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SHAKESPEARE

THE
ROMANCE OF YACHTING:

Voyage the First.

BY JOSEPH C. HART,
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Reproduction of the original title page

THE ANCIENT LETHE.

I now took a turn along the banks of the Guadalete, which disembogues into the bay of Cadiz at St. Mary's. As I have said, it is the ancient Lethé (corrupted by the common Moorish prefix,) to whose waters were ascribed such potent narcotic qualities, that one needed but to bathe in it, or to drink of its floods, to be steeped or sealed up hermetically in forgetfulness. Wonderful river! I wandered for a while on its shores, thinking over its history, and suffering my mind to run back through the many ages in which it had been almost an actor, at any rate a passive spectator of some of the most interesting portions of the history of man. The little river before me told a story for Spain, the pages of which extend over seven hundred years of her history.

Indeed, where can you find a spot of ground in Spain that is not full of classic story? Wherever it lacks reality, the imagination of the poet has peopled it with celestial beings, and covered it with heavenly verdure. The famed Gardens of the Hesperides were, by some writers, placed in Spain,

and in this part of Andalusia. And why not? To a climate most serene, it added a vegetation of unparalleled richness, covering the country and filling the air with sweets for hundreds of miles. Some ancient writers have given locality to the Hesperides in Africa, near Tangier. Others, again, have placed them upon the borders of the Red Sea—"Betwixt which Places," (saith old Purchas, an obsolete historian,) "is such a World of Distance, it argueth how great Errours great Schollars may fall into, by Want of that so much neglected Studie of Geographic, without which, Historie, that delectable Studie, is sick of a half-dead Palsie." Admirable historian! Shakspeare lived about the same time with Purchas, and made a similar blunder in his reckoning, (that is, if he wrote the play attributed to him containing it,) by wrecking some of his sailors upon the "sea-coast of Bohemia," no part of which ever touched the sea by at least a hundred miles.

It is worth our while, sometimes, to see how great and learned men, (Pope said Shakspeare was so,) do treat their subject-matter; and, therefore, I transcribe the passage referred to. It is taken from his "Winter's Tale," and is almost the only portion free from obscene allusions. Yet, in creating this play, what an imagination and invention he must have had—that Swan of Avon!—Eccc signum:

"SCENE, BOHEMIA.—A desert country near the sea.—Enter
Antigonus, with a child; and a Messenger.

"ANT.—Thou art perfect then, our ship hath touched upon the deserts of Bohemia."

"MAR.—Ay, my lord; and fear we have landed in ill time: the skies look grimly, and threaten present blusters.

"ANT.—Go get aboard; look to thy bark; I'll not be long before I call upon thee.

"MAR.—Make your best haste; and go not too far i' the land: 'tis like to be loud weather; besides this place is famous for the creatures of prey that keep upon 't.

"Enter Shepherd and Clown.

"CLOWN.—I have seen two such sights by sea and by land;—but I am not to say it is a sea, for it is now the sky; between the firmament and it, you cannot thrust a bodkin's point.

"SHEP.—Why, boy, how is it?"

"CLOWN.—I would you did but see how it chafes, how it rages, how it takes to the shore! but that's not to the point: O, the most piteous cry of the poor souls! sometimes to see 'em, and not to see 'em: now the ship boring the moon with her mainmast; and anon swallowed with yest and froth, as you'd thrust a cork into a hog's-head.—But to make an end of the ship: to see how the sea flap-dragoned it—but, first, how the poor souls roared, and the sea mocked them;—how the poor gentleman roared, and the bear mocked him, both roaring louder than the sea or weather. The men are not yet cold under water."

Oh, Shakspeare—Immortal bard—Mighty genius—Swan of Avon—thou Unapproachable! Are there no more fish, no more krakens in that wondrous sea from which thou wert taken? Shall there be no more cakes and ale?

How prone the English people are to kill off their great men! They first raise them up to the loftiest pinnacle of fame, and then, like the eagle with the tortoise, or the monkey which mounts the highest tree with his cocoa-nut, they dash their victims "all to pieces" upon the rocks below. Thus, also, they play the game of nine-pins with all their great statesmen. They set them up, ay, "set them up, my boy!"

for the pleasure of knocking them down. And then, again, they drink to the full, at the Castalian fount, and the inclination is irresistible to demolish the vessel that has served them :

“ Sweet the pleasure
After drinking—to break glasses !”

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

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

After “the bard” had been dead for one hundred years and utterly forgotten, a player and a writer of the succeeding century, turning over the old lumber of a theatrical “property-room,” find bushels of neglected plays, and the idea of a “speculation” occurs to them. They dig at hazard and promiscuously, and disentomb the literary remains of many a “Wit” of a former century, educated men, men of mind, graduates of universities, yet starving at the door of some theatre, while their plays are in the hands of an ignorant and scurvy manager, awaiting his awful fiat. They

die in poverty, and some of absolute starvation. Still their plays, to the amount of hundreds, remain in the hands of the manager, and become in some way or other his "property." A "factotum" is kept to revise, to strike out, to refit, revamp, interpolate, disfigure, to do any thing to please the vulgar and vicious taste of the multitude. No play will succeed, without it is well peppered with vulgarity and obscenity. The "property-room" becomes lumbered to repletion with the efforts of genius. It was the fashion of the day for all literary men to write for the theatre. There was no other way to go, their productions before the world. In the process of time, the brains of the "factotum," teeming with smut and overflowing all the while with prurient obscenity, the theatre becomes indicted for a nuisance, or it is sought to be "avoided" by the magistrates for its evil and immoral tendency. The managers are forced to retire; and one, who "owns all the properties," leaves the hundreds of original or interpolated plays to the usual fate of garret lumber, some with the supposed *mark* of his "genius" upon them. They are useless to him, for he is a player and a manager no longer. A hundred years pass, and they and their reputed "owner" are forgotten, and so are the poets who wrote and starved upon them. Then comes the resurrection—"on speculation." Betterton the player, and Rowe the writer, make a selection from a promiscuous heap of plays found in a garret, nameless as to authorship. "I want a hero!" said Byron, when he commenced a certain poem. "I want an author for this selection of plays!" said Rowe. "I have it!" said Betterton: "call them Shakspeare's!" And Rowe, the "commentator," commenced to puff them as "the bard's," and

to write a history of his hero in which there was scarcely a word that had the foundation of truth to rest upon.

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

Alas, Shakspeare ! Lethé is upon thee ! But if it drown thee, it will give up and work the resurrection of *better men and more worthy*. Thou hast had thy century ; they are about having theirs.

“A singular and unaccountable mystery,” says Rees, “is attached to Shakspeare’s private life ; and, by some strange fatality, almost every document concerning him has either been destroyed or still remains in obscurity.

“The *first* published memoir of him was drawn up by *Nicholas Rowe* in 1709, nearly one hundred years after the decease of the poet, and the materials for this, were furnished by *Betterton* the player.

“And it is not a little remarkable, that Jonson seems to have maintained a higher place in the estimation of the public in general, than our poet. (Shakspeare.) for more than a

century after the death of the latter. Within that period Jonson's works are said to have passed through several editions, and to have been read with avidity, while Shakspeare's were comparatively neglected till the time of Rowe.

“ At the time of his becoming in some degree a public character, we naturally expected to find many anecdotes recorded of his *literary* history : but, strange to say, *the same destitution of authentic incidents marks every stage of his life.*”

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

Shakspeare was born on the 23d of April, 1564, and died on the 23d of April, 1616. His age was therefore 52 years at the time of his death. In 1589 he had been some time, it is supposed about four years, in London. In the latter year he was one of the 16 shareholders in the “ Black-friars ” Theatre, his name being the 12th on the list. In 1603 his name appears among others in a license of James I., to perform not merely in London but in any part of the kingdom.

“ These actors,” says a commentator, “ rendered themselves justly obnoxious to the citizens of London by their satirical, we might truly say, their licentious representations.”

“ The wisdom of men and the fidelity of women,” were openly and wantonly attacked on the stage.

“ A complaint was formally made to the royal council ” accordingly.

Instead of abating the nuisance at once, a petition is received from the managers, and entertained by the authorities having charge of the complaint. Compensation for the establishment threatened with demolition, and for its "properties," is prayed for with earnestness, and a negotiation ensues, in the course of which the following facts appear.

In an estimate "for avoiding the play-house in the precinct of the Blackfriars," or abating it as a nuisance, the following item occurs.

"ITEM. W. Shakespeare asketh for the *wardrobe* and *properties* of the same play-house, 500*l.*, and for his four shares the same as his fellowes, Burbidge and Fletcher, viz. 933*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.*—£1433. 6*s.* 8*d.*"

Heminges & Condell had each two shares; Joseph Taylor one share and a half; Lowing one share and a half; and "Foure more playeres with one-halfe share to eche of them:"—Total 20 shares.

"Moreover the hired men of the companie demand some recompense for their great losse, and the widows and orphanes of playeres, who are paide by the sharers, at diueres rates and proportions, so as in the whole it will coste the Lo. Mayor and the citizens at the least 7000*l.*"

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

"Of Shakspeare's youth we know nothing," says one commentator.

“Of Shakspeare’s last years we know absolutely nothing,” says another.

“The whole, however,” says Alexander Chalmers, commenting upon Rowe, Malone and Steevens’ labored attempts to follow Shakspeare in his career, “is unsatisfactory. Shakspeare in his private character, in his friendships, in his amusements, in his closet, in his family, *is nowhere before us.*”

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

A writer in Lardner’s Cabinet Cyclopædia undertakes to give us the history of his family; from which I gather that John Shakspeare, the father of William, was very poor and very illiterate, notwithstanding what the ambitious commentators may say to the contrary. So says Lardner, and he proves it beyond dispute. The coat of arms and the heraldry obtained for the family, afterwards, was procured by fraud: and the proceeding is pronounced discreditably to “the bard” who had a hand in it. But the poverty of the

family is nothing in this case, except to show that William Shakspeare must necessarily have been an uneducated boy. He grew up in ignorance and viciousness, and became a common poacher—and the latter title, in literary matters, he carried to his grave. He was not the mate of the literary characters of the day, and no one knew it better than himself. It is a fraud upon the world to thrust his surreptitious fame upon us. He had none that was worthy of being transmitted. The enquiry will be, *who were the able literary men who wrote the dramas imputed to him?* The plays themselves, or rather a small portion of them, will live as long as English literature is regarded worth pursuit. The *authorship* of the plays is no otherwise material to us, than as a matter of curiosity and to enable us to render exact justice; but they should not be assigned to Shakspeare alone, if at all.

From the Cabinet Cyclopædia already referred to, conducted by the Rev. Dr. Lardner, assisted by eminent Literary and Scientific men, Vol. 2, London edition, 1837, we may gather many particulars concerning this subject, which I have condensed below.

The writer commences by observing that our ancient Drama is, indeed, a rich mine; but the dross outweighs the ore in the proportion of at least a thousand to one. A person may dig long days before he discovers anything worth the trouble of picking up.

Of the stage and dramatic writers immediately preceding the appearance of Shakspeare, and cotemporaneously with him, the writer observes:—

The custom indeed of later dramatists—Shakspeare among

the rest—was to adopt old pieces as the bases of their labors, to add or curtail, to condense or expand, as might seem best suited to the time.

The tragedy of *Tancred and Gismund*, which was exhibited (1568) before Elizabeth, at the Inner Temple, was the first play in our language founded on an *Italian* original:—a source soon to become fruitful enough. It was taken from one of Boccaccio's novels, and was the composition of five different persons.

Another play, *The Misfortunes of Arthur*, was written by Thomas Hughes, and seven other persons, one of whom was Lord Bacon.

The *Yorkshire Tragedy* some critics have not hesitated to ascribe to Shakspeare, and also many others which he probably never heard of even by name. Two plays, notoriously *not* his, were published with his name on the title-page in his life-time, and no effort appears to have been made on his part to set the matter right.

It is evident that the intellectual activity, so conspicuous in the latter half of the sixteenth century, has never been surpassed. We (the writer continues) have already alluded to *fifty-two* pieces, of which no vestige now remains, unless the substance of them lives in more recent productions: and these arose and fell in twelve years, viz. from 1568 to 1580.

That the later years were not less prolific, may be proved by the instances of Anthony Munday, Henry Chettle, Robert Greene, Christopher Marlowe, George Peele, and others, who wrote innumerable dramas, though most of them have not come down to our days.

But the most striking illustration of this subject is afforded

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

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

Robert Greene is mentioned, who, at one time, was one of the Queen's chaplains, and had taken the Master's degree at a University. It was sufficient for the world to know that he was a popular writer.

In a letter which Greene wrote in his last illness, in fact on his death-bed, to his boon-companions and brother playwrights, or dramatists, as they were called, Marlowe, Lodge, and Peele, appears the first authentic information we have of Shakspeare's literary thievery. The youthful propensity for stealing deer and game, which drove him from Stratford, seems to have remained in the bone and ripened into a confirmed habit.

"To those gentlemen" the letter of the dying Greene begins, "his quondam acquaintance, that spend their wit in making plays, Robert Greene wisheth a better exercise. Wonder not, (for with thee will I first begin,) thou famous gracer of tragedies," &c. This allusion is to Marlowe. "With thee," continues Greene, "I join young Juvenal, (Lodge) that biting satirist, that lastly with me together writ a comedy. Might I advise thee," &c. The letter then

proceeds, "And thou no less deserving than the other two, (Peele) in some things rarer, in nothing inferior, driven (like myself) to extreme shifts," &c.—"Base minded men, all three of you, if by my misery ye be not warned; for unto none of you, like me, sought those burs to cleave—those puppets, I mean, that speak from our mouths—those antics garnished in our colors. Is it not strange that I, to whom they a l have been beholding, shall be left of them at once forsaken? Yes, trust them not; for there is *an upstart crow, beautified with our feathers*, that with his *tiger's heart wrupt in a player's hide*, supposes he is as well able to bombast out a blank verse as the best of you! And, being *an absolute John Fuctotum*, is, in his own conceit, the only *Shake-scene* in a country. Oh that I might entreat your rare wits to be employed in more profitable courses: and let these apes imitate your past excellence, and never more acquaint them with your admired inventions."

By the "upstart crow, beautified with our feathers," and "he is, in his own conceit, the only *Shake-scene* in a country," a Mr. Tyrwhitt thinks, (and the facts prove it,) Shakspeare is meant.

The commentator then proceeds: "But in what manner, the inquisitive reader may enquire, was Shakspeare indebted to Greene and his dramatic friends? To understand the subject more clearly, we must observe, that in the beginning of his (Shakspeare's) career, *for years indeed, after he became connected with the stage*, that extraordinary [!] man was satisfied with reconstructing the pieces which others had composed; he was *not* the author, but the *adapter* of them to the stage. Indeed, we are of opinion that the number of plays

which he thus recast, as well as those in which he made very slight alterations. is *greater than any of his commentators have supposed.*”

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

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

There were also “*Six Old Plays,*” on which Shakspeare founded his Measure for Measure—Comedy of Errors—Taming the Shrew—King John—King Henry IV.—King Henry V.—and King Lear. They were afterwards gathered into two volumes and published in London in 1779.

“Marlowe is positively said by Chalmers to have written ‘*The true Tragedy of Richard Duke of Yorke,*’ which Shakspeare remodelled and transferred into one of the parts

of Henry VI. He may also have written, (so says the commentator,) the *History of Henry the Sixth*, and *The whole contention between the two famous Houses Lancaster and York*. All three were in existence before Shakspeare began to write for the stage, and his (Shakspeare's) additions are few."

Thomas Kyd was the author of two plays, one called at first *Jeronimo*, and afterwards *The Spanish Tragedy*. Some additions were made to this play, after the author's death, by no less a writer than Ben Jonson. "These additions were considered of greater value than the original. The fable of the tragedy is not founded in history: it is entirely a creation. A resemblance between this play and the *Hamlet* attributed to Shakspeare has been discovered. In both a ghost appears to urge revenge on the procrastinating relative; in both there is a play within a play. It shows that Shakspeare was not so much a creator as is supposed. He was frequently satisfied with improving the conceptions of others."

Henslowe, as we find in his old Diary, recently dug up from obscurity, paid the sum of X s. (probably for refreshments) to Drayton, Wilson, Munday and Hathaway, the joint authors of the play of "*Sir John Oldcastle*," after its first performance. This play was printed as one of Shakspeare's, and is the original of all the "*Sir John Falstaffs*" improperly said to be the creations of Shakspeare.

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

Drayton, Chettle and Decker wrote the "Famous Wars of Henry I."

Ben Jonson and Decker wrote the "Page of Plymouth," for which the very highest price of that day was given, namely eleven pounds.

These facts I gather from Henslowe : and it appears from another authority that Beaumont and Fletcher wrote in conjunction, or in partnership ; one furnishing the funds and the other the brains. This was the taste of the age. During the last thirteen years of Elizabeth's reign, and during all that of James I., partnerships of two, three, or four, and even five writers, in the same dramatic piece, were more common than single labors of the kind. One authority asserts that Shakspeare wrote in that way. It is very likely. We can easily discover the part he wrote by its filth. By that mark you may invariably know where his hand has been at work.

Cartwright, who wrote thirty years after Shakspeare's death, is the only early writer who has said any thing of Shakspeare's peculiar quality ; that quality for which alone he is celebrated, namely, vulgarity and "obscene wit." Here is the only true and tangible record of Shakspeare's character, as an author, extant, written by one almost his cotemporary :

"Shakspeare, whose best jest lies
In the lady's questions and the fool's replies ;
Whose wit our nicer times would *obsceneness* call,
And which made the *bawdry* pass for *comical*."

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

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

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

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

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

“The indifference of cotemporaries, and even the generations after his death, (observes one commentator,) to the *personal* history of Shakspeare, has often been matter of astonishment. Nobody, indeed, so much as cared for the knowledge. Sir William Dugdale, a native of Coventry, about twenty miles from Stratford upon Avon, who published the antiquities of Warwickshire, thirty years only after the poet's death, and who might have seen a score of persons once familiar with him, did not trouble himself to make a single enquiry on the subject. Fuller was equally careless. Edward Phillips, author of *Theatrum Poetarum*, just condescends to mention such a man. Langbaine, and Blount, and Gildon copy their predecessors. Anthony à Wood, one of the most industrious writers England ever produced, who was born only fourteen years after Shakspeare's decease, and who lived within thirty-six miles of the place where so much information might have been obtained, has not a syllable about the dramatist, though he found room for many other writers who never saw Oxford. Even Shakspeare's family might have been consulted. In short there never was a person of whom more might *have been*, of whom so little *was* collected, until the attempt was vain. Whence arose this indifference?”

Had the editor who furnishes the foregoing extract, recurred to his own writings, immediately before him, he might easily have found the reason for the indifference he complains of. He has told us prettily satisfactorily where nearly all the Shakspeare (not *Shakspeare's*) plays came from originally; and it is hardly to be expected that a man who merely adapted other people's works to the *playing stage*, like a Theatrical

Factotum, as Greene calls him, (and he was nothing else,) is worthy of any further remembrance than such fact would warrant. He has shown us conclusively that he scarcely deserves the name of *author*. But the lame answer of this editor, insulting to the intelligence of the age about which he writes, is as follows: "The causes of this neglect are obvious. *The great body of readers are incapable of comprehending a master.*" How would this writer rank Ben Jonson? The great body of readers comprehended him then, and comprehend him now; and many, not without good reason, suppose that he has no equal as a dramatic poet. But, perhaps, the logical point of the above writer consists in a man's being a master only in proportion to the difficulty of understanding him. It certainly has taken a hundred commentators to elucidate Shakspeare, where scarcely one has been needed to tell us what the undefiled English of Jonson means. Even Milton studied Jonson's style intently as the most perfect of any then existing in the English language.

The singular and pertinacious endeavors of Pope to work out a fictitious literary reputation for Shakspeare, by declaring that he must necessarily have been well versed in classic lore, and citing the authors which he *must* have read to produce some of his plays, is thus summarily and conclusively disposed of by the writer in Lardner: "All this," he says, "shows, what we did not expect to find in *Pope*, namely, *an almost entire ignorance of our early literature*"—whence, in fact, the plays were mostly derived, sometimes without alteration or emendation.

Byron, it appears, regarded the Shakspeare mania as a sort of periodical epidemic—

“To be, or not to be! That is the question,”
Says Shakspeare, who, *just now*, is much in fashion!

Byron had not read Plato in the original, or he would have substituted that philosopher's name for Shakspeare's, perhaps.

“To speak the language of Shakspeare,” is a common expression. That expression, applied to Americans, was uttered by our minister in England on the occasion of a public dinner at which he was a guest. The words used were that the “Americans speak the language of Shakspeare;” intended, doubtless, to convey the idea that we speak the English in its purity. But, under favor, he did us great injustice, and heaped upon us an egregious wrong; for whoever speaks the language which Shakspeare used, speaks in the language of the Five Points or of the obscene Fishwomen of England. If, however, he had said that Americans speak the language of “Rare Ben Jonson,” he would have given us the idea of perfect purity of style and elegance of diction. Ben never descended from the high position of a true poet, except, perhaps to utter some invective like the following.

Hear him, in the most poetical and indignant words, while he speaks of the stolen wares of his vulgar cotemporary from Stratford:

I can approve
The state of poesy, such as it is,
Blessed, eternal, and most true divine:
Indeed, if you will look on poesy,
As she appears in many, poor and lame,
Patch'd up in remnants and old worn-out rags,
Half-starv'd for want of her peculiar tool,
Sacred Invention; then I must confirm
Both your conceit and censure of her merit:

But, view her in her glorious ornaments,
 Attired in all the majesty of art,
 Set high in spirit with the precious taste
 Of sweet philosophy ; and, which is most,
 Crown'd with the rich traditions of a soul
 That hates to have her dignity profaned
 With any relish of an earthly thought,
 O, then, how proud a presence doth she bear !
 Then she is like herself, fit to be seen
 Of none but grave and consecrated eyes.
 Nor is it any blemish to her fame,
 That such lean, ignorant, and blasted wits,
 Such brandless gulls, should utter their stolen wares
 With such applauses in our vulgar ears ;
 Or that their slubbered lines have current pass
 From the fat judgments of the multitude ;—
 But that this barren and infected age
 Should set no difference twixt these empty spirits
 And a true poet :—than which reverend name
 Nothing can more adorn humanity.

O, rare Ben Jonson ! Can any one doubt that “ Big Ben ”
 meant Shakspeare, that smallest of poetasters, in these his
 forcible and manly censures ? The greatest dramatic poet of
 England, speaking of the meanest and the least !

“ Of Shakspeare’s moral character we know nothing,” says
 the commentator, and then shortly informs us that he kept a
 mistress in London. In fact he never went back but twice
 to Stratford to see his wife, (Anne Hathaway, who was eight
 years older than himself,) whom he married when he was
 eighteen. The same writer then asks the following question—
 to which he applies an answer of unquestionable truth :—

“ But is there nothing in the works of this celebrated man

to justify the *suspicion* of immorality? Whoever has looked into the *original editions* of his dramas, will be disgusted with the obscenity of his allusions. They *absolutely teem with the grossest impurities—more gross by far than can be found in any cotemporary dramatist.*"

Another writer says, and with equal truth, that Shakspeare's obscenity exceeds that of all the dramatists that existed before him, and coteremporaneously with him; and he might have included all that ever came after him. This was the secret of his success with the play-goers. The plays he purchased or obtained surreptitiously, which became his "property," and which are now called his, were never set upon the stage in their original state. They were first spiced with obscenity, blackguardism and impurities, before they were produced; and this business he voluntarily assumed, and faithfully did he perform his share of the management in that respect. It brought *mony* to the house. No wonder the "Lord Mayor and the Citizens" wished to "avoid" the play-house in which he was concerned.

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

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

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

"All his sonnets are licentious," says another, and quotes the libidinous lines to his mistress.

Many of the plays attributed by the moderns to Shak-

spere were acted at a rival Theatre, of which Old Henslowe was treasurer or proprietor. A most singular discovery of facts, tending positively to disprove the authorship of Shakspeare to several of the dramas imputed to him, is found in Henslowe's Diary. It was discovered but a few years ago, (1845,) and is now in possession of the Shakspeare society of London, but is the property of Dulwich college. The orthography of Henslowe is exceedingly "cramp"—but it is sufficient evidence to be brought into court. Its date runs from 1591 to 1609. The name of Shakspeare is not mentioned therein, while those of nearly all the writers of mark of that day are repeatedly spoken of. I have extracted several passages from it.

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

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

2. *The Comedy of Errors*.—Whoever wrote this play was indebted to the *Menœchmi* of Plautus, which was translated into English some years before Shakspeare left Stratford. Yet whether Shakspeare (if he is the author) was immediately indebted to it, or to a Comedy founded upon it, entitled the “History of Error,” and performed before Queen Elizabeth in 1576, is doubtful. It is supposed he did no more than slightly retouch the old comedy; and some commentators reject the play as being Shakspeare’s altogether. “He retouched it,” says one, “*probably* at the request of the manager!” This commentator has hit the fact exactly, not only in regard to this play but to all the others attributed to him, except perhaps one, “*The Merry Wives of Windsor*,” which is probably Shakspeare’s from its obscene “internal evidence.” In a note at the bottom of the page where some of the above facts are stated, the following words appear:

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

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

4. *The Merchant of Venice*.—This play was derived partly from the *Pecorone* of Giovanni Fiorentino; partly from the *Gesta Romanorum*, an old English ballad, and

Marlowe's Jew of Malta. In Gosson's School of Abuse, published as early as 1579, there is a distinct allusion to a play containing the characteristic incidents in this Merchant of Venice.

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

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

7. *Romeo and Juliet*.—the story of this play was first related by a novelist of Vicenza, as early as 1535. It also formed the subject of a novel of Bandello, printed in 1554. Bristeau, a French novelist, soon gave it a French form; and Brooke, in 1562, transferred it into English verse. Painter, also, in the Palace of Pleasure, took his story of Rhomeo and Julietta from the French, and not from the Italian novel. The writer of "Shakspeare's" Romeo and Juliet followed Brooke, but availed himself of some things from Painter. With all this knowledge before one commentator, who is determined to hear nothing against the "genius" of "the bard," he says—"The genius of Shakspeare cannot suffer from the fact that he borrowed the foundation of all his plots. What others left unfinished, he perfected: he turned the dross of others into fine gold." I

am forced to the opinion that he, or the one who wrote the play in question, took the gold itself, "more suo," without resort to the process of transmutation by the crucible of his "genius."

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

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

10. *Hamlet*.—With the exception of the grave-digger's scene, inserted to catch the groundings, which may possibly be the production of the "genius of Shakspeare," this play owes its paternity elsewhere. The foundation of Hamlet is notoriously to be found in Saxo Grammaticus, which Shakspeare could not read, notwithstanding Mr. Pope supposes he *must* have been a great scholar. If he wrote Hamlet, Pope was probably near the truth; and it is upon the sup-

position that he wrote all the plays attributed to him, that Pope says he must have been conversant with the classics, familiar with Plautus, Dares Phrygius, and Plutarch, and he might have added Plato. What confiding men biographers and historians are, when they have a favorite theory to carry out! In addition to a printed story called *The Historie of Hamblet* then extant, there was a play called *Hamlet*, (acted as early as 1589;) and another play of *Hamlet* was also acted at a rival Theatre in London, in the year 1594, at which old Henslowe was treasurer. His entry is thus:—*“Received at Hamlet VIII s.”* A poor night’s receipts, that! Shakspeare probably got this play afterwards, and inserted the grave-digger’s scene to render it popular with the play-goers. That was his vocation. At any rate the soliloquy of “*To be or not be,*” is a literal translation from Plato, and judging from that, and the deep philosophy of the whole piece, (always excepting the Shakspearian blot upon it,) it must have been the creation of an educated man, which Shakspeare was not. It is probably a partnership concern. The only man of that day, of poetical power sufficient to write the higher parts of this tragedy, was *Ben. Jonson*, the greatest Dramatic Poet England ever produced. Langhorne, in his preface to *Plutarch*, referring to the time of Shakspeare, says—“The celebrated soliloquy, ‘*To be or not to be,*’ is taken almost verbatim from that philosopher, (Plato); yet we have never found that Plato was translated in those times.”

11. *The Merry Wives of Windsor*.—If any play of the whole catalogue is Shakspeare’s, this comes nearest the mark. The impress of his vulgar and impure mind is upon every

page. Tradition asserts that it was composed at the express command of Queen Elizabeth, who "wished to see Falstaff in love." It is probably, like all the other traditions relating to the "genius" of Shakspeare, without foundation, except in the brain of his admiring commentators. But he has no originality even in this revolting piece of trash. The author was indebted to a translation of Pecorino, and to Tarleton's News out of Purgatory, for his plot and incidents; and his *Sir John Falstaff* is the *Sir John Oldcastle* of Drayton, Wilson, Munday and Hathaway.

12. *Troilus and Cressida*.—Whoever wrote this play took the plot and materials from the Italian, and from Chaucer, and from Lydgate's Boke of Troye. The authorship is settled by an entry in Henslowe's Diary on the 7th of April, 1599, in these words; "*Lent unto Thomas Downton, to lende unto Mr. Dickers and harcy cheatell, in carreste of their boocke cull'd Troyeles and Cressedaye, the some of iij li.*"

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

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

15. *King Lear*.—The story of Lear is drawn from Geoffrey of Monmouth; but the play is one of the "Six Old Plays," to which something was contributed by way of

amendment, perhaps, from the *Arcadia*, and the *Mirror of Magistrates*. Henslowe had the play at his Theatre, as is evident from an entry in his book: “*8th of April, 1594, received at King leare XXVI s.*” It is therefore not Shakspeare’s—for he had no interest in the rival play-house, and Henslowe must have owned the play as his “property.”

16. *All's well that ends well*.—May be found in Boccaccio. In Painter’s *Palace of Pleasure* the story is called *Giletta of Narbon*. This play may have been among the “properties” of the Theatre to which Shakspeare was attached, upon the suppression of that dramatic nuisance, by the Lord “Mayor and citizens.” The only wonder is that Betterton and Rowe, in getting up their “Shakspeare speculation,” did not give us a second series of a like number of plays while they were about it, and call them new discoveries. Who does not remember the “Shakspeare forgeries,” of Ireland, which deceived the very elect!

17. *Macbeth*.—The incidents of the story, founded on Scottish history, are all in Hector Boece; “but of Hector,” observes one critic, “Shakspeare knew as much as he did of Hesiod.” Could he read Hesiod, think you? The writer of the play probably consulted Hollinshed for a guide. Buchanan thought the subject a fit one for the stage, and some of the “wits” of the day took his hint and produced it. Part of this play, is borrowed from Middleton’s production entitled *The Witch*. So says Steevens, or rather he says the “bard of Avon” was not the originator.

18. *Twelfth Night*.—Derived remotely from the Italian of Bandello and more immediately from Belleforest: and

partly from The Historie of Appolonius and Silla, a tale in the collection of Barnaby Riche.

19. *Julius Cesar*.—From Plutarch, inaccessible to Shakspeare's "genius." He could not read it in the original, nor in the French translation of it by Amiot. The Earl of Stirling had already written a tragedy of that title. The Julius Cesar attributed to Shakspeare is undoubtedly the following, as noticed by old Henslowe, the theatrical treasurer: "22d of May, 1602. Lent unto the Companye to geve unto Antoney Monday and Mikell Drayton, Webester, Mydelton, and the Rest, in carneste of a Boocke called *sesers Falle*, the some of *V li*." It is possible that Shakspeare's managers purchased this play, and set it upon their stage.

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

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

22. *Timon of Athens*.—The commentator says this play

is of the "same stamp" as the foregoing. "It was certainly indebted to a former tragedy of the name, never printed, but well known in MS. The incidents are taken from Painter's Palace of Pleasure, and Plutarch."

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

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

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

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

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

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

29. *King Henry V.*—Founded, by universal concession,

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

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

31. *King Richard III.*—This great drama, one that has kept the stage longest and with the greatest popularity, **seems**

to be given up without a struggle, notwithstanding the "internal evidence." "Here," the commentator says, "Shakspeare had also prior dramas before him. Some of them are enumerated in the last edition of Malone by Boswell: and a mutilated copy of one, which *our dramatist had certainly in view*, is printed in the 19th volume of that laborious work." Henslowe has this entry in his diary: "*Lent unto benjamy Johnson, in earnest of a Boocke called Richard crookbake, and for new adicyons for Jeronym, the some of X li.*" It should be remembered, however, that the playing copy of **Richard**, now used, is greatly altered from the original. All the most striking and beautiful passages are the work of modern hands. Garrick first undertook to remodel it, and several professional hands have since been at work at it. Indeed this is the case with all the "Shakspeare" acting dramas. The originals, with their obsolete and obscene defects and blemishes, would not be tolerated for a moment upon the present English or American stage. The authors that wrote them originally, could not, by any possibility, recognise them in the present text.

32. *King Henry VIII.*—It has heretofore been believed, upon pretty good grounds, that Rowley was author of this play, or at least furnished the foundation and material for its construction. The title of his drama is *The Famous Chronicle History of King Henry the Eighth*. Rowley was cotemporary with Shakspeare. But, recently, a partnership with Rowley in its authorship has been discovered. Henslowe's Diary has the following entry: "*5th June, 1601. Lent unto Samuell Rowley to pay unto harye Chettell, for writtinge the Boocke of Carnall Wolseye lyfe, the some of*

XX s." The inference is irresistible that Shakspeare is as innocent of the production of this play, as of those which are more plumply denied because they are "unworthy of his genius." It is idle to speculate in the face of such positive testimony. He was the mere "factotum" of a theatre—a copyist for the prompter—and an arranger of the parts with the cues copied out for the actors: a very responsible and laborious station, certainly—but it does not make an author, nor give him any title to the authorship of the pieces he sets upon the stage.

33. *Pericles*.—The "bard's" chronicler says that "**P**ericles is certainly not the offspring of Shakspeare's genius. No ingenuity can show that there is the least affinity between the mind which produced it and that of our author. It would disgrace even the third rate dramatist of Shakspeare's age." This is no proof one way or the other. But the denial of his chronicler would seem to establish the fact, if assertion goes for any thing, that it was absolutely Shakspeare's, except that Shakspeare does not come up to the level of a third rate dramatist of any age. When his admirer asserts that a play belongs absolutely to Shakspeare, he finds himself negatived by positive proof: and it is fair to presume if there is the usual "internal evidence" of blackguardism in *Pericles*, it is Shakspeare's, or at least that part, which is thus marked, is his.

34. *Titus Andronicus*.—The same remarks precisely, both of chronicler and underwriter, as above given, apply here. This play, however, like that of *Pericles*, continues to be presented as Shakspeare's, and is claimed for Shakspeare. The following entries, however, in the books of

rival Theatre, or rather in old Henslowe's diary, settle the question as to its *not* being Shakspeare's. "1594" at several dates, "*received at titus and ondronicus, 3l. 8s. ;—2l. ;—XII s. ;—7s.*" The audiences must have been slim in those days!

Verily that "speculation" of Rowe and Betterton has been the cause of mighty contention among the learned commentators of this age. How much good Christian ink has been spent in writing up a worthless subject, I mean Shakspeare in person, and how much scholarship and research have been exhausted to furnish the means of sending him to "*quod!*"

The question put into the mouth of Lady Betty's waiting-maid in *High Life below Stairs*, "Who wrote Shakspeare?" was laughed at, as a good theatrical joke, some years ago; but, when it is now asked, there is "not so much laughing as formerly." And the theatrical pleasantry of playing one of Shakspeare's plays without speaking a word from Shakspeare, was actually carried out by John Kemble, who, in setting Hamlet upon the stage, left out the grave-digger's scene, as unworthy of the play; and thus the play was played, and well played too, doubtless, without a word being uttered from Shakspeare—for that scene is all that is his.

Upon the same principle that the Shakspeare series of plays selected by Rowe and Betterton are called Shakspeare's, might we call the rare old tracts and papers of the Harleian Miscellany, the *Earl of Orford's*, because they were found in his library, and some of them copied in his hand-writing. If they had been buried a century or two, he certainly would have been their author with the commentators of the calibre of those, generally, who have written upon Shakspeare.

About a century hence, when our old Metropolitan Theatre of the Park shall be turned into a brewery of beer, or a huge manufactory of some future Solomon's Balm of Gilead, or some life-preserving Panacea of an unborn Swain, those who come after us may find its "properties" barrelled up and stowed away in some lumber garret. Then will some "speculating Rowe and Betterton" gloat over the tons of plays and operas that have been acted in our day, and the chi-rography of our industrious and respectable Mr. Peter Richings will be recognised, in perhaps an hundred plays prepared by him for the prompter; and perhaps the music of a score of operas copied in his own hand-writing, will be found as well. Then will the forgotten play-writers of our day have a resurrection, and Mr. Richings an uncoveted immortality. Mozart and Rossini, too, sunk perhaps in the night of the intervening age, will come forth anew, and the hand-writing of that useful attaché of the Park, will be enquired about, and identified after long and indéfatigable research. The operas and the manuscript plays *will be his* by the same token, and that "internal evidence," (the hand-writing,) will be the proof by which to test the identity and authorship of all those cotemporary productions. Richings!—Your fate is posthumous fame, by this process—and even little Oliffe, the keeper of the "property room" and player of all the big-soldier parts, will have a glorious run for immortality!

The flavor of the Sherry furnished me at my Posada, was the finest I ever tasted. It was aromatic. I carried the remembrance of it about me for many days afterwards, and "The scent of the roses hangs round me still." Do we ever get such Sherry in America? I fear we seldom get a taste of St. Peter

Who does not remember the Sherris-sack of Falstaff?—
"Go, brew me a pottle of Sack!"

FALSTAFF—(solus.) A good Sherris sack hath a twofold operation in it. It ascends me into the brain; dries me there all the foolish, and dull, and crudy vapours which environ it; makes it apprehensive, quick, forgerive, full of nimble, fiery, and delectable shapes; which delivered o'er to the voice (the tongue), which is the birth, becomes

excellent wit. The second property of your excellent Sherris is,—the warming of the blood; which, before cold and settled, left the liver white and pale, which is the badge of pusillanimity and cowardice; but the Sherris warms it and makes it course from the inwards to the parts extreme. It illumineth the face: which as a beacon, gives warning to all the rest of this little kingdom, man, to arm; and then the vital commoners, and inland petty spirits, muster me all to their captain, the heart; who, great and puffed up with this retinue, doth any deed of courage; and this valor comes of Sherris: So that skill in the weapon is nothing, without Sack; for that sets it awork; and learning, a mere hoard of gold kept by a devil, till Sack commences upon it, and sets it in act and use. Hereof comes it that prince Hal is valiant: for the cold blood he did naturally inherit of his father, he hath, like lean, steril, and bare land, manured, husbanded and tilled, with excellent endeavour of drinking good, and good store of fertile Sherris; that he is very hot and valiant. If I had a thousand sons, the first human principle I would teach them, should be—to forswear thin potations and addict themselves to Sack.

FALSTAFF.—Bardolph, I say!—[Enter Bardolph.]

BARDOLPH.—Here, sir.

FALSTAFF.—Go fetch me a quart of Sack; put a toast in't. [Exit Bardolph, and he returns with the wine.]

FALSTAFF.—Come, let me pour in some Sack to this Thames water; for my belly's as cold as if I had swallowed snow-balls for pills to cool the reins. [Empties the can.] Go to, knave, *there's time in't!* Take away these chalices: Go brew me a pottle of Sack, finely.

BARDOLPH.—With eggs, sir?

FALSTAFF.—Simple, of itself; I'll no pullet-sperm in my beverage. [Exit Bardolph.]

I am in the land of Sherry, and therefore a word or two more about it, while "my foot is upon the hill." The quality of the "Sherris-sack," of the time of Shakspeare, upon whose virtues Falstaff so learnedly descants, has escaped

the notice of the commentators ; whereat I greatly marvel, for scarcely a passage which would admit of a page or two of learned comment has been suffered to explain itself. Sherris-sack is another name for *dry* wine, or *sec* ; such, in fact, as is the Sherry of the present day. It is a favorite wine in England, introduced there under the name of *Sack* ; and the greater portion, if not all the best Sherry is sent there from the wine-merchants, formerly of Xeres, but now of Port St. Mary, where their immense vaults, or warehouses are established for the greater convenience of superintending their exportations. The allusion to "*lime*" being in the bottom of the can, will sufficiently be accounted for by the fact that lime is, or was, formerly, used as a rectifying bath, or flux, through which to pass the wine in order to deprive it of its crude qualities. The phrase, "Go to, knave, there's lime in't," is an interpolation of the players. I have not been able to find it in the older editions of the play.

The finer pale Sherries are nearly pure, and are all made from the Xeres grape, having the admixture only of about a gallon of brandy to a butt. The dark brown is made by boiling down the pale Sherry to its utmost strength, and mixing this with the paler kinds as coloring matter, and as a preservative instead of brandy. The Amontillado is said to be the driest of Sherries, and is made from the grape plucked before it is quite ripe. It is also said to be the purest, having the least infusion either of brandy or boiled wine. The "burnt Sack" referred to in the "Merry Wives,"—("I'll give you a pottle of burnt Sack to give me recourse to him,") is nothing more than the brown Sherry of our own time.





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