

 N.B. The quotations are all from Shakespeare and the Songs & Glee duets &c have been sung in public for many years!

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An historical, musical & illustrative  
Lecture, entitled,  
Leaves from the Life!  
and  
Lays from the Lyre!  
of  
William Shakespere!

Theatre Royal Sadlers Wells  
March 5<sup>th</sup> 1853

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W.B.D.

I am about to lay before you this Evening one of the Sunniest pages in the volume of ballad literature (a page from which the many cold dull years which have rolled over it have not been able to steal one ray of light)[:] that which contain[s] the ballads of heart hallowed Shakespere; They are few it must be admitted how many too few! but those precious fragments, those bright jewels which have dropped from his Coronet, are worthy the costliest setting and the fondest keeping!

Before entering on the subject matter of the ballads I feel assured you will pardon me for saying a few words touching the great Master to whom we owe them, of him who has scattered so many bright flowers in the paths of his fellow men, reserving only one wreath for himself, in exchange for them all, a wreath of undying laurel! Shakspere the anointed Sovereign of the broad realms of poetry the truthful and passionate chronicler of the heart's deepest workings, and subtlest movements was. I need hardly say born at Stratford on Avon a Market-town in Warwickshire in the year of Grace 1564 on the 23<sup>rd</sup> April and most fitting was it that such a day should have been his first upon earth, for it is the holy day of our chivalrous Saint, so let us fondly deem that the broad region



of merry England is hallowed and guarded by gentle Will: Shakespere and the thrice blessed S<sup>t</sup> George! — And what shall be said of (this man) who has been the charm and marvel of those who in their turn have been the wonder of their fellow-men, how many a head and heart, long since dust, have been chastened and inspired by the breath of his master-spirit – what yet unborn myriads will kindle into smiles and melt into tears over his deathless pages.

And sigh to have shared the days they can but bless The older, golden days of good Queen Bess!—His truthfulness, freshness, force and feeling which charmed our youth and will solace our age, rendering our old hearts young again, these made him the idol of the past – as he is the (honored) of the present – and will be the beloved of the future and the eternal darling of the star-crossed sisters of Parnassus! He has been the dear companion of many household hearths, the lightener of hours that had else been drearily heavy. – The soundest philosophy – the purest morality – the deepest judgement – the brightest imagination – the profoundest knowledge of human nature shine out from his almost inspired pages – equal lord was he of the realms of terror and of beauty – nothing in earth – air – or sky was without the magic circle of his mighty mind – yet his was not the labored learning dug out from books – nor did he (wear) eyes and brain (away) over the dusty chronicles of abstruse learning – his was the learning of nature – fresh – bright and strong – his high soul, the clear fountain from whence flowed the mightiest truths clothed in ~~the~~ a mantle of everlasting poetry — and as he won universal admiration publicly (for) the splendour of his talents, so won he universal love (privately) for his singleness of heart and gentleness of temper – the world's rougher usage which he felt, and that not sparingly, in his earlier life, did not, as is too often the case – sour – or harden his heart against that world in his prosperity – & doubtless he looked upon creation and its Creator with the same love and gratitude when he held bridles at the theatre doors, as when, in the meridian of his



glory, he was the honoured friend of his courtly patron, the Lord Southampton<sup>1</sup> – and read his undying lines in the presence of that “fair Vestal thronèd in the West!”<sup>2</sup> the (magnificent) Elizabeth! —He has pourtrayed like no other – the majesty of virtue, the loathsomeness of vice – the purity of truth – the abomination of sin – his magic pen has, more truthfully than any other, embodied the workings – good & evil, of the human heart – [meekness – love – and charity the three bright lights which shed their mild rays upon his hallowed task – purifying all grossness therefrom] he has drawn aside – as it were – a veil, from the marvels and mysteries of the land of spirits, and unfolded to the love and veneration of all, the beauty and harmony of the breathing world! –There have been giants here in the land of letters – but to Shakspeare is it due that the English language is a magic sound amongst the nations – to Shakspeare is it due that the English drama stands, and will stand unapproachable among the lands – and to Shakspeare is it due that England herself is crowned Imperial mistress of Poetry throughout the length and breadth of this great globe! and his ashes sleep peacefully under the turf of his village grave-yard, far from the scene of his great triumphs, and sleep there independently – for with all this heavy debt of ours to him, he owes us nothing —barely a monument!

[ ] When we consider how deservedly Shakspeare is the pride and delight of all Englishness, for his unrivalled and almost unattainable genius – ~~his wit—his passion—his philosophy—warm as the mind that produced them—and genuine as the nature by which they were fostered~~ – it is to be wondered at, and much to be deplored, that so little is known regarding either his personal history or his personal appearance for of no man of any note of his time have we less information than of Shakspeare – so little indeed that a year or two ago some extraordinary individual understood to prove that there never was any such person – and that the writings attributed to Shakspeare were the productions of—the monks!! This gentleman was (however most probably) a lunatic <sup>mistaken</sup> – still it is unhappily too true that we are in possession of no information relative to his everyday life – his habits –&c –He appears to have been too (careless <sup>regardless</sup>) of himself to have taken any trouble in the matter (on his own account), but we might expect that he would have left letters – Manuscripts, &c which would have thrown some light on this interesting subject and there can be no doubt that many such documents were in the possession of his friend Ben Jonson – but unfortunately shortly before Ben’s death, his house and property were destroyed by fire – again we (may reasonably? <sup>[might??]</sup> conclude) that his theatre “The Globe” contained some records of his (proceedings <sup>daily life</sup>), and that numbers of letters to his private friends existed (at his native place Stratford <sup>in various places</sup>) – but the destroying angel once more robbed us of these <sup>such</sup> valuable treasures – if indeed they existed – for in 1613, the “Globe” was burnt down and shortly afterwards Stratford became the prey of a terrible conflagration which consumed many houses with their entire contents. – His friend Drummond of Hawthornden says of him

“I loved the man, and do honor his memory, on  
“this side idolatry, as much as any – he was indeed  
“honest - and of an open and free nature!”<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Henry Wriothesley, third earl of Southampton, (1573–1624) was a courtier and literary patron. Some nineteenth-century commentators took Henry Wriothesley to be the ‘Mr. W. H.’ to whom Shakespeare’s *Sonnets* were dedicated.

<sup>2</sup> *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* [MSND], Act 2, Scene 1, Line 158.

<sup>3</sup> A confusing reference. These words are Ben Jonson’s and feature in his *Timber: Or Discoveries: Made Upon Men and Matter: As they have flow’d out of his daily Readings; or had their reflux to his peculiar Notion of the Times* (London: 1641). In his Introduction to his critical edition, Maurice Castelain claims: ‘Jonson’s *Discoveries*, after enjoying a fair measure of success in the

—Aubrey<sup>4</sup> says – “He was verie good company – and of a  
“verie ready and smooth wit!” in corroboration, all who spoke of him termed him “worthy” –  
“gentle”–“beloved.” —As to his personal appearance, the same Aubrey – although it is true he wrote sixty  
years after Shakspeare’s death – and may hardly be relied on, says “He was a handsome – well-made man!”  
His bust in Stratford Church –which was placed there (according to Malone)<sup>5</sup> – in 1623 – only seven years  
after his death – gives us the idea of a tolerably good-looking but by no means a handsome man – it is  
however wretchedly sculptured – and most probably did him no justice – we find that during his engagement  
as an actor, he was very frequently cast in the parts of Kings – which would lead us to infer that his figure  
and general appearance were imposing – and suitable to such characters as required grace and dignity<sup>X</sup>. – I  
shall now make a few observations on the word “ballad” – then present you with a slight sketch of the state  
of music in England during Shakspeare’s time – and conclude by illustrating my lecture with a selection of  
his most favorite songs.

[] First ~~for~~ of the word “ballad” – A <sup>the term</sup> “ballad” in our author’s time was used in a much wider  
and graver sense than it is at present – it signifies with us a short piece of poetry adapted for music – in  
Shakspeare’s age however it signified a ~~great deal~~ <sup>much</sup> more. – Among Coxeter’s<sup>6</sup> papers is mentioned “The  
ballad of Helen’s epistle to Paris – from Ovid – in 1570. by B.G.” – The title of ballad was often applied to  
poems of considerable length – as in the register of the Stationers Sackville’s “Legend of Buckingham” – a  
part of “The Mirror of Magistrates” is recited under the year 1557 – amongst a great number of other ballads  
– and is entitled “The mourning of Edward duke of Buckingham”.<sup>7</sup> – a romance or history versified so as to  
form a book, or pamphlet, was sometimes called a ballad.<sup>8</sup>

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seventeenth century, chiefly on account of the critical utterances, which are to be found at the end of it, seems to have fallen into  
oblivion during the 18<sup>th</sup> [...]. In fact we find it very seldom alluded to, for more than a hundred years; and even Gifford’s eulogy, in  
his edition of 1816, enthusiastic as it was, does not seem to have brought back many readers to this forgotten work of the great  
Elizabethan poet’. The quotation cited appears on page 36 of Castelain’s edition thus: ‘I lov’d the man, and doe honour his memory  
(on this side Idolatry) as much as any. Hee was (indeed) honest, and of an open, and free nature;’ (Maurice Castelain, *Ben Jonson:  
Discoveries, A Critical Edition* (Paris: Librairie Hachette, 1906)). In 1842 the Shakespeare Society had published the recently  
discovered, *Notes of B.J.’s Conversations with William Drummond*, edited by David Laing with revised and additional notes by Peter  
Cunningham and John Payne Collier (London: Shakespeare Society, 1842), but the quotation does not appear in that volume.  
Nevertheless, this publication may have been misremembered during the preparation of the lecture, hence the mention of Drummond.  
William Drummond (1585–1649), was a poet and pamphleteer who became laird of Hawthornden on the death of his father in 1610.  
He befriended Jonson during the winter of 1618 during which these conversations (unlikely to have been recorded with a view to  
publication) took place. They have conferred a possibly unfair reputation for harsh judgment on Jonson, who spoke plainly his views  
of various luminaries’ creative talents.

<sup>4</sup> John Aubrey (1626–1697) was an English antiquary and biographer. He worked for much of his life with Anthony Wood (1632–  
1695), assisting him in his biographical research. Eventually Wood suggested that Aubrey begin his own ‘book of lives’ and in 1693  
Aubrey delivered a lengthy manuscript to the Ashmolean: he is best known for this work, *Brief Lives*, which includes discussion of  
Shakespeare’s life. *Brief Lives* is known for its colourful and sometimes controversial character, demonstrating Aubrey’s reputed  
verve and charm. See *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

<sup>5</sup> Edmond Malone (1741–1812) was a distinguished Shakespeare scholar, famed for his meticulous textual research and now  
recognized as a pioneer of English scholarly method. He published several editions of and supplements to Shakespeare’s plays and  
poems, often with George Steevens (1736–1800) with whom he had an sometimes antagonistic working relationship. In 1800 he  
published his *Historical account of the rise and progress of the English stage, and of the economy and usages of the ancient theatres  
in England* (Basil: J. J. Tourneisen, 1800) featuring discussion of Shakespeare’s life, derived partly from Malone’s immersion in  
Aubrey’s papers at the Ashmolean during 1792–1793. Indeed, the above quotation from Aubrey appears on page 225 of this work and it  
seems likely that those who prepared the lecture knew of Aubrey through Malone.

<sup>6</sup> Thomas Coxeter (1689–1747) was a literary scholar and editor who had a particular interest in old plays: he became an early  
collector of Elizabethan drama and literature and formed an important collection of early editions. He helped with an edition of  
Shakespeare in 1734.

<sup>7</sup> *The Mirror for Magistrates*: an Elizabethan volume of numerous ‘tragedies’ (verse renditions of stories from English history). It  
included an ‘Induction’ and ‘The Complaynt of Henrye duke of Buckingham’ by Thomas Sackville (c. 1536–1608), subsequently

Religious subjects were often called by this vague and indiscriminating title<sup>9</sup> – Amongst others the “Song of Solomon” was also called the “Ballad of Ballads”.<sup>10</sup> – There can be no question that in earlier times the dance had some connection with the ballad – as it’s derivation would imply – it being derived from the Italian word “balladre” “ballare” to dance —indeed that species of entertainment so much in vogue amongst us at this present time – called “ballet” is one and the same word with “ballad” – which in the references I have made is spelt ballet. —Ballads have also been used as powerful weapons in party and political contests in all countries where such freedoms are permitted by appealing to popular feeling by means of their comic & satirical powers.<sup>11</sup>

– Nor must we forget that when Shakspeare himself was persecuted by Sir Thomas Lucy, (whom, by the way, he has transmitted to us clothed in an eternal garment of contempt)<sup>12</sup> – he retaliated on the knight in a ballad which he affixed to the gates of Charlecote Park – full of sarcasms so biting and severe that he was compelled to seek safety from the consequences by a flight from Stratford to London. – For the music of most of Shakspeare’s dramatic ballads – we are indebted to Dr Thomas Arne<sup>13</sup> – who has certainly married Shakspeare’s immortal verse to most genial melodies – what the original music was we have no means of discovering – the probability however – from the irregular measure in which most of them are written – is, that they were intended for some popular times of the period, yet – as the age of Elizabeth exhibits perhaps the brightest period of English literature – so does it appear to have (abounded<sup>?</sup>) in musical talent – Elizabeth herself was a good performer and a competent judge of the beauties of music – indeed there is a work preserved bearing the title of “Queen Elizabeth’s Virginal Book—” – which contains pieces so difficult of execution as to bear ample testimony that her Majesty must have possessed very considerable powers<sup>14</sup> – it is but reasonable to suppose therefore that the musical art received great encouragement, and we may conclude

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described as ‘the best poem[s] in English between Chaucer and Spenser’ (Campbell, 3). It was first published in 1559 with additions in 1563, 1578, and 1587. Although it began to receive scholarly attention towards the end of the nineteenth century, it was generally neglected until then, save for one modern edition published in 1815, of which only one hundred and fifty copies were made (*Mirror for Magistrates*, ed. by Joseph Haslewood (London, 1815)). Those preparing the lecture may have been familiar with one of these copies, but it seems more likely that they knew of Sackville’s contribution through their frequent appearance in anthologies rather than from the original. See *The Mirror for Magistrates: Edited from Original Texts in the Huntington Library*, ed. by Lily B. Campbell (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1938, 1960).

<sup>8</sup> Inserted at the end of this paragraph is the following, crossed through in ink with ‘CUT’ written across it: [as, “A ballad entitled, the History of “Alexander and Campaspe Apelles, and “of the faithful friendship between them – printed” by Colwell - in 1565: Sometimes even a ballad was written in prose.] A play or interlude was also occasionally called a ballad – [as “A ballad entitled “an Interlude, The Cruel debtor, by Wayer, printed by Colwell in 1565”–.

<sup>9</sup> Inserted here is the following, crossed through in ink: as, in 1561 was published “A new ballad of IV Commandments” – that is, four of the ten commandments in meter.

<sup>10</sup> Inserted here is the following, crossed through in ink with ‘CUT’ written across it: Again, amongst many others of the same kind, as Puritanism gained ground “A ballad entitled “The 17th Chap: of the 2nd Book of Kings.” – and, at the same period “A ballad of the 1st Chap: of Genesis” – and John Hall wrote and compiled in 1564, “The Court of Virtue – containing many holy and spiritual songs – sonnets – ballads – poems, and short sentences as well of holy scriptures as of others.

<sup>11</sup> See Appendix 1.

<sup>12</sup> Sir Thomas Lucy (*b.* in or before 1532, *d.* 1600) was an English gentleman whose family had owned the estate at Charlecote, Warwickshire for several generations. Folklore has it that as a youth Shakespeare stole deer from the estate’s park, so receiving severe punishment. He is said to have written a satirical ballad on Lucy in revenge, which was posted on the gates of Charlecote, causing Shakespeare to flee to London to escape retribution. It is also said that Shakespeare’s creation, Justice Shallow (*Henry IV Part 2* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*) is a parody of Lucy.

<sup>13</sup> Thomas Augustine Arne (1710–1778) was an English composer best known for the patriotic song, ‘Rule, Britannia!’. He wrote a series of arrangements for songs from Shakespeare’s plays, including ‘Under the Greenwood Tree’ and ‘Where the bee sucks’ that featured in the Shakespeare season at the Drury Lane theatre in 1740–41.

<sup>14</sup> The following is written, in ink, above the main text here: her instruments were the lute and virginals, to which some add the violin and Poliphant – a species of harp.

that it was not thrown away when we consider the works of Bull – Tallis – Bird [sic]– Giles – Tarrant – Cawston [sic] – Oakland – Taverner. &c.<sup>15</sup> – The musical position of the Queen’s chapel was splendidly and numerously ~~attended~~ appointed – containing besides singers – organs – cornet – sackbuts, and other instruments, all of which, on festivals, were united in the sacred performances – The unaccountable aversion manifested by parents to their children singing in the choir, had been so strong in Henry the VIIIth’s reign that he had exercised his arbitrary power in the actual impressment of boys for the use of Royal choirs – Elizabeth inherited so much of her father’s tyrannical disposition that, so far from scrupling to resort to the same violence, she extended it to the sizing of men as well as boys, Among the manuscripts of the Ashmolean Museum at Oxford is a copy of her warrant for this purpose, which concludes thus —“and we give power to the bearer of this to take any singing men or boys from any chapel, our own household “and S<sup>t</sup> Pauls’ excepted – given at “Westminster, the 8<sup>th</sup> day of March, in “the second year of our reign.” —and in this despotic practice she persevered to the end of her life reign. –

[ ]– during the first years of Elizabeth our secular vocal music yielded in excellence to that of the church. – The words and music of a book of songs for three, four and five voices printed in 1571 by John Day<sup>16</sup> – a publisher of note are truly barbarous – and about that time many others appeared which could not boast either the genius or the science displayed in the ecclesiastical compositions of the same period. – some eight or ten years later however, the arrival and republication of a number of Italian madrigals diffused among the English composers. the taste of Palestrina, Luca Marenzio,<sup>17</sup> and other masters of the same country – and imparted to the chamber music of England a superior and more finished style – when I speak of the superior and finished style of the Italian melody of that age – I would be understood as speaking comparatively – it was good as collated with that of the English – which was bad – and appeared polished because ours was so rudd. – Although Italian poetry had been much longer cultivated than our’s, it had not imbued [sic] the music of that country with much elegance or finish – still such qualities as it possessed, it communicated to us. – Such was the state of our own lighter species of vocal compositions when the profound and illustrious musician Dr Bull illumined the musical world with his unequalled science and matchless mental powers. – John Milton<sup>18</sup> also – the father of our great poet, although not a musical

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<sup>15</sup> John Bull (1559 or 1563–1628) was a composer and organist at the Chapel Royal under Elizabeth I and James I, especially known for his keyboard compositions; Thomas Tallis (c. 1505–1585) was a composer and chorister at the Chapel Royal under Edward VI, Mary, and Elizabeth I. He worked closely with his colleague William Byrd (1539 or 1543–1623) who moved around between Lincoln, London, Middlesex and Essex during his professional life, working productively as an organist at the Chapel Royal for some of his career; Nathaniel Giles (c. 1558–1634) was a choirmaster and composer who was eventually appointed ‘Master of the Children’ at the Chapel Royal in 1597; Thomas Causton (*d.* 1570) was a minor composer of this period, and a gentleman of the Chapel Royal from 1550 onwards; John Taverner (c.1490–1545) did not, in fact, work at the Chapel Royal, but was Master of the Choir at Cardinal’s College, Oxford from 1526–30, before returning to his native Lincolnshire to continue his musical career. Tarrant and Oakland are unknown. See *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*.

<sup>16</sup> John Day (or Daye) (1521/2–1584) was a printer and bookseller, best known for printing John Foxe’s *Actes and Monuments* (1563). The lecture here refers to *Songes, for three, fower and five voyces. Triplex <Medius> <Contra Tenor> <Bassus>, of Songes, for three, fower, and five voices, composed and made by Thomas Whythorne, gent. the wch songs be of sundry sorts, that is to say, some long, some short, some hard, some easie to be songe, and some betwene both; also some solemne, and some pleasant or mery; so that according to the skill of the singers (not being Musitians) and disposition or delite of the hearers, they may here find Songes for their contentation and liking* (London: John Daye, 1571).

<sup>17</sup> Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina (1525–1594): an influential Italian composer noted for polyphony; Luca Marenzio (1553–1599): also a renowned Italian composer, known especially for madrigals.

<sup>18</sup> John Milton (1562–1647), father of the famed poet, wrote twenty musical compositions, most of which were sacred music.

professor was a voluminous, scientific and ingenious composer.. But however deficient the vocal music was, the instrumental was still less perfect – fretted viols with six strings, the lute – the virginals, the drum, fife and trumpets constituted a band – and if Henry the VIII<sup>th</sup> and Mary listened with tender delight to concerts of drums and fifes – Elizabeth’s delicate nerves tremulated during dinner to the soothing sound of twelve trumpets and two kettle-drums – accompanied by the soft pulsations and mild cadences of side-drums, fifes and cornets! —The natural vocal powers of the singers of that age were ~~naturally~~ <sup>of course</sup> of the same strength and compass as ours of more modern times – but as the science of singing possessed none of the refinement and perfection – with which cultivation has endowed it at the present day – the performances were naturally somewhat rude and inartificial.<sup>19</sup>



I shall now proceed to illustrate my lecture with some of the charming ballads and glees of our illustrious fellow countryman[. T]he first is a jovial sound of foresters from the fresh and lovely comedy of *As You Like It* – the first line, “What shall he have who killed the deer”<sup>20</sup> will furnish an opportunity of saying a word or two relative to the names of provisions in former ages. These names throw some light upon the style of living in vogue amongst the different grades of the population, the high and the low – in other words – the Normans and the Saxons. Bread and the common productions of the Garden, peas and beans, with eggs and some other articles retain their Saxon names, and certainly formed the chief provision of the Saxon community. The word meat is likewise Saxon, altho’ they ate I believe but little of it, for it is a very curious circumstance connected with the English language, that while the Animals when alive, are called by Anglo Saxon names, as Oxen, Calves, Sheep, Pigs, Deer &c the flesh of the same animals when prepared for table is called by names which are all Anglo Norman – as beef veal Mutton Pork Venison &c. The Man who kills them even is known by the Anglo Norman name of Butcher, and fowls again when killed received the Anglo Norman name of Poultry. This proves to us that the Saxon population in general was acquainted only with the living animals, whilst the flesh was carried off to the tables of their Norman Masters, who gave it names taken from their own language!

Glee – “What Shall he have who killed the deer”!

The next is a song from the same charming comedy sung by a forester in the fair forest of Arden, that old and venerable forest, whose “green robed senators” taught the banished Duke his high lesson of pure religion, when he found

Tongues in trees book in the babbling brook

Sermons in Stones and good in everything,”

And learned the memorable and healthy truth,

“Sweet are the uses of adversity,”<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> See Appendix 2.

<sup>20</sup> See Appendix 3 for the text of all songs mentioned during the lecture.

<sup>21</sup> Misremembered from *As You Like It*, Act 2, Scene 1, [Lines 15-20]:

Duke Senior:      And this our life, exempt from publick haunt,  
                                 Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,  
                                 Sermons in stones, and good in everything.

The song is a little homily, in its way, a short sermon melodiously turned on that besetting sin of human nature “In gratitude,” adapted to the atmosphere of the forest enouncing a sound reflection in healthy and appropriate language, and expressed by those natural similes, which would occur to the dwellers of the forest, with whom the elements were familiar things, and the wind, the Sky, and other portions of Nature the sources from whence they were most likely to draw their inspiration.

Song – “Blow, blow thou winter wind.”

Our next is from the same fresh, and charming scene the Forest of Arden, with its velvet greensward, and its far spreading Oaks with their guarded roots, and mossy trunks, the prince of moralists the “Melancholy Jaques” is surrounded by a band of social foresters, who taking nothing from the world, and owing it nothing, troll their merry roundelays as free from care as the light breezes which sweep about them, it is of a lighter character than the preceding one, and is called

Song “The Greenwood Tree”

I must now transport you into the company of some familiar friends, the love sick Julia, the beautiful Sylvia, and the subtle, perfused, false, disloyal Proteus it is a charming group from the “Two Gentlemen of Verona” – and the scene in which they figure, would show rarely transfer’d to the painters canvas, let us briefly realize it. It is a bright and lustrous night, a large Italian Moon is pouring a flood of silver radiance over the marbled palaces of Milan, the Scene is a Court of the ducal residence, costly and fragrant shrubs and flowers are throwing up incense into the calm air, slender columns of water sparkling upwards from the crystal basins – beneath the casement of the “fair true and holy Sylvia” stand a group of Minstrels, accompanied by the false friend and lover, Proteus, and the fantastical and conceited Thurio – Apart are seen the well fed, and well disposed host, and the overtrue, and over sad Lady of Verona, her soft limbs and womanly outline “obscured in the lovely garnish of a boy”<sup>22</sup> – her delicate cheek now paling with grief, now flushing with shame and to increase the Magic of the Scene and hour, the forthcoming beautiful melody is floating upwards and mingling its rich tones with the fragrance of all the fair flowers crowded in the balcony of Sylvia’s chamber window, hark to the Sounds of the instruments heralding the sweet concert, hear the melody and agree that

“The nights dead silence  
Doth well become such sweet complaining grievance,”<sup>23</sup>

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Amiens: I would not change it: Happy is your grace  
That can translate the stubbornness of fortune  
Into so quiet and so sweet a stile.

<sup>22</sup> This is actually said of Jessica by Lorenzo in *The Merchant of Venice* [T*MoV*], Act 2, Scene 6, Line 45.

<sup>23</sup> *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, Act 3, Scene 2, [Lines 84-86]:  
the night’s dead silence  
Will well become such swee complaining grievance.  
This, or else nothing, will inherit her.

Glee                    “Who is Sylvia”

Our next is a sweet air for the “Merchant of Venice”. It occurs during the last of the three elections of Portia’s caskets. The haughty and full sufficient braggart of Morocco whose complexion “the shadowed livery of the burnished Sun” had done such execution amongst the “best regarded Virgins of his climes,” and whose whose [sic] redoubtable scimitar had spread such amazing confusion and terror amongst his foes – who talks in such an “Ercels Strain” of “the bear cubs” and “roaring lions,” had already departed with the wholesome result of his ambitious choice a deaths head.<sup>24</sup> The presumptuous “Odi profanum Vulgus” Arroganese had also taken his leave, exemplifying his own words

“With one fools head I came to woo  
But I go away with two”<sup>25</sup>

Still we are disposed to rescue from the charge and obloquy of folly a Man who could utter such sentiments so noble, so just and so wise as the following.

“Oh! That estates degrees and offices  
Were not derived corruptly! And that clear honor:”<sup>26</sup> Quotations from Shakspere.

We say we would redeem such a speaker from the charge of folly – still we must adduce against him the counter charge of vanity, and self honor, when he assumes all this deserving to himself – However to use Portia’s words these “deliberate fools”<sup>27</sup> have taken their departure, and a third time have the gorgeous curtains been drawn aside and the caskets stand for election before the gay and chivalrous Bassanio, and it is in this moment of terrible anxiety and uncertainty while making his choice, and preparing for the ordeal, which is to elevate him to the height of rapture, or plunge him into the depths of despair, whilst on the point of crossing that Rubicon, on the far side of which is the gain or loss of all the world to him<sup>28</sup> – the following melody hovers tremblingly in mid air, as if it too felt the timidity and rapture of the hour – unknowing whether it shall sink to earth with the defeat or rise to heaven with the triumph of the passioning Bassanio.

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<sup>24</sup> Quotations taken from *TMoV*, Act 2, Scene 2 during which the Prince of Morocco seeks to woo Portia.

<sup>25</sup> *TMoV*, Act 2, Scene 9, Lines 74-75. ‘Odi profanum Vulgus’ – ‘I hate the vulgar rabble and drive them away’: a reference to the Prince of Aragon’s claim:

I will not chuse what many men desire,  
Because I will not jump with common spirits,  
And rank me with the barbarous multitudes.

*TMoV*, Act 2, Scene 9, [Lines 29-31]

<sup>26</sup> As above, Lines 40-42.

<sup>27</sup> As above, Line 79.

<sup>28</sup> To ‘cross the Rubicon’ is to take an irrevocable step: ‘the Rubicon was a small river which separated ancient Italy from Cisalpine Gaul (the province allotted to Julius Caesar). When Caesar crossed this stream in 49 B.C. he passed beyond the limits of his province and became an invader in Italy, thus precipitating war with Pompey and the Senate’ (*Brewer’s Dictionary of Phrase and Fable*, 14th edn, (London: Cassells, 1989), p. 960).

Duett            “Tell me where is fancy bred”

The fresh and pretty song which we shall next introduce is from the sparkling comedy of “Love’s Labour’s Lost” and forms a sweet finale to the mingled romance and burlesque of that admirable play. The discomfited lovers, under the verdict of their triumphant mistresses, are preparing to undergo their 12 months probation ere their heresies can be sufficiently purged out of them, and they themselves fit to sit by ladies sides, and served the master they have scorned. The nine worthies are entirely disencumbered of their heroics, and endeavour by the performance of this agreeable Melody to make amends to the potentates whom they have so tediously amused with their monstrous illustrations of, “Hector of Troy” and the huge huge Pompey,”

Song            “When daisies pied”

We can now come to something consolatory for the Ladies, whether it will have the effect designed, and desired, that of diminishing their love sighs, is an entirely open question, and one on which I have some delicacy in hazarding an opinion, it is from the Comedy of “Much Ado about Nothing” and commences, “Sigh no more ladies.” sigh no more.

Glee            “Sigh no more ladies, sigh no more”

We have now a serenade offered to the much injured and true wife “Imogen” in “Cymbeline”. That obstuse ass, and vaunting bully Cloten, having heard from some of his associates, a grain heavier in brain than himself, that music was powerful in taking ladies hearts, has prepared an early morning concert for the ear of the chaste and chastened Imogen, whom he profanes by the offer of his gross love, the words are pretty and appropriate, not so the circumstances under which they are uttered, which are treasonable to pure and holy affection, the lover here (instead of rising from a bed whence reverential love had driven him to offer up fresh and early homage to his mistress) has come seeking from scenes of drink, gambling, and debauchery, and so the loyal devotion intended by such serenade turns to disloyal hypocrisy and insolence. Imogen however pays no heed to music or music hirer,<sup>29</sup> doubtless the sounds (though sweet, and harmonious in themselves) sounded harsh and dissonant, to her, as without question they broke the golden chains with which sleep had bound her heart, to her hearts dearest hope, and in which she was holding sweet and holy intercourse with her lord and lover, the banished Posthumous!



Glee            “Hark! Hark! The Lark”

Now comes the plaintive and complaining ditty of Mariana in the moated Grange from “Measure for Measure”. It is however uncertain whether it is the composition of our author or not, it is true Sewall and

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<sup>29</sup> I.e. One such as Cloten, who ‘hires’ musicians to serenade Imogen.

Gildon give it a place in their collection of Shakspeare's Poems,<sup>30</sup> but as they have done the same with many other pieces which were not his, and whose real authors have since been known, very little reliance can be placed upon them. It is also to be found in the — Edition of Shakspeare's poems published in 1640 that however is a book of very little authority.<sup>31</sup> It does not appear in Jaggards collection of his sonnets, which was published during his life time.<sup>32</sup> The whole of the Song is to be met with in Beaumont's "Bloody Brother" or "Rollo Duke of Normandy"<sup>33</sup> but it is there sung by a boy, and has no connection with any character or incident in the play, but appears simply introduced to supply a wait, The authorship will probably never be satisfactorily proved, and as it has evidence by the style of having been Shakspeare's to Shakespere let us impute it. The Song is not entire in the text, Mariana omitting the second verse, as being inappropriate to the female character.

Song                    "Take oh take those lips away"!

Once again must we breathe the fresh air, tread the velvet lawn, and sit upon the moss crowned banks beneath the cool shade of the venerable trees in the Forest of Arden, whilst we listen to the following fantastical ditty, the performance of one of the banished Duke's pages – a song which the sagacious fool Touchstone compliments in a very unequivocal manner by assuring the Singer that, "though there was no great matter in the ditty, yet the note was very untunable"<sup>34</sup> I trust that the motley Philosophers censure will not be confirmed here, and that his after judgment may be reversed, that it may not be considered "time lost to hear such as foolish Song,"<sup>35</sup>

Duett                    "It was a lover and his lass!"–

The next piece of Music is from the close of that glowing luxurious and elegant creation "A Midsummer Night's Dream" The charm is already wound up the perplexities of the fond Athenians unravelled, the

<sup>30</sup> Reference to *The Seventh Volume. Containing Venus and Adonis; Tarquin and Lucrece, and Mr. Shakespear's Miscellany Poems. To which is prefix'd, An Essay on the Art, Rise, and Progress of the Stage, in Greece, Rome, and England* by C. Gildon. And a Glossary of the old words used in these works. The whole revis'd and corrected, with a preface by Dr. Sewell (London: J. Darby, 1725).

<sup>31</sup> Reference to *Poems: Written by Wil. Shake-speare. Gent* (London: John Benson, 1640). The edition has been described as 'outrageously piratical and misleading' (Duncan-Jones, 42). It mixed up Shakespeare's work with poems by other writers, and Benson took great liberties with the presentation of the *Sonnets*, frequently changing pronouns from 'he' to 'she' and effectively 'pasting' sonnets together to make longer poems with unlikely titles, such as 'The Exchange'. See *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, ed. by Katherine Duncan-Jones (London: Arden Shakespeare, 1997), pp. 41-3.

<sup>32</sup> William Jaggard (c. 1568–1623) was a printer and bookseller who published an edition of *The Passionate Pilgrim*, ascribed to Shakespeare, in 1599; the edition included versions of sonnets 138 and 144, extracts from *Love's Labour's Lost* and other poems, some anonymous, some by other writers.

<sup>33</sup> *Rollo Duke of Normandy* or *The Bloody Brother* is a play attributed to John Fletcher and others (the identities of which have long been debated, although Philip Massinger, Ben Jonson, George Chapman, and Francis Beaumont have all been proposed). The date of its writing has also been disputed, although suggestions usually rest somewhere between 1614 and 1630. It is latterly considered not to have involved Beaumont, but an edition was published in 1718 attributing it to 'Mr F. Beaumont and Mr. J. Fletcher [or rather by Fletcher and others.]' (*The Bloody Brother* or *Rollo Duke of Normandy* (London: J. Brown, 1718)). Debates from the latter half of the nineteenth-century are summarised in E. H. C. Oliphant's *The Plays of Beaumont and Fletcher: An Attempt to Determine Their Respective Shares and the Shares of Others* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1927), pp. 457-463. Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure* was first performed at court on 26 December 1604 (Taylor & Wells, p. 789), suggesting Shakespeare's use was the earlier.

<sup>34</sup> *As You Like It*, Act 5, Scene 3, Lines 39-41.

<sup>35</sup> As above, Lines 44-45.

magnificent Hyppolita [sic] the transparent Helena, and the modest Hermia, are in the hearts keeping of their amorous lords. “The iron tongue of midnight hath told twelve”<sup>36</sup> The lovers have retired – the guests departed, the audience of the late “tedious brief scene of Pyramus and Thisbe” are reclining on lawn and velvet whilst the actors of that piece of “very tragic mirth”<sup>37</sup> are snoring on their truckle beds, the revellers are at rest, the sumptuous halls of the ducal palace still! – and deserted by earthly tenants – all mortal lights are extinguished, but the dim and vaulted hall is illumined still with the faint lustre of the magical stars shining on the perfumed tresses of Oberon, his Queen and their [elfirerout] – as the delicate spirits chaunt in soft low tones, the sweet melody of the “Fairy Blessing”!

Duett.           “Hand in hand with fairy grace.”

The next song is from that most beautiful creation of the great bard “The Tempest” which is supposed by many to be the last play he ever wrote, and surely there is something mournfully in unison in the fact of the Magician Prospero abandoning his mystic power, and the greater Magician Shakspeare laying aside his mighty pen forever, might he not have spoken in his own person, as in that of Prospero –

“I’ll break my staff,  
Bury it certain fathoms in the earth  
And deeper than did ever plummet sound  
I’ll drown my book”!<sup>38</sup>

The song is the delicate Ariel’s playful and fairy like Madrigal of “Where the bee sucks!”

Song           “Where the bee sucks”

[*End of Part 1*]

[*Part 2*]

“The Thane of Cawdor”

There is nothing which more powerfully evinces the magic of Shakspeare’s pen than the interest which he invests, and the feeling which he excites for the characters, which are unconnected with the visible action of the play, characters which have not even the advantage of the Mutes of the Roman Drama, for they do enlist our sympathy by their appearance, whilst in our Author’s plays they form a very fair definition of nothing!

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<sup>36</sup> *A Midsummer Nights Dream [MSND]*, Act 5, Scene 1, Line 356.

<sup>37</sup> *MSND*, Act 5, Scene 1, [Lines 56-57]:

Theseus [reads]:   *A tedious brief scene of young Pyramus  
And his love Thisbe; very tragical mirth.*

<sup>38</sup> *The Tempest*, Act 5, Scene 1, Lines 54-57.

“unseen Mutes”! That such is the case is forcibly exemplified in the person of the ill fated Thane of Cawdor!<sup>39</sup> We may feel



a wholesome and correct abhorrence of his treasons, admit the justice of the retribution which overtakes him but still by far the stronger feelings excited, are those of compassion for his misdeeds, and admiration of the incomparable majesty with which he met the dark and early doom to which those misdeeds consigned him. Who can hear the narration of his death, without the deepest sorrow for the treason, and highest admiration of the traitor, “I have Spoke

“With one who saw him die, who did report  
That very frankly he confessed his treasons  
Implored your Highness pardon and set forth  
A deep repentance! Nothing in his life  
Became him like the leaving it – he died  
As one that had been studied in his death.  
To throw away the dearest thing he owed  
As twere a careless trifle”! —<sup>40</sup>

There is no doubt but these noble lines carried an illusion and implied a compliment to the memory of the chivalrous, and ill starr’d Earl of Essex who about this time was executed for “treasons capital, confessed, and proved”<sup>41</sup> – The circumstances in each tally so exactly – each culprit asking his Sovereigns forgiveness, each making confession – and expressing repentance of his crimes each “so studied in his death” showing such concern about behaving with propriety on the scaffold, all of which, as regards the end of the unfortunate Essex, are minutely described by Stowe, and such an illusion could not fail of its desired effect upon an audience – many of whom had been eye witnesses of the execution of the guilty Earl, and its introduction was very happy just at this time – as it paid honor to the memory of a Man, who was always extremely popular, and it must have been anything but offensive to the Queen herself! We may be assured in the first place that the Thane of Cawdor was no common man, the greatness of his death argues a corresponding greatness in his life, altho’ circumstances had unfortunately perverted the course of his conduct, and made those attributes which might have been the promoters of his highest glory, the causes of his deepest shame – And who can say what the force and combination of those circumstances might have

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<sup>39</sup> From *Macbeth*: Previously loyal to King Duncan, the Thane of Cawdor traitorously conspired with Norway’s King Sweno in a conflict at Fife and is subsequently executed. His title is then passed to Macbeth, who had excelled in putting down rebels. As the lecture suggests, he does not feature in the play, but his story is reported by Ross and Malcolm. See *Macbeth*, Act 1, Scene 2.

<sup>40</sup> *Macbeth*, Act 1 Scene 4, Lines 3-11.

<sup>41</sup> Robert Devereux, second earl of Essex (1565–1601) was a soldier and politician who, for many years after his return to England as a war hero in 1587, was a favourite with Elizabeth I. Although he worked to develop and maintain authority as a military leader, and despite her favoritism, Essex’s relationship with Elizabeth became increasingly fraught as he felt stung by her apparent capriciousness and lack of support for his military endeavours. Following a badly handled campaign in Ireland, and in the wake of his association with many disaffected aristocracy and communication with James VI of Scotland, Essex was charged with treason and sentenced to death in 1601. His final hours were widely reported as being remarkable for his show of penitence and piety, as detailed in numerous accounts published posthumously and until today. See *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Taylor & Wells suggest that *Macbeth* was probably composed in 1606.

been, even Macbeth, a man of energy and as yet of unstained loyalty – a Man also “full of the milk of human kindness”<sup>42</sup> was by the force of circumstances, the tampering of the hags of Forres – and the incitement of the un-womanly woman his wife, led into the commission of the direst deeds, and foulest treason, in comparison with which, that of Cawdor’s was very loyalty – who then shall say that circumstances as potent as those which drove Macbeth to the commission of his arch villainies [sic], had not been brought to bear upon the unhappy Cawdor. What the treason was, attributed to Cawdor is not very manifest, its nature and extent very ill defined – for we see Lord Angus (a Nobleman of condition, and one whom we cannot but believe acquainted with everything that was then absolutely known) possessed of very vague and uncertain information, when he says

“Whether he was  
Combin’d with Norway or did live the rebel  
With hidden help and vantage, or that with both  
He laboured in his Country’s wreck I know not!”<sup>43</sup>

Insufficient and unsatisfactory as the details of his malpractices are it would be absurd to question their existence, for the culprits himself confessed them, cheerfully meeting the penalty, not only cheerfully but meeting it with that dignity and propriety of bearing, as made the Prince of Scotland himself assert that – “Nothing in his life became him like the leaving it” – a mean-spirited systematic intriguer, and traitor would not have died so, such a death in spite of ourselves makes us look with an eye of indulgence on the errors of his life. The personal appearance of the Thane of Cawdor would appear to have been prepossessing for the good King Duncan’s exclamation implies as much, nay plainly affirms that his face was the index of a pure, loyal, and incorruptible heart, when he says

“There’s no art  
To find the minds construction in the face  
He was a Gentleman on whom I built  
An absolute trust!”<sup>44</sup>

This starts a question which had they met might have set a talking the two Philosophers Wm. Shakspeare, and Caspar [sic] Lavater<sup>45</sup> for the latter would have stoutly maintained that there is such an art. I hope to be pardoned in the belief, that the greater Philosopher Shakspeare’s hypothesis is the correct one, for admitting Lavaters theory to be built on reasonable grounds, admitting that its application in many instances is wonderfully correct, we know that it will not bear universal application, and therefore that the theory is not perfect, suppose for example the two men Socrates and Caligula, as fair specimens of the best and worst of human beings had been submitted for Lavaters judgment, we question much if he would have discovered in

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<sup>42</sup> *Macbeth*, Act 1, Scene 4, Line 16.

<sup>43</sup> *Macbeth*, Act 1, Scene 3, Lines 109-112.

<sup>44</sup> *Macbeth*, Act 1, Scene 4, Lines 11-14.

<sup>45</sup> Johann Kaspar Lavater (1741–1801) was a Swiss poet and physiognomist.

the vulgar, sensual and apish lineaments of Socrates the purity of his thoughts, the divinity of his wisdom, or in the mild and feminine countenance of Caligula the brutal deformity of his mind and the savage ferocity of his disposition. In these two cases it must certainly have been next to impossible to “find the minds construction in the face”<sup>46</sup>—independently of this we are disposed to think Shakspeare by far the profounder philosopher of the two. To return to the Thane of Cawdor, he had doubtless during his career, ere his evil start rose in the ascendant, done good and loyal service to his King and Country, both in the Cabinet, and in the Field for Duncan would hardly have applied such words as these “he was a Gentleman on whom I built an absolute trust”<sup>47</sup> – to any man who had not given warranty for the assertion by having filled posts of trust, and honor and discharged the duties thereof, with loyalty & credit. How much then must we mourn the defalcations of such a man! What powerful causes do we not fondly seek to assign as excuses for his errors. peradventure he too had been met and assailed by the jargon of those weird women, carrying the remark of the Thane of Lochaber.

“Often times to win us to our harm  
 These instruments of darkness tell us truths  
 Win us with honest trifles to betray us  
 In deepest consequence—”<sup>48</sup>

Who can say but these “secret black and midnight hags”<sup>49</sup> had not by some honest trifle, beguiled Cawdor to his perdition to furnish one link in the infernal chain with which they entangled Macbeth, peradventure he had seeming friends, but secret foes at Court, as what man in his Sovereign’s favor has not, who by crafty suggestions and insidious whispers had induced him to fancy himself, wronged in the appointment of Macbeth and Banquo to the command of the Royal forces, whilst he himself as capable was neglected, and had urged him to avenge himself thus, and peradventure half a score other reasons now for ever lost might for a while have mastered the better spirit within him, & hurried him to those fatal quicksands which engulfed [sic] him, but be it as it may, all we know of him is that he lies overwhelmed & crushed by his treasons even as Tarpeia was beneath the Sabine Shields<sup>50</sup> – we hear of him but a few minutes before his crimes are in effect atoned – We hear of him only as a great Man who had hitherto won golden opinions from his Sovereign, with a frank admission of his guilt, greatly meeting his death. We cannot help feeling it a matter of regret that the Thane of Cawdor did not make his appearance on the scene for however short a time even but on his road to execution, the language of such a Man, at such a time, suggested by such a writer as Shakspeare could not fail to have been of the most touching nature, of intense feeling, and of a grandeur approaching sublimity, independently of the high moral lesson it would have inculcated, but this satisfaction is denied us. We hear of him but as the traitor Cawdor, who makes way for the greater traitor Macbeth – We

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<sup>46</sup> *Macbeth*, Act 1, Scene 4, Line 12.

<sup>47</sup> *Macbeth*, Act 1, Scene 4, Lines 13-14.

<sup>48</sup> *Macbeth*, Act 1, Scene 4, Lines 121-124.

<sup>49</sup> *Macbeth*, Act 4, Scene 1, Line 64.

<sup>50</sup> Tarpeia: in Roman legend Tarpeia betrayed her city to the Sabines for what they wore on their left arms (their gold bracelets). As they entered Rome they crushed her under a mound of shields, which they also wore on their left arms.

hear of his treasons, we hear his death warrant uttered, we hear the account of how he met his death, but we may confidently assert that in this short and masterly sketch Shakspeare had shadowed forth the outline of a character which had he amplified would have been scarcely inferior to any in the range of his finest creations, and that even as Othello, Hamlet, Macbeth, and Lear stand crowned with undying brilliancy in the enchanted temple of his genius, a niche as conspicuous and a pedestal as lofty would have been no less worthily occupied by the erring but magnanimous Thane of Cawdor.

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Our next piece of music is from our great Bard's elegant poem of "Venus and Adonis" where the white handed Queen of Beauty is using all her fond endeavours and putting in practice all the blandishments of which she is the Mother & the Mistress, to win the cold and stubborn heart of the coy youth of Cyprus, to a return of that passion of which she is suffering the extremity & of which he scarcely seems to comprehend the meaning. I shall not enter into the details of the scene between the amorous Goddess and the sluggish fool she throws away her time, tenderness, and tears upon, but simply introduce the one passage which – beautiful as it is – made no more impression upon him than a blow from the soft hand of the fond speaker would have made upon the tough and bristly hide of the wild boar, which so speedily, and so deservedly extinguished the life of the handsome and cold blooded hunter who had rejected the overtures of the Queen of Love and Beauty.

Song            "Bid me discourse!

                         "Potpan.

In "Romeo and Juliet" Act 1<sup>st</sup> Scene 5<sup>th</sup> occurs this passage "Where's Potpan that he helps not to take away? He shifts a trencher! He scrape a trencher".<sup>51</sup>

We confess that we approach Potpan with a reverential relish! Whence arises this feeling is ill defined even to ourselves, whether we must plead a certain attachment to the name of Potpan which is expressive though but slightly distinguished or the performed and musical chambers in which we first hear that name invest it with a pleasant prestige, we know not, still we look at each entry of Servants, with eager eyes in the hope of finding Potpan but in vain. Potpan shows not. The utter hopelessness of his doing anything is pathetically laid before us by the exclamatory complaints of the 1<sup>st</sup> Servant, "He shift a trencher he scrape a trencher" no indeed not Potpan if he knew it and as "he was looked for, & called for, asked for & sought for in the great chamber"<sup>52</sup> to no purpose, we may safely conclude he was not there. Where then was Potpan! Was he not? Nay we are sure he was lounging at some entrance placidly surveying the labours of his

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<sup>51</sup> *Romeo and Juliet* [R&J], Act 1, Scene 5, Lines 1-2.

<sup>52</sup> *R&J*, Act 1, Scene 5, Lines 11-12.

soulless associates with dignified indifference and magnificent contempt, watching at the same time the masked and motley multitude passing on to the gilded saloons of old Capulet. We are by no means sure that some pert merry serving girl, as curious and as indolent as Potpan himself, was not his companion, & what is there we would not give to hear a few of the sapient and critical remarks which the wit and acumen of Potpan produced on the unconscious visitors, but this we must waive —while we endeavour to form a faint and hasty idea of the man himself and we would commence by asking any man, woman, or child of the most ordinary intellect or dullest imagination could Potpan have been a thin man? The name of Potpan is is [sic] corpulency itself – if Potpan had not a sleek cheek, a moist eye, a fat smile, and a “fair round belly” – we are very woefully [sic] in error! Potpan was of those whom Caesar loved about him “Sleek headed and such as sleep o’ nights”<sup>53</sup> — nor do I think that even Caesar would have expressed with regard to Potpan the desire he felt respecting Cassius “would he were fatter”<sup>54</sup> – was Potpan a hearty man? We do most heartily think so – a great devourer of Marchpane<sup>55</sup> – Was Potpan a learned man? We think not learned overmuch – we do imagine that his brain was affected through any excess of learning. Potpan was not a thinking man, in short to speak in homely phrase Potpan was not wise, not rather otherwise. We have some doubts as to whether Potpan enjoyed a perfect equanimity of temper, it has never appeared clearly enough for our satisfaction who it was that “cursed the Nurse in the Pantry”<sup>56</sup> We trust it was not Potpan, but we entertain doubts – we must again make free with the fair character of Potpan and this time without pulling a question, for it would be rank folly to make a question of it – Potpan was not a temperate man & sore afraid are we that the pleasures of the flesh were not strange unto Potpan, we much mistake if he was not somewhat “cardinally given”<sup>57</sup> – and we strictly believe him to have been on terms of easy familiarity with Susan Grindstone & Nell!<sup>58</sup> if we wrong this great man – we very humbly beg his great shadows pardon, but it is our stedfast [sic] opinion and one “that fire shall not burn one of us”[.]

[ ] We believe in that weakness of Potpans as firmly as we believe in the passion of Romeo, the wit of Mercutio, or the eloquence of Friar Laurence [sic]. We do not (however we may undervalue the learning of Potpan) set him down for a “Costard”<sup>59</sup> –Potpan would have scorned to have cried out in his trouble “Well if ever I do see the merry days of desolation that I have seen.”<sup>60</sup> Or have consoled himself with the hope that “affliction —would one day smile again—”<sup>61</sup> Nor do we think that Potpan would have crossgartered his

<sup>53</sup> *Julius Caesar* [JC], Act 1, Scene 2, [Lines 193-195]:

Caesar: Let me have men about me, that are fat;  
Sleek-headed men, and such as sleep o’ nights:  
Yon Cassius has a lean and hungry look;

<sup>54</sup> *JC*, Act 1, Scene 2, Line 199.

<sup>55</sup> Marzipan.

<sup>56</sup> *R&J*, Act 1 Scene 4, Lines 103-104.

<sup>57</sup> *Measure for Measure* [MfM], Act 2, Scene 1, Lines 76-78:

Elbow: Marry, sir, by my wife; who, if she had been  
a woman cardinally given, might have been accused  
in fornication, adultery, and all uncleanness there.

<sup>58</sup> Apparently other servants in the House of Capulet: *R&J*, Act 1, Scene 5, Line 9.

<sup>59</sup> The Clown in *Love’s Labour’s Lost* [LLL].

<sup>60</sup> *LLL*, Act 1, Scene 2, Lines 151-152.

<sup>61</sup> *LLL*, Act 1, Scene 1, Line 302.

yellow stockings to please Olivia<sup>62</sup> – still we are compelled to say that he wo<sup>d</sup> never have followed the barren fortunes of Rosalind to Arden.<sup>63</sup> Potpan had no such disinterested friendship – we are well assured Potpan was a “marvellous witty fellow”<sup>64</sup> his wit was coarse and unpolished, and we fear we must admit confused & ungrammatical but wit it was we may rest assured that had Potpan been allowed to “Strut his hour upon the stage”<sup>65</sup> that he might not have perilled [sic] well earned laurels of that “fit and senseless watchman Dogberry”<sup>66</sup> – or the versatile hero of that “Short and tedious Comedy” of “Pyramus & Thisbe” famous “Bully bottom” – and if a dog had “thrust himself” into the brilliant halls of the Capulets we are far from admitting that Potpan would not have remonstrated with him with as much grace, dignity, and pathos, as ever did that other worthy serving man of Verona – hight<sup>67</sup> Launce! Here we (with every fleeing of respect and admiration) take leave of the illustrious Potpan!

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The words of our next song are from the Comedy of the “Twelfth Night”, and from part of a speech delivered by the disguised “Viola” to the Duke telling her own sad tale under the cover of a sister’s love, and expressing her own deep passion in another’s name, the Duke interested in the fate of the Girl asks “And what’s her history? To which Viola replies, “a blank my Lord”<sup>68</sup> – finishing in the words of our Song.

Song                    “She never told her love.”

“Leah”

The next character I propose enlarging upon is Shylock’s wife “Leah” whose name is mentioned only once, when the malicious Jubal is alternately torturing and gratifying his friend, by a relation on the one hand, of his daughter’s prodigality, & on the other ~~hand~~ by his assurance of his creditors hopeless bankruptcy & ruin. It is in one of his bursts of anguish and rage on hearing the loss of a favorite ring that he exclaims “Thou torturest me Tubal! It was my turquoise, I had it of Leah! when I was a Bachelor”<sup>69</sup> – We are disposed to regard Shylocks wife, in the light of a gentle and loveable woman, in as much, as the beauty and tenderness of their daughter Jessica must have been derived from some other nature than that of her gross & grasping father! Who can tell the story of their youth, their days of love, their season of Marriage! was she the beautiful child of needy parents, sold & delivered as a bale of Merchandise to the wealthy Hebrew, or was

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<sup>62</sup> Reference to Malvolio in *Twelfth Night* [TN], who is duped into doing this by Sir Toby Belch, Sir Andrew Aguecheek and Maria. See *TW*, Act 2, Scene 5 and Act 3, Scene 4.

<sup>63</sup> See *As You Like It*.

<sup>64</sup> *Much Ado About Nothing* [MA], Act 4, Scene 2, Line 25.

<sup>65</sup> *Macbeth*, Act 5, Scene 5, [Lines 23-24]:

Macbeth: Life’s but a walking shadow; a poor player  
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,

<sup>66</sup> See *MA*, Act 3, Scene 3.

<sup>67</sup> Archaic term for ‘named’.

<sup>68</sup> *TN*, Act 2, Scene 5, Lines 109-110.

<sup>69</sup> *TMoV*, Act 3, Scene 1, Lines 112-113.

Youth different to the Man? Was the Man hardened and his soul narrowed by the insults, scoffs, and injuries, which all thought it meritorious then, to level at the despised and persecuted Sons of Abraham we may think it was so, & we confess for our own parts we are disposed to think more favorably of Shylock than the



is – every one must admit that he had good and sufficient reasons for his hatred of Antonio. What insult or injury had the Royal Merchant omitted to put in practice against him? he had “hindered him of “half a Million! laughed at his losses, mocked at his gains – scorned his nation, thwarted his bargains, cooled his friends, heated his enemies”.<sup>70</sup> And wantonly and brutally insulted him on the Rialto itself, where he kicked him and spat upon his gabardine and beard – were not these causes enough for hate? & this is no false coinage of Shylocks, he tells Antonio of it to his face & he so far from denying the disgraceful charge gives a pretty good promise of repeating it “I am as like to call thee so again. To spit on the [sic] again. To spurn thee too!”<sup>71</sup>

The calling so he mentions as very likely of reoccurrence was simply “Cutthroat – Misbelieving dog” Schlegel says, in his remarks on this play, “Shylocks hate is naturally directed chiefly against those Christians who profess truly Christian sentiments”.<sup>72</sup> Was Antonio of these? Was the humility and charity of that religion illustrated by his spitting on an old man’s beard because he was of a different creed? the judge of all creeds forbid! fearlessly we assert that between the Christian defiling and the Jew defiled, the difference was this, the Christian placed himself in a more degraded & degrading position, that ever did the Jew in his lowest and dirtiest dealings! Let us think then that ere the world & Shylocks particular connection with the world, had filled his heart with such —tenants as knew it not when he sat by the side of his betrothed & told her how fair she was, that he had kindlier feelings, and softer nature – nay let us go further and say that the good spirit had not quite forsaken him, and that it was not the intrinsic value of the “turquoise ring” which moved so fearfully when it was stolen, but the fact that it was a love gift of his dead wife, hallowed by the remembrance of the youth, freshness, and confidence of her, who gave it to him when he was “a bachelor”. Stevens – imagines that he valued it on account of its magical properties attached to it, but we do not accuse Shylock of any such nonsensical opinions, although it was anciently believed, & even down to a much later date, that certain precious stones were endowed with mystic powers, as that the amethyst prevents drunkenness, that the diamond placed beneath the pillow will detect the frailty of a wife, that the sapphire is a preservative against enchantments, that the fume of the agate will abate tempests, that the Chrisphrase will make the wearer out of love with gold and so on, but this is from the purpose – Shylock makes sudden mention of his lost wife in the hour of his great anguish and despair, and let us give him the benefit of a doubt that he might suddenly have been seized with affectionate remembrance of her true love and devotion —

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<sup>70</sup> See *TMoV*, Act 3, Scene 1, Lines 50-53.

<sup>71</sup> *TMoV*, Act 1, Scene 3, Lines 128-129.

<sup>72</sup> See August Wilhelm Schlegel, ‘Lecture XXIV: Criticisms on Shakspeare’s Comedies’ (1808), in *Lectures on Dramatic Art*, trans. by John Black (London: George Bell & Sons, 1883), pp. 379–400 (p. 389): ‘His hate is naturally directed chiefly against those Christians who are actuated by truly Christian sentiments: a disinterested love of our neighbour seems to him the most unrelenting persecution of the Jews’. Schlegel (1767–1845), born in Hanover, was a scholar, critic, poet and contemporary of Schiller, Goëthe and Madame de Staël. He produced 9 volumes of translations of Shakespeare between 1797 and 1810. He delivered his series of *Lectures on Dramatic Art* in Vienna in the spring of 1808; they were first published in 1809 with an Author’s Preface.

We may then picture Leah as brilliant, with the peculiar beauty of her race, her rich Southern blood glowing beneath her warmly colored cheek, her lustrous eyes burning beneath the triumphal arches of her fine eyebrows, her mouth like a fairy casket of crimson velvet, which ever and anon a merry smile would uncloset displaying its treasure of “orient pearl” outoing the purest in her husband’s cabinet. We see her seated in an antique chair, before a quaintly carved frame, on which, the stretched web glowed with the radiant dyes of her rich embroidery! How often surrounded by a cluster of velvety, curled perfumed Venetians, suitors to her husband, rich purse & to her richer person! – We may safely avouch that many a hundred – ducats borrowed at a ruinous rate of usance from Shylock’s hoards, were disbursed at the Goldsmiths in exchange for some costly device of Jewels to be offered at the Shrine of Leah’s beauty! to corrupt the fair tenant of the temple some wooers again would go less delicately to work, and borrowing an idea of Joves make love in a shower of gold, but half an hour before drawn from the money bags of the wealthy Hebrew! And how were these lawless love offerings received? With that scorn which purity feels for things impure? Or was the complacent wife confederate with her grasping Lord in catching at the brilliant bait held out by these patrician fishers of Women? Were they taken by the young wife & redelivered to captivity in her husband’s surcharged coffers, and were the reckless libertines twice plundered, were their necessities fed by the genuine usurer, and again exhausted by the seeming wanton? both husband and wife joyfully conspiring for their ruin and beggary, he adding terrible interest for every smile his wife bestowed upon them, she compounding with her conscience at the rate of a dazzling gem, or chain, for every taunt she suffered them to lead against her husband. No! No! It cannot for a moment be believed that she listened to the unholy proposals of her libertine suitors, or that she had demeaned herself in any such manner as to arouse the suspicions of her husband! certain it is that she was a pure and faithful wife unto him, or he had never recalled her name in the violent outburst of his agony, or remembered her gift to him, when he was “A Bachelor” —



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Some apology may perhaps be necessary for the introduction of a Song, the words which, do not proceed from our poets pen still I have ventured upon it, in the hope that the sportiveness of the “tricksy Ariels” nature forming the burden of it, the abstract beauty of the melody itself, added to its having frequently been introduced in the play itself, may form an excuse for the liberty which under any other circumstances, I, of all others sho’d have the least warrant & the least inclination to indulge in, The words are illustrative and the music delightful and upon this double plea I am willing to abide the risk of this seeming incongruity! The Song is supposed to be sung by the quaint spirit himself & commences thus,

Song

“Bid your faithful Ariel fly”<sup>73</sup>

“The wise woman of Brentford”<sup>74</sup>

It is very certain that the same old woman of Brentford – although now nearly every trace of her has been swept away – was a well known character in the time of Shakspeare himself, – for in “Westward Hoe”! a comedy bearing date 1607 the same individual is referred in the words, “I doubt that old hag Gillian of Brentford has bewitched me”<sup>75</sup> and to make it still more evident that the same old witch is referred to by Shakspeare the early quarto of our Author makes Mrs Ford say “Its my Maid’s Aunt Gillian of Brentford” – there remain also several ballads on some old woman of Brentford most probably the same for amongst the rest is “Julian of Brentford’s last will and testament” – imprinted in 1599 – Beyond these meagre details we know nothing save that according to Shakspeare her name was Pratt.<sup>76</sup> and I sorely fear that poor Mrs Pratt had but a very queer time of it during her sojourn at Brentford – for witches were not only strictly believed in at the time, but were strictly and mercilessly handled in “that time” I say – but the disgraceful and barbarous usage of these poor old creatures was persisted in at a much later & much more enlightened period, indeed at a period – which was denominated by those who lived in it, the new and pure period of regeneration both of mind & morals. I allude especially to the years of the protectorate – for in the course of that time & 8 years before it that is from 1640 to 1660 – there were between 3 and 4,000 persons who suffered death for witchcraft – the usual method of detecting a witch was by the marks found on them – such as moles, spots or warts which so frequently grow large in old age – but which were supposed to be infernal nipples to suckle imps, and the mode of proving their innocence or guilt was by tying the thumbs and toes of suspected persons, about whose waist was fastened a cord, the ends of which were held on the banks of a river by two men, in whose power it was either to slacken or tighten them, and they were then placed in the river, if they could swim under these circumstances it was sure proof of guilt, sometimes they were tied neck and heels and thrown into a pond, if they floated it was a sure sign of guilt, and they were taken out and burnt – if they sank they were innocent and of course drowned by the fact of proving it, this barbarous torture was recommended if not invented by His most Gracious and Sagacious Majesty James 1<sup>st</sup> who in his “Doemonologia” [sic] says (alluding to their floating being proof of guilt) “That as such persons had renounced their baptism by water – so the water refused to receive them.”<sup>77</sup> — The rascal who made himself most particularly zealous and busy in these tragical absurdities was one Matthew Hopkins<sup>78</sup> – this pretty

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<sup>73</sup> This ‘Shakespearean’ song was first set by Thomas Linley (1756–1778) for a revival of *The Tempest* at Drury Lane in 1777. However, the text used was an adaptation of *The Tempest* by R. B. Sheridan, which included a chorus piece for the storm scene at the beginning and this opening aria for Ariel. These are additions to Shakespeare’s text, so do not appear in Appendix 3.

<sup>74</sup> The ‘wise woman of Brentford’ is referred to in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* [*MWW*], Act 4, Scene 5, Lines 24-25. In folklore, the ‘wise woman of Brentford’ is sometimes referred to as a witch, and is said to have had certain ‘supernatural’ powers of insight and prediction.

<sup>75</sup> Thomas Dekker and John Fletcher, *Westward Hoe* (1607): Clare says: “O Master Linstock, ’tis no walking will serve my turn: have me to bed, good, sweet Mistress Honeysuckle. I doubt that old hag Gillian of Braineфорд has bewitched me.”

<sup>76</sup> In a scene from *MWW*, Falstaff enters disguised as an old woman and is referred to by Mrs Page as ‘Mother Prat’ (*MWW*, Act 4, Scene 2, Line 168).

<sup>77</sup> King James’ treatise on witchcraft, *Daemonologie* (1597) became famous for this claim.

<sup>78</sup> Matthew Hopkins (*d.* 1647) was a notorious witch-finder who worked in Suffolk and surrounding area. His zealousness is understood to have escalated in the last few years of his life, after 1644. The East Anglian trials of 1645–1647 are sometimes referred to

scoundrel in one year hanged 60 reputed witches in the county of Essex, however the satisfaction remains that Sir Hopkins himself was suspected at last and lost his life in the usual manner.<sup>79</sup> The last instance of ducking for witchcraft occurred in 1751 – But to return to Gillian Pratt of Brentford she was probably at first a poor ignorant woman, who by indulging in the harmless eccentricities of living alone – keeping a cat, and a bird or two, and amusing herself with her spinning wheel had earned the dangerous reputation of being a witch, the supposition being coloured by the pertinacious visits of the ripe country girls who insisted upon the old woman’s giving them an insight into their future prospects – the pay correspondent with the poverty in splendour of the predictions, or a burly farmer, or frightened shepherd, to discover the thief of a missing calf or lamb – or five thousand other errands upon which the illiterate and superstitious neighbours would pester her & old Gillian discovering which it certainly required no witchcraft to discover that their gullibility provided a sure and simple mode for spending the residue of her days in comparative affluence – always supposing she had the luck to escape the pond or the stake embraced it on the risk but bitterly I fear did she repent it, the hootings of idle boys, the curses of suspicious husbands, the innuendos of illiberal neighbours, and the perpetual prospect of a very wet or uncomfortably dry death must have been sufficient to upset the equanimity of a more favored person than Gillian of Brentford – and doubtless in the end this combination of annoyances roused her beyond recall against all her fellow creatures, perhaps turned her head a little until she really fancied she possessed the supernatural properties they invested her with, and indulging in the full sprite of a new malicious spirit – she fulfilled the character of a witch in its most popular and wildest acceptation. Our limits will not allow us to dwell further upon this old woman if they would many long & interesting page might be written – but want of time not want of matter compel us to break off here.

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 Our next musical selection is a comparative view of the pleasures of youth, and the discomfort of age! D<sup>f</sup>. Percy<sup>80</sup> thinks that it was intended to be spoken by Venus, weighing the comparative merits of youthful Adonis & aged Vulcan, but as Stevens observes “We know not that Vulcan was more aged than his brethren Mars Mercury or Apollo, and especially as the fabled deities were supposed to enjoy a perpetuity of health life and pleasure, it is not likely that Venus objected to her husband on any other account than his ungracefulness & lameness”.<sup>81</sup> This appears conclusive, and we must consider it only in the abstract as a melodious view of the respective attractions of Youth & Age.

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as ‘the Hopkins witch panic’, indicating Hopkins’ apparent importance to these brutal investigations in which at least 100 were executed.

<sup>79</sup> The *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* notes this legend, but states that ‘In fact he died, according to Stearne, ‘after a long sickness of consumption’ (J. Stearne, *A confirmation and discovery of witchcraft* (1648), 61) at Manningtree, and the parish register of Mistley with Manningtree records his burial there on 12 August 1647.’, <<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/13751>> [accessed 5 July 2007], paragraph 8 of 8.

<sup>80</sup> Thomas Percy (1729–1811), *Reliques of Ancient Poetry* 3 vols (Dublin, 1766), i: 186. Percy’s *Reliques* collected together many poems and songs by various writers in the English tradition, and did much to popularise early English ballads.

<sup>81</sup> *The Passionate Pilgrim* is a collection of poems published by William Jaggard in 1599 and attributed to Shakespeare. It includes poems of different forms, lengths, and themes (and some that are known to have been written by other poets), but several refer to Venus and Adonis – more formally treated by Shakespeare in his long poem *Venus and Adonis*. The poem in question compares the relative merits of youth over age, which, as the lecture suggests, could relate to Venus’ comparison of her husband, Vulcan, an aged



“Will Squele – a Cotswold Man”

In the 2<sup>nd</sup> part of “Henry the IVth” Act 3<sup>rd</sup> Scene 2<sup>nd</sup> that shrewd and erudite magistrate Justice Robert Shallow entertains his cousin Silence with an account of his roistering days at Clement’s Inn<sup>82</sup> & afterwards recalls the memory of them with Sir John Falstaff who had been his companion therein, and truly to take the garrulous old simpleton’s account, he must have been a very mad and sad rogue indeed, he appears to have been thus accompanied “little John Doit of Staffordshire, black George Bare, Francis Pickbone, and Will Squele a Cotswold Man”<sup>83</sup> – Gracious heaven! What what [sic] a set of scarecrows must they have been! – Mark how finely Shakspeare, ridicules these “Swinge buckler”<sup>84</sup> associates of Justice Shallow! on a Cotswold Man which is a term synonymous with daring, courage, and robust qualities of all descriptions, he bestows the villainously small sounding patronymic of Squele! Will Squele! Why Feeble the “woman’s tailor”<sup>85</sup> must have been Hector of Troy to him – Doit again of Staffordshire! – what can be conceived more worthless than the man who bore such a name! if you would desire to depreciate absolute insignificance itself, you could not do it more forcibly than by asserting “such a thing, or such a one is not worth a Doit” – go thy ways – little John Doit of Staffordshire thou must have been an inconceivably contemptible animal! Again George Bare! & Francis Pickbone! what anatomies have we confused up here! the very incarnation of leanness & famine – Shallow, Doit, Bare, Pickbone, and Squele! what a formidable band of desperadoes! these were the ruffling roaring lads, who thrashed fruiterers in Gray’s Inn. – who had the best of the Bonarobas<sup>86</sup> at commandment & frightened the Tower from its propriety! associated with these, with them but not of them, was young Jack Falstaff page to Thomas Mowbray Duke of Norfolk<sup>87</sup> then in the heyday of his youth, merry, witty, active, and mischeivous, his face smooth & his figure slim, for it was before the time when to use his own pathetic language sighing and grief had blown him up like a bladder! & rare sport must these riotous young students have created for the sharp-witted page & convenient too – for out of all question he made these “fools his purse” – what Steels were these to sharpen his wit upon, what scape-goats for his transgression, with what breakage of their empty heads & exhaustion of their full purses, did they not pay for the privilege of the young wag’s<sup>88</sup> acquaintance & companionship!

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carpenter more concerned with his work than his wife, and the youthful and beautiful Adonis, with whom Venus was infatuated. Steevens, however, conjectures that relative youth and age are anachronisms when talking of the Gods, for whom time is immaterial.

<sup>82</sup> One of the Inns of Chancery (buildings that housed associations of lawyers). Clement’s Inn was sold by its members in 1884 and demolished in 1891.

<sup>83</sup> 2 *Henry IV*, Act 3, Scene 2, Lines 18-20.

<sup>84</sup> As above.

<sup>85</sup> See 2 *Henry IV*, Act 3, Scene 2, Lines 145-167.

<sup>86</sup> Courtesans (Italian).

<sup>87</sup> Thomas de Mowbray, 1st Duke of Norfolk (1366–1399) was an English nobleman.

<sup>88</sup> ‘wag’: ‘a habitual joker’ (*Oxford English Dictionary*), usually a young man.

[ ] – Shakspeare has been guilty of a sad anachronism in placing Justice Shallow at Clements Inn fifty-five years before the date of the text – which would make it in the reign of Edward III<sup>89</sup> whereas Clement’s Inn was not founded until 1478 – which was in the 18<sup>th</sup> year of the reign of Edward IV<sup>th</sup>.<sup>90</sup> but this is a mere trifle. Shakspeare could afford to indulge in freaks of this nature, which would be intolerable from one whom we had less cause to love and venerate! Oh! For the records of these early days of Jack Falstaff’s career! For the chronicles of Turnbull for the archives of the Windmill in St George’s Fields! – For a recital of but half a dozen of the thousand mad freaks which had their being when “the Chimes were heard at Midnight.” Falstaff is not half so inclined to gossip over these times with Shallow as he usually is, else what brave doings we might have heard of, then should we have been told into how many ludicrous scrapes he had led these simple would-be roisterers, how many suppers he had eaten at their cost, how many flasks of wine he had swallowed at their charge – how many bonarobas he had defrauded them of, and how many times, even as he “brake Skogan’s head at the Court Gate,”<sup>91</sup> he had also directly or indirectly broken the heads of Messieurs Shallow, Doit, Bare, Pickbone, and Will Squele the Cotswold man! Be sure of it – that when Shallow had so manful a set-to with “Simon Stockfish the fruiterer”<sup>92</sup> – the quarrel was of Falstaff’s inciting – the belligerents of Falstaff’s backing, & the fray of Falstaff’s furthering so long as any fun could be extracted from it, then would he clap the unlucky battered, bruised, and bleeding champion on the back and tell him how valiantly he had maintained his addition of “lusty” Shallow!

[ ] How often after some long and loud carouse, has he sent these four poor devils on their homeward route, blundering and bewildered, yet still striving to keep up the spirit of the Evening, by instalments of shouts & snatches of Songs, each attempt sinking in volume and strength until helpless and overcome they look the “measure of their unmade graces”<sup>93</sup> in some muddy gutter, or were hauled away by the Guardians of the night to their respective homes, in the blankest & most powerless state of unconsciousness & imbecility! Sometimes too would he introduce them to the great hall of his Lord Norfolk’s Mansion, to furnish forth entertainment for the frolicsome tirewomen<sup>94</sup> & his pert brother pages & be sure they did not escape from the treacherous hospitality of old “Simon the Cellarer nor from the malicious encouragement of the trim Abigail, Maud, Marian, and Alice! for these are certain simple mortals so loosely constituted that they cannot find themselves in the presence of good liquor, or pretty women but they deem it incumbent upon straight-way to drink and make love desperately these creatures also possess such sensitive brains & hearts, that a glass of the wine and a glance of the woman, will set the one turning, and the other burning for the rest of the Evening, many a rainbow ribbon, sparkling brooch, “tawdry lace & pair of soiled gloves” were these excellent Staffordshire & Cotswold men despoiled of, exchanging their true wares, the result of soft heads & hard cash, for the hollow returns of the false wearers! who paraded their showy trophies on holiday, with more favored suitors to whom was gratuitously paid the price promised to the victims at some season peradventure when the hearts of these wenches were more charitably inclined, or

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<sup>89</sup> 1327–1377.

<sup>90</sup> In fact 1465–1483, so making 1478 the 13<sup>th</sup> year of his reign.

<sup>91</sup> 2 *Henry IV*, Act 3, Scene 2, Line 29.

<sup>92</sup> 2 *Henry IV*, Act 3, Scene 2, Line 31.

<sup>93</sup> I have been unable to trace this quotation.

<sup>94</sup> ‘Tire’ is from ‘attire’ and ‘tirewomen’ were servants who helped with dressing.

when for very decency's sake they could no longer refuse so slight a favor, so strongly urged, they would deign to indulge their gullible suitors with a stroll out, or perhaps with a gambol round the Maypole in the Strand, then might be seen the profound and redoubtable Shallow buckled to a pert witty damsel. Bare & Pickbone the Quixotic Cavaliers of two plump Rosy Dulcineas, little John Doit with that perverse & unaccountable infatuation which almost invariably displays itself, in such cases, the protector of a late bouncing partner, whilst a merry mischievous lass laughed and chatted in the stalwart arm of Will Squele the Cotswold Man!

[ ] Of this motley group be sure Jack Falstaff was whipper-in! Unprovided with a partner himself, for it better suited his mad-cap humour to trust to the chances of the crowd, but seemingly by “the nods & becks & wreathed Smiles” on very unequivocal terms of intimacy with the partners of his friends! On these occasions would the country purses be in great request for fruits sweet cakes & glasses of Sack<sup>95</sup> for the consumption of these complaisant girls, whilst the health they drank seemingly directed to their enthralled lovers, would fly over their shoulders & be appropriated by some more fortunate & favored rival behind them – anon – on the provocation of a side-long glance, some gay prentice would aspire to more familiar intercourse with Maud, or Marian, or Alice whereupon Falstaff with well-affected worth & in very grave terms would remonstrate with the offenders on the levity of their conduct, and thus “aggravate the choler”<sup>96</sup> of the indignant Shallow the magnanimous Doit, Bare & Pickbone & the indomitable Will Squele! but their anger was laughed at, their menaces mocked at, their confusion worse confounded by showers of jokes from the ‘prentices, peals of laughter from the girls and shouts of approbation from the by-standers, whilst Falstaff apparently striving with might and main to extinguish the fire of discord was by whispers, hints, and numberless unseen pranks, fanning the hot coals until they burst out into a full blaze, then came a roaring time of it, shrieks, oaths, screams, shouts, blows, kicks & cuffs, fast & furious – rapiers drawn – cudgels flourished, doublets damaged – jerkins rent, arms disabled, & heads broken, meanwhile the fair provokers of the fray had wisely profited by the confusion & betaken themselves to their heels & home – bye & bye the combatants bearing patchable evidence of their prowess & incontestible [sic] proofs of having had considerably the worse of it are drawn of the field by the unscathed Falstaff, to some neighbouring hostelry, there to drown their defeat and disappointment in flask after flask of mine hosts’ Sack and canary,<sup>97</sup> not without some appearance of anger against the faithless Maud, Alice, & Marian aforesaid for deserting them against Falstaff also, for a sort of glimmering idea has penetrated their thick heads that he had somehow or other been concerned in their discomfiture, which opinion is helped out by a vague remembrance on the part of little John Doit, of having had his cap thrust over his eyes by the said Falstaff, and by the recalling an accidental stroke of his cudgel having alighted on the shoulders of Will Squele, however as the bottle circles, the wine which warms their hearts – cools their resentment, they again swear everlasting friendship for jolly Jack Falstaff, undying love for the girls of mettle at the hall, & terrible maledictions & threats of

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<sup>95</sup> A corruption of *sec* (French for ‘dry’), ‘sack’ referred to a class of white wines from Spain and the Canary Islands.

<sup>96</sup> *Henry IV Part 2*, Act 2, Scene 4, line 158. ‘Choler’ is a term for anger or wrath.

<sup>97</sup> See note 95.

extermination against the “villain flat-caps” – who had dared to come “between the wind & their nobility”<sup>98</sup> – and so passed away their London life, day after day, month after month, used, abused, plundered, punished, jeered at, and jilted until their fathers or guardians recalled them to the Country & Providence kept them there, and to prove the assertion [sic] that “no fool is so foolish as an old fool” – fifty five years had added so little to the funded stock of brains possessed by Robert Shallow that he was as fond of recalling, as he had been enacting these scenes, or such as these, and such remembrances were the only ties by which he was bound to his early associates & fellow students – Doit, Bare, Pickbone, & Will Squele the Cotswold Man. —

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 Our next illustration is from the Comedy of Loves Labours Lost not correctly a song, but a passage so beautiful that it has enlisted a high musician in its composition. It is an ode written by the love sick Domain<sup>99</sup> to his divine Kate, these silly gentlemen had so railed [sic] against love, so rebelled against the Sovereign authority of King Cupid, that he brings into action against these traitors the fascinating Princess of France & her three witty & beautiful maids of honor & these fair allies so plagued the braggadocios in brain & heart as nearly to tumble one & break the other so besieging them with womans wit, that never were 4 poor mortals more overcome with shameful defeat with more ludicrous despair, or more perfect passion!<sup>100</sup>

Duett.            “As it fell upon a day”

Yorick! The Kings Jester!<sup>101</sup>

In the venerable churchyard of Royal Elsinore, under the dark yew and the sorrowing cypress, amidst storied urns amidst the white and broken columns reared in memory of youth stricken before its prime, amidst marbled mausolea daily adorned with freshly weaved coronals of flowers, despositaries of lordly & lofty dust, amidst gently rising mounds of turf starred with daisies, the narrow beds of the lowly! amidst the perishable monuments of more perishable mortality – amidst the memorials of youth, valour, wit, and beauty passed away for ever, amidst the records of blight and bereavement amidst dust, decay, and desolation! Walks the saddest thoughted [sic] and sorest tried man in Denmark, the moody and melancholy Hamlet – his brain overwrought his heart full, well right to breaking accompanied by his only friend the true soul’d Horatio! It is in such a scene that the gloomy prince picks up a skull tossed out on to the grass by a careless sexton who is hollowing the ground for a fresh grave, and to his enquire “whose was it?”<sup>102</sup> receives the reply, that it was the skull of Yorick the Kings Jester! The name acts as a spell – breaking the cruel dominion of the one thought, which preyed upon his brain, and gnawed at his heart – vengeance for his murder’d

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<sup>98</sup> *Henry IV Part 1*, Act 1, Scene 3, Line 44.

<sup>99</sup> ‘Domain’ is sic for ‘Dumaine’, one of the lords in *Love’s Labour’s Lost*.

<sup>100</sup> See the plot of *Love’s Labour’s Lost* in which four lords attending on the King of Navarre attempt to stay true to their studies and avoid the temptations of the Princess of France and her ladies-in-waiting, who nevertheless outwit the scholars’ good intentions. As the sung piece here is a passage of undefined length rather than a song, and musical settings often alter its words, it does not feature in Appendix 3. However the reference is *LLL*, Act 4, Scene 3, Line 99.

<sup>101</sup> See the graveyard scene: *Hamlet*, Act 5, Scene 1.

<sup>102</sup> As above, Line 170.

father, and brings back thoughts and feelings associated with childhoods happier hour, tinged however with the besetting gloom of his chafed and changing spirit, as he thus muses over the senseless skull of his long departed friend and playmate

Alas poor Yorick &c –

Here we have a palpable description of the character. We recognise in him all the attributes necessary in a jester and many qualities admirable in a man, let us look at him first in his vocation of Jester, he was “a fellow of infinite jest and of most excellent fancy! This we may conceive to have been the higher cast of his office – displayed in the discharge of his duty in the presence of his royal master and his high bred court – and when and when [sic] inclined to favour the servants hall or a meaner concourse of auditors with a “touch of his quality–” he was equal master of “gibes and gambols and flashes of merriment that set the table in a roar” – The fashion of keeping salaried Jesters in loyal and noble households is of very ancient date, we may even go back to the time when the Grecian forces were encamp’d before Troy – for what was the witty and malignant Thersites<sup>103</sup> but one of these? At some periods these Jesters have been coarse, ribald, and obscene! at others polished, elegant and decent, but at all periods they have been men of ready humour, & caustic wit. One of the most favourable specimens of this class here in England was the celebrated Will Somers, Jester to Henry the 8<sup>th</sup><sup>104</sup> whose memorable and cutting reply to Cardinal Wolsey has been handed down to us. It appears that suspicions were entertained against the unscrupulous and ambitious churchman of a desire to elevate himself to the Pontifical chair when one day he addressed the following doggerel to Powers desiring a reply

A rod in the school  
And a Whip for the fool  
Are always in Season!

The desired reply he obtained in the following words

A halter & a rope  
For him that would be Pope  
Against all right and Reason<sup>105</sup>

Of this class we may consider Yorick to have been an accomplished member, mercurial mirthful boisterous shrewd severe or sarcastic as time and occasion required – Let us next look at him as a man – here we are

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<sup>103</sup> ‘Thersites’ – a figure from Greek myth: the son of *Agrius* and a soldier in the Trojan wars.

<sup>104</sup> William Somer (or Sommers) (d. 1559), a celebrated court fool, first in Henry VIII’s service in 1535 before going on to serve Edward VI and living at court with Mary Tudor before dying in the first year of Elizabeth I’s reign.

<sup>105</sup> This anecdote is related in *A pleasant history of the life and death of Will Summers. How he came first to be known at court, and by what means he got to be King Henry the Eight’s Jester. With the entertainment that his cousin Patch Cardinal Wolsey’s Fool gave him at the Lord’s house, and how the Hogsheads of Gold were known by this means*, Anon., cited in Enid Welsford, *The Fool: His Social and Literary History* (London: Faber & Faber, 1935), p. 167. *A pleasant history* suggests that there was a good deal of enmity between Wolsey and Somer, and even suggests the latter’s involvement in the former’s downfall.

inclined to regard him with special favor. The passage in Hamlet's speech bespeaks him of a kindly natur'd and gently temper'd heart. "he hath borne me on his back a thousand times" – implying that he had indulged his childish humours, and join'd in his childish gambols! Now a cynical ill natur'd man it has been truthfully remark'd has a particular aversion to children, chides these innocent pranks roughly & repels their artless advances with harshness and anger, whereas one of generous and amenable disposition will enter into all their frolics, strive to engage their confidence, & win their affection – all this did Yorick attempt to do and succeeded in the attempt, for Hamlet adds here hangs those lips that I have kissed I know not how oft, thereby admitting the love he bore him and certain it is that all men who are loved of young children have their heart in the right place. Many a time and oft when the chivalrous king Hamlet sat at the head of his long and nobly filled board, side by side with his lov'd and trusted brother ere the demon of ambition and lust had whisper'd bloody and unnatural thoughts in his ears, and the young hope of Denmark the silken hair'd Hamlet gambolled through the wide hall! have the infinite jest & excellent fancy of the sparkling Yorick made the table roar and the Rafters sing! Many a time and oft has the broad courtyard resounded with loud merriment consequent upon his practical jokes, and wild vagaries. Whilst the bearded men of arms [again?] appreciation of his powers. The serving men fairly scream'd with laughter, and the trim [sic] the maidens clapped their little hands in an ecstasy of delight. By his agency was much villainy punished much virtue rewarded, much hypocrisy unmask'd much merit made manifest, so that not only was he a body carer by exciting in it healthy mirth and hilarious humours, but also a kind of mind carer by exploring the existence & in a manner controlling the extent of the soul blots lust malice avarice & all other gross passions which humanity is heir to! On the whole then we may consider Yorick though a "motley fool" was a worthy fool, and in spite of the old saying that the office of jester is one which none but a man who has wit can perform, and none but he who wants it will perform, we may feel confident that Yorick had both wit to enact and wisdom to redeem the character, that he was free from all grossness & scurrility, – and possessed of that sparkling wit and talent at repartee which constitutes the charm & brilliancy of fancy, & testifies thought and heartiness of brain, and that Hamlet, both from his own childish experience, and the after testimony of those who had known the man, was justified in the expression of love & respect with which he recall'd the memory of the dead Jester in his exclamation of "Alas poor Yorick!" —

Our concluding piece of music will be that very exquisite Duett, I know a bank! The words (which are from the Midsummer Nights Dream) have necessarily undergone some alteration by their adaptation to music but if Shakspeare will hold out such tempting baits to the lovers of harmony he has only himself to thank for the violence which one muse must visit upon another to serve her own ends, both in this, and in other charming passages in his text which been selected for music!

#### Duett and Finale "I know a bank"<sup>106</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> As previously, this is a passage of undefined length – spoken by Oberon – rather than a song, so does not appear in Appendix 3. The reference is *MSND*, Act 2, Scene 1, Line 249.