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SHAKESPEARE (1734) ***

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LEWIS THEOBALD

Preface to The Works of Shakespeare
(1734)

With an Introduction by
Hugh G. Dick

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INTRODUCTION

Lewis Theobald's edition of Shakespeare (1734) is one cornerstone of modern Shakespearian scholarship and hence of English literary scholarship in general. It is the first edition of an English writer in which a man with a professional breadth and concentration of reading in the writer's period tried to bring all relevant, ascertainable fact to bear on the establishment of the author's text and the explication of his obscurities. For Theobald was the first editor of Shakespeare who displayed a well grounded knowledge of Shakespeare's language and metrical practice and that of his contemporaries, the sources and chronology of his plays, and the broad range of Elizabethan-Jacobean drama as a means of illuminating the work of the master writer. Thus both in the edition itself and in his Preface, which stands as the first significant statement of a scholar's editorial duties and methods in handling an English classic, Theobald takes his place as an important progenitor of modern English studies.

It is regrettable, though it was perhaps historically inevitable, that this pioneer of English literary scholarship should have been tagged "piddling Theobald" by Pope and crowned the first king of The Dunciad. Pope's edition of Shakespeare was completed by 1725, and in the following year Theobald made the poet his implacable enemy when he issued his Shakespeare Restored, which demolished Pope's pretensions as an editor by offering some two hundred corrections. But the conflict was not merely strife between two writers: it was a clash between two kinds of criticism in which the weight of tradition and polite taste were all on the side of Pope. What Theobald had done, in modern terms, was to open the rift between criticism and scholarship or, in eighteenth-century terms, to proclaim himself a "literal critic" and to insist upon the need for "literal criticism" in the understanding and just appreciation of an older writer. The new concept, which Theobald owed largely to Richard Bentley as primate of the classical scholars, was of course the narrower one--implicit in it was the idea of specialization--and Theobald's opponents among the literati were quick to assail him as a mere "Word-catcher" (cf. R.F. Jones, Lewis Theobald, 1919, p. 114).

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His own edition of Shakespeare, therefore, was the work of a man and a method on trial. At first Theobald had proposed simply to write further commentary on Shakespeare's plays, but by 1729 he determined to issue a new edition and in October of that year signed a contract with Tonson. From the first Theobald found warm support for his project among booksellers, incipient patrons, and men of learning. His work went forward steadily; subscribers, including members of the Royal Family, were readily forthcoming; and by late 1731 Theobald felt that his labors were virtually complete. But vexing delays occurred in the printing so that the edition, though dated 1733, did not appear until early in 1734, New Style. When it did appear, it was plain to all that Theobald's vindication of himself and his method was complete. Judicious critics like the anonymous author of Some Remarks on the Tragedy of Hamlet (1736) were quick to applaud Theobald's achievement, and even Pope himself was silenced.

Ultimately of course Theobald came under severe attack by succeeding editors of Shakespeare, notably Warburton and Johnson, yet both men were guilty of unwarranted abuse of their predecessor, whose edition was nine times issued in the course of the century and was still in current use by the time of Coleridge (cf. Wm. Jaggard, Shakespeare Bibliography, 1911, pp. 499-504). Warburton and Johnson's abuse, coupled with that of Pope, obscured Theobald's real achievements for more than a century until J.C. Collins did much to rehabilitate his reputation by an essay celebrating him as "The Porson of Shakespearian Criticism" (Essays and Studies, 1895, pp. 263-315). Collins's emotional defense was largely substantiated by T.R. Lounsbury's meticulous The Text of Shakespeare (1906), R.F. Jones's Lewis Theobald (1919), which brought much new material to light, and most recently by R.B. McKerrow's dispassionate appraisal, "The Treatment of Shakespeare's Text by his Earlier Editors, 1709-1768" (Proceedings of the British Academy, XIX, 1933, 23-27). As a result, so complete has been Theobald's vindication that even in a student's handbook he is hailed as "the great pioneer of serious Shakespeare scholarship" and as "the first giant" in the field (A Companion to Shakespeare Studies, 1934, ed. H. Granville Barker and G. B. Harrison, pp. 306-07).

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Theobald's Preface occupied his attention for over a year and gave him much trouble in the writing. Its originality was, and still is, a matter of sharp dispute. The first we hear of it is in a letter

of 12 November 1731 from Theobald to his coadjutor Warburton, who had expressed some concern about what Theobald planned to prefix to his edition. Theobald announced a major change in plan when he replied that "The affair of the Prolegomena I have determined to soften into a Preface." He then proceeded to make a strange request:

But, dear Sir, will you, at your leisure hours, think over for me upon the contents, topics, orders, &c. of this branch of my labour? You have a comprehensive memory, and a happiness of digesting the matter joined to it, which my head is often too much embarrassed to perform.... But how unreasonable is it to expect this labour, when it is the only part in which I shall not be able to be just to my friends: for, to confess assistance in a Preface will, I am afraid, make me appear too naked (John Nichols, Illustrations of the Literary History of the Eighteenth Century, 1817, II, 621-22).

4 His next letter, which contains the list of acknowledgements substantially as printed, thanks Warburton for consenting to give the requested help, announces that he is himself busy about "the Contents... wch. I am Endeavouring to modell in my Head, in Order to communicate them to you, for your Directions & refinement," indicates that he has "already rough-hewn the Exordium & Conclusion," and asserts that "What I shall send you from Time to Time, I look upon only as Materials: wch I hope may grow into a fine Building, under your judicious Management" (Jones, op. cit., pp. 283-84).

Warburton apparently misunderstood or overlooked Theobald's remarks about materials, for in his next letter Theobald was obliged to return, somewhat ambiguously, to the same point:

I make no Question of my being wrong in the disjointed Parts of my Preface, but my Intention was, (after I had given you the Conclusion, & the Manner in wch. I meant to start) to give you a List of all the other general Heads design'd to be handled, then to transmit to you, at proper Leisure, my rough Working off of each respective Head, that you might have the Trouble only of refining & embellishing wth: additional Inrichments: of the general Arrangement, wch. you should think best for the whole; & of making the proper Transitions from Subject to Subject, wch. I account no inconsiderable Beauty (Ibid., pp. 289-90).

Finally on January 10, 1733, Theobald wrote Warburton: "I promise myself now shortly to sit down upon ye fine Synopsis, wch. you so modestly call the Skeleton of Preface" (Ibid., p. 310).

5 It is clear from the foregoing that Theobald wrote most of the Preface topic by topic, and probably followed the plan for the general structure as submitted by Warburton. Yet it is equally clear that certain parts of the Preface, such as the contrast between Julius Caesar and Addison's Cato, which Warburton later claimed as his and which Theobald omitted from his second edition, were furnished Theobald as "additional Inrichments" (D.N. Smith, Eighteenth Century Essays on Shakespeare, 1903, pp. xlviii-ix). When later a break did occur between the two men, neither was free from blame. Theobald had asked and got so much help with the Preface that he should have acknowledged the debt, no matter how naked it might have made him seem. Warburton, on the other hand, had had honest warning that acknowledgement would not be made for this part of his help; and if his synopsis were followed, as seems likely, his condemnation of the Preface as "Theobald's heap of disjointed stuff" was disingenuous, to say the least. Far less defensible was his assertion in the same letter to Thomas Birch that, apart from the section on Greek texts, virtually the entire Preface was stitched together from notes which he had supplied (Nichols, Illustrations, II, 81).

Three further points concerning the Preface demand mention. First, the section on Shakespeare's life is often dismissed as a simple recension of Rowe's Life (1709). Actually, however, the expansion itself is a characteristic example of Theobald's habit of exploring original sources. To take only a single instance, Rowe says that Shakespeare's "Family, as appears by the Register and Publick Writings relating to that Town, were of good Figure and Fashion there, and are mention'd as Gentlemen" (ed. S.H. Monk, Augustan Society Reprints, 1949, p. ii). To this statement Theobald adds plentiful detail drawn from the same Stratford records, from tombs in the Stratford Church, and from documents in the Heralds' Office connected with the coat of arms obtained for the playwright's father. Such typical expansions were the result of conscientious research.

6 Second, all critics have agreed to condemn the digression in which Theobald advertised his ability to emend Greek texts. Theobald himself was hesitant about including it lest he be indicted for pedantry, but was encouraged to do so by Warburton, who later scoffed at what he had originally admired. This much may be said in Theobald's behalf. Such a digression would not have seemed irrelevant in an age which took its classical scholarship seriously; and such digressions, arising naturally out of context and strategically placed before the conclusion, were not only allowed but actually encouraged by classical rhetoricians like Cicero and Quintilian, whose teachings were still standard in the English schools.

Finally, the Preface exists in two forms. The later and shorter form was that designed for Theobald's second edition (1740), which omits all passages presumably contributed by Warburton and more besides, the section on Greek texts, and the list of acknowledgements to contemporary Shakespearian enthusiasts. This abridged form has been frequently reprinted. From a copy in the University of Michigan Library the original Preface is here reproduced for the first time.

THE
WORKS
OF
SHAKESPEARE:
IN
SEVEN VOLUMES.

Collated with the Oldest Copies, and Corrected;
With NOTES, Explanatory, and Critical:
By Mr. *THEOBALD*.

I, Decus, i, nostrum: melioribus utere Fatis. Virg.

LONDON:
Printed for A. BETTESWORTH and C. HITCH,
J. TONSON, F. CLAY, W. FEALES,
and R. WELLINGTON.

MDCCLXXXIII.

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THE
PREFACE.

THE Attempt to write upon SHAKESPEARE is like going into a large, a spacious, and a splendid Dome thro' the Conveyance of a narrow and obscure Entry. A Glare of Light suddenly breaks upon you, beyond what the Avenue at first promis'd: and a thousand Beauties of Genius and Character, like so many gaudy Apartments pouring at once upon the Eye, diffuse and throw themselves out to the Mind. The Prospect is too wide to come within the Compass of a single View: 'tis a gay Confusion of pleasing Objects, too various to be enjoyed but in a general Admiration; and they must be separated, and ey'd distinctly, in order to give the proper Entertainment.

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And as in great Piles of Building, some Parts are often finish'd up to hit the Taste of the *Connoisseur*; others more negligently put together, to strike the Fancy of a common and unlearned Beholder: Some Parts are made stupendiously magnificent and grand, to surprize with the vast Design and Execution of the Architect; others are contracted, to amuse you with his Neatness and Elegance in little. So, in *Shakespeare*, we may find *Traits* that will stand the Test of the severest Judgment; and Strokes as carelessly hit off, to the Level of the more ordinary Capacities: Some Descriptions rais'd to that Pitch of Grandeur, as to astonish you with the Compass and Elevation of his Thought: and others copying Nature within so narrow, so confined a Circle, as if the Author's Talent lay only at drawing in Miniature.

*A sketch of
Shakespeare's
general Character.*

In how many Points of Light must we be oblig'd to gaze at this great Poet! In how many Branches of Excellence to consider, and admire him! Whether we view him on the Side of Art or Nature, he ought equally to engage our Attention: Whether we respect the Force and Greatness of his Genius, the Extent of his Knowledge and Reading, the Power and Address with which he throws out and applies either Nature, or Learning, there is ample Scope both for our Wonder and Pleasure. If his Diction, and the cloathing of his Thoughts attract us, how much more must we be charm'd with the Richness, and Variety, of his Images and Ideas! If his Images and Ideas steal into our Souls, and strike upon our Fancy, how much are they

iii improv'd in Price, when we come to reflect with what Propriety and Justness they are apply'd to Character! If we look into his Characters, and how they are furnish'd and proportion'd to the Employment he cuts out for them, how are we taken up with the Mastery of his Portraits! What Draughts of Nature! What Variety of Originals, and how differing each from the other! How are they dress'd from the Stores of his own luxurious Imagination; without being the Apes of Mode, or borrowing from any foreign Wardrobe! Each of Them are the Standards of Fashion for themselves: like Gentlemen that are above the Direction of their Tailors, and can adorn themselves without the Aid of Imitation. If other Poets draw more than one Fool or Coxcomb, there is the same Resemblance in them, as in that Painter's Draughts, who was happy only at forming a Rose: you find them all younger Brothers of the same Family, and all of them have a Pretence to give the same Crest: But *Shakespeare's* Clowns and Fops come all of a different House: they are no farther allied to one another than as Man to Man, Members of the same Species: but as different in Features and Lineaments of Character, as we are from one another in Face, or Complexion. But I am unawares launching into his Character as a Writer, before I have said what I intended of him as a private Member of the Republick.

iv Mr. *Rowe* has very justly observ'd, that People are fond of discovering any little personal Story of the Great Men of Antiquity: and that the common Accidents of their Lives naturally become the Subject of our critical Enquiries: That however trifling such a Curiosity at the first View may appear, yet, as for what relates to Men of Letters, the Knowledge of an Author may, perhaps, sometimes conduce to the better understanding his Works: And, indeed, this Author's Works, from the bad Treatment he has met with from his Editors, have so long wanted a Comment, that one would zealously embrace every Method of Information, that could contribute to recover them from the Injuries with which they have so long lain o'erwhelm'd.

Some Particulars of his private Life.

'Tis certain, that if we have first admir'd the Man in his Writings, his Case is so circumstanc'd, that we must naturally admire the Writings in the Man: That if we go back to take a View of his Education, and the Employment in Life which Fortune had cut out for him, we shall retain the stronger Ideas of his extensive Genius.

v His Father, we are told, was a considerable Dealer in Wool; but having no fewer than ten Children, of whom our *Shakespeare* was the eldest, the best Education he could afford him was no better than to qualify him for his own Business and Employment. I cannot affirm with any Certainty how long his Father liv'd; but I take him to be the same Mr. *John Shakespeare* who was living in the Year 1599, and who then, in Honour of his Son, took out an Extract of his Family-Arms from the Herald's Office; by which it appears, that he had been Officer and Bailiff of *Stratford*, and that he enjoy'd some hereditary Lands and Tenements, the Reward of his Great Grandfather's faithful and approved Service to King *Henry VII.*

Be this as it will, our *Shakespeare*, it seems, was bred for some Time at a Free-School; the very Free-School, I presume, founded at *Stratford*: where, we are told, he acquired what *Latin* he was Master of: but, that his Father being oblig'd, thro' Narrowness of Circumstance, to withdraw him too soon from thence, he was so unhappily prevented from making any Proficiency in the Dead Languages: A Point, that will deserve some little Discussion in the Sequel of this Dissertation.

How long he continued in his Father's Way of Business, either as an Assistant to him, or on his own proper Account, no Notices are left to inform us: nor have I been able to learn precisely at what Period of Life he quitted his native *Stratford*, and began his Acquaintance with *London*, and the *Stage*.

vi In order to settle in the World after a Family-manner, he thought fit, Mr. *Rowe* acquaints us, to marry while he was yet very young. It is certain, he did so: for by the Monument, in *Stratford* Church, erected to the Memory of his Daughter *Susanna*, the Wife of *John Hall*, Gentleman, it appears, that she died on the 2d Day of *July* in the Year 1649, aged 66. So that She was born in 1583, when her Father could not be full 19 Years old; who was himself born in the Year 1564. Nor was She his eldest Child, for he had another Daughter, *Judith*, who was born before her, and who was married to one Mr. *Thomas Quiney*. So that *Shakespeare* must have entred into Wedlock, by that Time he was turn'd of seventeen Years.

Whether the Force of Inclination merely, or some concurring Circumstances

of Convenience in the Match, prompted him to marry so early, is not easy to be determin'd at this Distance: but 'tis probable, a View of Interest might partly sway his Conduct in this Point: for he married the Daughter of one *Hathaway*, a substantial Yeoman in his Neighbourhood, and She had the Start of him in Age no less than 8 Years. She surviv'd him, notwithstanding, seven Seasons, and dy'd that very Year in which the *Players* publish'd the first Edition of his Works in *Folio*, Anno Dom. 1623, at the Age of 67 Years, as we likewise learn from her Monument in *Stratford-Church*.

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a How long he continued in this kind of Settlement, upon his own Native Spot, is not more easily to be determin'd. But if the Tradition be true, of that Extravagance which forc'd him both to quit his Country and way of Living; to wit, his being engag'd, with a Knot of young Deer-stealers, to rob the Park of Sir *Thomas Lucy* of *Cherlecot* near *Stratford*: the Enterprize favours so much of Youth and Levity, we may reasonably suppose it was before he could write full Many. Besides, considering he has left us six and thirty Plays, which are avow'd to be genuine; (to throw out of the Question those Seven, in which his Title is disputed: tho' I can, beyond all Controversy, prove some Touches in every one of them to come from his Pen:) and considering too, that he had retir'd from the Stage, to spend the latter Part of his Days at his own Native *Stratford*; the Interval of Time, necessarily required for the finishing so many Dramatic Pieces, obliges us to suppose he threw himself very early upon the Play-house. And as he could, probably, contract no Acquaintance with the Drama, while he was driving on the Affair of Wool at home; some Time must be lost, even after he had commenc'd Player, before he could attain Knowledge enough in the Science to qualify himself for turning Author.

viii It has been observ'd by Mr. *Rowe*, that, amongst other Extravagancies which our Author has given to his Sir *John Falstaffe*, in the *Merry Wives of Windsor*, he has made him a Deer-stealer; and that he might at the same time remember his *Warwickshire* Prosecutor, under the Name of Justice *Shallow*, he has given him very near the same Coat of Arms, which *Dugdale*, in his Antiquities of that County, describes for a Family there. There are two Coats, I observe, in *Dugdale*, where three Silver Fishes are borne in the Name of *Lucy*; and another Coat, to the Monument of *Thomas Lucy*, Son of Sir *William Lucy*, in which are quarter'd in four several Divisions, twelve little Fishes, three in each Division, probably *Luces*. This very Coat, indeed, seems alluded to in *Shallow's* giving the dozen White *Luces*, and in *Slender* saying, *he may quarter*. When I consider the exceeding Candour and Good-nature of our Author, (which inclin'd all the gentler Part of the World to love him; as the Power of his Wit obliged the Men of the most delicate Knowledge and polite Learning to admire him;) and that he should throw this humorous Piece of Satire at his Prosecutor, at least twenty Years after the Provocation given; I am confidently persuaded it must be owing to an unforgiving Rancour on the Prosecutor's Side: and if This was the Case, it were Pity but the Disgrace of such an Inveteracy should remain as a lasting Reproach, and *Shallow* stand as a Mark of Ridicule to stigmatize his Malice.

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a2 It is said, our Author spent some Years before his Death, in Ease, Retirement, and the Conversation of his Friends, at his Native *Stratford*. I could never pick up any certain Intelligence, when He relinquish'd the Stage. I know, it has been mistakenly thought by some, that *Spenser's Thalia*, in his *Tears of his Muses*, where she laments the Loss of her *Willy* in the Comic Scene, has been apply'd to our Author's quitting the Stage. But *Spenser* himself, 'tis well known, quitted the Stage of Life in the Year 1598; and, five Years after this, we find *Shakespeare's* Name among the Actors in *Ben Jonson's Sejanus*, which first made its Appearance in the Year 1603. Nor, surely, could he then have any Thoughts of retiring, since, that very Year, a Licence under the Privy-Seal was granted by K. *James I.* to him and *Fletcher, Burbage, Phillippes, Hemmings, Condel, &c.* authorizing them to exercise the Art of playing Comedies, Tragedies, &c. as well at their usual House call'd the *Globe* on the other Side of the Water, as in any other Parts of the Kingdom, during his Majesty's Pleasure: (A Copy of which Licence is preserv'd in *Rymer's Foedera*.) Again, 'tis certain, that *Shakespeare* did not exhibit his *Macbeth*, till after the *Union* was brought about, and till after K. *James I.* had begun to touch for the *Evil*: for 'tis plain, he has inserted Compliments, on both those Accounts, upon his Royal Master in that Tragedy.

x Nor, indeed, could the Number of the Dramatic Pieces, he produced, admit of his retiring near so early as that Period. So that what *Spenser* there says, if it relate at all to *Shakespeare*, must hint at some occasional Recess he made for a time upon a Disgust taken: or the *Willy*, there mention'd, must relate to some other favourite Poet. I believe, we may safely determine that

he had not quitted in the Year 1610. For in his *Tempest*, our Author makes mention of the *Bermuda* Islands, which were unknown to the *English*, till, in 1609, Sir *John Summers* made a Voyage to *North-America*, and discover'd them: and afterwards invited some of his Countrymen to settle a Plantation there. That he became the private Gentleman at least three Years before his Decease, is pretty obvious from another Circumstance: I mean, from that remarkable and well-known Story, which Mr. *Rowe* has given us of our Author's Intimacy with Mr. *John Combe*, an old Gentleman noted thereabouts for his Wealth and Usury: and upon whom *Shakespeare* made the following facetious Epitaph.

*Ten in the hundred lies here in-grav'd,
'Tis a hundred to ten his Soul is not sav'd;
If any Man ask who lies in this Tomb,
Oh! oh! quoth the Devil, 'tis my John-a-Combe.*

This sarcastical Piece of Wit was, at the Gentleman's own Request, thrown out extemporally in his Company. And this Mr. *John Combe* I take to be the same, who, by *Dugdale* in his Antiquities of *Warwickshire*, is said to have dy'd in the Year 1614, and for whom at the upper End of the Quire, of the Guild of the Holy Cross at *Stratford*, a fair Monument is erected, having a Statue thereon cut in Alabaster, and in a Gown with this Epitaph. "Here lyeth enterr'd the Body of *John Combe* Esq; who dy'd the 10th of *July*, 1614, who bequeathed several Annual Charities to the Parish of *Stratford*, and 100*l.* to be lent to fifteen poor Tradesmen from three years to three years, changing the Parties every third Year, at the Rate of fifty Shillings *per Annum*, the Increase to be distributed to the Almes-poor there."—The Donation has all the Air of a rich and sagacious Usurer.

Shakespeare himself did not survive Mr. *Combe* long, for he dy'd in the Year 1616, the 53d of his Age. He lies buried on the North Side of the Chancel in the great Church at *Stratford*; where a Monument, decent enough for the Time, is erected to him, and plac'd against the Wall. He is represented under an Arch in a sitting Posture, a Cushion spread before him, with a Pen in his Right Hand, and his Left rested on a Scrawl of Paper. The *Latin* Distich, which is placed under the Cushion, has been given us by Mr. *Pope*, or his Graver, in this Manner.

INGENIO Pylium, *Genio* Socratem, *Arte* Maronem,
Terra tegit, *Populus* mæret, *Olympus* habet.

I confess, I don't conceive the Difference betwixt *Ingeniô* and *Geniô* in the first Verse. They seem to me intirely synonymous Terms; nor was the *Pylian* Sage *Nestor* celebrated for his Ingenuity, but for an Experience and Judgment owing to his long Age. *Dugdale*, in his Antiquities of *Warwickshire*, has copied this Distich with a Distinction which Mr. *Rowe* has follow'd, and which certainly restores us the true meaning of the Epitaph.

JUDICIO Pylium, *Genio* Socratem, &c.

In 1614, the greater part of the Town of *Stratford* was consumed by Fire; but our *Shakespeare's* House, among some others, escap'd the Flames. This House was first built by Sir *Hugh Clopton*, a younger Brother of an ancient Family in that Neighbourhood, who took their Name from the Manor of *Clopton*. Sir *Hugh* was Sheriff of *London* in the Reign of *Richard* III, and Lord Mayor in the Reign of King *Henry* VII. To this Gentleman the Town of *Stratford* is indebted for the fine Stone-bridge, consisting of fourteen Arches, which at an extraordinary Expence he built over the *Avon*, together with a Cause-way running at the West-end thereof; as also for rebuilding the Chapel adjoining to his House, and the Cross-Isle in the Church there. It is remarkable of him, that, tho' he liv'd and dy'd a Batchelor, among the other extensive Charities which he left both to the City of *London* and Town of *Stratford*, he bequeath'd considerable Legacies for the Marriage of poor Maidens of good Name and Fame both in *London* and at *Stratford*. Notwithstanding which large Donations in his Life, and Bequests at his Death, as he had purchased the Manor of *Clopton*, and all the Estate of the Family, so he left the same again to his Elder Brother's Son with a very great Addition: (a Proof, how well Beneficence and Oeconomy may walk hand in hand in wise Families:) Good part of which Estate is yet in the Possession of *Edward Clopton*, Esq; and Sir *Hugh Clopton*, Knt. lineally descended from the Elder Brother of the first Sir *Hugh*: Who particularly bequeathed to his Nephew, by his Will, his House, by the Name of his *Great-house* in *Stratford*.

The Estate had now been sold out of the *Clopton* Family for above a

Century, at the Time when *Shakespeare* became the Purchaser: who, having repair'd and modell'd it to his own Mind, chang'd the Name to *New-place*; which the Mansion-house, since erected upon the same Spot, at this day retains. The House and Lands, which attended it, continued in *Shakespeare's* Descendants to the Time of the *Restoration*: when they were repurchased by the *Clopton* Family, and the Mansion now belongs to Sir *Hugh Clopton*, Knt. To the Favour of this worthy Gentleman I owe the Knowledge of one Particular, in Honour of our Poet's once Dwelling-house, of which, I presume, Mr. ROWE never was appriz'd. When the Civil War raged in *England*, and K. *Charles the First's* Queen was driven by the Necessity of Affairs to make a Recess in *Warwickshire*, She kept her Court for three Weeks in *New-place*. We may reasonably suppose it then the best private House in the Town; and her Majesty preferr'd it to the *College*, which was in the Possession of the *Combe*-Family, who did not so strongly favour the King's Party.

xiv

How much our Author employ'd himself in Poetry, after his Retirement from the Stage, does not so evidently appear: Very few posthumous Sketches of his Pen have been recover'd to ascertain that Point. We have been told, indeed, in Print, but not till very lately, That two large Chests full of this Great Man's loose Papers and Manuscripts, in the Hands of an ignorant Baker of *Warwick*, (who married one of the Descendants from our *Shakespeare*) were carelessly scatter'd and thrown about, as Garret-Lumber, and Litter, to the particular Knowledge of the late Sir *William Bishop*, till they were all consumed in the general Fire and Destruction, of that Town. I cannot help being a little apt to distrust the Authority of this Tradition; because as his Wife surviv'd him seven Years, and as his Favourite Daughter *Susanna* surviv'd her twenty six Years, 'tis very improbable, they should suffer such a Treasure to be remov'd, and translated into a remoter Branch of the Family, without a Scrutiny first made into the Value of it. This, I say, inclines me to distrust the Authority of the Relation: but, notwithstanding such an apparent Improbability, if we really lost such a Treasure, by whatever Fatality or Caprice of Fortune they came into such ignorant and neglectful Hands, I agree with the *Relater*, the Misfortune is wholly irreparable.

xv

To these Particulars, which regard his Person and private Life, some few more are to be glean'd from Mr. ROWE's Account of his *Life* and *Writings*: Let us now take a short View of him in his publick Capacity, as a *Writer*: and, from thence, the Transition will be easy to the *State* in which his *Writings* have been handed down to us.

*His Character as a
Writer.*

No Age, perhaps, can produce an Author more various from himself, than *Shakespeare* has been universally acknowledg'd to be. The Diversity in Stile, and other Parts of Composition, so obvious in him, is as variously to be accounted for. His Education, we find, was at best but begun: and he started early into a Science from the Force of Genius, unequally assisted by acquir'd Improvements. His Fire, Spirit, and Exuberance of Imagination gave an Impetuosity to his Pen: His Ideas flow'd from him in a Stream rapid, but not turbulent; copious, but not ever overbearing its Shores. The Ease and Sweetness of his Temper might not a little contribute to his Facility in Writing; as his Employment, as a *Player*, gave him an Advantage and Habit of fancying himself the very Character he meant to delineate. He used the Helps of his Function in forming himself to create and express that *Sublime*, which other Actors can only copy, and throw out, in Action and graceful Attitude. But *Nullum fine Veniâ placuit Ingenium*, says *Seneca*. The Genius, that gives us the greatest Pleasure, sometimes stands in Need of our Indulgence. Whenever this happens with regard to *Shakespeare*, I would willingly impute it to a Vice of *his Times*. We see Complaisance enough, in our own Days, paid to a *bad Taste*. His *Clinches*, *false Wit*, and descending beneath himself, seem to be a Deference paid to *reigning Barbarism*. He was a *Sampson* in Strength, but he suffer'd some such *Dalilah* to give him up to the *Philistines*.

xvi

As I have mention'd the Sweetness of his Disposition, I am tempted to make a Reflexion or two on a Sentiment of his, which, I am persuaded, came from the Heart.

xvii

*The Man, that hath no Musick in himself,
Nor is not mov'd with Concord of sweet Sounds,
Is fit for Treasons, Stratagems, and Spoils:
The Motions of his Spirit are dull as Night,
And his Affections dark as Erebus:
Let no such Man be trusted.—*

Shakespeare was all Openness, Candour, and Complacence; and had such a *A Lover of Musick.*

Share of Harmony in his Frame and Temperature, that we have no Reason to doubt, from a Number of fine Passages, Allusions, Similies, &c. fetch'd from *Musick*, but that He was a passionate Lover of it. And to this, perhaps, we may owe that great Number of *Sonnets*, which are sprinkled thro' his *Plays*. I have found, that the Stanza's sung by the Gravedigger in *Hamlet*, are not of *Shakespeare's* own Composition, but owe their Original to the old Earl of *Surrey's* Poems. Many other of his Occasional little Songs, I doubt not, but he purposely copied from his Contemporary Writers; sometimes, out of Banter; sometimes, to do them Honour. The Manner of their Introduction, and the Uses to which he has assigned them, will easily determine for which of the Reasons they are respectively employ'd. In *As you like it*, there are several little Copies of Verses on *Rosalind*, which are said to be the right *Butter-woman's Rank to Market*, and the very *false Gallop of Verses*. Dr. *Thomas Lodge*, a Physician who flourish'd early in Queen *Elizabeth's* Reign, and was a great Writer of the Pastoral Songs and Madrigals, which were so much the Strain of those Times, composed a whole Volume of Poems in Praise of his Mistress, whom he calls *Rosalinde*. I never yet could meet with this Collection; but whenever I do, I am persuaded, I shall find many of our Author's Canzonets on this Subject to be Scraps of the Doctor's amorous Muse: as, perhaps, those by *Biron* too, and the other Lovers in *Love's Labour's lost*, may prove to be.

xviii

It has been remark'd in the Course of my Notes, that Musick in our Author's time had a very different Use from what it has now. At this Time, it is only employ'd to raise and inflame the Passions; it, then, was apply'd to calm and allay all kinds of Perturbations. And, agreeable to this Observation, throughout all *Shakespeare's* Plays, where Musick is either actually used, or its Powers describ'd, it is chiefly said to be for these Ends. His *Twelfth-Night*, particularly, begins with a fine Reflexion that admirably marks its soothing Properties.

*That Strain again;—It had a dying Fall.
Oh, it came o'er my Ear like the sweet South,
That breathes upon a Bank of Violets,
Stealing and giving Odour!*

xix

This *Similitude* is remarkable not only for the Beauty of the Image that it presents, but likewise for the Exactness to the Thing compared. This is a way of Teaching peculiar to the Poets; that, when they would describe the Nature of any thing, they do it not by a direct Enumeration of its Attributes or Qualities, but by bringing something into Comparison, and describing those Qualities of it that are of the Kind with those in the Thing compared. So, here for instance, the Poet willing to instruct in the Properties of Musick, in which the same Strains have a Power to excite Pleasure, or Pain, according to that State of Mind the Hearer is then in, does it by presenting the Image of a sweet South Wind blowing o'er a Violet-bank; which wafts away the Odour of the Violets, and at the same time communicates to it its own Sweetness: by This insinuating, that affecting Musick, tho' it takes away the natural sweet Tranquillity of the Mind, yet, at the same time, communicates a Pleasure the Mind felt not before. This Knowledge, of the same Objects being capable of raising two contrary Affections, is a Proof of no ordinary Progress in the Study of human Nature. The general Beauties of those two Poems of MILTON, intitled, *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*, are obvious to all Readers, because the Descriptions are the most poetical in the World; yet there is a peculiar Beauty in those two excellent Pieces, that will much enhance the Value of them to the more capable Readers; which has never, I think, been observ'd. The Images, in each Poem, which he raises to excite Mirth and Melancholy, are exactly the same, only shewn in different Attitudes. Had a Writer, less acquainted with Nature, given us two Poems on these Subjects, he would have been sure to have sought out the most contrary Images to raise these contrary Passions. And, particularly, as *Shakespeare*, in the Passage I am now commenting, speaks of these different Effects in Musick; so *Milton* has brought it into each Poem as the Exciter of each Affection: and lest we should mistake him, as meaning that different Airs had this different Power, (which every Fidler is proud to have you understand,) He gives the Image of those self-same Strains that *Orpheus* used to regain *Eurydice*, as proper both to excite Mirth and Melancholy. But *Milton* most industriously copied the Conduct of our *Shakespeare*, in Passages that shew'd an intimate Acquaintance with Nature and Science.

xx

*Milton an Imitator
of him.*

I have not thought it out of my Province, whenever Occasion offer'd, to take notice of some of our Poet's grand Touches of Nature: Some, that do not appear superficially such; but in which he seems the most deeply instructed; and to which, no doubt, he has so much ow'd that happy

*Shakespeare's
Knowledge of
Nature.*

xxi Preservation of his *Characters*, for which he is justly celebrated. If he was not acquainted with the Rule as deliver'd by *Horace*, his own admirable Genius pierc'd into the Necessity of such a Rule.

—*Servetur ad imum*
Qualis ab incoepto processerit, & sibi constet.

For what can be more ridiculous, than, in our modern Writers, to make a debauch'd young Man, immers'd in all the Vices of his Age and Time, in a few hours take up, confine himself in the way of Honour to one Woman, and moralize in good earnest on the Follies of his past Behaviour? Nor can, that great Exemplar of *Comic Writing*, *Terence* be altogether excused in this Regard; who, in his *Adelphi*, has left *Demea* in the last Scenes so unlike himself: whom, as *Shakespeare* expresses it, *he has turn'd with the seamy Side of his Wit outward*. This Conduct, as Errors are more readily imitated than Perfections, *Beaumont* and *Fletcher* seem to have follow'd in a Character in their *Scornful Lady*. It may be objected, perhaps, by some who do not go to the Bottom of our Poet's Conduct, that he has likewise transgress'd against the Rule himself, by making Prince *Harry* at once, upon coming to the Crown, throw off his former Dissoluteness, and take up the Practice of a sober Morality and all the kingly Virtues. But this would be a mistaken Objection. The Prince's Reformation is not so sudden, as not to be prepar'd and expected by the Audience. He gives, indeed, a Loose to Vanity, and a light unweigh'd Behaviour, when he is trifling among his dissolute Companions; but the Sparks of innate Honour and true Nobleness break from him upon every proper Occasion, where we would hope to see him awake to Sentiments suiting his Birth and Dignity. And our Poet has so well, and artfully, guarded his Character from the Suspicions of habitual and unreformable Profligateness; that even from the first shewing him upon the Stage, in the first Part of *Henry IV*, when he made him consent to join with *Falstaffe* in a Robbery on the Highway, he has taken care not to carry him off the Scene, without an Intimation that he knows them all, and their unyok'd Humour; and that, like the Sun, he will permit them only for a while to obscure and cloud his Brightness; then break thro' the Mist, when he pleases to be himself again; that his Lustre, when wanted, may be the more wonder'd at.

Another of *Shakespeare's* grand Touches of Nature, and which lies still deeper from the Ken of common Observation, has been taken notice of in a Note upon *The Tempest*; where *Prospero* at once interrupts the Masque of *Spirits*, and starts into a sudden Passion and Disorder of Mind. As the latent Cause of his Emotion is there fully inquir'd into, I shall no farther dwell upon it here.

xxiii
b Such a Conduct in a Poet (as *Shakespeare* has manifested on many like Occasions;) where the Turn of *Action* arises from Reflexions of his *Characters*, where the Reason of it is not express'd in Words, but drawn from the inmost Resources of Nature, shews him truly capable of that Art, which is more in Rule than Practice: *Ars est celare Artem*. 'Tis the Foible of your worser Poets to make a Parade and Ostentation of that little Science they have; and to throw it out in the most ambitious Colours. And whenever a Writer of this Class shall attempt to copy these artful Concealments of our Author, and shall either think them easy, or practised by a Writer for his Ease, he will soon be convinced of his Mistake by the Difficulty of reaching the Imitation of them.

Speret idem, sudet multùm, frustráq; labore,
Ausus idem:—

Another grand Touch of Nature in our Author, (not less difficult to imitate, tho' more obvious to the Remark of a common Reader) is, when he brings down at once any *Character* from the Ferment and Height of Passion, makes him correct himself for the unruly Disposition, and fall into Reflexions of a sober and moral Tenour. An exquisite fine Instance of this Kind occurs in *Lear*, where that old King, hasty and intemperate in his Passions, coming to his Son and Daughter *Cornwall*, is told by the Earl of *Gloucester* that they are not to be spoken with: and thereupon throws himself into a Rage, supposing the Excuse of Sickness and Weariness in them to be a purpos'd Contempt: *Gloucester* begs him to think of the fiery and unremoveable Quality of the Duke: and This, which was design'd to qualify his Passion, serves to exaggerate the Transports of it.

xxiv As the Conduct of Prince *Henry* in the first Instance, the secret and mental Reflexions in the Case of *Prospero*, and the instant Detour of *Lear* from the Violence of Rage to a Temper of Reasoning, do so much Honour to that surprizing Knowledge of human Nature, which is certainly our Author's

Masterpiece, I thought, they could not be set in too good a Light. Indeed, to point out, and exclaim upon, all the Beauties of *Shakespeare*, as they come singly in Review, would be as insipid, as endless; as tedious, as unnecessary: But the Explanation of those Beauties, that are less obvious to common Readers, and whose Illustration depends on the Rules of just Criticism, and an exact Knowledge of human Life, should deservedly have a Share in a general Critic upon the Author.

I shall dismiss the Examination into these his latent Beauties, when I have made a short Comment upon a remarkable Passage from *Julius Cæsar*, which is inexpressibly fine in its self, and greatly discovers our Author's Knowledge and Researches into Nature.

Mr. Addison and He compared, on a similar Topick.

*Between the acting of a dreadful Thing,
And the first Motion, all the Interim is
Like a Phantasma, or a hideous Dream:
The Genius, and the mortal Instruments
Are then in Council; and the State of Man,
Like to a little Kingdom, suffers then
The Nature of an Insurrection.*

That nice Critick *Dionysius of Halicarnassus* confesses, that he could not find those great Strokes, which he calls the *terrible Graces*, in any of the Historians, which he frequently met with in *Homer*. I believe, the Success would be the same likewise, if we sought for them in any other of *our* Authors besides our *British HOMER, Shakespeare*. This Description of the Condition of Conspirators has a Pomp and Terror in it, that perfectly astonishes. Our excellent Mr. *Addison*, whose Modesty made him sometimes diffident in his own Genius, but whose exquisite Judgment always led him to the safest Guides, as we may see by those many fine Strokes in his *Cato* borrow'd from the *Philippics* of *Cicero*, has paraphrased this fine Description; but we are no longer to expect those *terrible Graces*, which he could not hinder from evaporating in the Transfusion.

*O think, what anxious Moments pass between
The Birth of Plots, and their last fatal Periods.
Oh, 'tis a dreadful Interval of Time,
Fill'd up with Horror all, and big with Death.*

I shall observe two Things on this fine Imitation: first, that the Subjects of these two Conspiracies being so very different, (the Fortunes of *Cæsar* and the *Roman* Empire being concern'd in the First; and That of only a few Auxiliary Troops, in the other;) Mr. *Addison* could not with Propriety bring in that magnificent Circumstance, which gives the terrible Grace to *Shakespeare's* Description.

*The Genius and the mortal Instruments
Are then in Council.—*

For Kingdoms, in the poetical Theology, besides their good, have their evil *Genius's* likewise: represented here with the most daring Stretch of Fancy, as fitting in Council with the Conspirators, whom he calls the *mortal Instruments*. But this Would have been too great an Apparatus to the Rape, and Desertion, of *Syphax*, and *Sempronius*. Secondly, The other Thing very observable is, that Mr. *Addison* was so warm'd and affected with the Fire of *Shakespeare's* Description; that, instead of copying his Author's Sentiments, he has, before he was aware, given us only the Image of his own Impressions on the reading his great Original. For,

*Oh, 'tis a dreadful Interval of Time,
Fill'd up with Horror all, and big with Death;*

are but the Affections raised by such forcible Images as these;

—All the Int'rim is
Like a Phantasma, or a hideous Dream.
—the State of Man,
*Like to a little Kingdom, suffers then
The Nature of an Insurrection.*

Comparing the Mind of a Conspirator to an Anarchy, is just and beautiful; but the *Interim* to a *hideous Dream* has something in it so wonderfully natural, and lays the human Soul so open, that one cannot but be surpriz'd, that any Poet, who had not himself been, some time or other, engaged in a Conspiracy, could ever have given such Force of Colouring to Truth and Nature.

xxviii It has been allow'd on all hands, far our Author was indebted to *Nature*; it is not so well agreed, how much he ow'd to *Languages* and acquir'd *Learning*. The Decisions on this Subject were certainly set on Foot by the Hint from *Ben Jonson*, that he had small *Latin* and less *Greek*: And from this Tradition, as it were, Mr. *Rowe* has thought fit peremptorily to declare, that, "It is without Controversy, he had no Knowledge of the Writings of the ancient Poets, for that in his Works we find no Traces of any thing which looks like an Imitation of the Ancients. For the Delicacy of his Taste (*continues He*,) and the natural Bent of his own great Genius (equal, if not superior, to some of the Best of theirs;) would certainly have led him to read and study them with so much Pleasure, that some of their fine Images would naturally have insinuated themselves into, and been mix'd with, his own Writings: so that his not copying, at least, something from them, may be an Argument of his never having read them." I shall leave it to the Determination of my Learned Readers, from the numerous Passages, which I have occasionally quoted in my Notes, in which our Poet seems closely to have imitated the Classics, whether Mr. *Rowe's* Assertion be so absolutely to be depended on. The Result of the Controversy must certainly, either way, terminate to our Author's Honour: how happily he could imitate them, if that Point be allow'd; or how gloriously he could think like them, without owing any thing to Imitation.

xxix
b4 Tho' I should be very unwilling to allow *Shakespeare* so poor a Scholar, as Many have labour'd to represent him, yet I shall be very cautious of declaring too positively on the other side of the Question: that is, with regard to my Opinion of his Knowledge in the dead Languages. And therefore the Passages, that I occasionally quote from the *Classics*, shall not be urged as Proofs that he knowingly imitated those Originals; but brought to shew how happily he has express'd himself upon the same Topicks. A very learned Critick of our own Nation has declar'd, that a Sameness of Thought and Sameness of Expression too, in Two Writers of a different Age, can hardly happen, without a violent Suspicion of the Latter copying from his Predecessor. I shall not therefore run any great Risque of a Censure, tho' I should venture to hint, that the Resemblance, in Thought and Expression, of our Author and an Ancient (which we should allow to be Imitation in One, whose Learning was not question'd) may sometimes take its Rise from Strength of Memory, and those Impressions which he ow'd to the School. And if we may allow a Possibility of This, considering that, when he quitted the School, he gave into his Father's Profession and way of Living, and had, 'tis likely, but a slender Library of Classical Learning; and considering what a Number of Translations, Romances, and Legends, started about his Time, and a little before; (most of which, 'tis very evident, he read;) I think, it may easily be reconcil'd, why he rather schemed his *Plots* and *Charaters* from these more latter Informations, than went back to those Fountains, for which he might entertain a sincere Veneration, but to which he could not have so ready a Recourse.

xxx In touching on another Part of his Learning, as it related to the Knowledge of *History* and *Books*, I shall advance something, that, at first sight, will very much wear the Appearance of a Paradox. For I shall find it no hard Matter to prove, that from the grossest Blunders in History, we are not to infer his real Ignorance of it: Nor from a greater Use of *Latin* Words, than ever any other *English* Author used, must we infer his Knowledge of that Language.

xxxi A Reader of Taste may easily observe, that tho' *Shakespeare*, almost in every Scene of his historical Plays, commits the grossest Offences against Chronology, History, and Antient Politicks; yet This was not thro' Ignorance, as is generally supposed, but thro' the too powerful Blaze of his Imagination; which, when once raised, made all acquired Knowledge vanish and disappear before it. For Instance, in his *Timon*, he turns *Athens*, which was a perfect Democracy, into an Aristocracy; while he ridiculously gives a Senator the Power of banishing *Alcibiades*. On the contrary, in *Coriolanus*, he makes *Rome*, which at that time was a perfect Aristocracy, a Democracy full as ridiculously, by making the People choose *Coriolanus* Consul: Whereas, in Fact, it was not till the Time of *Manlius Torquatus*, that the People had a Right of choosing one Consul. But this Licence in him, as I have said, must not be imputed to Ignorance: since as often we may find him, when Occasion serves, reasoning up to the Truth of History; and throwing out Sentiments as justly adapted to the Circumstances of his Subject, as to the Dignity of his Characters, or Dictates of Nature in general.

Then, to come to his Knowledge of the *Latin* Tongue, 'tis certain, there is a surprising Effusion of *Latin* Words made *English*, far more than in any one

English Author I have seen; but we must be cautious to imagine, this was of his own doing. For the *English* Tongue, in his Age, began extremely to suffer by an Inundation of *Latin*; and to be overlaid, as it were, by its Nurse, when it had just begun to speak by her before-prudent Care and Assistance. And this, to be sure, was occasion'd by the Pedantry of those two Monarchs, *Elizabeth* and *James*, Both great *Latinists*. For it is not to be wonder'd at, if both the Court and Schools, equal Flatterers of Power, should adapt themselves to the Royal Taste. This, then, was the Condition of the *English* Tongue when *Shakespeare* took it up: like a Beggar in a rich Wardrobe. He found the pure native *English* too cold and poor to second the Heat and Abundance of his Imagination: and therefore was forc'd to dress it up in the Robes, he saw provided for it: rich in themselves, but ill-shaped; cut out to an air of Magnificence, but disproportion'd and cumbersome. To the Costliness of Ornament, he added all the Graces and Decorum of it. It may be said, this did not require, or discover a Knowledge of the *Latin*. To the first, I think, it did not; to the second, it is so far from discovering it, that, I think, it discovers the contrary. To make This more obvious by a modern Instance: The great MILTON likewise labour'd under the like Inconvenience; when he first set upon adorning his own Tongue, he likewise animated and enrich'd it with the *Latin*, but from his own Stock: and so, rather by bringing in the Phrases, than the Words: And This was natural; and will, I believe, always be the Case in the same Circumstances. His Language, especially his Prose, is full of *Latin* Words indeed, but much fuller of *Latin* Phrases: and his Mastery in the Tongue made this unavoidable. On the contrary, *Shakespeare*, who, perhaps, was not so intimately vers'd in the *Language*, abounds in the Words of it, but has few or none of its Phrases: Nor, indeed, if what I affirm be true, could He. This I take to be the truest *Criterion* to determine this long agitated Question.

xxxii

It may be mention'd, tho' no certain Conclusion can be drawn from it, as a probable Argument of his having read the Antients; that He perpetually expresses the Genius of *Homer*, and other great Poets of the Old World, in animating all the Parts of his Descriptions; and, by bold and breathing Metaphors and Images, giving the Properties of Life and Action to inanimate Things. He is a Copy too of those *Greek* Masters in the infinite use of *compound* and *de-compound Epithets*. I will not, indeed, aver, but that One with *Shakespeare's* exquisite Genius and Observation might have traced these glaring Characteristics of Antiquity by reading *Homer* in *Chapman's* Version.

xxxiii

An additional Word or two naturally falls in here upon the Genius of our Author, as compared with that of *Jonson* his Contemporary. They are confessedly the greatest Writers our Nation could ever boast of in the *Drama*. The first, we say, owed all to his prodigious natural Genius; and the other a great deal to his Art and Learning. This, if attended to, will explain a very remarkable Appearance in their Writings. Besides those wonderful Masterpieces of Art and Genius, which each has given Us; They are the Authors of other Works very unworthy of them: But with this Difference; that in *Jonson's* bad Pieces we don't discover one single Trace of the Author of the *Fox* and *Alchemist*: but in the wild extravagant Notes of *Shakespeare*, you every now and then encounter Strains that recognize the divine Composer. This Difference may be thus accounted for. *Jonson*, as we said before, owing all his Excellence to his Art, by which he sometimes strain'd himself to an uncommon Pitch, when at other times he unbent and play'd with his Subject, having nothing then to support him, it is no wonder he wrote so far beneath himself. But *Shakespeare*, indebted more largely to Nature, than the Other to acquired Talents, in his most negligent Hours could never so totally divest himself of his Genius, but that it would frequently break out with astonishing Force and Splendor.

xxxiv

B. Jonson and
Shakespeare
compar'd.

As I have never propos'd to dilate farther on the Character of my Author, than was necessary to explain the Nature and Use of this Edition, I shall proceed to consider him as a Genius in Possession of an Everlasting Name. And how great that Merit must be, which could gain it against all the Disadvantages of the horrid Condition in which he has hitherto appear'd! Had *Homer*, or any other admir'd Author, first started into Publick so, maim'd and deform'd, we cannot determine whether they had not sunk for ever under the Ignominy of such an ill Appearance. The mangled Condition of *Shakespeare* has been acknowledg'd by Mr. *Rowe*, who publish'd him indeed, but neither corrected his Text, nor collated the old Copies. This Gentleman had Abilities, and a sufficient Knowledge of his Author, had but his Industry been equal to his Talents. The same mangled Condition has been acknowledg'd too by Mr. *Pope*, who publish'd him likewise, pretended to have collated the old Copies, and yet seldom has corrected the Text but to its Injury. I congratulate with the *Manes* of our Poet, that this Gentleman

xxxv

His Reputation
under
Disadvantages.

has been sparing in *indulging his private Sense*; for He, who tampers with an Author whom he does not understand, must do it at the Expence of his Subject. I have made it evident throughout my Remarks, that he has frequently inflicted a Wound where he intended a Cure. He has acted with regard to our Author, as an Editor, whom LIPSIUS mentions, did with regard to MARTIAL; *Inventus est nescio quis Popa, qui non vitia ejus, sed ipsum, excidit.* He has attack'd him like an unhandy *Slaughterman*; and not lopp'd off the *Errors*, but the *Poet*.

When this is found to be the Fact, how absurd must appear the Praises of such an Editor? It seems a moot Point, whether Mr. *Pope* has done most Injury to *Shakespeare* as his Editor and Encomiast; or Mr. *Rymer* done him Service as his Rival and Censurer. Were it every where the true Text, which That Editor in his late pompous Edition gave us, the Poet deserv'd not the large Encomiums bestow'd by him: nor, in that Case, is *Rymer's* Censure of the Barbarity of his Thoughts, and the Impropriety of his Expressions, groundless. They have Both shewn themselves in an equal *Impuissance* of suspecting or amending the corrupted Passages: and tho' it be neither Prudence to censure, or commend, what one does not understand; yet if a Man must do one when he plays the Critick, the latter is the more ridiculous Office. And by That *Shakespeare* suffers most. For the natural Veneration, which we have for him, makes us apt to swallow whatever is given us as *his*, and let off with Encomiums; and hence we quit all Suspicions of Depravity: On the contrary, the Censure of so divine an Author sets us upon his Defence; and this produces an exact Scrutiny and Examination, which ends in finding out and discriminating the true from the spurious.

*Praise sometimes
an Injury.*

xxxvi

It is not with any secret Pleasure, that I so frequently animadvert on Mr. *Pope* as a Critick; but there are Provocations, which a Man can never quite forget. His Libels have been thrown out with so much Inveteracy, that, not to dispute whether they *should* come from a *Christian*, they leave it a Question whether they *could* come from a *Man*. I should be loth to doubt, as *Quintus Serenus* did in a like Case,

*Sive homo, seu similis turpissima bestia nobis,
Vulnera dente dedit.*

The Indignation, perhaps, for being represented a *Blockhead*, may be as strong in Us as it is in the Ladies for a Reflexion on their *Beauties*. It is certain, I am indebted to Him for some *flagrant Civilities*; and I shall willingly devote a part of my Life to the honest Endeavour of quitting Scores: with this Exception however, that I will not return those Civilities in his *peculiar* Strain, but confine myself, at lead, to the Limits of *common Decency*. I shall ever think it better to want *Wit*, than to want *Humanity*: and impartial Posterity may, perhaps, be of my Opinion.

xxxvii

But, to return to my Subject; which now calls upon me to inquire into those Causes, to which the Depravations of my Author originally may be assign'd. We are to consider him as a Writer, of whom no authentic Manuscript was extant; as a Writer, whose Pieces were dispersedly perform'd on the several *Stages* then in Being. And it was the Custom of those Days for the Poets to take a Price of the *Players* for the Pieces They from time to time furnish'd; and thereupon it was suppos'd, they had no farther Right to print them without the Consent of the *Players*. As it was the Interest of the *Companies* to keep their Plays unpublish'd, when any one succeeded, there was a Contest betwixt the Curiosity of the Town, who demanded to see it in Print, and the Policy of the *Stagers*, who wish'd to secrete it within their own Walls. Hence, many Pieces were taken down in Short-hand, and imperfectly copied by Ear, from a *Representation*: Others were printed from piece-meal Parts, surreptitiously obtain'd from the Theatres, uncorrect, and without the Poet's Knowledge. To some of these Causes we owe the train of Blemishes, that deform those Pieces which stole singly into the World in our Author's Life-time.

xxxviii

There are still other Reasons, which may be suppos'd to have affected the whole Set. When the *Players* took upon them to publish his Works intire, every Theatre was ransack'd to supply the Copy; and *Parts* collected which had gone thro' as many Changes as Performers, either from Mutilations or Additions made to them. Hence we derive many Chasms and Incoherences in the Sense and Matter. Scenes were frequently transposed, and shuffled out of their true Place, to humour the Caprice or suppos'd Convenience of some particular Actor. Hence much Confusion and Impropriety has attended, and embarras'd, the Business and Fable. For there ever have been, and ever will be in Playhouses, a Set of assuming Directors, who know better than the Poet himself the Connexion and Dependance of his Scenes; where Matter is defective, or Superfluities to be retrench'd;

*The old Editions
faulty, whence.*

Persons, that have the Fountain of *Inspiration* as peremptorily in them, as Kings have That of *Honour*. To these obvious Causes of Corruption it must be added, that our Author has lain under the Disadvantage of having his Errors propagated and multiplied by Time: because, for near a Century; his Works were republish'd from the faulty Copies without the assistance of any intelligent Editor: which has been the Case likewise of many a *Classic* Writer.

The Nature of any Distemper once found has generally been the immediate Step to a Cure. *Shakespeare's* Case has in a great Measure resembled That of a corrupt *Classic*; and, consequently, the Method of Cure was likewise to bear a Resemblance. By what Means, and with what Success, this Cure has been effected on ancient Writers, is too well known, and needs no formal Illustration. The Reputation consequent on Tasks of that Nature invited me to attempt the Method here; with this View, the Hopes of restoring to the Publick their greatest Poet in his Original Purity: after having so long lain in a Condition that was a Disgrace to common Sense. To this End I have ventur'd on a Labour, that is the first Assay of the kind on any modern Author whatsoever. For the late Edition of *Milton* by the Learned Dr. *Bentley* is, in the main, a Performance of another Species. It is plain, it was the Intention of that Great Man rather to Correct and pare off the Excrescencies of the *Paradise Lost*, in the manner that *Tucca* and *Varius* were employ'd to criticize the *Æneis* of *Virgil*, than to restore corrupted Passages. Hence, therefore, may be seen either the Iniquity or Ignorance of his Censurers, who, from some Expressions, would make us believe, the *Doctor* every where gives us his Corrections as the Original Text of the Author; whereas the chief Turn of his Criticism is plainly to shew the World, that if *Milton* did not write as He would have him, he ought to have wrote so.

The Editor's Drift and Method.

Difference betwixt this Edition and Dr. Bentley's Milton.

xl

I thought proper to premise this Observation to the Readers, as it will shew that the Critic on *Shakespeare* is of a quite different Kind. His genuine Text is religiously adher'd to, and the numerous Faults and Blemishes, purely his own, are left as they were found. Nothing is alter'd, but what by the clearest Reasoning can be proved a Corruption of the true Text; and the Alteration, a real Restoration of the genuine Reading. Nay, so strictly have I strove to give the true Reading, tho' sometimes not to the Advantage of my Author, that I have been ridiculously ridicul'd for it by Those, who either were iniquitously for turning every thing to my Disadvantage; or else were totally ignorant of the true Duty of an Editor.

xli
c2

The Science of Criticism, as far as it affects an Editor, seems to be reduced to these three Classes; the Emendation of corrupt Passages; the Explanation of obscure and difficult ones; and an Inquiry into the Beauties and Defects of Composition. This Work is principally confin'd to the two former Parts: tho' there are some Specimens interspers'd of the latter Kind, as several of the Emendations were best supported, and several of the Difficulties best explain'd, by taking notice of the Beauties and Defects of the Composition peculiar to this Immortal Poet. But This was but occasional, and for the sake only of perfecting the two other Parts, which were the proper Objects of the Editor's Labour. The third lies open for every willing Undertaker: and I shall be pleas'd to see it the Employment of a masterly Pen.

xlii

It must necessarily happen, as I have formerly observ'd, that where the Assistance of Manuscripts is wanting to set an Author's Meaning right, and rescue him from those Errors which have been transmitted down thro' a Series of incorrect Editions, and a long Intervention of Time, many Passages must be desperate, and past a Cure; and their true Sense irretrievable either to Care or the Sagacity of Conjecture. But is there any Reason therefore to say, That because All cannot be retriev'd, All ought to be left desperate? We should shew very little Honesty, or Wisdom, to play the Tyrants with an Author's Text; to raze, alter, innovate, and overturn, at all Adventures, and to the utter Detriment of his Sense and Meaning: But to be so very reserved and cautious, as to interpose no Relief or Conjecture, where it manifestly labours and cries out for Assistance, seems, on the other hand, an indolent Absurdity.

But because the Art of Criticism, both by Those who cannot form a true Judgment of its Effects, nor can penetrate into its Causes, (which takes in a great Number besides the Ladies;) is esteem'd only an arbitrary capricious Tyranny exercis'd on Books; I think proper to subjoin a Word or two about those Rules on which I have proceeded, and by which I have regulated myself in this Edition. By This, I flatter myself, it will appear, my Emendations are so far from being arbitrary or capricious, that They are

establish'd with a very high Degree of moral Certainty.

As there are very few Pages in *Shakespeare*, upon which some Suspicions of Depravity do not reasonably arise; I have thought it my Duty, in the first place, by a diligent and laborious Collation to take in the Assistances of all the older Copies.

In his *Historical Plays*, whenever our *English* Chronicles, and in his Tragedies when *Greek* or *Roman* Story, could give any Light; no Pains have been omitted to set Passages right by comparing my Author with his Originals: for, as I have frequently observed, he was a close and accurate Copier where-ever his *Fable* was founded on *History*.

xliii
c3 Where-ever the Author's Sense is clear and discoverable, (tho', perchance, low and trivial;) I have not by any Innovation tamper'd with his Text; out of an Ostentation of endeavouring to make him speak better than the Old Copies have done.

Where, thro' all the former Editions, a Passage has labour'd under flat Nonsense and invincible Darkness, if, by the Addition or Alteration of a Letter or two, I have restored to Him both Sense and Sentiment, such Corrections, I am persuaded, will need no Indulgence.

And whenever I have taken a greater Latitude and Liberty in amending, I have constantly endeavoured to support my Corrections and Conjectures by parallel Passages and Authorities from himself, the surest Means of expounding any Author whatsoever. *Cette voie d'interpreter un Auteur par lui-même est plus sure que tous les Commentaires*, says a very learned *French* Critick.

xliv As to my *Notes*, (from which the common and learned Readers of our Author, I hope, will derive some Pleasure;) I have endeavour'd to give them a Variety in some Proportion to their Number. Where-ever I have ventur'd at an Emendation, a *Note* is constantly subjoin'd to justify and assert the Reason of it. Where I only offer a Conjecture, and do not disturb the Text, I fairly set forth my Grounds for such Conjecture, and submit it to Judgment. Some Remarks are spent in explaining Passages, Where the Wit or Satire depends on an obscure Point of History: Others, where Allusions are to Divinity, Philosophy, or other Branches of Science. Some are added to shew, where there is a Suspicion of our Author having borrowed from the Antients: Others, to shew where he is rallying his Contemporaries; or where He himself is rallied by them. And some are necessarily thrown in, to explain an obscure and obsolete *Term, Phrase, or Idea*. I once intended to have added a complete and copious *Glossary*; but as I have been importun'd, and am prepar'd, to give a correct Edition of our Author's POEMS, (in which many Terms occur that are not to be met with in his *Plays*;) I thought a *Glossary* to all *Shakespeare's* Works more proper to attend that Volume.

xlv
c4 In reforming an infinite Number of Passages in the *Pointing*, where the Sense was before quite lost, I have frequently subjoin'd Notes to shew the *deprav'd*, and to prove the *reform'd*, Pointing: a Part of Labour in this Work which I could very willingly have spared myself. May it not be objected, why then have you burthen'd us with these Notes? The Answer is obvious, and, if I mistake not, very material. Without such Notes, these Passages in subsequent Editions would be liable, thro' the Ignorance of Printers and Correctors, to fall into the old Confusion: Whereas, a Note on every one hinders all possible Return to Depravity; and for ever secures them in a State of Purity and Integrity not to be lost or forfeited.

Again, as some Notes have been necessary to point out the Detection of the corrupted Text, and establish the Reiteration of the genuine Readings; some others have been as necessary for the Explanation of Passages obscure and difficult. To understand the Necessity and Use of this Part of my Task, some Particulars of my Author's Character are previously to be explain'd. There are *Obscurities* in him, which are common to him with all Poets of the same Species; there are Others, the Issue of the Times he liv'd in; and there are Others, again, peculiar to himself. The Nature of Comic Poetry being entirely satyrical, it busies itself more in exposing what we call Caprice and Humour, than Vices cognizable to the Laws. The *English*, from the Happiness of a free Constitution, and a Turn of Mind peculiarly speculative and inquisitive, are observ'd to produce more *Humourists* and a greater Variety of Original *Characters*, than any other People whatsoever: And These owing their immediate Birth to the peculiar Genius of each Age, an infinite Number of Things alluded to, glanced at, and expos'd, must needs become obscure, as the *Characters* themselves are antiquated, and disused.

*Causes of
Obscurities in
Shakespeare.*

xlvi An Editor therefore should be well vers'd in the History and Manners of his Author's Age, if he aims at doing him a Service in this Respect.

Besides, *Wit* lying mostly in the Assemblage of *Ideas*, and in the putting Those together with Quickness and Variety, wherein can be found any Resemblance, or Congruity, to make up pleasant Pictures, and agreeable Visions in the Fancy; the Writer, who aims at Wit, must of course range far and wide for Materials. Now, the Age, in which *Shakespeare* liv'd, having, above all others, a wonderful Affection to appear Learned, They declined vulgar Images, such as are immediately fetch'd from Nature, and rang'd thro' the Circle of the Sciences to fetch their Ideas from thence. But as the Resemblances of such Ideas to the Subject must necessarily lie very much out of the common Way, and every piece of Wit appear a Riddle to the Vulgar; This, that should have taught them the forced, quaint, unnatural Tract they were in, (and induce them to follow a more natural One,) was the very Thing that kept them attach'd to it. The ostentatious Affectation of abstruse Learning, peculiar to that Time, the Love that Men naturally have to every Thing that looks like Mystery, fixed them down to this Habit of Obscurity. Thus became the Poetry of *DONNE* (tho' the wittiest Man of that Age,) nothing but a continued Heap of Riddles. And our *Shakespeare*, with all his easy Nature about him, for want of the Knowledge of the true Rules of Art, falls frequently into this vicious Manner.

The third Species of *Obscurities*, which deform our Author, as the Effects of his own Genius and Character, are Those that proceed from his peculiar Manner of *Thinking*, and as peculiar a Manner of *cloathing* those *Thoughts*. With regard to his *Thinking*, it is certain, that he had a general Knowledge of all the Sciences: But his Acquaintance was rather That of a Traveller, than a Native. Nothing in Philosophy was unknown to him; but every Thing in it had the Grace and Force of Novelty. And as Novelty is one main Source of Admiration, we are not to wonder that He has perpetual Allusions to the most recondite Parts of the Sciences: and This was done not so much out of Affectation, as the Effect of Admiration begot by Novelty. Then, as to his *Style* and *Diction*, we may much more justly apply to *SHAKESPEARE*, what a celebrated Writer has said of *MILTON*; *Our Language sunk under him, and was unequal to that Greatness of Soul which furnish'd him with such glorious Conceptions*. He therefore frequently uses old Words, to give his Diction an Air of Solemnity; as he coins others, to express the Novelty and Variety of his Ideas.

Upon every distinct Species of these *Obscurities* I have thought it my Province to employ a Note, for the Service of my Author, and the Entertainment of my Readers. A few transient Remarks too I have not scrupled to intermix, upon the Poet's *Negligences* and *Omissions* in point of Art; but I have done it always in such a Manner, as will testify my Deference and Veneration for the Immortal Author. Some Censurers of *Shakespeare*, and particularly Mr. *Rymer*, have taught me to distinguish betwixt the *Railer* and *Critick*. The Outrage of his Quotations is so remarkably violent, so push'd beyond all Bounds of Decency and sober Reasoning, that it quite carries over the Mark at which it was levell'd. Extravagant Abuse throws off the Edge of the intended Disparagement, and turns the Madman's Weapon into his own Bosom. In short, as to *Rymer*; This is my Opinion of him from his *Criticisms* on the *Tragedies* of the Last Age. He writes with great Vivacity, and appears to have been a Scholar: but, as for his Knowledge of the Art of Poetry, I can't perceive it was any deeper than his Acquaintance with *Bossu* and *Dacier*, from whom he has transcribed many of his best Reflexions. The late Mr. *Gildon* was One attached to *Rymer* by a similar Way of Thinking and Studies. They were Both of that Species of Criticks, who are desirous of displaying their Powers rather in finding Faults, than in consulting the Improvement of the World: the *hypercritical* Part of the Science of *Criticism*.

I had not mentioned the modest Liberty I have here and there taken of animadverting on my Author, but that I was willing to obviate in time the splenetick Exaggerations of my Adversaries on this Head. From past Experiments I have Reason to be conscious, in what Light this Attempt may be placed: and that what I call a *modest Liberty*, will, by a little of their Dexterity, be inverted into downright *Impudence*. From a hundred mean and dishonest Artifices employ'd to discredit this Edition, and to cry down its Editor, I have all the Grounds in Nature to be aware of Attacks. But tho' the Malice of Wit join'd to the Smoothness of Versification may furnish some Ridicule; Fact, I hope, will be able to stand its Ground against Banter and Gaiety.

It has been my Fate, it seems, as I thought it my Duty, to discover some

Shakespeare's

Anachronisms in our Author; which might have slept in Obscurity but for *this Restorer*, as Mr. *Pope* is pleas'd affectionately to style me; as, for Instance, where *Aristotle* is mentioned by *Hector* in *Troilus* and *Cressida*: and *Galen*, *Cato*, and *Alexander* the Great, in *Coriolanus*. These, in Mr. *Pope's* Opinion, are Blunders, which the Illiteracy of the first Publishers of his Works has father'd upon the Poet's Memory: *it not being at all credible, that These could be the Errors of any Man who had the least Tincture of a School, or the least Conversation with such as had.* But I have sufficiently proved, in the Course of my *Notes*, that such Anachronisms were the Effect of poetic Licence, rather than of Ignorance in our Poet. And if I may be permitted to ask a modest Question by the way, Why may not I restore an Anachronism really made by our Author, as well as Mr. *Pope* take the Privilege to fix others upon him, which he never had it in his Head to make; as I may venture to affirm He had not, in the Instance of Sir *Francis Drake*, to which I have spoke in the proper Place?

Anachronisms defended.

But who shall dare make any Words about this Freedom of Mr. *Pope's* towards *Shakespeare*, if it can be prov'd, that, in his Fits of Criticism, he makes no more Ceremony with good *Homer* himself? To try, then, a Criticism of his own advancing; In the 8th Book of the *Odyssey*, where *Demodocus* sings the Episode of the Loves of *Mars* and *Venus*; and that, upon their being taken in the Net by *Vulcan*,

Mr. *Pope's* *Anachronisms* examin'd.

—*the God of Arms*
Must pay the Penalty for lawless Charms;

Mr. *Pope* is so kind gravely to inform us, "That *Homer* in This, as in many other Places, seems to allude to the Laws of *Athens*, where Death was the Punishment of Adultery." But how is this significant Observation made out? Why, who can possibly object any Thing to the Contrary?—*Does not Pausanias relate, that Draco the Lawgiver to the Athenians granted Impunity to any Person that took Revenge upon an Adulterer? And was it not also the Institution of Solon, that if Any One took an Adulterer in the Fact, he might use him as he pleas'd?* These Things are very true: and to see What a good Memory, and sound Judgment in Conjunction can achieve! Tho' *Homer's* Date is not determin'd down to a single Year, yet 'tis pretty generally agreed that he liv'd above 300 Years before *Draco* and *Solon*: And That, it seems, has made him seem to allude to the very Laws, which these Two Legislators propounded above 300 Years after. If this Inference be not something like an *Anachronism* or *Prolepsis*, I'll look once more into my Lexicons for the true Meaning of the Words. It appears to me, that somebody besides *Mars* and *Venus* has been caught in a Net by this Episode: and I could call in other Instances to confirm what treacherous Tackle this Network is, if not cautiously handled.

How just, notwithstanding, I have been in detecting the Anachronisms of my Author, and in defending him for the Use of them, Our late Editor seems to think, They should rather have slept in Obscurity: and the having discovered them is sneer'd at, as a sort of wrong-headed Sagacity.

The numerous Corrections, which I made of the Poet's Text in my *SHAKESPEARE Restor'd*, and which the Publick have been so kind to think well of, are, in the Appendix of Mr. *Pope's* last Edition, slightly call'd *Various Readings, Guesses, &c.* He confesses to have inserted as many of them as he judg'd of any the least Advantage to the Poet; but says, that the Whole amounted to about 25 Words: and pretends to have annexed a compleat List of the Rest, which were not worth his embracing. Whoever has read my Book will at one glance see, how in both these Points Veracity is strain'd, so an Injury might but be done. *Malus etsi obesse non pote, tamen cogitat.*

Another Expedient, to make my Work appear of a trifling Nature, has been an Attempt to depreciate *Literal Criticism*. To this End, and to pay a servile Compliment to Mr. *Pope*, an *Anonymous* Writer has, like a *Scotch* Pedlar in Wit, unbraced his Pack on the Subject. But, that his Virulence might not seem to be levelled singly at Me, he has done Me the Honour to join Dr. *Bentley* in the Libel. I was in hopes, We should have been Both abused with Smartness of Satire, at least; tho' not with Solidity of Argument: that it might have been worth some Reply in Defence of the Science attacked. But I may fairly say of this Author, as *Falstaffe* does of *Poins*;—*Hang him, Baboon! his Wit is as thick as Tewksbury Mustard; there is no more Conceit in him, than is in a Mallet.* If it be not Prophanation to set the Opinion of the divine *Longinus* against such a Scribler, he tells us expresly, "That to make a Judgment upon *Words* (and *Writings*) is the most consummate Fruit of much Experience." ἡ γὰρ τῶν λόγων κρίσις πολλῆς ἐστὶ πείρας τελευταίου ἐπιγένημα. Whenever Words are depraved, the Sense of course must be

Literal Criticism defended.

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corrupted; and thence the Readers betray'd into a false Meaning. Tho' I should be convicted of Pedantry by some, I'll venture to subjoin a few flagrant Instances, in which I have observed most Learned Men have suffer'd themselves to be deceived, and consequently led their Readers into Error: and This for want of the Help of *Literal Criticism*: in some, thro' Indolence and Inadvertence: in others, perhaps, thro' an absolute Contempt of It. If the *Subject* may seem to invite this Digression, I hope, the *Use* and *Application* will serve to excuse it.

liv I. In that golden Fragment, which we have left of *Platonius*, upon the three Kinds of *Greek Comedy*, after he has told us, that when the State of *Athens* was alter'd from a Democracy to an Oligarchy, and that the Poets grew cautious whom they libell'd in their Comedies; when the People had no longer any Desire to choose the accustom'd Officers for furnishing *Choric Singers*, and defraying the Expence of them, *Aristophanes* brought on a Play in which there was no *Chorus*. For, subjoins He, τῶν γὰρ ΧΟΡΕΥΤΩΝ μὴ χειροτονουμένων, καὶ τῶν ΧΟΡΗΓΩΝ οὐκ ἔχόντων τὰς τροφὰς, ὑπεξηρέθη τῆς Κωμωδίας τὰ χορικὰ μέλη, καὶ τῶν ὑποθέσεων ὁ τρόπος μετεβλήθη. "*The Chorus-Singers being no longer chosen by Suffrage, and the Furnishers of the Chorus no longer having their Maintenance, the Choric Songs were taken out of Comedies, and the Nature of the Argument and Fable chang'd.*" But there happen to be two signal Mistakes in this short Sentence. For the *Chorus-Singers* were never elected by Suffrage at all, but hir'd by the proper Officer who was at the Expence of the *Chorus*: and the *Furnishers* of the *Chorus* had never either Table, or Stipend, allowed them, towards their Charge. To what Purpose then is this Sentence, which should be a Deduction from the Premises, and yet is none, brought in? Or how comes the Reasoning to be founded upon what was not the Fact? The Mistake manifestly arises from a careless Transposition made in the Text: Let the two *Greek Words*, which I have distinguished by *Capitals*, only change Places, and we recover what *Platonius* meant to infer: "That the ^A*Furnishers* of *Chorus's* being no longer elected by Suffrage, and the ^B*Chorus-Singers* having no Provision made for them, *Chorus's* were abolished, and the Subjects of Comedies alter'd."

Platonius corrected.

A: Χορηγῶν.
B: Χορευτῶν.

lv d II. There is another more egregious Error still subsisting in this instructive Fragment, which has likewise escaped the Notice of the Learned. The Author is saying, that, in the *old Comedy*, the *Masks* were made so nearly to resemble the Persons to be satirized, that before the Actor spoke a Word, it was known whom he was to personate. But, in the *New Comedy*, when *Athens* was conquered by the *Macedonians*, and the Poets were fearful lest their *Masks* should be construed to resemble any of their New Governors, they formed them so preposterously as only to move Laughter; ὀρώμεν γοῦν (says He) τὰς ὄφρῦς ἐν τοῖς προσώποις τῆς Μενάνδρου κωμωδίας ὁποίας ἔχει, καὶ ὅπως ἐξεστραμμένον τὸ ΣΩΜΑ. καὶ οὐδε κατὰ ἀνθρώπων φύσιν. "*We see therefore what strange Eyebrows there are to the Masks used in Menander's Comedies; and how the Body is distorted, and unlike any human Creature alive.*" But the Author, 'tis evident, is speaking abstractedly of *Masks*; and what Reference has the *Distortion* of the *Body* to the Look of a *Visor*? I am satisfied, *Platonius* wrote; καὶ ὅπως ἐξεστραμμένον τὸ ὍΜΜΑ, *i.e.* "and how the *Eyes* were *goggled* and *distorted.*" This is to the Purpose of his Subject: and *Jul. Pollux*, in describing the Comic Masques, speaks of some that had ΣΤΡΕΒΛΟΝ τὸ ὍΜΜΑ: Others, that were ΔΙΑΣΤΡΟΦΟΙ τὴν ὍΨΙΝ. *Perversis oculis*, as *Cicero* calls them, speaking of *Roscius*.

lvi III. *Suidas*, in the short Account that he has given us of *Sophocles*, tells us, that, besides Dramatic Pieces, he wrote Hymns and Elegies; καὶ λόγον καταλογάδην περὶ τοῦ Χοροῦ πρὸς Θέσπιν καὶ Χοίριλον ἀγωνιζόμενος. This the Learned *Camerarius* has thus translated: *Scriptis Oratione solutâ de Choro contra Thespin & Choerilum quempiam.* And *Keuster* likewise understood, and render'd, the Passage to the same Effect. He owns, the Place is obscure, and suspected by him. "*For how could Sophocles contend with Thespius and Choerilus, who liv'd long before his Time?*" The Scholiast upon ^C*Aristophanes*, however, expressly says, as *Keuster* might have remember'd, that *Sophocles* actually did contend with *Choerilus*. But that is a Point nothing to the Passage in Question; which means, as I have shewn in another Place, *That Sophocles declaimed in Prose, contending to obtain a Chorus for reviving some Pieces of Thespius and Choerilus.* Is This contending against Them, as rival Poets?

Camerarius and Keuster, mistaken.

C: In Ranis, v. 73.

IV. Some other Learned Men have likewise been mistaken in Particulars with regard to *Sophocles*. In the Synopsis of his Life, we find these Words; Τελευτᾷ δὲ μετὰ Ἐυριπίδην ἐτῶν ζ'. *Meursius*, as well as *Camerarius*, have

Meursius, and Camerarius mistaken.

expounded This, as if *Sophocles* surviv'd *Euripides* six Years. But the best Accounts agree that they died both in the same Year, a little before the *Frogs* of *Aristophanes* was play'd; *scil.* Olymp. 93, 3. The Meaning, therefore, of the Passage is, as some of the Commentators have rightly observ'd; *That Sophocles died after Euripides, at 90 Years of Age.* The Mistake arose from hence, that, in Numerals, ζ' signifies as well 6 as 90.

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V. The Learned Father *Brumoy* too, who has lately given us three Volumes upon the *Theatre* of the *Greeks*, has slipt into an Error about *Sophocles*; for, speaking of his *Antigone*, he tells us, it was in such Request as to be perform'd Two and Thirty times; *Elle fût représentée trente deux fois.* The Account, on which This is grounded, we have from the Argument prefix'd to *Antigone* by *Aristophanes* the Grammarian: and the *Latin* Translator of this Argument, probably, led Father *Brumoy* into his Mistake, and he should have referr'd to the Original. The *Greek* Words are; λέλεκται δὲ τὸ δράμα τοῦτο τριακοστὸν δεύτερον. i. e. "This Play is said to have been the Thirty Second, in Order of Time, produced by Sophocles."

Father Brumoy
mistaken.

The Mistakes, that I have mentioned, (tho' they necessarily lead into Error, from the Authority with which they come into the World;) yet are such, 'tis obvious, as have been the Effects of Inadvertence; and therefore I do not quote them to the Dishonour of their Learned Authors. I shall point out Two or Three, which seem to have sprung from another Source: either a due Want of Sagacity, or an absolute Neglect of *literal Criticism*. VI. Sir *George Wheler*, who, in his *JOURNEY* into *GREECE*, has traded much with *Greek* Antiquities and Inscriptions, and who certainly was no mean Scholar, has shewn himself very careless in this Respect. When he was at *Sardis*, he met with a Medal of the Emperor *Commodus* seated in the Midst of the Zodiack with Celestial Signs engraven on it; and, on the other Side, a Figure with a Crown-Mure with these Letters about it, Σάρδις Ἀσίας, ΑΥΔΙΑΣ, Ἑλλάδος, ἁ μητρόπολις: *Sardis, the first Metropolis of Asia, Greece, and Audia.*—But where and what *Audia* was, (*says He*) I find not. Now is it not very strange, that this Gentleman should not remember, that *Sardis* was the Capital City of *Lydia*; and, consequently, that for ΑΥΔΙΑΣ we should read ΑΥΔΙΑΣ? Tho' my Correction is too obvious to want any Justification, yet, I find, it has One from the Learned Father ^D*Harduin*; who produces another Coin of *Sardis* (in the *French King's* Cabinet) which bears the very same Inscription, only exhibited as it ought to be.

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Sir George Wheler
corrected.

Nor was This a single Inaccuracy in Sir *George*. I'll instance in Two pretty Inscriptions, the One an *Epitaph*, the other a *Votive Table*, which He has given Us, but in a very corrupt Condition. Tho' I have never been in *Greece*, nor seen the Inscriptions any where but in *his* Book, I think, I can restore them to their true Sense and Numbers: And, as they are particularly elegant, some Readers will not be displeas'd to see them in a State of Purity.

lix
d3

D: In his *Nummi Antiqui illustrati.*

VII. *Of the Antiquities of Philadelphia* (*says he*) *I had but a slender Account; only I have the Copy of one Inscription, being the Monument of a Virgin, in these three Couplets of Verses.* But she was so far from being a *Virgin*, that the *Epitaph* shews her to have been a *Wife*; that it was put up in Memory of Her by her *Husband*; and that she dy'd in the Flower of her Youth at the Age of twenty three.

An Epitaph
corrected and
explained.

Ξαντίππην Ἀκύλα μνήμην ¹ βίου παρέδωκεν	¹ βίου παρέδω- κεν.
Βωμῶ ² τειμήσας σεμνω ταυτῆν ἄλοχον	² τειμήσας σεμνοτά- την.
Παρθένον ἧς ἀπέλυσε μίτρην ΗΣΔΡΙΟΝ ἄνθος	³ βιοῦς'.
Ἔσκεν ἐν ἡμιτελεῖ παυσάμενον θαλάμῳ.	⁴ τὸ λι- πούσα φά- σι.
Τρεῖς γὰρ ἐπ' εἰκοσίῳς τελεῶσε ³ βιον ἐνιαυτοῦς,	
Καὶ μὲν τῶςδε θάνεν ⁴ τετι λιπούσα φάσι.	

Ξαντίππην Ἀκύλα μνήμην ¹βίου παρέδωκεν
Βωμῶ ²τειμήσας σεμνω ταυτην ἄλοχον.
Παρθένον ἧς ἀπέλυσε μίτρην ΗΣΔΡΙΟΝ ἄνθος.
Ἔσκεν ἐν ἡμιτελεῖ παυσάμενον θαλάμῳ.
Τρεῖς γὰρ ἐπ' εἰκοσίῳς τελεῶσε ³βιον ἐνιαυτοῦς,

1. βίου
παρέδωκεν.
2. τειμήσας
σεμνοτάτην.
3. βιοῦς'.
4. τοῦτο λιπούσα

I have, for Brevity's sake, mark'd the general Corrections, which I have made, at the Side. The third Verse is neither true in Quantity, nor Language: ΗΣΔΡΙΟΝ is a Monster of a Word, which never could be the Reading of any Marble. As I correct it, we recover a most beautiful Couplet.

Παρθένον, ἧς ἀπέλυσε μήτηρ· ἦΣ ἮΡΙΝΟΝ ἄνθος
Ἔσκειν ἐν ἡμιτελεῖ παυσάμενον θαλάμῳ.

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*Puellam, cujus Zonam solvit; cujus VERNUS Flos
Præproperò tabuit in Thalamò.*

VIII. I come now to the *Votive Table*, which is rich in poetick Graces, however overwhelm'd with Depravation: and Sir *George* seems as much to have mistaken the Purport, as the Words, of the Inscription. At Chalcedon, says he, *I found an Inscription in the Wall of a private House near the Church; which signifieth, that Evante, the Son of Antipater, having made a prosperous Voyage, and desiring to return by the Ægean Sea, offered Cakes at a Statue, which he had erected to Jupiter, which had sent him such good Weather, as a Token of his good Voyage.*

A Votive Table
corrected.

1 ΟΥΡΙΟΝ ἐπι 2 ΠΡΙΜΝΗΣ τις ὀδηγη- τήρα καλείτω,	1 Ὀυρον. 2 πρύμνης.
Ζῆνα κατὰ 3 πρωτον ΩΝιστιον ἐκπετάσας	3 πρώτων. ιστίον.
4 ΕΠΙ ΚΥΑΝΕΑΣ ΔΙΝΑΣ ΔΡΟΜΟΥΣ ἐνθα Ποσειδῶν	4 Κυανεαῖς δίησιον ἐπίδρο- μον.
Καμπύλον εἰλίσσει κῦμα παρὰ ψαμαθοῖς.	
Εἶτα κατ' Αἰγαῖαν πόντου πλάκα 5 ΝΑΣ ἐρεῦ- νων,	5 Νόστον.
Νεῖσθω· τῷ δὲ 6 ΒΑΛΛΩΝ ψαιστὰ παρὰ 7 ΤΩ ΖΩΑΝΩ.	6 βαλῶν. 7 ξοάνω.
8 ΟΔΕ τὸν 9 ΕΥΑΝΤΗ τὸν ἀεὶ θεὸν Ἀντιπά- τρου παῖς	8 Ἔσδέ. 9 εὐανθῆ.
Στησε 10 φίλων ἀγαθῆς σύμβολον εὐπλοΐης.	10 φίλων.

1ΟΥΡΙΟΝ ἐπι 2ΠΡΙΜΝΗΣ τις ὀδηγητήρα καλείτω,
Ζῆνα κατὰ 3πρωτον ΩΝιστιον ἐκπετάσας
4ΕΠΙ ΚΥΑΝΕΑΣ ΔΙΝΑΣ ΔΡΟΜΟΥΣ ἐνθα Ποσειδῶν
Καμπύλον εἰλίσσει κῦμα παρὰ ψαμαθοῖς.
Εἶτα κατ' Αἰγαῖαν πόντου πλάκα 5ΝΑΣ ἐρεῦνων,
Νεῖσθω· τῷ δὲ 6ΒΑΛΛΩΝ ψαιστὰ παρὰ 7ΤΩ ΖΩΑΝΩ.
8ΟΔΕ τὸν 9ΕΥΑΝΤΗ τὸν ἀεὶ θεὸν Ἀντιπάτρου παῖς
Στησε 10φίλων ἀγαθῆς σύμβολον εὐπλοΐης.

1. Ὀυρον.
2. πρύμνης.
3. πρώτων, ιστίον.
4. Κυανεαῖς δίησιον ἐπίδρομον.
5. Νόστον.
6. βαλῶν.
7. ξοάνω.
8. Ἔσδέ.
9. εὐανθῆ.
10. Φίλων.

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d4

I have mark'd, as before, my Corrections at the Side; and I may venture to say, I have supported the faltring Verses both with *Numbers* and *Sense*. But who ever heard of *Evante*, as the Name of a Man, in *Greece*? Neither is this Inscription a Piece of Ethnic Devotion, as Sir *George* has suppos'd it, to a Statue erected to *Jupiter*: On the contrary, it despises those fruitless Superstitions. *Philo* (a *Christian*, as it seems to me;) sets it up, in Thanks for a safe Voyage, to the *true God*. That all my Readers may equally share in this little Poem, I have attempted to put it into an *English Dress*.

*Invoke who Will the prosp'rous Gale behind,
Jove at the Prow, while to the guiding Wind
O'er the blue Billows he the Sail expands,
Where Neptune with each Wave heaps Hills of Sands:
Then let him, when the Surge he backward plows,
Pour to his Statue-God unaiding Vows:
But to the God of Gods, for Deaths o'erpast,
For Safety lent him on the watry Waste,*

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I shall have no Occasion, I believe, to ask the Pardon of *some* Readers for these *Nine* last Pages; and Others may be so kind to pass them over at their Pleasure. (Those Discoveries, which give Light and Satisfaction to the truly Learned, I must confess, are Darkness and Mystery to the less capable: Φέγγος μὲν ξυνετοῖς, ἀξυνετοῖς δ' Ἐρεβος.) Nor will they be absolutely foreign, I hope, to a Preface in some Measure critical; especially, as it could not be amiss to shew, that I have read other Books with the same Accuracy, with which I profess to have read *Shakespeare*. Besides, I design'd this Inference from the Defence of Literal Criticism. If the *Latin* and *Greek* Languages have receiv'd the greatest Advantages imaginable from the Labours of the Editors and Criticks of the two last Ages; by whose Aid and Assistance the Grammarians have been enabled to write infinitely better in that Art than even the preceding Grammarians, who wrote when those Tongues flourish'd as living Languages: I should account it a peculiar Happiness, that, by the faint Assay I have made in this Work, a Path might be chalk'd out, for abler Hands, by which to derive the same Advantages to our own Tongue: a Tongue, which, tho' it wants none of the fundamental Qualities of an universal Language, yet as a *noble Writer* says, lisps and stammers as in its Cradle; and has produced little more towards its polishing than Complaints of its Barbarity.

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Having now run thro' all those Points, which I intended should make any Part of this Dissertation, it only remains, that I should account to the Publick, but more particularly to my Subscribers, why they have waited so long for this Work; that I should make my Acknowledgments to those Friends, who have been generous Assistants to me in the conducting it: and, lastly, that I should acquaint my Readers what Pains I have myself taken to make the Work as complete, as faithful Industry, and my best Abilities, could render it.

*The Delay of this
Edition excused.*

lxiv

In the middle of the Year 1728, I first put out my *Proposals* for publishing only *Emendations* and *Remarks* on our Poet: and I had not gone on many Months in this Scheme, before I found it to be the unanimous Wish of those who did me the Honour of their Subscriptions, that I would give them the Poet's Text corrected; and that I would subjoin those Explanatory Remarks, which I had purpos'd to publish upon the Foot of my first Proposals. Earnest Sollicitations were made to me, that I would think of such an Edition; which I had as strong Desires to listen to: and some *noble* Persons then, whom I have no Privilege to name, were pleased to interest themselves so far in the Affair, as to propose to Mr. *Tonson* his undertaking an Impression of *Shakespeare* with my Corrections. The throwing my whole Work into a different Form, to comply with this Proposal, was not the slightest Labour: and so no little Time was unavoidably lost. While the Publication of my Remarks was thus respited, my Enemies took an unfair Occasion to suggest, that I was extorting Money from my Subscribers, without ever designing to give them any Thing for it: an Insinuation levell'd at once to wound me in Reputation and Interest. Conscious, however, of my own just Intentions, and labouring all the while to bring my wish'd Purpose to bear, I thought these anonymous Slanderers worthy of no Notice. A Justification of myself would have been giving them Argument for fresh Abuse; and I was willing to believe that any unkind Opinions, entertain'd to my Prejudice, would naturally drop and lose their Force, when the Publick should once be convinc'd that I was in Earnest, and ready to do them Justice. I left no Means untry'd to put it in my Power to do this: and I hope, without Breach of Modesty, I may venture to appeal to all candid Judges, whether I have not employ'd all my Power to be just to them in the Execution of my Task. I must needs have been in the most Pain, who saw myself daily so barbarously outraged. I might have taken advantage of the favourable Impressions entertain'd of my Work, and hurried it crudely into the World: But I have suffer'd, for my Author's sake, those Impressions to cool, and perhaps, be lost; and can now appeal only to the *Judgment* of the Publick. If I succeed in this Point, the Reputation gain'd will be the more solid and lasting. I come now to speak of those kind Assistances which I have met with from particular Friends, towards forwarding and compleating this Work. Soon after my Design was known, I had the Honour of an Invitation to *Cambridge*; and a generous Promise from the Learned and ingenious Dr. *Thirlby* of *Jesus-College*, there, who had taken great Pains with my Author, that I should have the Liberty of collating his Copy of *Shakespeare*, mark'd thro' in the Margin with his own Manuscript References and accurate Observations. He not only made good this Promise, but favour'd me with a Set of Emendations, interspers'd and distinguish'd in his Name thro' the Edition, and which can need no Recommendation here to the judicious

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*Acknowledgment of
Assistance.*

Reader.

The next Assistance I receiv'd was from my ingenious Friend *Hawley Bishop* Esq; whose great Powers and extensive Learning are as well known, as his uncommon Modesty, to all who have the Happiness of his Acquaintance. This Gentleman was so generous, at the Expence both of his Pocket and Time, to run thro' all *Shakespeare* with me. We join'd Business and Entertainment together; and at every of our Meetings, which were constantly once a Week, we read over a *Play*, and came mutually prepar'd to communicate our Conjectures upon it to each other. The Pleasure of these Appointments, I think, I may say, richly compensated for the Labour in our own Thoughts: and I may venture to affirm, in the Behalf of my Assistant, that our Author has deriv'd no little Improvement from them.

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To these, I must add the indefatigable Zeal and Industry of my most ingenious and ever-respected Friend, the Reverend Mr. *William Warburton* of *Newark* upon *Trent*. This Gentleman, from the Motives of his frank and communicative Disposition, voluntarily took a considerable Part of my Trouble off my Hands; not only read over the whole Author for me, with the exactest Care; but enter'd into a long and laborious Epistolary Correspondence; to which I owe no small Part of my best Criticisms upon my Author.

The Number of Passages amended, and admirably Explained, which I have taken care to distinguish with his Name, will shew a Fineness of Spirit and Extent of Reading, beyond all the Commendations I can give them: Nor, indeed, would I any farther be thought to commend a Friend, than, in so doing, to give a Testimony of my own Gratitude. How great a share soever of Praise I must lose from my self, in confessing these Assistances; and however my own poor Conjectures may be weaken'd by the Comparison with theirs; I am very well content to sacrifice my Vanity to the Pride of being so assisted, and the Pleasure of being just to their Merits. I beg leave to observe to my Readers, in one Word, here, that from the Confession of these successive Aids, and the Manner in which I deriv'd them, it appears, I have pretty well fill'd up the *Interval*, betwixt my first *Proposals* and my *Publication*, with having my Author always in View, and at Heart.

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Some Hints I have the Honour to owe to the Informations of Dr. *Mead*, and the late Dr. *Friend*: Others to the Kindness of the ingenious *Martin Folkes*, Esq; who likewise furnish'd me with the first *folio* Edition of *Shakespeare*, at a Time when I could not meet with it among the Booksellers; as my obliging Friend *Thomas Coxeter*, Esq; did with several of the old 4^{to} single Plays, which I then had not in my own Collection. Some few Observations I likewise owe to *F. Plumtree*, Esq; Others to the Favour of anonymous Persons: for all which I most gladly render my Acknowledgments.

As to what regards my self singly, if the Edition do not speak for the Pains I have taken about it, it will be very vain to plead my own Labour and Diligence. Besides a faithful Collation of all the printed Copies, which I have exhibited in my *Catalogue* of *Editions* at the End of this Work; let it suffice to say, that, to clear up several Errors in the Historical Plays, I purposely read over *Hall* and *Holingshead's* Chronicles in the Reigns concern'd; all the Novels in *Italian*, from which our Author had borrow'd any of his Plots; such Parts of *Plutarch*, from which he had deriv'd any Parts of his *Greek* or *Roman* Story: *Chaucer* and *Spenser's* Works; all the Plays of *B. Jonson*, *Beaumont* and *Fletcher*, and above 800 old *English* Plays, to ascertain the obsolete and uncommon Phrases in him: Not to mention some Labour and Pains unpleasantly spent in the dry Task of consulting Etymological *Glossaries*.

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But as no Labour of Mine can be equivalent to the dear and ardent Love I bear for *Shakespeare*, so, if the Publick shall be pleas'd to allow that He owes any Thing to my Willingness and Endeavours of restoring Him; I shall reckon the Part of my Life so engag'd, to have been very happily employ'd: and put Myself, with great Submission, to be try'd by my Country in the Affair.

*The Editor's
particular Pains
taken.*

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SERIES V: DRAMA

Thomas Southerne, *Oroonoko* (1696)
Mrs. Centlivre, *The Busie Body* (1709)
Charles Johnson, *Caelia* (1733)
Charles Macklin, [Man of the World](#) (1781)

SERIES VI: POETRY AND LANGUAGE

Andre Dacier, *Essay on Lyric Poetry*
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Poems by the Earl of Dorset
Samuel Johnson, [Vanity of Human Wishes](#) (1749),
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- [7.](#) John Gay's *The Present State of Wit* (1711); and a section on Wit from *The English Theophrastus* (1702). (I, 3)
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- [13.](#) Sir John Falstaff (pseud.), *The Theatre* (1720). (IV, 1)
- [14.](#) Edward Moore's *The Gamester* (1753). (V, 1)
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- [16.](#) Nevil Payne's *Fatal Jealousy* (1673). (V, 2)
- [17.](#) Nicholas Rowe's *Some Account of the Life of Mr. William Shakespear* (1709). (Extra Series, 1)
- [18.](#) Aaron Hill's Preface to *The Creation*; and Thomas Brereton's Preface to *Esther*. (IV, 2)

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