THE ERECTION OF NEW PLAYHOUSES

about the city, or in any public place, during this time of summer." This was a serious blow to the Chamberlain’s Men, who were compelled to leave the city during the most profitable months of the year when Falstaff was crowding their house with large audiences, and to go on a tour of the country. But the Privy Council did not stop with this. It ordered that all playhouses in and about London should “be plucked down” to the ground. Fortunately this drastic order, possibly an expression of the Queen’s hot temper, was not carried into effect. We may easily guess why. Both the Lord Chamberlain and the Lord Admiral were prominent members of the Privy Council. Ever alert to protect the interests of their “servants,” they knew that the players could not maintain an existence without playhouses; and they knew, too, that the Queen herself would not welcome the destruction of the great city troupes which alone were able to supply her with the entertainments she was passionately fond of. So, in all probability, secret instructions were issued to the sheriffs not to carry into effect that part of the order which called for the demolition of the playhouses.

These were uncomfortable times for the actors. But the Queen’s anger gradually cooled, and ultimately punishment was limited to the actual offenders. The Pembroke’s Company was permanently dissolved by the Council, and the Swan playhouse was closed for dramatic performances throughout the life of the Queen.

More important still, the Privy Council ordered that henceforth license to act in the city should be granted to two companies only, and that these companies should be the Lord Chamberlain’s Men, and the Lord Admiral’s Men. Upon the passing of this ordinance the chief actors of the Pembroke’s Company, including Gabriel Spencer, Robert Shaw, and Ben Jonson, joined the Admiral’s Men
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at the Rose. The other members of the Pembroke's Company, finding themselves without employment, resolved to defy the order of the Privy Council, and began to act again in the city. But the news of this coming to the Privy Council, on February 19, 1598, the Council dispatched a peremptory order to the Master of the Revels, who had general supervision of the drama, and also to the Justices of both Middlesex and Surrey, "to require you, upon receipt hereof, to take order that the aforesaid third company may be suppressed, and none suffered hereafter to play but those two formerly named, belonging to us, the Lord Admiral and Lord Chamberlain." Thus, through the erection of the Swan and the episode of The Isle of Dogs, the two older companies became more strongly than ever intrenched in their monopoly of acting in the city.

In obedience to the order of the Privy Council forbidding plays in or near London during the summer of 1597, the Chamberlain's Men had gone upon a tour of the provinces; but on November 1, when the inhibition was raised, they returned to the city. Cuthbert Burbage's lease of the land on which the Theatre stood had now expired, and he was having serious trouble with Gyles Alleyn, who for puritanical reasons did not wish the building to be longer used for plays. The Chamberlain's Men, therefore, moved into the adjacent Curtain, while the owner of the Theatre carried on further negotiations with Alleyn in the hope of inducing him to renew the lease on something like reasonable terms. But the Curtain was smaller than the Theatre, probably had not been altered to meet the demands of more modern acting, and in general was ill-suited to the needs of the great Chamberlain's Company. The inadequacy of its accommodations seems to be glanced at in the Prologue to Henry V:

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THE LORD HIGH ADMIRAL (LEFT CENTRE, WITH VELVET SKULL-CAP) AND THE LORD CHAMBERLAIN (CENTRE FOREGROUND, WITH HIS LEFT HAND CLASPING HIS SWORD)

The figure at the extreme right, bearing the sword of state, is Lord Cobham.
THE ERECTION OF NEW PLAYHOUSES

But pardon, gentles all,
The flat unraised spirits that hath dar’d
On this unworthy scaffold to bring forth
So great an object. Can this cockpit hold
The vasty fields of France? or may we cram
Within this wooden O the very casques
That did affright the air at Agincourt?

The Merry Wives, Henry V, and Julius Caesar were first presented at this playhouse during 1598–99; and Romeo, as well as Falstaff, we are told, won “Curtain plaudities.” Still another notable event marking the company’s temporary stay there was the production, in September, 1598, of Every Man in his Humor. In connection with this play Shakespeare, according to tradition, was able to show to its author, Ben Jonson, a small bit of kindness which the latter never forgot.

Jonson, if we may believe his own statement, was of gentle birth: “His grandfather . . . served King Henry VIII, and was a gentleman. His father lost all his estates under Queen Mary, having been cast in prison and forfeited; at last turned minister. He himself was posthumous born a month after his father’s decease.”¹ The widow subsequently married a bricklayer in London, and young Ben learned to handle the trowel and lay chimneys. But he had also received an excellent general education and a thorough grounding in the classics under the tuition of William Camden at Westminster School. Later, as did Shakespeare, he threw in his lot with the drama, and became both actor and playwright, thereby endeavoring to improve his pecuniary condition and win a place in the world of letters. Always conscious of his gentle birth, he was unduly sensitive about being called the son of a bricklayer, with the result that his enemies never ceased to twit him with lime-and-mortar jests.

As already stated, he was a member of the unfortunate

¹ William Drummond’s Conversations with Ben Jonson.
Pembroke's Company, and had a finger in the composition of The Isle of Dogs. After the suppression of that company several of its leading actors joined the Admiral's Men under Henslowe at the Rose. The great Gabriel Spencer appears to have taken for the time the place of Edward Alleyn as their chief performer. And along with Spencer came Ben Jonson. Though an "inferior player" (he was never good as an actor), he rapidly developed as a playwright, and was engaged in composing several plays, mainly in collaboration with other and more experienced dramatists working for Henslowe. In December, 1597, he submitted to Henslowe the plot of an original play, and on the promise of completing it at an early date, secured an advance payment of £1. Before delivering the finished manuscript, however, he seems to have quarreled with the Admiral's Men, and left them. Accordingly, he took the manuscript of his next play, Every Man in his Humor, to the rival Chamberlain's Company at the Curtain. The play was of a new type, now famous as the comedy of humors, and the manager of the Chamberlain's Men, so tradition states, declined to accept it. Shakespeare then intervened in behalf of his fellow-dramatist, looked over the manuscript, and persuaded the players to try it; and shortly it was put on the boards with Shakespeare himself in one of the leading roles. The tradition is thus narrated by Rowe:

His acquaintance with Ben Jonson began with a remarkable piece of humanity and good nature; — Mr. Jonson, who was at that time altogether unknown to the world,¹ had offer'd one of

¹ This may explain Henslowe's subsequent entry in his Diary: "unto Mr. Chapman on his play book, and two acts of a tragedy of Benjamin's plot, the sum of £3."

² It is true that at this time Jonson's reputation as an author was not great, his previous work having been in collaboration, but he was not "wholly unknown" as a playwright.
THE ERECTION OF NEW PLAYHOUSES

his plays to the players in order to have it acted; and the persons into whose hands it was put, after having turn'd it carelessly and superciliously over, were just upon returning it to him with an ill-natur'd answer that it would be of no service to their company, when Shakespeare luckily cast his eye upon it, and found something so well in it as to engage him first to read it through, and afterwards to recommend Mr. Jonson and his writings to the publick. After this they were profess'd friends.

We need not accept all the details with which Rowe has garnished the story, yet the tradition that Shakespeare's intervention led to the presentation of Every Man in his Humor by the Chamberlain's Company seems to be supported by other evidence. For example, when Jonson published the play he associated Shakespeare's name with its performance in an apparently significant way. He placed on a special leaf the following statement:

This Comedie was first
Acted in the yeere
1598
By the then L. Chamberlayne
his Servants
The principall Comedians were
Will. Shakespeare Ric. Burbage
Aug. Philips Joh. Hemings
Hen. Condell Tho. Pope
Will. Slye Chr. Beeston

It has been thought that by placing the name of Shakespeare at the head of the first column, with the name of the great actor Burbage relegated to the head of the second column, Jonson meant to indicate his special debt to Shakespeare for the appearance of the play on the stage.

If in truth Shakespeare was responsible for the production of Every Man in his Humor, its author had special reason to be grateful to him, for the comedy
proved to be one of the great successes of the day, instantly making Jonson, then in his twenty-sixth year, famous, and launching him upon a notable career as a dramatist.

Possibly Shakespeare's kindness to Jonson went beyond merely rescuing *Every Man in his Humor* from oblivion. Shortly after that play had attained its phenomenal success on the stage (it is described as "new" on September 20, 1598), a quarrel arose between its author and Gabriel Spencer. We do not know the cause, but it may have concerned Jonson’s desertion of the Admiral’s Company, his sale of *Every Man* to the Chamberlain’s Company, and his failure to complete the manuscript of the play for which Henslowe had made him an advance payment of £1. And we may suspect that in the heat of the argument that followed, Spencer very unwisely called Jonson a bricklayer. Jonson, an expert swordsman, promptly challenged him to a duel. The challenge was accepted, and on September 22, 1598, these two eminent members of the theatrical profession met by appointment in the Fields near the Theatre. Spencer came with a weapon ten inches longer than had been agreed on, but Jonson was in no mood to quibble over such a trifle. At the outset Jonson was wounded in the arm; but ultimately he succeeded in killing his opponent, "giving then and there to the same Gabriel Spencer with the aforesaid sword a mortal wound of the depth of six inches and of the breadth of one inch, in and upon the right side of the same Gabriel, of which mortal blow the same Gabriel Spencer... then and there died instantly." On September 26 Henslowe wrote to Edward Alleyn, then in Sussex: "I will tell you some [news], but

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1 On this date Tobie Mathew wrote to Dudley Carleton: "There were with him divers Almains, whereof one lost out of his purse at a play 300 crowns, a new play called *Every Man’s Humor.*" (*State Papers, Domestic Series, cclxiii, 67.*)
BEN JONSON

Desuntia Pater Eruditionis, 
Et Scena veteris nova gravis.
Vides frugi recentis Senulis, 
Vesicardem minus aut minus politus.
Antiquar reparatorem unius artis, cui somni similis, figuram vinere.
Quid tunc hee artis found out that might.
Produce his shape soe lively as to write. Sr. Holl.
THE ERECTION OF NEW PLAYHOUSES

it is for me hard and heavy. Since you were here with me I have lost one of my company which hurteth me greatly, that is Gabriel, for he is slain in Hogsdon Fields by the hands of Benjamin Jonson, bricklayer; therefore I would fain have a little of your council if I could.”

Jonson was promptly arrested and thrown into prison. Unluckily for him the Queen at this time was making a special effort to suppress dueling. A true bill of manslaughter was returned against him, he was put on trial, pleaded guilty, and thus stood condemned to be hanged. Jonson, however, claimed the right of clergy, scanned his “neck verse” to the satisfaction of the court — for he was one of the best Latin scholars in England — and so managed to escape the gallows. But his property was confiscated to the Crown, and he was branded on the thumb with the felon’s mark, a large capital T standing for Tyburn prison. As the record of the court summarized his case: “He confesses the indictment, asks for the book, reads like a clerk, is marked with the letter T, and is delivered according to the statute.”

For the newly famous playwright these were dark hours; and it may be that in connection with his imprisonment and trial Shakespeare further befriended him. When in 1601 Jonson (who was naturally given to quarrels) fell out with the Chamberlain’s Men, and wrote in Poetaster his bitter attack upon them, Dekker, assisted by the actors, retorted in Satiromastix. Among the reproaches heaped on him was the following charge of ingratitude: “Thou ... should’st have been hang’d, but for one of these part-takers, these charitable copper-

1 In September, 1598, Jonson was well-known as a playwright. Henslowe’s anger at him is reflected in this contemptuous reference to his early trade. Possibly it echoes, also, the cause of the duel between Spencer and Jonson.

2 J. P. Collier, Memoirs of Edward Alleyn, p. 51.

3 To escape execution through benefit of clergy one had to demonstrate his knowledge of Latin, usually by reading the first verse of the twenty-first Psalm, vulgarly called the “neck verse.”
lac'd Christians, that fetched thee out of purgatory."
Which "one" of the Chamberlain's players assisted
Jonson in his trouble, and helped him out of prison, is
not stated; but it may well have been his friend Shakes-
ppeare. We know that Jonson always maintained for
Shakespeare the deepest affection: in his Timber he de-
clared, "I lov'd the man, and do honor his memory on
this side idolatry as much as any"; and in a poem pre-
fixed to the First Folio he called him "my beloved."

Every Man in his Humor, acted in the autumn of 1598,
was among the last new plays the Chamberlain's Men
brought out at the Curtain, for within a few months they
had moved to a house especially built for them on the
Bankside as a solution of the difficulty the Burbages were
having over the Theatre.

For nearly a year Cuthbert had been desperately pros-
cecuting his negotiations with Alleyn. By the terms of
the old lease he had a right to tear down the Theatre and
move the timber, benches, and stage-equipment to an-
other place, provided he did so before the expiration
of the twenty-one years; if, however, he allowed the
building to stand one day after the lease expired, it
legally passed into the possession of Alleyn. Upon a verbal
agreement with Alleyn, he had allowed the Theatre to
stand after the lease expired, in order to carry on further
negotiations, for Alleyn now professed himself ready to
sign a renewal, although he would not make clear his
terms. This was not without danger to Cuthbert, for
if Alleyn should repudiate his verbal agreement and seize
the building as his own, he could hold it by law. This
was precisely what Alleyn was scheming to do; for when,
at last, he stated his conditions he made them so pre-
posterous that they could not possibly be accepted.

After Cuthbert declined to consider these terms,
Alleyn, near the close of 1598, resolved to seize the build-
THE ERECTION OF NEW PLAYHOUSES

ing, claiming that now, since the owner had "suffered the same there to continue till the expiration of the said term ... the right and interest of the said Theatre was, both in law and conscience, absolutely vested" in himself; and he proposed "to pull down the same, and to convert the wood and timber thereof to some better use." Luckily the Burbages "got intelligence" of this treachery, and luckily, too, Alleyn was called away into the country, not to return until after the Christmas holidays. This gave Cuthbert his opportunity to save the building. He consulted his brother Richard, and together they laid plans to outwit the crafty Alleyn, and at the same time provide the Chamberlain's Company with its much needed playhouse.

But a playhouse suitable to the uses of the Chamberlain's Company would have to be large and sumptuous, and the Burbages, already saddled with two theatres, and heavily in debt on account of Blackfriars, would need assistance. Moreover, they desired to make sure that the Chamberlain's Men would permanently occupy the building after it was completed. In order to accomplish these two ends, they devised a brand-new scheme of playhouse ownership: they proposed to form a stock company to finance the erection of the building, and to admit into this stock company the leading actors of the Chamberlain's troupe. Such a scheme would not only provide the necessary funds, but also tie the Chamberlain's Men to the building. Furthermore, it would allow the chief players to share in the profits from the ownership of a structure which their efforts alone made valuable. Hitherto theatres had been operated by shrewd business men who were not themselves actors, and who leased their buildings to the companies on hard terms, taking all, or at least a large share, of the income from the galleries. As a result they had long reaped an unduly

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rich harvest from the labors of the players. The new plan would remedy this state of affairs by making the actors themselves the proprietors of their theatre.

The opportunity of participating in the scheme was possibly, though we do not know, offered to each of the full-sharers in the Chamberlain's troupe; and those who were able to advance the necessary money, or were willing to risk investment in the enterprise, we may suppose, were admitted to the syndicate. However that may be, only five sharers actually joined the two Burbages in their undertaking—William Shakespeare, John Heminges, Augustine Phillips, Thomas Pope, and William Kempe. All the members of this syndicate, it will be observed, were members also of the Chamberlain's troupe, except Cuthbert Burbage, who had long been closely associated with the players, and now stood ready to supply the materials of the old Theatre towards the erection of the new structure; and the intention was to keep the ownership of the playhouse in the hands of the actors. To that end the builders legally bound themselves in such a way as to prevent any member from disposing of his share to an outsider.

It will be observed, too, that relatively few members of the Chamberlain's troupe were members of the syndicate. The syndicate, indeed, was strictly a business organization made up of men of substance, who were required to advance considerable capital, and to assume the necessary risks of a speculative venture. It was thus entirely distinct from the troupe. Its members, as owners of the building, stood in the relation of landlords to the players, and were known by the technical name of "housekeepers." The players, with their organization of sharers, hirelings, etc., were technically known as the "company." The "company" of course, had to pay the "housekeepers" a suitable remuneration for the use of
THE FIRST GLOBE

(From Visscher's *View of London*, published in 1616, but representing the city as it was several years earlier.)
THE ERECTION OF NEW PLAYHOUSES

the building. It was agreed that, in return for providing the building, the "housekeepers" should receive one half the income from the "galleries"; the "company," for supplying and acting the plays, was to receive the other half of this income, plus all the takings at the doors. Thus the two organizations, though entirely distinct, the one a business, the other a professional organization, were interlocking. Their interests were closely bound up together. And to perpetuate this common interest it was the intention from time to time to admit leading actors to be sharers in the building as soon as their attainments made their permanent connection with the playhouse desirable.

The scheme thus evolved had many advantages. In the first place, it prevented the troupe from shifting from one playhouse to another, often to the serious loss of the proprietors. In the second place, it guaranteed the sustained excellence of the company. Too often good troupes were weakened by the desertion of a few leading members who could be tempted to join rival organizations. In the third place, it tended, like all profit-sharing schemes, to elicit from each member his full energy; and, by offering the younger actors the hope of ultimate admission into the syndicate, it stimulated them to their best efforts. Finally, the plan brought the leading members together in bonds of close friendship that lasted throughout life. Heminges, who acted as business-manager, was universally loved and trusted, and he generously gave his fellows the benefit of his shrewd business judgment. The "gentle" Shakespeare was admired and revered by all. Indeed, a study of the numerous documents relating to the lives of these men is inspiring because of their loyalty and devotion to each other. The pious effort of Heminges and Condell, the last survivors, to publish the works of their "friend and fellow" Shake-
A LIFE OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Shakespeare is but one out of many expressions of this splendid comradeship.

According to the original organization of the "housekeepers" there were to be ten shares in the stock company.¹ The two Burbages, who were to supply most of the material, were to hold between them one half of the shares, and the rest were to hold the other half. The distribution of the shares, therefore, was as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Shareholder</th>
<th>Share</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cuthbert Burbage</td>
<td>2½</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard Burbage</td>
<td>2½</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Shakespeare</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Heminges</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Augustine Phillips</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Pope</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Kempe</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All the expenses of erecting and maintaining the building, and likewise all profits from its use as a playhouse, were to be divided among the sharers according to their several holdings.

The first question presenting itself to the members of the syndicate was, Where should the new playhouse be erected? Doubtless they gave the question much thought. The precinct of Blackfriars, though in every respect admirable, obviously was not to be considered; they were under the necessity of remaining in the suburbs. Their experiences in Shoreditch had not been happy, and they probably desired to get closer to the centre of London. So they turned their eyes to the Bankside, a section that had become the chief amusement-resort of the citizens. Here were situated the Rose and the Swan, and the great Bear Garden for the baiting of bears and bulls; and thither each day, by boat, or over the bridge, thousands of persons flocked in search of entertainment. The Swan, it was realized, had been

¹ For the subsequent history of the stock company, see the writer's article, "The Housekeepers of the Globe Playhouse," Modern Philology, May, 1919.
CONJECTURAL RECONSTRUCTION OF THE GLOBE

No attempt has been made to indicate the division of the galleries into Six-penny Rooms, Twelve-penny Rooms, and Lords' Rooms.
THE ERECTION OF NEW PLAYHOUSES.

poorly placed; for it was so remote from London Bridge that audiences were forced to use boats in order to reach it, or to walk an unduly long distance if they made use of the bridge. This mistake had to be avoided. Close to the end of the bridge, and hard-by the fine old church of St. Mary Overies (now Southwark Cathedral), they found a plot of land that met their approval. From the owner, Sir Nicholas Brend, they secured a lease of the property for thirty-one years, beginning on December 25, 1598.

Three days later, on December 28, Gyles Alleyn being still absent in the country, Richard and Cuthbert Burbage, having engaged the services of a master-carpenter, Peter Street, with his twelve workmen, gathered at the Theatre, and began to tear down the building. We know that the widow of James Burbage "was there, and did see the doing thereof, and liked well of it," as was also a special friend of the Burbages, "William Smith, of Waltham Cross, in the County of Hartford, gentleman." We may suspect that among the interested and satisfied spectators was also William Shakespeare, together with the other venturers associated in the enterprise.

The episode is best described in the language of the angry Gyles Alleyn:

The said Cuthbert Burbage, having intelligence of your subject's purpose herein [to seize the building], and unlawfully combining and confederating himself with the said Richard Burbage and one Peter Street, William Smith, and diverse other persons to the number of twelve [workmen], to your subject unknown, did about the eight and twentieth day of December, in the one and fortieth year of your highness reign... riotously assemble themselves together, and then and there armed themselves with diverse and many unlawful and offensive weapons, as, namely, swords, daggers, bills, axes, and such like; and so armed did then repair unto the said Theatre, and then and there armed as aforesaid, in very riotous, outrageous,
and forcible manner, and contrary to the laws of your highness realm, attempted to pull down the said Theatre. Whereupon, diverse of your subject's servants and farmers, then going about in peaceable manner to procure them to desist from that their unlawful enterprise, they, the said riotous persons aforesaid, notwithstanding procured then therein with great violence, not only then and there forcibly and riotously resisting your subject's servants and farmers, but also then and there pulling, breaking, and throwing down the said Theatre in very outrageous, violent, and riotous sort.

The workmen, under the expert direction of the master-carpenter, Peter Street, carried the timber and other stuff from the old Theatre to the tract of land that had just been leased from Sir Nicholas Brend — as Gyles Alleyn puts it, they "did then also, in most forcible and riotous manner, take and carry away from thence all the wood and timber thereof unto Bankside, in the Parish of St. Mary Overies, and there erected a new playhouse with the said timber and wood."

The playhouse thus erected was an entirely new building, towards the construction of which the timber from the old Theatre merely contributed; much new material, of course, had to be supplied. Nearly a quarter of a century had elapsed since James Burbage had designed the Theatre, the first structure of its kind, and much progress had been made both in effective stage craft and in dramatic art. Doubtless many improvements were possible, in the stage as well as in the auditorium, to provide better facilities for the actors, and greater comfort for the spectators. In designing such improvements, Peter Street had the advice and help of the players, including Shakespeare with his fertile imagination; we need not wonder, therefore, that he succeeded in producing a playhouse that was notable for its excellence, and that won for him a reputation as a builder of theatres. To the new playhouse the actors gave the name "The
THE ERECTION OF NEW PLAYHOUSES

Globe.” Dekker punningly writes: “How wonderfully is the world altered! And no marvel, for it has lyen sick almost five thousand years: so that it is no more like the old Theatre du monde, than old Paris Garden is like the King’s Garden at Paris. What an excellent workman, therefore, were he that could cast the Globe of it into a new mold.” And Henslowe and Alleyn, in erecting their magnificent Fortune Playhouse, 1600, immediately sent for Peter Street, and frankly made use of the Globe as the model of their new theatre. The details of the contract they signed with the builder give ample testimony to the excellence of the planning that went into the design of the Globe:

With such-like stairs, conveyances, and divisions, without and within, as are made and contrived in and to the late-erected playhouse . . . called the Globe. . . . And the said stage to be in all other proportions contrived and fashioned like unto the stage of the said playhouse called the Globe. . . . And the said house, and other things before mentioned, to be made and done, to be in all other contrivances, conveyances, fashions, thing, and things, effected, finished, and done according to the manner and fashion of the said house called the Globe.

Apparently Henslowe and Alleyn, and the actors of the Admiral’s Company, felt that the Globe could not be bettered.

The playhouse was situate in Maiden Lane, thus described by Strype in his edition of Stow’s Survey of London: “Maiden Lane, a long straggling place, with ditches on each side, the passage to the houses being over little bridges, with little garden-plots before them, especially on the north side, which is best both for houses and inhabitants.” In certain of these garden-plots,¹ and near one of the ditches, or “sewers” as they were called,

¹ See The Site of the Globe Playhouse, published by the London County Council, 1921.
the Globe was erected; and, like the other houses there situated, it was approached over a bridge. In February, 1606, the Sewer Commission ordered that "the owners of the playhouse called the Globe, in Maid Lane, shall before the 20 day of April next, pull up and take clean out of the sewer the props or posts which stand under the bridge on the north side of Maid Lane." The ground on which the building stood was marshy, and the foundations were made by driving piles deep into the soil. We can thus understand Jonson when he writes: "The Globe, the glory of the Bank... Flanked with a ditch, and forced out of a marish."

In shape the building was polygonal, with three galleries surrounding an open "yard," as in the case of all public playhouses. The frame, we know, was of timber, the exterior of plaster, and the roof of thatch. In front of the main door was suspended, it is said, a sign of Hercules bearing the globe upon his shoulders, under which was the motto Totus Mundus Agit Histrionem.¹

The earliest representation of the building is probably to be found in the Delaram view of London set in the background of an engraving of King James on horseback. This view, which presents the city as it was in 1603 when James came to the throne, shows the Bear Garden at the left, polygonal in shape, the Rose in the centre, circular in shape, and the Globe at the right, polygonal in shape. The building is again represented in Visscher's view of London, which, though printed in 1616, presents the city as it was several years earlier.

The cost of the finished Globe is not exactly known. Mr. Wallace observes that it was erected "at an original

¹ So Malone states. Oldys records an early anecdote on the subject: "Verse by Ben Jonson and Shakespeare, occasioned by the motto to the Globe Theatre, totus mundus agit histrionem." Shakespeare apparently makes a punning allusion to this sign in Hamlet, II, ii, 378; cf. also his "All the world's a stage," As You Like It, II, vii, 139.
CONJECTURAL RECONSTRUCTION OF THE INTERIOR OF THE GLOBE

The curtains to the rear stage are open; the curtains to the upper stage are closed; the "music rooms," occupied by the play house orchestra, are represented as above the upper stage; the "painted heavens" over the stage are adorned with stars, moon, and clouds; the "huts" are supported by the columns resting on the stage.
THE ERECTION OF NEW PLAYHOUSES

cost, according to a later statement, of £600, but upon better evidence approximately £400." ¹ I am not aware of the "better evidence" referred to, nor do I know whether the estimate of £400 includes the value of the timber and materials of the old Theatre furnished by the Burbages. If the Theatre cost nearly £700, and the second Globe £1400, the sum of £400 seems too small: We may safely assume that the cost of the Globe was not far from £600. Since William Kempe had withdrawn from the syndicate before a year had gone by, and the shares had been reduced from ten to eight, Shakespeare must have contributed to its erection approximately £75.

Nor do we know exactly when the Globe was opened to the public. On May 16, 1599, a post-mortem inquisition of the estate of Sir Thomas Brend, father of Sir Nicholas, was taken. Among his other properties in Southwark was listed the Globe playhouse, described as "una domo de nova edificata . . . in occupacione Willielmi Shakespeare et aliorum." Besides indicating the conspicuous part Shakespeare took in the erection of the playhouse, this statement suggests that the building was either completed or nearing completion on May 16. Unquestionably before the end of the summer of 1599 the Lord Chamberlain’s Men had moved from the Curtain to their new home, "the glory of the Bank."

To celebrate this occasion the actors, we may suppose, used a new play, possibly Ben Jonson’s Every Man out of his Humor (a sequel to his very successful Every Man in his Humor). In the Epilogue he speaks of "the happier spirits in this fair-fitted Globe," and in the Induction he makes allusion to the elaborately-carved pillars in the galleries: "A well-timbered fellow! He would have made a good column, an he had been thought on when the house was a-building."

¹ The London Times, October 2, 1909.

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Henceforth this "fair-fitted" playhouse was the home of the Chamberlain's Men; and here, in a theatre of which he was one of the proprietors, Shakespeare's plays were to be introduced to applauding audiences. More than any other building it is associated with the greatest achievements of his career, and with the noblest triumphs of English dramatic art.
CHAPTER XV

JOYOUS COMEDIES; HAMLET

With the building of the Globe Shakespeare had almost reached the summit of his remarkable career. It may be worth our while to glance back in rapid survey over his achievements. Coming to London unknown and in poverty, he had earned recognition as one of England's greatest poets; he had made himself the most successful playwright of his age; he had acquired wealth, heraldic honors, and a splendid country home in Stratford; and by sheer force of genius he had placed his company in a position of undisputed supremacy in the dramatic world. And he was now just thirty-five years of age. It is not strange, therefore, that in the exhilaration of success he should produce some of his finest and most exuberant plays. He celebrated the first year of his company's stay at the Globe by composing a magnificent comic trilogy, the very titles of which reflect the buoyancy of good health and a consciousness of worldly success — Much Ado About Nothing, As You Like It, and What You Will.

The first of these comedies, Much Ado, was probably acted by the Chamberlain's Men shortly after they opened the Globe in the early summer of 1599. For the main theme Shakespeare used an Italian love-romance based on one of the novels of Bandello; but then, as now, the chief appeal the play had for the public lay in the comic scenes, English in color and spirit, which the dramatist spun from his own rich imagination. In particular, Benedick and Beatrice, with their superabundant
joy in life, took the fancy of theatre-goers, and at once made the play a favorite. Leonard Digges wrote:

Let but Beatrice
And Benedick be seen, lo, in a trice,
The cockpit, galleries, boxes, all are full.

We need not wonder that when the play was presented at Court in 1613, it was described in the Treasurer’s accounts as *Benedicte and Betteris*. Yet Dogberry, a study in colossal stupidity created especially for William Kempe, scored a success hardly less notable, and established the pompous constable with big words and little wit as a stock figure on the stage. Perhaps the best indication of the sustained popularity of Shakespeare’s written-down “ass” is found in a comedy by Henry Glapthorne, 1639, entitled *Wit in a Constable*, which attempts to show that in one instance, at least, a constable was able to display some gleams of intelligence.

*Much Ado About Nothing* was quickly followed by *As You Like It*, probably acted at the Globe in the autumn of 1599. For the main theme, as in the case of its predecessor, Shakespeare made use of a foreign love-romance, taken almost without change from Lodge’s pastoral story of *Rosalynde*; and to this he added from his own invention comic scenes and characters essentially English in spirit. Again we have an outburst of sheer joy in life, typified by such characters as Rosalind and Orlando; and again the good-natured laugh at human stupidity, provoked this time by Touchstone and Audrey. Furthermore, in “the melancholy Jaques” with his humorous philosophizing on life and his studied pose as a malcontent, we have a new type that in favor with theatre-goers shared honor even with Rosalind and Touchstone. Marston, realizing its effectiveness, at once.

1 The actors had probably christened the play with this title for the occasion.
developed the type in his play entitled *The Malcontent* (1600); and from now on the “cynical raider” enjoyed something like a vogue on the stage.¹

In the performance of the play, according to an early tradition, Shakespeare himself assumed the rôle of the faithful servant Adam. An “old man” ² in the days of the Restoration, “stricken in years” and his memory “weakened with infirmities,” spoke of “having once seen him in one of his own comedies, wherein being to personate a decrepit old man, he wore a long beard, and appeared so weak and drooping and unable to walk that he was forced to be supported and carried by another person to a table, at which he was seated among some company, and one of them sung a song.” If this rather doubtful tradition can be accepted, we have at least the satisfaction of knowing that the rôle was well-enough acted to make a lasting impression on the mind of the spectators.

In still another way the play has a personal interest. Shakespeare inserted a deft allusion to his early friend and master, Christopher Marlowe, calling him with some display of affection “dead shepherd.” This he accomplished by quoting a line from Marlowe’s *Hero and Leander*, just issued from the press:

> Dead shepherd, now I find thy saw of might:  
> “Who ever loved that loved not at first sight?”

It is significant that this is the only allusion Shakespeare made to a contemporary poet. That he should break his custom in this one instance may be taken as a possible indication of close relations with Marlowe in early days when as a young “upstart” from the country he was struggling to find a place in the theatrical world.


² Said, but inaccurately, to have been one of the poet’s brothers. This tradition is more fully discussed on pages 426–27.
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The third member of the comic trilogy was probably composed late in the year, and brought out at the Globe in November or December, 1599, under the title *What You Will*. The substitution of another title can readily be explained. On January 6 the Chamberlain’s Men were called upon to present a play at the annual Twelfth Night revel before the Queen and her guests, commonly the most notable of all the Christmas entertainments. In 1596, 1597, and 1598 Shakespeare’s troupe had been complimented with the invitation to furnish the play, and now for a fourth time it was summoned to grace the festivities. The Twelfth Night revels of 1600 were unusually splendid; the Admiral’s Men also were pressed into service, and the children of the Chapel were paid “for a show, with music and special songs prepared for the purpose.”¹ Possibly it was in honor of this grand occasion that Shakespeare rechristened the comedy with the otherwise irrelevant title *Twelfth Night*.² His retention of the older title, *What You Will*, however, serves to reveal the essential kinship of the play with the two other members of the trilogy.

For the main theme, as in *Much Ado* and *As You Like It*, Shakespeare made use of a foreign love-romance, ultimately derived from Italian sources; and this he set off with purely English comic material drawn from his own fertile brain. Again, too, we have the combination of joy in life, and laughter at human stupidity; Olivia and Viola provide the one, Malvolio the other. The appeal that the cross-gartered gull had for the audience is shown by the fact that the play was sometimes acted under the title *Malvolio*, and by many contemporary allusions. For example, when in February, 1602, the Chamberlain’s

¹ See Peter Cunningham, *Revels*, p. xxxiii.
² Samuel Pepys, writing on January 6, 1663, justly complains that the play is “not related at all to the name or day.”
Company presented the comedy before the members of the Inner Temple, one of the students, John Manningham, wrote in his diary: "At our feast we had a play called Twelfth Night, or What You Will. . . . A good practise in it to make the steward believe his lady widow was in love with him, by counterfeit ing a letter as from his lady, in general terms, telling him what she liked best in him, and prescribing his gesture in smiling, his apparel, etc., and then when he came to practise making him believe they took him to be mad." Manningham fails to mention the other characters at all; yet to modern spectators no less "a good practise in it" is Viola in her page's rôle, with her irrepressible girlhood shining through the disguise.

The success attained by the Chamberlain's Men with such excellent plays as Much Ado, As You Like It, and What You Will, must have told heavily on the fortunes of the rival Admiral's Company. Moreover, the new and splendid Globe within a few feet of the old and now obsolete Rose would attract the populace by its smarter appearance and more luxurious accommodations. The Admiral's Men naturally felt themselves at a serious disadvantage. So, before the lapse of a year, Henslowe and Alleyn decided to build for their company a playhouse that would surpass the Globe both in size and magnificence. At the same time they resolved to move away from the dangerous proximity of the Globe and the powerful Chamberlain's organization.

Where could they erect their new house? Obviously not in Blackfriars, nor yet in Shoreditch which the Chamberlain's Company had just abandoned. They decided on a new suburb outside of Cripplegate to the northwest of the city. Here, on December 22, 1599, they secured a suitable building lot, and then sent for Peter Street, the builder of the Globe. In drawing up the plans for their
new structure they found they could not improve on
the playhouse erected by the Chamberlain’s Men; yet
desiring originality of some kind, they determined on a
building not polygonal as was the Globe, but square.
This, as they later discovered, was a mistake, and when
their building was destroyed by fire in 1621, they re-
erected it in the conventional circular shape.

The contract which they signed with Street on Janu-
ary 8, 1600, still preserved among the papers of Henslowe,
furnishes us with exact knowledge of many details of the
structure. Since the building was a close copy of the
Globe — differing chiefly in being square instead of
polygonal — these details are of great value as affording
some notion of the architectural economy of Shake-
speare’s more famous playhouse. From the document,
too long for quotation in full, I summarize below the
main specifications:

**Foundation.** “A good, sure, and strong foundation, of piles,
brick, lime, and sand, both without and within, to be wrought
one foot of assize at the least above the ground.”

**Frame.** “The frame of the said house to be set square, and to
contain fourscore foot of lawful assize every way square with-
out, and fifty-five foot of like assize square every way within.”

**Materials.** “And shall also make all the said frame in every
point for scantlings larger and bigger in assize than the scant-
lings of the said new erected house called the Globe.”

**Exterior.** “To be sufficiently enclosed without with lath,
lime, and hair.”

**Stairs.** “With such like stairs, conveyances, and divisions,
without and within, as are made and contrived in and to the
late erected playhouse . . . called the Globe. . . . And the stair-
cases thereof to be sufficiently enclosed without with lath,
lime, and hair.”

**Height of Galleries.** “And the said frame to contain three
stories in height; the first, or lower story to contain twelve foot
of lawful assize in height; the second story eleven foot of lawful
assize in height; and the third, or upper story, to contain nine
foot of lawful assize in height.”

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Breadth of Galleries. "All which stories shall contain twelve foot of lawful assize in breadth throughout. Besides a jutty forward in either of the said two upper stories of ten inches."

Protection of Lowest Gallery. "The lower story of the said frame withinside ... to be paled in below with good, strong, and sufficient new oaken boards." "And the said lower story to be also laid over and fenced with strong iron pikes."

Divisions of Galleries. "With four convenient divisions for gentlemen's rooms, and other sufficient and convenient divisions for two-penny rooms ... And the gentlemen's rooms and two-penny rooms to be ceiled with lath, lime, and hair."

Seats. "With necessary seats to be placed and set, as well in those rooms [i.e., Gentlemen's and Two-Penny Rooms] as throughout all the rest of the galleries."

Stage. "With a stage and tiring-house to be made, erected, and set up within the said frame; with a shadow or cover over the said stage ... which stage shall contain in length forty and three foot of lawful assize, and in breadth to extend to the middle of the yard of the said house. The same stage to be paled in below with good, strong, and sufficient new oaken boards. ... And the said stage to be in all other proportions contrived and fashioned like unto the stage of the said playhouse called the Globe."

Columns. "All the principal and main posts of the said frame and stage forward shall be square, and wrought pilaster-wise, with carved proportions called satyrs to be placed and set on the top of every of the said posts."

Roof. "And the said frame, stage, and staircases to be covered with tile."

Miscellaneous. "To be in all other contrivations, conveyances, fashions, thing and things, effected, finished, and done, according to the manner and fashion of the said house called the Globe."

To their new playhouse Henslowe and Alleyn gave the name "The Fortune." No pictorial representation of the building has come down to us; yet from the details cited in the contract we can readily imagine how it looked — a hollow structure eighty feet square, and approximately forty feet high; the galleries, seventeen and a
half feet deep, enclosing an open yard fifty-five feet square; a red tile roof, and a turret and flagpole rising high above the stage. Over the main entrance was placed a handsome sign representing Dame Fortune.

Into this building, which in size, and probably in decoration, surpassed the Globe, the Admiral’s Men moved in November, 1600. Thus within little more than a year the two city companies changed homes. Both were now housed in new and commodious theatres, the one to the north, the other to the south of the city; and the rivalry between them continued as of old.¹

But no longer were they to enjoy their previous monopoly of entertaining the London public. At once they were called upon to face competition of a new sort, this time from child-actors. The choir-boys of the Queen’s Chapel Royal and of St. Paul’s Cathedral had long been accustomed to present plays, mainly for the amusement of the sovereign or distinguished individuals. From 1577 to 1584 they had been allowed to give their plays before the public in a small hall in the Blackfriars precinct.² After the closing of this hall in 1584, the Paul’s Boys continued to act in their singing-school near the Cathedral until 1590, when they were suppressed.

About the end of the century, however, both these child-troupes again revived their performances before the public. In the closing months of 1598, or the early months of 1599, the Paul’s Boys were allowed to reopen their singing-school to small and select audiences. They engaged John Marston and Thomas Dekker to write plays for them, and began to compete, though in a very limited way, with the Chamberlain’s and Admiral’s

¹ For the full history of the Fortune see my Shakespearean Playhouses, 1917.
² At first the Windsor boys, later the Paul’s boys, were associated with the boys of the Chapel Royal at Blackfriars. For a full history of their connection with public performances see my Shakespearean Playhouses.
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companies. In *Jack Drum's Entertainment* (1600), we read:

I saw the Children of Paul's last night,  
And troth, they pleased me pretty pretty well.  
The apes in time will do it handsomely.

And they did. Paul's playhouse became very fashionable with gentlemen, who were willing to pay the higher prices charged in order to escape the noisy rabble that haunted the public theatres:

I' faith, I like the audience that frequenteth there  
With much applause. A man shall not be choak't  
With the stench of garlic, nor be pasted  
To the barmy jacket of a beer-brewer.  

But far more serious competition for the adult actors was to come from the children of the Queen's Chapel Royal. In the autumn of 1600 they secured the use of the handsome Blackfriars Theatre which James Burbage had fitted up in 1597, and which the Privy Council had closed for public plays. Henry Evans, who had managed these boys during their former occupancy of the small upstairs hall in Blackfriars, hit upon a shrewd scheme for avoiding the order of the Privy Council. He proposed to have the children give what he was pleased to call "private" performances, though these were such merely in name. The order of the Privy Council would then be interpreted to apply only to "public" performances by "common" actors. But Evans mainly counted, no doubt, on the fact that the Privy Council would not be disposed to interfere with the doings of the royal choristers, members of the Queen's own household, especially if it were known that the Queen sanctioned their proceeding; and unquestionably Evans had Elizabeth's consent before going far with his undertaking.

1 *Jack Drum's Entertainment*, acted at Paul's in 1600.
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On September 2, 1600, he secured from Richard Burbage a lease of the Blackfriars Theatre for twenty-one years, agreeing to pay £40 a year as rental. And in a short time he and Nathaniel Giles, Master of the Chapel Children, had a large and well-trained company of boy-actors performing at this theatre. The boys could act well, with a grace and charm that often made them more attractive than the adult players. Middleton advises a new arrival in London “to call in at Blackfriars, where he should see a nest of boys able to ravish a man.” Ben Jonson gives eloquent testimony to the power of one of these Chapel children, little Salathiel Pavy, to portray the character of old men. While assuming such rôles, Salathiel died at the early age of twelve, and Jonson wrote the following elegy on him:

Years he numbered scarce thirteen
When fates turned cruel;
Yet three filled zodiacs had he been
The stage’s jewel,
And did act, what now we mourn,
Old men so duly
As, sooth, the Parcae thought him one,
He played so truly.

Thus Death, thinking Salathiel to be indeed an old man, gathered him in his scythe. The mistake was not discovered until too late; and then Heaven, well pleased with him, refused to give him up.

Furthermore, to expert acting these boys of the Chapel added the charms of expert vocal and instrumental music, in which they had been carefully trained. The Duke of Stettin-Pomerania, who upon his grand tour of European countries in 1602 attended a play at Blackfriars, gave high praise to the musical powers of the children: “For a whole hour before the play begins, one listens to charming instrumental music played on organs, lutes, pandorins, mandolins, violins, and flutes; as, indeed,
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on this occasion a boy sang, cum voce tremula, to the accompaniment of a bass-viol, so delightfully, that, if the Nuns at Milan did not excel him, we had not heard his equal in our travels.”

Finally, to write plays for them Evans engaged the two eminent poets, George Chapman, whose translation of Homer was receiving the applause of the world, and Ben Jonson, whose recent comedies, Every Man in his Humor and Every Man out of his Humor, had lifted him into the front rank of popular dramatists.

With the handsomest theatre in the city, with excellent acting, with charming musical accompaniment, and with the famous playwrights Chapman and Jonson, the children began their performances before the public late in 1600, or early in 1601, charging high prices of admission and catering to aristocratic audiences. The innovation took London by storm. At last the Admiral’s and the Chamberlain’s companies had competition that seriously affected their long and comfortable monopoly of playing.

Perhaps the most interesting evidence of the success of the innovation is to be found in the words of Shakespeare himself; for the popularity of the child-actors, it would seem, forced even the Chamberlain’s Company to close the Globe for a time, and to go on a tour of the country.¹ Shakespeare alludes to this in Hamlet, where the traveling players that visit Elsinore are in reality the Chamberlain’s troupe. Hamlet, astonished that they should leave the city, questions them closely as to the cause.

¹ This cannot be absolutely proved by the provincial records, but seems to be established on other grounds. A. W. Pollard, Shakespeare Folios and Quarios, 1909, p. 73, says that the company “is heard of as acting at Aberdeen as late as October,” 1601; but the evidence on which he bases this assertion is not conclusive. See J. T. Murray, English Dramatic Companies, i, 104, note 3.
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_Hamlet._ What players are they?
_Rosen._ Even those you were wont to take delight in, the tragedians of the city.¹
_Hamlet._ How chances it they travel? Their residence, both in reputation and profit, was better both ways.
_Rosen._ I think their inhibition comes by the means of the late innovation.
_Hamlet._ Do they hold the same estimation they did when I was in the city? Are they so followed?
_Rosen._ No indeed they are not!
_Hamlet._ How comes it? Do they grow rusty?
_Rosen._ Nay, their endeavour keeps in the wonted pace; but there is, sir, an aerie [i.e., nest] of children, little eyases [i.e., fledglings], that cry out on the top of question, and are most tyrannically clapped for it. These are now the fashion, and so berattle the "common stages" — so they call them — that many wearing rapiers are afraid of goose-quills and dare scarce come thither.
_Hamlet._ What! are they children?

The passage ends with the question from Hamlet: "Do the boys carry it away?" which gives Rosencrantz the opportunity to pun on the well-known sign of the Globe: "Ay, that they do, my lord, Hercules and his load, too." The form this passage takes in the pirated first quarto is hardly less interesting:

_Gil._ Yfaith, my lord, novelty carries it away,
For the principal public audience that
Came to them are turned to private plays,
And to the humor of children.

And Jonson, in his _Poetaster_ (1601), makes Histrio, who represents the Chamberlain’s Company, say:

_O._ O, it will get us a huge deal of money, captain, and we have need on’t; for this winter has made us all poorer than so many starved snakes; nobody comes at us, not a gentleman, nor a —— .

Still other evidence might be quoted to show that the competition of the two children’s companies seriously affected the prosperity of the public troupes.

¹ In 1601 Shakespeare had begun his tragic period, and the Chamberlain’s Company was acting _Julius Caesar_ and _Hamlet._
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This competition, however, did not stimulate Shakespeare to increased productivity; on the contrary we observe, beginning with the year 1600, a gradual letting-down of effort on his part. Whereas heretofore he had been producing on an average about three plays a year, he now begins to produce on an average about one play a year. His plays, to be sure, have a greater depth, but that alone is not sufficient to explain the slowness with which they appeared; nor can it be supposed that by winning greater popularity with London audiences they made up for their paucity in number.

And along with this diminished productivity there is noticeable also a distinct change in the mood of the plays; or, to put it in other words, immediately after writing the joyous trilogy of comedies in 1599, Shakespeare began to study the darker sides of human character, and to produce his great series of tragedies. Many scholars have supposed that this was due to some deep personal sorrow, or to some bitter experience in the life of the poet, which for a time made him pessimistic about human nature, and plunged him — to use the phrase most commonly employed — “into the depths.” But if this be the case, we may with Browning exclaim, “the less Shakespeare he,” for complete objectivity as an artist has been regarded as one of his crowning merits. It seems more reasonable to suppose that with the passing of youth, and the coming of the harder and more subtle intellect of middle-age, the dramatist sought to probe into those festering “imposthumes” of life which, as he had observed, oft breaking within, show no cause without why the world is filled with unhappiness. And if this led him to the production of his great tragedies, with such personages as Iago and Edmund, Goneril and Lady Macbeth, Cleopatra and Volumnia, we have no right to complain. That he did not easily and at once arrive at the
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The secret of great tragedy can readily be understood — he had no guides among his contemporaries. For a time he seems to have been groping through sordid material for the true effects of pity and fear; but ultimately the vision flashed upon him in the nobility and purity of Lear and Cordelia, of Othello and Desdemona, set, like stars in darkest night, against a background of human nature superlatively corrupt. Accordingly — if we accept this theory, and we have no evidence for any other — we may assume that Shakespeare, in the full maturity of his powers, felt at last ready to attempt tragedy, the most difficult and lofty type of dramatic art; and that ambition, rather than melancholia, led him to the production of his masterpieces.

After Twelfth Night, in 1600 or 1601, though the precise date cannot be determined, Shakespeare delivered to his troupe All's Well that Ends Well, a revision of an earlier play of about 1596, usually identified by scholars with the Love's Labour's Won mentioned by Francis Meres in 1598. The reader familiar with Shakespeare cannot fail to note the presence of lines and scenes of an early date mingled with lines and scenes that bear the stamp of greater maturity. The main theme, a foreign love-romance taken from the Decamerone, set off by the addition of the comic characters Parolles, Lafeu, and the Clown, drawn from the poet's own invention, suggests a superficial kinship with the comic trilogy of 1599. But now joy in life gives place to a sombre consideration of the unpleasant elements in human nature, and the innocent laughter we derive from Touchstone and Dogberry finds no counterpart in the humor of Parolles. The absence of contemporary allusion to the play suggests that it did not please in its own day. Nor does it now. Something in the moral quality of the story repels the reader. Yet Helena, the maiden who loves not wisely but too well, is rendered
so pure and true that Coleridge declared her to be "the loveliest of Shakespeare's characters."

In 1601, too, Shakespeare put on the boards another revision of an old play, Hamlet, which had demonstrated its effectiveness through more than a decade of popularity. The original play had been composed at least as early as 1589, for in that year Nashe used it as the type of tragic rant: "He will afford you whole Hamlets, I should say handfuls of tragical speeches."¹ This early drama had never been printed, and the stage-manuscript doubtless perished in Shakespeare's revision; but its general character and even the main outlines of its plot are discernible in a crude German adaptation, Der bestrafte Brudermord,² and in the mutilated 1603 quarto of Hamlet. Even in Shakespeare's finished revision as represented in the second quarto of 1604 the chief features of the older play are still retained. Its plot was of the bloody, melodramatic type which Kyd had rendered popular in Hieronimo, and its style clearly showed the influence of Seneca that prevailed in the tragedies of this early date. Most scholars attribute the first draft to Kyd himself, but it is unwise to be positive on the slender evidence we possess. Indeed, the very closeness with which the play, even as it emerges in Shakespeare's revision, copies the famous Hieronimo, at times echoing its phraseology, suggests that it might have been a slavish imitation of Kyd rather than an original work by that versatile author.³

The old Hamlet, it appears, had belonged to the Pem-

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¹ Address "To the Gentlemen Students of both Universities," prefixed to Robert Greene's Menaphon, 1589.
² The result of the travels of English actors on the Continent. For a translation of this play see Furness' Variorum edition of Hamlet.
³ One must not confuse the "additions" to Hieronimo, or, as it is now called, The Spanish Tragedy, with the work of Kyd. The additions represent Hieronimo as really mad, and show, I think, the influence of Shakespeare's popular revision of Hamlet.
broke’s Men; but when that troupe was dissolved in 1593–94 the manuscript was purchased, along with *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Titus Andronicus*, and other plays, by the Chamberlain’s Company. From Henslowe’s *Diary* we learn that the Chamberlain’s Men acted the play once during their brief stay of ten days at Newington Butts in 1594:

9 of June, 1594. Rd. at *Hamlet*, viii.

After leaving Henslowe, they carried the play with them to the Theatre, where they occasionally performed it with success. It may be that Shakespeare then took the opportunity slightly to touch up the manuscript, for in the final draft we discover passages that resemble his early style. And we have evidence of a special revival of the play about 1595; Lodge, in his *Wit’s Miserie* (1596), writes: “As pale as the visard of the ghost which cried so miserably at the Theatre, like an oyster-wife, *Hamlet, revenge!*”

Shakespeare’s first revision of the play in 1601 seems not to have been thorough, yet it was adequate enough to attain sensational popularity, and led him shortly to a further and more complete reworking of the piece. Dekker, in *Satironomastix*, acted late in 1601, makes Captain Tucca exclaim: “My name’s Hamlet revenge.”

It may be, of course, that the allusion is to the ancient play, but more likely it was inspired by the popularity of Shakespeare’s revision. And the Admiral’s Men at the Fortune promptly made an attempt to revive the equally famous old tragedy of revenge, *Hieronimo*, now called *The Spanish Tragedy*, as a rival attraction.

1 The rest of the passage, “Thou hast been at Paris Garden, hast not?” does not show, as many have thought, that *Hamlet* had been acted at the Swan. Tucca suddenly turns and addresses this question to Ben Jonson, and it refers to Jonson’s having acted in *The Isle of Dogs* at the Swan in Paris Garden, to his great misfortune.
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For this purpose they engaged Ben Jonson himself to freshen up the manuscript. Henslowe, acting as manager for the troupe, records in his Diary:

Lent unto Mr. Alleyn the 25 of September, 1601, to lend unto Benjamin Jonson upon his writing of his additions to Hiero-
nimo [i.e., The Spanish Tragedy] the sum of xxxx.

Since Henslowe paid only from £6 to £8 for a new play, the sum of £2 indicates that Jonson’s alterations were thoroughgoing. Bills were, of course, posted all over the city announcing the revival at the Fortune of this popular old tragedy of revenge with additions by the great dramatist Jonson. The play must have been a success, for in June, 1602, we find Henslowe paying Jonson for still further additions. It is probable also that Marston, in the sequel to his Antonio and Mellida, entitled Antonio’s Revenge (tentatively entered in the Stationers’ Registers on October 24, 1601, and published in 1602), shows the influence of the popularity of Shake-
spere’s Hamlet. Many passages, some apparently inter-
polations, were designed to take advantage of the contemporary interest in ghosts crying for revenge; and echoes of both Hamlet and The Spanish Tragedy, even of Jonson’s additions, are observable. The appeal such echoes might have to London audiences would largely depend on fresh familiarity with the two famous revenge plays at the public theatres.

Furthermore, the great stir that Hamlet made started a vogue in tragedies of revenge. In 1602 Chettle wrote Hoffman, or A Revenge for a Father; in 1602–03 Tourneur wrote The Atheist’s Tragedy, or The Honest Man’s Re-
venge, which seems to have been intended as a reply to Hamlet, for the author refuses to give a son the right of revenge for his father, advancing instead the prin-
ciple, “Leave revenge unto the King of Kings,” and
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attempting to prove that "Patience is the honest man's revenge." About 1605 Châpman wrote The Revenge of Bussy d'Ambois, and about 1606 Tourneur The Revenger's Tragedy. Until the closing of the theatres in 1642 the type maintained its popularity, and in addition colored many plays that do not strictly fall within its category.

The success of Hamlet must have enabled the Chamberlain's Men to emerge from any temporary eclipse in public favor caused by "the late innovation" at Blackfriars. As Anthony Scoloker wrote: "Faith, it should please all, like Hamlet." Not only did it please all in London, who could attend its numerous performances at the Globe, but, we are told, the actors were called upon to present it before "the two universities of Cambridge and Oxford." That this was a signal honor deeply appreciated by playwrights is shown by Ben Jonson's satisfaction when his Volpone was similarly presented before "the two most famous universities"; in dedicating the play to them he declares: "I now render myself grateful, and am studious to justify the bounty of your act."

Naturally this popularity would make Hamlet, which had never been printed in any form, a desirable item to the publishers. But the actors were careful of their manuscripts, and preserved them safely under lock and key. As a rule only one complete copy of a new play was in existence, namely the author's original manuscript bearing the official license of the censor. From this original manuscript the playhouse copyist made for each member of the company taking part in the performance an actor's part, giving only the lines each was required to memorize, with the cue from the preceding speaker. No actor, therefore, had a full copy of the text, so that the danger of the play's falling into the hands of a printer was slight.

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Yet, in spite of these precautions, the success of Hamlet led to the theft of the play in mangled form, and the issue in 1603 of an exceedingly corrupt text. This annoying occurrence must have been in the minds of Heminges and Condell when they framed their complaint against “stolen and surreptitious copies, maimed and deformed by the frauds and stealths of injurious impostors.”

The thief seems to have been one of the hirelings employed by the Chamberlain’s Company. Although we do not know his name, we can trace the rôles he assumed in the play. He acted in succession as Marcellus, Voltimand, one of the traveling players, one of the soldiers in Fortinbras' army, the second grave-digger, the churlish priest, and one of the ambassadors from England. Most of these rôles were unimportant, but they kept him on the stage through a large part of the performance, and enabled him to patch up a “maimed and deformed” copy to sell to an unscrupulous publisher. To his own speeches, which were fairly exact reproductions of what Shakespeare wrote, he added from ready but inaccurate memory the utterances of the other actors in the scenes in which he appeared. He was also familiar, though to a less extent, with certain other scenes which he might overhear after making up and while waiting his cue to come on, or in which he might possibly have been used as a mere “super.” In the case of numerous scenes, however, he had no such sources of knowledge; and in these cases he was forced to resort to some transcript of the old play in its unaltered form. The resultant hodge-podge of a text would fully justify Heminges and Condell in describing it as a “fraud,” and in branding the compiler as an “injurious impostor.”

1 Prefixed to the First Folio of Shakespeare, 1623.
2 For a fuller discussion, with bibliographical references, see Chap. XXVIII.
3 It has been suggested that this was an abridged transcript prepared for the company's use while traveling.
A LIFE OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

Apparently the actors discovered the treachery of the hireling, and in order to prevent his disposal of the copy to some publisher, resorted to the device of having their printer friend, James Roberts, who had helped them before in similar cases, take the genuine playhouse manuscript to the Stationers’ Hall and there copyright it in his own name. This he did on July 26, 1602: “James Roberts, Entered for his copy . . . a book called The Revenge of Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, as it was lately acted by the Lord Chamberlain his servants.” Roberts, it will be understood, was taking this step in behalf of the players, and had no intention of actually printing the play; his sole purpose was to prevent any one else from securing a license to do so.

In this he was successful; but he was not successful in preventing the issue of the stolen text, for the hireling managed to sell his copy to two publishers unscrupulous enough to defy the laws of the Stationers’ Company, Nicholas Linge and John Trundle.¹ Without a license they issued the play in May, 1603, with the title: “The Tragicall Historie of Hamlet, Prince of Denmarke. By William Shake-speare. As it hath beene diverse times acted by his Highnesse servants in the Cittie of London: as also in the two Universities of Cambridge and Oxford, and else-where.”

Shakespeare must have been greatly provoked that the play, which had won him fame both in London and at the universities, should be offered to the reading public in so corrupt a form. Yet he had no recourse at law, and the only way he could protect his reputation was to issue a correct and authorized edition. This, however, he did not at once do. The death of Elizabeth, with the coming of James and the resultant distraction, and

¹ Trundle seems to have made himself especially disliked by the playwrights and actors, and is satirized in several plays.
especially the outbreak of the plague, caused him to defer action. The pirated edition appeared in May, 1603; on May 26 the theatres were closed by the plague, and they remained closed for six months. Shakespeare may have utilized this interval of leisure further to improve the play. No doubt he had been astonished at the success it had attained as a result of his hasty revision, and felt stimulated to give it further and more careful reworking before offering it to critical readers.\(^1\) Late in 1604, however, he sent to the press his authorized edition.\(^2\) The title-page states that the tragedy was “enlarged to almost as much again as it was,” and gives assurance to the purchaser that the text is printed “according to the true and perfect copy.” There is every reason to believe that the printer set up the type from a manuscript furnished by Shakespeare.\(^3\)

Thus at last the world was supplied with a trustworthy edition of the play, and readers were able to judge of its merits as literature. They were not disappointed. Even Gabriel Harvey, the censorious scholar of Cambridge, acknowledged that it had in it “to please the wiser sort”; and Harvey’s judgment has been unanimously approved by literary critics of subsequent ages.

On the stage *Hamlet* still maintains the popularity which marked its first appearance; yet the Hamlet we

\(^1\) In the first quarto Polonius appears as Corambis, Guildenstern and Rosencrantz as Gilderstone and Rosencraft, Reynaldo as Montano, and the order of the scenes is different.

\(^2\) Some copies bear the date 1604, others 1605, indicating that the book was issued late in 1604.

\(^3\) Curiously enough, the volume was published by Linge, who had issued the pirated edition. Perhaps he was the leader in that enterprise, and agreed to suppress the corrupt edition, only two copies of which are extant. He engaged James Roberts to print the play. They must have come to terms whereby Roberts in return for the privilege of printing the play transferred the copyright to Linge, for later we find Linge selling the copyright to another publisher. The text of the First Folio was set up from a different manuscript, that used by the actors.
see to-day is probably not the Hamlet that Shakespeare conceived, and that in the hands of Burbage won such plaudits from Elizabethan audiences. The rôle has been subjected to the whims of several generations of actors, who have gradually built up the modern interpretation of the character. One illustration will suffice to make this clear. In the play as originally presented Hamlet first appears to the audience neatly dressed in black, as became a mourner and one who had always been the "glass of fashion." But when he begins to feign madness, he suddenly becomes foul and slovenly of dress. His uncle describes the change as nothing less than a "transformation":

Since nor the exterior, nor the inward man
   Resembles that it was.

When Hamlet impetuously rushes into Ophelia's closet after having several times been denied access to her, she is greatly shocked at the change in his dress: ¹

_Oph_. O, my lord! my lord! I have been so affrighted!
_Pol_. With what, i' the name of God?
_Oph_. My lord, as I was sewing in my closet,
Lord Hamlet, with his doublet all unbraced,
No hat upon his head, his stockings foul'd,
Undgarter'd and down-gyved to his ankle,
Pale as his shirt . . .

And Anthony Scoloker, who had seen the play on the stage, writing in 1603–04, compares the mad Daiphantus to Hamlet in these terms:

Puts off his clothes, his shirt he only wears,
   Much like mad Hamlet.

When a man entered the stage "in his shirt" ² he was

¹ This has been supposed to be the affectation of a forlorn lover, but it goes far beyond that.
² Daiphantus, published in 1604.
³ So the stage directions read. Cf. The Spanish Tragedy, where Hieronimo
THE
Tragicall Historie of
HAMLET,
Prince of Denmarke.

By William Shakespeare.

Newly imprinted and enlarged to almost as much againe as it was, according to the true and perfect Coppie.

AT LONDON,
Printed by I. R. for N. L. and are to be sold at his shoppe under Saint Dunstons Church in Fleetstreet. 1604.
supposed to be at the limit of deshabille. Hamlet's slovenliness of dress is, of course, in perfect keeping with his feigned rôle of a madman, and must have made a profound impression upon the audience, as it did upon Ophelia. But the modern actor represents Hamlet as throughout the play exquisitely groomed in black velvet, with an attractive gold chain about his neck — still, though mad, the "glass of fashion."

We cannot sufficiently regret the absence of Shakespeare himself to drill our actors in the representation of his plays. That he was painstaking in such matters, and exacting in the extreme, is indicated by the advice, put into the mouth of Hamlet, to the traveling actors in Elsinore; and that he was successful as his own stage manager we have abundant evidence. John Downes, book-keeper and prompter at the Restoration theatres, writes of Betterton's performance of Hamlet in accordance with the instructions of Sir William Davenant:

The Tragedy of Hamlet; Hamlet being Perform'd by Mr. Betterton; Sir William (having seen Mr. Taylor of the Black-Fryars Company Act it, who being Instructed by the Author Mr. Shaksepear) taught Mr. Betterton in every Particle of it; which by his exact Performance of it, gain'd him Esteem and Reputation Superlative to all other Plays.

This "correct" representation of Hamlet came to Betterton indirectly: Shakespeare personally instructed Richard Burbage; after Burbage's death in 1619, Joseph

roused out of his "naked bed" enters "in his shirt." Was Edmund Gayton really thinking of "mad Hamlet" when he wrote in his Festivoius Notes, p. 17: "This roguing Queane had watch'd her Uncle, and seen him act Jeronimo [i.e., Hieronimo] in his short shirt, and now thinking him quite lost, discovers his mad pranks to the Curate"?

1 Tourneur, in The Revenger's Tragedy (III, v), written under the influence of Hamlet, makes Vindice say:

Surely wee're all mad people, and they
Whome we thinke are, are not; we mistake those:
'Tis we are mad in scence, they but in clothes.

2 Roscius Anglicanus, p. 21.
Taylor assumed the rôle;¹ Davenant had seen Taylor act the part, and, after the Restoration, attempted to instruct Betterton “in every particle of it.” The success his instruction enabled Betterton to achieve is revealed by contemporary criticism. Samuel Pepys writes on August 24, 1661: “To the Opera, and there saw Hamlet, Prince of Denmarke; done with scenes very well; but above all Betterton did the Prince’s part beyond imagination”; on May 28, 1663: “There saw Hamlet done, giving us fresh reason never to think enough of Betterton”; and again on August 31, 1668: “Saw Hamlet, which we have not seen this year before, or more; and mightily pleased with it; but above all with Betterton — the best part, I believe, that ever man acted!” And Pepys’ enthusiasm was shared by numerous other men of letters. Steele described Betterton’s performance of Hamlet as “the force of action in perfection.” Rowe declared that “Betterton performed the part as if it had been written on purpose for him, as if the author had conceived it as he played it.” Possibly Rowe did not know that under Davenant’s instruction Betterton was actually attempting to play the rôle “in every particle” as the author himself had conceived it.

With Shakespeare’s guiding hand the difficult scene of Hamlet’s leaping into the grave would doubtless prove one of the most effective moments in the play. So it was when Burbage acted under the author’s tutelage. In the mind of the person who wrote the Funeral Elegy on the Death of the Famous Actor Richard Burbage, the scene stood out among his greatest achievements:

Oft have I seen him leap into the grave,
Suiting the person, which he seemed to have,

¹ James Wright, in Historia Histrionica (1699), says: “Burbage, Heminges, and others of the older sort, were dead before I knew the town; but in my time, before the wars, . . . Taylor acted Hamlet incomparably well.”
JOYOUS COMEDIES; HAMLET

Of a sad lover with so true an eye,
That there, I would have sworn, he meant to die.

Even in the hands of Betterton the scene called for special comment from Steele, who observes that it is one of the "circumstances which dwell strongly upon the minds of the audience." To-day the leaping into the grave is commonly omitted.

Perhaps Shakespeare did not specially concern himself with the way in which the clowns might render the humorous grave-digging episode, yet their comic business must at least have had his approval; it is interesting, therefore, to note an early traditional representation of the scene, which is peculiarly Elizabethan in spirit. A Frenchman, who saw this in London in 1811, has left the following description: 1

After beginning their labour and breaking ground for a grave, a conversation begins between the two grave-diggers;—the chief one takes off his coat, folds it carefully, and puts it by in a safe corner; then, taking up his pickaxe, spits in his hand, gives a stroke or two, talks, stops, strips off his waistcoat, still talking, folds it with great deliberation and nicety, and puts it with the coat; then an under-waistcoat, still talking; another, and another;—I counted seven or eight, each folded and unfolded very leisurely in a manner always different, and with gestures faithfully copied from nature;—the British public enjoys this scene excessively, and the pantomimic variations a good actor knows how to introduce in it are sure to be vehemently applauded.

How old this traditional representation of the scene is we cannot say, but it seems to have gone back at least to the days of Betterton and Davenant. And it was imitated in the Restoration, if not previously in the Elizabethan, performances of Webster's Duchess of Malfi, written with distinct reminiscences of Shakespeare's plays, and acted by the Globe company about 1611.

1 I quote the passage from Halliwell-Phillipps, Outlines, ii, 320.
The 1708 quarto, valuable for the fullness of its stage-directions, notes that in Act V, Scene ii, when the comic doctor removes his gown, he “puts off his four Cloaks one after another.” Possibly Anthony Scoloker was thinking of this farcical representation of the grave-digging episode when in 1603-04 he cited the play of Hamlet as a triumphant example of those tragedies in which the broadly comic and the deeply pathetic are placed side by side: “Like friendly Shakespeare’s tragedies, where the comedian rides when the tragedian stands on tip-toe.”

Though a few of the personal instructions from Shakespeare may have come down through Burbage, Taylor, Davenant, Betterton, and later stage-tradition to the present time, most of them doubtless have been lost or modified beyond recognition. We may have no reason to complain at the modern performance of Hamlet, for our actors succeed in maintaining the original popularity of the play; yet it is well to bear in mind the possibility that the Elizabethan representation differed in many essential ways from that of Henry Irving or Forbes-Robertson, and their imitators.

Successful as Hamlet is on the stage, it is no less popular as a closet drama. The subtle, elusive personality of the young Prince of Denmark, and the eternal mystery of life which seems to brood over the plot, exercise upon readers a spell that makes the tragedy one of the most fascinating in the English language. Tennyson’s dictum, “Hamlet is the greatest creation in literature that I know of,” merely reflects the universal esteem in which the play is held by lovers of poetry.

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1 As to the Elizabethan impersonation of the Ghost, cf. Randolph in Hey for Honesty: “Her looks are as terrible as . . . the Ghost in Hamlet.”
CHAPTER XVI

THE ESSEX REBELLION, AND THE WAR OF THE THEATRES

The year 1601 held for Shakespeare other things than the gratifying success of Hamlet. Its early months were marked by a sensational occurrence which must have deeply stirred him, and which involved his troupe in a perilous experience.

The gallant soldier, Robert Devereaux, Earl of Essex, who had endeared himself to the hearts of the people by his spectacular expeditions to Cadiz and the Azores,¹ had in 1599 been appointed Lord Deputy of Ireland for the specific purpose of subduing the rebellious islanders and bringing peace to that unfortunate land. On March 27, with his staff and a splendid retinue of attendants, he set out for his new post. His progress through the streets of London took the form of a triumphal procession, the populace everywhere flocking to see and applaud their hero. Stow tells us that “the people pressed exceedingly to behold him, especially in the highways, for more than four miles' space, crying and saying, God bless your Lordship! God preserve your honour! etc., and some followed him until the evening, only to behold him.” By his side

¹ Spenser, in Prothalamion, goes out of his way to celebrate Essex. The passage begins thus:

Yet therein now doth lodge a noble Peer,
Great England's glory, and the world's wide wonder,
Whose dreadfull name late through all Spaine did thunder,
And Hercules' two pillors standing neere
Did make to quake and feare.
Fair branch of Honor! Flower of Chevalrie!
That fillest England with thy triumphs fame,
Joy have thou of thy noble victorie!

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rode his dear friend, the Earl of Southampton, as one of his captains.

Shakespeare was keenly interested in the expedition, and seems fully to have shared the popular confidence in its ultimate success. In a Chorus prefixed to the last act of *Henry V* he gave expression to this confidence in words that suggest high admiration for Essex, if not indeed personal affection:

> How London doth pour out her citizens,
> The mayor and all his brethren in best sort,
> Like to the senators of the antique Rome,
> With the plebeians swarming at their heels,
> Go forth and fetch their conquering Cæsar in:
> As, by a lower, but loving, likelihood,
> Were now the general of our gracious empress,—
> As in good time he may,—from Ireland coming,
> Bringing rebellion broached on his sword,
> How many would the peaceful city quit
> To welcome him!

But Essex, like other great men who have attempted to solve the Irish problem, lamentably failed, and the following year he returned to London to be put on trial for his conduct of affairs in the island. In August, 1600, he was deprived of all his offices in the State, and his public career, hitherto so brilliant, was clouded in official disgrace. This downfall he attributed, not without cause perhaps, to his political enemies who were then in favor with Elizabeth; and he schemed to use force to overthrow these men, and re-establish himself in power. In a daring plot to seize by violence the reins of government he interested several great noblemen, including Shakespeare’s friend and patron the Earl of Southamp-ton.¹ The date set for the uprising was Sunday, February 8, 1601.

ESSEX: THE WAR OF THE THEATRES

The main hope of the conspirators was that, when the banner of Essex was raised in the streets, the populace would rally to the support of their hero. And in order to prepare the public in advance for conduct so revolutionary, they planned to have the Chamberlain’s Company at the Globe act Shakespeare’s Richard II, in which was represented “the deposing and murder” of an English sovereign.\(^1\) One might here suspect the hand of the Earl of Southampton, who doubtless was familiar with Shakespeare’s plays,\(^2\) and aware of Shakespeare’s personal sympathy with Essex. However that may be, certain of the conspirators interviewed the Globe actors, and requested them to present Richard II on the afternoon of February 7 — that is, on the day preceding the fateful morning set for the revolt. Augustine Phillips, a leading member of the Chamberlain’s Company, subsequently testified:

Sir Charles Percy, Sir Jostlyne Percy, and the Lord Montegle, with some three more, spake to some of the players in the presence of this examinant, to have the play of the deposing and killing of King Richard the Second to be played the Saturday next, promising to give them xls. more than their ordinary to play it, when this examinant and his fellows were determined to have played some other play, holding that play of King Richard to be so old and so long out of use that they should

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\(^1\) It is curious that the quarto of Richard II issued by Wise in 1597 from the players’ copy omitted the deposition scene. Possibly Wise used his own judgment, for the scene might well have brought him into trouble with the censors of the press. The scene, however, remained in the actors’ version, and was added to the edition of 1608.

\(^2\) C. C. Stopes, op. cit., p. 106, calls attention to what may be a significant letter written by Sir Walter Raleigh from Plymouth, July 6, 1597, to Sir Robert Cecil: “I acquainted my Lord Generall [Essex] with your letter to mee, and your Kind acceptance of your entertainment. He was also wonderfull merry att your consait of Richard II. I hope it shall never alter, and whereof I shahe most gladd if it is the trew way to all our good, quiet, and advancement, and most of all for her sake, whose affairs shall truely fynd better progression.”
have small or no company at it; but, at their request, this examinant and his fellows were content to play it...and so played it accordingly.

At noon on the day of the arranged performance the plotters met at dinner, and after dinner proceeded in a body to the Globe. Sir Gelly Merrick later testified that "he dined at Gunter's in the company of the Lord Montegle, Sir Christopher Blount, Sir Charles Percy, Ellys Jones, and Edward Bushell," and others "whom he remembreth not; and after dinner that day, and at the motion of Sir Charles Percy and the rest, they went all together to the Globe." There the play was duly acted, with the conspirators, probably from a box, watching the effect upon the audience, and loudly applauding the deposition scene. What influence, if any, the performance had upon the public we cannot say; but that the Chamberlain's Men were unaware of the part they were taking in a bold attempt to overthrow the government is certain.

On the following morning, Sunday, February 8, about eleven o'clock, the Earl of Essex, accompanied by the Earl of Southampton, the Earl of Rutland, the Earl of Bedford, and other "knights and gentlemen of great blood, to the number of some sixty," passed through Ludgate into London, marching "on foot, armed some with swords, some with targets, and some few with French pistols," and in the main streets of the city raised the banner of Essex. The populace, however, did not rally to their support; and it soon became obvious that

1 This, I think, may be regarded as an ex parte statement, for Richard II was probably not unpopular. It was still being acted at the Globe as late as 1611, when it was witnessed by Forman; and in 1631 it was chosen by Sir Henry Herbert for his benefit performance.

2 All these men were close personal friends of Essex, and intimately concerned in the revolt; see C. C. Stopes, op. cit. Sir Charles Percy, son of the Earl of Northumberland, was familiar with Shakespeare's plays; see above, p. 227.
the rebellion was doomed to failure. Some of Essex's followers, observing this, took occasion to slip away from him; and Essex and his friend Southampton, realizing their own danger, hastily retreated to Essex House on the banks of the Thames, where they prepared to defend themselves to the death. Here they were immediately besieged by the Queen's forces, the Lord Burghley assaulting the house from the land side, and the Lord Admiral from the river side. At six o'clock in the afternoon parleys were held with the Earl of Southampton, who was boldly pacing the roof with a sword drawn in his hand.

All London was seething with excitement; and Shakespeare, we can hardly doubt, was profoundly moved by the stirring events of the day, as well as by the grave peril of his friend Southampton.

The snapshot—for we cannot linger over details—was that the conspirators were arrested and put on trial for treason. Both Essex and Southampton were sentenced to the block; but later Southampton's sentence was reprieved on the ground that he had acted merely through love of his friend, and he was sent to close confinement in the Tower, where he remained during the rest of the Queen's life.

Nor did the actors at the Globe wholly escape. They were brought before the authorities, and made to explain their performance of Richard II. Yet no real blame could be fastened upon them, and, possibly through the influence of their patron, the Lord Chamberlain, and their other friends at Court, they were not subjected to any punishment. The Queen, however, did not forget the episode, and ever afterwards felt a strong resentment at the play. In August, 1601, she exclaimed to Lambard: "I am Richard the Second, know ye not that?"

1 Sir Gelly Merrick, who paid the actors £2 to present the play, was among those executed.
And with what seems to be hysterical exaggeration she declared to him that “this tragedy was played forty times in open streets and houses.”

On the morning of February 24, Essex was led to the block. With fine irony, Elizabeth summoned the Chamberlain’s Men to entertain Her Majesty on the evening before; and, as though further to show her indifference to the fate of her one-time favorite, on the morning of the execution she amused herself by playing on the virginals.

Shakespeare, we may feel sure, had no part in this luckless conspiracy; but he seems not to have forgiven Elizabeth for her heartless treatment of the gallant Essex, and her long imprisonment of Southampton. This may perhaps explain why he refused, in spite of several protests, to write, as did so many poets, an elegy on the great Queen who had taken such delight in his plays, or to express any grief at her death.

The summer that followed was destined to bring him another unpleasant experience, the so-called “War of the Theatres,” growing out of the “Poetomachia.” The chief personages in the “Poetomachia” were Ben Jonson, on the one hand, and John Marston and Thomas Dekker, on the other; and the trouble originated in a private quarrel between Jonson and Marston.¹

Marston, formerly a spendthrift gallant of the Middle Temple, began his career as a poet with the publication in 1598 of a volume of “snag-tooth’d” Satires, followed immediately by a second volume of the same character, The Scourge of Folly, in both of which he attempted to lash the sins of the day. The satires are chiefly remarkable for the use of an uncouth “gallimaufry of words,” which often produces the effect of a deafening verbiage

¹ This theatrical quarrel has been studied by J. H. Penniman, The War of the Theatres, 1897, R. A. Small, The Stage Quarrel, 1899, and J. H. Penniman, Poetaster and Satiromastix, 1913. I have chosen to give my own interpretation of the facts.
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without much apparent meaning. Yet they brought Marston no little reputation. John Weever, in his Epigrams (1599), writes:

Marston, thy Muse enharbors Horace's vein;  
Then some Augustus give thee Horace's merit!

And Charles Fitzgeoffrey, in Affania (1601), thus addresses him:

Gloria, Marstoni, satirarum proxima primae,  
Primaque, fas primas si numerare duas!

But Jonson, with his surer judgment, realized that the satires were bad; and probably in his conversation with literary men ridiculed Marston's obscurity of thought and absurdities in diction. If so, it must be said, he was fully justified.

When the Paul's Boys opened their little private theatre late in 1598 or early in 1599, and engaged Marston and Dekker as playwrights, Marston at once furbished up for them an old academic play entitled Histriomastix. Again he made use of his strange "gallimaufry of words" to split the ears of the public. Jonson was just putting on the boards of the Globe his Every Man out of his Humor, a play avowedly designed to tax the follies of the time; and he took the occasion to insert what he probably intended to be a good-natured ridicule of the "fustian" language of Marston:

Now, sir, whereas the ingenuity of the time, and the soul's synderisis are but embrions in nature, added to the paunch of Esquiline, and the intervallum of the zodiac, besides the ecliptic line being optic and not mental, but by the contemplative and theoric part thereof, doth demonstrate to us the vegetable circumference, and the ventosity of the tropics, and whereas our intellectual or mincing capreal, according to the metaphysics — as you may read in Plato's Histriomastix.

The parody of Marston's style, in words and phrases culled from his works, was very clever; and the mention
of *Histriomastix* by name made it impossible for the audience to miss the identity of the victim. But Jonson did not stop with this. In another scene he humorously alluded to Marston’s second volume of satires, *The Scourge of Villany*:

And how dost thou, thou *Grand Scourge* or Second Unrüşs of the time?

Marston, sensitive to criticism, seems to have been deeply resentful, and to have exhibited, in the taverns of London and other places where literary men gathered, an open hostility to Jonson, in which he was seconded by his friend and fellow-laborer Thomas Dekker. Jonson was made aware of their attacks upon him; and in his next play, *Cynthia’s Revels*, produced at Blackfriars in 1600, he introduced, as a digression, Marston and Dekker under the names of Anaides and Hedon,¹ and represented them as backbiting him in literary company. He made Hedon (i.e., Marston) say:

Well, I am resolv’d what I’ll do. . . . Marry, speak all the venom I can of him; and poison his reputation in every place where I come . . . and if I chance to be present where any question is made of his sufficences, or of anything he hath done private or public, I’ll censure it slightly and ridiculously.

Anaides (i.e., Dekker) is made to say that he likewise will speak detractingly of Jonson whenever possible. But to their attempts at backbiting Jonson retorted with characteristic arrogance:

I think but what they are, and am not stirred,
The one [Marston] a light, voluptuous reveler,²
The other [Dekker] a strange arrogating puff,
Both impudent and ignorant enough.

The satire on Marston in this play was so obvious that, as Dekker declared, it was no wonder that, out of an

¹ The identification is verified by Dekker in *Satiromastix*, I, ii, 183–95.
² In *Poetaster* Jonson again contemptuously describes Marston as a reve
er; see Act III, Scene iv, line 72.
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audience of five hundred, four hundred "should all point with their fingers in one instant at one and the same man." ¹ Marston therefore answered the attack in his What You Will, acted by the Paul's Boys late in 1600.² In this play he gave a full-length portrait of Jonson as Lampatho, taking the name from Jonson's own description of himself in Cynthia's Revels: "Foh! he smells all lamp-oil with studying." In what were probably savage terms,³ he ridiculed Jonson's arrogance and insolence, and caustically referred to the failure of Cynthia's Revels at Court.

Jonson was furious, and challenged Marston to a duel. This put Marston in an embarrassing situation, for Jonson was one of the best swordsmen in England, known already to have killed two men in duels. Under the circumstances he ignored the challenge. Jonson thereupon sought him out, and ultimately found him in one of the taverns of London. Marston, who must have been expecting such an occurrence, drew a pistol. Jonson promptly "took his pistol from him" — so he boasted to William Drummond of Hawthornden — and then gave him a beating.⁴

Not content, however, with drubbing his opponent in private, Jonson desired to settle the score before the theatrical audiences of the city. To this end he began to write, for the performance at the Blackfriars, Poetaster,

¹ Satiromastix, I, ii, 290–91.
² The date can be fixed by internal evidence, especially the reference to Cynthia's Revels (1600), and the absence of any allusion to Poetaster (1601).
³ It should be remembered that the play as we have it was rewritten by Marston. Jonson had unmercifully satirized its diction in Poetaster (1601), which led Marston carefully to revise it before publishing it in 1607. Since he was then on friendly terms with Jonson, he doubtless omitted much of the original abuse. There is enough left, however, to make clear the nature of Marston's attack.
⁴ See Drummond's Conversations, and cf. Jonson's Epigram No. 68. That the episode preceded Poetaster is clear from passages in the play; see especially (Belles-Lettres Series) II, i, 115–18; II, ii, 176; II, ii, 188.

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in which he planned to celebrate contemporary London under the name, conventional in Elizabethan satire, of Rome, pompously representing himself as the great Quintus Horatius Flaccus, “poet and priest to the Muses,” and Marston as Crispinus, “an ignorant poetaster.” At the end of the play, as a climax, he proposed to give Marston a pill which should make him vomit up on the stage before the London public his grotesque diction, “words able to bastinado a man’s ears,” such as “oblatrant — furibund — fatuate — conscious dampe — prorumped — snarling gusts — spurious snotteries — obstupefact.” He was at work on the play — for he was slow in composition — nearly four months,\(^1\) during which time he must have freely talked about it, and have taken the tavern-gossips into his confidence. Thus his enemies were well-informed of his intentions, and even learned much about the plot of his “comical satire.” Marston, after his recent experience with Jonson, thinking prudence to be the better part of valor, took no steps towards a counter-attack. But Dekker bravely came to the defense of his friend. He was just finishing for the Paul’s Boys a comedy on William Rufus, and upon the shoulders of this play he foisted a sub-plot lampooning Jonson. Taking a cue from Poetaster, he introduced Jonson as Horace, Marston as Crispinus, and himself as Demetrius. He also stole thunder from Jonson by using Captain Tucca, whom Jonson had created as a vain-glorious braggart. Finally, he rechristened the play with the title, Satiromastix, or The Unrussing of the Humorous Poet. News of Dekker’s purpose coming to Jonson while he was still engaged on Poetaster, he inserted Dekker in the play as a second “poetaster,” and made other efforts to counter the expected attack.

So far this was merely a private quarrel between Jonson,

\(^{1}\) According to his own statement some fifteen weeks.

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on the one hand, and Marston and Dekker, on the other—or what Dekker himself aptly termed the "Poetomachia." But a second quarrel, between Jonson and the Chamberlain's Company, became involved with the "Poetomachia," so that we have to consider the two together.

Jonson was exceedingly vain of the fact that he was writing for the children of the Chapel Royal. They were not "common players," but members of the Queen's household; their theatre was finer than the public houses, and situated not in the vulgar suburbs but in a most aristocratic locality; and they charged higher prices of admission, and drew their audiences from fashionable circles. With unpardonably bad taste he took occasion in the plays he wrote for the children to emphasize the superiority of Blackfriars, and to sneer at the "common actors." In this he seems to have been further inspired by the animosity he had for some unknown reason developed towards the Lord Chamberlain's Men, who had recently brought out his Every Man in his Humor and Every Man out of his Humor. It was his arrogant and ill-natured attacks upon the public actors in general, and the Chamberlain's Company in particular, that led to the open quarrel between the Blackfriars and the Globe. This is known as the "War of the Theatres." ¹

In his very first play for the children of the Chapel, Cynthia's Revels (1600), Jonson began to draw his invidious distinction between the elegant and fashionable Blackfriars Theatre and what he was pleased to call the "public theatres" or "common stages."

'Slid, the boy takes me for a piece of perspective. . . . Sir Crack, I am none of your fresh pictures that use to beautify the decayed dead arras in a public theatre.

¹ In Raven's Almanacke (1609), Dekker writes: "The contention of the two houses (the gods be thanked) was appeased long ago, but a deadly war between the three houses [Globe, Fortune, Red Bull] will I fear burst out like thunder and lightning," etc.
Furthermore, he speaks scornfully of the sort of plays acted on the “common stages,” and sneers at those gentlemen who “will press forth on common stages and brokers’ stalls.”

It is not strange that Shakespeare, in behalf of the Chamberlain’s Men, should make a protest against this ill-natured attack upon the “common stages” and “common players.” In the passage in Hamlet dealing with the Blackfriars children, reference to which has already been made, he uttered his protest as follows:

Rosencrantz. These [children at Blackfriars] are now the fashion, and so berattle the “common stages” — so they call them — that many wearing rapiers [i.e., men of fashion] are afraid of goose-quills [i.e., Jonson’s pen], and dare scarce come thither.

Hamlet. What! are they children? . . . Will they pursue the quality [of acting] no longer than they can sing? Will they not say afterwards, if they should grow themselves to be “common players” — as is most like if their means are no better, — their writers do them wrong to make them exclaim against their own succession?

Jonson, however, continued his sneers at the “common stages” and “common players,” and in writing his next play, Poetaster (1601), became even more virulent. In Act I, Scene ii, Ovid Senior says to the poet, Ovid Junior: “Yes, sir! I hear of a tragedy of yours coming forth for the common players.” Whereupon Tucca adds: “They are grown licentious, the rogues, libertines, flat libertines. They forget they are in the statute” — referring to the well-known statute which listed “common players” with Rogues, Vagabonds, and Sturdy Beggars. Ovid Senior then observes to his son: “Methinks if nothing else yet this alone, the very reading of the public edicts, should fright thee from commerce with them.”

1 The phrase quoted appears in Cynthia’s Revels (1600), but not in Poetaster (1601).

2 Shakespeare’s anticipation came true, for three of these boy-actors, Nathaniel Field, William Ostler, and John Underwood, later joined the “common players” at the Globe.
But the self-respecting Ovid Junior, jealous of his good name, replies with some heat:

They wrong me, sir, and do abuse you more
That blow your ears with these untrue reports.
I am not known unto the open stage,
Nor do I traffic in their theatres.

The Chamberlain's Men, bent upon revenge, allied themselves with Marston and Dekker. The latter was then, as has been stated, preparing for the Paul's Boys his attack on Jonson called *Satiromastix, or The Untrussing of the Humorous Poet*, in which Jonson was to be fetched upon the stage and scurrilously abused. The Chamberlain's Men arranged with Dekker that *Satiromastix* should be acted simultaneously by the Boys at Paul's and by themselves at the Globe. Furthermore, the play being in process of composition, the Chamberlain's Men assisted in devising some of the cruelest scenes. As Jonson makes Demetrius (i.e., Dekker) say in *Poetaster*, IV, iii, 145: "Wee'll all join, and hang upon him like so many horse-leaches, the players and all. We shall sup together soon, and then wee'll conspire, i' faith." Even Shakespeare seems to have been induced to put a finger in the play. Jonson later ¹ wrote as follows:

What they have done against me
I am not moved with . . .
Only amongst them I am sorry for
Some better natures, by the rest so drawn,
To run in that vile line.

If Shakespeare had a hand in *Satiromastix*, we may suspect that he is responsible for the scene which represents Jonson in the pangs of composing one of his odes. The passage is free from the gross scurrility and personal abuse that mark the other satirical scenes, and as humor has a merit that cannot be attributed to the play as a

¹ In an Apologetical Dialogue subsequently added to *Poetaster*.
whole. Jonson, as every one in London knew, was slow at composition, and had to hammer out his verses with great effort, with the burning of many candles, and with inspiration drawn from numerous classical authors; that, and nothing else, is laughed at in this scene:

SCENE 2

Horace sitting in a study behind a curtain, a candle by him burning, books lying confusedly. To himself.

Horace. To thee, whose forehead swells with roses,
Whose most haunted bower
Gives life and scent to every flower,
Whose most adorèd name incloses
Things abstruse, deep, and divine,
Whose yellow tresses shine
Bright as Eoan fire,
O me, thy priest, inspire!
For I to thee and thine immortal name,
In — in — in golden tunes —
For I to thee and thine immortal name
In — sacred raptures flowing — flowing — swimming — swimming —
In sacred raptures swimming,
Immortal name — game — dame — tame — lame, lame, lame!
Pux! — hath shame — proclaim — oh! —
In sacred raptures flowing, will proclaim, not —
O me, thy priest, inspire!

Jonson, learning that the Chamberlain’s Men were to have a share in Satiromastix, inserted in his Poetaster some special abuse aimed at them in the character of Histrio. Captain Tucca says to Histrio: “I would fain come with my cockatrice one day and see a play, if I knew where there were a good bawdy one. But they say you have nothing but Humors, Revels, and Satires” (alluding to Jonson’s Blackfriars plays—Cynthia’s Revels, a study in “humors,” and Poetaster, described on the title-page as “a comicall satire”). Histrio promptly corrects him: “No, I assure you, Captain, not we. They are on the other side of Tyber [i.e., the Thames]. We [on the Bankside, where only the Globe was in operation as a
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playhouse] have as much ribaldry in our plays as can be, as you would wish, Captain; all the sinners in the suburbs [i.e., the occupants of the licensed stews on the Bankside] come and applaud our action daily." Tucca, thus learning that Histrio is connected with the Chamberlain's Company, angrily exclaims: "I hear you'll bring me o' the stage there; you'll play me, they say; I shall be presented by a sort of copper-laced scoundrels of you. Life of Pluto! if you stage me, stinkard, your mansions shall sweat for't, your tabernacles, varlet, your Globes." Not content with such general abuse, Jonson proceeds to lampoon five particular members of the Chamberlain's Company under the then no doubt easily identified descriptions of "your eating player," "the villainous out-of-tune fiddler Aenobarbus," "Æsop, your politician,"¹ "Frisker, the zany,"² and "Your fat fool."³ And it would seem that he even took a fling at Shakespeare, who had recently acquired heraldic honors and purchased an estate at Stratford: "What, you are proud, you rascal, are you proud? ha? You grow rich, do you, and purchase?"; and with reference to a coat of arms: "They forget they are in the statute, the rascals. They are blazoned there! There they are tricked, they and their pedigrees! They need no other heralds, i-wis."

If Jonson's abuse of the players was severe, the lam-

¹ An allusion to the share the Globe actors had in the Essex conspiracy? Æsop is again referred to in Act V, Scene iii, as a politician.
² Probably Will Kempe, who danced a morris all the way to Norwich in 1600.
³ Possibly the comedian who took the rôle of Falstaff and for whom Shakespeare designed the rôle of Ajax. In his Apologetical Dialogue Jonson says:

Now, for the Players, it is true I tax'd 'hem,
And yet but some; and those so sparingly
As all the rest might have sat still, unquestioned,
Had they but had the wit or conscience
To think well of themselves. But impotent they
Thought each man's vice belong'd to their whole tribe:
And much good doo't 'hem.
pooning of Jonson by Dekker and the Chamberlain's Men was worse. As Shakespeare observed, there was "much throwing about of brains." The public seems to have enjoyed both the Poetaster at Blackfriars and Satiromastix at Paul's and the Globe. Rosencrantz declares: "Faith, there has been much to-do on both sides: and the nation holds it no sin to tarre them to controversy: there was, for a while, no money bid for argument, unless the poet and the player went to cuffs in the question."

Further details of the quarrel are unknown to us; but a contemporary writer seems to give Shakespeare credit for putting an end to it. In II Return from Parnassus, composed late in 1601, occurs the following colloquy between the two leading actors of the Globe:

Kempe. . . . O that Ben Jonson is a pestilent fellow! He brought up Horace, giving the poets a pill; but our fellow Shakespeare hath given him a purge that made him bewray his credit.

Burbage. It's a shrewd fellow, indeed!

Shakespeare's purge, whatever it was, seems to have been effective. Very soon after we find the "War of the Theatres," and along with it the "Poetomachia," a matter of the past. Jonson and his old enemy Dekker are lovingly writing a play together; Marston dedicates The Malcontent to Jonson in affectionate terms, "Benjamino Jonsonio, poetae elegantissimo, gravissimo, amico suo, candido et cordato"; Jonson assists Marston in the composition of Eastward Hoe; and the Chamberlain's Men, in order to show that they too had "buried the hatchet," act his Sejanus at the Globe.

Still another distressing experience was reserved for Shakespeare in this memorable year. In the first week of September his father died at Stratford at the age of at least seventy. We may suppose that the glover's later years were, through the dramatist, rendered free from
pecuniary embarrassment, and that he was happy in the success achieved by his illustrious son. Sir John Mennes, it will be recalled, described him as a merry-cheeked old man, still in his shop, who said, "Will was a good honest fellow, but he darest have crackt a jest with him at any time." Such property as the father had, except for the dower-rights of the widow, came to the poet. The bulk of the estate consisted of the two houses in Henley Street, namely, the family home and the adjacent Wool Shop. Shakespeare's mother continued to occupy the eastern house, which had been her residence since her marriage; the western house, the Wool Shop, was, it seems, let by the poet for commercial use.

If Shakespeare was in Stratford at or soon after the death of his father, he probably returned to London in time to take part in the usual Christmas performances at Court. The Queen, though now in failing health, summoned the Chamberlain's Men to amuse her at Whitehall on December 26 and 27, 1601. Two days later, on December 29, the Lord Chamberlain had the honor of entertaining her at his private house in Blackfriars, where after dinner he had his company of actors to present a play. Sir Dudley Carleton writes on December 29: "The Queen dined this day privately at my Lord Chamberlain's. I came even now from the Blackfriars, where I saw her at the play with all her candidæ auditrices." Three days later Shakespeare and his fellows again presented a play before the Queen, this time at Court and on her own summons. Thus within a week the Chamberlain's Men appeared before Her Majesty four times—ample evidence that they had not suffered a permanent loss of royal favor through their unlucky part in the Essex plot.
CHAPTER XVII

THE PASSIONATE PILGRIM AND LOVE'S MARTYR

Shakespeare, as we have seen, had definitely abandoned the composition of non-dramatic literature; yet just at the turn of the century appeared two volumes of lyrical verse with which his name was associated, though in different ways.

The first bore the title: "The Passionate Pilgrime. By W. Shakespeare. At London. Printed for W. Jaggard, and are to be sold by W. Leake, at the Greyhound in Paules Churchyard. 1599." It is mainly significant as showing the eagerness of publishers to secure something from the pen of the dramatist, and the confidence they had in the potency of his name on the title-page to "vent" a work.¹ In all probability Jaggard had come into possession of a small commonplace-book, such as Elizabethan gentlemen were fond of making. From various sources its owner had copied into its blank leaves songs and sonnets — for the most part amorous — that pleased him, including two sonnets from Shakespeare's unpublished cycle, and two sonnets from Love's Labour's Lost,² all four, no doubt, with Shakespeare's name appended; and in addition, verses by Griffin, Barnfield, Marlowe, and others, some with, some perhaps without, the author's name attached. Collections of this character³ frequently fell into the hands of publishers and

¹ The publisher of the first quarto of Othello says: "The author's name is sufficient to vent his work."

² Not transcribed from the printed play (unless from the pirated and corrupt first quarto of which no copy is extant), but, apparently, from some manuscript then circulating among gallants.

³ They were very common; the present writer has two such commonplace-books, with poems by Jonson, Donne, and other well-known writers, and many verses with no names attached.

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