CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-00583-8 - The First Part of King Henry VI, Volume 11
William Shakespeare
Frontmatter
More information

CAMBRIDGE LIBRARY COLLECTION

Books of enduring scholarly value

Literary studies

This series provides a high-quality selection of early printings of literary works, textual editions, anthologies and literary criticism which are of lasting scholarly interest. Ranging from Old English to Shakespeare to early twentieth-century work from around the world, these books offer a valuable resource for scholars in reception history, textual editing, and literary studies.

The First Part of King Henry VI

John Dover Wilson's New Shakespeare, published between 1921 and 1966, became the classic Cambridge edition of Shakespeare's plays and poems until the 1980s. The series, long since out-of-print, is now reissued. Each work is available both individually and as part of a set, and each contains a lengthy and lively introduction, main text, and substantial notes and glossary printed at the back. The edition, which began with The Tempest and ended with The Sonnets, put into practice the techniques and theories that had evolved under the 'New Bibliography'. Remarkably by today's standards, although it took the best part of half a century to produce, the New Shakespeare involved only a small band of editors besides Dover Wilson himself. As the volumes took shape, many of Dover Wilson's textual methods acquired general acceptance and became an established part of later editorial practice, for example in the Arden and New Cambridge Shakespeares. The reissue of this series in the Cambridge Library Collection complements the other historic editions also now made available.

© in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

Cambridge University Press has long been a pioneer in the reissuing of out-of-print titles from its own backlist, producing digital reprints of books that are still sought after by scholars and students but could not be reprinted economically using traditional technology. The Cambridge Library Collection extends this activity to a wider range of books which are still of importance to researchers and professionals, either for the source material they contain, or as landmarks in the history of their academic discipline.

Drawing from the world-renowned collections in the Cambridge University Library, and guided by the advice of experts in each subject area, Cambridge University Press is using state-of-the-art scanning machines in its own Printing House to capture the content of each book selected for inclusion. The files are processed to give a consistently clear, crisp image, and the books finished to the high quality standard for which the Press is recognised around the world. The latest print-on-demand technology ensures that the books will remain available indefinitely, and that orders for single or multiple copies can quickly be supplied.

The Cambridge Library Collection will bring back to life books of enduring scholarly value across a wide range of disciplines in the humanities and social sciences and in science and technology.

The First Part of King Henry VI

The Cambridge Dover Wilson Shakespeare

VOLUME 11

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE
EDITED BY JOHN DOVER WILSON

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

© in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-00583-8 - The First Part of King Henry VI, Volume 11
William Shakespeare
Frontmatter
More information

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge New York Melbourne Madrid Cape Town Singapore São Paolo Delhi

Published in the United States of America by Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781108005838

© in this compilation Cambridge University Press 2009

This edition first published 1952
This digitally printed version 2009

ISBN 978-1-108-00583-8

This book reproduces the text of the original edition. The content and language reflect the beliefs, practices and terminology of their time, and have not been updated.

© in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

Cambridge

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-00583-8 - The First Part of King Henry VI, Volume 11
William Shakespeare
Frontmatter
More information

THE WORKS OF SHAKESPEARE

EDITED FOR THE SYNDICS OF THE
CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
BY
JOHN DOVER WILSON

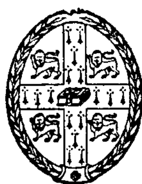
I KING HENRY VI

© in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-00583-8 - The First Part of King Henry VI, Volume 11
William Shakespeare
Frontmatter
More information

THE FIRST PART OF
KING HENRY VI



CAMBRIDGE
AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS
1968

© in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore,
São Paulo, Delhi

Cambridge University Press
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 8RU, UK

Published in the United States of America by
Cambridge University Press, New York

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9780521094788

© Cambridge University Press 1952, 2008

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception
and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements,
no reproduction of any part may take place without the written
permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 1952
Reprinted 1965
First paperback edition 1968
Re-issued in this digitally printed version 2009

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

ISBN 978-0-521-07535-0 hardback
ISBN 978-0-521-09478-8 paperback

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-00583-8 - The First Part of King Henry VI, Volume 11
William Shakespeare
Frontmatter
More information

CONTENTS

	PAGE
FOREWORD	vii
INTRODUCTION	ix
i Part I written later than Parts II and III	ix
ii Date and occasion	xiv
iii The hand of Nashe	xxi
iv What the sources tell us about the play's construction	xxxii
v Shakespeare's hand and the Talbot scenes	xli
vi How it all may have happened	xlviii
THE STAGE-HISTORY	li
TO THE READER	lvi
THE FIRST PART OF KING HENRY VI	1
THE COPY FOR *1 HENRY VI*, 1623	102
NOTES	108
GLOSSARY	210

© in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

Cambridge
Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-00583-8 - The First Part of King Henry VI, Volume 11
William Shakespeare
Frontmatter
More information

FOREWORD

I draw to an end of this edition of *Henry VI* with some relief. It has proved a large and arduous undertaking, larger than I expected when I first set hand to it in May 1948, larger than any three separate Shakespearian plays. For the Three Parts cannot be dismissed one by one, but must be envisaged as a whole, and worked through side by side, so interlocked and vexatiously intricate are their problems. Questions of source have, of course, to be tackled here as elsewhere, though compared to the elaborate dance with three chronicles and sometimes four which *Henry VI* leads its editor, the *pas de deux* with North in the Plutarch plays is a simple turn indeed; in which connexion I owe a special debt to my kind helper, Mr C. B. Young, who read all the chronicles with me and did much to guide my steps. Then there are the related questions of date and the company or companies for which the Parts were written; problems difficult enough in any play, but rendered doubly so in the case of *Henry VI* by the comparative obscurity of the period in the history of the Elizabethan theatre. Last and most contentious of all comes the question of authorship. Many Shakespearian scholars to-day, and among them the most eminent, make no question of this at all. The evidence has driven me to disagree with them, and much space in the Introductions to Parts I and II has had therefore to be given to this important matter; important for the biographical issues involved, and still more for the aesthetic ones, inasmuch as our whole conception of the nature of Shakespeare's poetic genius turns upon it.

The method of presentation introduces, moreover, a special difficulty. Though all three parts are

© in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-00583-8 - The First Part of King Henry VI, Volume 11
William Shakespeare
Frontmatter
More information

interrelated, Parts II and III raise one set of problems and Part I another. I have accordingly arranged my material as follows. The Introduction to the present volume deals exclusively with Part I, though portions of it will be clearer, and I think more persuasive, if read after the Introductions to the other Parts, that is to say in the order in which, as will be shown, the three plays were written. Parts II and III, on the other hand, forming as they do one continuous drama, share a common Introduction, which is, however, divided for convenience into two sections, one concerned with date, source and authorship printed with Part II, and the other, entitled 'Shakespeare and the Wars of the Roses', printed with Part III.

It remains to record my gratitude to the Fellows of All Souls for giving me an opportunity of trying out the ideas of these Introductions in the form of three Chichele lectures delivered at Oxford in October 1949, together with a critical preamble on 'Malone and the Upstart Crow', since published in *Shakespeare Survey* (1951); and in particular to my friend Humphrey Sumner, late Warden of the College, who lent the undertaking his generous interest from the beginning, and to whom, had it not 'been ordained otherwise', I should have dedicated the ensuing volumes.

© in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

Cambridge

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-00583-8 - The First Part of King Henry VI, Volume 11
William Shakespeare
Frontmatter
More information

INTRODUCTION

I. Part I written later than Parts II and III

We have no quarto, 'good' or 'bad', for *1 Henry VI*, and our only substantive text is therefore that of the First Folio, published in 1623, some thirty years or more later than its earliest stage production. One of the worst plays in the canon, it is also one of the most debatable. Date, occasion, authorship, all are in doubt, even its position and relevance as regards the second and third parts are open to question. And since the answer to this last problem involves answers to the others, it must be sought for first.

The plot is composed of four strands. The most important of all, occupying indeed some three-quarters of the play, concerns Talbot's heroic struggle to prevent the tottering French empire conquered by Henry V from being reconquered by the Dauphin and his sinister ally the witch Joan—for it was as an emissary of Satan that Englishmen, and not a few Frenchmen, of the sixteenth century regarded the Patron Saint of modern France[1]—a struggle from which, but for treacherous desertion on the part of factious noblemen in command of the main English forces, the hero might have emerged victorious. Faction again, this time at court, in the persons of the King's turbulent uncles, the Duke of Gloucester and the Bishop of Winchester, supplies a second strand. The third, consisting of the famous Temple Garden scene (2. 4), its sequel in which the dying Mortimer bequeathes the royal title to his nephew Richard Plantagenet Duke of York, and

[1] See pp. xxxiii, 111 below.

© in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

Cambridge

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-00583-8 - The First Part of King Henry VI, Volume 11
William Shakespeare
Frontmatter
More information

the brawls between Vernon and Basset which follow in after-scenes, is clearly introduced to prepare us for the Wars of the Roses, which are the theme of Parts II and III. Lastly, we have the no less preparatory introduction of Margaret of Anjou and the Earl of Suffolk, who without any previous dramatic warning appear in two scenes at the end of the play; the first representing her (unhistorical) capture by the earl, and the second his mission to England to persuade Henry to accept her as his bride. Now Margaret, whose arrival in London as Queen forms the opening scene of *2 Henry VI*, becomes of course the evil genius of England, appearing in all three plays that follow, and serving as at once chorus and principal agent in the disasters that overtake the nation; while the hostility of Winchester for Gloucester and the ambitious designs of Richard, Duke of York, provide the main political issues of *2 Henry VI*. But, it is argued by some, the Margaret scenes are palpably an afterthought added later than the rest of the play for the sole purpose of linking it up with the other two Parts. The prominence right from the beginning given to her father Reignier seems a sufficient confutation of this notion. He appears first in 1. 2 and is a leading character among the French adherents of the Dauphin for the rest of the play. Yet the chronicles do not mention him until his daughter is introduced, i.e. until they record the negotiations for Henry VI's marriage. Clearly then those responsible for drafting the play contemplated scenes dealing with these negotiations from the outset, and Reignier being necessary for such scenes was brought in at the earliest possible moment. Similarly Sir Edmund Chambers and others who imagine the Temple scene (2. 4) to have been added by Shakespeare some years after the rest of the drama was written, overlook the fact that the scene is integral to the plot and is followed by

© in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-00583-8 - The First Part of King Henry VI, Volume 11
William Shakespeare
Frontmatter
More information

scenes which refer back to it, one at least of them (4. 1. 78–194) being certainly composed or revised by him.

Apparently, therefore, Part I was from the outset intended as a preface to Part II; and most critics following Johnson[1] have naturally, if illogically, jumped to the conclusion that it must have been written first. Yet it differs from the rest of the cycle in one striking particular: while they are concerned entirely with domestic affairs, i.e. with the dynastic struggles of the fifteenth century, the centre of its interest is the fighting in France. No fewer than twenty out of the twenty-seven scenes take place across the Channel, whereas the three plays that follow contain only one French scene between them. Moreover, the death of Talbot and the final loss of France did not actually occur until 1453, three years after the rising of Jack Cade, so that the campaigns leading up to this catastrophe were more or less contemporary with the events depicted towards the end of Part II. A remoulding of history which made the former a prelude to the latter was of course entirely within the rights of a dramatist, and by itself tells us nothing about the history of the text. It only acquires textual significance in the light of another fact, which as far as I am aware has not been sufficiently observed[2], viz. that whereas *1 Henry VI* was written by a person or persons who knew all about *2 Henry VI*, and I think *3 Henry VI* also, those two plays display

[1] See his edition of *Shakespeare*, 1765, vol. v, p. 3.

[2] Allison Gaw, however, advances some of the following arguments in attempting to prove the priority of the *Contention* quartos to *1 Henry VI* (see his *Origin of '1 Henry VI'*, 1926, pp. 76 ff.). And E. K. Chambers (*William Shakespeare*, i. 292–3) suggests that *1 Henry VI* 'was put together in 1592 to exploit an earlier theme which had been successful in the form of *2* and *3 Henry VI*'.

© in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-00583-8 - The First Part of King Henry VI, Volume 11
William Shakespeare
Frontmatter
More information

complete ignorance of the drama which ostensibly precedes them.

There are many signs of this. Part I opens with the funeral of Henry V, who was succeeded, as the chroniclers duly record, by his infant son. But infancy does not suit the dramatist, who needs Henry VI as a character (i.e. for a boy-player) and one old enough to fall in love in the last scene; once again a perfectly legitimate departure from history. What does surprise us is to find the writer or writers of *2* and *3 Henry VI* three times informing the audience that Henry had been only nine months old when he ascended the throne, a statement repeated again at *Richard III*, 2. 3. 17[1]. So forgetful of the earlier play, if it was earlier, and so unnecessary, since some phrase about boyhood would have served equally well! Or take the slanging matches between Gloucester and Winchester, which, together with a couple of free fights by their retainers, form the staple of three scenes in *1 Henry VI* and are unquestionably connected with their rivalry in Part II. Winchester, who is most unfavourably depicted by the chroniclers, is much the same disagreeable hustler in both Parts. The Protector Gloucester, on the other hand, appears as two different men. In Part II he is, as Salisbury describes him, 'a noble gentleman' and the 'good Duke Humphrey', very conscious of his responsibilities and exercising the greatest restraint upon his feelings at moments of extreme provocation, especially in the royal presence, yet prepared to meet his enemy face to face, and let the sword decide between them, when no other means of settlement seems possible. In Part I, the first act especially, he shows neither dignity nor self-control, but conducts himself like a common brawler, who

[1] See also 3. 4. 17–18, n. below.

© in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-00583-8 - The First Part of King Henry VI, Volume 11
William Shakespeare
Frontmatter
More information

outbids Winchester in sacrilegious abuse, taxes him now with the attempted murder of Henry V, now with selling licences to brothels, and threatens to toss his reverence in a blanket, tug his beard and drag him up and down by the cheeks. This roaring-boy cannot have been drawn by the man to whom we owe the 'noble gentleman' of Part II. Yet whoever drew him had the other portrait in mind, even if he was incapable of appreciating its finer points, inasmuch as his single reference to Gloucester's duchess is demonstrably derived, not from the chronicles, but from what he understood about her in *2 Henry VI*[1]. Leaving for later treatment in the notes to that play a couple of passages[2], which appear to refer back to events in Part I, but can be readily explained by reference to the chronicle source, I conclude this section by asking any who may still believe *1* and *2 Henry VI* to have been written in that order to answer the following question. How comes it that Talbot, the hero of Part I, is never once mentioned in Part II? True, by that time 'the sweet war-man is' dramatically, though not historically, 'dead and rotten'. But in the first scene of Part II Gloucester gives a list of those who had shed their blood in France to preserve what Henry V had won, and overlooks the name of Talbot altogether[3]. Is that not very strange? And is it not still stranger—quite incomprehensible indeed if the three Parts were written in the Folio order—that among the names he does cite are those of Somerset and 'brave York', who are represented in Part I as factious traitors responsible for Talbot's death?

[1] See Gaw, *op. cit.* p. 81, and note below 1. 1. 39. For other points which may be derived from Parts II or III see notes 1. 3. 62–4; 2. 4. 62–6, 127; 2. 5. 74–92.

[2] See *2 Henry VI*, notes on 1. 1. 142 and 1. 3. 166–70.

[3] See *2 Henry VI*, 1. 1. 76–85.

© in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

Cambridge

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-00583-8 - The First Part of King Henry VI, Volume 11
William Shakespeare
Frontmatter
More information

II. Date and occasion

The Second and Third Parts, as all agree, must have been in existence and well known by the summer of 1592, because in a pamphlet written shortly before his death on 3 September, Robert Greene girds at a certain actor-dramatist, whom he calls 'Upstart Crow' and 'Shakescene', and mockingly cites a line from *3 Henry VI*. The First Part also has been generally held to date from the spring of the same year in virtue of two other contemporary allusions. One is an entry in the *Diary* of Philip Henslowe, owner of the Rose Theatre, which records fourteen performances between 3 March and 20 June of a play he describes as 'ne' (i.e. new) and calls 'Harey the vj', while he notes unusually large sums as his share of the profits[1]. The other is a passage in Nashe's *Pierce Penilesse*, entered in the Register on 8 August, which reads:

> How it would have ioyed braue Talbot (the terror of the French) to thinke that after he had lyne two hundred yeares in his Tombe, hee should triumphe againe on the Stage, and haue his bones embalmed with the teares of ten thousand spectators at least (at seuerall times), who, in the Tragedian that represents his person, imagine they behold him fresh from bleeding[2].

That Nashe and Henslowe are referring to the same popular play and that 'Harey the vj' is our *1 Henry VI* seems evident and has usually, I say, been accepted as fact[3]. Yet if Shakespeare wrote *1 Henry VI*, which first appeared on 3 March 1592, he could hardly have completed its sequels, *2* and *3 Henry VI*, in time for them to be acted, and become sufficiently famous with the London public, before 3 September, the date of

[1] *Henslowe's Diary*, ed. W. W. Greg, i. 13–15.
[2] v. *Nashe*, ed. R. B. McKerrow, i. 212.
[3] Cf. Stage History, p. li.

© in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

Cambridge
Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-00583-8 - The First Part of King Henry VI, Volume 11
William Shakespeare
Frontmatter
More information

Greene's death. And when it is observed that all the London theatres were closed by order of the Privy Council between 23 June and Michaelmas[1], the thing is seen to be impossible. Professor Alexander, who claims every line in the play below as Shakespeare's, is therefore obliged to contend that Henslowe's entry refers to some other *Henry VI*, now lost like most of the plays mentioned in the *Diary*. Yet since he is unable to deny that Nashe had in mind the battle scenes of Act 4 of the play before us when alluding to the triumph of Talbot on the stage, he leaves the problem in some obscurity[2]. Once, however, Part I is seen to be subsequent to Parts II and III, and designed as a preface to an already popular two-part drama, these perplexities vanish. *1 Henry VI*, we may take it then, was first produced on 3 March 1592 by Edward Alleyn's company, Lord Strange's men, at Henslowe's theatre, the Rose on Bankside; and it was the crowded houses and large takings at performances of *1 Henry VI* to which Nashe and Henslowe alike refer. As for Greene's allusion to *3 Henry VI*, this must point to performances of that play in 1592, up to or some time before 23 June; and it allows, if it does not compel, us to date the writing and probably the stage production of *2 Henry VI* in 1591 at latest[3].

A thronged house and heavy gate-money seem hardly justified by the intrinsic merits of Part I. But, as the standing popularity of *Titus Andronicus* shows, Elizabethan like other audiences were not very critical when dramatists appealed directly to their emotions, and an adventitious cause for the excitement at the Rose in March 1592 is not far to seek. As with *Henry V* in 1599 so with *1 Henry VI* in 1592, the production of

[1] Chambers, *Elizabethan Stage*, ii. 122; iv. 310–11.
[2] *Shakespeare's 'Henry VI' and 'Richard III'*, by Peter Alexander, 1929, pp. 189–92. [3] *2 Henry VI*, Introd. p. ix.

© in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-00583-8 - The First Part of King Henry VI, Volume 11
William Shakespeare
Frontmatter
More information

a heroic play was connected with the fortunes of an expeditionary force dispatched from these shores under the leadership of the brilliant and popular Earl of Essex. But the two plays present opposite sides of the war-god's shield; for whereas *Henry V*, celebrating Agincourt, reflects the nation's confident expectation of the impending conquest of Ireland, *1 Henry VI*, representing the overthrow of the French empire which was built up after that victory, gave an outlet for the growing sense of exasperation, anger, and even despair which was felt in London at the impending failure of an invasion of France launched in the autumn of 1591. On 2 August 1591, Essex, leading what was for that age a fine little army of some 4000 foot, 200 horse and a number of gentleman 'voluntaries', crossed to Dieppe with the intention of aiding Henry of Navarre to wrest Normandy from the power of the Catholic League. Norris had already preceded him, having occupied a port in the south of Brittany in May, while there were English forces elsewhere on the continent, e.g. at Dieppe and in the Netherlands; amounting in all to between 10,000 and 12,000 troops abroad. Though the last years of Elizabeth, writes Professor Cheyney, were 'distinctly a war period for England...in no one of the expeditions of the time was popular interest keener than in that of Normandy'[1]. Of this interest the First Folio preserves, I believe, a permanent memorial in *1 Henry VI*. A junction with Henry's army for the capture of Rouen, or 'Roan' as the capital and key-fortress of Normandy was then called in English, was the objective Essex and his mistress set before them. But when it came to the point, Henry found himself entangled in fighting elsewhere, so that the siege of Rouen did not actually

[1] E. P. Cheyney, *History of England, 1588–1603* (1926), i. 260–1.

© in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

Cambridge
Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-00583-8 - The First Part of King Henry VI, Volume 11
William Shakespeare
Frontmatter
More information

begin until 29 October; and meanwhile England watched with increasing impatience, and her Queen with ever stormier indignation, the smart expeditionary force being reduced by disease and desertion. The investment itself when at last undertaken proved an even greater disappointment. Rouen was brilliantly defended by Villars; the beleaguering army was too weak; and the English section of it was made constantly aware, or suspicious, of double-dealing on the part of Frenchmen on both sides. In the end Parma with an overwhelming Spanish army relieved the city on 10 April 1592; but the siege was already an acknowledged failure by Christmas 1591, and on 8 January Essex with a number of 'gentlemen of good quality' finally withdrew to England. It is not difficult for those who remember Gallipoli in 1915 or Norway and Dunkirk in 1940 to enter into the feelings of England at the beginning of 1592.

The *Journey's End* of that time was our play; and it was something of a stroke of genius on the part of one learned in the chronicles to select Talbot as its hero. He was the type of hero which has a special appeal for Englishmen[1]. Rather than withdraw from a siege, he had died fighting against odds; and he was moreover especially associated with Rouen, since his tomb with what la Pucelle calls its 'silly stately' epitaph, quoted at full length in the play, was a conspicuous object in the cathedral of Notre-Dame of that city[2]. Furthermore, *1 Henry VI*, which is largely concerned with siege-operations—sieges of Orleans, Rouen itself, and Bordeaux are each represented in turn, and a dozen or more scenes are devoted to them—is almost a news-reel; and was clearly composed by dramatists in close touch with the men in the trenches. Indeed, their

[1] See my introduction to *Henry V*, pp. xxx–xxxii.
[2] See note on 4. 7. 61–71 below.

© in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-00583-8 - The First Part of King Henry VI, Volume 11
William Shakespeare
Frontmatter
More information

preoccupation with contemporary events across the Channel is probably the main reason for their high-handed treatment of history; the most topical scenes, those dealing with the siege of Rouen, being in particular wholly unhistorical. Note also how the English associations with the cathedral of that town are stressed in the references to Cœur-de-lion's heart (3. 2. 83), Bedford's tomb (3. 2. 131–3), and Talbot's epitaph (4. 7. 61–71); all probably common talk in 1591–2.

But to realize how actual the play was, one only has to read the accounts by two eye-witnesses of the siege in 1591 which have come down to us: the pages devoted to it in the *Memoirs of Robert Cary*[1], who went out with Essex and returned with him about Christmas; and the more detailed day-to-day journal of the operations from 13 August to 24 December, kept by Sir Thomas Coningsby[2]. Take, for instance, the following:

Salisbury. Where is best place to make our battery next?
Gargrave. I think at the north gate; for there stand lords.
Glansdale. And I, here, at the bulwark of the bridge[3].

The three are standing with Talbot on a look-out, 'spotting' for their artillery; and the conversation might almost come direct from Coningsby, so full is his diary of similar incidents; while though the dramatist's story of the Master-Gunner and his Boy is drawn from the chronicles, 'lords' and other officers were the chief mark in 1591, and the fatal shot which killed both Salisbury and Gargrave had its counterpart in shots that laid a number of Essex's gentry low and were aimed at many more[4]. Or turn to the scene before

[1] Ed. G. H. Powell (The King's Classics), 1907.
[2] Coningsby, *Journal of the Siege of Rouen*, 1591, ed. J. G. Nichols (Camden Society, 1847).
[3] 1. 4. 65–7.
[4] E.g. see Coningsby, *op. cit.* pp. 35, 38.

© in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-00583-8 - The First Part of King Henry VI, Volume 11
William Shakespeare
Frontmatter
More information

Rouen in which Joan thrusts a burning torch from the top of a tower as a signal to the Bastard of Orleans who is waiting outside. The incident, as Boswell-Stone suggests[1], may be based on Hall or Holinshed, who relate how traitors within Le Mans showed a burning cresset from a steeple to those without. But any soldier in the theatre recently back from Rouen would recognize an allusion to disturbing 'notices of fyre' given 'out of a high steeple in the towne' to friends beyond the lines of the besiegers[2]. When, too, he heard Talbot (without any warrant in the chronicles) challenging 'Alencon and the rest' in Rouen—

> Will ye, like soldiers, come and fight it out?—

he would recall how his own Lord General challenged Villars, the Governor of Rouen[3]. Indeed, there is little doubt, as I have already hinted, that Talbot was intended to stand as in some sort the forerunner of Essex; I suspect, as others have done, it is to Essex that Lucy refers when he prophesies, over the bodies of Talbot and his son, that

> from their ashes shall be reared
> A phoenix that shall make all France afeard[4];

while in the appeal to Burgundy at 3. 2. 77 ff., the audience could hear Essex addressing Navarre.

The play reflects the lighter side of life in Normandy also. The scene (2. 3) of the visit that Talbot pays to the Countess in her castle, which again has no parallel in the chronicles, seems to be suggested by similar visits of young English officers to ladies in neighbouring castles[5] or even nunneries[6] when, owing to misty

[1] *Shakespeare's Holinshed*, 2nd ed. 1907, p. 225.
[2] See Coningsby, 8 Dec. (p. 59).
[3] Coningsby, pp. 35, 37–8.
[4] 4. 7. 92–3, and note.
[5] Coningsby, p. 60.
[6] *Ibid.* pp. 53–4.

© in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

Cambridge
Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-00583-8 - The First Part of King Henry VI, Volume 11
William Shakespeare
Frontmatter
More information

conditions or some other cause, fighting was not the order of the day. There is even a possible allusion to Henri Quatre's amorous propensities. Coningsby reports that, the French King having spoken of being obliged to leave Rouen for a few days on a visit to Dieppe, 'some of his domestiques, out of a French lyberty to speake every thynge, say that his jorney is to meete a saincte (for he oweth devotyon to more than *Gabryell*[1] only) which he hath bene devote unto longe'[2]; and a fortnight later, referring apparently to the same lady, he is surprised to find the King hunting, though 'it was said he would have taken a voiage unto Deape for some performaunce of some vowes and devotyons unto some unshreived saint there'[3]. Turn now to the scene (1. 2) in which Henri's predecessor, Charles VIII, makes love to Joan at their first interview. After waiting for some time in the outer chamber Reignier (i.e. René of Anjou) and Alençon, 'out of a French lyberty to speake every thynge', exchange the following remarks:

Reignier. My lord, methinks, is very long in talk.
Alençon. Doubtless he shrives this woman to her smock;
Else ne'er could he so long protract his speech.

The jest, which in a more innocent sense is often perpetrated by Greene, recurs in similar equivocal circumstances at 3. 2. 107–8 of *3 Henry VI*[4], and is one indication that Part I, which owes so much to Part II, owes something to Part III also. Yet with Coningsby before us we may well suppose that not a few gallants back from Rouen, in the lords' room or on the stage of the Rose, took Alençon's ribaldry as an allusion to the way of Henri IV with his 'saints', and

[1] Gabrielle d'Estrées, Henri's official mistress.
[2] Coningsby, p. 42. [3] *Ibid*. p. 52.
[4] v. *3 Henry VI*, 3. 2. 107–8, n.

© in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-00583-8 - The First Part of King Henry VI, Volume 11
William Shakespeare
Frontmatter
More information

as part of the topical colouring they had been led to expect.

1 Henry VI is richer in military incident and poorer in poetry than any other play in the canon. A good deal more might be said on the former head, on the attention paid to the alarums, sallies, and skirmishes which form the day-to-day staple of siege warfare, and on the occurrence of terms like 'court of guard', 'cornet', 'scaling-ladders', and even 'skirmish' itself, which are frequently used by Coningsby or Cary, and are nevertheless either not found elsewhere in Shakespeare, or only very rarely and in non-historical plays. But I have said enough, I hope, to show that the siege of Rouen was much in mind both with those who wrote and with those who first witnessed this, to us poor but to them exciting, drama; and that the author or authors had ransacked the chronicles to find analogies to the French campaign of 1591–2 in those of 1422–50. Let us now turn and inquire who such authors may have been.

III. The hand of Nashe

A topical play asks haste, since national excitements are at all times short-lived, eclipsed in the popular mind by new excitements of a different sort; and haste in play-making is most readily secured by setting a team of playwrights to work, even at the risk of too many cooks a little spoiling the broth. That such at least was the genesis of *1 Henry VI* seems borne out by its variety of styles, and its numerous and glaring inconsistencies and contradictions, which combine to create an impression of authorship at once multiple and precipitate. Those matters have long been recognized; and until recently critics have taken it more or less for granted that three or four hands were involved, one of them being Shakespeare's, clearly seen in 2. 4 as all agree. But Professor Alexander and his followers take, as

© in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

Cambridge
Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-00583-8 - The First Part of King Henry VI, Volume 11
William Shakespeare
Frontmatter
More information

I have said, a different view, and attribute the whole play to Shakespeare. That this at least cannot be so is, I think, proved by an amusing inconsistency in the matter of Winchester's elevation to the degree of Cardinal. We are first apprised of this elevation in the first scene of act 5, when the Duke of Exeter exclaims in surprise at his entry,

> What! is my Lord of Winchester installed,
> And called unto a cardinal's degree?

thereby implying that the bishop appears on the stage in scarlet robes and broad hat for the first time at this point. Yet if we turn back to the third scene of act 1 we find him referred to six times as cardinal and already in full canonicals, since his enemy Gloucester threatens to 'canvas him' (i.e. toss him) in his 'broad cardinal's hat' and later to stamp it under foot. Clearly 1. 3 and 5. 1 were written by different dramatists, working independently of each other; and the inconsistency, which must surely have been removed in the prompt-copy, had been left standing in the authors' MS.[1] Neither of those dramatists was, I believe, Shakespeare. Indeed I can name one of them with some assurance. For to Thomas Nashe, the 'young Juvenal' addressed with other fellow-scholars by the dying Greene in his attack upon the Upstart Crow, the Nashe whom we found enthusiastically advertising this very play in August 1592, I ascribe the whole of the first act.

It seems a hazardous guess, when we remember that the only blank verse we have in Nashe's authenticated works are 930 lines in *Summer's Last Will and Testament*, a play written in the following year and as different as can well be imagined from *1 Henry VI*, together with an unknown share of Marlowe's *Dido*. Yet the unmistakable stamp of his pinchbeck genius is

[1] See the Note on the Copy, pp. 102–3.

© in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-00583-8 - The First Part of King Henry VI, Volume 11
William Shakespeare
Frontmatter
More information

revealed by the parallels with his pamphlets in these scenes, and above all parallels which prove that he and the man who wrote *1 Henry VI*, act 1, stole their ideas from the same books. An examination of scene 2, where the parallels are most striking, should establish the point.

The scene opens with the Dauphin thus reflecting on the chances of war:

> Mars his true moving, even as in the heavens
> So in the earth, to this day is not known.

The observation is lifted almost verbatim from Nashe's favourite store of second-hand learning, Sandford's translation of Cornelius Agrippa's *De Incertitudine et Vanitate Scientiarum*, where we read 'Neither hathe the true movinge of Mars bene knowen untill this daie'[1], a piece of 'philosophy' which reappears, as Steevens noted, in Nashe's *Have with you to Saffron Walden*[2]. The last two lines of the Dauphin's same speech, which run

> Otherwhiles the famished English, like pale ghosts,
> Faintly besiege us one hour in a month,

also recall Nashe, who gives us 'pale rawbone ghosts' once[3] and 'otherwhile' (=now and then), a word not found elsewhere in Shakespeare, no fewer than nine times[4]. And lest we should suppose these things to be accidents, the following reply by Alençon to the Dauphin is even richer in such correspondences:

> They want their porridge and their fat bull-beeves:
> Either they must be dieted like mules
> And have their provender tied to their mouths,
> Or piteous they will look, like drownéd mice.

[1] Ch. 30, p. 43, ed. 1569.

[2] Nashe, ed. R. B. McKerrow, iii. 20. 13–15. For Steevens's note v. Boswell's *Malone's Shakespeare*, XVIII, 18.

[3] Nashe, *op. cit.*, ii. 69. 23. For 'rawbone' cf. 1. 2. 35, n.

[4] *Ibid.* Index in vol. v.

© in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-00583-8 - The First Part of King Henry VI, Volume 11
William Shakespeare
Frontmatter
More information

There were piteous English soldiers still in Brittany[1] a year after the siege of Rouen; and for their comfort Nashe asks whether London could not

> pumpe ouer *mutton and porridge* into Fraunce? this colde weather our souldiors, I can tell you, haue need of it, and, *poore fielde mise*, they haue almost got the colicke and stone with eating of *prouant*[2].

It looks as if the similarity of situation evoked similarity of diction. Further, 'bull-beef' is a word which Nashe uses[3], and Shakespeare does not use, elsewhere; the expression 'dieted like mules', which means 'forced to eat hay', seems connected with a discussion on the comparative nourishment that brute beasts and 'men, that diet themselves with sundry dishes', derive from their respective food—a discussion which Nashe, borrowing from Macrobius[4] or some intermediate source, had displayed as his own reflections in *The Anatomie of Absurditie*, 1589; and finally the mules with 'their provender tied to their mouths' find an echo in this typical pair of lines from *Summer's Last Will and Testament*:

> Except the Cammell haue his prouender
> Hung at his mouth, he will not trauell on[5].

Three more examples should be enough to clinch the present argument. All, like 'Mars his true moving', illustrate that trick of bookish window-dressing, so common with the 'university wits', so alien to the mind of Shakespeare; all likewise, though displayed as

[1] For the campaign in Brittany see Cheyney, *op. cit.* i. 284–8.

[2] *Four Letters Confuted* (*Nashe*, i. 331. 28–33), entered in S.R. on 12 January 1593.

[3] *Nashe*, iii. 332. 15.

[4] *Ibid.* i. 39. 30–40. 31 and McKerrow's note at iv. 34–6.

[5] *Ibid.* iii. 270, 1152–3.

© in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-00583-8 - The First Part of King Henry VI, Volume 11
William Shakespeare
Frontmatter
More information

genuine learning, have been filched from the same book, and that a book attested by his borrowings elsewhere to be one to which Nashe often had recourse for those learned scraps of which his pamphlets are mostly composed[1]. A theological treatise, entitled *A Defensatiue against the poyson of supposed Prophecies*, by Henry Howard, Earl of Northampton, 1583, this serious and learned attack upon 'expositions of dreames, oracles, revelations, invocations of damned spirits, iudicialls of astrologie, or any other kinde of pretended knowledge whatsoever *de futuris contingentibus*' would naturally attract the attention of a dramatist with the witch-prophetess, Joan of Arc, upon his hands, especially if he was meditating at the same time a pamphlet entitled *The Terrors of the Night*[2]. Certainly the author of the second scene of *1 Henry VI*, in which Joan meets the Dauphin, had read it. For he makes the infatuated prince address her thus:

> Was Mahomet inspiréd with a dove?
> Thou with an eagle art inspiréd then.
> Helen, the mother of great Constantine,
> Nor yet Saint Philip's daughters, were like thee.

The allusions in the first and last lines are explained by Howard, who writes: (i) 'Mahomet the glozing Sicophant was inspired with a Doue'[3]; and (ii) 'Saint Philippes daughters were inspired with the like gift [of prophesy], and (as Eusebius reports) renouncing all the vaine pleasures of the World, remained Virgines while they liued'[4]. And that Nashe is the dramatist who borrowed thus from Howard is strongly suggested

[1] *Ibid.* v. 376–7, 378 (McKerrow's notes).

[2] For its probable date of composition v. *Nashe*, iv. 196–7.

[3] Howard, ch. 4 (ed. 1620, p. 112).

[4] *Ibid.* ch. 32 (ed. 1620, p. 143 v.); cf. ch. 20 (p. 101 v.), ch. 34 (p. 147 v.).

© in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-00583-8 - The First Part of King Henry VI, Volume 11
William Shakespeare
Frontmatter
More information

by his *Terrors of the Night*, in which he speaks of 'the Doue wherewith the Turks hold *Mahomet* their Prophet to bee inspired'[1], and of 'the chast daughters of Saint *Philip*'[2]. So much for two of the allusions. The third also refers to Joan, but occurs earlier in the scene, where Orleans, in recommending her to the Dauphin, declares:

> The spirit of deep prophecy she hath,
> Exceeding the nine sibyls of old Rome[3].

This refers not to the ten Sibyls mentioned by Varro, or to the Cumaean Sibyl, or to her nine books, but to the so-called Sibylline Oracles, a series of pretended prophecies compiled in Alexandria during the second century A.D. and containing a passage almost universally regarded in the Middle Ages, like the fourth eclogue of Virgil, as a pagan prophecy of the coming of Christ. Howard more than once speaks of these Sibyls; and though looking upon them with some suspicion as pagans, he calls them 'discreete and bashfull virgins' and comes in the end to the conclusion that they must 'haue been inspired with this gift [of prophecy] aboue their equals'[4]. And Nashe, once more, alludes to the same Sibyls, first in a passage ridiculing Puritan preachers who 'would haue theyr mouthes reuerenced as the mouthes of the Sybils'[5], and then when he brings his Jack Wilton to Rome and takes him on a visit to 'the church of the seven Sibels, which is a most miraculous thing; all their prophesies and oracles being there inrolde'[6]. In this last he presumably utilizes some

[1] *Nashe*, i. 351. 8; cf. iii. 192. 27–30.
[2] *Ibid.* i. 381.
[3] *1 Henry VI*, 1. 2. 55–6.
[4] Howard, ch. 31 (ed. 1620, pp. 136, r. and v.); cf. ch. 32 (p. 144 r.).
[5] *Nashe*, ii. 123. 29–30.
[6] *Ibid.* ii. 280. 10–12.

© in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-00583-8 - The First Part of King Henry VI, Volume 11
William Shakespeare
Frontmatter
More information

traveller's tale of the Sistine Chapel with its five Sibyls, each with her scroll, painted with other prophets on the ceiling by Michelangelo. Nashe indeed seems rather shaky on the exact number of the ladies; but then Howard had forgotten to supply him with that detail.

The foregoing parallels are perhaps enough to prove the fundamentalists wrong about the authorship of *1 Henry VI*, as I hope to prove them wrong about that of the other two parts in my Introduction to the next volume. They should also clear Shakespeare of all responsibility for the dull, miserably commonplace, and often unmetrical verse found in these and a number of other scenes of the play. Take, for instance, a passage from scene 1, giving an account of the capture of Talbot at Patay, in which I have italicized the line-fillers, that is to say, the words unnecessary to the sense but required to eke out the decasyllables:

> The circumstance I'll tell you more at large.
> The tenth of August last this dreadful lord,
> Retiring from the siege of Orleans,
> Having *full* scarce six thousand in his troop,
> By three and twenty thousand of the French
> Was *round* encompasséd and set upon.
> No leisure had he to enrank his men;
> He wanted pikes to set before his archers;
> Instead whereof sharp stakes plucked out of hedges
> They pitchéd in the ground confusedly,
> To keep the horsemen *off* from breaking *in*.

Print this as prose, read it without metrical pauses at the end of the lines; and no one could possibly guess it to be verse. Yet, in point of fact, it is a rather favourable specimen of what Nashe was capable of, as those who know the verse of *Summer's Last Will* must admit.

When more ambitious he is less successful. Earlier in the scene, for example, something loftier is required.

© in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org

CAMBRIDGE

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-00583-8 - The First Part of King Henry VI, Volume 11
William Shakespeare
Frontmatter
More information

Bedford standing before the corpse of Henry V as it lies in Westminster Abbey thus prophesies the disasters that are coming to England:

> Posterity, await for wretched years,
> When at their mothers' moist'ned eyes babes shall suck,
> Our isle be made a nourish of salt tears,
> And none but women left to wail the dead.

Give the poet the benefit of one's perplexities, suppose the passage corrupt, read 'moist' instead of 'moist'ned' and 'marish' for 'nourish', and one might attain some improvement in sense and metre. But once begin rewriting the verse in *1 Henry VI* there would be no end to it. Besides, even when so amended what does it all amount to? What in particular would be the meaning of the second line:

> When at their mothers' moist eyes babes shall suck?

I cannot say. All I know is that this repulsive image had some meaning for Nashe, since he wrote the following lines a few months later in *Summer's Last Will*:

> Not raging Hecuba, whose hollow eyes
> Gave suck to fifty sorrows at one time[1].

Turn finally to the opening speech of the play:

> Hung be the heavens with black, yield day to night!
> Comets, importing change of times and states,
> Brandish your crystal tresses in the sky,
> And with them scourge the bad revolting stars
> That have consented unto Henry's death!
> King Henry the Fifth, too famous to live long!
> England ne'er lost a king of so much worth.

[1] See *Nashe*, iii. 289, and cf. ii. 6. 8: 'Graunt me (that am a Babe and an Infant in the misteries of Diuinitie) the gracious fauour to suck at the breasts of thy sacred Reuelation.'

© in this web service Cambridge University Press www.cambridge.org