THE

SECRET DRAMA

OF

SHAKSPEARE'S SONNETS UNFOLDED,

WITH

THE CHARACTERS IDENTIFIED.

BY

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1872.

SUPPLEMENTAL CHAPTER.

THE SECRET DRAMA OF SHAKSPEARE'S SONNETS.

A FAMILIAR EPISTLE TO A FRIEND.

My Dear ——

I sometimes say that by the time we reach the end of life we may have attained sufficient wisdom, as the result of all our experience, to equip us for the beginning, if we could only get a fresh start. So I feel with regard to my book on looking back at it after the lapse of years. I wrote it with the eager earnestness of the advocate; I can review it with the deliberation of the judge. How many flaws I am conscious of, that you have not found out. How much more compactly, quietly, conclusively, I could write it now. And yet I know well enough that if it had not been written at the time just as it is, it would not have been done at all. I cannot re-write it, but I may make a few additions with the view of perfecting the evidence and helping others to attain that sure grasp of the truth of my interpretation of the secret drama of Shakspeare's Sonnets which has been growing with me ever since my book was written. I have been shown no reasons, nor have I myself discovered any, for doubting the main conclusions of the work, some of which I can confirm and enforce with additional proof; what I meant was that I could now write it in a manner far more satisfactory to myself.

I cannot confess to having derived much benefit from our current criticism. Many writers have found it safer to doubt, or give but a qualified approval, than to discuss my evidence or avow their conviction. On the whole I may say that those who do not accept my reading cannot reply to it, and are henceforth compelled to keep silence on the subject. You have remarked that of late it has been found most convenient to write the biography of Shakspeare and make no mention of his Sonnets! But there they are, to be faced, and not to be got

over or outflanked by any such strategy, however convenient. Some of my critics underrated the necessary obscurity of the subject investigated: they seemed to think that I ought to have left no difficulty where before it was all difficulty. They were suddenly plunged, as it were, into subterranean passages in the dimmest twilight, through which I had been groping for years, and at first sight very naturally found they could not make out all that I described as being there.

A story is told of a discussion betwixt some sculptor and, I think, the painter Giorgione, as to which of their two arts was the perfectest representative of Nature. The sculptor adduced the fact that by means of his art you could get all round the figure, as the especial point of pre-eminence. Whereupon Giorgione painted a figure beside a stream of water, with a looking-glass so arranged that you saw all round the figure with the aid of the two mirrors, and so included more nature, and beat the sculptor on his own chosen ground. Figuratively speaking, the characters of the Sonnets had to be represented in some such way to get at them all round. They had not been completely sculptured out as the familar statues of History, but had to be reflected in the poet's mental mirror and partly traced in shadow, if realized at all. Nor was it always possible to procure evidence of my theory such as might satisfy the ordinary British twelve, and give proof tangible to the grosser sense. The subject must be dwelt with a while, so difficult is it for the prejudiced to become impartial and free their minds from the potent tyranny of association and fixed ideas; so apt are we to project the shape and shadow of our own preconceived thought, and see THAT rendered objective in what we look at, rather than bring the eye that can illuminate and distinguish clearly the novel features presented for recognition. The Sonnets must be studied in this new light which I have struck, and the internal evidence pondered over from this stand-point, where alone its peculiar nature, its subtle *allusiveness* to facts that seem so plain, can be gripped.

People who fancy they hold a diamond in their grasp, naturally object to your wrenching their hand open for the purpose of demonstrating that it is but charcoal! And that is precisely what I have to do with those who imagined they had grasped the facts of Shakspeare's biography in the revelations of the Sonnets. I tell you the jewel is elsewhere; show you the live sparkles of it, and you insist on closing your hand all the more on the charcoal, making all sorts of excuses for not looking at it in my presence, lest I should prove it to be only charcoal.

One old Shakspearean thus frankly opened his hand to me:—

"Having just finished your very interesting book on 'Shakspeare's Sonnets, I cannot deny myself the pleasure of thanking you for your eloquent vindication of Shakspeare's personal character, and for the new and clear light by

which you enable the world to read and comprehend those exquisite pieces of poetry.

"As one of the many admirers of these Sonnets, I have always been perplexed by their import, regarding them as autobiographical; but now that I can view them as having been written to and for others, their beauty and intensity appear to me to be wonderfully enhanced by the glowing spirit of love and devotedness which gives them a double life. Let me congratulate you on the completeness and fulness of your noble task, for which all lovers of Shakspeare must be grateful to you."

But my work has had its share in the struggle that awaits all new truths to get born into the world. Literary obstetrists who might assist somewhat in the delivery, seem to think it a duty to try and strangle the new birth before it can see the light. Mine is only a little one in point of importance, but their efforts appear to increase as the new truth rises in value. It is the curse of much of our current criticism that the reviewer of every book feels bound to sit in judgment on it. No matter what the subject, or how unfitted he may be to deal with it, an opinion of the work of years is dashed off in a few hours, or, mayhap, minutes. This is the easiest way in the world of giving a false impression of that with which an author has taken great pains to get rooted in truth. Why not sometimes imitate older and wiser judges, and reserve judgment? Why not allow a book now and then to speak for itself? I am thinking more of others than myself just now, so pray don't imagine I am trying to establish a "raw," or that I am a man with a "grievance." But, really, you can hardly imagine how puerile and impertinent are the objections raised by those critics who have given the world the benefit of their very first study of the subject, having come from the Shakspeare-mystery with a mind full of mist, to interpose betwixt my book and their readers, by troubling themselves with their own theory of probabilities instead of dealing with my evidence. For example, it has actually been urged that Southampton cannot be the speaker of Sonnet 51 (p. 178), because he calls his horse a "jade," and that Shakspeare would have been more appropriately mounted on a "hack" when on his way to "Stratford." The critic failed to perceive that this was a case of the pathetic fallacy; the horse being JADED by the speaker's feeling. Surely a nobleman might call his horse a "jade" after King Richard the Second had given royal example. He says of his pet "roan, Barbary"—

> "The JADE hath ate bread from my royal hand;"

and of himself—

> "Down, down, I come; like glistering Phaeton,
> Wanting the manage of unruly JADES."

The Horses of the Sun treated as "*Jades!*" The same critic argued that an Earl would not be "alone" on his journey, but "followed by a crowd of liveried retainers." What! a lover not

be alone with his love-thoughts! Shakspeare knew better than that. He likewise asserted that Southampton, in Sonnet 29 (p. 167), could not envy "this man's *art* and that man's scope;" therefore the speaker must be the struggling actor and writer. But this was

> "The *art o' the court*, whose top to climb
> Is certain falling, or so slippery, that
> The fear's as bad as falling."
>
> *Cymbeline*, Act iii. Scene 3.

Again, of what possible use is it to tell me that history keeps no record of William Herbert's love for Lady Rich? Does history contain any record of Shakspeare's keeping a mistress? In both cases the supposed facts have to be derived from the Sonnets. Or, where is the argument in saying that my interpretation of the latter Sonnets cannot be true because Lady Rich was seventeen years older than Herbert in 1599? when I have already shown *that* to be the fact of facts in my favour; the fact on which the two versions of Sonnet 138 (p. 368) are founded; and the alterations in the second version of the Sonnet were made to suppress that fact.

I am told that Lady Rich was "old enough to be Herbert's mother." But I knew that already! Sonnet 143 (p. 372) is based on it; the irony depends on it!

> "Whilst I, thy babe, chase thee afar behind;
> . . . . . turn back to me,
> And play the mother's part! kiss me, be kind:
> So will I pray that thou may'st have thy 'Will,'
> If thou turn back, and my loud crying still."

I have been called a "cruel apologist" for saying that the poet wrote the latter Sonnets for "Will" Herbert instead of for himself. I make no apology. There are the Sonnets to be accounted for, and either they were written for "Will" Shakspeare or "Will" Herbert. The poet cannot be defended against my view on the score of character. Nor do I defend his character against the *writing* of these Sonnets, or most of them. But here is the difference. If he wrote them for "Will" Herbert, at that young nobleman's solicitation, it is a question of private manners rather than of public morals; he would write them merely for a private purpose, with no thought of their ever being published. If he wrote them as a work of his own, he would be guilty of the passion, guilty of writing about it with great levity, and guilty of making public the proofs of it by parting with the Sonnets. The amount of blame in either case is not the question. Herbert, the players tell us, pursued our poet with so much favour and indulgence. And apart from my theory of the Sonnets, these words have had no *localized* meaning. The indulgence, however, may have had another side to it. Shakspeare may have so far *indulged* the fast young peer as to write on his suggestion, as he had done for Southampton. Still it is unjust,

untrue, to speak of Shakspeare as a "pander" in the case. He nowhere panders to the passion, or writes for its glorification. He accepts the infatuation of a youth for a woman of loose character as his theme, but he does not abet the intrigue.

The most remarkable characteristic of these singular Sonnets is that the passion is so seldom brought to bear with any purpose. They are written on a burning theme, but they could not possibly woo the woman. They paint the situation, but contain no flattery of the person. The passion is capable of any extravagance of speech to gain its ends, and yet the very opposite language is made use of; such as could not have furthered the speaker's aims. Persons who serenade a lady under the circumstances implied do not usually approach her windows with a band of vulgar "rough music." They do not remind her that she has broken her marriage vows, decry her charms, laugh at her age and her lies to conceal it, ask her not to play the wolf in leading lambs astray, quote her "good report" derisively, tell her that her breath "reeks" and her breasts are black, her face is foul, and on the whole she is as dark as night and as black as hell, with the view of gaining admission. Yet this is most certainly Shakspeare's treatment, and it cannot be the work of a pander: the Sonnets could not have seriously promoted any "love-suit." I still believe there was reality in Herbert's passion of which Shakspeare made sport; utterly repudiating the notion that it could not have existed on account of the lady's riper years. But I may have treated the subject too earnestly. My latest reading of this perplexing group leads me to lay more stress on the assertion contained in lines 6, 7, and 8 of Sonnet 141 (p. 376).

This protestation that lust is not his aim is precisely the same as in one of Herbert's own poems. Mr. Hallam remarked that some of Herbert's pieces were "grossly indecent, but they throw no light whatever on Shakspeare's Sonnets." Unfortunately, that is just how they do throw a light on these Sonnets. The spirit is one in both. I can find no positive proof in the latter Sonnets that the lady addressed was the speaker's guilty paramour. This is a case of close looking, or we shall be misled by language.

The lady's guilt is in relation to others rather than to the speaker. His perjuries in Sonnet 152 (p. 377) are limited to oaths. The meaning of Sonnet 151 (p. 378) when really mastered is that he is betrayed into sin with others by her image, and in straying elsewhere he is pursuit of her; it is on her account. 'Tis at her *name* (Rich) he says his passion rises; in defence of her he falls; and he is content to be "her poor drudge"; she is not to think him unconscionable if he is betrayed into pursuit of others for her sake. This is especially an instance in which we must have recourse to the mirror; the truth must be traced in shadow.

Something like what is here intended is stated more explicitly

with regard to one of the Wives in Goethe's "Elective Affinities." You can compare for yourself and perpend. The Sonnet says:—

> "Love is too blind to know what conscience is,
> Yet who knows not conscience is born of love."

And Falstaff in the "Merry Wives of Windsor" exclaims, "Why, now is Cupid a child of conscience; he makes restitution! Speak I like Herne the Hunter?" Not in the least, I should say, but very like the Sonnet.

Shakspeare had nearly reached the maturity and culmination of his poetic faculty when he wrote those later Sonnets, and his giant powers even at play may have imposed on me. I now doubt whether I made enough of the intent to burlesque the Sonnets of "Uncle Sidney," who had said that of his life and love he "must a riddle tell." And here the riddle has been riddled through and through. Lady Rich had in her later life so caricatured the description of her purity given in Sidney's poetry, so foully bedaubed the fairness he had painted, as to invite ridicule. The burlesque was ready-made, if you only compared the past ideal with the present reality. Also, the exaggeration in Sidney's descriptions is aimed at and replied to, in such Sonnets as 130 (p. 369), feature by feature. Sidney makes the lady a goddess, with a *gold covering;* says her *sweet breath* makes love's flames to rise, and tells Cupid that in "her breast thy pap well-sugared lies." The other writer repudiates such language, yet thinks his mistress as rare as "any she *belied* with *false compare.*" Sidney proclaims her blackness to be above all beauty. This is adopted as to the physical, and carried out in the moral domain by the infatuated lover. I previously showed that Sonnets 135-6, full of puns on the name of "Will," were a parody on Sidney's 37th Sonnet, in which he puns all through on the name of "Rich." I might have carried the suggestion still further, as one credible mode of accounting for the curious mixture. That it is Lady Rich whose name is punned upon as in Sidney's Sonnets—and not in his alone, for even John Davies must needs "descant" on her name "as others do, with the antithesis of "*indigence,*"—and says she played her part "*richly* well," I am more certain than ever. And if it be her, then, as matter of course, the youthful "Will" cannot be Shakspeare. To my apprehension, the innuendo, which was the final cause of all the play on names in Sonnets 135-136, is that the lady is "Rich in Will," and the speaker is desirous of being "Will" in (the love of) Rich. Even so is the *name* of "Rich" distinctly pointed out in Sonnet 151 in antithesis to her "*poor* drudge."

Sidney's last Sonnet contains these lines:—

> "Leave me, O Love, which reachest but to dust;
> And thou, my mind, aspire to higher things.
> Grow *Rich* in that which never taketh rust:
> Whatever fades but fading pleasure brings."

"Still harping on my daughter,"—still alluding to the name of "Rich" in this serious reflection on the subject of his Sonnets. This, too, Shakspeare has echoed in Sonnet 146; and here is good argument, I think, for its being placed the last of Herbert's Sonnets, as in my arrangement.

> "Then, soul, live thou upon thy servant's loss,
> And let that pine to aggravate thy store;
> Buy terms divine in selling hours of dross;
> Within be fed, without be *Rich* no more."

In this Sonnet, also, there is an antithesis to "*poor* soul." This is surely sufficient to deepen with an added tint the colourable pretext for writing the latter Sonnets which I ascribed to Shakspeare, which was, that as Sidney had besung and sonnetted the Lady Rich in earlier years, Herbert induced Shakspeare to paint her portrait on the back of the canvas in later years, representing him in passionate pursuit of her. This echoing of Sidney, coupled with the reproduction of those two lines from Sonnet 36—

> "But do not so; I love thee in such sort
> As, thou being mine, mine is thy good report,"

where they were used in all seriousness, to make a mock with them at the person addressed, does greatly increase the look of intentional parody.

But if my treatment was a thought too serious, that of some critics has been indignantly so, both in treating of the latter portion and in the "jealousy of Elizabeth Vernon."

In studying the Sonnets we have especially to guard against bringing in the "public" as an element in the matter. Shakspeare's only public for his Sonnets was the private friends. Also I tried (p. 269) to guard against the Dramatic Sonnets being treated too seriously, by saying that the "personal rendering has deepened and darkened the impression of things which, when applied to the Earl and his mistress, do not mean much, and are merely subject for a Sonnet, not for the saddest of all Shakspearean tragedies."

I have nowhere implied that Southampton was *really* in love with Lady Rich; not that she was "old enough to be his mother," for the difference in their ages was just ten years. I have nowhere said that he "approached her with any speech of love," or any "avowal of guilty love, so openly as to have caused a family and public scandal," or that Southampton had done this and then asked Shakspeare "to endow his sin with poetic life," as has been alleged. I should have been very shallow to have suggested anything so absurd. I have said on p. 224 there was only matter enough in this "jealousy" to supply one of the subjects for Shakspeare's Sonnets among his "private friends." I have treated it all through as only a case of suspicion, natural and pardonable, on the part of Elizabeth Vernon, considering

the fascinating influence of her cousin; and I stated that the most desperate Sonnet of all (144) was only tragic in terms, and expressed nothing more than a doubt. Nor do I say that Southampton set the poet writing that group. According to Sonnet 38, I find Southampton is about to supply his "own sweet argument" for future Sonnets, and give "invention light." This new argument of the Earl's is also

> too excellent
> For every vulgar paper to rehearse.

That is, according to my view, our poet is to write in a book provided for the purpose, and no longer commit his Sonnets to common writing paper.

This book I trace through Sonnets 77 (where the poet is writing in it) and 122 (in which Southampton has given it away). This Sonnet (122) shows me that the book was a gift from Elizabeth Vernon to the Earl, and had been devoted to *retain* her image, and was a sort of log-book of their love; "*tallies*," the speaker calls it. Well, then, if the book was a present from Elizabeth Vernon to Southampton, and he supplied his own "sweet argument," I see no great difficulty in supposing that the lady may also have given a subject to the poet and supplied her own argument. Not that the subject in this case was matter of public scandal. I cannot charge the Earl with any guilty love for Lady Rich when I hold him in Sonnet 120 to tell his mistress that she wronged him by her unjust suspicions in this particular affair of the "jealousy." But I see no difficulty in supposing that Shakspeare may have cautioned and pleaded with Southampton and "pitched into" him, dramatically, when I find that he has done the same things directly in other Sonnets. One of two things: either the story told in this group of Sonnets is personal to Shakspeare, or it is not. If it be a woman speaker, and that it is so there is abundant proof, it cannot be the corrupt married man supposed; therefore it cannot be Shakspeare.

You say that you most seriously sympathize with my indignation against the "personal theory" of the Sonnets. And yet you go with me little further than we can see from the autobiographic point of view! You follow me through certain Sonnets wherein Shakspeare speaks in person to Southampton, and you halt when it comes to my dramatic interpretation. In spite of all my identifications of fact in the subject-matter, such as can only be found in the life of Southampton,—facts of character, of sex, of absences abroad, of social conditions and circumstances the most peculiar—in spite of your own indignation, against the personal theory, you wantonly cast discredit on my dramatic interpretation, having nothing whatever to put into the place of it.

The facts in favour of my rendering of the Southampton Sonnets are these. In the first instance, Shakspeare was, of all

poets, the least autobiographic, the most dramatic. Next, when he has addressed a number of Sonnets to his friend Southampton, he, in allusion to the monotony of his method, says (Sonnet 38) that he cannot be wanting in freshness of matter and novelty of subject whilst the Earl lives to *pour into his verse his "own sweet argument."* Then, in the dedication to Lucrece, the poet tells his patron that what he has done and *what he has yet to do* is the Earl's, for he is a part in all that Shakspeare has *devoted* to him, And if Shakspeare was then speaking of the Sonnets as *devoted* to Southampton, he could not have meant mere fugitive sonnets, or sonnets *in any way devoted to himself*, but such as were devoted to Southampton's affairs. Only in sonnets written dramatically or vicariously can we possibly find the meeting-place of Sonnet 38 and the words of the dedication. Starting from this point—Shakspeare's own statement of two facts that blend in one meaning—I proceed to identify the various "arguments" supplied by Southampton, his private courtship and public career, possibly also by Elizabeth Vernon, for Shakspeare to shape into sonnets, and I find the Sonnets to be full of obvious facts that fit perfectly into my theory, and no other; facts quite as palpable as the identification of Marlowe or the release of Southampton from the Tower in 1603. By the door opened in Sonnet 38, I enter the interior of the Sonnets, where alone the imagery on the windows can be traced, and I do literally identify fact after fact of the Southampton series, and prove them from the life of Southampton, who, you know, is the man that Sonnet 38 says is to supply his own subject-matter and give light to the poet's invention. Meanwhile, instead of following me inside the building and having a look round, by way of showing me wherein my interpretation is wrong, you still want to remain on the outside, and, whilst rejecting the personal interpretation, try to limit your vision to the personal view. From such a stand-point it will be as impossible to do justice to my book as it will be to read the Sonnets themselves. I am quite satisfied that what I find in the Sonnets is there, for mine is not a subjective theory so intangible as not to be grasped; it is based on plain objective facts, with which the Sonnets abound, such facts as Southampton's travels abroad, his quarrels at Court, and his marriage. In Sonnets 123-4-5 the Earl as surely speaks to his wife from the Tower as he is greeted in Sonnets 107 upon his release. All through the Southampton series my reading is illustrated and enforced in a treble manner, because the personal and impersonal sonnets deal with the same sets of facts, and both are corroborated by the facts of his life and character. Believe me, I have not challenged the world without feeling securely armed. And if it be admitted, as it generally is, that any of Shakspeare's Sonnets were written dramatically or vicariously, all the rest will follow. It is only a matter of detail

and of closer acquaintanceship with the subject. The theory coheres from beginning to end. Pray do not compliment my "ingenuity" and "eloquence" at the expense of my theory. Permit me to suggest another probability. Instead of me being so immensely clever as you would imply, suppose the "ingenuity" is the pleading of Nature, and the "eloquence" is the voice of truth. That is a possibility I think well worth consideration.

Again you say of the latter sonnets, you do "not believe that Shakspeare played the pimp to his own dishonour." But you are afraid that he *did conceive* the "*dramatic* situation." Why, that at once grants the Dramatic theory, only you would leave it baseless, whereas I give it foundations. It is impossible to suppose that he wrote the latter sonnets neither on a reality of his own life nor on that of his friend's. The Sonnets were written for the private friends, as Meres tells us. They were inscribed to the only man who had power to obtain them for Thorpe. And there is proof, I think, that the book was intended to limit the Sonnets to those which belonged to these private friends. In "The Passionate Pilgrim" (1599) there appeared some seven or eight sonnets undoubtedly written by Shakspeare; only two of these reappear in Thorpe's collection. There are fourteen other sonnets in Shakspeare's works not included here. This sufficiently shows that Thorpe made up no book of Shakspeare's Sonnets, in the general sense; it shuts up the Sonnets quite safe from any "rascally friend" of Thorpe's in the hands of "Mr. W. H.," who, of course, only printed what belonged to the private friends, and did not gather in any fugitive sonnets. This thought came too late for my book, but I hold it to be most conclusive.

You admit that I have established the fact of Southampton's being the Lord of our poet's love; identified Marlowe as the rival poet; and allow that the mass of the Sonnets are dramatic! You may follow me a little further, I think, when I show that it is Southampton who speaks from abroad; who pleads to be forgiven; who talks of having had his brow branded by common scandal, and, at the same time, of stopping his ears to flatterers; and who has been Impeached for Treason.

If it be Southampton, as you allow, who is congratulated on his release from the "confined doom" on the death of Elizabeth, it *must* be him who speaks the Sonnets in prison, "all alone," where he can congratulate himself on his present bondage as preferable to that of courtiers and flatterers. And if in prison, he is in the Tower. Hence the "Pyramids *built up with newer might*." Those built later than the Egyptian ones! The name of Pyramids being employed as permanent type of age, strength, and duration. It is quite certain the old Pyramids had not been either rebuilt or more newly built, or built with "newer might."

We have Shakspeare's description of the Tower in "King Richard the Third" (Act iii. Scene 1):—

Prince. Did Julius Cæsar build that place, my lord?
Glo. He did, my gracious lord, begin that place;
Which, since, succeeding ages have *re-edified.*
Prince. Is it upon *record?*
Buck. Upon RECORD, my gracious lord.
Prince. But say, my lord, it were not REGISTER'D.

And in the Sonnet 123 (p. 303) the Tower—that stronghold of Time—the new Pyramids, which are but "dressings of a former sight," that is, comparatively modern representatives of the old ones—is the ancient *Record* and *Register* of Time!

The nature and quality of the speaker are still more marked than his environment, and Southampton alone could belong to "OUR Fashion;" that is, young men of rank, courtiers and soldiers; as Hotspur, for example, was "the mark and glass, copy and book that *fashioned* others," or, as is illustrated by Plantagenet in his disdain of the Somerset *faction*—

"I scorn thee and thy *Fashion*, peevish boy."

Only Southampton could speak of his "love" being the "child of State"—his child a "bastard of Fortune"—subject to Time's love or hate—out of the pale of the law—(for gloss on which hear Faulconbridge:—

"For he is but a *bastard* to the time,
That doth not smack of observation,
And *so am I* whether I smack or no.")

Only Southampton could have suffered in the "smiling pomp" of Court favour or fallen under the blow of "thrallèd discontent," *i.e.* of the rebels up in arms in Ireland; only he could have defied all State policy on account of some course taken by himself which he considers yet more politic; and only he could have hurled his supreme disdain at the hireling spy who had been suborned to inform against him and thus *led* to his impeachment for treason. When writing on this part of my subject, I omitted a very important point in proof that Southampton is the speaker of these Sonnets; one cannot always be up to Shakspeare, who so constantly "moralizes two meanings in one word"—like the old "Vice," as he says.

"Were't aught to me I bore the canopy,
With my extern the outward honouring,
Or laid great bases for eternity,
Which prove more short than waste or ruining?
Have I not seen dwellers on *form* and FAVOUR
Lose all, and more, by paying too much rent?"

asks the speaker of Sonnet 125 (p. 304). And I failed to remark how often Southampton as lord in waiting had helped to bear the canopy at Court—the cloth of State under which the Queen sat. That this is also meant is shown by the allusions to the obsequious courtiers—the favourites, the dwellers on "form,"

ceremony, and "favour," who proved how vain their "waiting" and looking and longing was; the "pitiful thrivers, in their gazing spent:" Essex, the great favourite, for instance, just dead. Queen Katharine calls herself

"A poor, weak woman, fallen from *favour*."

Wolsey says:—

"O how wretched
Is that poor man that hangs on princes' *favours*."
"O place! O *form!*
How often dost thou with thy case, thy habit,
Wrench awe from fools, and tie the wiser souls
To thy false *seeming!*"
Measure for Measure, Act ii. Scene 4.

"Throw away respect,
Tradition, form, and ceremonious duty."
King Richard II. Act iii. Scene 2.

"Others there are,
Who, trimmed in *forms* and visages of duty,
Keep yet their hearts attending on themselves;
And, throwing but shows of service on their lords,
Do well thrive by them."—*Othello*, Act i. Scene 1.

"In compliment extern."—*Ibid.*

The last lines form a curious gloss on the Sonnet, if you look at it in the reflector which I spoke of. "Poor wretches that depend on Greatness' *favour*, dream as I have done; wake and find nothing." That is a prison-thought of Posthumus', and most like to that of Southampton's. There is also a passage in "King Lear" very like in substance to the group of Sonnets in which we have Southampton's prison-thoughts:

"No, no, no, no! Come, let's away to prison:
We *two alone* will sing like birds i' the cage:
So we'll live,
And pray, and sing, and tell old tales, and laugh
At gilded butterflies, and hear poor rogues
Talk of Court news; and we'll talk with them too—
Who *loses* and who *wins; who's in, who's out;*
And *we'll wear out*
In a walled prison, packs and sects of great ones
That ebb and flow by the moon."

Much of that is incongruous imagery for Lear to use. What Court, what "great ones," what "gilded butterflies," should the proud, broken, aged king care to hear of? It passes, of course, as the pathetic, wild, and wandering talk of the garrulous old man, but there's more than that in it. If that "moon" be, and I would take my Shakspearian oath it is, the "*mortal moon*" that suffers eclipse in the 107th Sonnet, then Shakspeare is talking to, or for, his friend Southampton, in those lines, whilst poor "Lear" talks to Cordelia; and the passage was written before the death of Elizabeth, whatsoever inferences to the contrary may have been drawn from Harsnett's "Discovery of Popish Impostures."

This is a digression: I am anxious, however, to prove the prison-scene and thoughts, and get you fairly shut up in the Tower. But to return. If it be Southampton who is living in loose society "with infection" and "sin," in Sonnet 67, he must be the speaker who in Sonnet 111 confesses to all the charges that have been addressed to him, and who offers to drink "potions of eisell 'gainst my strong infection." If he be the person who is said to have been the mark of slander and the subject of public scandal in Sonnet 70 (p. 226), it follows that he must be the speaker who admits and deplores all this, and more, in Sonnets 109 and 112. If he be the "remover," the rover spoken of in Sonnet 116 (p. 285), of necessity he must have been the absentee speaker of those sonnets uttered on the "journey" and at "limits far remote" from England, and also the returned wanderer who had "hoisted sail to every wind that blew," and who comes back as the penitent lover, to say so and implore his mistress's forgiveness.

Another point I failed to score. My argument is, that Sonnets 29, 30, 31 are spoken by Southampton chiefly in memory of his father's death; and he alludes to "Love's long-since cancelled woe." Now, how can such a loss, such a woe, have been *cancelled* at all? I answer, only in one sense, which warrants the legal expression, and only in Southampton's case. The "woe" was the loss of his father, who died when Southampton was eight years old, and it was "*cancelled*" "long since" by the re-marriage of Lady Southampton to Sir Thomas Heneage, who became an affectionate stepfather to the young Earl, and, as such, as well as from his relationship to the players, was thought worthy of the allusion. I may add, that in fifty places does the *dramatic interpretation* touch ground as firm, with both feet, where no other touches ground at all; in truth, it offers the only anchorage in the midst of a tossed and troubled sea of speculation.

In my first edition I was unable to identify Sonnets 153-4 as necessarily related in subject to either the Southampton or Herbert series. I argued, that if Shakspeare had made up the collection he would not have included both these sonnets which form a double treatment of one idea, and that they must have been gathered in by Herbert, although I did not then see why. I now believe that the Sonnets as printed have all of them to do with the "private friends" for whom they were written, and among whom they circulated in MS. And I now see why and how Herbert should print them, if he wrote one and Shakspeare the other, on the given theme of "Cupid's brand" and Lady Rich's black eyes. That they were written so, just as Keats, Hunt, and Shelley wrote their sonnet each on the "Nile," I am convinced. Nor would it be difficult to determine which of the two was Herbert's. This is not the English of Shakspeare:—

> "The bath for my help lies
> Where Cupid got new fire—my mistress' eyes."—(153.)

In this I find another reason for believing what I before advanced, that Herbert not only suggested subject matter for Shakspeare to write on, but also lent a hand in the writing of the latter Sonnets as they have come to us.

I have been assured that historical facts run counter to my theory. But what facts has not been said. Certainly they are not to be found in the life of Southampton, or the characters of Herbert and Lady Rich. *There* the external evidence is entirely corroborative, so far as it goes. I did not, however, propose to make out the mystery of the Sonnets simply by what history has recorded. If the matter had been so publicly explained, there would have remained nothing for me to evolve from the Sonnets themselves! Contemporary history took but little note of Shakspeare's whole life; none whatever of his death. But why there should be any difficulty, for instance, in believing that Southampton may have given his mistress some cause for her to become jealous of Lady Rich, who was such a wily siren, I cannot conceive, when history tells us that in the first year of King James's reign this same Earl was *arrested on suspicion of intriguing with the Queen for amatory purposes!* Here is one of those tallies of character in which my interpretation of the Sonnets abounds.

I have been charged with trying to "make black white" in writing of Lady Rich's hair, which was tawnily golden, and yet is alluded to as "black wires" in Sonnet 130. As if it were not in the very nature of irony to state or imply the precise opposite to the known truth, or where would be the joke? And surely that which is jestingly done in the Plays may be done in the Sonnets? If not, why not? The "divine Kate" of Dumain's love is treated in the same vein:—

> "Her amber hair for foul" is darkly quoted:
> As witness thereof Lord Biron I call.
> "An amber-coloured raven was well noted,"
> He says, with merry mock and laugh ironical.

I need not mind the apparent contradiction thus ironically supplied, when I am able to identify the Lady Rich by the portrait Sidney drew and Shakspeare repeated; by the lady's mourning eyes, and that blackness above all beauty; the "fair woman with a black soul;" the violation of the marriage vows; her age in relation to Herbert as speaker, and the lies respecting her age (Sonnet 138); the implication in Sonnet 127 that the lady's hair is not black; the innuendoes and puns on the name of Rich —the "Rich in Will" and its antithesis; the *name* (Rich) in opposition to "*poor* drudge" Sonnet 151; the "poor soul" and the "RICH no more" (Sonnet 146); the oneness with Rosalind in "Love's Labour's Lost," who as the "*attending* star" identifies "Stella," the lady in waiting at Court. All this where no hint of such a recognition had ever before been given! And yet I

know well enough that the very next idiot who comes to the subject fresh from knowing nothing about it will, to show off his critical acumen, venture to doubt my identification because Lady Rich's hair was not black.

I knew that if I should be fortunate enough to disprove all other theories of the Sonnets, and drive my opponents point by point from their positions, their last rallying cry would be the integrity of Thorpe's arrangement and the necessity of preserving that order in which the Sonnets were first printed. All present editors of the Sonnets are bound to stand by that, it having become a vested interest. If it be admitted that the Sonnets cannot be read in the old order, where will be the use of continuing to print them thus? Of course Thorpe's arrangement must be fought for. One editor of the Sonnets, the late Robert Bell, writing in the *Fortnightly Review*, was constrained to admit that—

"Whatever may be the ultimate reception of Mr. Massey's interpretation of the Sonnets, nobody can deny that it is the most elaborate and circumstantial that has been yet attempted. Mr. Armitage Brown's essay, close, subtle, and ingenious as it is, recedes into utter insignificance before the bolder outlines, the richer colouring, and the more daring flights of Mr. Massey. What was dim and shapeless before, here grows distinct and tangible; broken gleams of light here become massed, and pour upon us in a flood; mere speculation, timid and uncertain hitherto, here becomes loud and confident, and assumes the air of ascertained history. A conflict of hypotheses had been raised by previous annotators respecting the facts and persons supposed to be referred to in the Sonnets, and the names of Southampton, Herbert, and Elizabeth Vernon flitted hazily through the discussion. It has been reserved for Mr. Massey to build up a complete narrative out of materials which furnished others with nothing more than bald hints, and bits and scraps of suggestions."

Still, there is one fatal flaw in the treatment; the author did not religiously keep to Thorpe's arrangement. Now, if it could be shown that Shakspeare had himself printed the Sonnets, or had anything to do with their publication, that would constitute an argument against alteration. But it cannot, and the plea is sheer hypocrisy. There is evidence absolutely incontrovertible, proof positive, that neither the poet nor the initiated private friend saw the Sonnets through the press. There are from forty to fifty errors which could not have passed if they had been submitted to Shakspeare. In Sonnet 46 the word "*thy*" occurs four times, and three times out of the four it is printed "their;" it being the custom to abbreviate those words in writing, and the reader for the press did not know which word was intended. *That is printer's proof* of what I state. And such is the nature of our poet's promises made to Southampton, so careful was he in correcting his other poems, that we must conclude he would have superintended the publication, and not subjected his promises of immortality to all the ills of printer's mortality, had he given his sanction to it as it comes to us. Had he authorised

the printing, Thorpe would have said so; therefore he did not. *That is publisher's proof.* We get no guarantee, then, from the author as to the arrangement, and it is useless to talk about the duty of sacredly accepting them as they have been handed down to us. At least we have the right to test the arrangement of an unauthorised work by an appeal to internal evidence; for it is *only by that the author himself can speak to us.* If I could show that one single sonnet had got out of place, there would be good cause to suspect they had not reached us in perfect order, and that a part of the problem was hidden in their dislocation. Whereas, I can give plenty of proof that the printed is not the written order. No one has doubted that I have identified the subject matter of Sonnet 107 as a congratulation to Southampton on his release from prison, at the time of Elizabeth's death, in the year 1603. At that date Shakspeare must have known the Earl some ten or eleven years at least. The "Venus and Adonis" had been dedicated to him ten years before. Yet this sonnet is printed *next but two* to the one (Sonnet 104, p. 169) which speaks of his having seen the youth for the first time *three years before* the date of writing it! Again: Sonnet 126 is a fragment, and printed last of the Southampton series. In this the Earl is called a "boy," and this comes *after the sonnet of* 1603, at which time Southampton was thirty years of age, married, father of a family, and a renowned war-captain. Of necessity the sonnet belongs to that earlier time when Shakspeare did salute him as "sweet boy," and has got displaced. Indeed, it is not a sonnet at all, but consists of six rhyming couplets. The idea of *growing by waning* has been re-wrought in Sonnet 11. Sonnet 57 (p. 373) is one of those that contain puns on the name of "Will," which are addressed to a woman of loose character. This fact had been overlooked from the time of the first edition till pointed out by me. By the original printing, as well as from internal evidence, it is identified as belonging to the latter series, and yet *it is printed by Thorpe with* 76 *sonnets betwixt it and its congeners.* I have shown Sonnets 123, 124, and 125, to be spoken by Southampton when in prison, and *the sonnet which greets his release from thence is numbered* 107. No one can study Sonnets 24, 46, and 47 (p. 185) and doubt that they form a trinity with the unitary idea running through them, and necessitating their having been written together, *yet* 21 *other sonnets are printed between the first and second of these three stanzas of one poem.* So with Sonnets 43 and 61: the second is a palpable continuation of the first (p. 181). The group to which these belong is spoken by some one on a journey. *We may fairly assume that they would be written with some sort of sequence to be intelligible to the reader for whom they were intended, yet those sonnets which are spoken by the person when at the remotest distance from his lady are numbered* 44 *and* 45, *whereas*

the first of the series spoken at starting on the journey is numbered 50!

These are facts—facts in Shakspeare's own handwriting, which tell us the Sonnets were printed with no key to the written arrangement, and that no restriction can be imposed on any such account. There is ample evidence to prove that some of the Sonnets are out of their place; there is ample warrant for me to collate them by the internal evidence. If any persons, however, should think that such a reality or romance can be told by the resetting of a few sonnets, I would advise them to try their hands on the sonnets of Spenser, or Daniel, or Drayton.

I see that I might safely have carried my dramatic theory a little further, in the Southampton series of Sonnets. You know I assumed Elizabeth Vernon to be the speaker of Sonnets 33, 34, 35, 41, 42, 133, 134, 40 (p. 206). I would now venture to make her the speaker more or less of the group (p. 239) 66, 67, 68, 69, 94, 77, because the charges are made in these sonnets that the person addressed is dwelling with base infection, that he has grown common in the mouths of men through his ill deeds, and *these identical charges are replied to, word for word, in later sonnets, which I hold to be spoken by Southampton* (see p. 269). Now, as these later sonnets are not addressed in reply to Shakspeare, but to a woman, it follows that the person who utters the charges should be the woman, and not Shakspeare: thus the drama would be most perfectly complete. Also, a book is here presented (Sonnet 77, p. 241) which has been parted with in Sonnet 122 (p. 321). It is more dramatic and more credible to think that Shakspeare should only be the writer in both cases, leaving the two lovers to speak their parts, and so complete the circle in a natural embrace.

I made an error in giving Sonnet 95 (p. 236) to Southampton, and ought to have printed it with this group as spoken TO him. It is the great likeness of this Sonnet 95 to Juliet's outburst on hearing that Romeo has killed her cousin Tybalt, that weighs heavily in turning the scale in favour of Elizabeth Vernon as speaker of the sonnet. With a woman for speaker the likeness is doubled.

> "O, what a mansion have those vices got
> Which for their habitation chose out thee,
> Where beauty's veil doth cover every blot,[1]
> And all things turn to fair that eyes can see!"

says the lady of the sonnet, and Juliet raging exclaims—

> "O serpent heart, hid with a flowering face!
> Was ever book containing such vile matter
> So fairly bound? O, that deceit should dwell
> In such a gorgeous palace!"

[1] "Every blot." It was the speaker in Sonnet 36 (p. 176) who regretted his "blots," and who in Sonnet 109 (p. 269) protests that despite these blots he cannot "so preposterously be *stained*" as to "leave for nothing all thy sum of good."

With regard to my suggestion that Wriothesley was the word which began with "some other letter" than "R," Mr. and Mrs. Cowden Clarke have been good enough to re-explain for my benefit, in a foot-note to "Romeo and Juliet," that Rosemary was the name of the dog, and "R" was the dog's letter, which leaves the matter just where I found it. But the point is, there is "*some other letter*" which is not "R," and is not in the play, and Juliet "hath the prettiest sententious of it, of YOU and Rosemary." Mr. Hunter had previously conjectured that the character of Benedick, a young lord, in "Much Ado about Nothing," was drawn to represent Herbert, which is more than likely. And here we have a similar reference to a letter not in the play. "Hey ho!" sighs Beatrice, and Margaret asks if that is for a hawk, a horse, or a husband? Beatrice replies, "For the letter that begins them all—H." Now she is in love with Benedick, whose name does not begin with "H." If for Benedick we read Herbert, we make out the meaning of it, not otherwise. In this play, too, there may be a *double entendre* on the name of Lady Rich. Speaking of HIS wife, in case HE should ever marry, Benedick says—"*Rich* she shall be, that's certain; an *excellent musician;* and *her hair shall be of what colour it please God.*" Nor is there only the play on Lady Rich's name, but the old riddle of the hair also, and a still further identification. Sonnet 128 (p. 368) is addressed to the lady playing on the virginal; she is called "my Music" by the speaker, who says how he envies the "jacks" that leap to kiss her hand.

"Whilst my *poor* lips, which should that harvest reap,

(a RICH harvest?)

At the wood's boldness by thee blushing stand!
To be so tickled, they would change their state
And situation with those dancing chips,
O'er whom thy fingers walk with gentle gait,
Making dead wood more blest than living lips."[1]

If Benedick be intended for Herbert, Shakspeare's comment on his character is very appropriate to one part of my subject. "The man doth fear God, *howsoever it seems not in him, by some large jests he will make*"—the "large jest" of the latter Sonnets, for example! Surely my suggestion respecting Southampton is not a whit wider of the mark; the two go together, tend to corroborate each other, and double the likelihood. It is impossible to follow Shakspeare or "delve him to the root," if we cannot now and then see double.

Will you have the patience to follow me while I enter upon a

[1] This conceit was borrowed from Ben Jonson's "Every Man Out of His Humour," produced in the year 1599—the year of Herbert's Sonnets:—

"*Fast.* You see the subject of her sweet fingers there (a viol de gamba). Oh, she tickles it so, that she makes it laugh most divinely. I'll tell you a good jest now, and yourself shall say it's a good one: I have wished myself to be that instrument, I think, a thousand times."—Act iii. Scene 3.

still closer course of corroboration and try to prove my reading of the Sonnets by Shakspeare's poetic practice in the Plays?

The more I study our poet's work, the more I find that his dramatic instinct must be true to sex, not only in the spirit and essence, but also in the outward appareling of imagery. There are certain natural illustrations which he never applied to man, but keeps sacred to woman; certain phrases used, which of necessity prove or imply that the opposite sex is addressed. It needs no special discernment: the commonest native instinct is guide enough to show that he would not talk of his appetite for a man, or speak of personifying desire in getting back to him —this being opposed to the law of kind and very liable to the most classical interpretation.

Southampton says, if he were only returning toward his mistress instead of going from her—

"Then could no horse with my desire keep pace;"

and so Hermia, following her lover in the wood, says:—

"My legs can keep no pace with my desires."

Likewise, compare Imogen's haste to get to Milford Haven and meet her husband. When told she can ride some twenty miles a day, she replies:—

"Why, one that rode to execution, man,
Could never go so slow."

Nor would he call a man his "sun," his "cherubin," his "best of dearest," his "jewel hung in ghastly night," his "rose." All such imagery is feminine, and has been held so by all poets that ever wrote in our language; and I consider his instinct in such a matter to be so purely true that he could not thus violate the sex of his images. That there are certain warranted exceptions is true; that there are moods in which the expression demanded rises above sex is also true. He makes a woman a "god" in love, in her power to re-create the lover. In such wise he has a man-muse, a man-fish, a man-mistress, a mankind witch, a mankind woman, as well as the godkind woman. In fact, he dare do anything on occasion, only there must be the occasion. But his ordinary practice is to do as other poets have done in this matter. It has been assumed that those lovely flower-sonnets, 98, 99 (p. 249), were addressed to a man; but not only is the whole of the imagery sacred to the sex, as I call it; not only is it so used by Shakspeare all through his work; not only did Spenser address his lady-love in exactly the same strain, in his Sonnets 35 and 64, likening her features to flowers, saying—

"Such fragrant flowers do give most odorous smell,
But her sweet odour did them all excel;"

and—

"All this world's glory seemeth vain to me,
And all their shows but shadows, saving she!"

Not only so, but the images had all been previously applied *seriatim* by Constable in his "Diana" (1584). Let me draw out a few parallels.

"The roses fearfully on thorns did stand,
One blushing shame, another white despair."
SHAKSPEARE.

"My lady's presence makes the roses red,
Because to see her lips they blush for shame."
CONSTABLE.

"The lily I condemnèd for thy hand."—SHAKSPEARE.

"The lilies' leaves for envy pale became,
And her white hands in them this envy bred."
CONSTABLE.

The violet in Shakspeare's Sonnet is said to have its purple pride of complexion because—

"In my love's veins thou hast too grossly dyed."

In Constable's the lover says—

"The violet of purple colour came,
Dyed with the blood she made my heart to shed."

"More flowers I noted, yet I none could see,
But sweet or colour it had stolen from thee."
SHAKSPEARE.

"In brief, all flowers from her their virtue take,
From her sweet breath their sweet smells do proceed."
CONSTABLE.

Here the likeness is all lady, and we have been asked to suppose that Shakspeare, whose instinct in poetry was as unerringly true as is the power of breathing in sleep, offered those delicates to a man who, as I have shown, was a bronzed and bearded soldier.

In Sonnet 33 (p. 206) the speaker, whom I say is Elizabeth Vernon, calls the person addressed her "sun," and says, "Suns of the world may stain when heaven's sun staineth." Here note that the speaker of the later Southampton Sonnets says he could "not *so* preposterously be stained." That this is lovers' language may be shown by Juliet's being Romeo's "sun:" "Rosalind" is Biron's "sun," Luciana is Antipholus' "fair sun," and Sylvia is Proteus' "celestial sun."

"My rose," the speaker of Sonnet 109 calls the person addressed.

Most readers are aware, it was a courtly fashion of Shakspeare's day for the young nobles to wear a rose in the ear for ornament, an image of gallantry. Shakspeare could not flatter Southampton by representing him as symbolically dangling at his ear. But how appropriate it was when addressed to Elizabeth Vernon by the lover who had plucked the rose, and pricked his fingers too, but had not yet worn her as he wished—

his life's chief ornament. Having made the most thorough examination of Shakspeare's wont and habit, I mean to prove it in this and other instances from his dramas. I doubt if there be an instance in Shakspeare of man addressing man as "my rose." and should as soon expect to find "my tulip." The Queen of Richard the Second speaks of her fair rose withering, and Ophelia of Hamlet as the "rose of the State." But even here it is *one sex describing the other*. For the rest, the "rose" is the woman-symbol. "Women are as roses," says the Duke in "Twelfth Night." Fair ladies masked, according to Boyet, are "roses in the bud;" and Helena, in "All's Well," speaks of "our rose." "You shall see a rose indeed," is said of Marina. "O, rose of May," Laertes calls Ophelia; Cleopatra is likened to the "blown rose;" a married woman is the "rose distilled," the unmarried "one that withers on the virgin thorn."

In Sonnet 114 (p. 179) the person apostrophised is likened to a "cherubin"—"such cherubins as your sweet self." And Prospero exclaims to Miranda: "O, a cherubin thou wast that did preserve me." "For all her cherubin look," says Timon of Phryne. In "Othello" we have, "Patience, thou young and rose-lipped cherubin;" in the "Merchant of Venice," "young-eyed cherubins;" but no man is called a cherubin in Shakspeare, nor does any man address another as a god. Æneas sneers at Agamemnon as a god in office, and Caliban is made to address a drunken man thus: "I prythee be my god." "A god on earth thou art," says the Duchess of York to Bolinbroke, who has just given her son new life; and then, illustrating the sense in which the word is used in the sonnet, she says to her son: "I pray God make thee new." Helena says, "We, Hermia, like two artificial gods, *created* both one flower." Miranda says, "Had I been any god of power." But the sexual parallel to the god in love of Sonnet 110 is only to be found in Iago's description of Desdemona's power over Othello. The speaker of the sonnet says:—

> "Mine appetite I never more will grind
> On newer proof, to try an older friend,
> A god in love, to whom I am confined."

(He was affianced years before he was married.) And Iago says of Othello and his infatuation for Desdemona:—

> "His soul is so enfettered to her love,
> That she may make, unmake, do what she list,
> Even as her appetite shall play the god
> With his weak function."

The confessional pleading of the whole group of these Sonnets as spoken by the ranging wanderer Southampton to his

[1] You can't fancy Shakspeare calling Southampton a "god in love," to whom he was "*confined*." With the Earl for speaker the phrase means affianced. But from man to man what could it mean?

much-tried and forgiving mistress is briefly summarised by Antony to Octavia, when about to marry her on his return from Egypt:—

> "My Octavia,
> Read not my blemishes in the world's report:
> I have not kept my square; but that to come
> Shall all be done by the rule."
>
> *Antony and Cleopatra*, Act ii. Scene 3.

Again, as an illustration of the testimony of sex to the rightness of my reading of the Sonnets, take the image in Sonnet 93 (p. 235):—

> "How like Eve's apple doth thy beauty grow,
> If thy sweet virtue answer not thy show!"

How could this be so if man were addressing man? How should the beauty of a man grow like the apple which tempted Eve? But the person addressed being a woman, the image becomes singularly felicitous. Then we for the first time see that Eve's apple means the apple with which she tempted Adam! So is it all through, with such exception as I shall point out.

"Next my heaven, the best," Southampton calls his mistress in Sonnet 110 (p. 270); and so Queen Katharine, speaking of the King, says she had "loved him next heaven." Antipholus in the "Comedy of Errors" calls Luciana

> "My sole earth's heaven and my heaven's claim."

"But mutual render, only me for thee," is the love of Southampton to his wife, in Sonnet 125 (p. 305), the very language in which Posthumus addresses his wife:—

> "Sweetest, fairest,
> As I my poor self did exchange for you."

Prospero says of the two lovers Ferdinand and Miranda:—

> "At the first sight they have changed eyes,"

And Claudio says to Hero:—

> "Lady, as you are mine, I am yours;
> I give away myself for you,
> And dote upon the exchange."

Southampton musing over his absent mistress, says he was very careful to lock up his treasures on leaving home—

> "But thou, to whom my jewels trifles are,
> Art left the prey of every vulgar thief!"
>
> *Sonnet* 48, p. 182.

He doubts whether the "filching age" may not steal his choicest treasure, the jewel of his love. And Iachimo says to Posthumus, speaking of the absent Imogen—

> "You may wear her in title yours: but you know, strange fowl light upon neighbouring ponds. Your ring may be stolen too. A cunning thief, or a that-way-accomplished courtier, would hazard the winning."
>
> *Cymbeline*, Act i. Scene 4.

It is a matter of absolute Shakspearean, and therefore natural,

necessity that such a sonnet as No. 48 (p. 182) can only be spoken to a woman by a man. Shakspeare was the manliest of men; not the most effeminate of poets. In his Plays, men do not call each other their "best of dearest," most "worthy comfort," or "only care." Shakspeare could not have called Southampton his "only care," he had a wife and family to care for, and a lively sense of that responsibility. In the Plays, the only expressions equal to these in depth of tenderness are such as those spoken by Posthumus to Imogen—"Thou the 'dearest of creatures.'" "Best of comfort" Cæsar calls his sister; "Thou dearest Perdita" is Florizel's phrase; and the Duke of France, speaking of Cordelia to King Lear, says: "She that even but now was your *best* object, balm of your age, most best, most dearest;" and Cordelia was the offspring of our poet's most fatherly tenderness. In "All's Well" the mother of Bertram calls her absent son her "greatest grief." Thus these expressions are sacred to the use of mother, father, lover, brother, and husband. Then the feeling and kind of jealousy can only be true to lovers who have the sensitive apprehension of sexual love and put forth its tenderest feelers. She is, in the previous Sonnet, assumed to send her spirit forth in the night-time to see what he may be "up to"—to "pry into" his deeds, his shames, and "idle hours," *i.e.* his companionship. For, being a soldier, he is likely to be with a gay loose lot, and he is jealous too, as only a lover can be, as he thinks of her so far away and who may be so near, too near, her with thievish intent, while he wakes and watches elsewhere—

> "Like one that stands upon a promontory,
> And spies a far-off shore where he would tread,
> Wishing his foot were equal with his eye,
> And chides the sea that sunders him from thence."
>
> *King Henry VI.* Part 3, Act iii. Scene 2.

The same picture is painted by Surrey to his love in absence:—

> "For when I think how far
> This earth doth us divide,
> Alas! meseems Love throws me down,
> I feel that how I slide;
> The farther off the more desired."

"Pity me, then, and wish I were renewed," pleads Southampton with his mistress in Sonnet 111 (p. 271); and in Leonatus' letter to Imogen, he writes: "You, O the dearest of creatures, would even renew me with your eyes,"

> "Whilst, like a willing patient, I will drink
> Potions of eisel,"

says Southampton; and Imogen's husband says to her—

> "Thither write, my queen,
> And with mine eyes I'll drink the words you send,
> Tho' ink be made of gall."
>
> *Cymbeline*, Act i. Scene 2.

"But these particulars are not my measure.
All these I better in one general best:
Thy love is better than high birth to me,
Richer than wealth . . . .
And having thee, of all men's pride I boast."
Southampton to his Mistress, Sonnet 91 (p. 234).

"But you, O you,
So perfect and so peerless are created
Of every creature's best."—*Ferdinand to Miranda.*

"Knowing thy will,
I will acquaintance strangle and look strange."
Southampton to Elizabeth Vernon, Sonnet 89 (p. 246).

"Ay, ay, Antipholus, look strange and frown,
Some other mistress hath thy sweet aspects."
Adriana to her Husband.

Southampton, in absence, speaks of those "swift messengers" returned from his love—

"Who even but now come back again, assured
Of thy fair health, recounting it to me."

So Imogen, on receiving a letter from her husband, says:—

"Let what is here contained relish of love,
Of my lord's health, of his content."

Compare the outburst of the returned wanderer Southampton addressing his mistress, with Othello's greeting to his young wife on landing at Cyprus after his stormy passage:—

"O my soul's joy,
If after every tempest come such calms,
May the winds blow till they have wakened death."

Southampton, on coming back to Elizabeth Vernon, after all his wanderings about the world, his blenches from the straight path, his goings here and there, and making a public fool of himself, says:—

"How have mine eyes out of their spheres been flitted
In the distraction of this madding fever!
O, benefit of ill! now I find true
That better is by evil still made better."

And Cymbeline, addressing his new-found, long-lost sons, says:—

"Blessed may you be,
That after this strange starting from your orbs,
You may reign in them now."

Whilst it is said of the returned Posthumus, after all his self-inflicted trials—

"He shall be lord of Lady Imogen,
And happier much by his affliction made."

There is a passage in the 2nd Book, Canto 1st, of the "Faery Queen," illustrative of my reading of Sonnet 34 (p. 206), given by me to Elizabeth Vernon. She asks her lover—

"Why didst thou promise such a beauteous day,
And make me travel forth without my cloak?
* * * * * *
For no man well of such a salve can speak,
That heals the wound, and cures not the disgrace;
Nor can thy shame give physic to my grief."

In the "Faery Queen" we have—

"*All wrongs have mends, but no amends of shame.*
Now, therefore, lady, rise out of your pain,
And see the salving of your blotted name."

This is written on behalf of a woman who is supposed to have been wronged by a man! And here too the woman is in disguise:—

"Her purpose was not such as she did feign,
Ne yet her person such as it was seen;
But under simple show and semblant plain
Lurkt false Duessa secretly unseen,
As a chaste virgin that had wrongèd been."

One easily perceives how Shakspeare would take the hint from Spenser and apply it to his *real* case of a maiden that had "wrongèd been." Also he makes another of his women, Duchess Elenor, exclaim:—

"My shame will not be shifted with my sheet."

I make Elizabeth Vernon say to her lover with regard to the lady of whom she is jealous, and who is an intimate friend of both—

"Thou dost love her, because thou know'st I love her."
Sonnet 42 (p. 208).

And what says Rosalind to Celia of her lover, in the same spirit of playful tenderness? "Let me love him for that, and do you love him because I do."

In "All's Well that Ends Well" there is a passage which in character and situation corresponds to the pleading of Elizabeth Vernon in Sonnets 133–34 (p. 209), on behalf of her lover, as face answers to face in a glass. Helena blames herself as being the cause of Bertram's going away to the wars, and prays for him:—

"Do not touch my lord!
Whoever shoots at him I set him there.
Whoever charges on his forward breast,
I am the catiff that do hold him to it;
And tho' I kill him not, I am the cause."

Compare this with the pleading of the other lady:—

"But then my friend's heart let my poor heart bail;
Whoe'er keeps me, let my heart be his guard."

"He learned but surety-like to write for me."

He only became a debtor for my sake, she urges; I am the cause of his being in danger. I call this as testimony of sex

to the rightness of my interpretation. The most curious thing is, that Helena writes her letter of parting in the form of a sonnet. In this again she repeats—

> "I, his despiteful Juno, sent him forth
> From courtly friends with camping foes to live."

And she offers to embrace death to set her lover free, just as the other lady offers to be kept a prisoner, so that her lover may go free. Again, this sentiment of love being the armour protecting the breast is very prettily turned by Imogen, a woman and a wife:—

> "Come, here's my heart;
> Something's afore't: soft, soft; we'll no defence;
> Obedient as the scabbard.—What is here?
> The scriptures of the loyal Leonatus,
> All turned to heresy? Away, away,
> Corrupters of my faith! You shall no more
> Be stomachers to my heart."

That is, her husband, in the shape of his love-letters, must be torn away for the blow to be struck. This too is a likeness that must be reflected in the mirror.

In Elizabethan love-language the names of endearment, "love," and "friend" are often used indifferently, and without distinction of sex. It was, however, a custom of the earlier time to reverse them, "friend" being used for "love," as though it were the dearer epithet. I gave instances of this at page 212. A lover in one of Dekker's plays apostrophizes his lady's portrait:—

> "Thou figure of my friend!"

Surrey calls his lady "my friend," and speaks of himself as her friend. John Davies, speaking of Paris, says, "Fair Helen beheld her love, her dear, her friend." This custom is quite familiar to Shakspeare in the Plays. Beatrice, in love with Benedick, calls him her "friend"—"For I must ne'er love that which my friend hates;" which, by the bye, is exactly what Southampton says in speaking of himself to his mistress (p. 246).

> "For I must ne'er love him whom thou dost hate."

"He hath got his friend with child," says Lucio of Claudio. "Gentle friend," Hermia calls her lover. "A sweeter friend," Proteus calls Silvia; whilst "friend" is the most endearing name that Juliet can find for Romeo as a climax to the line—

> "Art thou gone so, Love, Lord, my Husband, Friend?"

My analysis of the Southampton Sonnets shows that in those which are personal Shakspeare almost invariably calls Southampton his "love." This he does twice in Sonnet 13, twice in Sonnet 19, once in Sonnet 21, once in Sonnet 22; "my love;" in Sonnet 47; "my love," "my sweet love," "my lover," in Sonnet 63; "my love," in Sonnets 63, 64, 65, and 66; "dear love," in

Sonnet 72; "sweet love," in sonnet 76; "sweet love," in Sonnet 79; "love," in Sonnet 82; "my love," twice in Sonnet 100, once in Sonnet 101, and once in Sonnet 105. On the other hand, in what I term the Dramatic Sonnets, Southampton calls Elizabeth Vernon "dear friend" in Sonnet 30. In Sonnet 42, Elizabeth Vernon calls Southampton "my friend" three times. In Sonnet 56, Southampton speaks of his lady as his "friend." In Sonnet 110, she is an older friend" (*i.e.* in antithesis to "newer proof"), and in Sonnet 111 "dear friend." Elizabeth Vernon calls Southampton "my friend" twice. In Sonnet 133, he is "her sweetest friend," and she speaks of him as a friend in Sonnet 134. In alternation with this, Shakspeare calls Southampton "fair friend" once only in Sonnet 104. Southampton uses the term "love," as applied to Elizabeth Vernon, three times in Sonnets 89 and 99. I venture to claim the balance as the unconscious testimony of a custom of the time in favour of my interpretation of the speaker's sex, and of their being lovers, in the respective Sonnets. Hitherto, the one modern sense of the word "friend" has prevailed with readers of the Sonnets, the *other* curiously corroborative use of it being ignored, and made them think that Shakspeare must be addressing his "friend" Southampton. I need not say that no such tender application of the name of "friend" occurs in the latter Sonnets.

M. Philarète Chasles has made an attempt (*Athenæum*, April 1867) to convert me to his way of looking at the dedication of the Sonnets. But, in spite of his having changed his front and substituted William Hathaway for William Herbert as the "Mr. W. H.," I am not to be so persuaded, not even though the learned professor offered to do me the honour of dedicating his book to me, after the fashion of Thorpe's inscription; I am not to be seduced. M. Chasles now proposes to read the inscription as a dedication of the Sonnets to the Earl of Southampton by William Hathaway. The Sonnets he holds to be "*too earnest, too dramatic, too personal, too painful, to allow one to suppose that they do not spring from the heart, or that they have been written by Shakspeare for another.*" Ergo, the greatest dramatist that ever lived could not have rendered the agony of Othello, the mighty madness of Lear, the machinations of Iago, the devilish daring in crime of Lady Macbeth, unless these things had all been personal to his own experience! And we are asked to believe that Shakspeare wrote sonnets on his own sin, his infidelity to his wife; that he parted with the Sonnets to make the sin public—(what! "rhyme upon it, and vent it for a mockery"?)—that he made the brother of his wronged wife the medium of publicly proclaiming her husband's sins, and that he thus bequeathed the burden of his own guilt and shame by dedicating these proofs of illicit love, which can only be personal to a man whose name was "Will,"—to his beloved

friend Southampton, the man to whom he had publicly dedicated love without end, and privately promised eternal life, in sonnets which were consecrated to him. M. Chasles cannot see the impossibility of Shakspeare being a party to the printing of the profane latter Sonnets, with those that were sacred to Southampton, after he had publicly proclaimed that all he had to do was devoted and hallowed to his friend.

Here let me remark, that Benson, in his address to the reader, printed with his edition of the Sonnets in 1640, labours to say something as to the nature of the Sonnets, although he does not get it out very clearly. He appears to be protesting against any impure personal application of the Sonnets to Shakspeare himself. Evidently he has no clue whatever to their real nature, but he assures his readers that they are of the "same purity the author himself, when living, avouched." I do not suppose him to mean that the poet vouched for or vindicated the purity of his Sonnets, but that these are as pure as was the author's own life. And he adds: "I have been somewhat solicitous to bring this forth to the perfect view of all men, and in so doing glad to be serviceable for the continuance of glory to the deserving author."

This was written twenty-four years after Shakspeare's death, and is acceptable and important testimony to personal character. Benson tells us that our poet, living, avouched such purity that his life testifies to the purity of his poems. Obviously the Sonnets had already raised suspicion as to their subject-matter, and in reply to these Benson speaks, defending the Sonnets and their author.

Again, M. Chasles quotes numerous instances to show that Shakspeare used the word "beget" in the creative sense. But, as the Spartan said, "why say so much to the purpose of that which is nothing to the purpose?" I never suggested that Shakspeare used the "begetter" of the inscription as "obtainer." I said it was Thorpe.

The other day, whilst reading the "Faery Queen," I came upon a curious parallel to M. Chasles' difficulty in regard to the word "beget" (Book VI. canto 4):—

> "Yet was it said, there should to him a son
> Be gotten, NOT begotten."

This was a prophecy that Matilda should have a child, and the misinterpretation of the meaning led to a more serious disappointment than M. Chasles will feel—so I trust—even though his long-promised book may never be born. The lady naturally thought that she was to *bear* a child, whereas the oracle meant she was to *obtain* one and adopt it as her own. It was to be "got," not "begotten," just as the Sonnets were "got" for Thorpe by Mr. W. H., not "begotten" by him in the poet's mind.

M. Chasles asks, "What figure of rhetoric could induce the

pedantic Thomas Thorpe himself to use such an expression as *I favour you favourably*, or *I love you lovingly?* None but an idiot could write thus." Now, courtesy would forbid me to agree with M. Chasles here, because such writing is his own, not Thomas Thorpe's! However, students of Elizabethan literature, or even those who are only acquainted with Puttenham's "Arte of English Poesie," will smile at the fancy that Thorpe could not have written his "wisheth the well-wishing adventurer," in which he has so obviously imitated one of the then favourite figures of repetition.

My final reply to M. Chasles' appeal with regard to the inscription is, that I can only look upon his reading of it as a frivolous and pedantic notion. I fully agree with Mr. Dyce's remarks on this head in his last edition of Shakspeare's works. He says: "I am unable to persuade myself that the inscription prefixed to the quarto of 1609 is anything else than a *Dedication of the Sonnets to Mr. W. H. by Thomas Thorpe:* the idea of M. Chasles that the inscription consists of two distinct sentences, appears to me a groundless fancy; and his notion that, in the first of those sentences, 'Mr. W. H.' *is the nominative to the verb 'wisheth'* offends me as a still wilder dream."

In opposing my theory that Shakspeare wrote sonnets vicariously for the Earl of Southampton, M. Chasles asks: "Can we imagine that Southampton would borrow or purchase the pen of any poet to express," &c. There is no need to imagine. Shakspeare himself puts us in possession of the fact. He tells the Earl and us, in his Dedication to "Lucrece," that what he has written and what he has then to write, was for Southampton, to whom his pen is absolutely and utterly devoted; he is "all his, in dedication." He makes a promise, too, which was to have a most remarkable fulfilment. In the Sonnets, it could only have fulfilment in one way. He could only devote sonnets to the Earl's service by writing about the Earl's affairs. In perfect accordance with this declaration in prose, the 38th Sonnet tells us the Earl is about to furnish his "own sweet argument" for the poet to versify, and has thus given "invention light" by inventing the new method of dealing with the Earl's love affairs and suggesting the dramatic treatment. This dedication of Shakspeare's pen, whether bought or borrowed, was not limited, however, to the writing of "sugared sonnets" for the lover, as we know by the adding of the deposition scene in "Richard the Second," to suit the plans of the Essex conspirators—at whose suggestion I should like to know, if not Southampton's. Of this fact I have yet further proof to adduce when I come to speak of a passage in Hamlet. M. Chasles is content to discuss the inscription on the condition that the Sonnets themselves are "*never to be understood.*" I am not. After devoting years of labour to the whole subject, and, as I think, reaching the heart of the

maze, I do not care to stand with him on the outside, and argue about the inscription. No making out of the "Mr. W. H." could be satisfactory which left all the rest of the difficulties in outer darkness. My reading of the Sonnets and interpretation of the dedication go together. They throw light on each other; and this we have a right to demand from any *grapple* with the subject. There is no warrant whatever in the nature of the whole case—other than the initials of his name—for introducing "William Hathaway" either as "getter" or "begetter." Shakspeare could not have delegated to him the dedication of his own warm love for Southampton and the fulfilment of his promise made in 1594. And how should Southampton give up his secret-telling sybilline leaves to such a double nobody as William Hathaway? William Herbert was a *somebody;* the only man of sufficient importance to take Shakspeare's place. And there is proof extant that Thorpe had dedicatory dealings with Herbert in the fact that the folio translation of "Augustine Civitatis Dei," published in 1610, is dedicated to "the Honourable Patron of Muses and Good Minds, Lord William, Earl of Pembroke." Here, as with the Sonnets, it is another man's work that Thorpe inscribes to the Earl, and in doing so uses the cypher "Th. Th." instead of his full name.

Herbert was a friend of the Poet's, who felt and had sufficient interest to collect the Sonnets; sufficient motive to have his title concealed in the inscription; sufficient power to protect Thorpe in carrying out publicly the plan that he was privy to. Thorpe would not have dared to print another man's work without some warrant. So early as 1592 Shakspeare was of sufficient account to make Chettle apologise very courteously for words that had been uttered by another man for whom he had published a posthumous tract. Also we learn from Heywood that Shakspeare was much offended with Jaggard, who in 1599 pirated some pieces, including two of these Sonnets, and took liberties with the Poet's name—in fact, made it look as though the Poet had violated the secrecy of his private friends, and given the two sonnets to the press. Shakspeare's annoyance was so marked and manifested so strongly on that occasion that Jaggard took care to cancel his original title-page in a subsequent edition.

If I had gone no deeper than the inscription, the mere surface of this subject, I might have suggested as "getter" of the Sonnets for Thorpe a more likely candidate for the ownership of the "W. H." than "William Hathaway," *i.e.* Sir "William Hervey," third husband of Southampton's mother. But the problem was not to be solved so. That Thorpe had no warrant from Shakspeare through Hathaway or any other way, is certain, or he would have said so. It was Herbert who warranted Thorpe, and this Thorpe lets us know, and so we hear no word of the Poet's anger with the publisher this time. Herbert alone will account for

Shakspeare's after silence, he alone being of adequate importance. By the bye, is our Poet's after-silence so certain as has been assumed? Did he give "Mr. W. H." no reminder that the transaction was not fair and above-board—that the Sonnets were published—

> "Not honestly, my lord, but so covertly
> That no dishonesty shall appear in you?"

His way of reply in such a case would be to put it into his next play. In all probability "Antony and Cleopatra" was composed about the time the Sonnets were printed.[1] It has been suggested that the characters of Enobarbus and Menas stand for Southampton and Thorpe. But for the nonce, or the nonsense, let them stand for Herbert and Thorpe while we read the following scene:—

Eno. You have done well by water.
Men. And you by land.
Eno. I will praise any man that will praise me; tho' it cannot be denied what I have done by land.
Men. Nor what I have done by water.
Eno. Yes, something you can deny *for your own safety:* you have been a great thief by sea.
Men. And you by land.
Eno. There I deny my land-service. But give me your hand, Menas; if our eyes had authority here, they might take two thieves kissing.

As sense we shall make but little of that! Nor will Plutarch help us to unriddle the nonsense of it. But it is so like the smiling way our Poet has of covertly alluding to real facts, as I have previously shown. It looks exactly as though Shakspeare held Herbert and Thorpe to be thieves both; Herbert by land in pirating, and Thorpe by sea in publishing the Sonnets. That "something you can deny for your own safety," sounds like a hit at Thorpe's dedication, and his wriggling politeness in trying to cast the responsibility on "W. H." and whatsoever "land-service" Herbert might deny, according to Shakspeare, the meeting-point was two thieves kissing. A Judas-like reminder that he had been betrayed by both!

I might give other instances in proof that Shakspeare's humour frequently finds play in this fashion. For example, this passage occurs in "As you Like it":—

Touchstone. How old are you, friend?
Will. Five-and-twenty, Sir.
Touch. A ripe age: is thy name William?
Will. William, sir.
Touch. A fair name. Now you are not *ipse*, for I am he.
Will. Which he, sir?

And to me it appears to glance slyly at Herbert and the

[1] Shakspeare's play was not published, so far as we know, previous to its appearance in the folio of 1623, but a play with this title was entered at Stationers' Hall, May 20, 1608, in all likelihood the same. Of course the date of entry may be no criterion as to the time when the play was finished.

latter Sonnet, in which occurs the joke at the expense of Age in love:—

"But Age in love loves not to have years told."

Also it may foreshadow the fact that two "Wills" are concerned in the latter Sonnets, and it might possibly become a difficulty some day as to which of the two is IPSE! If so, it was a shrewd trick of Mr. W. H.—the younger "Will,"—to play off on his namesake the elder "Will" if he printed the Sonnets containing puns on the name of "Will" unknown to Shakspeare. This would be paying off his joke practically.

Then comes the question, "Art *Rich?*" Put to a poor country lout, it has not much meaning; poked at Herbert, the joke is enriched. I conjecture that this play was written in 1599, the year assigned by me to the Herbert series of Sonnets, and several likenesses crop up, more particularly where Silvius, the disdained lover of Phœbe, brings a love-letter from her to Rosalind, and Rosalind charges Silvius with writing the letter. There is not the least reason for supposing that Silvius does not speak the simple truth when he says he has "never heard it yet." But Rosalind, in spite of his protestations, still assumes that he devised and wrote it, and says, "*What, to make thee an instrument and play false strains upon thee!*" I see no motive in this, unless, as I believe, it points to something not in sight, and is a bit of by-play, glancing at the fact that Shakspeare wrote Sonnets on behalf of Herbert, and used such "*Ethiope words, blacker in their effect* THAN *in their countenance,*" as Rosalind says. It is curious, too, to notice in connection with the "*black wires*" of Sonnet 130, p. 369, that Phœbe complains of Rosalind in disguise.:—

"He said mine eyes were black, and MY HAIR BLACK!
And now I do remember scorned at me.
I marvel why I answered not again!"

As if, like Lady Rich's, her hair was NOT black, but only called so to spite her! The more one thinks of this

"Matter and impertinency mixed,"

in our Poet's by-play, the more probable it becomes that he does allude to the surreptitious publication of the Sonnets in the passage quoted from "Antony and Cleopatra."

If my account of the way in which the Sonnets were given to the press be correct, there ought surely to be some sort of contemporary evidence in corroboration of the fact. Easy-going as Shakspeare may have appeared, he could hardly help being annoyed, I think, at the liberties taken with his poetry and his name, even though this were done by an Earl who "prosecuted" him with so much favour. It must have happened that he spoke out on the subject pretty freely to some poet-friend or other. Ben Jonson, one may infer, would hear something of it. To be sure, Shakspeare, in 1609, may have been living at Stratford, almost

withdrawn from the old London haunts, thus leaving the ground clear for Herbert and Thorpe to print. Still, the transaction must have been talked of. About that time, or a little earlier, George Wither had come to London to try and push his fortunes at Court. Not succeeding in a hurry, he resolved to turn satirist. He was very young, and just in his eager first love of literature, with ears hungry for any poetic gossip going, and may have got at the facts as nearly as an outsider could; especially as he printed two dedicatory sonnets, one to the Earl of Southampton, the other to the Earl of Pembroke. Anyway, this volume of satirical poems is satirically inscribed to himself thus: "*G. W. wisheth himself all happiness;*" which is obviously a parody of Thorpe's fantastic inscription. But is there no more intended than a parody of form? Does not the satire lurk in the "wisheth *himself* all happiness?" Now, Thorpe did not wish himself all happiness, but "Mr. W. H." May not Wither have had an inkling that the Sonnets were given to the world by Herbert, who in accepting Thorpe's dedication was as good as wishing himself all happiness and that "eternity promised by our ever-living Poet," though not promised to him? Herbert knew that he was not the man to whom Shakspeare had promised immortality, but had coyly permitted Thorpe's soft impeachment. Wither may have known it too. He may also hold the Earl responsible for the dedication to himself, and 'tis there his arrow sticks. Ben Jonson likewise ostensibly alludes to Thorpe's inscription and at the same time points out *William Herbert* as the object of it. He dedicates his Epigrams to the Earl of Pembroke, and says: "While you cannot change your merit, *I dare not change your title*:—under which name I here offer to your lordship the ripest of my studies, my Epigrams; which, though they carry danger in the sound, do not therefore SEEK YOUR SHELTER; for *when I made them I had nothing in my conscience, to expressing of which I* DID NEED A CYPHER."

This tells us plainly enough that the Earl's title had been changed in some previous dedication in which a writer had taken the disguise of using a cypher instead of his full name. Here is an answer once for all to those who have urged against my reading, that the "Mr. W. H." could not be William Herbert, *because* he was the Earl of Pembroke, and *because* it was not the custom of the time to address Earls as "Masters!" as if this were a case to be settled by merely referring to a custom of the time! Well, then, if my interpretation of Wither's dedication to himself be right, this of Ben Jonson's looks like a reply to it, as though it were an endeavour to saddle Thorpe with the responsibility of publishing Shakspeare's Sonnets and dedicating them to the Earl. Shakspeare was dead and out of the question here. It was Thorpe who had changed the Earl's title, and used a cypher both for his own name and Pembroke's. And it is

implied that this was done because he had something on his conscience: all was not straightforward in the affair, and so he sought the Earl's shelter under a cypher covertly. But I do not believe Jonson to be so innocent as he looks. I hold him to be using "gag," as actors term it. I am afraid he knew better—even in the act of dealing Thorpe this backhander on the mouth—knew he was offering up a scapegoat. Be the inference as it may, the fact of Jonson's reference remains, and counts in favour of my theory. Jonson has a gird at Wither in "Time Vindicated?" one of his many "masques" presented at Court; as Chronomastix, the gentleman-like satirist who "cared for nobody." If I mistake not, Wither wrote a song with some such refrain as "I care for nobody." He identifies Chronomastix as one with himself in the 7th Canto of "Britain's Remembrancer":—

> "The valiant poet they me, in scorn, do call,
> The Chronomastrix."

I suspect Jonson also has a gird at John Davies in this masque. Davies wrote "The Scourge of Folly," and it was published with a frontispiece representing Folly on the back of Time, naked to the lash, which Davies wields. Jonson says:—

> "There is a schoolmaster
> Is turning all his (Wither's) works, too, into Latin,
> To pure satyric Latin; makes his boys
> To learn him; calls him the Time's Juvenal;
> Hangs all his school with his sharp sentences;
> And o'er the *execution place* hath painted
> Time whipt, for terror to the infantry."

Both Wither and Davies fought on the Puritan side as against the Players. The earliest form in which this stripping and whipping appeared was a puritanical pamphlet published in 1569, entitled "The Children of the Chapel Stript and Whipt." On their side, the Players were not backward in showing up and making sport of their opponents on the stage. I have previously pointed out Shakspeare's repayment to John Davies of something he owed him (p. 523.) I have now to suggest a still more startling identification. You will remember that John Davies was a schoolmaster. He published a book, called "The Writing Schoolmaster." He was a wonderful caligraphist "thrice famousèd for rarity," says Nicolas Deeble. He challenged all England to contest the palm for penmanship, and one of his admirers challenges the whole world on his behalf. He appears to have taught one-half the nobility to write, and on the strength of that, solicited the other half to read *his* writings. He was continually gnarring at the heel of Shakspeare, or absurdly trying to pat him on the back. In his "Paper's Complaint," which is full of tortured conceits, chiefly personal to himself, he says of Shakspeare:—

"Another (ah, *Lord help me!*) vilifies
With art of love, and how to subtilize,
Making lewd Venus, with eternal lines,
To tie Adonis to her love's designs.
Fine wit is shed therein, but finer 'twere
If not attired in such baudy gear."

This is immediately followed by allusions to the paper war between Nash and Harvey, and to the writings of Greene. And he may possibly allude to Shakspeare and the latter Sonnets when he writes—

"And oh, that ever any should record,
And chronicle the SEDGES OF A LORD!"

A pun is here intended, for he says, not SIEGES of castles and towns, but "sedges" of a vile kind. But his great complaint is some injury received from a playwright who has publicly put him to confusion and shame, and he regrets that

"Poets, if they last, can hurt with ease
(Incurably) their foes which them displease."

Again: he says, "a great torment in the life to come is due to those that can and will take such immortal revenge for any mortal injury." He tells us that he penned his "Scourge of Folly" because he had been "disgraced with fell disasters." He does not here allude to Ben Jonson's "Time Vindicated," for that is dated 1623, the "Scourge of Folly" appearing in 1611. It has been absurdly suggested that Davies is complaining of Shakspeare's having burlesqued him in his Sonnets, as the rival poet, whom I show to be Marlowe. But it is a chronicle, *i.e.* a play, in which his injuries were made historical. Hamlet calls the Players the "Chronicles" of the time. "This sport well carried shall be chronicled,"—made a play of—says Helena to Hermia. Besides, this chronicler is one who notices the least thing and puts it into his plays; such as the mending of the "Weathercock of Poules," or the publishing of the new map of the Indies, and he "confounds grave matters of State" with "plays of puppets," and he has made a puppet of poor John! Davies cries:—

"Alas!
That e'er this dotard made me such an ass,
. . . and that in such a thing
We call a chronicle, so on me bring
A world of shame. A shame upon them all
That make mine injuries historical,
To wear out time; that ever, without end,
My shame may last, without some one it mend.
And if a senseless creature, as I am,
And so am made by those whom thus I blame,
My judgment give, from those that know it well,
His notes for art and judgment doth excel.
Well fare thee, man of art, and world of wit,
That by supremest mercy livest yet!"

This sounds exactly like the maundering of one of Shakspeare's Dogberry kind of characters, but there's matter in 't, as we shall see.

Davies' position was an uneasy one; he tries to balance himself first on one leg, then on the other. He wants to say something cutting about Shakspeare all the while, and so the Players are "Nature's zanies; Fortune's spite;" and "railers" against the State. On the other hand, Shakspeare has been graced by Royalty, and is an intimate friend of the young Earl of Pembroke, for whose amusement probably Davies has been made such game of, and who was pestered continually by Davies' inflated fatuous effusions. And so, in spite of his attacks, he protests his love for the poets:—

> "Yea, those I love, that in too earnest game
> (A little spleen), did me no little shame."

My explanation of this is, that John Davies had been pilloried, staged, propertied, and made the most amazing ass of in the character of Malvolio, in the play of "Twelfth Night":—"For Monsieur Malvolio, let me alone with him: if I do not gull him into a nayword and make him a *common recreation*, do not think I have wit enough to lie straight in my bed." Shakspeare did not bite his lip there for nothing! We are "railers" and "zanies," are we? "I protest," says Malvolio, "I take these wise men that crow so at these set kind of fools, no better than the fools' zanies!" No envious allusion, let us hope, on account of the poet's noble patrons who "spent their time in seeing plays." To be sure, Davies' lines happen to be charged with that feeling. And what a blithe-spirited, sweet-blooded reply this draws from the happy, cordial heart of the man himself:—"O, you are sick of self-love, Malvolio, and taste with a distempered appetite. To be generous, guiltless, and of free disposition, is to take those things for birdbolts that you deem cannon bullets. There is no slander in an allowed fool, though he do nothing but rail; nor no railing in a *known discreet man*, though he do nothing but reprove." I will only remark here that the fool in the play cannot be the "known discreet man," but we may divine who was. Davies was a Puritan; but "dost thou think because thou art virtuous there shall be no more cakes and ale?" "Marry, sir, sometimes he is a kind of Puritan." "The devil a Puritan that *he* is, or anything constantly but a time-pleaser; an affectioned ass, that cons state without book, and utters it by great swarths: the best persuaded of himself, so crammed, as he thinks, with excellencies, that it is his ground of faith that all that look on him love." Few will know how true that is of Davies, for few will ever read his works; but a sufficient peep at him may be got as he stands before the mirror of himself in his dedications—

> "Practising behaviour to his own shadow."

Then Davies complains that the chronicler had spotted him with a "medley of MOTLEY LIVERY." Nothing could more surely characterise the dress in which the fool got his *dressing*—yellow stockinged, and cross-gartered most villanously. Next, Davies was the great master of writing on parchment, *i.e.* sheepskin; the "*niggardly, rascally sheepbiter;*" the great professor of caligraphy,—

"*I think we do know the sweet* Roman hand."

We saw how, with the air of a connoisseur, he studied the shape of my lady's letters. "These be her very C's, her U's, and her T's; and thus makes she her great P's." "Her C's, her U's, and her T's; WHY THAT?" asks Sir Andrew. "Ah, mocker, that's the dog's" profession. Then, he "*looks like a pedant that keeps a school i' the church.*" No doubt of it: he was a schoolmaster; and he puts himself into the trick of singularity, as God knows John Davies did. It is with him as the "very true sonnet is: please one, please all,"—which, if I rightly recollect, is an allusion to a refrain of one of Davies'. Thus was Davies made the "most notorious geck and gull that e'er invention played on:" thus the

"LUCRECE knife
With bloodless stroke"

was driven home; "the impressure her LUCRECE, with which she uses to seal;" and if he was not phlebotomised by the stroke, he was Bottom-ised all over; his ass-hood made permanent for ever.

Why should Shakspeare do this? He will tell us:—

"Myself and Toby
Set this device against Malvolio here,
Upon some stubborn and uncourteous parts
We had conceived against him.
How with a *sportful* malice it was followed,
May rather pluck on laughter than revenge;
If that the injuries be justly weighed
That have on both sides past."

But how do the dates tally? I know of no book published by Davies with a date previous to the year 1602—"Wit's Pilgrimage" having no date—in which year, according to Manningham's Diary," "Twelfth Night" was performed. But, as Mr. Halliwell has said, Davies' poems may, in either case, have been written years before publication; some of his Epigrams appeared with Marlowe's translation of Ovid's Elegies in 1596–7; and we know that Davies bewails the difficulty he had in getting his poems printed. The "Scourge of Folly" consists of various pieces, written during many years. Davies was educated at Oxford, and probably became a tutor in the Pembroke family. He wrote a poem on the death of Herbert's father, and says, "My friend did die, and so would God might I." This brings him very near to Herbert in the only accountable way, and explains the

familiarity of Davies' early dedications. As tutor, with Puritan pretensions, he would warn the young Earl against Shakspeare and the Players, for he was unboundedly liberal with his advice. In this way many things might come to Shakspeare's eyes and ears long before they were made public, for we know with what "favour" Herbert "prosecuted" our poet. The young lord could not help making fun of his own absurd, "peculiar John," as Davies signed himself when "double-bound to W.," and that in concert with Shakspeare, and then be generous enough to help him to get his pitiable endeavours to appear witty and wise shown up in print as fun-provoking follies. Shakspeare knew better than we what Davies may have written and said previous to 1602, but I have quoted enough, I think, for Davies to stand self-identified as Malvolio. For one thing, the last I have to take note of, among Davies' "Epigrams," No. 50 is "Drusus his Deer-stealing," the contents of which one cannot apply to Shakspeare, but there is more likelihood in the title. That Shakspeare was a deer-stealer we know; that he was described as "Drusus" by Marston, I have endeavoured to demonstrate (p. 520). But why Drusus should have been a nickname of Shakspeare's I do not pretend to understand. It looks, however, as though it were so, and if Marston's Drusus be meant for Shakspeare, then Davies is the same further identified by the deer-stealing.

An eminent critic, writing to me on the subject of Sonnet 107, says: "I have always thought that sonnet one of those from which those who, like yourself, attach high value to identifying the underlying facts, should be able to deduce solid inferences, and your explanation has a very probable air. On the other hand, the line about Peace—

'And Peace proclaims olives of endless age,'

appears to me rather too definite for the accession of James I., and to point to some single political event. A friend of mine kindly consulted the Astronomer Royal as to whether any conspicuous lunar eclipse had occurred about the time" (that is, of Elizabeth's death). This was, so far as the present writer can gather, entirely without success. Besides, the 'eclipse' in Shakspeare's Sonnet is 'mortal,' not lunar:—

'The MORTAL moon hath *her* eclipse endured.'

This luminary shone in the human or mortal sphere—was subject to mortality. Just in the same vein, he calls the eyes of '*Lucrece*,' '*mortal* stars; Valeria, in 'Coriolanus,' is called the 'moon of Rome;' and Cleopatra is spoken of by Antony as our '*terrene* moon'—"Our terrene moon is now eclipsed.' The Queen was the earthly or *mortal* moon. In 'Love's Labour's Lost' the King says of the Princess, who is possibly meant for Queen Elizabeth, 'My love, her mistress, is a gracious moon;'

she—that is Rosalind, whom I have shown to be Stella, Lady Rich—'an attending star.'" In reply to this letter I may say that King James came to the English throne as the personification of Peace—peace in himself and his policy; peace "white-robed or white-liver'd;" peace at home and abroad; peace anyhow so that he might not be scared with the shadow of his antenatal terror, a sword. I will make a very curious parallel to that 107th Sonnet (p. 311) from a bit of its contemporary prose. This is the first paragraph of the dedicatory epistle to King James, still to be seen at the beginning of our English Bibles:—

"For whereas it was the expectation of many, who wished not well to our Sion, that upon the setting of that bright occidental star, Queen Elizabeth, of most happy memory, some thick and palpable clouds of darkness would so have overshadowed this land, that men should have been in doubt which way they were to walk, and that it should hardly be known who was to direct the unsettled State; the appearance of your Majesty, as of the sun in its strength, instantly dispelled those supposed and surmised mists, and gave unto all that were well affected exceeding cause of comfort; especially when we beheld the Government established in your Highness and your hopeful seed by an undoubted Title, and this also accompanied with peace and tranquillity at home and abroad."

We look out of the same window on precisely the same prospect in both Sonnet and Dedication. Let me point a few of the parallels.

Ded. "*It was the expectation of many.*"
Sonnet. "Mine own fears" and "the prophetic soul of the *wide world* dreaming on things to come."
Ded. Upon the setting of that bright Occidental Star."
Sonnet. "The mortal Moon hath her eclipse endured."
Ded. "*The appearance of your Majesty, as of the sun in his strength.*"
Sonnet. "Now with the *drops* of this most balmy time (*i.e.* the *dews of this new April dawn*).
Ded. "*That men should have been in doubt—that it should be hardly known.*"
Sonnet. "*Incertainties* now crown themselves assured."
Ded. "*Accompanied with peace and tranquillity at home and abroad.*"
Sonnet. "And Peace proclaims olives of endless age."

It is impossible to doubt that the same spirit pervades the two; that the same death is recorded; the same fears are alluded to; the same exultation is expressed; the same peace identified. The Sonnet tells us in all plainness that our poet had been filled with a "prophesying fear" for the fate of his friend, whose life was supposed to be forfeited to a "confined doom," or, as we say, "his days were numbered;" that the instinct of the world in general had foreboded the same, but that the Queen is now dead and all uncertainties are over; those who augured the worst can afford to laugh at their own predictions. The new king smiles on our poet's friend, and calls him forth from a prison to a palace to richly receive the "drops," sheddings of his bounty; and with this new reign and release there opens a new dawn of gladness and promised peace for the nation:—

"Peace proclaims olives of endless age."

"I confess myself astonished," says a distinguished historian, in a commentary on my view of our poet's "private friends," "that you should assume that Shakspeare's friendships must necessarily have lain among the aristocracy. Why should they, any more than Carlyle's or Tennyson's, or, for the matter of that, yours or mine? If you knew as much of the history of the *million* other families which existed at that time in England as you happen to know of those you mention (*i.e.* Southampton, Herbert, Essex, Lady Rich, and Mistress Vernon), you would find perhaps at least a thousand with which the known facts and the structure of the Sonnets could be harmonized. Shakspeare was not a courtier like Raleigh, *e.g.* far more likely to have chosen his intimate associates in his own rank." In answer to this I need say nothing of the "million families" or the *thousand* candidates to any one who knows how narrow was the *beau monde* of Shakspeare's time—limited in point of fact to the Court circle—and I am greatly surprised at such a statement made by our Elizabethan chronicler. The reference to my own case is infelicitous, because, if my name and poetry should ever be coupled with my "private friends," it happens that these will be members of the aristocracy, and, as in Shakspeare's case, on account of the poems which were written by me for them. The parallel is perfect; not because my "private friends" are limited to the peerage—for the truth is, that one of them is but a commoner who does not make more than half a million a year.

Nothing could be further from my thoughts than to assume that our poet's *sole personal friends* were noblemen. Doubtless he had many private friends in his own social rank; evidently, he considered his "*fellows*, Heminge, Burbage, and Condell" as private friends when he remembered them in his "Will." In dealing with the words of Meres we have nothing whatever to do with Shakspeare's "private friends" or choice of companions *apart from his poems*. Meres speaks of those "private friends" amongst whom were Shakspeare's Sonnets up to 1598. We know that the Earls Southampton and Pembroke were friends of our poet. The Players tell us that Pembroke pursued our poet living with great favour; their language implies more than mere patronage. That Southampton was also his personal friend is told us by Shakspeare himself:—

"Myself have heard him say that this his love was an eternal plant."

He dedicated "love without end" to the Earl in 1594, and tells him that what he has written was *for* him, and what he has yet to write is *for* him, he being part and parcel in all that Shakspeare has devoted *to* him. No public writer has ventured to doubt that I have identified Southampton "in contempt of question." Shakspeare's poetical relationship to him will for ever be the

umbilical cord of the connection, which is not to be severed in favour of any other possible, but undiscovered, relationship. It is a known fact, never to be set aside by what we do not know. On this head let me quote my critic of the *Athenæum*, April 28, 1866 :—

"If Southampton is not the male friend addressed by Shakspeare in the earlier portion of these poems, evidence counts for nothing. Why, he is indicated in general and in particular—as regards his class and his person—by the most certain marks. The friend addressed by the poet is young (S. 1), of gracious presence (10), noble of birth (37), rich in money and land (48), a town gallant (95), a man vain and exacting (103). These general characteristics, though vague and impersonal, exclude a good many pretenders to the office of Shakspeare's friend. They exclude the whole class of actors, playwrights, and managers; the whole tribe of Shakspeare's kinsmen and townsmen; all the imaginary Hugheses, Hathaways, and Hartes. They confine our field of choice to men of the rank and character of Essex, Rutland, Pembroke, and Southampton; men about whom we have a good deal of information from other sources, whose fortunes we can follow, and whose characters we can read, by many distinct and independent lines. Having found that our hero is young, rich, noble, profligate, we may go a little further, for particular marks, and shall assuredly find them. Indeed, the poet's friend is described in full; discriminated from all his fellows by a number of special marks, some of which appear to have escaped Mr. Massey's critical eye.

* * * * * * * * *

"All these criteria (which admit of being tested in a few minutes) mark the man Southampton with unerring truth. Passing in review the noblemen who were then young, rich, wealthy, and profligate, we find one, and only one, to whom the criteria will apply. Essex was not single. Rutland had no previous connection with the poet, and had never publicly honoured him. Pembroke was a mere boy, to whom Shakspeare had not dedicated a book. In 1595, Pembroke, then William Herbert, was only fifteen years old, and *his* mother was not a widow. Every point in these criteria meet in Southampton."

After which certainty and anchorage in fact it is shere folly to cut ourselves adrift again with the vague supposition that Meres *may have meant* Shakspeare's intimates amongst playwrights and players. Of course Southampton was a public man of his time, and a public patron of our poet; but the public men of any time may have their private friends. Bolingbroke in "King Richard II." speaks of the King as having "landed with some few private friends," all of whom would be public men of the day. If Meres had been speaking of Shakspeare at the theatre, he might have alluded to Southampton as a patron: that would be the only opposition to "private friend." But the "private" in this case is not used in opposition to "public" in the modern sense, nor is Meres speaking of the theatre. He is recognising the other, the private side of Southampton's patronage, which means personal friendship. We know from Shakspeare himself that the Sonnets were private in their nature, and intended to be kept private, so far as he knew when he wrote them. Up to a late period they are devoted so solely and so sacredly to Southampton, that they could not have been given away by Shakspeare to his stage companions; he

could not have destroyed their privacy. In Sonnet 21 he does not purpose to "sell" them, as Drayton in 1593 had done with his. In Sonnet 102 he writes—

> "That love is merchandised whose rich esteeming
> The *owner's tongue doth publish everywhere.*"

Southampton and his love are still the whole of our poet's argument in Sonnet 76. In Sonnet 38, they are to be kept in the Earl's sight; they are also too precious in their subject for "every *vulgar* paper to rehearse," therefore too private for theatrical intimates to have copies of. In Sonnet 17 he looks forward to his *MS.* becoming "*yellow* with age." And when Shakspeare dies, the Sonnets are to remain with the Earl as the memorial of our poet's love. It is the *private* nature of the Sonnets in contradistinction to Shakspeare's writings for the theatre, coupled with the choice quality of the friendship, that of necessity determined the private nature of Meres' characterization. We knew before that Shakspeare was too diligent a man and too indifferent to fame to be writing fugitive sonnets to hand about in *MS.* amongst his common acquaintances. We know now, by this identification of Southampton as the person addressed, that Meres meant the Earl and *his* private friends when he alluded to Shakspeare's "private friends." So early as 1592 Chettle informs us that when our poet had been attacked and abused by the Green and Nash clique—the sort of people that some persons would identify as the "private friends" of our poet meant by Meres,—"divers of worth," that is persons of great importance, had come forward to testify to Shakspeare's integrity; in fact, such persons then befriended him; *ergo*, were his "private friends." By his "divers of worth," Chettle did not mean players and playwrights, but the exact opposite of such; and six years later Meres points to these "divers of worth" as Shakspeare's "private friends." Shakspeare has identified for us the public patron as the private friend, and that must absolutely and for ever determine the meaning of Meres in relation to the Sonnets.

And now, bear with me a little longer, while I examine a passage in "Hamlet," to see what further light it may shed on the subject of our poet's feeling towards Queen Elizabeth, and the nature of his relationship to those "private friends" of his, previously, and I trust sufficiently, identified.

You are aware that one of the real *cruxes* and greatest perplexities of Shakspearean editors occurs in a passage in "Hamlet" which is so bungled or broken that it has never been mended with any satisfaction. The lines are spoken by Horatio, in the opening scene, after he has caught his first glimpse of the Ghost:—

> "In the most high and palmy state of Rome,
> A little ere the mightiest Julius fell,

The graves stood tenantless, and the sheeted dead
Did squeak and gibber in the Roman streets.
* * * * * *
As stars with trains of fire and dews of blood,
Disasters in the sun; and the moist star
Upon whose influence Neptune's empire stands
Was sick almost to doomsday with eclipse.
And even the like *precurse* of fierce events,
As harbingers preceding still the fates
And prologue to the omen coming on,
Have heaven and earth together demonstrated
Unto our climatures and countrymen"—

The asterisks stand for a missing link in these lines. Some of the Commentators have tried to solder them together by altering a word or two, but they have never been set right. Rowe endeavoured to connect the fifth and sixth lines by reading—

"Stars *shone* with trains of fire, dews of blood *fell*,
Disasters veiled the sun."

Malone proposed to change "as stars" to Astres, remarking that "the disagreeable recurrence of the word star in the second line induces me to believe that 'as stars' in that which precedes is a corruption. Perhaps Shakspeare wrote—

'*Astres* with trains of fire and dews of blood,
Disastrous veiled the sun.'"

Another critic proposed (in *Notes and Queries*) to read

"Asters with trains of fire and dews of blood,
Disasters in the sun"—

meaning by *disasters, spots* or blotches. Mr. Staunton conceives the cardinal error lies in "disasters," which conceals some verb importing the obscuration of the sun; for example—

"Asters with trains of fire and dews of blood
Distempered the sun;"

or *discoloured* the sun:" So far as I can learn, no one has gone any deeper into the subject matter of this passage, or questioned the fact of eclipses of the sun and moon heralding and presaging the death of Julius Cæsar. As the lines stand, we are compelled to read that, amongst other signs and portents of Cæsar's assassination, there were "*disasters in the sun,*" and almost a complete eclipse of the moon. Yet no such facts are known or registered in history. There WAS an eclipse of the sun the year after Cæsar's death, which is spoken of by Aurelius Victor, Dion, Josephus, and Virgil in his 4th Georgic (*vide* "L'Art de Verifier les Dates," vol. i. p. 264). This is known and recorded, just as we have evidence of the general eclipse at the death of Jesus Christ, but it did not presage and could not be the precursor of Cæsar's fall.

If we turn to Plutarch, we shall find there were "strong signs and PRESAGES of the death of Cæsar;" and the old biographer suggests that fate is not always so secret as it is inevitable. He alludes to the lights in the heavens, the unaccountable noises

heard in various parts of the city, the appearance of solitary birds in the *Forum*, and says these trivialities may hardly deserve our notice in presence of so great an event; but more attention should be paid to Strabo, who tells us that fiery figures were seen fighting in the air; a flame of fire issued visibly from the hand of a soldier who did not take any hurt from it; one of the victims offered in sacrifice by Cæsar was discovered to be without a heart; a soothsayer threatened Cæsar with a great danger on the ides of March; the doors and windows of his bedroom fly open at night; his wife Calpurnia dreams of his murder, and the fall of the pinnacle on their house. He mentions the sun in a general way: says the "sun was darkened—the which all that year rose very pale and shined not out." In Golding's translation of the 15th Book of Ovid's Metamorphoses there is an account of the prodigies, which speaks of "Phœbus looking dim," but there is no eclipse, nor is there any allusion to the moon. Neither is there in Shakspeare's drama of Julius Cæsar. The poet, as usual with him, has adopted all the incidents to be found in Plutarch. He has repeated Calpurnia's dream; the fiery figures encountering in the air, the lights seen in the heavens, the strange noises heard, the lonesome birds in the public *Forum*, the flame that was seen to issue from the soldier's hand unfelt, the lion in the Capitol, the victim offered by Cæsar and found to have no heart. He describes the graves yawning, and the ghosts shrieking in the Roman streets; blood drizzling over the Capitol, and various other things "*portentous*" to the "*climate* that they *point upon*." But, I repeat, there is no hint of any eclipse of sun or moon in Shakspeare's "Julius Cæsar." Thus we find no eclipse marked in history; no eclipse noted by Plutarch; no eclipse alluded to by Shakspeare when directly treating the subject of Cæsar's fall. How, then, should an eclipse, not to say two, occur in "Hamlet," and this in the merest passing allusion to the death of Cæsar? Further study of the passage has led me to the conclusion that, from some cause or other, the printers have got the lines wrong, through displacing five of them, and that we should read the passage as follows:—

> "In the most high and palmy state of Rome,
> A little ere the mightiest Julius fell,
> The graves stood tenantless, and the sheeted dead
> Did squeak and gibber in the Roman streets.
> *And* even *the like precurse* of *fierce events*
> (As harbingers *preceding still* the fates,
> And *prologue* to the omen coming on)
> Have heaven and earth together demonstrated
> Unto *our climatures* and countrymen,
> As stars with trains of fire and dews of blood;
> Disasters in the sun: and the moist star
> Upon whose influence Neptune's empire stands
> Was sick almost to doomsday with eclipse."

It is noteworthy that where the original punctuation has been retained—and this is a warning to those who will be tampering with the text—it goes to corroborate the present reading, for it runs on after "countrymen," and comes to the full stop after "eclipse."

It must be admitted that we recover the perfect sense of the passage by this version, and I have to submit to Shakspeare students and editors that our poet would not have introduced "*disasters in the sun*" and an almost "*total eclipse of the moon*" where they never occurred; consequently, these can have no more to do with Cæsar in the play of "Hamlet" than they are connected with him in history. Therefore, as they are wrong in fact, the reading of the passage hitherto accepted *must* be wrong; and as this simple transposition of the lines sets the reading right, with no change of words, I trust that it may be found to correct the printer's error.

We have in the present reading of the lines, then, got away from Rome with our eclipses: they did not occur there. Nor do they occur in the Play prior to the appearance of the Ghost. Nor had they occurred in Denmark. These portents of sun and moon had not been visible to Horatio and his fellow-seers. *Their* only portent was the apparition of Hamlet's father, this "*portentous* figure" that appeared to the watchers by night. The meteors, the dews of blood, the disasters in the sun, and the complete eclipse of the moon, are wanting to Denmark. Where then did these eclipses take place?

Having spent a good deal of time and thought in trying to track our poet's footprints and decipher his *shorthand* allusiveness, which must have been vastly enjoyed by the initiated, but which so often and so sorely poses us, I am all the more suspicious that there is deeper meaning in this passage than meets the eye on the surface, or than could be fathomed until we had the shifted lines restored to their proper place. Not that my interpretation has to depend altogether on the restoration. However read, there *are* the "*disasters in the sun*" and the ECLIPSE OF THE MOON in the lines, and there is the fact that these did not happen in Rome and do not occur in Denmark! But I am in hopes that this fracture of the lines may prove an opening, a vein of richness in the strata of the subject-matter, especially as this very passage *was not printed in the quarto of* 1603, *and it was again omitted in the folio edition of* 1623.

I have to suggest, and if possible demonstrate, that in this passage from "Hamlet" our poet was going "round to work," as I have traced him at it a score of times in his Sonnets and Plays. I can have no manner of doubt that Shakspeare was referring in those lines to the two eclipses which were visible in England in the year 1598. Though but little noted, the tradition is that a total eclipse of the sun took place in 1598, and the day was so dark as to be called "black Saturday." But that was not

enough; an eclipse of the moon was wanted: and I am deeply indebted to the Astronomer Royal for his courtesy and kindness. I told him I wanted two eclipses in the year 1598, visible in England, to illustrate Shakspeare. He did not know me personally, and could not possibly see how they could apply to the passage till it was set right. But he was good enough to get J. R. Hind, Esq.[1] and his staff to enter on the necessarily elaborate calculations, and read the skiey volume backwards for nearly three centuries. And sure enough the eclipses were there; they had occurred; and I have the path of the shadow of the solar eclipse over England mapped out, together with notes on the eclipse of the moon, showing that there was a large eclipse of the moon on February 20th (21 morning), Gregorian, and a large eclipse of the sun, possibly total in some parts of Britain, on the 6th of March, 1598. Two eclipses in a fortnight —the sun and the moon darkened as if for the Judgment Day! Such a fact could hardly fail to have its effect on the mind of Shakspeare, and be noted in his play of the period, just as he works up the death of Marlowe, "late deceased in beggary" (*i.e.* in a scuffle in a brothel), in "A Midsummer Night's Dream;" the wet, ungenial seasons of 1593-4 (same play); the "new map," in "Twelfth Night;" and the earthquake spoken of by the Nurse in "Romeo and Juliet." We shall see further on that Shakspeare has another possible reference to these eclipses of the sun and moon.

According to my restored reading and interpretation, then, the speaker alludes to things that occurred out of the order of nature as prognostications of Cæsar's sudden death; and he goes on to say that a "like *precurse*" (not *like precursors*, mark!) has in our country and climate presaged similar things. We too have had our harbingers of the fates, and the coming imminent events have been darkly and fiercely foreshadowed to us on earth by awful signs and wonders in the heavens; or, as he puts it, the "like *precurse*" of "fierce events" have heaven and earth together demonstrated in the shape of meteors, bloody dews, *disasters in the sun, and an almost total eclipse of the moon.* Now, as these latter had not taken place in Rome or Denmark, and *had* occurred in England in 1598, the conclusion is forced upon us that Shakspeare was writing "Hamlet" in 1598, and that the eclipses are introduced there because they had just occurred and were well known to his audience.

Our poet had what we in our day of Positive Philosophy may think a weakness for the supernatural, a most quick apprehension of the neighbourhood of the spirit-world bordering on ours, and of its power to break in on the world of flesh. So many of his characters are overshadowed by the "skiey influences." And with this belief so firmly fixed in the popular mind, and so often appealed to and breathed upon by our poet

[1] Superintendent of the "Nautical Almanack."

in his Plays, he takes these two eclipses in the passage quoted from "Hamlet," and covertly becomes the interpreter of their meaning to the English people. He does not simply allude to the darkness that covered the land, does not merely describe the late event, but most distinctly and definitely points the moral of it for the behoof of his listeners. Certain deadly signs are said to have ushered in the fate of Cæsar, and the poet finds in the late eclipses and meteors the "*like precurse*" of a similar event to come; he holds these to be "harbingers *preceding still* the fates," the "prologue to the *omen coming* on." He had done the same thing in "King Richard the Second," where the Captain says—

> "Meteors fright the fixèd stars of heaven;
> The pale-faced moon looks bloody on the earth,
> And lean-look'd prophets whisper fearful change.
> These signs forerun the death or fall of kings."

And this was the play chosen for representation the night before Essex made his attempt.

Having identified the eclipses as English, and not Romish or Danish, we must go one step further and see that the application is meant to be English, and Shakspeare points to the death or deposition of Elizabeth! Obviously, Shakspeare had read William of Malmsbury, who tells his readers that the eclipse of August 2nd, 1133, *presaged* the death of Henry I. "The elements showed their grief," he says, "at the passing away of this great king, for on that day the sun hid his resplendent face at the sixth hour, in fearful darkness, disturbing men's minds by his eclipse." Our poet treats the eclipses of 1598 in the same spirit, and holds them to presage similar fierce events to those that took place in Rome, which had been heralded and proclaimed by signs and portents in earth and heaven. It may seem strange that Shakspeare should use the phrase "disasters in the sun;" but possibly the eclipse may have been preceded by one of the great magnetic disturbances, and he had noted the sun-spots, and so he has pluralised the phenomenon. Moreover, it is the eclipse of the moon he has to bring out. The "moist star" has to do double duty for the moon and monarch too. Elizabeth *was* the moon, and a changeful one also! She was the "Cynthia" of Spenser, Raleigh, Jonson, and all the poets of the time. She was governess of the sea as much as the moon was "governess of floods." That is why the emphasis is laid on the lunar eclipse, when the sun's must have been so much the more obvious. It is a personification; a fact with Janus faces to it. The Queen, who is the "mortal moon," had, I find, a special sickness at the time, and this year 1598 was the one in which her health is visibly beginning to break. The general effect of the year of eclipse would thus be gathered up and pointed with its most ominous and particular signification—the sickness and coming death or

deposition of Elizabeth. This suggestion, which may be also an explanation, dovetails with and doubles the effect of the previous suggestion, that the poet was turning contemporary circumstances to account, and *underlining* them for private purposes with a covert significance.

He recurs to the subject again in "King Lear." Gloster says, "These *late* eclipses in the sun and moon portend no good to us. We have seen the best of our time." Possibly our poet replies to himself in the person of Edmund, who, when asked by Edgar what he is thinking of, answers, "*I am thinking, brother, of a prediction I read the other day, what should follow these eclipses.*" Edmund mocks at the superstitious notions entertained of eclipses: "This is the excellent foppery of the world! we make guilty of our *disasters* the sun, the moon, and stars: as if we were villains by necessity; fools by heavenly compulsion; all that we are evil in, by a divine thrusting on;"—which sounds like a scoff at what he had previously written; and there looks like a sly allusion, a *self-nudge,* as it were, in Edgar's question, "How long have *you* been a sectary astronomical?" Be this as it may, the allusion to the *late eclipses in the sun* and moon does tend to the corroboration of my view that he refers to the same in "Hamlet." I think he certainly does allude to his prediction made in "Hamlet" with regard to the eclipses and verify its supposed application to the Queen, thus clenching my conclusion, in the 107th of his Sonnets. This Sonnet I hold to be written by Shakspeare as his greeting to the Earl of Southampton, who was released from the Tower on the death of Elizabeth. In this Shakspeare says:—

> "The *mortal* moon hath *her* eclipse endured,
> And the sad *augurs* mock *their own presage.*"

He himself had presaged "fierce events," and had afterwards feared the worst for his friend doomed first to death and then to a life-long imprisonment, but he finds the great change has taken place peaceably.

There is likewise in Sonnet 124 a link such as constitutes a perfect tally with the prediction deduced by me from the passage in "Hamlet." The speaker says his "love" is so happily circumstanced that it

> "fears not *policy*—that *heretic*
> Which *works* on *leases* of *short-numbered hours.*"

It was the Queen's "policy" for years to prevent the marriage of Southampton, and the poet here implies that the "*heretic*" won't live for ever.

Students of Shakspeare's times, his life, and works, unless their view may have been distorted by a wrong interpretation of Meres' meaning when he spoke of Shakspeare's "private friends" amongst whom the "sugared sonnets" circulated, will have received an impression that our poet must have been in some

way, to some extent, mixed up with the affairs of Essex. I am told that the late Mr. Croker, of the *Quarterly Review*, always entertained this opinion, although he could never lay his hand on any very tangible evidence of the fact. There is constructive evidence enough to show, that if Shakspeare was not hand-in-glove with the Essex faction, he fought on their side pen-in-hand. In the chorus at the end of "Henry the Fifth" he introduced a prophecy of the Earl's expected successes in Ireland.

Then, one of the counts in Essex's indictment was the play of "King Richard the Second," which, according to Bacon's account of Meyrick's arraignment, was ordered to be played to satisfy his eyes with a sight of that tragedy which he thought soon after his lord should bring from the stage to the State. That this play was Shakspeare's cannot be doubted, except by the most wilful crassness or determined blindness; nor that the "*new additions of the Parliament scene, and the deposing of King Richard, as it hath been lately acted by the King's Majesty's servants at the Globe*," were made to the drama, previously written by Shakspeare, at the call of his patrons, the confused recollections of Forman notwithstanding. I have now to add another bit of evidence, that Shakspeare did throw a little light on things political with the *dark lanthorn*, and introduce allusions which, to say the least, were calculated to make play for Essex; and thus far we must hold that our poet was on the same side, and rowed, as we say, in the same boat with these "private friends" of his. If we glance for a moment at the condition of things in England, and particularly in London, in 1598, it will increase the significance of Shakspeare's presaging lines.

That year lies in shadow ominously and palpably as though the eclipses had sunk and *stained* into the minds of men: this is as obvious to feeling as the eclipses were to sight. We breathe heavily in the atmosphere of that year; the scent of treason is rank in the air. That was the year in which the nation grew so troubled about the future: the Queen's health was breaking, and Cecil opened secret negotiations with James VI. of Scotland. Essex and his associates were on the alert with the rest. A witness deposed that as early as 1594 Essex had said he would have the crown for himself if he could secure it; and whether the expression be true or not, one cannot doubt that it jumps with the Earl's intent. Moreover, he was as near a blood relation to the Queen as was King James of Scotland. The gathering of treason was ripening fast, to break in insurrection. Essex became more and more secret in his practices. Strange men flocked round him, and were noticed stealing through the twilight to Essex House. He became more and more familiar with those who were known to be discontented and disloyal. The mud of London life, in jail, and bridewell, and tavern, quickens into mysterious activity in this shadow of eclipse. Things that have

only been accustomed to crawl and lurk, begin to walk about boldly in the open day. The whisperings of secret intrigue grow audible in the mutterings of rebellion and threats of the coming "fierce events." The Catholics are seen to gather closer and closer round Essex; their chief fighting tools, their Jesuit agents, their dangerous outsiders, hem him round or hang upon his skirts. Blount and others grow impatient of waiting so long, and are mad to strike an early blow. The Earl, as usual, is irresolute. He is not quite a Catholic, and no doubt has his views apart from the hopes and expectations of the Catholics. Still, there is the conspiracy. The plans are formed, the plot is laid, the leaders are all ready, could Hamlet—I mean Essex—but make up his mind to strike. And in this year, in the midst of these circumstances, Shakspeare holds up that mirror, so often held up to Nature, to reflect the signs in heaven, and interpret them to the people as symbols of the coming death of Elizabeth, and the fall of her throne:—

> "And *even* the *like precurse* of *fierce events*
> (As *harbingers preceding still* the *fates*,
> And *prologue* to the *omen coming on*),
> Have heaven and earth together demonstrated
> Unto *our climatures* and countrymen."

Is it possible to doubt that our poet is not aware of all that is darkly going on, and all that is expected shortly to take place? Not only does he indicate the "*fierce events*" which may be looked for, but he reads the portents as heaven's warrant or sign-manual of what is going to happen. I have before argued that Shakspeare took sides with Southampton against the tyranny of Elizabeth in the matter of his marriage with Elizabeth Vernon: that fact I find written all through his Sonnets. And that his intimacy with the Earl, to whom he dedicated "love without end," went still deeper, I cannot doubt. As with Antonio in his friendship for Sebastian, the Viola-faced youth of the "Twelfth Night," he would give his

> "love *without retention* or *restraint*,
> *All his in dedication*,"

because he was one like Antonio again, who,

> "for his love dares yet do more
> Than *you have heard him brag to you he will*."

Not that I think our poet abetted Southampton on his path of conspiracy. I know he bewails the young Earl's courses; his dwelling in the society of evil companions and wicked, dangerous men. In Sonnet 67 he mourns that his young friend should live with "*infection*," and with his presence grace *impiety;* that he should give the "*advantage*" to "*sin*," by allowing it to take shelter and steal a grace from his "*society*." In Sonnet 69 he tells the Earl that he has grown *common* in the mouths of men in consequence of his "ill-deeds," and because by his low com-

panionship he to his "fair *flower adds* the rank smell of *weeds*;" and he warns him that—

"*Lilies* that fester smell far worse than weeds."

In all likelihood these very men against whom our poet is warning his young friend are the blackguardly crew that was creeping into the company of Essex and urging him on to his destruction. But I do believe that our poet was induced by Southampton to lend his pen, so far as they could get him to go, with the view of serving the cause of Essex, and that for love of Southampton he kept beside him. They sought to make use of him when and where they could, just as a statesman or a conspirator of the time might make use of a preacher at Paul's Cross, to be, as it were, a living poster for the purpose of announcing certain things to the crowd. An intimation could be made by the Dramatist as effectively as though he had distributed handbills. And in this covert way, I take it, was Shakspeare working in that passage quoted from "Hamlet."

The non-appearance of the lines in the first quarto, and their suppression in the first folio edition, tends to corroborate and increase the significance of the subject matter. They were not printed during the Queen's life, and, as they were not likely to be spoken when her Majesty was at the theatre or Court representation, they would demand careful handling. This may have entailed such a manipulation of the passage as led to the shifting of the lines in print, and the consequent difficulty from which they have not till now recovered.

In the 125th Sonnet, Southampton defied not only Time, imprisonment, and statecraft, but also the "suborned informer" who was the immediate cause of his "confined doom." Camden tells us that there was such a person amongst the Essex conspirators, but he could not find out which of them it was who played the dastard. We are able to identify pretty confidently the man thus marked by Shakspeare as the "black sheep" of the Essex flock of friends. This hireling spy was undoubtedly Lord Monteagle. He was known to be in the conspiracy: there were damning proofs against him. It was he who made the arrangement with the Players, and paid them to perform "King Richard the Second" on the eve of the insurrection, but he was not even put on trial for his life. It is said that when Coke rose with certain evidence in his hand, he dropped the name of Monteagle from the sworn depositions of Phillips the player, and inserted that of Meyrick in its stead. Lord Monteagle was fined; Meyrick was executed. This, coupled with Lord Monteagle's subsequent conduct in the "Gunpowder Plot," shows that he was the secret spy of the Government; the traitor to Essex and his friends; the "*suborned informer*" of Shakspeare's Sonnets.

And now, since Shakspeare was the known author of "King Richard the Second," and whispering tongues informed the Queen that the play was intended to familiarise the people with the deposition and death of monarchs; since these hints affected her so much that she exclaimed fiercely to Lambard, Keeper of the Records, "I am Richard—know you not that?"—since such was the intimacy of Shakspeare with Essex's friends, and when the Lords Southampton and Rutland were inquired after for non-attendance at Court, her Majesty would learn that they passed their time in seeing plays at the theatre of this play-wright, William Shakspeare,—is it possible that our poet could have escaped suspicion and passed on his way quite unchallenged in the matter? I more than doubt it. At p. 291, I remarked on the unusual intensity of feeling in a personal sonnet, in which he says:—

> "Against my love shall be, as I am now,
> With Time's injurious hand crushed and o'er-worn."

He appears to be broken down. It is not a question of health only. I ventured to suspect that it had to do with political affairs. The whole group looks as if the shadow of death lay on the lines and also on himself, if not on the friend as well. John Davies' lines tend to strongly confirm that conjecture:—

> "Well fare thee, man of art and world of wit,
> *That by supremest mercy livest yet!*"

Was it so near a chance with him, then, that it was only by the sheerest mercy of God that Shakspeare escaped from the wreck and ruin of his "private friends?" To all appearance that is what John Davies means.

Yours faithfully,

GERALD MASSEY.

P.S.—At p. 240 I referred to the unsatisfactory reading of a perplexing passage in the "Tempest:"—

> "My sweet mistress
> Weeps when she sees me work, and says such *baseness*
> Had ne'er like executor! I forget—
> But these sweet thoughts do e'en refresh my labours—
> Most *busiless* when I do IT."

I now believe "baseness" is a misprint, that it has been repeated from the line above, "There be some kinds of *baseness* are nobly undergone;" and that the word should be "*business*." Shakspeare was fond of the word in his later writings. In this play we find "the present business," "to do me business," "this business making," and "much business appertaining." Shakspeare was himself business man enough to know that it was more natural to *execute* "business" than "baseness." Moreover, this new lection will give us the right true Shakspearean antithesis, whilst proving and perfecting Theobald's emendation. Let us try the passage so:—

> "My sweet mistress
> Weeps when she sees me *work*, and says such *business*
> Had ne'er like *executor*! I forget;—
> But these sweet thoughts do e'en refresh my labours—
> Most *busiless* when I do IT."

I argued, at page 486, that Horatio could not be meant for Lord Southampton, even though Essex supplied the character of Hamlet. But I think I know who was the living original of Horatio. At least, as a suggestion to be thought over, what do you say to Bacon? He was for some years in Essex's service—part lawyer, part man of political business, and very intimate with him as the cooler-headed, wiser friend. To my mind the practical, philosophic, and slightly sceptical character of Horatio is very Baconian.

"So have I heard, and do in part believe."

You may see the mental motion and meditative moving of the living lips of Francis Bacon in that! Then there is the bright sedateness, the calm temperance, the philosophy of the man who is drawn as *the* Philosopher :—

"There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
Than are dreamed of in *your philosophy.*"

The description, which did not apply to Southampton, does to Bacon, with a perfect fit :—

"Thou hast been
As one in suffering all, that suffers nothing;
A man that Fortune's buffets and rewards
Hast ta'en with equal thanks!
. . . . . and blest are those
Whose blood and judgment are so well commingled
That they are not a pipe for Fortune's finger
To sound what stop she please.
. . . . . Give me that man
That is not Passion's slave," &c.

Essex tried often and hard to advance the fortunes of his friend at Court, and did not succeed. I like to think *that* is his personal testimony to the manner in which the failures were borne by Bacon. Bacon's was a character sure to arrest the attention and study of our dramatist, especially in contrast with that of Essex. He had one such in view, I fancy, when in his 94th Sonnet he extolled those who are

"the lords and owners of their faces,
Who rightly do inherit Heaven's graces,
And husband Nature's riches from expense."

I believe I spoke too grudgingly of Ben Jonson, having, like others, been unduly influenced by the often-asserted ill-feeling said to have been shown by him toward Shakspeare. It does seem as though you have only to repeat a lie often to get it confirmed with the world in general as a truth. I ought to have relied more on the spirit of his poem. He has left us the noblest lines ever written on Shakspeare; in these we have the very finest, fullest, frankest recognition of the master-spirit of imagination. He salutes him as a writer too great for rivalry, but in a manner that reaches a kindred greatness. Nor do I think the likeness in these lines is the only personal impression of Shakspeare left by Ben Jonson. If it had not been for the persistent endeavour to prove Shakspeare a lawyer, and too confidently assumed that the character, or rather the name, of Ovid, in the "Poetaster" (produced at Shakspeare's theatre, 1601), was intended for Shakspeare, it would have been seen that it is in the character of "Virgil" that Jonson has rendered the nature of the man, the quality of his learning, the affluence of his poetry, the height at which the poet himself stood above his work, in the truest, best likeness of Shakspeare extant :—

THE MAN.

"I judge him of a rectified spirit,
(By many revolutions of discourse
In his bright reason's influence) *refined*
From all the tartarous moods of common men:
Bearing the nature and similitude
Of a right heavenly body: *most severe*
In fashion and collection of himself,
And then as clear and confident as Jove."

HIS POETRY.

"That which he hath writ
Is with such judgment laboured, and distilled
Thro' all the needful uses of our lives,
That *could a man remember but his lines,*
He should not touch at any serious point
But he might breathe his spirit out of him.
And for his poesy, 'tis so rammed with life,
That it shall gather strength of life with being,
And live hereafter more admired than now."

HIS LEARNING.

"His learning savours not the school-like gloss
That most consists in echoing words and terms,
And soonest wins a man an empty name:
Nor any long or far-fetcht circumstance
Wrapped in the various generalities of Art,
But a direct and analytic sum
Of all the worth and first effects of Arts.
And yet so chaste and tender is his ear,
In suffering any syllable to pass,
That he thinks may *become the honoured name*
Of issue to his so-examined self,[1]
That all the lasting fruits of his full merits
In his own poems he doth still distaste,
As if his mind's piece, which he strove to paint,
Could not with fleshly pencils have her right."

Part of this is spoken by "Horace," who is Ben himself, and said in reply to Cæsar, who had just described him as the likeliest to *envy* or *detract*. How cordially one can repeat his epitaph—

"O RARE BEN JONSON!"

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[1] "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-turnèd and true-filèd lines."

BEN JONSON.

R. CLAY, SONS, AND TAYLOR, PRINTERS, LONDON.