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.

Shakespeare's Fight with the Pirates

Originally delivered in November 1915 as a series of lectures at the University of Cambridge, this close textual analysis of Shakespeare overturned the conventional methods of Shakespearean bibliography. In this careful study, Pollard, a bibliographer and literary scholar, called into question the long-held assumption that the early Quartos were of little bibliographical value because of the errors, mis-spellings and mis-lineations. By emphasizing the efforts made to impede printing piracy in early modern England, Pollard argued that the Quartos are much closer to Shakespeare's manuscripts than previous scholarship had allowed. Pollard, along with J. Dover Wilson, W.W. Greg and R.B. McKerrow, was instrumental in establishing the theoretical framework of New Bibliography, and on its publication the book was greeted with what is described in the introduction as 'friendly controversy'. First published in 1915, the book was revised for republication in 1920. This reissue is of the 1967 reprint.

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 (including out-of-copyright works originally issued by other publishers) across a wide range of disciplines in the humanities and social sciences and in science and technology.

Shakespeare's Fight with the Pirates

And the Problems of the Transmission of his Text

ALFRED W. POLLARD

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge, New York, Melbourne, Madrid, Cape Town, Singapore,
São Paolo, Delhi, Dubai, Tokyo

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

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781108015349

This edition first published 1967
This digitally printed version 2010

ISBN 978-1-108-01534-9 Paperback

SHAKESPEARE PROBLEMS

By A. W. POLLARD & J. DOVER WILSON

I

SHAKESPEARE'S FIGHT WITH THE PIRATES

AND

II

SHAKESPEARE'S HAND IN SIR THOMAS MORE

SHAKESPEARE'S FIGHT WITH THE PIRATES AND THE PROBLEMS OF THE TRANSMISSION OF HIS TEXT

BY

ALFRED W. POLLARD

SANDARS READER IN BIBLIOGRAPHY
1915

SECOND EDITION, REVISED
WITH AN INTRODUCTION

CAMBRIDGE
AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS
1920

REPRINTED
1967

Published by the Syndics of the Cambridge University Press
Bentley House, 200 Euston Road, London, N.W. 1
American Branch: 32 East 57th Street,
New York, N.Y. 10022

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Cambridge University Press Library Editions are reissues of out-of-print standard works from the Cambridge catalogue. The texts are unrevised and, apart from minor corrections, reproduce the latest published edition.

First issued in this edition 1920
Reprinted 1967

First printed in Great Britain
at the University Printing House, Cambridge
Reprinted in the United States of America
Library of Congress Catalogue Card Number: 20–8599

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

THE lectures here reprinted were delivered in November, 1915, in the University of Cambridge, under the terms of the Sandars Readership in Bibliography. They were printed in successive numbers of *The Library* in 1916, and published in book-form the following year. Thanks largely to a friendly controversy which followed a generous review in the *Literary Supplement* of *The Times*, the small first edition was speedily exhausted, and the book has been for some time out of print. That a new edition of it is offered here as the first volume of the series of monographs on *Shakespeare Problems* projected by Mr Dover Wilson and myself is due partly to my desire that the lectures should reappear under the auspices of the Press of the University which honoured me with the invitation to deliver them, partly to their forming the starting point from which most of the Problems with which this series is concerned will be approached. The central idea of the lectures is that the early editions upon which a text of Shakespeare's plays must be built, are a good deal closer to the original manuscripts from his pen than most of the text-builders have allowed. In the subsequent volumes of this series Mr Dover Wilson and I hope to show that because the text-builders have underrated their sources they have neglected many of the clues which these offer, and that the clues lead to very interesting results, also that the futility of many of the 'conjectural emendations' which overload the

Variorum editions is amply accounted for by the neglect of their venturesome authors to take any account of the character of the hand in which the plays were written. In many respects, if we are to do better, we must make a fresh start.

Some apology is perhaps needed for one who has already written, or helped in writing, four books on Shakespeare bibliography, now taking part in planning a new series of booklets on the same subject. The best plea in mitigation that can be offered is that one bit of work has led to another, often with the help of an idea borrowed from a friend, and that in a research so largely new it is only by taking one step at a time that any sure progress can be made. One or two points have, I hope, been definitely cleared up and the elucidation of these has revealed pathways of advance which previously could hardly have been distinguished.

The first of these points is as to the editions of *The Merchant of Venice*, Printed by J. Roberts, 1600; *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Printed by Iames Roberts, 1600; *King Lear*, Printed for Nathaniel Butter, 1608; and *Henry V*, Printed by T. P., 1608. As long as these imprints and dates were accepted as correct, it was impossible to arrive at any sound conception of the Shakespeare Quartos as a class, or of the part played by James Roberts in their publication. Accident having brought under my notice, at an interval of three or four years, first a volume belonging to Edward Gwynn (a seventeenth century collector) and then, in 1906, one owned by Mr Hussey, each containing these four plays with six others[1]

[1] *The Whole Contention between the two Famous Houses, Lancaster and York*, Printed for T. P., n.d., in two parts, counting

(three of them dated 1619) by or attributed to Shakespeare, I was led to look for traces of other volumes made up in the same way, and finding clear proof that Garrick and Capell[1] had both owned such volumes leapt at the conclusion that in 1619 advantage was taken of the issue of reprints of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Pericles* and the *Yorkshire Tragedy*, to bind up with them the unsold stock of earlier editions. The theory was set forth in an article contributed to *The Academy* (2nd June, 1906) entitled *Shakespeare in the Remainder Market*. Two years later, I had the pleasure of printing in *The Library* (2nd Series, vol. IX. pp. 113-131) an article by Dr W. W. Greg, *On Certain False Dates in Shakespearian Quartos*, which drew attention to the "curious similarity of style in the various titlepages" of the plays in the volume of 1619 which I had supposed to have been made up of new editions and remainders, to the use in them of large numerals not elsewhere found before 1610, and of devices followed by Roberts' imprint which Roberts is not known to have used, also (and chiefly) to the evidence offered by the watermarks that "the whole volume is printed on one mixed stock of paper," which "could not have been the case if the individual plays had been printed

as two: *Pericles*, *Prince of Tyre*, Printed for T. P., 1619; *The first part of the Life of Sir John Old-castle*, Printed for T. P., 1600; *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, Printed for Arthur Johnson, 1619; *A Yorkshire Tragedie*, Printed for T. P., 1619.

[1] Later research suggests that the copies of the ten plays owned by Dr Farmer, the Duke of Roxburghe, Thomas Jefferson and T. P. Barton, had originally belonged to similar volumes. See *A Census of Shakespeare Quartos*, by H.C. Bartlett and A. W. Pollard, Yale University Press, 1916, Introduction, pp. xxvii *sqq*.

at different dates extending over a period of twenty years." Dr Greg quite rightly deduced from this evidence that all the editions in the 'Gwynn' volume were printed together in 1619. He thus at a blow rid literary criticism and bibliography of the problems falsely raised by what had been taken to be duplicate editions of those of *The Merchant of Venice* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, rightly dated 1600, and of *King Lear*, rightly dated 1608.

Dr Greg's contention won considerable acceptance, but the argument from non-occurrence used in the case of the large numerals and the devices is necessarily weak, while the proof (for such it was) from watermarks embedded in the backs of small quartos often tightly bound was not easily checked. The following year Mr William Jaggard helped, by showing in *The Library* (2nd Series, vol. IX. pp. 208–11) that his ancestor, both before and after 1619, was using papers with watermarks similar to those found in the plays in the Gwynn volume. In chapter IV. of my *Shakespeare Folios and Quartos* (written as an introduction to Messrs Methuen's excellent series of facsimiles of the four Shakespeare Folios) I added arguments from the text-type used in *The Merchant of Venice* and other plays, from the spelling and other points. There was growing assent, but in *The Library* for January, 1910 (3rd Series, vol. I. pp. 36–45) in an article *On the Supposed False Dates in certain Shakespeare Quartos*, Mr Alfred Huth defended my original hypothesis of a 'remainder volume' as against Dr Greg's of false dates with equal courtesy and skill, and though I bowled my hardest against him I am not sure that any umpire, still less the average bookman, would have granted that I bowled

him out. Before the year closed, however, Mr William Neidig, an instructor in the University of Wisconsin, in two articles in American reviews[1] offered a physical proof which could not be gainsaid. Having first obtained exact photographic facsimiles of all the title-pages in question (photographing a millimetre rule along with each so as to enable its accuracy to be tested),

"He then plotted out each title-page into little squares, and by this means convinced himself that the words 'Written by W. Shakespeare,' the 'Heb Ddieu, Heb Ddim' device, and the word 'Printed' in the title-page of 'Pericles' dated 1619, and of the 'Merchant of Venice' dated 1600, come in precisely the same places, and demonstrated this beyond possibility of cavil by a composite photograph in which the 'Merchant of Venice' is superimposed on 'Pericles,' and the words in question come out quite sharply, and the device with only the very slightest blur, showing that the block may have been shifted a fraction of a millimetre. The occurrence in both title-pages of an identical flaw of one kind in the W of 'Written' and of another kind in the W of Shakespeare's initial, completes the proof that this portion of the title-page of 'Pericles' had been used again in the title-page of the 'Merchant of Venice' and thus offered a pretty demonstration of the impossibility of their having been separated by an interval of nineteen years. Mr Neidig thinks that the trouble-saving printer 'lifted off the lower portion' of one title-page for use in another. It

[1] *Modern Philology*, October, 1910 (pp. 1–19, 'The Shakespeare Quartos of 1619'), and *The Century Magazine*, October, 1910 (pp. 912–919, 'False Dates on Shakespeare Quartos').

seems to me more probable that he picked out all the rest of the contents of the forme, rather than risked dropping out letters by transferring the old matter to a new one; but that the same type-letters in the same setting-up were used in the 'Yorkshire Tragedy' of 1619, 'Pericles' of 1619, 'Merchant of Venice' of 1600, and 'Merry Wives' of 1619, he has proved up to the hilt; and I think that henceforth any bookseller who sells the '1600' 'Merchant of Venice' as printed in that year, will be liable to have it returned[1]."

Possibly because of the hint in this last paragraph, the editions in question are now, I believe, always sold with a mention of the spuriousness of their dates, so that at least this one problem may be considered definitely settled. To the literary student the most important result is the disappearance of all theories as to the true and false editions bearing the same dates being printed from different manuscripts, and also of the contention, which had been generally accepted, that the falsely dated *Merchant of Venice* was the true

[1] From my review of Mr Neidig's articles in *The Library* (3rd Series, vol. II. pp. 101–107) for January, 1911. In the same review I mentioned a curious fact, to which my attention had first been called by Mr E. H. Dring, viz. that in copies of the falsely-dated issues the dates have sometimes been torn away in a manner which points to deliberate intent. This suggests that when Laurence Heyes reasserted his claim to his father's copyright at Stationers' Hall, on 8th July, 1619, the false dates, having been adjudged spurious, were mutilated by way of penalty, enforced either by the Company or by private agreement. While the volume may originally have been planned honestly, there seems little room for doubt that before it was completed a deliberate attempt had been made to 'wangle' the copyrights of the *Merchant of Venice* and *Midsummer Night's Dream*.

'first edition.' To bibliographers, on the other hand, the chief gain was the solution of the difficulties as to Roberts' use of his types and the reversal of the current view of him as the most daring of the pirates who attacked the property of the players. It became possible to understand his entries in the Stationers' Register as 'staying' entries, made in the interests of the actors to render piracy more difficult, a rôle which accorded much better with his position as holder of a privilege for printing all play-bills than the predatory career usually assigned to him.

Read by this new light on Roberts' career, the entries in the Stationers' Register become intelligible and there was the less reason to believe that the Company had grossly abused the powers entrusted to it to the detriment of authors. In writing my *Shakespeare Folios and Quartos* in 1909, I gave the Stationers credit for the moderate degree of honesty which succeeds in maintaining itself when times are not too hard, and the players for the moderate power of self-defence which, when one horse has been stolen from a stable in which others are still kept, sets about getting a new lock for the stable-door. As I then wrote:

"The theory that anyone could steal and print an Elizabethan play and obtain copyright in it by paying sixpence to the Stationers' Company, to the exclusion of the author and his assigns, does not conflict with the official functions either of the Censors of the Press or of the Stationers' Company. Neither the one nor the other were legally bound to show any consideration to authors. What the theory, when extended to cover not an isolated instance but a whole series of depredations, conflicts with, is common

sense and the English character. It is understood that in this happy land if various people did all the things they are legally entitled to do, the Constitution would be in a sad plight. But these mysterious possibilities remain unfulfilled, and while they are unfulfilled, no one troubles to obtain paper guarantees against them, with the result that future historians will perhaps gravely argue that of course they happened."

Historians of the drama had argued with great gravity that all the publishers of Shakespeare's plays were thieves, and that the Stationers' Company was always on the side of the thief. The main work of my *Shakespeare Folios and Quartos* was the demonstration that the more charitable view (that while some publishers were thieves others were honest, and that the Stationers' Company, as a body, when called on to lend its help to one side or the other, at least occasionally is found helping the right man) explains alike the reference to 'stolne and surreptitious copies' in the Address to the Reader in the First Folio and the entries in the Register much more successfully than the pessimism which had become traditional with the writers on Shakespeare's text. When the available data were interpreted on these lines the early quartos fell into two groups: (i) of four bad texts to which alone the epithets 'stolne and surreptitious' properly applied, viz. *Romeo and Juliet*, 1597, *Henry V*, 1600, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, 1602, and *Hamlet*, 1603, all entered irregularly on the Stationers' Register or not at all, with *Pericles*, 1609, as a later instance of a similar kind; and (ii) of fourteen (positively or comparatively) good texts, twelve of which were regularly entered on the Register, while

of the other two one certainly (*Romeo and Juliet*, 1599) and the other probably (*Loves Labors Lost*) were printed to take the place of copies rightly called 'stolne and surreptitious.' The chapters devoted to this topic in the *Shakespeare Folios and Quartos* book were written controversially and on some minor points did not make the best of their case. In the first and second of these Sandars Lectures, the argument is put as well as I can put it, and it has not yet been challenged.

Between the writing of the *Shakespeare Folios and Quartos* of 1909 and the Sandars Lectures of 1915, a little book was published, Mr Percy Simpson's *Shakespearian Punctuation* (Oxford, at the Clarendon Press, 1911, pp. 107, price 5*s*.), which was a real inspiration to me, none the less so because I put my own interpretation on some of the facts which I owed to Mr Simpson. Mr Simpson's main thesis was that the punctuation which is usually regarded as the weakest point in the printing of the Folio of 1623, is "on the whole sound and reasonable." He asked "was there, or was there not, a system of punctuation which old printers used," and proved conclusively that there was such a system and that numerous pointings in the First Folio which ignore our modern (not very successful) rules for applying a logically appropriate pointing to every grammatical construction, when interpreted on the lines of the older system are strikingly justified. Something is said of Mr Simpson's book in the fourth of these lectures, but before this was delivered I had already written more fully on the subject in the introduction to *A New Shakespeare Quarto, the Tragedy of King Richard II, printed for the third time by Valentine Simmes in*

1598[1], in which I had more space at my disposal. To have enlarged what I wrote for my lecture would have destroyed its balance, and I may therefore be pardoned for quoting a few paragraphs from my *Richard II* introduction to illustrate the importance of the new light I owed to Mr Simpson in dealing with the Quartos, with which his own little book was not concerned.

Mr Simpson's two points as regards the old punctuation were (i) that "the earlier system was mainly rhythmical" rather than logical, and (ii) that whereas "modern punctuation is uniform; the old punctuation was quite the reverse," and that this 'flexible' system of punctuation enabled poets to "express subtle differences of tone." Commenting on this, I wrote:

"In plays, wherever punctuation becomes important, it might perhaps best be called 'dramatic.' To get at its underlying principle we may go back to the lessons of the schoolroom in which I learnt that, when a comma stopped the way, I must pause while I could count one; when a semicolon, while I could count two; when a colon, three; when a full-stop, four. Educational formulas are long-lived, and it is possible that this simple rule of thumb, which made each stop simply and solely a measure of time, came down from Elizabethan days. It is certainly quite inapplicable to modern punctuation. Anyone who read aloud and marked his stops like this would risk having things thrown at him. In reading aloud we ignore many of the stops with which

[1] Reproduced in facsimile from the unique copy in the library of William Augustus White. With an introduction by Alfred W. Pollard. Bernard Quaritch, 1916.

grammarians have taught printers to pepper our pages. The stops may sometimes save us from mistaking the sense, but they give hardly any clue as to how a given passage should be 'taken,' and it is precisely this which the punctuation of the First Folio attempted to do—and, at least occasionally, did.

"The strength of Mr Simpson's treatise lies in his examples, and the example which effected my conversion was a line and a half from *King Henry V* (V. i. 49 *sq.*) spoken by Pistol as, in terror of Fluellen's cudgel, he begins to eat the leek. In the Folio it is printed, quite shamelessly:

> By this Leeke, I will most horribly reuenge I eate
> and eate I sweare.

In the Globe Shakespeare there is a colon after 'reuenge' and a comma after the second 'eate'; but the Folio shows us Fluellen flourishing his cudgel, and how should Pistol stop while he might count three after 'reuenge,' or even one after 'eate,' when the slightest pause might bring the cudgel on his head? The absence of stops here can hardly be called rhythmical, but it is certainly dramatic, and it gives what is practically a stage direction, which is totally lacking in the modern rendering.

"While I was pondering this section chance brought to me, at second hand[1], a delightful piece of Shakespearian punctuation of an opposite kind, in Mr Anstey's *Voces Populi*. A Hyde Park orator is

[1] In a quotation in the Rev. Cyril A. Alington's *A Schoolmaster's Apology* (Longmans, 1914).

giving his views on ministerial shortcomings, and by printing his observations as:

> The present Government Har. The most Abandoned! The most Degraded! The most Cowardly! The most Debased! The most Ber-lud-thirsty! Set. Of Sneakin' Ruffians. That hever disgraced the Title. Of so-called Yumanity

Mr Anstey not only tells us exactly what his orator said, but exactly how he said it. Here, in fact, we have the First Folio punctuation in a nut-shell, emphasis-capitals and all."

Mr Simpson had concerned himself only with the punctuation of the Folio. In my introduction to the facsimile of the newly identified quarto of *Richard II* I was trying to follow the transmission of the text of one of the 'good' Shakespeare Quartos from the time when the ink first dried on Shakespeare's manuscript of it to the publication of the first Quarto in 1597 and again on from that till the pages on which it is printed in the First Folio were finally printed off. I could not help believing that the punctuation, or lack of punctuation, in Pistol's line and a half represented exactly how that line and a half was 'taken' when *Henry V* was performed at the Globe, and I did not doubt that it also represented exactly how the line and a half was written in Shakespeare's original manuscript. Were there any passages in the first quarto of *Richard II* for which as much as this could be claimed?

In writing this last sentence, I have unconsciously allowed experience to modify my question. There was a brief excited moment during which it took the larger form, 'Was the first Quarto of *Richard II* punctuated throughout like this'? To that an honest editor can

only return one answer: 'In any positive sense it was *not*.' Negatively and defectively we may persuade ourselves that its light, inadequate punctuation corresponds roughly to what Shakespeare set down, but for pages at a time there is nothing on which we can put our finger and say 'that punctuation must be Shakespeare's.' On the other hand, as regards the set speeches, and now and again elsewhere, the punctuation is distinctly dramatic and entitles us to believe that Shakespeare punctuated these portions of his manuscript with some care and that the Quarto reproduces this punctuation with very much the same substantial fidelity that it reproduces the words of the text.

"In the Cambridge edition, lines I. i. 92–100 are thus printed:

> Besides I say and will in battle prove,
> Or here or elsewhere to the furthest verge
> That ever was survey'd by English eye,
> That all the treasons for these eighteen years 95
> Complotted and contrived in this land
> Fetch from false Mowbray their first head and spring.
> Further I say, and further will maintain
> Upon his bad life to make all this good,
> That he did plot the Duke of Gloucester's death...

Plump at the end of l. 96, separating 'treasons' from its verb, the Quarto inserts a colon, and the line "Fetch from false Mowbray their first head and spring" comes rushing out after the pause with doubled effect. And at the end of this line, shade of Lindley Murray! there is no full stop—only a comma; for Bolingbroke will not give Mowbray a chance to interrupt him, but dashes on with his second accusation, with only an imperceptible pause. In the earlier lines, on the other hand, when he is

preparing the way for his rush, Bolingbroke's measured tones are marked by two stops which the Cambridge editors omit, a comma after 'say' in l. 92, and another after 'here' in the next line. Grammatically a comma after 'here' should entail another after 'elsewhere,' but dramatic punctuation sets no store on pairing its commas and usually omits either one or the other."

That the punctuation in this passage is no mere accident to which a fanciful interpretation has been assigned, may be shown by quoting another set speech from the same source. As a rule Richard is exhibited in the Quarto as a rapid speaker, seldom needing a heavier stop than a comma, and the contrast to his usual style which we find in his despondent speech, III. iii. 142–159, when he finds himself obliged to speak Bolingbroke fair is marked in the first Quarto by a punctuation obviously deliberate. In this text it reads:

What muſt the King do now? muſt he ſubmit?
The King ſhall do it: muſt he be depoſde?
The king ſhall be contented: muſt he looſe
The name of King? a Gods name let it go:
Ile giue my iewels for a ſet of Beades:
My gorgeous pallace for a hermitage:
My gay apparel for an almeſmans gowne:
My figurde goblets for a diſh of wood:
My ſcepter for a Palmers walking ſtaffe:
My ſubiects for a paire of carued Saintes,
And my large kingdome for a little graue,
A little little graue, an obſcure graue,
Or Ile be buried in the Kings hie way,
Some way of common trade, where ſubiects feete
May hourely trample on their ſoueraignes head;
For on my heart they treade now whilſt I liue:
And buried once, why not vpon my head?

Here the Cambridge editors check the passion of the cry 'a God's name let it go' by a comma after 'name'; substitute commas for colons at the end of the next five lines, and on the other hand put a semicolon after 'an obscure graue' instead of a comma and again another semicolon instead of a colon after 'liue.' By these changes in the time in which the several sections of the speech are taken the whole passage is reduced, as far as the words allow, to a dull monotony. The punctuation of the first Quarto, on the other hand, accents the despondent slowness of the beginning, the swiftness of the cry of impatience and the pauses between the meditative lines in which Richard soothes himself with his fancies. Then at the idea of death it shows him swept away by a flood of self-pity, which will bear no stops heavier than commas till it slows down for the final reproach, and (after a long pause) the sombre sarcasm which succeeds it. No printer could have invented this exquisitely varied punctuation. Is there any room for doubt that it gives the lines as Shakespeare trained his fellows to deliver them? Is there any greater room for doubt that it gives us the lines as Shakespeare punctuated them himself as he wrote them down while he heard the accents in which Richard, as he conceived him, was to speak them? These colons and commas take us straight into the room in which *Richard II* was written and we look over Shakespeare's shoulder as he penned it.

When I wrote my *Shakespeare Folios and Quartos*, I wrote as a bibliographer and a lover of logical economy impatient of hypotheses disproportionately large compared with the facts they were framed to explain, also as an optimist impatient of the pessimism

which represents human nature as worse than it is. For a quarter of a century my work had brought me into touch with printers and publishers and editors, and I stood up for my friends. I satisfied myself that most of the Quartos were not 'stolne and surreptitious,' that the Folio editors made no use of the four that were, and that in other respects they did fairly well. I owe it to Mr Simpson's little book and to Mr W. A. White who exhorted me to put all I could into the introduction to the facsimile of his newly-found Quarto[1] that I woke up at last to the fact that I was playing for much higher stakes than I had in the least realized, that here was evidence which concerned not merely the good name of Roberts or Heminge and Condell, or Blount, but the whole problem of the transmission of Shakespeare's text, with possibilities of finding ourselves in an actual contact with him of which I had previously not allowed myself to dream. My hopes rose higher when in gathering materials for my third Sandars lecture I found myself able to show (1) that many of Shakespeare's plays were printed from prompt copies and (2) that some plays by other writers which have come down to us in manuscript are autographs to which the prompter had added his notes. There was room, as I ought to have emphasized, for a copyist of almost photographic fidelity between the prompt copy and the printed texts, but a copyist making a copy for printing would surely have edited away the more obvious prompter's notes. In any case the link I sought to establish holds fast to this extent that no one who knows the evidence can say it is impossible, or

[1] Also to Miss Henrietta Bartlett who generously waived in my favour her claim as the discoverer to edit it herself.

even very improbable, that some of the copy used in printing both the good Quartos and the Folios was actually in Shakespeare's autograph. If we honestly admit this possibility it must alter our whole attitude to the extant texts.

Shakespeare died in 1616, and out of the commemoration, maimed by the occurrence of the tercentenary in the middle of the Great War, came Sir Edward Maunde Thompson's book on *Shakespeare's Handwriting* (Oxford, at the Clarendon Press, 1916) which showed by a masterly analysis that Shakespeare must have written a hand of the same style as that found in the three pages of the extant manuscript of the play of *Sir Thomas More* (British Museum Harleian MS. 7368) in which More persuades the May-day rioters to submission. I believe myself that my old Chief's full claim that those three pages are the work of Shakespeare and written by him with his own hand is well founded and will ultimately be accepted by all competent judges, as it has been already by the few who are familiar with the manuscript. It is proposed that one of the volumes of our Shakespeare Problems series should deal with this question. But splendid as is the hope of finding ourselves in acknowledged possession of three pages in Shakespeare's autograph, the gain of having secured the guidance of a great expert in translating for us the six authentic signatures (written, one of them with obvious impatience, two with the uncertainty as to what they ought to do which comes over laymen when they have to sign important documents in the presence of a lawyer, and three in sickness) into the hand in which the plays were written in the abounding vitality of the prime of life is

potentially even greater. We now know at least approximately the rules to which the emendation of Shakespeare must conform if it is to be anything better than a game of literary guess-work. Ninety-nine per cent. of the shots which overcrowd the notes of the Variorum editions are shown to be altogether off the target, and the way is prepared for a saner class of emendations, wholesomely limited by the condition that in an Elizabethan English hand they must look sufficiently like what appears in the printed texts for it to be conceivable that a scribe or printer should have mistaken the one for the other.

This willing submission to limitations recognized as the rules of what, being Englishmen, we shall probably call 'the game,' has a very important counterpart and also applies to other editings besides those which involve the substitution of one or more words for others. As an example of its extension we may take the line-arrangements, which should not lightly be altered unless we can see how and why the scribe or printer went wrong. Its counterpart lies in the necessity of refusing to be satisfied with merely setting right an obvious error until we have discovered what lies behind it. Faced with the double disarrangement of the lines in Theseus' speech in the *Midsummer Night's Dream* (V. i. 1–20) here printed from Fisher's Quarto of 1600, previous critics of Shakespeare's text had contented themselves with the easy task of rearranging as four the first three italicized lines in the passage as here printed, and the five and a quarter as six, in accordance with the slanting strokes here inserted:

Hip. Tis strange, my Theseus, that these louers speake of.
The. More straunge then true. I neuer may beleeue

These antique fables, nor these Fairy toyes.
Louers, and mad men haue such seething braines,
Such shaping phantasies, that apprehend / more,
Then coole reason euer comprehends. / The lunatick
The louer, and the Poet / are of imagination all compact. /
One sees more deuils, then vast hell can holde:
That is the mad man. The louer, all as frantick,
Sees Helens beauty in a brow of Ægypt.
The Poets eye, in a fine frenzy, rolling, / doth glance
From heauen to earth, from earth to heauen. / And as
Imagination bodies forth / the formes of things
Vnknowne: the Poets penne / turnes them to shapes,
And giues to ayery nothing, / a locall habitation,
And a name. / Such trickes hath strong imagination,
That if it would but apprehend some ioy,
It comprehends some bringer of that ioy.
Or in the night, imagining some feare,
How easie is a bush suppos'd a Beare?

Mr Dover Wilson was not so easily contented. He could not believe that if the copy which the scribe or the printer had before him had arranged the lines correctly it would not have been faithfully followed. Nor did he rush at the explanation, too readily offered in such cases, that the printer had no copy before him, but was setting up his lines at the dictation of some extraordinarily leisured person who read out the text at the rate of a line a minute, the quickest possible rate at which it could be set in type. He noticed that the lines here printed in roman letter are concerned only with lovers and madmen; those in italic not only with lunatics and lovers, but also with 'the poet,' and so reached the conclusion that the italicized lines were an afterthought, written, in such space as could be found, on the margin, and transferred thence to the text by a scribe or printer who had no instinct for

dividing them rightly. Thus we can look over Shakespeare's shoulder, not only when he is in the first heat of inspiration, but also when he is revising, though in truth in this case he seems to have been better inspired in his second thoughts than in his first. Such a nugget is not likely to be found very often, but to have lighted on even one of this size and quality must hearten any literary goldminer to seek for others.

This series has been projected in the belief that what remains to be done is far more important than the little which has so far been accomplished. It is possible to distinguish already at least four different varieties of Shakespeare texts, each with its own special problems:

(i) the four piracies, *Romeo and Juliet* (1597), *Henry V* (1600), *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (1602), *Hamlet* (1603), besides that of *Pericles* (1609) about which, to be frank, we at present have made no special research;

(ii) the texts of Shakespeare's journeyman's days, notably those of *Henry VI* (all three parts) and *Richard III*, where he was working in collaboration with others, or revising their work, so that we are dealing with other problems besides those of his making;

(iii) the texts for which we have both a 'good' Quarto and the Folio, and have to ascertain their relations;

(iv) the texts of later plays for which we have only the Folio.

Thanks to the constant kindness of the editor of *The Literary Supplement* of *The Times*, Mr Wilson and I have been able to put in print, at least in outline, a theory as to the four piracies, and I have myself

dealt, even more sketchily, with the York and Lancaster Plays which form part of group (ii). In articles in *The Athenaeum*, Mr Wilson has written on the literary problems of *Hamlet* as well as in *The Library* on the more strictly bibliographical ones. We hope that volumes of the series will grow out of each of these preliminary handlings. For groups (iii) and (iv), we have at present but scanty materials, but we know already that there are plenty to be found. The printers of the Quartos, the editors of the Folio, have alike been blamed for doing so little to present Shakespeare's plays in a worthy form, for not correcting obvious errors, for not even dividing the texts uniformly into Acts and Scenes. We should rather be thankful that these honest men were content with printing the copies from which they had to work with so little alteration. Where they have asserted themselves they have done real harm which can never be entirely righted. Their refusal to edit their material is always our gain. On almost every page of the Quartos and First Folio there is to be found some clue to the history of the text which the literary editors have either despised as beneath their notice or treated as an error introduced by the printers, without ever asking why or how the printers should have so mishandled straightforward copy, if it was straightforward copy that they had before them. We hope by noting and classifying these clues—stage-directions which should have been re-written, line-arrangements which should have been re-divided, strange spellings which should have been normalized, even misprints which should never have been made—to contribute something to the solution of problems which have already occupied the attention of scholars

and even of problems, of no less importance, which as yet have scarcely been raised. By dealing with them in separate booklets we hope to continue to advance safely, step by step, and to use the experience gained from the problems of one group in dealing with those of another. It is all pioneer work and we ask for the indulgence which pioneers may fairly claim and which up to the present we gratefully acknowledge has been most generously extended to us.

ALFRED W. POLLARD.

5 *April*, 1920.