat and watched thy sad decay;
Here on this bed thou last didst lie,
Here on this pillow thou didst die."

¹⁴ In round numbers 1,000 men and boys, 125 women speak in dialogue in the plays. Among the "good women" of unblemished moral character we may name Queen Katharine of *King Henry VIII*; Imogen in *Cymbeline*; Hermione, Paulina, and Perdita, in *The Winter's Tale*; Miranda in *The Tempest*; Volumnia, Virgilia, and "dear Valeria" in *Coriolanus*; Cordelia in *King Lear*; Isabella in *Measure for Measure*; Helena in *All's Well That Ends Well*; Portia and Calpurnia in *Julius Caesar*; Ophelia in *Hamlet*; Viola and Olivia in *Twelfth Night*; Rosalind and Celia in *As You Like It*; Beatrice and Hero in *Much Ado About Nothing*; Julia and Silvia in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*; Juliet in *Romeo and Juliet*; and, perhaps above all, Portia in *The Merchant of Venice*. Here, out of 125 speaking women, are twenty-five superior in real goodness and innocence to any twenty-five of the thousand men!

¹⁵ May 4, 1597, he purchased The Great House, built by Sir Hugh Clopton more than a century before, with two barns and two gardens. The place was a good deal "run down," but he paid for it sixty pounds. As to the probable worth of money in Shakespeare's age, Halliwell-Phillipps remarks (*Outlines*, Vol. I, p. 21), "In balancing the Shakespearian and present currencies, the former may be roughly estimated from a twelfth to a twentieth of the latter in money, and from a twentieth to a thirtieth, in landed or house property." In May, 1602, he bought from William and John Combe one hundred and seven acres of arable land for 320 pounds. To this he added twenty acres early in 1610.

¹⁶ See Bacon's *Essays*, VIII and X. In the eighth we read, "A man may have a quarrel (i.e. cause, reason, or plea) to marry when he will; but yet he was reputed one of the wise men that made answer to the question when a man should marry — 'A young man not yet, an older man not at all.'"

¹⁷ See Dickens' *David Copperfield*.

¹⁸ Graduating from Amherst in 1834, he taught school for a little while in Northbridge (Whitinsville), Mass. — See my *Recollections of Henry Ward Beecher*.

Studies in Shakespeare

is "I have taught him even as one would say, 'precisely thus would I teach a dog';" spoken of his ill-mannered cur Crab by the clownish Launce in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, IV, iv, 4, 5.

A story was once current that John C. Calhoun said to Daniel Webster on the steps of the Capitol at Washington as a drove of donkeys passed by, "Webster, there goes a lot of your Massachusetts constituents," and he replied, "Yes, they're going to South Carolina to teach school!" The same anecdote was related of Tristan Burges of Rhode Island and John Randolph of Roanoke.

²⁰ See Beeston's statement as quoted by Aubrey in Halliwell-Phillipps' *Outlines*, II, 71. Sidney Lee says that Beeston "was doubtless in the main a trustworthy witness." — *Life of Shakespeare*, p. 361.

²¹ There is little or no doubt that our dramatist belonged first to the Company of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester. This was licensed when William was ten years old. When he was twelve, this company acted at the playhouse built in London that year (1576) by James Burbage, father of the celebrated actor, Richard Burbage (? 1567-1619), and known simply as The Theatre. Upon Leicester's death in 1588 his company was merged with that of Lord Strange (Ferdinando Stanley, who became Earl of Derby in 1592). He died in 1594, and Henry Carey, the first Lord Hunsdon, holding the high office of Lord Chamberlain, succeeded him as patron. So the company then took the name, The Lord Chamberlain's Company. He died in 1596, and then his son George Carey, the second Lord Hunsdon, became the company's patron. In 1597 he became Lord Chamberlain. The company continued to bear the name of The Lord Chamberlain's Company till the accession of James in 1603. Among the first acts of the king was the licensing (May 19, 1603) of the company as the special "Servants" of the king. Of course it included what remained of Lord Strange's Company. In the list of "The King's Servants" Shakespeare's name stands second. Did he attempt to repay the royal favor a few years later by whitewashing Banquo, one of James's reputed ancestors?

²² See the preceding *Study (Shakespeare's Cradle and School)* as to his use of words in their root meaning; also as to his coining or anglicising such.

²³ Many a play, especially his earlier, bristles with such names as Alexander, Ajax, Hercules, Cupid, Argus, Ovidius Naso, Apollo, Phoebe, Phoebus, Bellona, Mercury, Pompey, Caesar, Hector, Mars, Ilion, Hannibal, Ate, Aurora, Titan, Cleopatra, Iris, Briareus, Ceres, Pluto, Juno, Niobe, Pythagoras, etc. Outside the circle of college professors, it is rather unusual to find any one so familiar with classic mythology and ancient history. — See what is perhaps his earliest comedy, *Love's Labor's Lost*, especially IV, ii, and V, i.

His Early Manhood

²⁴ This scene (Act IV, sc. 1) is not found in the quarto of 1602. It first appears in the Folio of 1623. It has been queerly fancied that the boy, William Page (the *g* being "hard" like the *g* in *go* and *Sprague*), was none other than the William who with his two brothers, Ralph and Richard, founded Charlestown, Mass., in 1628. (See the pamphlet, *The Founding of Charlestown by the Three Spragues*, by Henry H. Sprague.) The fancy is that their father, Edward Sprague, a well-to-do fuller of Upway, Dorsetshire, entertained Shakespeare at his house, and there the dramatist saw the boy, who was about eight years of age at the time of Shakespeare's death. After hearing him recite, his schoolmaster, the Welsh parson, Sir Hugh Evans, compliments him to his mother, "He is a good sprag memory," punning on the word *sprag* (for 'Sprague!') meaning smart, quick, or ready. Shall we say, "*Credat Judæus Apella*"?

Apropos of book study, note the importance which Prospero, in whom all critics discern some of the lineaments of Shakespeare himself, attaches to the schoolmaster's tools. He tells Miranda that his usurping brother Antonio consigned him to his library as "dukedom large enough"; that the good Gonzalo, —

Knowing I loved my books, he furnished me
 with volumes that
 I prize above my dukedom.

The monster Caliban, plotting to destroy him, tells his fellow conspirators,

Thou may'st brain him
 Having first seized his books. . . . Remember
 First to possess his books; for without them
 He's but a sot as I am! . . . Burn but his books.

See *The Tempest* (Sprague's ed.), I, ii, 73, 74, 77, 89, 90, 109, 110; III, i, 19, 20, 94; ii, 84, 85, 87-91; V, i, 56, 57. See also *Macbeth*, I, vii, 6 (Sprague's ed.) and the note on "this bank and school of time," where nearly all editors erroneously change 'school' to *shoal*

²⁵ The earliest charter of the East India Company was granted by Elizabeth Dec. 31, 1600. The earliest mention of *Twelfth Night* is in a diary by John Manningham of the Middle Temple; thus: "At our feast (Feb. 2, 1601-2) we had a play called *Twelfth Night*, or *What You Will*." — *Outlines*, II, 82.

²⁶ "Shakespeare is Hamlet," say many critics. The prince tells us how, like a schoolmaster with due regard to penmanship, punctuation, syntax, and rhetoric, he forged a new commission from the king of Denmark to the king of England —

Studies in Shakespeare

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Ere I could make a prologue to my brains,
They had begun the play. I sat me down,
Devised a new commission, wrote it fair: —
I once did hold it, as our statist do,
A baseness to write fair, and labored much
How to forget that learning; but, sir, now
It did me yeoman's service. . . .
An earnest conjuration from the king,
As England was his faithful tributary,
As Love between them like the palm might flourish,
As Peace should still her wheaten garland wear
And stand a comma 'tween their amities,
And many such like as 's of great charge, *etc.*

— V, ii, 30-43 (Sprague's ed.).

In *Midsummer Night's Dream*, Peter Quince, personating the Prologue in "the play within the play," suggests by his mispunctuation and false inflections the need of a schoolmaster's correcting hand and voice. — See note to V, i, 108-117 (Sprague's ed.). The verbal and vocal trick is very like that in the letter to Dame Custance in the funny comedy of *Ralph Roister Doister* (1553) by Nicholas Udall (1505-1556).

²⁷ In *The Taming of the Shrew* (I, i, 92-95), Bianca's father Baptista says of her,

And for I know she taketh most delight
In music, instruments, and poetry,
Schoolmasters will I keep within my house
Fit to instruct her youth.

²⁸ *Taming of the Shrew*, III, i, 26-43. — If William taught Miss Hathaway as Lucentio probably taught Bianca the familiar paradigm,

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| <i>amo</i> , I love, | <i>amarem</i> , I might, could, would or should love, |
| <i>amas</i> , thou lovest, | <i>amares</i> , you might, could, would, or should love, |
| <i>etc., etc.</i> | <i>etc., etc.</i> |

he very likely soon became more a learner than a teacher. Slowly his "sense undazzled" till he could say with Biron of the new, uplifting, inspiring, illuminating, energizing mysterious force,

Other slow arts entirely keep the brain,
.
.
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.
.
.
.
But Love, first learned in a lady's eyes,
Lives not alone immured in the brain,

His Early Manhood

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But with the motion of all elements,
Courses as swift as thought in every power,
And gives to every power a double power.

It adds a precious seeing to the eye:
A lover's eye will gaze an eagle blind;
A lover's ear will hear the lowest sound

Love's tongue proves dainty Bacchus gross in taste:
For valor, is not Love a Hercules,
Still climbing trees in the Hesperides?
Subtle as Sphinx; as sweet and musical
As bright Apollo's lute, strung with his hair?

— *L.L.L.*, IV, iii, 319-338

²⁰ We think of him as of Posthumus Leonatus. By self-education, the only real education,

“Self-schooled, self-scanned, self-centred, self-secure,”

he did for himself in spite of his narrow circumstances what King Cymbeline did for his *protégé*—

Puts to him all the learnings that his time
Could make him the receiver of; which he took,
As we do air, fast as twas ministered,
And in 's spring became a harvest. — *Cymbeline*, I, i, 43-46.

²⁰ See article on *Falstaff and Equity* in the magazine *Shakespeareana* for April, 1893, pp. 68, 69, 70.

²¹ Those who argue from the case of Shylock vs. Antonio that Shakespeare was ignorant of the technique of the legal profession appear to misapprehend the purpose of the dramatist. It was not to show off his own knowledge of law or judicature, but, if we may use his masterly description of 'the end of playing,' "to hold, as 't were, the mirror up to nature; to show Virtue her own feature, Scorn her own image, and the very age and body of the time his form and pressure." This is exactly what he appears to have done in this case. Not satisfied with portraying the beauty and glory of celestial mercy in the eloquent language of Portia, the finest speech in Shakespeare, and the detestable image of cruelty in the scornful words of Shylock, he has taken special pains to hold before us as in a mirror "the very age and body of the time," reproducing what might very naturally have taken place in a Venetian court hundreds of years before.

Studies in Shakespeare

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First, a learned jurist is invited by the duke, not to ascertain the facts — these are already agreed upon — but to expound and apply the law.

Secondly, in place of the invited Bellario, young Portia comes in disguise to act as judge, and is accepted as such by the duke, who presides as chief justice.

Thirdly, she is accepted in due form by the plaintiff, Shylock.

Fourthly, she is accepted by the defendant, Antonio.

Fifthly, being thus invested with power, she renders judgments adhering closely to the story in the Italian novel, exercising a fourfold jurisdiction.

Sixthly, instead of the customary 'gratification' (*honorarium*) to which she was morally, though not by force of law, entitled, but which she declines, she takes from Bassanio as a souvenir the ring she had given him the day before! See *Merchant of Venice*, IV, i, 100, 101; 161; 229-231; 233, 234; 290-385; 397; 417; ii, 9 (Sprague's ed.).

¶ If we feel bound to accept as true any account of escapades on young Shakespeare's part, we may perhaps reasonably explain them as the Earl of Warwick did those of Prince Hal in company with Falstaff and other rakes. Says the earl to the king,

The prince but studies his companions
Like a strange tongue; wherein, to gain the language,
'T is needful that the most immodest word
Be looked upon and learned; which once attained,
Your highness knows, comes to no further use
But to be known and hated! — *2 King Henry IV*; IV, iv, 68-73.

Studying human nature in wild pranks, low resorts, vulgar companions? The sudden and complete change from the dissolute prince to the grave, pious, scholarly King Henry V, seems almost a miracle to the Archbishop of Canterbury,

Since his addiction was to courses vain;
His companies unlettered, rude, and shallow;
His hours filled up with riots, banquets, sports;
And never noted in him any study. — *King Henry V*, I, i, 54-57

The Bishop of Ely replies —

The strawberry grows underneath the nettle,
And so the prince obscured his contemplation
Under the veil of wildness; which, no doubt,
Grew like the summer grass, fastest by night,
Unseen, yet crevice in his faculty! — *King Henry V*, I, i, 60, 63-66,

His Early Manhood

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As in Hamlet and Prospero, so the commentators think they recognize something of Shakespeare in his favorite monarch, Henry the Fifth.

* Betterton's testimony is valuable. He communicated many facts to Rowe. See Halliwell-Phillipps' *Outlines*, i, 12-15; ii, 251. Thomas Jones (born *circa* 1615, dying 1703), who lived at Tarbick, near Stratford; William Oldys, antiquarian (1696-1761); Nicholas Rowe, dramatist and translator, "the first critical editor of Shakespeare," 1709 (1674-1718, poet laureate in 1715); Edward Capell, Shakespearian commentator (1713-1781), and others, relate the story of the ballad, which they had heard from old Stratford people, their grandfathers or others who had known the Shakespeares or the Lucys. They quote as follows:

"A parliament member, a justice of peace,
At home a poor scarecrow, at London an ass,
If lowsie is Lucy, as some folk miscall it,
Then Lucy is lowsie whatever befall it!
He thinks himself great,
Yet an ass in his state
We allow by his ears but with asses to mate.
If Lucy is lowsie, as some folk miscall it,
Sing O lowsie Lucy, whatever befall it!"

It hardly needs to be added that the letters *o w* in the third, fourth, and last two lines are to be sounded like *ow* in *Louis*, not like *ow* in *now*.

For a quite thorough discussion of this deer-stealing and its consequences, see Halliwell-Phillipps' *Outlines*, Vol. I, pp. 67-76. For interesting remarks about the ballad and the Lucys, see the *Outlines*, Vol. II, pp. 379-390. Sir Thomas was elected to the parliaments of 1571 and 1584. — The great actor, Betterton (1635-1710), was buried in Westminster Abbey.

* It is to be noted that the armorial bearings of the family show three interlaced *lucres*, the luce being a fish, a pike full-grown. The device is on the seal, the vanes, and emblazoned on the stained glass in the large Gothic bow windows. The paranomasia on *luce*, the fish; *louses*, the *peculidae vestimenti*; and *Lucy* the family name; was natural enough, and had been repeated for ages.

The following objections have been urged against the authenticity of the anecdote:

- (1) Sir Thomas had no deer park at Charlecote.
- (2) The only punishment allowed by statute for poaching was fine and imprisonment.
- (3) No one is known to have twitted Shakespeare with it.
- (4) Lucy was high sheriff and William's father had been mayor.

Studies in Shakespeare

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(5) Sir Thomas died August 18th, 1600, and it would have been ungracious or even cowardly for the dramatist to satirize the dead knight in writing *The Merry Wives*.

To these objections respectively we may answer as follows:

(1) Sir Thomas's son and heir in 1602 sent a buck from Charlecote as a present to Harefield on the occasion of a four-days' visit there by Queen Elizabeth.

(2) This was not simple larceny, but a riotous trespass.

(3) It was not regarded as a disreputable offence. Many a dignitary in church and state in his maturer years has felt an ill-disguised satisfaction if not pride in having participated in just such sport in his youth.

(4) William's father had fallen into obscurity if not disgrace in his poverty.

(5) This scene in *Merry Wives* in all probability was written a year or two before Sir Thomas's death, and there is really no spite in it; only good-natured fun.

For the earliest manuscript account of the poaching, see what is said of the writers, Rev. William Fulman and Archdeacon Richard Davies, by Halliwell-Phillips in his *Outlines*, I, ii, 68, 69; II, 71. They speak of the young man as "oft whipt" for poaching!

* It was the work of one Gerard Johnson, "tomb-maker," born in Holland, but resident twenty-six years in England. It had been colored to the life, and the coloring was renewed in 1748; but in 1793 the learned and usually judicious Shakespearian scholar, Edmund Malone (1741-1812), caused it to be painted white in imitation of classic marble. In 1861 the white was removed, and the former colors were restored. Undoubtedly it was intended to represent faithfully the complexion, features, and facial expression.

In June, 1882, with the aid of a ladder I examined the bust from various points of view on a level with the face. I saw it in different lights, for rain and sunshine were alternating that day. Upon wiping off with a handkerchief the thick dust from Shakespeare's face and eyes, I was much struck with the different expression of the features when viewed from opposite sides. The right side of the countenance is for tragedy; the left, for comedy! If the difference is not accidental, it evinces real skill on the part of Johnson, who was not a sculptor but a Southwark stone-mason, and it well atones for the evident crudity of the rest of the performance.

* The Ghost in *Hamlet* must of course have been in form and movement a *fac-simile* of the older Hamlet, king of Denmark, whose physical proportions were magnificent. (*Hamlet*, I, i, 41, 47-49, 143; ii, 186-188; and especially III, iv, 55-63; Sprague's ed.)—The "kingly parts played in sport" by Shakespeare are not named; but besides the Cæsars, the princes and dukes, twenty kings are introduced in the plays, and it would have been strange if he had personated none of them. See the statement

His Early Manhood

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of John Davies of Hereford (1610; Fleay says 1607), quoted by Halliwell-Phillipps in *Outlines* II, 154.

²⁷ Of these three elements, doubtless two are of prime importance; in early life the first, in later years the last.

²⁸ It would be difficult to overestimate his painstaking in the matter of felicitous expression. To attain this he had ransacked the stores of English speech, "searched its coffers," as Milton would say, and acquired his unequalled working vocabulary. These raw materials he kneaded and moulded with extraordinary care.

Felicitous speech was admired in polite society all over Europe, and the publication of John Lyly's *Euphues*, when William was fifteen, soon made it a fashion, a fad, a craze in all England for many years. Shakespeare ridiculed its excess; but he must have felt the impulse, and with finest taste, avoiding its fantastic conceits, he was stimulated to seek ever the best possible expression. In his sonnets he appears to be practising poetic gymnastics. In his plays he is trying his skill at fittest phrasing. By verbal ingenuities, word and sentence manipulation, choicest locutions, inversions, antitheses, onomatopœia, unlimited personification, alliteration, assonance, linguistic jugglery; not disdaining clever tricks of talk, quibbles, paronomasia, multitudinous malapropisms; he contrives with seeming spontaneity to hit always upon the most pleasing, the most distinctive, the most striking forms.

It is dangerous to attempt to improve upon the language of Milton or Shakespeare. I recollect but one or two attempts of my own in which I seem to myself to have succeeded. In *Macbeth*, I, vii, 12, I would substitute for the word "double" the word *treble* or *triple*. (See note in Sprague's ed.) The words are *He's here in double trust*. — (See note on the 116th Sonnet, *ante*.)

"The poet's pen," says Shakespeare, "gives to airy nothing
A local habitation and a name."

Often it treats airy vocables as solid realities; the word and thought, the phrase and concept are nearly or quite identical. "Here," says Professor Barrett Wendell, "we have the trait which, above all others, defines the artistic individuality of Shakespeare. To him, beyond any other writer of English, words and thoughts seemed naturally identical." See Prof. Wendell's *William Shakespeare*, a book that should be in the hands of every student of the drama.

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Study III
Shakespeare's Sword and Musket

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THE FIRST GREAT SOLDIER—AUTHOR?

1491 B. C.

This was the bravest warrior
That ever buckled sword;
This the most gifted poet
That ever breathed a word;
And never earth's philosopher
Traced with his golden pen
On the deathless page
Truths half so sage
As he wrote down for men!
—*The Burial of Moses*,
by Mrs. Alexander.

THE HAPPY WARRIOR

Who is the happy warrior? Who is he
That every man in arms should wish to be? —
It is the generous spirit, who, when brought
Among the tasks of real life, hath wrought
Upon the plan that pleased his boyish thought;
Whose high endeavors are an inward light
That makes the path before him always bright:
Who, with a natural instinct to discern
What knowledge can perform, is diligent to learn;
Abides by this resolve, and stops not there,
But makes his moral being his prime care;
Who, doomed to go in company with Pain
And Fear and Bloodshed, miserable train!
Turns his necessity to glorious gain: —

.
'T is he whose law is reason; who depends
Upon that law as on the best of friends;

.
Who comprehends his trust, and to the same
Keeps faithful with a singleness of aim —

.
'T is, finally, the man, who, lifted high,
Or left, unthought-of, in obscurity,

.
Finds comfort in himself and in his cause,
And, while the mortal mist is gathering, draws
His breath in confidence of Heaven's applause.
This is the happy warrior; this is he
That every man in arms should wish to be. —

—*William Wordsworth, 1806-7.*

STUDY III

SHAKESPEARE'S SWORD AND MUSKET

A STUDY OF THE MILITARY ELEMENT IN THE MAN AND HIS DREAMS

A PRELIMINARY word in regard to Soldier-Authors.

A life-long soldiership must be fatal to authorship; a brief one may transform the sword into a pen. With pardonable exaggeration the sweet Scottish songstress¹ sings of the great Hebrew, who more than three thousand years ago united in himself warrior, poet, statesman, theologian, historian, lawgiver, and prophet.

With a passionate loyalty which impelled him at the outset of his career to strike down an Egyptian smiting an Israelite; with a chivalrous reverence for womanhood that made him, though a stranger, champion of the wronged daughters of the priest of Midian; yet with a modest self-depreciation or disinterestedness that has rendered his name for all subsequent ages a synonym for meekness;—perhaps the leading impression gained from a study of his character and deeds is a sense of energy. This, as always with soldiers and with almost every man of genius, must have been, at least in part, physical; and accordingly we are told that at the age of one hundred and twenty “his

Studies in Shakespeare

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eye was not dim nor his natural force abated." In whatever direction he acted a fiery vigor blazes forth, just as truly as in the earliest and grandest of martial hymns, "The Song of Moses," when the hundreds of thousands of Israel had passed through the sea and the pursuing hosts were drowned —

"I will sing unto the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously:
The horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea.

With the blast of thy nostrils the waters were gathered
together,

The floods stood upright as a heap,
The depths were congealed in the heart of the sea. —
The enemy said,

I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil;
My lust shall be satisfied upon them;
I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them! —
Thou didst blow with thy wind, the sea covered them;
They sank as lead in the mighty waters! —
Who is like unto thee, O Lord, among the gods?
Who is like unto thee, glorious in holiness,
Fearful in praises, doing wonders?"³

Such men are necessarily few: human nature is rarely great enough to combine intensest thought with stoutest action. The strong man is usually strong in but one direction. If, like the image in Nebuchadnezzar's dream, the head be of gold, and the breast silver, and the thighs brass, and the legs iron, the feet will be partly at least of clay. There is a law of compensation here, some defect offsetting every excellence.³

His Sword and Musket

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Accordingly hundreds of years elapse before another world-renowned soldier author marches before us. It is the Psalmist, warrior and poet; slayer in youth of savage beasts and the more savage giant; softening with music the sad insanity of his king and the sorrows and frenzy of uncounted millions since.

Five hundred years after David another martial poet arises; earliest and loftiest of writers of tragedy, the most brilliant character in early Grecian history; Athenian Æschylus; justly proud of his deeds at Marathon, where with his two brothers he took the highest prize for bravery, and conspicuous ten years later at Artemisium and Salamis, and a year after 'on old Plataæa's day.'⁴

Three and a half centuries pass, and he is born whom Shakespeare dares to call 'the foremost man of all this world,' polished gentleman, luminous historian, powerful orator, far-seeing statesman; who, had his life been spared a few years longer, would perhaps have shown himself greatest of reformers; admittedly, of conquerors one of the most merciful; yes, and one of the most extensive, subduing much of what is now Switzerland, France, Belgium, Holland, Spain, southern England, northern Africa, southeastern Europe, southwestern Asia; pronounced by Mommsen 'the sole creative genius produced by ancient Rome, and the last produced by the ancient world'; — the most illustrious example in history of the soldier author — Julius Cæsar.

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Six or seven centuries glide away, and the meteor sword of the great Arabian, author of the Koran, flashes across the sky.

Three hundred other years: then, in the darkness, a thousand years ago a star-like character rises; warrior, scholar, author, king; declared by the historian Freeman to be 'the most perfect character in history'; Alfred 'the truth-teller,' 'Alfred the Great.'

Four hundred years more. The gifted Florentine, heroic in battle as in song, a luminary of the first magnitude, ascends to the zenith, and is flaming there still; immortal Dante.

Half a century later England's 'morning star of song,' shines and sings, the 'Father of English poetry,' a soldier in the army of Edward III, a prisoner of war in France, Geoffrey Chaucer.

Two centuries afterwards a constellation of geniuses, wielders of sword and pen, illumines the sky of Elizabeth; such as Jonson, Gascoigne, Lodge, Raleigh. Brightest and best of all was he who sank in blood on the field of Zutphen, the gifted poet, the first skilled artist in English prose, Sir Philip Sidney.

Across the sea in that age, the chief of Spanish if not of the world's humorists, Cervantes, is utilizing his extraordinary experience as a soldier, lighting up, tradition tells us, the darkness of a prison with phosphorescent fun in composing his immortal *Don Quixote*. Three quarters of a century

His Sword and Musket

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later in the gloom of Bedford jail the prince of prose allegorists,

“ Ingenious dreamer, in whose well-told tale
Sweet fiction and sweet truth alike prevail,”

works his military career into the luminous pages of his *Holy War* and his *Pilgrim's Progress*.

We have passed the age of Elizabeth. We might come down to America and our own times, and speak of Grant, Sherman, Sheridan, Logan, Lew Wallace, and the Confederates, Generals Longstreet and Gordon, my gifted classmate Colonel William Preston Johnston, and others, writers as well as fighters; all tending to show that a military life, if not too long and too absorbing, may constitute a valuable preparation and to some extent an equipment for a literary career.⁵

To this long list selected from the chronicles of more than thirty centuries, I venture to suggest the addition of another name, William Shakespeare. Was he ever a soldier?

Here we trench on debatable ground; but perhaps it may be held against all attacks. As the technical legal knowledge he displays convinced Lord Chancellor Campbell and Senator Cushman K. Davis that the dramatist had mastered the law; and as twenty or thirty other professions or occupations have for analogous reasons claimed him as a trained member of their respective vocations; I

Studies in Shakespeare

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think we may fairly and with even stronger logic argue that he must have been for a while a soldier. For of all the terms of art, science, handicraft, business, or avocation, scattered with wondrous profusion through his dramas, those which he employs most lavishly, are of matters military.

Before proceeding to illustrate this, let me premise that if he was long in the army the fact would not only account for his several years' disappearance from view, but it might throw much light upon the sources whence he drew certain kinds of knowledge the possession of which by him is not otherwise easily accounted for.

For example: The most distinctive and most useful equipment for his life work was knowledge of human nature. Perhaps there is no school quite equal to the army for that.

In passing to and from scenes of active hostilities, he would sail the seas, and gain that familiarity with navigation which surprises all who read his *Tempest*.⁶

In marching, drilling, fortifying, besieging, mining, battering; in tents, trenches, barracks, camps, forts, ships; in frost and heat, sun and rain, dust and mire, he would meet disease in many forms, and would insensibly become a physician.⁷

Campaigning against Spaniards and their allies, Italians, Frenchmen, Walloons, Germans, Portuguese; associating with Dutch, Welsh, Scotch, Irish and other auxiliaries; meeting adventurers, soldiers

His Sword and Musket

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of fortune, prisoners of war, deserters, camp followers; he would pick up, schoolmaster-like, that smattering of many languages with which his plays are besprinkled.

Looking beyond the immediate present in place and time, great questions of national and international polity would confront him and tend to make him a statesman.

In the fertile fields of the Netherlands under Leicester or Sidney, or of Ireland under Lord Grey de Wilton, this keen and comprehensive observer would be in perpetual contact with rich flora and become a botanist; for students of plant-life claim him as of their peripatetic tribe.

Sir Philip was General of Cavalry in the Low Countries, and the young soldier would there see splendid steeds and more splendid riders. His description of "the perfect horse" surpasses that of the reverend romancer of the Adirondacks.⁸ May we not easily believe that Sidney was the original of his portrait of the Prince of Wales in the *First Part of King Henry IV*?

I saw young Harry with his beaver on,
His cuisses on his thighs, gallantly armed,
Rise from the ground like feathered Mercury,
And vaulted with such ease into his seat,
As if an angel dropped down from the clouds
To turn and wind a fiery Pegasus
And witch the world with noble horsemanship!

If at Leicester's headquarters, he would observe

Studies in Shakespeare

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court scenes and ceremonies, the speech and manners of the nobility, arrivals and departures of ambassadors, heralds, aides-de-camp, bearers of dispatches — all reproduced by and by in the plays to the amazement of those who cannot conceive where the dramatist could have learned such things. For there the Commander-in-chief, too much like a king, was always on dress parade, surrounded by three or four lords, a score of knights, a hundred of the English gentry, all playing soldier, and always with a bevy of butterfly ladies who would better have stayed at home.⁹

So bright and quick-witted a young man would have made the best of clerks or orderlies. Have we a glimpse of such 'detached service' in the remark of Parolles, 'The letter is on file with the duke's other letters in my tent'? and in the request of the Earl of Richmond the night before the battle of Bosworth Field —

Give me some ink and paper in my tent:
I'll draw the form and model of the battle.

In such a position above that of an ordinary private, he might naturally wish to acquire skill as a swordsman, the accomplishment of a gentleman. In evidence of his familiarity with fencing, we name without defining some of the terms he uses; thus: 'three veneyes for a dish of stewed prunes,' 'a quick venue of wit,' 'dismount thy tuck': 'to see thee foin, to see thee traverse, to

His Sword and Musket

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see thee pass thy punto': 'thy stock, thy reverse, thy distance, thy montant': 'a pass of practice and a sword unbated': 'the duello': 'the pasado': 'the punto reverso, the hay': 'stoccado': 'a la stoccata.'

Most remarkable are the multitudes of allusions or references that show a mind saturated with military ideas and soldier talk. This technique in Shakespeare is perhaps twice as copious as any other. Ordinary civil life could afford little or no opportunity to acquire it. The gulf that separates the colorless phraseology of any peaceful vocation from the vividly painted vocabulary of the fighting profession is wider and more difficult to span than that which keeps most of the non-martial occupations apart from each other. I speak from over four years' experience of active service in the Union army. Mere books were inadequate in Shakespeare's time to communicate the peculiar dialect, the patois, jargon, lingo, slang even; and there were no newspapers. Something of it, but not much of its familiar use, might be caught from old soldiers.

To illustrate this familiarity, I quote, without explaining, a few out of a hundred or more of such significant expressions as I happen to light upon them.

"The sergeant of the band sets up his rest to do more exploits with his mace than a morris pike," — "Pluck your sword out of his pilcher." —

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“Corporal of his field.” — “Like powder in a skillless soldier’s flask, is set on fire by thine own ignorance.” — “I give thee the bucklers.” — “You must put in the pikes with a vice.” —

“Like to a murdering-piece in many places
Gives me superfluous death.” —

“Sorrows come not single spies, but in battalions.”
— “Methought I lay worse than the mutines in the bilboes.” — “Compassed like a good bilbo in the circumference of a peck, hilt to point, heel to head.” —

“What an eye she hath!
Methinks it sounds a parley of provocation

• • • • •
And when she speaks, is it not an alarm to love?” —

“To instruct for the doubling of files.” — “Had the whole theoretic of war in the knot of his scarf, and the practice in the chape of his dagger.” — “The clown shall make those laugh whose lungs are tickle o’ the sere.”¹⁰ —

“The nimble gunner
With linstock now the devilish cannon touches,
And down goes all before him.” —

“Time delves the parallels in Beauty’s brow.” —

“When forty winters shall besiege thy brow
And dig deep trenches in thy beauty’s field.” —

“His coward lips did from their color fly.” — “I must advance the colors of my love.” —

His Sword and Musket

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“Thou art not conquered; Beauty’s ensign yet
Is crimson in thy lips and on thy cheek,
And Death’s pale flag is not advanced there.” —

“If he be angry, he knows how to turn his girdle.”
— “Hal, if thou seest me down in the battle,
and bestride me, so; ’T is a point of friendship.” —
“Nothing but a colossus can do thee that friend-
ship! Say thy prayers, and farewell.” — “I would
't were bedtime, Hal, and all were well.”

“Many a time hath banished Norfolk fought
For Jesu Christ in glorious Christian field,
Streaming the ensign of the Christian cross
Against black pagans, Turks, and Saracens:
And toiled with works of war, retired himself
To Italy; and there at Venice gave
His body to that pleasant country’s earth,
And his pure soul unto his Captain Christ,
Under whose colors he had fought so long.”¹¹

“I dare not fight, but I will wink, and hold out
mine iron, . . . it will toast cheese.”

“Put up thy sword betime,
Or I’ll so maul you and your toasting-iron
That you shall think the devil is come from hell.”

“Fortuna de la guerra.” —

“To be the mark
Of smoky muskets? O you leaden messengers,
That ride upon the violent speed of fire,
Fly with false aim; move the still-piecing air
That sings with piercing; do not touch my lord.” —

“What fashion will you wear the garland of?” —
“Under your arm like a lieutenant’s scarf?” —

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“That in the captain’s but a choleric word
Which in the soldier is flat blasphemy.” —

“According to my description, level at my affection.” —

“As level as the cannon to his blank
Transmits his poisoned shot.” —

“If this should blast in proof.” — “Words too light for the bore of the matter.” —

These are but a few of the multitude of examples that might be cited. Particularly do they abound in the early historical plays, *King John*, *Richard II*, *Richard III*, the three *Parts of Henry VI*, the two *Parts of Henry IV*, *Henry V*. Bristling all over with speech of war and battle, they illustrate Coleridge’s remark, “A young author’s first work almost always bears traces of his recent pursuits.” His brain is saturated with them like Hotspur’s, who can talk of nothing else even in his sleep, and to whom his wife, Lady Percy, says,

In thy faint slumbers I by thee have watched
And heard thee murmur tales of iron wars,
Speak terms of manage to thy bounding steed,
Cry “Courage! to the field!” And thou hast talked
Of ‘sallies’ and ‘retires’; of ‘trenches,’ ‘tents’;
Of ‘palisadoes,’ ‘frontiers,’ ‘parapets’;
Of ‘basilisks’; of ‘cannon,’ ‘culverin’;
Of prisoners’ ransom and of soldiers slain,
And all the current of a heady fight!¹³

His Sword and Musket

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In *Romeo and Juliet*, perhaps his earliest tragedy, Queen Mab's pranks are provocative of similar dreams.

Sometimes she driveth o'er a soldier's neck,
And then dreams he of cutting foreign throats,
Of 'breaches,' 'ambuscadoes,' Spanish 'blades,'
Of healths five fathom deep; and then anon
Drums in his ear, at which he starts and wakes,
And being thus frighted swears a prayer or two
And sleeps again!¹³

In *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, his second or third comedy, three careers are specified as being particularly appropriate and customary for enterprising young men —

Some to the wars, to try their fortunes there;
Some to discover islands far away;
Some to the studious universities.¹⁴

In Shakespeare's celebrated division of man's life into seven ages, note that the soldier stage comes next after the lover's. He describes it as a matter of course for a young man to be a lover; and next, as a matter of course, for him to become a soldier. Is he not thinking of his own experience?

. Then the lover
Sighing like furnace, with a woful ballad
Made to his mistress' eyebrow: then a soldier
Full of strange oaths, and bearded like the pard,
Jealous in honor, sudden and quick in quarrel,
Seeking the bubble reputation
Even in the cannon's mouth!¹⁵

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Unlike Lord Bacon, Shakespeare was conscientiously opposed to unjust war. He states (is it the first time in literature?) the unanswerable argument; namely, International war cannot be waged without the deliberate shedding of innocent blood. It is in a passage which he originates (its source not found elsewhere), in which he makes Henry the Fifth say to the Archbishop of Canterbury who had urged him to invade France,

God doth know how many now in health
Shall drop their blood in approbation
Of what your reverence shall incite us to.
Therefore take heed how you impawn our person,
How you awake our sleeping sword of war;
We charge you in the name of God, take heed!
For never two such nations did contend
Without much fall of blood; whose GUILTLESS drops
Are every one a woe, a sore complaint
'Gainst him whose wrong gives edge unto the swords
That make such waste in brief mortality.

.
May I with right and conscience make this claim?¹⁶

He shows us King Henry the night before the battle of Agincourt visiting incognito his sentinels, and earnestly impressing upon them the duty of being constantly prepared for death. Speaking of wicked men dying in battle he says, "If these men have defeated the law and outrun native punishment, though they can outstrip men, they have no wings to fly from God!" Yet he makes Henry hold that the soldier's duty is paramount.

His Sword and Musket

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He says, "Every subject's duty is the king's; but every subject's soul is his own. Therefore should every soldier in the wars do as every sick man in his bed, wash every mote out of his conscience; and dying so, death is an advantage; or not dying, the time was blessedly lost wherein such preparation was gained."¹⁷

With all his conscientious objection to unjust war, he yet has the true military spirit, the admiration for heroic daring, the martial ardor that 'stirs the blood like a trumpet,' at thought of 'fair, square fighting',

"And the stern joy that warriors feel
In foemen worthy of their steel."

The language of his favorite king, in whom all critics believe they discern lineaments of the dramatist himself, will be recalled —

Once more unto the breach, dear friends, once more,
Or close the wall up with our English dead!

Stiffen the sinews, summon up the blood,

Then lend the eye a terrible aspect;
Let it pry through the portage of the head
Like the brass cannon; let the brow o'erwhelm it.

Now set the teeth and stretch the nostril wide,
Hold hard the breath, and bend up every spirit
To his full height! On, on you noble English!
Whose blood is fet from fathers of war-proof,

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Be copy now to men of grosser blood,
And teach them how to war! — And you, good yeomen,
Whose limbs were made in England, show us here
The mettle of your pasture! let us swear
That you are worth your breeding! which I doubt not;
For there is none of you so mean and base
That hath not noble lustre in your eyes!
I see you stand like greyhounds in the slips,
Straining upon the start! The game 's afoot!
Follow your spirit; and upon this charge
Cry 'God for Harry, England, and Saint George!'¹⁸

Surely here is the spirit which all admire in certain fowls and dogs and supposed to characterize all English fighters long before and since Cromwell's Ironsides, of whom it is recorded, "They were accustomed to rejoice greatly whenever they came in sight of the enemy."

Hence it is not surprising to find in the plays passages which indicate that the word 'soldier' has along with animal courage and contempt of danger and death a distinctive flavor of nobleness and fidelity. It is 'a name that best becomes' a manly man. "Fie, my lord, fie!" says Lady Macbeth in the sleep-walking scene, "a soldier and afeard?" King Henry V, wooing Katherine, says, "I speak to thee plain soldier . . . take me, take a soldier; take a soldier, take a king."¹⁹ So Ophelia implies when she says of Hamlet,

O what a noble mind is here o'erthrown!
The courtier's, scholar's, soldier's, eye, tongue, sword!²⁰

His Sword and Musket

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In the 'seven ages' of man in *As You Like It*,
the first trait of the soldier is 'Jealous in honor,'

Seeking the bubble Reputation
Even in the cannon's mouth.

Note that in all the centuries a so-called 'honor' in the estimation of the military man is the supreme virtue. Yet it is seen to be often but an empty bubble. Falstaff pricks it just before the battle of Shrewsbury (1403) —

Honor pricks me on. Yea, but how if honor prick me off when I come on? how then? Can honor set to a leg? no; or an arm? no; or take away the grief of a wound? no. Honor hath no skill in surgery, then? no. What is honor? a word. What is that word honor? air. A trim reckoning! Who hath it? he that died o' Wednesday. Doth he feel it? no. Doth he hear it? no. Is it insensible, then? yea, to the dead. But will it not live with the living? no. Why? detraction will not suffer it. Therefore I'll none of it. Honor is a mere scutcheon; and so ends my catechism.²¹

Of course Shakespeare must sympathize and share in the sentiment of the duke of Norfolk in his impassioned utterance in *Richard the Second* —

The purest treasure mortal times afford
Is spotless reputation: that away,
Men are but gilded loam or painted clay.

.
Mine honor is my life; both grow in one;
Take honor from me, and my life is done.²²

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He must also respect, though he may not wholly admire Hotspur's glorification of a kind of honor in contempt of danger and death —

Sink or swim!

Send danger from the east unto the west,
So honor cross it from the north to south,
And let them grapple! Oh the blood more stirs
To rouse a lion than to start a hare!

.
By heaven! methinks it were an easy leap
To pluck bright honor from the pale-faced moon,
Or dive into the bottom of the deep,
Where fathom-line could never touch the ground,
And pluck up drownéd honor by the locks,
So he that doth redeem her thence might wear
Without corrival all her dignities.²³

But Hotspur's passion is at bottom selfish, vain-glorious. It longs for the admiration of men; not the approving voice of conscience. It is the false honor of Marcus Brutus, not the true honor of the Founder of Christianity. That of Shakespeare's favorite king, Henry the Fifth, is tinged with patriotism, modesty, conscience. In the early morning of St. Crispin's Day, with his little army of 12,000 he is confronted by the flower of French chivalry, fifty thousand strong. They block his way to Calais. Against such odds he must give battle, and they all know it is victory or death. In presence and hearing of his little army he holds a brief council of war. As he enters, he hears the Earl of Westmoreland sighing for reinforcements —

His Sword and Musket

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O that we now had here
But one ten thousand of those men in England
That do no work to-day!

Henry replies —

What 's he that wishes so?
My cousin Westmoreland? No, my fair cousin:
If we are marked to die, we are enow
To do our country loss; and if to live,
The fewer men the greater share of honor!
God's will! I pray thee, wish not one man more.
By Jove! I am not covetous for gold,
Nor care I who doth feed upon my cost;
It yearns me not if men my garments wear;
Such outward things dwell not in my desires:
But if it be a sin to covet Honor,
I am the most offending soul alive.
No, faith, my coz, wish not a man from England:
God's peace! I would not lose so great an honor
As one man more, methinks, would share from me,
For the best hope I have. O do not wish one more!
Rather proclaim it, Westmoreland, through my host,
That he which hath no stomach to this fight —
Let him depart; his passport shall be made,
And crowns for convoy put into his purse:
We would not die in that man's company
That fears his fellowship to die with us.
This day is called the feast of Crispian:
He that outlives this day and comes safe home,
Will stand a tip-toe when this day is named,
And rouse him at the name of Crispian!
He that shall live this day and see old age,
Will yearly on the vigil feast his neighbors,
And say "To-morrow is Saint Crispian!"
Then will he strip his sleeve and show his scars,
And say "These wounds I had on Crispin's day!" —

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Old men forget; yet all shall be forgot,
But he 'll remember with advantages
What feats he did that day. Then shall our names
Familiar in his mouth as household words —
Harry the king, Bedford and Exeter,
Warwick and Talbot, Salisbury and Gloucester —
Be in their flowing cups freshly remembered.
This story shall the good man teach his son;
And Crispin Crispian shall ne'er go by
From this day to the ending of the world
But we in it shall be remembered,
We few, we happy few, we band of brothers!
For he to-day that sheds his blood with me
Shall be my brother! be he ne'er so vile,
This day shall gentle his condition:
And gentlemen in England now a-bed
Shall think themselves accursed they were not here,
And hold their manhoods cheap while any speaks
That fought with us upon Saint Crispin's day!²⁴

Did the ardor of military honor, the passion for military fame and glory, ever rise higher?

There were circumstances that would naturally predispose young Shakespeare to enter the army.

He was about twenty-one, the husband of a lady who had rather unkindly permitted him to marry her when he was eighteen and she twenty-six, though neither had sufficient property or income or remunerative employment. He was the son of a man who had apparently failed in business, and who, as many are convinced, was in disfavor at that time for being at heart like his father a Roman

His Sword and Musket

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Catholic, or, as others say, suspected and accused of obstinate Puritan recusancy, or, at least, as almost every one admits, was under a cloud in the tightening clutches of poverty. If the young man should enlist, he might reasonably hope that his wife and infant children, perhaps his father and mother, would be taken care of.²⁵

We may be sure too that like Amyas Leigh in Kingsley's *Westward Ho* he felt in full the spirit of adventure which burns in the heart of every enterprising youth.

If, like Francis Bacon, he has "taken all knowledge to be his province," he must not miss this opportunity "to see the world."²⁶

We can hardly imagine him utterly destitute of every soldier's ambition,

"That last infirmity of noble mind,"

prompting him "to endure hardness as a good soldier,"

"To scorn delights and live laborious days."

In the army he might also fairly hope for such acquaintance and recognition as bore fruit a few years later in the princely generosity of the Earl of Southampton.²⁷

Especially would he be desirous to meet the literary genius, the most accomplished of gentlemen, nephew of Leicester, Sir Philip Sidney; and equally perhaps Sir Philip would wish to know the

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brilliant young poet of Stratford. Aubrey tells us, "Sidney was of a very munificent spirit and liberal to all lovers of learning, and to those that pretended to any acquaintance with Parnassus; in-somuch that he was cloyed and surfeited with the poetasters of those days." There was ten years' difference in their ages and it might well be a case of love at first sight. The cold-blooded Leicester, who lived only a dozen miles away, would at least take an interest in the chief ornament of the company of players called by his name.

From several sources we learn that Queen Elizabeth was delighted with Shakespeare. His undoubted loyalty seventeen or eighteen years before her death would be an inducement to serve in her armies.²⁸

There is little if any doubt that the actor, Thomas Betterton, the dramatist, Nicholas Rowe, and Archdeacon Richard Davies are truthful in stating that Sir Thomas Lucy's hostility on account of the deer stealing and the ballad hastened William's departure from Stratford to London.²⁹ But Sir Thomas was a member of Parliament, and the young poacher might not be safe even in the city. If he wished to put some distance between himself and the hostile Puritan knight, what safer refuge than to go to fight the Spanish? It would tend also to conciliate the zealous Protestant, and very likely prompt him to deal kindly with the dear ones left at home.

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There was of course another motive which may have been stronger than any of the others, PATRIOTISM. Was Shakespeare a patriot?

In Coriolanus he makes Cominius say

I do love

My country's good with a respect more tender,
More holy and profound than my own life.³⁰

At the end of King John, Faulconbridge exclaims —

This England never did nor never shall
Lie at the proud foot of a conqueror.

.
Come the three corners of the world in arms,
And we shall shock them! Naught shall make us rue
If England to itself do rest but true.³¹

And listen to 'old John of Gaunt, time-honored Lancaster' —

This royal throne of kings, this sceptred isle,
This earth of majesty, this seat of Mars,
This other Eden, demi-paradise,
This fortress built by Nature for herself
Against infection and the hand of war —
This happy breed of men, this little world, —
This precious stone set in the silver sea —

.
This blessed plot, this earth, this realm, this England—
This land of such dear souls, — this dear, dear land!³²

Surely the man who wrote that regarded England with an almost unspeakable love.

But was his country in any special need of soldiers? Yes; a struggle for national existence

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had long been foreseen, and the crisis was imminent. Spain at the zenith of her power was pushing with energy her military operations against her revolted subjects in Holland and Belgium. More and more it appeared likely that England would be forced into the conflict. In anticipation of hostilities, there was in the year 1583 a general census and review of Englishmen capable of actively bearing arms. It is reasonable to believe that our William, then recently married, was counted among the 1,172,000 able-bodied. If old enough to be married, he was old enough to fight! "A happy marriage is a suppressed warfare," said Eliot, historian of New England echoing Lord Bacon, to me at his dinner table fifty-four years ago!

We have good evidence that he was of the proper physique. At the age of twenty-eight he is declared by his contemporary, the publisher Henry Chettle, to be an excellent actor. When he was forty-six, John Davies of Hereford in his Book entitled 'Scourge of Folly' has lines addressed 'To our English Terence, Mr. Will Shakespeare,' in which he declares,

"Hadst thou not played some kingly parts in sport,
Thou hadst been a companion for a king."

Aubrey is more specific: he tells us Shakespeare "was a handsome well-shaped man." His earliest biographer, Nicholas Rowe, tells us on the authority

His Sword and Musket

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of the famous actor Thomas Betterton that Shakespeare acted the part of the Ghost in his own play of *Hamlet*, that "it was the top of his acting," and that "he did act exceeding well." Doubtless this Ghost was one of those 'kingly parts,' the facsimile of the elder Hamlet, King of Denmark, a man of the finest proportions, physically perfect. Says Horatio,

I saw him once; he was a goodly king.

'Goodly' of course refers to external appearance, equivalent to comely and of good size. Hamlet replies,

He was a *man*; take him for all in all,
I shall not look upon his like again.

Still speaking of his physical perfections, you will recollect Hamlet's description of his father as he gazes upon his full-length portrait in his mother's chamber. It shows unmistakably how Shakespeare looked, if he personated the Ghost as genuine tradition asserts and as all scholars believe.

See what a grace was seated on this brow!
Hyperion's curls, the front of Jove himself,
An eye like Mars to threaten and command;
A station like the herald Mercury
New-lighted on a heaven-kissing hill;
A combination and a form indeed
Where every god did seem to set his seal
To give the world assurance of a *man!*³³

We do not then doubt that he was of good physique. Being such, he would naturally be enrolled

Studies in Shakespeare

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at the age of nineteen among the one million one hundred and seventy-two thousand fit for military service.

Next year (1584) the illustrious Founder of the Dutch Republic, 'The Washington of Holland,' William of Orange, 'William the Silent,' perished by the hand of an assassin. The outlook for liberty and independence on the continent and for the safety of England was growing very dark. With the subjugation of the low countries, the last barrier against the overwhelming advance of the Spanish would seem to be swept away, and England would apparently lie at the mercy of the foe.

Fifteen eighty-five came and in August the splendid city of Antwerp fell. Elizabeth at last reluctantly yielded to the advice of the illustrious Walsingham and other statesmen and to the urgent entreaties of the Dutch envoys, and determined, none too soon, to strike a blow, lest the destruction that impended over the Netherlands should involve England also.

In September she appointed her favorite, the Earl of Leicester, commander-in-chief. Early in November she dispatched Sir Philip Sidney with troops. He was eager for active service. Leicester was not. The great Lord of Kenilworth, whom many had thought likely to become king, or at least husband to the queen, if Lady Leicester would but step down and out, must go in pomp

His Sword and Musket

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with a loud flourish of trumpets. He invited a multitude of his clients and retainers to accompany him as a guard of honor. A large and splendid retinue, some five hundred in number, mostly from central England, responded.³⁴ Several among them were probably young Shakespeare's friends, neighbors, or even relatives; certainly his fellow actors or authors. We have, it has been supposed, a recollection of Leicester's pompous embarkation in the Chorus in Act III of *King Henry V*—

Suppose that you have seen
The well-appointed king at Hampton pier
Embark his royalty, and his brave fleet

A city on the inconstant billows dancing.
 Follow, follow!
And leave your England
Guarded with grandsires, babies and old women.

For who is he whose chin is but enriched
With one appearing hair, that will not follow
These culled and choice-drawn cavaliers to France?

When, to all other incitements were added the inspiration of such a scene and the sense of comradeship with enthusiastic thousands rallying around the red-cross flag of Saint George, who can doubt that William Shakespeare, perhaps already enlisted, would gladly join the splendid battalions moving to martial music 'on to the field of Glory?'

What would he think of the invertebrate stay-at-home gentleman, Oliver Wendell Holmes's 'sweet

Studies in Shakespeare

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little man, like the parasite Osrice in *Hamlet*, whom our fathers would have termed a 'dandy' and our sons a 'dude.' By no stretch of imagination can we fancy our hero such a milksop as is described in one of the last stanzas of Robert Browning —

“ What had I on earth to do
With the slothful, with the mawkish, the unmanly?
With the aimless, helpless, hopeless, did I drivel?
Being who? ”

Rather must our beloved dramatist have been like Browning himself,

“ One who never turned his back, but marched breast forward;
Never doubted clouds would break;
Never dreamed, though right were worsted, wrong would triumph;
Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,
Sleep to wake! ”

Here we are not left to conjecture. Hotspur had fought against the Scots, captured a goodly number of them, and refused to deliver them up to King Henry. The monarch calls him sharply to account for this disobedience. Hotspur prudently apologizes —

My liege, I did deny no prisoners:
But I remember, when the fight was done,
When I was dry with rage and extreme toil,
Came there a certain lord, neat, trimly dressed,
Fresh as a bridegroom; and his chin new reaped
Showed like a stubble-land at harvest home.
He was perfuméd like a milliner,

His Sword and Musket

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And twixt his finger and his thumb he held
A pouncet-box, which ever and anon
He gave his nose and took 't away again;
Who therewith angry, when it next came there.
Took it in snuff! and still he smiled and talked,
And as the soldiers bore dead bodies by,
He called them untaught knaves, unmannerly,
To bring a slovenly unhandsome corse
Betwixt the wind and his nobility!
With many holiday and lady terms
He questioned me, among the rest, demanded
My prisoners in your majesty's behalf.
I then, all smarting with my wounds being cold,
To be so pestered with a popinjay,
Out of my grief and my impatience,
Answered neglectingly I know not what, —
He should or he should not; for he made me mad
To see him shine so brisk and smell so sweet,
And talk so like a waiting-gentlewoman
Of guns and drums and wounds — God save the mark—
And telling me the sovereign'st thing on earth
Was parmaceti for an inward bruise!
And that it was great pity, so it was,
This villainous salt-petre should be digged
Out of the bowels of the harmless earth,
Which many a good tall fellow had destroyed
So cowardly; and but for these vile guns
He would himself have been a soldier!⁹⁶

We come now to a remarkable coincidence. To fix the time, let us premise that Shakespeare's twins, Hamnet and Judith, as shown by the parish register, were christened February 2d, 1585. The father would naturally be present at the ceremony.

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From this time for several years he is lost to view, except for the possible reappearance which we are about to state.

Sir Philip Sidney arrived in Holland November tenth, 1585; Leicester a few weeks later. On the twenty-fourth of March, 1586, having been campaigning in Holland four and a half months, Sidney writes from Utrecht a letter to his father-in-law, Sir Francis Walsingham, in which occurs this passage:—

“ I wrote to you a letter by Will, my Lord of Leicester’s jesting player, enclosed in a letter to my wife, and I never had answer thereof. It contained something to my Lord of Leicester and Council, that some way might be taken to stay my lady there. I since, divers times, have written to know whether you had received them; but you never answered me on that point. I since find that the knave delivered the letters to my lady of Leicester, but whether she sent them to you or no, I know not, but earnestly desire to do; because I doubt there is more interpreted thereof.”⁷⁷

From this we naturally infer that before Leicester left England in December, 1585, Sir Philip employed one ‘Will’ as amanuensis to write to Walsingham; that this letter, so dictated, contained a message to Leicester and the Council, in which there was an expression of Sir Philip’s desire that his wife should be made to stay in England; furthermore, the Walsingham letter and the message it contained were enclosed in a personal

His Sword and Musket

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letter from Sir Philip to his wife: but these two letters and the accompanying message were delivered by 'Will,' not to Sidney's wife, nor to her father Walsingham, nor even to the Earl, but to my Lady of Leicester! and Sidney has repeatedly tried in vain to find out whether the Countess ever delivered them to any one, or whether the wife, father, or Earl ever received them.

Sir Philip appears suspicious of double-dealing. Evidently he doesn't believe the letters reached their destination. Lady Leicester probably wished to come over to Holland with a goodly number of ladies of the nobility and gentry. Sir Philip's remonstrance was unheard or unheeded. Notwithstanding his opposition and Queen Elizabeth's disapprobation, the ladies must see the holiday festivities over in Holland, and the

Pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war!

Even Sir Philip's wife came over at last!

Now the question is, Who was the amanuensis 'Will,' 'my Lord of Leicester's jesting player'? It has been quite commonly assumed that he was William Kemp. To this supposition there are several objections which seem decisive.

Kemp is not mentioned as a theatrical player till six or seven years after Sidney's death. His name first appears in 1593 in a list of six members of Lord Strange's Company. In 1594 he acted the part of Dogberry in *Much Ado About Nothing*.

Studies in Shakespeare

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In 1612, twenty-six years after Sidney's death, the learned Thomas Heywood tells us that in September, 1588, Kemp succeeded to the place on the stage made vacant by the death of the celebrated Richard Tarleton, as dancer, vaulter, tumbler, and clown.³⁸ In 1600, fourteen years after Sidney's death, Kemp says of himself, "I have spent my life in mad jiggcs and merry jestes." In 1589 the author of a book entitled *An Almond for a Parrat* dedicates it as follows: To that most Comical and Conceited Cavaliero, Monsieur de Kempe, jestmonger and Vice-Regent-Generall to the Ghost of Dicke Tarlton. At this date, three years after the death of Sir Philip, he and his associates were engaged in their favorite occupation of ridiculing the Puritans.

Now if anything could disgust Sir Philip Sidney, it would be just such business as gave Kemp his popularity. From his earliest youth his remarkable gravity, his puritanic seriousness, his lofty ideals, are commented upon by all his biographers. Especially at this crisis, when the life of the new-born Dutch Republic and the safety of England were in imminent peril, he would say of Kemp as the intense Hamlet says of the shallow Polonius, "He 's for a jig or a tale of bawdry." Leicester might have brought over this jumping-jack to please himself or the ladies; but Sir Philip never would have tolerated him. Like the sober Brutus in *Julius Cæsar* he would ask,

"What should the wars do with these jiggging fools?"³⁹

His Sword and Musket

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It nowhere appears that Kemp was ever in the army or in the Netherlands at all. He did not rise to the dignity of a comic play-actor till seven years after Sidney's death.

Then as to the *name* of "my Lord of Leicester's jesting player" — Kemp was never called simply 'Will.' Of course it was convenient to abbreviate the names Benjamin Jonson, Richard Burbage, and Christopher Marlowe, into Ben, Dick, and Kit, and their cronies always did so. But the name 'Kemp' was short enough already. He was often designated as Will Kemp, oftener still as Kemp; never in his day, so far as we can learn, merely 'Will.'

On the contrary, William Shakespeare was universally known as 'Will.' He is himself pleased with the pet sobriquet. In his 135th and 136th sonnets he insists on being so called. In them he uses the word twenty times, ten of them being clear instances of paronomasia. The 136th ends with this couplet:

Make but my name my love, and love that still,
And then thou lov'st me; for my name is Will!

Six years before Shakespeare's death John Davies of Hereford, in his book entitled 'The Scourge of Folly,' has lines addressed 'To our English Terence, Mr. Will: Shakespeare', as follows:

"Some say, good Will, which I in sport do sing,
Hadst thou not played some kingly parts in sport,
Thou hadst been a companion for a king,
And been a king among the meaner sort."

Studies in Shakespeare

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Nineteen years after Shakespeare's death, he was still known by his accepted name Will. Thus Thomas Heywood in his 'Hierarchy of the Blessed Angels' (1635), uses this language:

"Mellifluous Shakespeare, whose enchanting quill
Commanded mirth or passion, was but 'Will'"

That Will had been for several years a play-actor when Sidney wrote the Walsingham letter, it is reasonable to believe. "It is fair to infer," says Sidney Lee, "that it was Leicester's company that Shakespeare originally joined and adhered to through life." All the biographers concur in this.

"My Lord of Leicester's jesting player." Probably no opprobrium attaches to the word 'jesting.' Hamlet says admiringly of Yorick, "He was a fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy." It is recorded in praise of Lord Bacon that he was 'a most delightful companion . . . bringing out with great effect his unexhausted stores of jests new and old.' Ben Jonson tells us that Bacon's speech, "When he could spare or pass by a jest, was nobly censorious." Sidney had probably heard of the smart squib on Sir Thomas Lucy with its atrocious puns. "The worst puns are the best," says Charles Lamb. Shakespeare is perhaps the greatest punster in our language. Dr. Sam. Johnson and other solemn critics blame him for his frequent quibbling plays upon words.

In the period under consideration he had proba-

His Sword and Musket

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bly engaged in comedy chiefly or only. When we read what many think his earliest, *Love's Labor's Lost*, we say with Schlegel, "It is a humorsome display of frolic; a whole cornucopia of the most vivacious jokes . . . unbroken succession of plays on words . . . sallies of every description . . . Sparkles of wit fly about in such profusion that they resemble a blaze of fireworks." To the same effect, Charles Cowden-Clarke — "There is an exuberance, an extravagance in Shakespeare's fun which is infectious. We laugh in spite of ourselves, stung by that keen sense of the ludicrous which has evidently smitten and inspired the writer. We feel in reading Shakespeare's drollery that he himself had a relish for it; that he enjoyed a frolic of words; that he loved a bout of jesting; that he reveled in a spell of waggery and nonsense."⁴⁰

As to his conversation we may safely believe in the truth of Aubrey's well-authenticated tradition that he was 'very good company, and of a very ready and pleasant smooth wit.' Aubrey quotes in illustration the 'extemporary epitaph' on the old usurer 'John O' Combe'; tells of his histrionic mock heroics in boyhood; and adds, "I have heard Sir Wm. Davenant and Mr. Thomas Shadwell, who is accounted the best comedian that we have now, say that he had a most prodigious Wit." But here the word 'wit' includes far more than the power of giving sudden intellectual pleasure.

Studies in Shakespeare

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In the light of these considerations it is easy to imagine the circumstances under which Sidney wrote to his wife, to her father, and to Leicester. He had arrived as Governor of Flushing the second week in November. The briefest observation confirmed his conviction that this was no time nor place for lady visitors. Winter and the Spaniards are coming. He protests against the feminine invasion.

Young Shakespeare, between whom and Sidney there would naturally be attraction and mutual confidence, had probably come from England with him. No soldier detailed as clerk at headquarters could be more useful. Sidney learns that Will has a wife and three infant children at Stratford, and is therefore trustworthy; that his home is in Stratford a dozen miles from Leicester's lordly castle of Kenilworth; and he would be glad to revisit his family, his father and mother, his sister, his brothers and friends. Sidney knows that the Earl is soon to embark for the seat of war. He loses no time: Lady Sidney at least must not come. He employs Will to write a formal communication to the Earl and the Privy Council, and immediately sends him home to Warwickshire bearing the three-fold protest. Innocently enough Will delivers the precious epistles 'to my Lady of Leicester!' *She knows how to take care of them!*

"I find the knave delivered the letters," writes Sidney. The word 'knave' has no disparagement

His Sword and Musket

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in it. Often, as repeatedly in Shakespeare, it signifies boy, servant, or stripling. Sidney, ten years Will's senior, might even make it a term of endearment, as Brutus does.⁴¹ Will would naturally return in Leicester's train, if not earlier, and report to Sir Philip.

Very likely he remained in the service for years. This would account for his silence from 1585 till 1592; for he was too modest to speak of his own deeds. We are left to imagine; but we cannot for a moment doubt his exaltation of soul, when in a just cause he beheld the splendid display of seemingly irresistible force; infantry advancing in successive waves foam-tipped with flags, or densely massed steadily moving flanked with thundering artillery; and cavalry in shining armor swiftly plunging past.

“ There is something of pride in the perilous hour,
Whate'er be the shape in which death may lower;
For Fame is there to say who bleeds,
And Honor's eye is on daring deeds.”

He could keenly appreciate the contrast as in Othello's heartbreak —

Farewell the plumed troops, and the big wars
That make ambition virtue! O farewell!
Farewell the neighing steed and the shrill trump,
The spirit-stirring drum, the ear-piercing fife,
The royal banner, and all quality,
Pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war!

Studies in Shakespeare

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And O, you mortal engines, whose rude throats
The immortal Jove's dread clamors counterfeit,
Farewell! — Othello's occupation 's gone!¹²

We have spoken of the emergency that called for soldiers in the summer and fall of 1585. Three years later there was another, still more imperative; a crisis which stirred England as perhaps it never was stirred before or since. The ambitious Spanish monarch, Philip the Second, lord of dominions on which the sun never set, emboldened by the conquest of Portugal, the acquisition of the East Indies, and the yearly receipt of vast treasures from North and South America, determined to subdue England, make it a province of Spain, and from it as a standpoint and base of operations crush liberty and independence and make himself master of Europe and the civilized world. The hour seemed opportune. Immense preparations had been going on for years. The 'Invincible Armada,' the most powerful fleet that had ever floated, clouded all the southern sky, and was ready to pour on England its iron hail and thunder fire. Great galleons, ships larger than Britons had ever seen, from Italy, Sicily, Spain, and Portugal, were swarming toward the English Channel. Troops from those nations and from other portions of Europe swelled the ranks of the vast invading army on the other shore under the most skilful general of the age, the veteran Duke of Parma. All England,

Catholic and Protestant alike, armed and drilled. For fame, home, country, civilization, no sacrifice seemed too great.

To these incentives was added a more intense personal loyalty. If the queen had done nothing else to earn the name 'Great Elizabeth,' her apparent conduct at this crisis would in the estimation of the common people have been enough. She puts herself at the head of her principal army. At West Tilbury, near where the invaders may be expected to attempt a landing, she rides on horseback through the lines and thus addresses them:—

"I have always so behaved myself that, under God, I have placed my chiefest strength and safeguard in the loyal hearts and good will of my subjects; and therefore I am come among you at this time, not as for my recreation or sport, but being resolved in the midst and heat of the battle to live or die amongst you all; to lay down for my God and for my kingdom and my people my honor and my blood even in the dust. I know I have but the body of a weak and feeble woman; but I have the heart of a king, and a king of England too; and think foul scorn that Parma or Spain or any prince of Europe should dare to invade the borders of my realm!"⁴⁸

Where was William Shakespeare at this time? They tell us he was probably in a London theatre, acting third-rate parts in third-rate plays. Do not believe it. They tell us he was so great a man that he was sublimely indifferent to the fate of nations, religions, and civilizations. Do not be-

Studies in Shakespeare

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lieve it. Prominent critics like Richard Grant White and James Russell Lowell tell us that "he wrote without any moral intention," and that it is 'his highest praise' that "he carries his persons indifferently through right and wrong, . . . and leaves their example to operate by chance." This may be measurably true of his drama; but when they add the strange assertion that "he was simply observer and artist, and was incapable of partisanship," do not believe it. What right has a great man or a small man to shirk and slink and shut his eyes and seal his lips and fold his hands, when the life of his country is trembling in the balance? "Incapable of partisanship" in a day like that? Give us men that are capable of partisanship, of enthusiasm, of fanaticism even. "Simply observer and artist"? Oh for an hour of old Athenian Æschylus, who did not forget that he was a man of muscle as well as mind, a citizen as well as a dramatist, and whose epitaph composed by himself reads,

" Athenian Æschylus, Euphorion's son,
Buried in Gela's fields, these words declare.
His deeds are registered at Marathon,
Known to the deep-haired Mede who met him there! "

Give us a Joseph Warren, who on the eve of Bunker Hill, as he kisses 'Good-bye' to wife and child, exclaims, and next day proves it true, "It is sweet and beautiful to die for one's country!" — a James Lawrence, who knowing with Sir Humph-

His Sword and Musket

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rey Gilbert and the Martyrs of river and sea that "Heaven is as near by water as by land," won't give up the ship!—Leonidas and his three hundred, who would rather be dead in Thermopylæ than alive in retreat—a heart as well as a brain, a backbone as well as a tongue—if it *must* be, a hand that can wield a pike as well as a pen—a heart that is flesh, not ice; vertabræ that are bone, not rubber; an arm that can strike quicker, surer, heavier blows for God than others can for the devil; a brain that to illumine the dark and smite the wrong can condense the light of truth into lightning; a self-devotion whose death, like the last sparkle of a spent rocket, may indeed be followed by a momentary gloom, but whose life shall shine in memory as the stars forever!

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NOTES IN STUDY III

His Sword and Musket

¹ Mrs. Cecil Frances (Humphreys) Alexander, wife of William Alexander 'Archbishop of Armagh and Primate after 1896,' was the author of the hymn beginning "There is a green hill far away"; also of "Jesus calls us o'er the tumult," *etc.*

² *Exodus* xv, 8-11.

³ "The Muse dearly loved the tuneful bard (Demodocus), but she gave him both good and ill; she indeed deprived him of sight, but she gave him sweet song."—*Odyssey* viii, 63, 64.

"The gods bestow not equally on all
The gifts that men desire, the grace of form,
The mind, the eloquence. One man to sight
Is undistinguished, but on him the gods
Bestow the power of words. All look on him
Gladly: he knows whereof he speaks: his speech
Is mild and modest: he is eminent
In all assemblies; and, whene'er he walks
The city men regard him as a god.
Another in the form he wears is like
The immortals, yet he has no power to speak
Becoming words. So thou hast comely looks —
A god would not have shaped thee otherwise
Than we behold thee — yet thy wit is small."

Odyssey viii, 167-177 (Bryant's Translation).

So in some way the favorite of the Muses pays penalty for their love; deaf like Beethoven; or lame like Byron and Scott; or consumptive like Virgil, Mozart, Keats, Lanier, and Stevenson; or blind like Homer, Milton, ancient Thamyris,

"And Tiresias and Phineus, prophets old,"

and our Prescott and Fanny Crosby; or exiled like Ovid, Seneca, Dante, Locke, and Boyle O'Reilly; or insane like Lucretius, Swift, Cowper, Collins and Delia Bacon; or poverty-stricken like Spenser, Butler, Dryden, Burns,

Studies in Shakespeare

Otway, Hood, Chatterton, and Francis Thompson; or unhappily married like Euripides, Socrates, Montaigne, Hooker, Bacon, Molière, Addison, Shelley, Landor, Dickens, and Sumner; or unhappily unmarried like Horace, Voltaire, Pope, Gray, Goldsmith, Lamb, Macaulay, Fitz Greene Halleck, Walt Whitman, Joaquin Miller and Phillips Brooks!

¶Sophocles too was a soldier. So Pericles, Thucydides, and Xenophon.

¶The danger lies in extreme specialization. "I devotees my whole mind to it," was the explanation given by one of the leaders of 'the Four Hundred' in New York City, accounting for his much-admired mustache.

¶He may have been with one of those old 'sea-kings' who loved above all things 'to sing the king of Spain's beard!'—Sir Francis Drake, Thomas Cavendish, Sir John Hawkins, Sir Martin Frobisher, Admiral Lord Charles Howard, or 'the Shepherd of the Ocean,' Sir Walter Raleigh.

As to his knowledge of navigation, see notes to Sprague's edition of *The Tempest*, Act I, sc. 1, page 30; also quotations from the second Lord Mulgrave (1740-1792) in the notes to Furness's Variorum ed. of *The Tempest*, Act. I, sc. 1. See also note on *The Tempest* V, 1, 223, p. 125, Sprague's ed.

¶There is an old Spanish proverb, "Every man at forty is either a physician or a fool."

¶Shakespeare's knowledge of hippology is perhaps best shown in his *Venus and Adonis*, lines 295-300.

All the horse worshipers, from Richard III of England to Richard Croker of Tammany Hall, and all the horse traders from Moses Primrose to David Harum, may claim him as of the equine cult; but the most enthusiastic devotee was perhaps the Rev. W. H. H. Murray, whose 'Camp Life in the Adirondacks' gave him his popular sobriquet. To his interesting book entitled 'The Perfect Horse,' Henry Ward Beecher wrote an introduction saying that "although the horse is a rather remote department of theology," yet he was glad to gratify his friend 'Adirondack Murray'!

¶See in this 'Study' (*post*) the quoted postscript of Sir Philip Sidney's letter to his father-in-law, Sir Francis Walsingham, and our comments thereon.

¶For once we deviate from our rule and explain 'tickle o' the sere.' The phrase points to a delicate piece of mechanism which, to a non-military man, is involved in obscurity. The attempts by civilians to elucidate it, as may be seen in their editorial comments, have been numerous, ingenious, and funny. It was first made clear by Dr. Nicholson in 'Notes and Queries,' July 22, 1871.

"The sere (or, as it is often spelled, sear, or sear) of a gun-lock is the bar or balance lever interposed between the trigger on the one side and

His Sword and Musket

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the tumbler or other mechanism on the other, and is so called from its acting the part of a *serre* or talon in gripping the mechanism and preventing its action. It is in fact a paul or stop-catch. When the trigger is made to act on one end of it, the other end releases the tumbler, the mainspring acts, and the hammer, flint, or match falls. . . . Now if the lock be so made of purpose, or be worn, or be faulty in construction, this sear or grip may be so tickle or ticklish in its adjustment that a slight touch or jar may displace it, and then of course the gun goes off. Hence 'light' (or 'tickle') 'of the sere' (equivalent to like a hair-trigger), applied metaphorically, means that which can be started into action at a mere touch, or on the slightest provocation, or on what ought to be no provocation at all."

During 'the war between the States' (1861-1865) some of us Union officers were careful to understand this nice mechanical structure.

For the etymology of "tickle" and "sere" see notes to *Hamlet*, II, ii, 318, Sprague's ed. It hardly needs to be emphasized that, some three hundred years ago as now, the word "tickle" conveyed the idea of incitement to laughter. See *Merchant of Venice*, III, i, 51, and the kindred passage in *The Tempest*, II, i, 169-171, Sprague's ed.

¹¹ *Richard II*, IV, i, 92-100.

¹² *1 Henry IV*, II, iii, 43-51.

¹³ Act I, sc. iv, 82-88. — "Swears a prayer or twol" Could anything be truer to the life? To the characteristics referred to in *As You Like It* (II, vii, 147-153) that mark the soldier in the field — beard untrimmed, sensitiveness to a sort of 'honor,' quickness to quarrel, eagerness for distinction — the dramatist adds as first of all that he is 'full of strange oaths,' a failing more nearly universal than deep drinking even. We never heard so much profanity in an equal space of time as in our first battle in Louisiana, and the most pious seemed to swear loudest and fastest! "Lest we forget" that "War is hell!"

¹⁴ *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, I, iii, 8-10.

¹⁵ *As You Like It*, II, vii, 147-153. See notes in Sprague's ed.

Pretty surely, among his soldier experiences and very likely before or after them, he saw such scenes as Falstaff's examination of the recruits Mouldy, Wart, Shadow, Feeble, and Bullcalf. When four have been accepted, the fat knight orders his quartermaster Bardolf to issue uniforms to them: privately, however, the sly old rogue, on receipt of three pounds cash, allows Mouldy and Bullcalf to be released altogether from military service! See *2 Henry IV*, III, ii, 91-173; 204-227; 268.

¹⁶ *King Henry V*, I, ii, 18-28.

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¹⁷ *Ibidem*, IV, i, 154-156; 166-174. Henry's first remark here appears to be a recollection of the speech of Clearchus to the treacherous Tissaphernes in Xenophon's *Anabasis*.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*, III, i, 1-34.

¹⁹ *Ibidem*, V, ii, 160, 161.

²⁰ *Hamlet*, III, i, 160, 161. See note, Sprague's ed.

²¹ *1 Henry IV*, V, i, 127-139.

²² *Richard II*, I, i, 177-179; 182, 183.

²³ *1 Henry IV*, I, iii, 194-205.

²⁴ *Henry V*, IV, iii, 16-67. The battle of Agincourt was fought October 25, 1415.

²⁵ "Why don't you enlist?" said State Senator Hammond of Connecticut to me at the beginning of our 'War between the States' (1861). "Because I have a wife and children to support," I replied. "Why don't you enlist?" he asked an impecunious lawyer at my side. "Because I have no wife nor children to support," he answered! The State of Connecticut was promising to take good care of soldiers' families.

²⁶ On huge placards calling for recruits for the American navy, the authorities are careful to hold out as one of the inducements the opportunities afforded 'to see the world.'

²⁷ With Leicester in the army of the Netherlands were, among others of note, his step-son, the brave but unfortunate Robert Devereux, Earl of Essex; Lord Audley, Lord North; among other knights William Russell, Thomas Shirley, Arthur Bassett, Walter Waller, and Gervase Clifton; Thomas Sidney, younger brother of Sir Philip; John and Thomas Arden and Miles Combe, who were probably of Stratford. Ben Jonson at this time was only thirteen or fourteen: he served there later.

²⁸ E.g. Note the lines in Ben Jonson's tribute prefixed to the First Folio:

"Sweet Swan of Avon! what a sight it were
To see thee in our water yet appear
And make those flights upon the banks of Thames
That so did take Eliza and our James!"

So the publisher, Henry Chettle, on the death of Queen Elizabeth in 1603, in his memorial volume entitled 'England's Mourning Garment,' has lines blaming Shakespeare and virtually accusing him of ingratitude for not writing elegiac verses on her who had been so gracious to him; thus

His Sword and Musket

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"Nor doth the silver-tongued Melicert
Drop from his honeyed Muse one sable tear
To mourn her death that grac'd his desert
And to his lays opened her royal ear."

²⁰ See these names in the Index to Lee's *Life of Shakespeare*; also in Halliwell-Phillipps' *Outlines*, Vol. II.

²¹ *Coriolanus*, III, iii, 111-113.

²² Act V, vii, 112-118.

²³ Act II, i, 40-46; 50, 57.

²⁴ *Hamlet*, III, iv, 55-62; also I, ii, 186, Sprague's ed. — For Chettle and Davies see Fleay's *Shakespeare Manual*, pp. 13, 15; for Aubrey and Betterton, Halliwell-Phillipps' *Outlines*, I, 10, 12; II, 70, 71; 251. For Rowe, I, 13; II, 72-76, 298.

²⁵ See note 27, *ante*.

²⁶ Epilogue to *Asolando*, 2d and 3d stanzas.

²⁷ *1 Henry IV*, I, iii, 29-64.

²⁸ See Sir Phillip's Biography by H. R. Fox Bourne.

It may be objected that Will Shakespeare was not a good penman and therefore could hardly have been acceptable as clerk, secretary, or amanuensis to Sir Phillip. But he certainly wrote a better hand than Sir Henry Irving, several of whose autograph letters to me I should in vain have attempted to decipher, had I not known before receiving them what he meant to say.

The probability, however, is that like Hamlet, in whom all agree that we see much of the dramatist himself, he was able to write a fair hand in his youth. Says Hamlet,

I sat me down;
Devised a new commission; wrote it fair:
I once did hold it, as our statistes do,
A baseness to write fair, and labored much
How to forget that learning; but, sir, now
It did me yeoman's service.

— *Hamlet*, V, ii, 31-35, Sprague's ed.

Hudson remarks, "It was accounted a mechanical and vulgar accomplishment to write a fair hand." Dr. Wm. J. Rolfe quotes Blackstone — "Most of the great men of Shakespeare's time, whose autographs have been preserved, wrote very bad hands; their secretaries very neat ones."

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The Italian John Florio, translator of Montaigne's 'Essays,' quotes the great French author thus: "I have seen some, who by writing did get both their titles and living, disavow their apprenticeship, mar their pen, and affect ignorance of so vulgar a quality."

* Richard Tarleton, clown, jig-maker, and dancer of jigs, died in 1583, and Kemp is supposed to have succeeded him in his comic nonsense. As to jigs, see Furness's *Hamlet*, Variorum ed., Vol. I, pp. 189-190. For its etymology see notes to *Hamlet*, II, ii, 486, and *Julius Caesar*, IV, iii, 135, Sprague's editions.

Shakespeare is thought to have Kemp in mind when in *Hamlet*, III, ii, 35-41, he directs—"Let those that play your clowns speak no more than is set down for them; for there be of them that will themselves laugh, to set on some quantity of barren spectators to laugh too, though in the mean time some necessary question of the play be then to be considered: that 's villainous and shows a most pitiful ambition in the fool that uses it."

Twelve years after Sidney's death the satirist John Marston in his *Scourge of Villainy* is quite enthusiastic over Kemp's dancing jig. In the year 1600 Kemp distinguished himself by what he himself described in a pamphlet entitled 'Kemp's Nine Days Wonder Performed in a Dance from London to Norwich.' It was a 'morrise dance.' We get a fine glimpse of it in Alfred Noyes's 'The Companion of a Mile,' the fifth of his 'Tales of the Mermaid Tavern.'

* *Julius Caesar*, IV, iii, 135, Sprague's ed.

* Black's Translation (pp. 383 *et seq.*) of A. W. Schlegel's Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature.

* 'Knave' (from the Anglo-Saxon *cnafa* (German *knabe*), properly a servant or boy) generally had a favorable signification. Thus in Wiclif's Translation of the Bible (1383), the Epistle to the Romans begins, 'Paul, a knave of Jesus Christ, called to be an Apostle,' *etc.* Brutus in *Julius Caesar* speaks affectionately to his boy attendant Lucius; "Poor knave, I blame thee not," and "Gentle knave, good night!" IV, iii, 239, 267, Sprague's ed. Some scholars have made the word akin to *knob*, and so to mean 'Knobby boy.' The total depravity inherent in 'knobby boys' often cropped out, and so the once innocent word became tainted with the opprobrious sense it now bears of rogue or rascal.

* *Othello*, III, iii, 349-352.

* For a merciless arraignment of Elizabeth at the bar of history, see Professor Goldwin Smith's 'The United Kingdom, A Political History,' Vol. I, pp. 367 *et seq.*; especially 388-392. "A policy partial, feeble, and fretful; vacillation, infirmity of purpose, and general dishonesty; false and perfidious, heartless and selfish; capable at times of hateful cruelty; a

His Sword and Musket

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vanity such as could hardly dwell in the same breast with greatness; to say nothing of her indelicacy and at least one darker stain (prompting to the assassination of Mary Queen of Scots) a virago who spat, swore, and cuffed!" — such is the indictment, and it seems to be sustained. There is hardly in history a more painful disillusion than the admirer of 'Great Elizabeth' experiences when he first comes to know 'the true inwardness' of the character and conduct of 'the Virgin Queen.' But of all this, at the epoch in question, young Shakespeare knew little, and the common people nothing.

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Study IV
Shakespeare's Wand and Sceptre

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YES, Master of the human heart! we own
Thy sovereign sway, and bow before thy throne.
There warbles Poesy her sweetest song;
There the wild Passions wait, thy vassal throng;
At thy command the varied tumult rolls,
Now Pity melts, now Terror chills our souls;
Now, as thou wav'st the wizard rod, are seen
The Fays and Elves quick-glancing o'er the green;
There, mid the lightning's blaze and whirlwind's
 howl,
On the scathed heath the fatal Sisters scowl.

These are thy wonders, Nature's darling birth!
And Fame shall waft thy wealth o'er all the earth.
There, where Rome's eagle never stooped for blood,
By hallowed Ganges or Missouri's flood,
Thy peaceful triumphs spread, and mock the pride
Of Pella's Youth, and Julius slaughter-dyed.

In ages far remote, if Albion's state
Hath touched the mortal limit, marked by Fate,
E'en Australasia shall thy sway prolong,
And her rich cities echo with thy song;
There myriads still shall laugh or drop the tear
At Falstaff's humor or the woes of Lear;
Man wave-like following man thy powers admire,
And thou, my Shakespeare, reign till time expire!

*Newstead Abbey,
England.*

*Charles Symmons, D.D.
Aug. 4, 1825.*

STUDY IV

SHAKESPEARE'S WAND AND SCEPTRE

A STUDY OF HIS IMAGINATION AND POINTS OF SUPERIORITY

"THERE IS an upstart crow beautified with our feathers." So Shakespeare is described by Robert Greene in the year 1592.¹ "Beautified with our feathers!" This seems to imply that he is a plagiarist. That may not be the meaning; but it suggests the question of his originality.

"Many have supposed him original," says Grant White, "when he was only following the old play or the old story." Emerson remarks—"Shakespeare regarded the mass of plays as waste stock, in which any experiment might be freely tried, and he used whatever he found. The investigation leaves hardly a single play as his absolute invention." "A great poet" (I am still quoting Emerson) "knows the sparkle of the true stone, and puts it in high place, wherever he finds it. Chaucer is a huge borrower; he uses poor old John Gower as if he were only a brick kiln or a stone quarry, out of which to build his house. He steals by this apology, that what he takes has no value where he finds it, and the greatest where he leaves it."

It is doubtful if Shakespeare originated wholly

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a single play.² When he builds the stately edifice, he usually finds the corner stone already laid, some if not all of the foundations in position, some of the principal apartments located. In what, then, does his originality consist? Partly in this: that, as Augustus 'found Rome brick and left it marble,' so Shakespeare finds a barn and leaves it a palace. He touches the rude fabric: wood becomes gold, foundations grow, walls recede, rooms multiply, ceilings lift; the roof expands, rounds into a dome, stretches far toward the infinite blue. Lo, columns, arches, battlements, towers!

"Cornice or frieze with bossy sculptures graven!"

But the new structure, though it proves him a master builder, is the least part. He was not architect only, nor chiefly. So far as mere frameworks or plots are concerned, other dramatists and some novelists have been equally inventive, equally constructive; many of them more so.³ But what music sounds through Shakespeare's halls! What flowers of fancy and fragrance of sentiment there! What outlooks to earth and sky, toward heaven and hell, from those windows! What pictures adorn those walls, or move before our eyes!

Yet melody of verse, bloom of ideality, aroma of feeling, glimpses of great truths of the seen and the unseen, some of them from lofty soarings or deep-sea soundings of the soul — neither one nor many

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of these combined are the principal charm. More than all else what living, speaking, energetic forms, interesting *persons* are here! The first thing we note on entering and the last on leaving is the multitude of striking characters, many of them the creation of the poet himself, a hundred of them seeming more real than the men and women of history!

It is not so much their number as their distinctness, representativeness, and mutual helpfulness. Here are thirty-seven plays presenting more than twelve hundred speakers, each of whom with hardly an exception talks and acts consistently with the author's conception of his part and so as to promote the purpose of the whole. For, speaking broadly, these productions, not only in their structure but also in the arrangement and interplay of characters, fulfil measurably the definition of an organism, that in which all portions are reciprocally means and ends.

There has been a good deal of loose exaggeration in describing his power, but most critics would probably agree in asserting this: That no other dramatist, perhaps no other man, ever stood at so many independent standpoints, looked through so many eyes, spoke from so many lips — in a word identified himself with so many individualities. His characters are rarely or never exact duplicates; they are seldom interchangeable or superfluous. Often each is typical of a distinct class. How

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different from many great poets! Byron's Manfred, Mazeppa, Lara, Cain, Conrad, Hugo, Alp, Childe Harold, Don Juan, Sardanapalus and the rest—all are different editions of Byron himself, Byrons in miniature: they all have the handsome Byronic scowl, or the beautiful Byronic disdain, or the bitter Byronic sneer, or the eloquent Byronic whine! Most of Milton's personages too,—Milton's Samson, Sabrina, Adam, Eve, Abdiel, Belial, Beelzebub, Gabriel, Michael, Uriel, Raphael, and especially Satan—yes, there's a great deal of Milton in the devil! his enemies always insisted there was a good deal of the devil in Milton!—they are all stamped with Milton's likeness; all are phases of John Milton!

Not so with Shakespeare. His characters are not little Shakespeares. If he seems to duplicate, it is for dramatic effect, as in the case of the two Dromios of Syracuse and Ephesus in *The Comedy of Errors*. They are exactly alike externally, as are also their masters. You cannot tell them apart by their looks, "and there's the humor of it"; but they are differentiated; not alike internally.

In this Character-creation the dramatist apparently loses his identity, wears many masks, becomes successively each of a thousand persons. How is this transformation effected? Apparently either by intuition and reproduction, or by original creation: he either enters into the consciousness of some known personage, perhaps historical, and then

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re-creates it, sometimes bettering it, Shakespearianizing it!⁴ or he assumes, or so to speak invents, a consciousness, clothes it with flesh and blood, all the attributes of personality; and thus really originates the character. In either case, the self-effacement is perfect; the writer himself disappears.

From 'the foremost man of all this world,' as he styles Julius Cæsar, and from old Lear 'every inch a king,' all the way down to young Gobbo, whose horizon rarely reaches beyond his dinner, and to Launce whose life mission was to train his mischievous cur Crab 'even as one would say,' "precisely thus would I teach a dog";— from the elder Hamlet, 'a goodly king,'

A combination and a form indeed
Where every god did seem to set his seal
To give the world assurance of a man;

and from Mark Antony, of whose Herculean physique Cleopatra exclaims,

His face was as the heavens; and therein stuck
A sun and moon, which kept their course and lighted
The little O, the earth!
His legs bestrid the ocean; his reared arm
Crested the world; his voice was propertied
As all the tuned spheres! —

from such, all the way down to Thersites of the sugar-loaf head, mastiff jaws, bandy legs, 'lame of the other foot'; — yes, still lower to Caliban, tortoise shaped, 'fins like arms,' 'ancient and fish-

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like smell,' missing link between man and brute;—
from the perfect woman,

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

from the transparent innocence of Miranda, the saintly devotion of Imogen, the heavenly tenderness of Cordelia, — all the way down to the more than swinish foulness of Cloten, the more than Mephistophelian malice of Iago, the more than devilish savageness of Cornwall or Richard Third, — the dramatist left himself far behind, and became for the moment the person he imaginatively saw. Nor stops with beings of common flesh and blood. Gods and goddesses from Jupiter and Juno down; allegorical persons like Time and Rumor; fairies, witches; spirits from ocean, from air, from other worlds, from beyond the grave; come at his call, and Shakespearian words issue from supernatural lips!

Is not this Character-creation the principal thing? The more we note its grace, ease, and completeness, the more his greatness grows upon us. Argus was hundred-eyed, Rumor hundred-tongued, Briareus hundred-armed; but such epithets belittle Shakespeare. Rather with Hallam we term him the 'thousand-souled,' or with Coleridge we name him the 'myriad-minded,' and speak of his 'oceanic intellect.' 'Oceanic'! — how multitudin-

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ous that sea of thought from whose depths bubbled up in inexhaustible profusion such varieties of being! If we name as the first point in his superiority shown in a previous study his mastery of the English language, the blended copiousness and felicity of his diction, is not this unequalled creation of strikingly important characters the second?⁵

To make this self-transformation more complete, to give each important person of the drama an appropriate setting, framework, and background, he often creates or colors an environment. As a means to this end, while he himself is for the moment out of sight and out of mind, he makes many of his characters strangely subjective. The mood imparts its tone and hue. Even inanimate nature seems interpenetrated with the soul of the speaker, sympathetic with him, sharing his views and feelings; at least the speaker thinks so; the burning emotion or passion, like colored flame in evening fireworks filling the atmosphere with its odor, and suffusing all things with its glow.

This will be clearer by illustration. Take Lady Macbeth, bent on murdering her royal guest. Contrast her words with those of the king and his suite. They are coming to her castle in the north of Scotland. It is 'beautiful for situation,' pleasant for its pure air and breezes like the breath of heaven, attractive for its architecture, sweetly soothing for the notes of 'temple-haunting' songsters all around, their lovely nests in every advanta-

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geous nook; delightful for memories of affection, music, gaiety, mirth, hospitality within its walls. King Duncan is coming: all should be gladness: but she means to kill him, if need be with her own hands! Her soul is black: it radiates darkness, as Byron says of Satan,

“And where he gazed, a gloom pervaded space.”⁶

If she thinks of any bird, it is one of foreboding, of midnight, Edgar Poe's ‘grim, ungainly, ghastly, gaunt, and ominous bird of yore,’ the raven! If she thinks of any sound, it is one of evil omen, a hoarseness, a croaking! if of any ceremony, it is of deadly import, fatal! if of any portion of her castle, it 's something menacing, frowning, hostile, the battlements! Hear her mutter, thinking aloud!

The raven himself is hoarse,
That croaks the fatal entrance of Duncan
Under my battlements!

Soon the king arrives, all unsuspecting, full of kindness and cheer. Glad thoughts tinge his speech. No raven now, no hoarseness, no croaking, no fatality, no threatening battlements! Hear him:

This castle hath a pleasant seat: the air
Nimble and sweetly recommends itself
Unto our gentle senses.⁷

Banquo chimes in —

This guest of summer,
The temple-haunting martlet, does approve
By his loved mansionry that the heaven's breath

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Smells wooingly here: no jutting, frieze,
Buttress, nor coigne of vantage, but this bird
Hath made his pendent bed and procreant cradle:
Where they must breed and baunt, I have observed
The air is delicate.

It may be worth while to note in passing that this imparting of the color of the mind to the environment as if one looked through stained glass, and still more this seeming transfer of the mind itself to surrounding objects, as if all nature were alive, sympathetic, consciously akin to the speaker and sharing his mood, is not peculiar to Shakespeare, James Russell Lowell to the contrary notwithstanding. Lowell declares, "If this be accident, it is at least one of those accidents of which Shakespeare only was ever capable." On the contrary, the same merit is seen in Bunyan, Burns, Milton, and many others, including Lowell himself. Thus Bunyan in one of his self-condemnatory moods exclaims, "Methought I saw as if the very sun that shineth in the heavens did grudge to give me light." Burns, in his lines *To Mary in Heaven* — Mary Campbell, whom he was to have married, but who suddenly passed away — writes of their last meeting on the banks of the river Ayr,

"Ayr, gurgling, kissed his pebbled shore:
O'erhung with wild woods, thickening, green,
The fragrant birch, the hawthorn hoar,
Twined amorous round the raptured scene:
The flowers sprang wanton to be pressed,
The birds sang love on every spray."

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Lowell's claim that Shakespeare is the sole possessor of this power, we may grant that he surpasses in the frequency, the completeness, and the felicity of its exercise.

This Character-creation, embracing not less than twelve hundred who speak in all nearly twenty-five thousand most appropriate words, and many of whom live in peculiar atmospheres of thought and sentiment, implies a keen, deep, perpetual scrutiny, not only of human nature, human conduct, and human history, but also of man's surroundings, all things within reach of the senses and of mental perception, all objects and subjects. No such production, verbal delineation, or tinting of environment — not one of his great plays, hardly one of his great characters — would have been possible without an artistic observation extraordinary in scope and power, a grasp most comprehensive, an inspection most minute — all eyes, all ears, all sense, all memory — perception and apperception. Not otherwise can we account fully for his amazing intelligence evinced in those stores of information of which Lowell declares, "The range and accuracy of his knowledge were beyond precedent or later parallel." This result may be questioned, but the superior extent and accuracy of the dramatist's observation will generally be conceded. Take a single illustration. In *2 Henry IV*, the Chief Justice, Sir William Gascoigne, reprimands old Jack Falstaff for pretending to be young —

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Do you set down your name in the scroll of youth,
that are written down with all the characters of age?
Have you not a moist eye? a dry hand? a yellow
cheek? a white beard? a decreasing leg? an in-
creasing belly? Is not your voice broken? your wind
short? your chin double? your wit single? and
every part about you blasted with antiquity?

Multiply this passage by a hundred, and we begin to realize that this man was perhaps the keenest, broadest of observers, his insight and range microscopic and telescopic.⁸

Considering the multitude of his characters, their representativeness, the completeness with which he withdraws himself from view, and the extent to which he allows their idiosyncrasies to tinge their surroundings, we learn how tolerant, how large-hearted he was. His overflowing sympathies reach an extraordinary number and every kind. Clowns, fools, villains, witches, monsters, fiends in human or devilish form, as well as kings, sages, saints, warriors, statesmen, and truly angelic women—all are made to appear at their best, Shakespearianized; all, even the worst, allowed to plead their own cause, speak for themselves the most fitting words. As one critic finely observes, the dramatist “would rather feel them in his arms than under his feet.” All-embracing in his charity, he can even “give the devil his due.” Burns pitied Satan and wished he'd reform!—

“But fare ye well, auld Nickie Ben.
O wad ye tak a thought and men!”

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Ye aiblins might, I dinna ken,
Still ha' a stake!
I'm wae to think upon yon den,
Even for your sake! ”⁹

But Shakespeare goes a step further, respects His
Satanic Majesty's rank; says

Let the devil
Be sometime honored for his burning throne!

In the hateful passage in which he represents Joan
of Arc invoking the aid of fiends, they are

Under the lordly monarch of the north.

Lowell remarks, “Milton can do justice to great
devils, but not to little devils.” But the dramatist
abdicates in favor of every one. Saint or sinner,
angel or imp, fool, felon or flunkey, sage, savage,
or simpleton — he treats all fairly, kindly, sym-
pathetically. Does he go too far in this? Dr.
Samuel Johnson thought so; he would rather see
a larger measure of righteous wrath grinding some
of these demons into small dust.

We cannot help feeling that is what fiends are
for; to be fought against and put down; to be
spurned, not dandled; not caressed in Shake-
speare's arms nor any arms; but flung as Alcides
threw Lichas 'from the top of Cæta into the
Euboic sea,' or as Vulcan was

“thrown by angry Jove

Sheer o'er the crystal battlements,”

or as Satan, whom

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“ the Almighty Power

Hurled headlong flaming from the ethereal sky!”

And so Johnson regrets that Shakespeare “ carries his persons indifferently through right and wrong, and leaves their example to operate by chance.” Well, if he erred, it was on the side of charity. We all need that. Let us rather set this down as one of his points of superiority, that no other writer of that age, or perhaps of any age, is so tolerant as he.

The drama of Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, from which Aristotle is said to have drawn his rules on the Poetic Art, was simple, like Greek art in general. It respected strictly the Unities of Time, Place, and Plot. Shakespeare’s, like mediæval art was complex. Greek was classic, severe, statuesque; Shakespeare, Gothic, varied, multi-form. An ancient temple, say the Parthenon, with its chaste simplicity, may stand for the ancient drama. A cathedral of the middle ages, say that of Amiens, Cologne, or Milan, with all its complexity, may stand for the Shakespearian. Except in *Henry VIII* he observes pretty well the Unity of Plot; but he cares little for the Unities of Time and Place.

He is, too, the earliest of dramatists to ‘ hold the mirror up to nature ’ by blending tragedy and comedy. Contrast the most perfect of ancient tragedies, say the *Agamemnon* of Æschylus, the *Œdipus Tyrannus* or *Electra* of Sophocles, or the

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Alcestis of Euripides, with *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *Lear*, or *Macbeth*. Is not the introduction of the comic element, more or less alternating with the tragic, truer to life? Does it not also relieve for a moment from the almost unendurable stress of horror? And then by contrast does it not accentuate and intensify?

“ Life, struck sharp on death,
Makes awful lightning.”

This blending of sunshine and shadow differentiates Shakespeare's from the ancient tragedies, as also from most of the French. Perhaps we may claim it as another point of his superiority.

Besides the intermingling of tragedy and comedy as often occurs in human affairs, there are many passages properly described as history, pastoral dialogue, interlude, and even farce; so that old Polonius is as correct as funny in his characterization — “ The best actors in the world for tragedy, comedy, history, pastoral, pastoral-comical, historical-pastoral, tragical-historical, tragical-comical-historical-pastoral, scene individable or poem unlimited: Seneca cannot be too heavy, nor Plautus too light.” This mixture makes it difficult to classify the plays;¹⁰ and the difficulty is enhanced by the disregard of the Unity of Time. He allows many months, sometimes years, fifteen or more, to elapse between the first and the last act, as in *Pericles*, *The Winter's Tale*, and *King Henry VIII*. Equally regardless is he of the Unity of Place;

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shifting the scene in *Macbeth* from the north of Scotland to the south of England four hundred miles, and in *Cymbeline* from Wales to Rome a thousand miles!

A simple arrangement, which is no classification but may assist the memory, is to make the end of the year 1600 the dividing line. About eighteen of the plays were composed before, and about eighteen after.

Speaking broadly we may say that the works of his early manhood, those prior to 1601, display more spontaneity, fertility, and splendor. Not that imagination is anywhere lacking. Indeed it is absolutely stronger, bolder, loftier in the later; but more exuberant in the earlier.

Of these, *Midsummer Night's Dream*, which Hallam deems the finest of all comedies, and which Grant White singles out as 'the most exquisite, the daintiest, the most fanciful creation that exists in poetry,' has for its chief excellence the originality and skill shown in the creation and management of the fairy machinery. Except for slight touches in Chaucer, Robert Greene, and one or two others, he was the first to place upon the stage, the first really to introduce into literature the fairies of English folklore.

Time hardly suffices to illustrate the skill with which he has done this; but as a hint of the coinage of purest and most playful imagination we may quote from the language of Oberon, king

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of the sprites, to his 'tricksy spirit' Puck. The passage contains the celebrated compliment to Queen Elizabeth as 'a fair vestal throned by the west.' It appears to be a recollection of 'the princely pleasures of Kenilworth' so finely described by Walter Scott. Shakespeare, then a boy of eleven years, had very likely tramped over to Kenilworth a dozen miles away during that memorable fortnight in 1575 and seen something of what he describes. Oberon speaks —

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

Puck.

I remember.

Ober.

That very time I saw, but thou couldst not,
Flying between the cold moon and the earth
Cupid all armed: a certain aim he took
At a fair vestal throned by the west,
And loosed his love shaft smartly from his bow,
As it should pierce a hundred thousand hearts;
But I might see young Cupid's fiery shaft
Quenched in the chaste beams of the watery moon,
And the imperial votaress passed on
In maiden meditation, fancy free!
Yet marked I where the bolt of Cupid fell:
It fell upon a little western flower,
Before milk-white, now purple with love's wound,

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And maidens call it love-in-idleness.

Fetch me this herb

. and be thou here again

Ere the leviathan can swim a league.

Puck.

I'll put a girdle round about the earth

In forty minutes!¹¹

If *Midsummer Night's Dream* excels in that phase of imagination displayed in the creation and management of the fairy machinery, *The Merchant of Venice* is perhaps unequaled in the felicitous juxtaposition of contrasted characters. The terrible Jew is face to face with celestial Portia. We must not pause to illustrate this contrast. Victor Hugo comes near it in *Les Miserables*.¹²

But here are lines which Hallam thinks the finest in Shakespeare. It is the passage which blends in delicious harmony love, music, moonlight, the star pavement of heaven, loftiest Platonic philosophy, a vision of listening cherubs, an assurance of immortal life.

How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank!
Here will we sit and let the sounds of music
Creep in our ears. Soft stillness and the night
Become the touches of sweet harmony.
Sit, Jessica. — Look how the floor of heaven
Is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold!
There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st
But in his motion like an angel sings,
Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubins!
Such harmony is in immortal souls!

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Illustrative of the exuberance and splendor of imagination in the earlier plays, the lines just quoted remind us of another claim of superiority. It is made by Richard Grant White. It is in regard to the language form in which this imagination often clothes itself. Says White, "Shakespeare's use of simile, imagery, and impersonation, shows a power to which that of any other poet in this respect cannot be compared even in the way of derogation; for it is not only superior to, but unlike that which we find in any other." He adds by way of explanation, "He fuses a thought, a feeling, and an image together." There is a basis of truth in this claim, though at first it may seem extravagant. On careful examination we shall find that the analysis is not original with White; the synthesis he praises is not peculiar to Shakespeare. The rhetorical or poetic combination of a truth, a sentiment, and a picture is almost the precise excellence which Edmund Burke commended a century and a half ago as characteristic of great writers in every age. "A truly fine sentence," said Burke, "consists in a union of thought, feeling, and imagery — of a striking truth and a corresponding sentiment, rendered doubly striking by the force and beauty of figurative language."¹⁸ The simplest element, the indispensable basis, ornament or no ornament, must be a truth, important or at least interesting.

To illustrate: take the bald statement of the

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brevity of life, "Man is of few days," or as the Prayer Book has it, "Man hath but a short time to live." The next step adds a picture; as "Your life is a vapor, that appeareth for a little time and then vanisheth away." Or two pictures, "He cometh forth as a flower and is cut down; he fleeth also as a shadow and continueth not"; or three pictures —

"As the winged arrow flies
Speedily its mark to find;
As the lightning from the skies
Darts and leaves no trace behind;
Swiftly thus our fleeting days
Bear us down life's rapid stream."¹⁴

Or there may be many graceful images. Notice how the ornaments soften and soothe:

"Like to the falling of a star,
Or as the flights of eagles are,
Or like a wind that chafes the flood
Or bubbles that on water stood,
Or like the fresh spring's gaudy hue
Or silver drops of morning dew;
E'en such is man; whose borrowed light
Is straight called in and paid to-night!
The wind blows out, the bubble dies,
The spring entombed in autumn lies,
The dew dries up, the star is shot,
The flight is past, and man forgot."¹⁵

In all these we have an important truth, that life is brief; but here is no passion, no emotion, scarce any feeling. The pictures are fine, but they

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have no color. Let us add the third ingredient, the hue of *sentiment*. Take this from the southern poet, the late Father Ryan of Mobile:

“ Only a few more years, weary years!
Only a few more tears, bitter tears!
And then — ah! then — like other men,
I cease to wander, cease to weep;
Dim shadows o'er my way shall creep;
And out of the day and into the night,
Into the dark and out of the bright
I go! — . . . and then like other men
I close my eyes and go to sleep;
Ah me! the grave is dark and deep!
Alas! alas! how soon we pass!”¹⁶

But as yet we have no impersonation. Let us add, then, to the three component parts, the fourth element, *personification*. Listen to half a dozen lines from Shakespeare's *Richard the Second*. In them note the familiar truth that life, even a monarch's life, is brief. See, too, the imagery, a king's crown expanded to a palace containing a throne and a court! You share a feeling of ineffable contempt for ridiculous vanity; and there in full view is the tremendous skeleton form of the King of Terrors, death personified!

Within the hollow crown
That rounds the mortal temples of a king
Keeps Death his court, and there the antic sits
Scoffing his state and grinning at his pomp,
Allowing him a breath, a little scene,
To monarchize, be feared, and kill with looks!¹⁷

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To show that this fourfold combination is not peculiar to Shakespeare, note instances from other authors. When Milton makes Satan exclaim —

“ Which way I fly is hell! myself am hell!
And in the lowest deep a lower deep,
Still threatening to devour me, opens wide,
To which the hell I suffer seems a heaven! ”²⁸

we have one of the greatest truths; namely, to use Milton's language,

“ The mind is its own place, and in itself
Can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven! ”

we have as intense a feeling as ever was uttered, Satan's agony of remorse; we have a suggested picture, the lowest depths of the infernal world; and we have a personification, not so vivid as Dante or Shakespeare would have made it, but tremendous, the lower deep as a threatening, all-devouring, open-jawed monster!

When Gray paints the early magnificence and dark and bloody end of Richard's reign, a bright summer day ending in cyclone, we have in half a dozen lines a wonderful combination of prophetic truth, sentiments of joy, pride, and reckless confidence, a maritime picture unsurpassed in beauty; vivid personifications of laughing Morn, a gilded bark on a smooth blue sea, Youth with eyes on the future, Pleasure guiding all, and in the distance a crouching Whirlwind silently awaiting his victims!

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“ Fair laughs the Morn, and soft the zephyr blows,
While proudly riding o'er the azure realm
In gallant trim the gilded vessel goes,
Youth on the prow, and Pleasure at the helm,
Regardless of the sweeping Whirlwind's sway,
That, hushed in grim repose, expects his evening prey!”¹⁹

Without pausing to point out or analyze, we quote from Byron sentences illustrative. The first is of a thunder-storm at midnight among the Alps.

“ Oh Night
And Storm and Darkness, ye are wondrous strong,
Yet lovely in your strength, as is the light
Of a dark eye in woman! Far along
From peak to peak, the rattling crags among
Leaps the live thunder! Not from one lone cloud,
But every mountain now hath found a tongue,
And Jura answers through her misty shroud
Back to the joyous Alps, who call to her aloud!

And this is in the night: most glorious Night!
Thou wast not made for slumber! let me be
A sharer in thy fierce and far delight,
A portion of the tempest and of thee!
How the lit lake shines, a phosphoric sea,
And the big rain comes dancing to the earth!
And now again 't is black, and now the glee
Of the loud hills shakes with its mountain-mirth,
As if they did rejoice o'er a young earthquake's birth!”

And so the Morning after the storm —

“ The Morn is up again, the dewy Morn,
With breath all incense, and with cheek all bloom,
Laughing away the clouds with playful scorn,
And living as if earth contained no tomb.”²⁰

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In these passages and many others we find the fourfold blending that has been claimed as Shakespeare's alone, truth, feeling, picture, impersonation — warp of logic, woof of sentiment, embroidery of fancy, a robe richly wrought, and, within, the throb, the stir, the consciousness, the activity of an intelligent personality. This is as truly the fact, though the workmanship may not be so delicate, as in Romeo's exquisite description of the dawn. He has stayed too long in his courtship, and his life is in danger. Day begins to glimmer, an unwelcome intruder, seeming envious of his happiness, and coming to sever him from Juliet. The subjectivity is inverted!

Look, love; what envious streaks
Do lace the severing clouds in yonder east?
Night's candles are burnt out, and jocund Day
Stands tiptoe on the misty mountain's tops!²¹

Professor Goodrich, in his work on *British Eloquence* declares that more sentences combining a striking thought with sentiment and imagery are found in Burke than in any other writer. On the contrary Burke falls below Shakespeare in this regard; and if we include personification, there are ten, yea, a hundred in the dramatist to one in the statesman. Burke rarely, Bacon never, vividly personifies. Shakespeare deals more profusely in this quadruple commingling than any other, and his artistic work is more complete. At once philosopher, enthusiast, painter, life-giver, the very

His Wand and Sceptre

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fibre of his logic seems metaphor; the color of sentiment is not an after added dye, but ingrain; the figures of fancy are not painted or printed — it is not calico or chromo — but they are inwoven; and everything that he looks upon or even thinks of, lives! What does this show? Is there not in him a degree of piercing insight, subjective intensity, fertile fancy, life-imparting creativeness, to which we find no complete parallel, at least in modern times, and of which men in general have no conception? insight giving us truths; intensity, sentiment; fancy, pictures; vital creativeness, persons?

Set down, then, this fourfold blending as another point in Shakespeare's superiority.

In a former study we endeavored to show that he turns at will any word into a verb. With equal ease he turns at will any object of thought into a person. Probably nowhere else in literature are there so many such or so life-like. Let us illustrate: Romeo has slain Tybalt in fair fight; but the nurse is of the Tybalt faction, and she exclaims, "Shame come to Romeo!" Juliet hotly replies (again note the fourfold combination!) —

Blistered be thy tongue

For such a wish! He was not born to shame.

Upon his brow Shame is ashamed to sit!

For 't is a throne where Honor may be crowned

Sole monarch of the universal earth!²³

Listen to other examples. "Disdain and scorn

Studies in Shakespeare

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ride sparkling in her eyes." " Nice customs curtsy to great kings." " The wish is father to the thought."

The iron of itself, though heat red hot,
Approaching near these eyes would drink my tears
And quench his fiery indignation . . .

There is no malice in this burning coal;
The breath of heaven hath blown his spirit out,
And strew'd repentant ashes on his head.²³

One more illustration out of hundreds:

Your mind is tossing on the ocean,
There where your argosies with portly sail,
Like signiors and rich burghers on the flood,
Or, as it were, the pageants of the sea,
Do overpeer the petty traffickers
That curtsy to them, do them reverence,
As they fly by them with their woven wings.²⁴

This vivid personification affords a glance, perhaps more revealing than any other, into Shakespeare's laboratory. Weak poets glue, strong weld, Shakespeare fuses; simile becoming metaphor, and metaphor creation. The cemented mass—truth, feeling, imagery—in the passionate heat of this soul, becomes incandescent, melts, flows into moulds, solidifies; the castings are statues, the statues persons alive, sympathetic, immortal as literature.

The poet's eye in a fine frenzy rolling
Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven;
And as imagination bodies forth

His Wand and Sceptre

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The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing
A local habitation and a name.²⁶

“A fine frenzy!” Is he not thinking of himself?
A single sentence is an aerolite from

The brightest heaven of invention;

a single act lets loose a group of shooting stars;
a single drama is a comet that drags in its train a
hundred meteors; and what shall we say of the
“Muse of Fire” that could send from its depths
in quick succession thirty-seven such to circle for-
ever in the world's intellectual sky?

We have been speaking chiefly of the plays
produced before the end of the century. It is
proper to add that some of the earlier, as for
instance the First and Second Parts of King
Henry the Fourth, appear to exhibit most con-
spicuously another quality, in which some of the
best judges claim that he surpasses all other drama-
tists or even all other authors, his Wit and Humor.
“Comparisons are odorous,” as Dogberry wisely
remarks; but Falstaff is often regarded as the most
comic character in literature. As the Chief Jus-
tice says, Falstaff always “wrenches the true cause
the false way”; but his judgment is keen, as when
going into the battle of Shrewsbury he points out
the emptiness of false ‘honor.’ So he says, “I
am not only witty in myself, but the cause that
wit is in other men.”

Studies in Shakespeare

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We need not pause to illustrate this.²⁶ It is enough that we mention with him some of the other names synonymous with fun, frolic, jesting, comicality in a hundred forms; Dogberry, Bottom, Mercutio, the two Dromios, Launce, the two Gobbos, Touchstone, the nameless fools and clowns; those who laugh and those who are laughed at. May we not properly include Wit and Humor as an element in Shakespeare's superiority?

If his earlier works best exhibit the spontaneity, exuberance, and brilliancy of his fancy, I think we may safely affirm that his later have more depth and delicacy, more reflective power; more daring, comprehensive, lofty imagination; deeper significance of humor; intenser pathos; more justice, charity, self-control, fortitude.²⁷ The man has grown in what the Scripture calls "Grace," as he has grown in years. These qualities will be illustrated incidentally, though only to a limited extent, in what we have to say of three surpassing excellences, clearly evident after the year 1600; his Philosophic Insight, Practical Wisdom, and Power of expressing deep and varied Emotion.

As bearing on his philosophic insight, we might quote Lowell's bold assertion — "Whatever we have gathered of thought or knowledge shrinks to a mere footnote, the stepping-stone to some hitherto inaccessible verse." Of his intuition Lowell writes — "That intuition, whose edging shallows may have been sounded, but whose abysses, stretching down

His Wand and Sceptre

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amid the sunless roots of Being and Consciousness, mock the plummet." Conversely, but to the same effect, Hawthorne declares, "Shakespeare has surface beneath surface to an immeasurable depth adapted to the plummet line of every reader. His works present many phases of truth, each with scope large enough to fill a contemplative mind. There is no exhausting the various interpretations of his symbols; and a thousand years hence a world of new readers will possess a whole library of new books, as we ourselves do in these old volumes already." Are Lowell and Hawthorne given to exaggeration?

This insight is seen in numerous masterly generalizations. We here quote but three.²⁸

One touch of nature makes the whole world kin.

'T is mad idolatry

To make the service greater than the god.

It is an heretic that makes the fire,

Not she which burns in it.

A learned critic characterizes as 'superhuman' the precision and power with which our dramatist differentiates at different epochs national peculiarities, as, for instance, contrasting the Romans in the time of Coriolanus with the Romans four and a half centuries later in the time of Julius Cæsar. The gifted essayist, Edwin P. Whipple, calls attention to the subtle insight in his method, seizing unerringly the law of a class, so embodying it in a character as to constitute it a type, and then

Studies in Shakespeare

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making it elevated, ideal, poetic, in a word, Shakespearean!

Akin to this philosophic insight, and as a consequence of it, we may name his Practical Wisdom. A palpable phase of this might be inferred from his business success, a success unparalleled for two hundred years till the time of Sir Walter Scott. But his practical wisdom as an *author* has often been questioned or denied altogether, especially by the French critics, Chateaubriand, Taine, and Voltaire. The average Frenchman has much wit, little humor. He is likely to confound taste with wisdom. They ought of course to be identical; but too often in the fashionable world are far apart: taste dealing with the outside; wisdom, the inside; taste appearing well, wisdom really being well. Chateaubriand affirms Shakespeare has "corrupted art"; Taine is fond of representing him as eccentric, irregular, lawless, bizarre, exaggerated, barbarous; "a drunken savage," says Voltaire, whom, you will remember, Goethe characterized as 'the greatest literary genius of all time'—"*un sauvage ivre sans le moindre étincelle de bon gout, et sans le moindre connaissance des regles.*" Voltaire continues the description—"a writer of monstrous farces called tragedies"—"these pieces are monstrous in tragedy . . . the merit of this author has ruined the English drama!"—"Imagine what you can of most monstrous and absurd; you will find it in Shakespeare!" Later

His Wand and Sceptre

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French critics, Victor Hugo, Darmesteter, Mézières, and a few others are unqualified admirers, as are all German, English, and American. "A heavenly genius," says Goethe, "who approaches mankind in order in the mildest way, to make them acquainted with themselves." "He was the man who, of all the moderns," says Dryden, "and perhaps we should include the ancients, had the largest and most comprehensive soul." He quotes with approval from 'the ever-memorable Hales of Eton,' "Whatever topic you quote upon from the ancients, something at least equally well written on the same may be found in Shakespeare."²⁹ Our Emerson declares, "Other poets are conceivably wise; Shakespeare, inconceivably. We can in some sort nestle into Plato's brain; not so into Shakespeare's; we are still out of doors!"³⁰

But this is hearsay, opinion. One fact goes far toward proving him the wisest of non-biblical authors; he surpasses all the rest in the number of keen and deep observations that have become proverbs. In the first act in *Hamlet*, for example, are more than a score of aphorisms, many of which are as familiar as household words. Thus:

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

"Frailty, thy name is woman!" — "In my mind's eye, Horatio." —

Studies in Shakespeare

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He was a man, take him for all in all,
I shall not look upon his like again. —

“Loan oft loses both itself and friend.” — “Borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry.” —

Foul deeds will rise,
Though all the earth o'erwhelm them, to men's eyes. —

“A custom more honored in the breach than the observance.” — “Something is rotten in the state of Denmark.” — “One may smile and smile, and be a villain.” —

There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.

The time is out of joint; — O cursed spite,
That ever I was born to set it right!

This above all: to thine own self be true,
And it must follow, as the night the day,
Thou canst not then be false to any man. —

We venture, then, to name Practical Wisdom as another point in Shakespeare's preeminence.

One word more. Coleridge remarks that Intensity is a leading characteristic of genius. In the power of portraying deep and varied emotion, a power that was apparently increasing all through his life, a power that seems to have been totally lacking in Bacon, Shakespeare is on the whole unequalled. Milton, we may concede, is unapproached in sustained sublimity, intensity sonorous and prolonged. But we always fancy Milton playing the organ, as Tennyson sings —

His Wand and Sceptre

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“O mighty-mouthed inventor of harmonies!
O skilled to sing of time and eternity!
God-gifted organ voice of England,
MILTON, a name to resound for ages!

Whose Titan angels, Gabriel, Abdiel,
Starred from Jehovah's gorgeous armories,
Tower, as the deep-domed empyrean
Rings to the roar of an angel onset.”¹¹

Milton is at the organ: Shakespeare plays many instruments, sounds nearly every chord in the heart from its lowest note to the top of its compass. Shall we endeavor to illustrate? — sound the gamut of the diatonic scale — imagine a “Seventh Symphony”! show the three primary colors — fancy the rainbow! pour a glass of water — say Niagara! a splinter of marble — Dian's Temple! Nevertheless we quote as hints.

How much love, real or pretended, when the splendid animal, Antony, returning victorious, calls to the Egyptian Queen —

O thou Day o' the world,
Chain mine arm'd neck! Leap thou, attire and all,
Through proof of harness to my heart, and there
Ride on the pants triumphing!¹²

How much of reverent love, tinged with a sense of its divineness, for the sincerest is most sacred, is compressed in Ferdinand's inquiry of Miranda and their instant avowals!

Ferd. I do beseech you,
Chiefly that I might set it in my prayers,
What is your name?

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Mir. *Miranda.* — O, my father,
I have broken your heart to say so!

Ferd. *Admired Miranda!*
Indeed the top of admiration! worth
What's dearest in the world. Full many a lady
I have eyed with best regard
. But you — O you,
So perfect and so peerless, are created
Of every creature's best!

Mir. I do not know
One of my sex; no woman's face remember,
Save from my glass mine own; nor have I seen
More that I may call men than you, good friend,
And my dear father.
. but, by my modesty,
The jewel in my dower, I would not wish
Any companion in the world but you;
Nor can imagination form a shape,
Beside yourself, to like of

Ferd. *Hear my soul speak:*
The very instant that I saw you, did
My heart fly to your service; there resides
To make me slave to it

Mir. *Do you love me?*

Ferd. O heaven! O earth! bear witness to this sound,
And crown with kind event what I profess,
If I speak true; if hollowly, invert
What best is boded me to mischief! I,
Beyond all limit of what else i' the world,
Do love, prize, honor you.

Mir. I am a fool
To weep at what I am glad of.²³

How much of scorn and wrath break from Corio-
lanus when he turns upon cowardly soldiers fleeing
in battle!

His Wand and Sceptre
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You souls of geese that bear the shapes of men,
How have you run from slaves that apes would beat!
Pluto and hell! all hurt behind! backs red,
And faces pale with flight and agued fear!
Mend and charge home; or, by the fires of heaven,
I'll leave the foe and make my wars on you!
Look to 't: come on!

Before the Volscian lords, whom he had erst
fought single-handed and driven like sheep before
him in their capital city of Corioli, their leader
Aufidius now stigmatizes him as 'A Boy!' 'a
Boy of tears!' because he has wept, and yielded
to his mother's entreaties, and spared Rome.
Coriolanus' words are sledge-hammer —

Measureless liar! thou hast made my heart
Too great for what contains it. "Boy"? O slave! —
Pardon me, lords; 't is the first time that ever
I was forced to scold. Your judgments, my grave lords,
Must give this cur the lie.

But the conspiring nobles are drawing their swords
to kill him on the spot. He shouts,

Cut me to pieces, Volsces! men and lads,
Stain all your edges on me! — "Boy"? — false hound!
If you have writ your annals true, 't is there,
That, like an eagle in a dove-cote, I
Fluttered your Volscians in Corioli;
Alone I did it. — "BOY!"⁴

How much of admiration and love in Florizel's
praise of Perdita! He thinks she is perfection:
so do we.

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What you do
Still betters what is done. When you speak, sweet,
I'd have you do it ever. When you sing,
I'd have you buy and sell so; so give alms;
Pray so; and for the ordering your affairs,
To sing them too. When you do dance, I wish you
A wave o' the sea, that you might ever do
Nothing but that; move still, still so, and own
No other function. Each your doing . . .
Crowns what you are doing
That all your acts are queens!²⁶

How much of noblest indignation in Queen Katharine's repudiation of Cardinal Wolsey as her judge in the court scene in *Henry VIII*.

Q. Kath. Lord Cardinal,
To you I speak.

Wol. Your pleasure, Madam?

Q. Kath. Sir,
I am about to weep; but thinking that
We are a Queen, or long have dreamed so, certain
The daughter of a King, my drops of tears
I'll turn to sparks of fire.

Wol. Be patient yet.

Q. Kath. I will when you are humble; nay, before,
Or God will punish me. I do believe,
Induced by potent circumstances, that
You are mine enemy, and make my challenge
You shall not be my judge; for it is you
Have blown this coal betwixt my lord and me, —
Which God's dew quench! — Therefore, I say again,
I utterly abhor, yea, from my soul,
Refuse you for my judge; whom yet once more
I hold my most malicious foe, and think not
At all a friend to truth!²⁷

His Wand and Sceptre

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How full of awe the prayer of Pericles during the sea-tempest in which his daughter Marina was born!

Thou god of this great vast, rebuke these surges,
Which wash both heaven and hell; and thou that hast
Upon the winds command, bind them in brass,
Having called them from the deep! O still
Thy deafening, dreadful thunders; gently quench
Thy nimble sulphurous flashes!
. The seaman's whistle
Is as a whisper in the ears of death,
Unheard!¹⁷

How much of horror in the selfish Claudio's fear!
He has committed a capital crime, and must die
for it on the morrow. There is but one way to
save his life; his sister, the white-souled nun
Isabella, must give up her chastity to the foul
acting duke! How unspeakable is her disgust at
the vileness of Angelo, and still more at the
willingness of her brother that she should pay
such a price to prolong his worthless existence!

Claud. O Isabel!

Isab. What says my brother?

Claud. Death is a fearful thing.

Isab. And shamed life a hateful.

Claud.

Aye; but to die and go we know not where —
To lie in cold obstruction and to rot —
This sensible warm motion to become
A kneaded clod; and the delighted spirit
To bathe in fiery floods
. or to be worse than worst

His Wand and Sceptre

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Nor heaven peep through the blanket of the dark
To cry 'Hold! hold!'³⁹

How refreshing the recognition of human equality, the utter nothingness of rank on the ship in *The Tempest*! King Alonzo, Duke Antonio, the high counsellor Gonzalo, the King's brother Sebastian, and other noblemen rush on deck where they've no business to be in the fury of the storm. They obstruct the proper movements of the sailors. King Alonzo undertakes to give orders to the boatswain!

Alonso. Good boatswain, have care. — Where's the master? — Play the men.

Boatswain. I pray now, keep below.

Antonio. Where is the master, bo'son?

Boatswain. Do you not hear him? You mar our labor. Keep your cabins: you do assist the storm.

Gonzalo. Nay, good, be patient.

Boatswain. When the sea is. Hence! What cares these roarers for the name of king? — To cabin! Silence! Trouble us not.

Gonzalo. Good, yet remember whom thou hast aboard.

Boatswain. None that I love more than myself. You are a counselor. If you can command these elements to silence — we will not hand a rope more. Use your authority; if you cannot, give thanks you have lived so long, and make yourself ready in your cabin for the mischance of the hour. Out of our way, I say.⁴⁰

In *Lear* the passion is almost superhuman. His brain is a volcano, hurling masses of mixed thought,

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feeling, imagery, white-hot and swift. Maddened by the ingratitude of daughters to whom he has given his kingdom, but who have repaid him by driving him out of doors into the night and the storm, he exclaims of one —

All the stored vengeance of heaven fall
On her ingrateful top! Strike her young bones,
You taking airs, with lameness! . . .
You nimble lightnings, dart your blinding flames
Into her scornful eyes!²²

Was ever more distressful cry than this?

How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is
To have a thankless child!
. Beloved Regan,
Thy sister's naught. O Regan, she hath tied
Sharp-toothed unkindness like a vulture here!
I can scarce speak to thee.

When Lear thinks the heavens are friendly, he appeals to them for sympathy and succor on the ground that he and they are alike old!

O heavens,
If you do love old men, if your sweet sway
Allow obedience, if yourselves are old,
Make it your cause, send down and take my part!

But the heavens, the elements, are not friendly, and in midnight and tempest he raves defiance at them.

Blow winds, and crack your cheeks, rage, blow!
You cataracts and hurricanoes, spout
Till you have drenched the steeples, drowned the cocks!
You sulphurous and thought-executing fires,

His Wand and Sceptre

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Vaunt-couriers to oak-cleaving thunderbolts,
Singe my white head! And thou, all-shaking thunder,
Strike flat the thick rotundity of the world!
Crack nature's moulds, all germens spill at once
That make ingrateful man!

Rumble thy bellyful! Spit, fire! spout rain!
Nor rain, wind, thunder, fire, are my daughters.
I tax not you, ye elements, with unkindness;
I never gave *you* kingdoms, called you children;

But yet I call you servile ministers,
That will with two pernicious daughters join
Your high-engendered battles 'gainst a head
So old and white as this. O! O! 't is foul!

When Lear's discarded daughter Cordelia hears of
the treatment of her father by her unnatural sisters,

. . Now and then an ample tear trilled down
Her delicate cheek
Faith, once or twice she heaved the name of father
Pantingly forth, as if it pressed her heart;
Cried "Sisters! sisters! Shame of ladies! sisters!
Kent! father! sisters! — What, 'i the storm? 'i the night?"
. Then she shook
The holy water from her heavenly eyes!

When at last he has become helpless and insen-
sible, she bends over him with almost unspeakable
tenderness —

O my dear father! — Restauration hang
Thy medicine on my lips, and let this kiss
Repair those violent harms that my two sisters
Have in thy reverence made! Was this a face
To be opposed against the warring winds?

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To stand against the deep dread-bolted thunder?
In the most terrible and nimble stroke
Of quick cross lightning? . . . Mine enemy's dog,
Though he had bit me, should have stood that night
Against my fire!

We may now enumerate those points in which it may perhaps be fairly claimed that Shakespeare surpasses all other dramatists, if not all other men.

1. As shown in another Study, his mastery of the English Language, the blended copiousness and felicity of his diction.
2. Character-creation, the number, consistency, and representativeness, of striking Dramatis Personæ.
3. Felicitous subjectivity, creating and coloring a sympathetic environment.
4. Extraordinary artistic observation.
5. Vastness of knowledge.
6. Tolerance, impartial and perfect.
7. Mirroring actual life in its changing phases.
8. Spontaneity and exuberance of Imagination.
9. Sentential structure, uniting truth, feeling, imagery, and personality.
10. Personification, vivid and universal.
11. Wit and humor.
12. Philosophic insight.
13. Practical wisdom.
14. Portrayal of deep and varied emotion.

How strange that few or none of that age so prolific of genius recognized the greatest of them all!⁴² Ben Jonson knew him, honored him, loved him; and a greater than Jonson, John Milton, born nearly eight years before Shakespeare's death, has left on record his estimate of our dramatist's

His Wand and Sceptre

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primacy. What he thought of the comedies may be inferred from the fact that in his *L'Allegro* he singles him out and for sweetness and fancy places him at the head of all —

“ Then to the well-trod stage anon,
If Jonson's learned sock be on,
Or sweetest Shakespeare, Fancy's child,
Warble his native wood-notes wild.”

What he thought of the tragedies may fairly be gathered from the *Theatrum Poetarum* of his nephew, Phillips, a work that bears evident traces of the uncle's mighty hand. These are the words: “ In tragedy none ever expressed a more lofty and tragic height; none ever painted nature more purely and to the life.” And what he thought of him as both author and man is clearly seen in the Epitaph composed fourteen years after his death. It is a voucher for the dramatist's moral character; for the fastidious young Puritan was not the man to tolerate immorality, much less to glorify one tainted with vice. The title expresses admiration: it reads, “ Epitaph on the Admirable Dramatic Poet, William Shakespeare.” It expresses personal love and religious reverence, calling him ‘ dear,’ ‘ my Shakespeare,’ speaking of ‘ his honored bones,’ and ‘ hallowed relics.’ It almost deifies him; for it represents him as ‘ son of Memory ’ (Greek *Mnemosyne*) and so by inference brother of the nine Muses. It would seem as if there was talk of erecting a lofty monument to his memory; but Milton re-

Studies in Shakespeare

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gards any such possible structure as 'a weak witness' at best, though it were a stone pyramid piled to the skies by a generation of toilers. And lastly by a far-fetched but truly Miltonic tableau he groups the eminent living admirers, himself among them, around Shakespeare's lowly tomb, and there they are transmuted into marble with very astonishment at the mighty genius that had dwelt in that tenement of clay. For a sepulchre encompassed by such statuary, even kings would gladly die!

The earliest of Milton's poetry to get into print, it shows him the first truly illustrious Englishman to appreciate Shakespeare at his real worth, and connects most honorably the greatest of epic poets with the greatest of dramatists.

"What needs my Shakespeare for his honored bones
The labor of an age in piled stones?
Or that his hallowed relics should be hid
Under a stary-pointing pyramid?
Dear son of Memory, great heir of fame,
What need'st thou such weak witness of thy name?
Thou in our wonder and astonishment
Hast built thyself a livelong monument.
For whilst to the shame of slow-endeavoring art
Thy easy numbers flow, and that each heart
Hath from the leaves of thy unvalued book
Those Delphic lines with deep impression took,
Then thou, our fancy of itself bereaving,
Dost make us marble with too much conceiving;
And so sepulchred in such pomp dost lie
That kings for such a tomb would wish to die."

NOTES IN STUDY IV

His Wand and Sceptre

¹ Greene, poet and dramatist, a man of real ability, had been educated for a minister, but had fallen and become a drunken actor. Dying at 32 in September of a 'surfeit of pickled herring and Rhenish wine,' he left behind him a singular treatise composed on his death-bed, entitled 'A Groatworth of Wit Bought with a Million of Repentance,' in which he betrays his jealousy at Shakespeare's rising fame. The passage is commonly regarded as the earliest contemporary mention of Shakespeare in the theatre. It is therefore worthy of careful examination. It reads, "There is an upstart crow" (meaning a newly arrived ungainly country fellow) "beautified with our feathers" (perhaps meaning tricked out with a theatrical costume like ours); "that with his tiger's heart wrapped in a player's hide" (echoing the line in *3 Henry VI*, I, iv, 137, 'O tiger's heart wrapped in a woman's hide!')—the phrase 'tiger's heart' indicating an intensity amounting to fierceness), "supposes he is as well able to bombast out a blank verse as the best of you" (addressed to his fellow dramatists, Marlowe, Nash, Peele, or Lodge, and attributing to Shakespeare a belief that he could compose sonorous blank verse as pompous as 'Marlowe's mighty line'); "and being an absolute *Johannes factotum* ('Jack-at-all-trades, able to do anything and everything), "is, in his own conceit" (Shakespeare must have known his superiority), "the only Shake-scene in a country." 'Shake-scene' is probably equivalent to stage manager.

It is gratifying to know that the publisher of Greene's book, Mr. Henry Chettle, three months later in December, 1592, publicly apologized for this attack on Shakespeare; and, bearing personal testimony to his gentlemanly behavior and his excellence as an actor, he declares, "Divers of worship have reported his uprightness of dealing which argues his honesty, and his facetious grace in writing that approves his art."

² We find a substantial basis for all except *Love's Labor's Lost* and perhaps *The Tempest*, which some suppose to have been founded upon an Italian or Spanish novel that has disappeared. Only slight hints have been discovered that may have helped in the plot of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*.

³ As Scott, Dickens, Balzac, the Dumas, Zola, Howells, Kipling, and many others. Ben Jonson is said to have composed 50 comedies; Æschylus, 70 tragedies; Sophocles, 123; Lope de Vega Carpio, 1500 plays!

⁴ Note how clearly in the tragedy of *Julius Cæsar* he sees through Brutus, Cassius, Cicero, Cæsar, Mark Antony and the rest; how he

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improves on the Homeric conception of Ulysses in *Troilus and Cressida*; and how celestial he makes Portia in *The Merchant of Venice* in contrast with the rather indelicate and greedy though beautiful 'cat' of *Il Pecorone*.

* See *Study No. 1*, of this series, p. 25.

* See Byron's *The Vision of Judgment*, St. xxiv; also Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*, II, iv, 3, 4.

† See notes on *Macbeth* I, v, 36-38; I, vi, 1-10, Sprague's ed.; also his notes on V, i, 1-22, of *The Merchant of Venice*; also Stanza v of Milton's *Hymn on the Nativity*, and his *Paradise Lost* VIII, 511-520. See note on Hamlet's remark. "There is nothing either good or bad but thinking makes it so," II, ii, 246, Sprague's ed. The reader will recall the famous song, beginning, "The year 's at the spring" in Browning's *Pippa Passes*.

* Young Gobbo "sleeps by day more than the wild-cat"; *Merchant of Venice*, II, v, 47. Drunken Stephano knows the effect of wine the first time it is ever drunk; *The Tempest* II, ii, 67; notes in Sprague's editions. How nice the discernment by Ulysses of the effect of Diomedes's aspiring spirit! (*Troilus and Cressida* IV, v, 15, 16.)

He rises on the toe: that spirit of his
In aspiration lifts him from the earth.

* See Burns's *Address to the Deil*, last stanza. "The lordly monarch of the north" is alleged by Schmidt in his *Shakespeare Lexicon* to be Lucifer, referring to *Isaiah* xiv, 13. Symmons, Rolfe and some other editors make him to be Zimmar, one of the four principal devils invoked by witches. See comments on *Henry VI*, V, iii, 5.

‡ The most common classification is that of the First Folio (1623); viz., 14 Comedies; 10 Histories (of the English kings); and 12 Tragedies. *Pericles* was not included.

†† See Notes to *Midsummer Night's Dream*, II, i, 145-173, Sprague's ed. Grant White declares that line 161,

In maiden meditation fancy free,

furnishes the finest example in literature of the beauty of alliteration. But is it finer than that in the last stanza of Longfellow's *The Slave in the Dismal Swamp*,

"On him alone the curse of Cain
Fell like a flail on the garnered grain"?

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or than Goldsmith's

"And as a hare whom hounds and horns pursue
Pants to the place from whence at first she flew?"

Lines 93, 94 of *The Deserted Village*.

¹² *Merchant of Venice*, IV, i, 35-385; also V, i, 54-65; notes in Sprague's ed.

¹³ *Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*. It was handsomely examined by Goldsmith in Griffith's *Monthly Review*, in May, 1757.

¹⁴ By John Newton, friend of the poet Cowper (1725-1807).

¹⁵ Attributed to Francis Beaumont (1584-1616) by Charles Dexter Cleveland (1802-1869); but to Henry King (1591-1669) by William Cullen Bryant (1794-1878) in his *Library of Poetry and Song*.

¹⁶ *Reverie* by Abram Joseph Ryan (1834-1886).

¹⁷ *Richard II*, III, ii, 160-165.

¹⁸ *Paradise Lost* IV, 75-78; also I, 254, 255. But Dante places his Lucifer, *alias* Satan, at the bottom of hell. Wedged in there, he is crunching in his triple jaws Judas Iscariot, Marcus Brutus, and Caius Cassius!

¹⁹ *Gray's Bard*, 71-76.

²⁰ *Childe Harold*, Canto III, xcii, xciii, xcvi.

²¹ *Romeo and Juliet*, III, v, 7-10.

²² *Romeo and Juliet*, III, ii, 90-94.

²³ *King John*, IV, i, 61-63; 109-111.

²⁴ *Merchant of Venice*, I, i, 8-14. See notes, Sprague's ed.

²⁵ *Midsummer Night's Dream*, V, i, 12-17.

²⁶ See 1 *Henry IV*, V, i, 130-140, quoted on p. 119 of the *Third Study* in this series.

²⁷ If we may include *Hamlet* and *Julius Caesar* among the plays after the year 1600, we may safely say that there is a greatness in subjects and characters superior on the whole to that which we find in the earlier. E.g., see especially in *The Tempest*, IV, i, 148-158, and the notes in Sprague's ed. Here are the great tragedies, *Othello*, *Timon*, *Lear*, *Macbeth*, *Coriolanus*, *Cymbeline*, *Antony and Cleopatra*; the great comedies, *The Tempest*, *Measure for Measure*, *All's Well that Ends Well*, and *Twelfth Night*.

Studies in Shakespeare

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²⁰ *Troilus and Cressida*, III, iii, 175; II, ii, 57; *Winter's Tale*, II, iii, 115, 116.

²¹ In the voluminous *Dictionary of Quotations from English and American Poets* compiled by R. H. Stoddard, himself a poet of no mean rank, there are five thousand nine hundred and fourteen choice selections from two hundred and twenty-four poets illustrative of hundreds of topics. Of these quotations, fifteen hundred and sixty-three are from Shakespeare alone, being nearly three times as many as from any other poet.

²² Richard Grant White, one of the acutest and most learned of Shakespearean critics, avers that the Fool in *Lear* "has wisdom enough to set up a college of philosophers." But he never lived in Boston.

²³ Tennyson's *Alcaics* (experiment in quantity).

²⁴ *Antony and Cleopatra*, IV, viii, 13-16.

²⁵ *The Tempest*, III, i, 31-52; 63-74; notes in Sprague's ed.

²⁶ *Coriolanus*, I, iv, 34-40; V, vi, 103-106; 112-117.

²⁷ *The Winter's Tale*, IV, iv, 134-146.

²⁸ *Henry VIII*, II, iv, 68-84.

²⁹ *Pericles*, III, i, 1-10.

³⁰ *Measure for Measure*, III, i, 114-150.

³¹ *Macbeth*, I, v, 38-52. See notes, Sprague's ed.

³² *The Tempest*, I, i, 9-25. Consult notes, Sprague's ed.

³³ *Lear*, II, iv, 156-160. See also in *Lear*, III, ii, 1-9; 13-25; IV, iii, 12, 25-30; IV, vii, 26-39, etc.

³⁴ The literary men on the continent in that age or not much later — men like Cervantes, Galileo, Kepler, Richelieu, Grotius, Descartes, Joseph Scaliger, Isaac Casaubon — could not take notice of the works of an obscure English dramatist. But it seems surprising that he escaped the attention of the great Englishmen; Bacon, Raleigh, Walsingham, Richard Hooker, Dr. Donne, Isaac Walton, Edmund Spenser, Sir Edward Coke, John Selden, John Pym, Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon, Sir Henry Wotton, Thomas Hobbes, Jeremy Taylor, and the rest.

INDEX

N. B. In this Index the capital S stands for *Shakespeare*, either the man or his works. The names of his dramas are often abbreviated, the initial letters or syllables of the principal words in the title standing for complete words. Thus L.L.L.=Love's Labor Lost; Mer. of V.=Merchant of Venice.

| | PAGE | | PAGE |
|--|--------------|---|---------------|
| Actor. As such S. is complimented, | 205 | Analysis, sentence, | 179, 184 |
| Address to the De'il, Robert Burns's, | 173 | Ancestry of S., | 17 |
| Æschylus, soldier-author, | 111 | Ancestry, pride of, Saxe's burlesque, | 45, 46 |
| quoted, | 148 | Ancient Pistol, | 34, 51 |
| his fruitfulness, | 205 | Ann, sister of S., | 47 |
| Affeeror, | 19, 20 | Angelo, acting duke in <i>M. for M.</i> , | 197 |
| Agassiz, Louis, as teacher in school, | 73 | Angelo, Michael, quoted, | 70 |
| Agnes Hathaway. Same as Anne? | 94 | Antonio in <i>The Tempest</i> , | 199 |
| Age, Elizabethan, most remarkable, | 89 | Antony, Mark, in <i>Jul. C.</i> , | 205 |
| Age of S. at marriage, | 60, 93 | Antony, in <i>Ant. and Cle.</i> , | 165, 193 |
| at death, | 93 | Antwerp, captured by Spanish, | 134 |
| Age proper for marriage, Bacon's view, | 95 | Aphorisms, illustrative, quoted, | 191, 192 |
| Agincourt, battle of, | 122, 154 | Apocrypha, drawn from by S., | 59 |
| Alcalca, Tennyson's experiment in, | 193, 208 | Arden. Celtic for 'wood?' | 18 |
| Aldermen in Stratford; John S. one, | 20, 21 | Arden family, | 146 |
| ale-conner, | 19, 46 | Arden, Mary, mother of S., | 17, 18, 46 |
| Alexander, Mrs., | 109, 151 | Ariosto's <i>Orlando Furioso</i> , | 35, 52 |
| Alfred the Great, soldier-author, | 112 | Aristocracy, American, hit off by Saxe, | 45, 46 |
| Alleged blunders in law by S., | 82 | Aristotle, | 174 |
| Alliteration, fine in S., in others, | 49, 206, 207 | Armada, 'The Invincible,' | 146 |
| Alonso, King of Naples, intrudes, | 199 | Armorial bearings of Sir Thomas Lucy, | 101 |
| American soldier-authors, | 113 | Arnold, Matthew, quoted, | 90, 91 |
| Amyas Leigh's love of adventure, | 129 | Arnold, Thomas, of Rugby, | 73 |
| | | Arrangement of plays, difficult, | 175, 176, 206 |
| | | Arrest for poaching? | 85, 101 |

Studies in Shakespeare

www.libtool.com.cn

| | PAGE | | PAGE |
|---------------------------------------|------------------|----------------------------------|---------------|
| Art, Greek, | 174 | Brooks, Phillips, a school- | |
| Gothic, | 174 | teacher, | 73 |
| that of S., | 174 | Browning, Mrs. E. B., | |
| Assonance, | 49 | quoted, | 15, 70, 175 |
| Aubrey, John, quoted, | | Browning's life-work? | 58 |
| 40, 41, 66, 74, 86, 94, 132, 143 | | Browning, Robert, quoted, | |
| description of the boy S., | 41 | 136, 155, 206 | |
| Aufidius in Coriolanus, | 195 | Brutus, Marcus, | 126, 205 |
| <i>Asvora Leigh</i> , Mrs. Brown- | | Bryant, William Cullen, | 207 |
| ing's, | 15, 70, 175 | Bunyan, John, quoted, | 169 |
| | | Bunyan, soldier-author, | 112, 113 |
| | | Burges, Tristan, | 96 |
| Babe, tenderness of, | 22 | <i>Burial of Moses</i> , by Mrs. | |
| Bacon, Francis, | 23, 36, 122, 132 | Alexander, | 151 |
| Bacon, quoted, | 57, 70 | Burke, Edmund, quoted, | 179, 184 |
| on marriage, | 95, 129 | Burke's Philosophical In- | |
| Bailiff, high, in Stratford, | 20 | quiry, | 179, 207 |
| Ballad on Sir Lucy, coarse | | Burns, Robert, quoted, | 169, 173 |
| but keen, | 85, 102 | Bust of S., carefully ex- | |
| Banquo, whitewashed? | 96 | amined, | 86, 102 |
| <i>Bard</i> , Gray's, quoted, | 183 | Bust, colored, etc., | 102 |
| Baynes, T. Spencer, | 23, 46, 47, 48 | Butcher business, drama- | |
| Beaumont, Francis, quoted? 180, 207 | | tised, | 41 |
| Bed, 'second-best,' | 67 | Byron, Lord, quoted, | 168, 183, 206 |
| Becher, Rev. H. W., quoted, | | Byron's characters little | |
| 71, 72, 152 | | Byrons, | 164 |
| Beeston, William, quoted, | 74, 96 | | |
| Bernal's <i>Orlando Inamorato</i> , | 35, 52 | Cresser, Julius, soldier-author, | 111, 165 |
| Betterton, Thomas, good | | Calhoun, John C., quoted, | 96 |
| authority, | 40, 83, 101, 130 | Calendar, O. S., 'retrenched,' | 45 |
| Bible, number of words in, | 25 | Caliban, the 'missing link'? | |
| Bible, knowledge of by S., | 37, 38, 59 | 165, 166 | |
| Boatswain ignores rank in a | | Campbell, John, Lord Chan- | |
| tempest, | 199 | cellor, quoted, | 80, 113 |
| Boccaccio's <i>Decameron</i> , | 35 | Capell, Edward, quoted, | 46 |
| Boiardo, Matteo M. His | | Carlyle, Thomas, quoted, | 23 |
| <i>Orlando</i> , | 35, 52 | Castle of Macbeth, | 167, 168 |
| Bond, marriage, quoted, | 93 | Castle, Mr. William, | 40 |
| Books, Shakespeare's, | | Catechism, Ch. of Eng.- | |
| 26, 38, 39, 58, 59, 93, 97 | | quoted, | 86 |
| Books, we have too many? | 58 | Celtic blood, nature, etc., | 18, 45 |
| Borough court, | 20, 21, 46 | Cervantes, a soldier-author? | 112 |
| Botany in S., | 115 | Chamberlain in Stratford, | 20 |
| <i>British Eloquence</i> , Goodrich's | 184 | Chamberlain's Company, the | |
| 'Boy' of tears,' spoken in | | Lord, | 96 |
| scorn, | 195 | Chapman, Geo., translator, | 52 |

Index

www.libtool.com.cn

| | PAGE | PAGE |
|---|-----------------------|---|
| Character-creation, the chief thing? | 163, 166, 171 | Compensation, law of, 110, 151, 152 |
| Characters in S., how created, | 164, 165 | Compliment to Queen Elizabeth, |
| Characters rarely duplicated, 1,000 male, 125 female, | 163, 164 | 177 |
| Charity in S., hardly paralleled, | 172-174 | 'Conjugation,' quickly learned, |
| Charlecote, Sir T. Lucy's mansion, | 101, 102 | 78, 79, 98 |
| Park of deer at? | 83 | Conjugation, two-fold, |
| Chaucer, Geoffrey, 'a huge borrower,' | 161, 176 | 98 |
| Chaucer, a soldier-author? | 94, 112 | Conscious strength, |
| Chateaubriand, Vicomte de, quoted, | 190 | 89 |
| Chettle, Henry, apologizes, Blames S., | 205, 154, 155 | Constables in Stratford, in the plays, |
| <i>Childs Harold's Pilgrimage</i> , quoted, | 168, 183, 207 | 46 |
| Chuzzlewit, Martin, Dickens, quoted, | 27 | Conscious strength, |
| Classical names in S., profusion of, | 96 | 89 |
| Classification of the plays, difficult, | 175, 176, 206 | Contemporary great men unaware of S., |
| Clay, Cassius M., marriage at 83, | 93 | 202, 208 |
| Claudio in <i>M. for M.</i> , | 197, 198 | Cordelia in <i>Lear</i> , |
| Clearchus to Tissaphernes, | 154 | 166, 201, 202 |
| Cleopatra in <i>Ant. and Cle.</i> , disgusted, | 27 | Coriolanus, |
| Clerk, military. S. for Sidney? | 116, 144 | 194, 195 |
| Clopton, Sir Hugh, His 'Great House,' | 68, 95 | Cornwall in <i>Lear</i> , |
| Cloten, the human swine, | 166 | 166 |
| Clowns, jesters, fools, etc. in S., | 188 | Court-leet in Stratford? |
| Coining words, | 30, 32, 49, 50 | 20, 21, 80 |
| Coleridge, S. T., quoted, | 42, 75, 120, 166, 192 | Court, Venetian, its four-fold power, |
| Comedy and tragedy in same play, | 174, 175 | 82, 99, 100 |
| Comedy of Errors, source of, | 30, 50 | Cowden-Clarkes, Charles and Mary, quoted, |
| Comedy in S. Milton's estimate of, | 202, 203 | 144 |
| 'Common-law marriage' ? no solemnization? | 60, 93 | Cowper, William, quoted, |
| | | 113 |
| | | Crispian, Crispin and, saints, |
| | | 126, 127, 128 |
| | | Crispin, Saint Crispin's Day, Oct. 25, |
| | | 154 |
| | | Cromwell's Ironsides, |
| | | 124 |
| | | Currency values in the age of S., |
| | | 95 |
| | | <i>Cymbeline</i> , source of, |
| | | 35 |
| | | Dante, soldier-author, |
| | | 112 |
| | | Darmesteter, James, French author, |
| | | 191 |
| | | Davenant, Sir William, |
| | | 143 |
| | | David, King, soldier-author, |
| | | 111 |
| | | <i>David Copperfield</i> , Dickens's, |
| | | 95 |
| | | Davies, Archdeacon Richard, |
| | | 130 |
| | | Davis, Cushman K., on law in S., quoted, |
| | | 81, 113 |
| | | Davis, John of Hereford, quoted, |
| | | 86, 132, 141 |
| | | <i>Derameron</i> , Boccaccio's, drawn from, |
| | | 35, 60 |
| | | Deer-stealing, not accounted bad, |
| | | 83, 84, 102 |
| | | Departure for London, |
| | | 86, 130 |

Studies in Shakespeare

| www.libtool.com.cn | PAGE | | PAGE |
|---|------------------|--|--------------|
| De Quincey, Thomas, quoted, | 26, 66 | Education, the best and only real, | 99 |
| <i>Deserted Village</i> , Goldsmith's, quoted from, | 207 | Electra of Sophocles, comment on, | 32, 33, 51 |
| Devecmon, William C., able lawyer, | 82 | Eliot, Charles W. His five-foot shelf, | 58, 59 |
| Devil, the, honored as monarch, | 173, 206 | Elizabethan age, most wonderful, | 89, 112, 113 |
| Devil, Milton just to? | 173 | Elizabeth, Queen, at the bar of History, | 156, 157 |
| Devil, pitted by Burns! | 172, 173 | Elizabeth's speech at West Tilbury, | 147 |
| Devils, little ones, Milton toward, | 173 | Emerson, R. W., once a school-teacher, | 73 |
| Dewey, Orville, quoted, | 24, 48 | Emerson on brain of Plato and S., quoted, | 191 |
| <i>Diana Enemorada</i> , Jorge de Montemayor's, | 53, 59 | Emerson, on originality of S., quoted, | 161 |
| Dickens, Charles, his Mark Tapley, | 26, 27 | Emotion and passion, intense expression of, | 192-201 |
| his Micawber, | 19, 95 | English, mastery of, by S., | 28, 30, 167 |
| fruitfulness, | 205 | Environment, fitting, made or colored by S., | 167 |
| Dictionary of Quotations, Stoddard's, | 191, 208 | Epitaph of Æschylus, quoted, | 148 |
| Differentiation in meanings, | 26, 49 | Epitaph on S. by Milton, | 204 |
| Differentiation of national traits, | 189 | Epitaph on wife of S., quoted, | 93 |
| Dogberry, father of all 'Malaprops,' | 19, 38, 187, 188 | Epithets. Those of S. and Æschylus, | 33 |
| Double comparatives and superlatives, | 51 | Equality, All men's recognized, | 199 |
| Double negatives—an affirmative? | 51 | Escapades of S., easily explained, | 53 |
| Doyle, Mr. John T. on Central Am. courts, | 82, 83, 100 | Etymologies, studied by S.? | 30 |
| Dowdall, John, traveler, quoted, | 94 | Euphronius, tutor in <i>Ant. and Cle.</i> , | 77, 78 |
| Drama, the classic, | 174 | <i>Euphues</i> , John Lyly's; its influence, | 88? 103 |
| Dreams of soldiering, | 120, 121 | Euphuism, a fad in the Elizabethan age, | 103 |
| Dromios, the two, | 164 | Euripides, drawn from, | 33 |
| Dryden, John, quoted, | 38, 73, 191 | Evans, Sir Hugh, Welsh schoolmaster, | 76, 97 |
| Dyaks of Borneo, defective language of, | 28 | Evil spirits invoked by Lady Macbeth, | 198, 199 |
| Earl of Warwick's apology for 'Hal,' | 31, 50, 100 | Experiments in phraseology, | 103 |
| East India Company's first charter, | 97 | | |
| Education of S. Available means for, | 22, 23 | | |

Index

www.libtool.com.cn

| | PAGE | PAGE | |
|--|---------------|---|---------------------|
| Fairy machinery introduced by S., | 176, 177, 178 | Grammar, De Quincey on defective, | 26 |
| <i>Falstaff and Equity</i> , | 99 | Grammar school at Stratford, | 22, 23, 47 |
| Falstaff, prince of comic characters, | 31, 172, 187 | Grammar school, English, curriculum, | 47, 48 |
| running away, | 41 | 'Gratification' (=honorary?), | 100 |
| Falstaff on emptiness of false honor, | 125 | Gray, Thomas, quoted, xii, | 182, 183 |
| Faulconbridge (Philip), patriotism of, | 131 | 'Great House' or 'New Place,' of S., | 95 |
| Felicity in speech, a constant aim, | 26, 49, 103 | Greek coined into English, | 32, 33, 51 |
| Fencing, technical terms in, | 116, 117 | Greek Drama, origin of? | 41 |
| Ferdinand and Miranda, | 193, 194 | Greek idioms in S., | 51 |
| Ferdinando Stanley, Lord Strange, | 73, 96 | Greek phraseology translated? | 33, 50, 51 |
| Flight? from Stratford, | 86 | 'Greek, small Latin and less,' | 23, 31, 33, 50 |
| Florizel and Perdita, | 195, 196 | Greene, Robert, dramatist, | 161, 176, 205 |
| Fool in Lear wiser than philosophers? | 208 | his sneer at S., quoted and examined, | 205 |
| Four-fold combination in sentence, | 181-185 | Gregorian calendar, | 45 |
| French used fluently by S., | 23 | | |
| French's <i>Genealogica Shakespeareana</i> , | 46 | 'Hal.' Intimacy with Falstaff, why? | 31, 50 |
| Fulman, Rev. William, an authority, | 102 | Hal's reformation, | 50, 100 |
| | | Hales of Eaton, 'ever memorable,' quoted, | 191 |
| Game laws in England, more stringent, | 84 | Hallam, Henry, historian, his opinion, | 166, 176, 178 |
| Genius defined, | 24 | Halliwell-Phillipps, High authority, | 46, 61, 95, 96, 101 |
| Genius in action, | 42 | Halliwell-Phillipps, quoted, | 16, 95 |
| Genius of S., for labor, | 24 | <i>Hamlet</i> , drama of, quoted from, | 29, 81, 206 |
| Genius, physical basis of, | 109 | Hamlet, elder, King of Denmark, | 133 |
| Ghost in <i>Hamlet</i> , | 86, 102, 133 | Hamlet, younger, prince of Denmark, | 133 |
| Gilbert, Sir Humphrey, quoted, | 149 | Hamnet and Judith, twins born to S., | 83, 138 |
| Goethe's ideal in childhood? | 57, 58 | Handkerchief, Othello's fatal, | 34, 35, 52 |
| Goethe, quoted, | 191 | Handwriting, Hamlet's, fine in his youth, | 155 |
| Goldsmith, Oliver, quoted, | 207 | Handwriting of John S., | 45 |
| Gonzalo's intrusion checked, | 199 | | |
| Goodrich, Chauncey A., author, | 184 | | |
| Gothic art complex? | 174 | | |
| Gower, John, 'the moral,' quoted, | 161 | | |
| | 65, 94 | | |

Studies in Shakespeare

www.libtool.com.cn

| | PAGE | | PAGE |
|--|----------|--|--------------------|
| Handwriting of S., | 155 | Hyphened words in S., to be noted, | 52 |
| Happy marriage of S.? | 66-69 | Iago in <i>Othello</i> , | 166 |
| Harrington, John, Translation of Ariosto (1591), | 35 | Ideal of love, | 65, 66 |
| Hathaway cottage at Shottery, 60, 63, 66, 67, 71, 93 | | Identity. S. parts with his own, | 164 |
| Hathaway, Anne, possible pupil of S.? | 78, 79 | Illad, Homer's, drawn from, | 33, 51 |
| Hawthorne, Nathaniel, estimate of S., | 189 | Image, ingredient in a sentence, | 180 |
| Heavens, if friendly, invoked by Lear, | 200 | Imagery, abundant in Bacon, more in S., | 184 |
| Heirloom in the Hathaway cottage, | 61 | Imagination, most exuberant before 1601? | 176, 178, 179 |
| Henry IV, Part 1, | 120, 153 | Imagination, most profound after 1601? | 176 |
| Henry V. Favorite king of S., 101, 122, 123, 124 | | Impulse, threefold, persistent? | 87 |
| Henry VIII stops the Stratford school, | 47 | Impecuniosity of S., overstated? | 94 |
| Hippology in S., | 115, 152 | Industry of S., attested, | 87 |
| 'Hold the mirror up to nature,' | 99 | Industry, demonstrated, | 38, 39 |
| Holden, Edward S., on vocabularies, | 48, 49 | Insight, keen and comprehensive, 164, 165, 171, 205, 206 | |
| Holinshed's Chronicle Histories, | 59, 93 | Insight, profound philosophical, | 188, 205 |
| Holmes, Oliver Wendell, | 135 | Intensity, characteristic of genius, | 192 |
| Holophernes, pedantic teacher in <i>L. L. L.</i> , | 76 | Intensity in S., rarely paralleled, | 192-198 |
| Homer, poet, once schoolmaster? | 72, 73 | 'Invincible Armada,' | 146 |
| Homer, quoted, | 151 | Invocation of devils, by Lady Macbeth, | 198, 199 |
| Homer's words literally translated by S., | 33 | Inwardness, the true, seen clearly by S., | 205 |
| Honor, false; its bubble pricked? 125, 126, 127, 128 | | Isabella in <i>M. for M.</i> , | 197, 198 |
| Honor, true, its essential nature, | 126 | Italian language, knowledge of by S.? | 23, 34, 35, 36, 52 |
| Horse, 'a department of theology,' | 152 | Italian origin of five plays, | 53 |
| Horse, Murray's <i>The Perfect Horse</i> , | 115, 152 | Jacques-pierre=Shakespeare? | 17 |
| Horses and horse worshipers, | 152 | James, King, pleased with dramas of S., | 154 |
| Hortensio, music teacher in <i>Tom. of Shrew</i> , | 77 | James's 'Servants of the King' licensed, | 96 |
| Hotspur's dreams, honor, 126, 136, 137 | | Jesting, | 142 |
| Hugo, Victor | 178, 191 | John of Gaunt. Outburst of patriotism, | 131 |

Index

www.libtool.com.cn

| | PAGE | | PAGE |
|--|---------------|--|------------------------------|
| Johnson, Gerard, maker of the S. bust, | 102 | Knave, true meaning of, | 138, 144, 145, 156 |
| Johnson, Jesse, Judge, | 37 | Knowledge, displayed in the S. plays, | 90, 171 |
| Johnson, Samuel, quoted, | 74, 75 | how acquired, | 171 |
| Johnson regrets charity to devils, | 173, 174 | Laboratory process in brain of S., | 186 |
| Joke and deer carried too far, | 85 | Lady Leicester, the Earl's wife, | 139, 144 |
| Jonson, Ben, lover of S., | 202 | Lady Macbeth. Her dark design, | 167, 168 |
| quoted, | 31, 51 | Lady Sidney, Sir Phillip's wife, | 138, 144 |
| Jonson, Ben, prolific author of comedies, | 56 | <i>L'Allegro</i> , Milton's, quoted, | 203 |
| Jonson's splendid praise of S. in Folio I, | 56 | Lamb, Charles, quoted, | 142 |
| Jorge de Montemayor, author of 1,500 plays? | 36 | Lampoon on Sir Thomas's park gate, | 85 |
| also of the Spanish <i>Diana Enamorada</i> ? | 53, 59 | Language form, peculiar in S.? | 179 |
| Juliet in <i>Rom. and J.</i> , intense, | 185 | Lapse into poverty, by John S., | 39, 40 |
| June's rare days described by Lowell, | 170 | Later plays (i. e., after 1601) greater? | 188-192, 207 |
| Jurisdiction of Venice court, fourfold? | 99, 100 | Latin, as taught in school, | 23 |
| Jurors in Stratford, | 19 | Latin, knowledge of by S., | 30, 31, 34, 50, 52 |
| Justice, Chief, Sir William Gascoigne, | 171 | Latin recitation by 'sprag' boy, | 97 |
| to Falstaff, | 171, 172, 187 | Latin taught to Bianca, | 78, 79 |
| Justice Shakespeare in Stratford, | 46 | Law in court scene in <i>Mer. of V.</i> | 99, 100 |
| Katherine, French princess, | 34 | Law, knowledge of by S., | 79, 80 |
| Katherine, Queen, in <i>Henry VIII</i> , | 196 | Lawrence, James, quoted, | 149 |
| Kemp, William, dancer of jigs, | 139-141, 156 | Lear, passion in, | 199-201 |
| quoted, | 140 | Learning in S., | 23 |
| Kenilworth Castle, residence of Leicester, | 144 | Lee, Sidney. His <i>Life of S.</i> , | 23, 45, 46, 61, 96 |
| ' princely pleasures of ' | 177 | Legalism in S., | 81, 113 |
| King Henry, quoted? | 180, 207 | Legal terminology, alleged blunders in, | 82 |
| King Henry V, favorite of S., | 123 | Leicester, Lord, | 88 |
| Kingly parts played by S., | 102 | Leicester's Company of actors, | 96 |
| 'King's Servants,' company of S., | 96 | Leicester's soldiering, | 115, 116, 134, 135, 138, 144 |
| Kingsley's <i>Westward Ho</i> , | 129 | Leonidas, | 149 |

Studies in Shakespeare

| www.libtool.com.cn | PAGE | PAGE | |
|--|--------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| Library of S., small but select, | 58, 59 | Marriage of S. and Anne Hathaway, | 60, 61, 63, 65, 69, 93, 132 |
| License to marry, discovered, | 93 | Marsh, Dr. G. P., on number of words, | 48 |
| Lichas, thrown from top of Mt. Oeta, | 173 | his method of counting, | 49 |
| Lincoln, Abraham, studying by firelight, | 44 | Massinger, Philip, dramatist, quoted, | 42 |
| Lineage of S., how far known, | 17 | Masters, Stratford grammar-school, | 93 |
| Lineage. Saxe on American, | 45, 46 | Meanings condensed or differentiated, | 26, 49 |
| Literary men in Elizabethan age, | 208 | <i>Menachmi</i> of Plautus, | 30, 50 |
| Longfellow, H. W., quoted, | 206 | Mézières, Alfred, French scholar, (1860), | 191 |
| Lope de Vega's fruitfulness, | 205 | <i>Mer. of Venice</i> , source of, | 35 |
| Lovers and madmen coupled in <i>M. N. D.</i> , | 62 | Micawber, Wilkins, Dickens's, | 19, 71 |
| Lowell, J. R., opinion of, | 33, 38 | Mrs. Micawber lovingly threatens, | 71 |
| quoted, 17, 25, 32, 90, 173, 188, 189 | 169, 170 | <i>Midsommer Night's Dream</i> , White's characterization, | 176 |
| modestly mistaken? | 169, 170 | Military ambition and ardor, | 134, 135, 145, 148 |
| Lucentio, how he taught Latin, | 78, 79 | Military life affording equipment, | 113-116 |
| Luces=pike (fishes) or <i>pecu-lida</i> , | 101, 102 | Milton, John, | 25, 36, 48, 203 |
| Lucian's Greek <i>Dialogues</i> , | 32 | quoted, | 70, 162, 170, 173, 174, 182, 203, 204 |
| Lucifer <i>alias</i> Satan <i>alias</i> Zim-mar? | 206 | his devil and other characters phases of Milton? | 164 |
| Lucy, Sir Thomas=Justice Shallow? | 83-86 | Milton's great epitaph on S., | 204 |
| Lucy's deer preserve, | 83, 84, 101, 102 | Milton's ideal? | 57, 58 |
| Lyly, John, romancer and dramatist, author of <i>Euphues</i> , | 103 | Milton's Music, described by Tennyson, | 193 |
| Mab, queen of fairies, her pranks, | 121 | Miranda, | 166 |
| Mable, Hamilton W., author, | 23 | Miranda, Latin, | 30 |
| Macbeth, castle of, | 167, 168 | Miranda and Ferdinand, | 193, 194 |
| Macbeth, Lady, her subjective intensity, | 167, 168, 198, 199 | Mirror help up to nature by S., | 99 |
| Maginn, William, answers Farmer, | 36 | Mohammed, soldier-author, | 112 |
| Malapropisms of Dogberry and his ilk, | 19, 38, 187, 188 | Molière, J. B. P., quoted, | 53 |
| Malone, Edmund, | 80 | Mommsen, Theodor, quoted, | 111 |
| Manningham, John, quoted, | 97 | Money values, then and now, | 95 |
| Marina, tempest-born in Pericles, | 197 | 'Moral Gower,' quoted, | 65, 94 |
| | | Morgan, Appleton, S. scholar, author, | 23, 36, 37, 48, 82 |
| | | quoted, | 45 |

Index

| | PAGE | | PAGE |
|--|---------------|--|-------------------------|
| ' Morris dance,' by Kemp in 1600, | 156 | <i>Outlines, Life of S., Halliwell-Philippe's,</i> | 16, 46, 61, 95, 96, 101 |
| Moses, soldier-author, | 109 | Ovid, favorite poet of S., | 31, 50, 59 |
| Moses, Song of, | 110 | | |
| Murra v. W. H. H., | 115, 152 | Page, William, author's ancestor? | 97 |
| Moth, page in <i>L. L. L.</i> , | 76 | <i>Paradise Lost</i> , quoted from | 162, 170, 173, 174, 182 |
| Music, 'food of love,' | 64, 94 | Parma, Duke of, | 146, 147 |
| Myriad-minded; Coleridge's phrase, | 166 | Patriotism in S., | 131 |
| | | <i>Peculida; vestimenti; Anglice</i> , lice, | 85, 101 |
| Name, familiarly abbreviated, | 141 | Pedagogy, art of, | 72, 73 |
| Name, S., how spelled, | 45 | Penmanship of S., | 155 |
| for short, | 45 | Personification in a sentence, | 181-183 |
| Nature, imagined intelligently sympathetic, and participating, | 167 | Personifications, multitudinous, | 185, 186 |
| Navigation, knowledge of by S., | 114, 152 | Pet names, abbreviations, | 141 |
| Nebuchadnezzar's dream, | 110 | Philip II of Spain, | 146 |
| Newton, John, quoted, | 180; 207 | <i>Philosophical Inquiry</i> , Edmund Burke's, | 179, 207 |
| Nicaragua, court usages in, | 82, 83, 100 | Physical basis of genius, | 109 |
| Niceties in language, | 26, 49, 103 | ' Phrase-monger,' was S.? | 49, 103 |
| Nobility and gentry with Leicester, | 135, 154 | ' Physician or fool at 40,' proverb, | 114, 152 |
| | | Pity, tenderness of, | 47 |
| Observation, minute, illustrated, | 171, 172, 206 | Place, Unity of, often disregarded in S., | 175, 176 |
| ' Oceanic intellect.' Coleridge's phrase, | 166 | Plagiarism charged? | 161 |
| <i>Odyssey</i> , Homer's, drawn from, | 41 | Plato's brain, Emerson on nestling in, | 191 |
| quoted, | 151 | Plautus's <i>Menæchmi</i> , | 30, 50 |
| <i>Edipus Coloneus</i> of Sophocles, | 51 | Plots, not often originated by S., | 162 |
| Organism, each play an? | 163 | Plutarch's <i>Lives</i> , | 49, 59, 93 |
| Olivia in <i>Twelfth Night</i> , | 63 | Poaching on Lucy's deer preserve, | 83-85, 101, 102 |
| Originality of S.; in what? | 162, 163, 205 | Poe, Edgar A., quoted, | 168 |
| <i>Orlando Furioso</i> of Ariosto, | 35 | Poetic gymnastics, a kind of? | 103 |
| <i>Orlando Inamorato</i> of Berni, | 35, 52 | Points of superiority, | 202 |
| <i>Orlando</i> of Boiardo, | 52 | Polonius's classification quoted, | 175 |
| Orsino, Duke, in <i>Twelfth Night</i> , | 63 | Pope, Alexander; his chosen vocation, | 58 |
| Othello, story of, | 34, 35 | Poverty, John S. lapses into? | 39, 40 |

Studies in Shakespeare

| www.libtool.com.cn | PAGE | | PAGE |
|----------------------------------|------------------|---|---------------|
| Practical wisdom of S., | 190-192 | Satan, honored as monarch, | 173 |
| Private tutors, termed school- | | pitted by Burns, | 172 |
| masters? | 77, 78 | quoted in <i>Paradise Lost</i> , | 182 |
| Prose in S., | 28, 29, 49 | location of, | 207 |
| Protest against influx of new | | Saxe, J. G., stanzas quoted, | 45, 46 |
| words, | 50 | Schlegel, A. W. von, quoted, | 144 |
| Proverbs in S., | 191, 192 | School, old-fashioned, un- | |
| Pun on name Will, | 141, 142 | loved, | 77 |
| Puns in S., | 103 | 'School' wrongly changed | |
| Charles Lamb's dictum, | 142 | to <i>school</i> in <i>Macbeth</i> ? | 97 |
| Puritan poet, | 203 | Schools, importance of rec- | |
| Pythagoras, | 72 | ognized, | 75, 76 |
| Queen Elizabeth, arraignment | | School-keeping, | 70, 71, 72 |
| of by Goldwin Smith, | 156, 157 | Schoolmaster with but one | |
| Quince, Peter, in <i>Midsum-</i> | | pupil, | 77, 78 |
| mer <i>Night's Dream</i> , | 98 | was S. such? | 71-79 |
| Raleigh, Sir Walter, soldier- | | Schoolmaster lore, | 74 |
| author, | 112 | methods, | 97, 98 |
| <i>Ralph Roister Doister</i> , | 98 | School-teachers, greatest and | |
| Randolph, John, story told | | smallest, | 72, 73; 93 |
| of, | 96 | Scott, Walter, childhood as- | |
| Randolph, Thomas, quoted, | 70 | piration, | 36 |
| Rank, ignored aboard ship | | 'Second-best bed,' | 67 |
| in tempest, | 199 | <i>Scourge of Folly</i> , quoted from, | 141 |
| Recruits, Falstaff's, Mouldy, | | <i>Scourge of Villainy</i> , Marston's, | 156 |
| Bullcalf, etc., | 153 | Sea-kings, English, | 152 |
| Reed, Edwin, | 49 | Self-effacement by S., | 164 |
| Regan, daughter of Lear, | 200 | Sentence form, | 179 |
| Reputation, precious, | 125 | building, | 179-182 |
| Richard II, | 119 | Sentiment, often important, | 181 |
| Richard III, | 166 | Shakespeare, etymology of | |
| Rolfe, W. J., | 23 | the word, | 17, 18 |
| Root meanings of words, | 30, 32, 75 | Shakespeare, John, father of | |
| Rosalind to Orlando in A. | | S., | 18, 39, 46 |
| Y. L. I., | 62 | offices held by him, | 19, 20 |
| Rowe, Nicholas, first bi- | | lapse, | 39, 40 |
| ographer of S., | 48, 83, 132, 133 | Shakespeare, William, <i>pas-</i> | |
| Rumor, allegorical, | 166 | sim, his possible motive, | 43, 57, 87-90 |
| Ryan, Abram J., quoted, | 181, 207 | Shakespeares, earliest mention | |
| Sacrificial goat in dawn of | | of, | 17, 45 |
| drama, | 41, 53 | Shallow, Justice, in <i>Mer-</i> | |
| Saint Crispin's Day, | 126 | <i>W. of W.</i> , | 85 |
| | | Shelley, P. B., | 206 |
| | | Shottery, Hathaway cottage | |
| | | at, | 93 |
| | | Sibyl, original of that in S., | 52 |

Index
www.libtool.com.cn

| | PAGE | PAGE |
|---|--|--|
| Siddons, 'the incomparable,' Sarah, | 33 | 'Swears a prayer or two,' 121, 153 |
| Sidney, Sir Philip, soldier-author, | 88 112, 115, 129, 130, 134, 138, 155 | 'Sweating sickness,' or 'the plague'? mortality in, 20, 46 |
| Silence as to S. for several years, | 138, 145 | 'Sweet little man,' O. W. Holmes's, 135, 136 |
| 'Singe the king of Spain's beard,' | 152 | Swift, Dean, on accumulated learning, 37 |
| Sir Launfal, Lowell's, quoted, from, | 170 | Symmons, Dr. Charles, quoted, 160 |
| Snitterfield, | 21, 40 | Taine, Henri, 190 |
| Soldier-authors, | 109-113 | Tapley, Mark, quoted, 27 |
| Soldier stage next after lover's, | 121 | Tarleton, Dick, Kemp's predecessor, 140, 156 |
| Soldier's name honorable, | 124, 125 | Tenderness of pity, 47 |
| Soldier's peculiar talk, | 117-120 | Tennyson, Alfred, quoted, his life-work, 70, 193, 58 |
| 'Small Latin and less Greek,' | 50 | Thousand-souled, Hallam's estimate of S., 166 |
| Smith, Goldwin, quoted, | 156, 157 | Therites, deformed tongue-stabber, 165 |
| Song of Moses, quoted from, | 110 | Three purposes cherished by S.? 58, 87, 89, 103 |
| Sophocles, author of great tragedies, quoted, his fruitfulness, | 152 51 205 | Three careers for enterprising youths, 121 |
| Spanish language, knowledge of by S.? | 36, 53 | Three Unities observable in dramas, 174, 175 |
| Specialization, extreme, danger of, | 152 | Tickle o' the sere, 118, 152, 153 |
| 'Sprag' boy, William Page, | 76, 97 | Time, personified, 166 |
| Sprague, Charles, poet, quoted, | 95, 97 | Time for marriage, 63 |
| Sprague, William, author's ancestor? | 97 | Time, Unity of, disregarded by S., 175 |
| Steevens, George, | 80 | <i>Timon of Athens</i> . Its foundation, 32 |
| Stoddard, R. H., on quotations, | 208 | Toleration, perfect in S., carried too far? 172, 173, 174, 175 |
| Strange, Lord=Ferdinando Stanley, his company of players, | 73, 96 | Tragedy and comedy mixed in a play, 174, 175 |
| Stratford on Avon, | 18 | Tragedy of S. Milton's opinion, 203 |
| Studies in Eng. Grammar schools, | 47, 48 | Tricks, verbal and vocal, 98 |
| Subjectivity, singular power in S., inverted or transferred, | 167-171 184 | Troilus in <i>Tro. and Cres.</i> , deluded, 63 |
| Susannah S., Mrs. John Hall, | 68, 83 | Truancy, evil of, recognized by S., 75, 76 |
| | | Truth, the main ingredient in sentence, 179 |

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