

УИЛЬЯМ ШЕКСПИР

THE WORKS OF
WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE
[CAMBRIDGE EDITION]
[VOL. 1 OF 9]

Уильям Шекспир
The Works of William
Shakespeare [Cambridge
Edition] [Vol. 1 of 9]

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PREFACE

The main rules which we proposed to ourselves in undertaking this Edition are as follows:

1. To base the text on a thorough collation of the four Folios and of all the Quarto editions of the separate plays, and of subsequent editions and commentaries.

2. To give all the results of this collation in notes at the foot of the page, and to add to these conjectural emendations collected and suggested by ourselves, or furnished to us by our correspondents, so as to give the reader in a compact form a complete view of the existing materials out of which the text has been constructed, or may be emended.

3. In all plays of which there is a Quarto edition differing from the received text to such a degree that the variations cannot be shown in foot-notes, to print the text of the Quarto *literatim* in a smaller type after the received text.

4. To number the lines in each scene separately, so as to facilitate reference.

5. To add at the end of each play a few notes, (*a*) to explain such variations in the text of former editions as could not be intelligibly expressed in the limits of a foot-note, (*b*) to justify any deviation from our ordinary rule either in the text or the foot-notes, and (*c*) to illustrate some passage of unusual difficulty or interest.

6. To print the Poems, edited on a similar plan, at the end of the Dramatic Works.

An edition of Shakespeare on this plan has been for several years in contemplation, and has been the subject of much discussion. That such an edition was wanted seemed to be generally allowed, and it was thought that Cambridge afforded facilities for the execution of the task such as few other places could boast of. The Shakespearian collection given by Capell to the Library of Trinity College supplied a mass of material almost unrivalled in amount and value, and in some points unique; and there, too, might be found opportunities for combined literary labour, without which the work could not be executed at all. At least, if undertaken by one person only, many years of unremitting diligence would be required for its completion.

The first step towards the realization of the project was taken in the spring of 1860, when the first act of *Richard the Second* was printed by way of specimen, with a preface signed 'W. G. Clark' and 'H. R. Luard,'¹ where the principles, on which the proposed Edition should be based, were set forth with the view 'of obtaining opinions as to the feasibility of the plan, and suggestions as to its improvement.'

All the persons who answered this appeal expressed their warm approval of the general plan, and many favoured us with suggestions as to details, which we have either adopted, or at least not rejected without careful and respectful consideration.

Since our work was commenced, we have learned that the need of such an Edition has presented itself, independently, to the minds of many literary men, and that a similar undertaking was recommended as long ago as 1852, by Mr Bolton Corney, in *Notes and Queries*, Vol. VI. pp. 2, 3; and again by a correspondent of the same journal who signs himself 'Este,' Vol. VIII. p. 362.

This concurrence of opinion leads us to hope that our Edition will be found to supply a real want, while, at the same time, the novelty of its plan will exempt us from all suspicion of a design to supersede, or even compete with, the many able and learned Editors who have preceded us in the same field.

We will first proceed to explain the principles upon which we

¹ A third editor was afterwards added. Mr Luard's election to the office of Registrary compelled him to relinquish his part, at least for the present; and the first volume, consequently, is issued under the responsibility of two editors only.

have prepared our text.

A. With respect to the Readings

The basis of all texts of Shakespeare must be that of the earliest Edition of the collected plays, the Folio of 1623, which, for more easy reference, we have designated F_1 ². This we have mainly adopted, unless there exists an earlier edition in quarto, as is the case in more than one half of the thirty-six plays. When the first Folio is corrupt, we have allowed some authority to the emendations of F_2 above subsequent conjecture, and secondarily to F_3 and F_4 ; but a reference to our notes will show that the authority even of F_2 in correcting is very small. Where we have Quartos of authority, their variations from F_1 have been generally accepted, except where they are manifest errors, and where the text of the entire passage seems to be of an inferior recension to that of the Folio. To show that the later Folios only corrected the first by conjecture, we may instance two lines in *Midsummer Night's Dream*:

Give me your neif, Mounsieur Mustard Seed. IV. 1.

'Neif,' which is spelt 'nief' in Qq F_1 , becomes 'newfe' in F_2 , 'newse' and 'news' in F_3 F_4 .

And finds his trusty Thisby's mantle slain. V. 1.

F_1 omits 'trusty.' F_2 makes up the line by inserting 'gentle.'

² See [page xxi](#).

Where the Folios are all obviously wrong, and the Quartos also fail us, we have introduced into the text several conjectural emendations; especially we have often had recourse to Theobald's ingenuity. But it must be confessed that a study of errors detracts very much from the apparent certainty of conjectures, the causelessness of the blunders warning us off the hope of restoring, by general principles or by discovery of causes of error.

For example: in the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, I. 1, Or else it stood upon the choice of merit, the reading of the Folios, is certainly wrong; but if we compare the true reading preserved in the Quartos, 'the choice of friends,' we can perceive no way to account for the change of 'friends' to 'merit,' by which we might have retraced the error from 'merit' to 'friends.' Nothing like the 'ductus literarum,' or attraction of the eye to a neighbouring word, can be alleged here.

Hence though we have admitted conjectures sometimes, we have not done so as often as perhaps will be expected. For, in the first place, we admit none because we think it better rhythm or grammar or sense, unless we feel sure that the reading of the Folio is altogether impossible. In the second place, the conjecture must appear to us to be the only probable one. If the defect can be made good in more ways than one equally plausible, or, at least, equally possible, we have registered but not adopted these improvements, and the reader is intended to make his own selection out of the notes.

For example, in the *Merry Wives of Windsor*, II. 3. 80, we have assumed Mr Dyce's conjecture, 'Cried I aim?' to be the only satisfactory reading of a passage decidedly wrong; but in the same play, IV. 1. 63, 'Woman, art thou lunaties?' as the error may equally possibly be evaded by reading 'lunacies' with Rowe, and 'lunatics' with Capell, we have retained the error.

The well-known canon of criticism, that of two readings 'ceteris paribus' the more difficult is to be preferred, is not always to be applied in comparing the readings of the Folios. For very frequently an anomaly which would have been plausible on account of its apparent archaism proves to be more archaic than Shakespeare, if the earlier Quartos give the language of Shakespeare with more correctness. Ex. *Midsummer Night's Dream*, III. 2: 'Scorn and derision never come in tears' Qq; 'comes' Ff; and in the same play, IV. 1: 'O how mine eyes do loath' Q₁, altered to 'doth loath' in Q₂ F₁, and restored, evidently by a grammatical reviser, to 'do loath' in F₂ F₃ F₄. Again, I. 1: 'what all but he do know,' Qq, is altered to 'doth know' in Ff.

This last error points to a very common anomaly in grammar; one which seems almost to have become a rule, or, at any rate, a license in Shakespeare's own time, that a verb shall agree in number with the nominative intervening between the true governing noun and the verb.

B. Grammar

In general, we do not alter any passage merely because the grammar is faulty, unless we are convinced that the fault of grammar was due to the printer altogether, and not to Shakespeare. We look upon it as no part of our task to improve the poet's grammar or correct his oversights: even errors, such as those referred to in note (VII) to the *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, and notes (I) and (X) to the *Merry Wives of Windsor*, because we thought them to be Shakespeare's own blunders, have been allowed to stand. But many phrases that are called bad grammar by us, and rightly so called, were sanctioned by usage among the contemporaries of Shakespeare, especially, no doubt, by the usage of conversation, even among educated persons. And as a learned correspondent (Dr B. Nicholson) remarks, this would naturally be the style of English which Shakespeare would purposely use in dramatic dialogue.

As examples of the anomalies of grammar sanctioned by Elizabethan usage we may mention: —

Singular verbs, with plural nouns, especially when the verb precedes its nominative:

Hath all his ventures failed? What; not one hit?

Merchant of Venice, III. 2.

Nominatives for accusatives:

She should this Angelo have married.

Measure for Measure, III. 1. 204.

And repeatedly ‘who’ for ‘whom.’

Omission of prepositions:

Most ignorant of what he’s most assured. *Ibid.* II. 2. 119.

– which now you censure him. *Ibid.* II. 1. 15.

The changes of accidance are less frequent than those of syntax, yet such occur. In the Folios verbs ending in *d* and *t* are constantly found making their second persons singular in *ds* and *ts* instead of *d’st* and *t’st*. This was a corruption coming into vogue about the time of their publication, and in the earlier Quartos we frequently find the correct form; for example, in *Midsummer Night’s Dream*, V. 1: ‘standst’ in Q₁ is corrupted to ‘stands’ in Q₂ and in Ff. We have therefore confidently replaced the correct form for the incorrect, even without authority to back us; looking upon the variation as a corrupt abbreviation of spelling.

But, in general, our practice has been not to alter the text, in order to make the grammar conform to the fixed rules of modern English. A wide latitude of speech was allowed in Shakespeare’s age both as to spelling and grammar.

C. Orthography

It was not without much consideration that we determined to adopt the spelling of the nineteenth century. If we had any

evidence as to Shakespeare's own spelling, we should have been strongly inclined to adopt it, but to attempt to reproduce it, by operating by rule upon the texts that have come down to us, would be subjecting Shakespeare's English to arbitrary laws, of which it never yet was conscious. This argues no want of education on the part of Shakespeare; for if Lord Bacon himself had rules for spelling, they were but few, as we may easily perceive by inspection of his works published under his own eye. But if we have not Shakespeare's own spelling to guide us, what other spelling shall we adopt? Every student of Shakespeare has now an easy opportunity of acquainting himself with the text of F_1 , by means of Mr Booth's excellent reprint, and we are certain that not one of them will consider the spelling of that volume intrinsically better than that of our day. Rather more like Shakespeare's it certainly is, but we doubt whether much is gained by such approximation, as long as it is short of perfect attainment. Moreover, in many of the Plays there is a competing claim to guide our spelling, put forward by an array of Quartos, of earlier date than F_1 . To desert F_1 for these, where they exist, would be but an occasional, and at best an uncertain means of attaining the lost spelling of Shakespeare, while the spelling of our volume would become even more inconsistent than that of F_1 itself. Add to this; there are places, though, as has been seen, not many, where we have had to leave the reading of F_1 altogether. How then shall we spell the correction which we substitute?

D. Metre

Corrections of metre are avoided even more carefully than those of grammar. For the rules of prosody have undergone perhaps greater change than those of grammar. There is no doubt that a system of versification has taken root among us very different from that which was in use in the earlier days of our poetry. The influence of classical prosody has worked in a manner that could hardly have been expected. Quantity in the sense in which the Greeks and Romans understood it, is altogether foreign to our speech; and our poets, willing to imitate the verse regulated by laws of quantity, have partially adopted those laws, substituting for long syllables those that bear a stress of accent or emphasis.

In Greek and Latin accent was essentially distinct from quantity, and verse was regulated entirely by the latter. In the modern imitation of classical metres, for want of appreciation of quantity, we go entirely by accent or emphasis, and make precisely such verses as classical taste eschewed. Thus we have learned to scan lines by iambuses, or rather by their accentual imitations, and a perfect line would consist of ten syllables, of which the alternate ones bore a rhythmical stress. These iambuses may, under certain restrictions, be changed for 'trochees,' and out of these two 'feet,' or their representatives, a metre, certainly very beautiful, has grown up gradually, which

attained perhaps its greatest perfection in the verse of Pope. But the poets of this metre, like renaissance architects, lost all perception of the laws of the original artists, and set themselves, whenever it was possible, to convert the original verses into such as their own system would have produced. We see the beginnings of this practice even in the first Folio, when there exist Quartos to exhibit it. In each successive Folio the process has been continued. Rowe's few changes of F_4 are almost all in the same direction, and the work may be said to have been completed by Hanmer. It is to be feared that a result of two centuries of such a practice has been to bring about an idea of Shakespearian versification very different from Shakespeare's. But we feel a hope that the number of Shakespeare's students who can appreciate the true nature of the English versification in our elder poets is increasing, and will increase more as the opportunity is furnished them of studying Shakespeare himself.

Of course we do not mean to give here an essay on Shakespearian versification. Those who would study it may best be referred to Capell, in spite of the erroneous taste of his day, to Sidney Walker, and especially, if they are earnest students, to Dr Guest's *History of English Rhythms*.

We will only state some of the differences between Shakespearian versification and that which has now become our normal prosody; namely, such as have excited an ambition of correcting in later editors. There is a large number of verses which a modern ear pronounces to want their first unaccented

syllable. The following we quote as they appear in F_1 , in the opening of the *Two Gentlemen of Verona*:

No, I will not, for it boots thee not. I. 1. 28.

Fire that's closest kept burns most of all. I. 2. 30.

Is't near dinner-time? I would it were. I. 2. 67.

These lines are all corrected by editors; and it is evident that there would be little trouble in altering all such lines wherever they occur: or they may be explained away, as for instance in the second cited, 'fire' doubtless is sometimes pronounced as a dissyllable. Yet to attempt correction or explanation wherever such lines occur would be ill-spent labour. A very impressive line in the *Tempest* is similarly scanned:

Twelve year since, Miranda, twelve year since. I. 2. 53.

Where we are rightly told that 'year' may be a dissyllable. Yet that one word should bear two pronunciations in one line is far more improbable than that the unaccented syllable before 'twelve' is purposely omitted by the poet; and few readers will not acknowledge the solemn effect of such a verse. As another example with a contrary effect, of impulsive abruptness, we may take a line in *Measure for Measure*:

Quick, dispatch, and send the head to Angelo. IV. 3. 88.

This last example is also an instance of another practice, by modern judgement a license, viz. making a line end with two unaccented 'extrametrical' syllables.

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