Werk

Titel: The still lion

Autor: Ingleby, C. M.

Jahr: 1865

PURL: https://resolver.sub.uni-goettingen.de/purl?338281509_0002|log15

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The still Lion.

An essay towards the restoration of Shakespeare's text.

By

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We may say of Shakespeare's text what Thomas De Quincey said of Milton's. „On any attempt to take liberties with a passage of *his*, you feel as when coming, in a forest, upon what seems a Dead Lion; perhaps he may not be dead, but only sleeping, nay perhaps he may not be sleeping, but only shamming. — — You may be put down with shame by some man reading the line otherwise," — or reading it in the light of more extended or more accurate knowledge.

Here lies the covert danger of emendation. It is true that the text of Shakespeare as it comes down to us — „the latest seed of time" — in the Folio of 1623, as well as in the quartos, is very corrupt. It is corrupt on two accounts. As to the text of the quartos, there was no proper editorial supervision, since the editions were intended merely for the accommodation of play-goers; and therefore the text was imperfect by design both in substance and in form. As to the text of the folio, the supervision exercised by Messrs. Heminge and Condell seems to have been confined to the selection of copies for the printer; and some of those were playhouse-

copies which had been curtailed for representation, and others were copies of quarto editions; while the correction of the press was probably left to the „reader“ of the printing-house, who did not use any extraordinary vigilance in the exercise of his vocation. So that we have imperfect copies at first; and a misprinted text at last. This is the „case“ of the advocates of unlimited conjectural criticism; and we cordially make the concession, that our text needs emendation. But, before they can be permitted to conjecture, we require of them to find out where the corruptions lie. If a man's body be diseased, the seat of the disease can be generally determined between the patient and the doctor; in some cases, however, the malady baffles research and experiment.

In the case of Shakespeare's text, the diagnosis is infinitely perplexed: 1) from the multitude of obscurities and difficulties that beset it: 2) from the close resemblance that subsists between those obscurities which spring from the obsolete language or archaic allusions of the text, and those which are wholly due to the misreading or misprinting of the text. Our healthy parts are so like our diseased parts, that the doctor sets about the medicinal treatment of that which needs no cure; and the patient's body is so full of those seeming anomalies, that his life is endangered by the multiplicity of agencies brought to bear on his time-worn frame.

What if there are cases in which those *κύριοι συνωμόται*, archaic phraseology and textual corruption, unite their powers against us? Why, in such cases, it is most likely that the critic would be utterly baffled: that he would be unable to restore the lost integrity even by the combined powers of exposition and conjecture. Now it so happens that after all that contemporary literature and conjectural criticism can do for Shakespeare's immortal works, there is a residue of about thirty-five passages which have defied all attempts to cure their immortal nonsense. Does it not seem likely that the perplexity in such cases is due to the joint action of those two sources of obscurity, and our inability to discriminate (to persever, Shakespeare might have said) the one from the other? We shall see.

The vintage afforded by these remarks may be thus expressed. Conjectural criticism is legitimate; for it is needed to the perfectionment of the text: but no critic can be licensed to exercise it whose knowledge and culture do not fulfil two great prerequisites. 1) A competent knowledge of the orthography, phraseology, prosody, as well as the language of arts and customs, pre-

valent in Shakespeare's day. 2) A refined and reverent judgment for appreciating the genius and learning of Shakespeare.

The present time seems most fitting for the treatment of the question: to what extent, and in what manner may conjectural criticism be safely exercised? For, the last few years have witnessed an assault on the traditional words and phrases of the Bard, which for its wholesale destructiveness and the arrogance of its pretentions, is wholly without parallel. The English press has teemed with works designed to improve, but most of them achieving no other result than that of villanously defaming and corrupting (bewraying, the Bard might have said) the ancient text. Here are the titles of some of these.

Proposed Emendations of the Text of Shakespeare's Plays with Confirmatory and Illustrative passages from the Poet's Works and those of his contemporaries, by Swynfen Jervis. London: Longman, Green, Longman and Roberts. 1860. Price one shilling. 8vo. pp. 28. 2nd Ed. 1861. pp. 20.

Notes on Shakespeare, by James Nichols M. R. C. P. London. William Skeffington. 163 Piccadilly part I. 1861. 8vo. pp. 28. part II. 1862.

On the Received Text of Shakespeare's Dramatic Writings, and its improvement, by Samuel Bailey. London: Longman, Green, Longman and Roberts. 1862. 8vo. pp. VII, 266.

[A second work by Mr. S. Bailey has lately been published (1866). We have not met with it.]

Stray Notes on the Text of Shakespeare, by Henry Wellesley DD. Principal of New Inn Hall, Oxford. London. John Murray. Albemarle St. 1865. 4to. pp. 34.

New Readings in Shakespeare or proposed Emendations of the Text, by Robert Cartwight. MD. London. John Russell Smith. 36 Soho Sq. January 1866. 8vo. pp. 40.

The Shakespeare Expositor, by Thomas Keightley.

[In the press: to be published by Mr. J. Russell Smith: the conjectures of Mr. K. have been published in the notes to the Cambridge Edition of Shakespeare; and some few in Mr. K.'s own. Edition. 1864.]

Of these works, there is but one of average merit; it is that by Dr. Wellesley; he is learned, modest, and ingenious; though very speculative.

Some of the conjectures thus put forth may be entertained for careful consideration. But the mass we repudiate as impertinent and absurd. We deny the need of any wholesale change, and we impute amazing ignorance to the assailants; — not to insist on matters of taste de quibus non est disputandum. We are fully able to prove the strength of our position, by shewing that the passages attacked are sense-proof; meaning thereby, not proof against sense, but proof against innovation by the power of their own sense.

We say to the assailants: „When you propose an emendation you are virtually affirming that the passage under your censure is nonsense. In every case, then, in which we shew the passage to be good sense, though veiled in „an ancient weed", we are making you trumpet your own ignorance, and pronounce your own condemnation". To do this in detail would require the dimensions of a large volume: to teach the general truth by the force of particular examples is all that would be warranted by the dimensions of an article in the Jahrbuch. What is here undertaken may be thus epitomised: We propose

1) To warn the conjectural critic of the danger of tampering with words or phrases which, after all, may be wholly unexceptionable, and may owe their obscurity only to the change incident to every living language.

2) To furnish a few examples culled from Shakespeare's text, of words and phrases which have presented difficulties to the editors and commentators, not by reason of the corruption, but of the obsolete construction of the old text.

3) To furnish a few examples of justifiable emendation. Having done these three things, we shall gladly leave the old text, with its legions of archaisms and corruptions, to the tender mercies of those critics whose object is to conserve what is sound and to restore what is corrupt; and not at all to improve what, to their imperfect judgment and limited knowledge, seems unsatisfactory. To the arbitration of such critics we submit the question: whether in any particular case a word or phrase which is intelligible to the well-informed reader, however strange or uncouth, does or does not fulfil the utmost requirements of the cultivated mind; regard being had to the context, the situation, and the speaker.

I.

Great is the mystery of archaic spelling. Let as consider a few caprices of spelling before proceeding to notice the vitality and consequent instability of written words: just as we must consider the symbolization and uses of words before the grammatical construction and force of phrases. The word, rightly regarded, is an ens rationis. It is purely a matter of convenience whether it shall be represented to the eye or to the ear. The object of writing or speaking is not to impart the inner word: for transition of aught from one man's mind to another, is impossible; but to suggest it. Still, in effect something is communicated, or made common to both minds. In order that we may suggest to another man's mind any word that is in our own, we employ a medium which will stand for it, and lead him to understand it as we do. The written word is simply such a mediatorial symbol. The letters which constitute it are used to represent vocal sounds: and these may be of very variable force and scope, while the word so symbolized is invariable. Thus, ea and a, or ea and e may by agreement represent the same vowel sound; and j and g, or j and i, may, according to circumstances, stand for the same consonant sound. But further, several written symbols that have little or nothing in common may stand for the same inner word: much more, may two written symbols which have grown by habit and custom from one symbol, such as purture and portray, scase and scarce, moe and more, windoe and windore, kele and cool, leese and lose, meve and move, cusse and kiss, make and mate, etc., be regarded as equivalent terms for one and the same word. Conversely several written symbols which in the letter are identical, may stand for as many distinct words; such as spirit (breath), spirit (soul), spirit (alcohol); or as mere (mare), mere (lake) and mere (pure). The main points to keep distinctly in view, in this study, are that the orthography of the written symbol, like its vocal expression, may change to almost any extent, and yet the internal word signified by such letters or sounds remain unaltered; and that the written or spoken symbol may remain unchanged while the word signified changes, or may be used for words which have not a common origin.

Shakespeare has had many ugly charges brought against him. Among others he has been arraigned for bad spelling and bad grammar! But what was Shakespeare's orthography we have no

certain means of knowing. We know nothing beyond the orthography of certain compositors who printed his works. At the present day words are spelt according to a standard that is subject to only very slight variations. But even as late as James I, it may be truly affirmed that there was no standard of spelling whatever. There were, indeed, limits to the vagaries of writers and printers. In every word represented by a particular kind of symbol, there were permitted about a dozen different forms of spelling. The word which we write swoon (to have a fainting-fit) is a very curious example in point. In a Nominale MS. of the 15th Century edited by Mr. Thomas Wright, F. S. A., the word is figured, swoyne. Chaucer and Lord Bacon have it, swoun (or with e final). In the state Trials 1388 it is swoon; and so we find it in Milton, Dryden and all the moderns. But Fabyan, 1364, spells it swown (or with the e final) and Spencer adopts the same orthography; North, Shakespeare and sundry others give it sound; and in Richard Hyrde's translations it is generally swone!

Within the assigned limit peculiar to each word, we may rest assured that every compositor in a printing-house spelt pretty much as it seemed good in his own eyes. That he had just spelt a word in one way, was, perhaps, a reason why he should, on its recurrence, spell it in some other way. The spelling of all words, in fact, like that of Sam Weller's surname, „depended upon the taste and fancy of the writer," or the printer: and just as pedants with us will sacrifice the exact render of their best thoughts in order to avoid the repetition of a word, (of all pedantries the most contemptible and reprehensible), so did an Elizabethan compositor sacrifice a just and compendious form of spelling to his love of variety. If he had set up foorth, poore, woorse, he would on the next occasion present these words in the more concise style, forth, pore, worse. If he had set up brydde for the feathered biped, that feat of composition became a reason for transposing the r and y; for omitting a d; for omitting the final e; or for substituting, i for y, on the next occasion when he had to cope with this protæan customer. „Among the bryddes the blackbrydde hath the saddest coate, and the moaste dulceate mellodie," would argue poverty of invention and not deficiency of type. No printer of that day would favour us with coate, moaste, dulceate in unbroken succession. It would be, cote, moast, dulcet; or coat, moste, and dulceat, or some combination shewing fertility of invention. „Invention" would not be thus kept „in a noted weed". Then

again he had to exhibit the resources of his „cases", as well as his fancy. His lines must be made up neatly; and he must work within the resources of his cases. Subject to these qualifications he was bound to use as great a number of letters as possible. Accordingly (in prose works mostly) it appears that his chief method was that of Procrustes: he dealt out his letters with no niggard hand at first; and then if his line was too long he omitted a letter or two to shorten it; if too short, he indulged in a still more prodigal display of his invention and his types.

The reader may haply think this a caricature of the printed books of Shakespeare's day. Here then are two examples from a work which in all likelihood Shakespeare had read, viz. Hyrde's translation of Vives' „Instruction of a Christian Woman" 1592 (press-mark. D. 4). Here we read, inter alias, the following lines, (never mind the sense)

„space betweene the holly-daies. For think
not y^{t} holy daies be ordained of the church"

Here the lead between „holy" and „daies" is exactly equal to the letter l; so that the l was probably omitted from choice, not from necessity or convenience. (In D there is no evidence of a paucity of type.) Again, (press-mark. G. 2)

„Let her bee content with a maide not
faire and wanton" fayre.

Here „fayre" is the catch-word at the bottom of one page, and „faire" the first word on the next page. Here, then, nothing but love of variety can account for the two orthographies. I might multiply examples at pleasure.

In fairness it must be allowed that in some few printed books of the Elizabethan era some approach to uniformity of spelling is occasionally perceptible: but there was nothing like a standard of spelling. In the work just quoted, (Book I. chapter 3) in the course of a single page, wool is spelt, woll and wooll; in the next page, woolle; in the next page, wolle: but wool is only found in compounds; and woole not at all!

In order to bring these remarks to a focus, in applying them to Shakespeare's text, let us confine ourselves to words of one initial letter, H. In Lupton's „Too good to be true" 4to 1580, hair is spelt twice haire, and once heare. It is also spelt heare in Kingesmyll's „Comforts in afflictions", 1585. The latter is the less

usual form. It occurs, however, in earlier books than those. It is used, for instance, in Drant's translation of „Horace's Satyres" 4to 1566: where we read „I have shaved of his heare": as to which passage it must be noted that of and off (like to and too, on and one, the and thee), are quite indistinguishable in this literature save by means of the context. Accordingly the participial adjective haired, being written and printed heared, hear'd and heard, is sometimes identical in form with the past participle of hear. Here is an example from Shakespeare's King John. V. 2.

„This un-heard sawcinesse and boyish Troopes,
The king doth smile at,"

where „un-heard sawcinesse" is the sauciness of those striplings whose „chin is not fleg'd". Theobald proposed unhair'd as an emendation, not knowing that unheard was the same word under an obsolete orthography. But what a source of confusion and mistake is opened up by these orthographies which coincide where they should diverge, and diverge where they should coincide. Wickliff spelt hard (durus) herd, both forms being a considerable departure from the A. S. heard. The Elizabethans, who inherited and retained the former style, spelt herd (armentum) heard; and heard (auditus) hard; and this last they pronounced as we do hard (durus); a fashion which is presupposed in The Taming of the shrew II. 1.

„Well have you heard, but something hard of hearing!"

and in parts of Essex and Cambridgeshire the same pronunciation may be heard to this day [1]).

Accordingly, those who hold that these various forms of spelling are evidences of a rude attempt at discrimination and perseverance, must needs admit that the attempt was wholly abortive; for what was gained by distinguishing heard, hard (auditus) from heard (comatus), was lost by confounding it with hard (durus); and what was gained by distinguishing herd, heard (ar-

[1]) A youth who came from near Wisbeach said to me — „you must know, sir, that I am a perfick keward. If a bullick runs at me I hallays makes a pawnt of running away. I should be lorth to meet him, for I should be attackted and gorr'd to death, they air so ferce and moross". And on my telling him of the propensities of some wild animals, he replied „so I 'av ard sir". He always said appen of, for light upon.

mentum) from herd (durus), was lost by confounding it with heard (auditus).

Heard (armentum) occurs in Coriolanus I. 4, where it has occasioned an emendation:

Enter Martius Cursing.

„All the contagion of the South light on you,
You Shames of Rome: you Heard of Byles and Plagues
Plaister you ore, that you may be abhorr'd
Farther than seene, and one infect another
Against the Winde a mile: you Soules of Geese,
That beare the shapes of men," etc.

The Johnsonian editors read, after Johnson himself, „you herd of — —", making a break, and supposing that Martius' passion made him leave his abusive epithet unfinished, to give place to his imprecations. From Johnson to Collier every editor understood by Heard, armentum: the latter editor reads unheard-of for „a heard of", a conjecture which, like so many other candidates for admission into the text, is good as a probable misprint, but bad as a supplanter of the old text: and for this reason. Passion takes concrete forms, and avoids generalities. Martius would, for certain, have specified the malady he invoked on the Romans, rather than have generalized his curse into „unheard-of boils and plagues".

Moreover, we cannot part with Heard in the sense of armentum; because twice in the same play, and once in Julius Cæsar are the plebs so designated, with the same contemptuous usage as in the passage we are considering. We adduce this passage, not because the difficulty admits of removal, but because it does not. It is just one of those which we must be content to leave as it is, and to despair of correcting. A score of suppositions may be made to account for the presence of the preposition of. We may fancy that Shakespeare was going to write you herd of sheep: or you herd of deer: and altering his mind — intending to say simply you herd! — omitted the cancel of the preposition: or that he left it in on purpose to give force to the curse by thrusting it out of an unfinished phrase: or that „of" is our off! i. e. — be off —: or that it has the sense of with: and there are still many other possibilities to consider. But in such a case it is not decision that is required, but faith. We must stand by the text, and wait.

In a similiar manner, the male deer was symbolized by both hart and hert; but our heart (cor) was generally spelt hart, and

still earlier hert, so that the alternative was no security against confusion.

All, or nearly all, these words are sometimes spelt with the final e; but it constituted a purely indifferent element of the word. The inflectional significance of the final e was lost before the era of Chaucer.

Help and heal (or hele) through two distinct words have a common origin, and are often used by Elizabethan writers indifferently. Thus in „Phiorauante's secrets“ 1582. the second chapter is headed thus: „To helpe the Fallyng Sicknesse in yong children“. But in the table of contents, the same chapter is referred to as having the title, „To heale the Falling Sicknes“: thus shewing that one and the same sense was attached to both. In the Authorised Version of the Holy Scriptures, helps occurs in the sense of healings or cures: „then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues“. I Cor. XII. 28. In the face of this conclusive evidence, in two places in Shakespeare where the word help is used in the sense of heal, emendations have been either proposed or actually admitted into the text of accredited editions. In the Comedy of Errors I. 1, the word occurs twice;

„To seek thy help by beneficial help“

the first help seems to mean welfare; the second, succour. The usage is not to be commended: but such a repetition is after the manner of the time. Out of a list of nearly fifty examples collected by Mr. Alexander Dyce, Mr. Marsh, and the writer, it will be sufficient to adduce three from the pages of Shakespeare, and three from those of his contemporaries.

„I'll take my leave
And leave to you the hearing of the cause.“
Measure for Measure. II. 1.

„To England will I steal, and there I'll steal.“
Henry V. V. 1.

„Dy'd in the dying slaughter of their foes.“
King John. II. 2.

„Yet some there were, the smaller summe were they,
That joyed to see the summe of all their joy,
Our Savior's Passion (circa 1580) by the Countess of Pembroke. Stanza 78.

„And leaves begin to leave the shady tree."
Mirror for Magistrates: Induction.

„I love thilke Lasse (alas! why do I love?)."
Spenser's Shepherds Calendar. Januarie.

The passage in The Comedy of Errors was tampered with by Pope, Steevens, Jackson, Collier and Singer: and „last though not least", Mr. Brae in his admirable tract, „Collier, Coleridge and Shakespeare", 1861 (pp. 75 and 150) proposed to substitute hele for the first help: which would be acceptable enough, but for the fact that help means hele already. It is somewhat curious that helpful and healthful occur before, in the same scene; and that Rowe changed the first into helpless; and the editor of the Folio 1632 changed the second into helpful. So great a fatality seems to have invested this family of words, all occurring in one scene! Why „Hapless Ægeon" was not converted by some one into „Hopeless Ægeon"; and hopeless (on its first or second occurrence in that scene) was not converted into hapless, may well excite our wonder: that they escaped, our gratitude!

In 2 Henry IV. V. 4, help again occurs, and is again suspected and supplanted. Lord Say thus pleads his cause:

„Long sitting to determine poor men's causes
Hath made me full of sickness and diseases.
Cade. Ye shall hempen caudle then, and the helpe of hatchet."

The folio 1632 reads „of a hatchet". Farmer, with an eye to a pun which Shakespeare did not intend, here proposed to read pap for help, which Steevens and Ritson admiringly approve, the former saying, „The help of a hatchet is little better than nonsense". Now the sense is self-evident. „The help of hatchet" (the article is an impertinence) is simply hatchet-cure; like whipping-cheer in 2 Henry IV. V. 4. Cade proposed to administer to Lord Say's diseases by giving him the rope and the axe. A friend of the writer suggests that help is a pun upon or allusion to the proverb, „To throw the helve after the hatchet". Mr. Brae proposed to substitute hele for help in this place also. Pap, helve, and hele agree in this: they carry double. Each may refer to a part of the hatchet, as well as to Lord Say's sickness. But they also agree in being impertinent, inasmuch as help in the sense of healing is a perfectly satisfactory reading.

II.

It will be perceived that help and heal or health, are not mere alternative forms of spelling one word; that in fact we have passed from the cases of two such forms to those in which the orthographies belong to two words, coincident in one, at least, of their several significations. Help and heal are twins, separable as distinct words, yet having the features of a common parent. In Shakespeare finding both make and mate (consors); bleak and bleat (balare); and in other writers, bak and bat (vespertilio) and quilke and quilt (calcita), we say that each of those pairs of symbols are equivalents of one and the same word. But, written words which had once an equivalent usage are often found to have grown apart, so that they become the signs of several distinct words: e. g. wait and wake or watch; dole and deal; list and lust; ward and guard. Then to crown the work, they may receive some modification of form by association with cognate, or even similar incognate signs. Thus we get such pairs of words as help, and health; pelting and paltry; etc. — We are now to consider words not as existing under different forms of spelling, but as carrying particular significations.

The risk of applying conjectural criticism to „the Still Lion", increases as we proceed with our subject. Under apparently nonsensical words and phrases often lurk a sense and intelligence the most „express and admirable". Scarcely a year passes over our heads but new light, radiating from Elizabethan lore, is shed on some „dark passage", which the commentator with his „farthing candle" has carefuly shunned, or the conjectural critic, with his ingenuity and felicity, has tinkered again and again, and still in vain. Yet there remain, as I have said, a small band of outlaws, who cannot be persuaded to submit to the rules of grammar, or the expurgation of criticism. Of the single words there are some twenty which thus get referred to the category of immortal nonsense. These, like the finest passages in Shakespeare, receive their share of homage. As Boswell, the greatest of biographers, knelt down before the „Shakespearian Relics", reeking from the forge of the Irelands, so does many a superstitious ignoramus, electro-biologized by the Immortal Name, fall down on the knees of his mind, and devour the leek of the typographical Fluellin, to whose neologizing fingers Messrs. Heminge and Condell committed the text of their folio. Can earth shew its Fetish a spectacle more triumphant than

a votary of the ancient text, mouthing with doting zeal a fragment of the immortal nonsense? But the sight is extremely rare: for the editor is extremely rare who, like the Cambridge Editors, has the courage to prefer Shakespeare's nonsense to the laboured nonsense of a Rowe or a Perkins! Here are a few of these „ugly customers", with most of which every conscientious editor has had a mortal struggle, in which he was, of course, defeated.

An-heires (Merry Wives of Windsor II. 1), Arm-gaunt (Antony and Cleopatra I. 5), Aroint (Macbeth I. 3, Lear III. 4), Barlet (Macbeth I. 6), Charge-house (Love's Labour's Lost V. 1), Cyme (Macbeth V. 3), Ducdame (As you like it II. 5), Empirickqutik (Coriolanus II. 1), land-damn (Winter's Tale II. 1), Oneyers (I. Hen. IV. II. 1), Paiocke (Hamlet III. 2), Prenzie (Measure for Measure III. 1), Scamels (Tempest II. 1), Strachy (Twelfth Night II. 5), Vllorxa (Timon of Athens III. 4), ... From the last, we will call the entire class Ullorxals. Now some of these have passed or are in the act of passing out of the „awkward squad". Aroint is certainly a true word: Barlet was corrected by the editor of the folio 1632; it is a printer's error for Martlet. Cyme seems to be a misprint for Cené, the old form of Senna. Arm-gaunt is either tarmagaunt (termagant), rampaunt) or arm-girt: Charge-house is either Church-house or else the domus curationis. Of scamels we shall have something to say hereafter. Guesses enow have been made at the words for which the rest of the squad may have been errors of the press: but, with the exception of Empirickqutick, they remain to this day shrouded in hopeless obscurity — mere printer's Sphinx-riddles. Obiter, ducdame like aroint and prenzie, has the distinguished honour of occurring several times: viz. thrice in one line in As you like it, and once in the next speech. Mr. Halliwell is disposed to regard it as a nonsensical refrain: and cites from the burden of an old song dusadam-me-me, in support of that view. Such refrains are common enough. We have dan-dyry-cum-dan, danderri-dan, hey-down-derry, fara-diddle-deyno, down-a-down-a, and a score of others. The real question is, not whether ducdame, ducdame, ducdame, night not well be a senseless refrain, like any of these, but — supposing ducdame is such a refrain, is it likely that Amiens would have shewn such solicitude as to its meaning? If the mystical line had been down-a-down-a, would Shakespeare have made him ask Jacques, „What's that down-a-down-a?" Surely not.

There is one of those Sphinx-riddles which I think may be solved at once and for ever. Empirickqutick, till the advent of the Perkins imposture, was uniformly corrected into empiric (empirick): and rightly so. Empirickqutick belongs to a very definite class of misprints; which we will call reduplicative misprints. Here are a few examples of such, which have been observed by the writer. Respectivective, for respective; (in the Office Copy of a Will): ascendendo ad axiomomata, for ascendendo ad axiomata (Whewell's Philosophy of Discovery. 1860. p. 144); and still more to the purpose is the following: „they adjudged for pronostiquykys and tokens of the kynges deth": (Fabyan: Vol. 1. c. 246): where pronostiquykys is a misprint of pronosticks or pronostiques. This last is an error of near kin to Empirickqutick, and exemplifies the tendency of compositors to reduplicate where a word is spelt indifferently with a ck or a qu.

Since storms have been reduced to law, we ought not to despair of printers' and copyists' errors. Yet it must be owned that some compositors seem capable of setting up anything for anything. We recently observed in a proof the words „There is no surer stepping ground for conjecture than the proper names of an extinct language". This was intended to represent the written words, no more slippery ground!

But a very slight inaccuracy may wholly obscure the sense of a phrase. We recently saw in a proof the words, at the beginning of a sentence — „Not women can have the same object of sight". Was this an error for, „Women cannot have" etc. . . ? Not at all. There was simply the dislocation of a single letter: the t belonged to the w and not to the o. It should have been, „No two men can have" etc. —. The very same accident happened to a line in the Tempest I. 2.

„Urchins
Shall for that vast of night, that they may worke
All exercise on thee": folio 1623.

Mr. Thomas White BA. of Pembroke College, Cambridge, in 1793 pointed out that there was a dislocation of two letters; the th belonged to the r and not to the a: so that the sentence should run,

„Urchins
Shall forth at vast of night, that they make worke
All exercise on thee".

The word exercise is used in the very ordinary sense of chastisement (as in Othello III. 4); and it is governed by the verb worke: „shall forth“ is a usual expression in Shakespeare, for shall issue forth (as in Julius Caesar II. 2 and III. 1). The whole text of Shakespeare does not present so certain a restoration of a deranged sentence, purchased at the cost of so slight a change. Yet Mr. White wrote and talked in vain. To this day every editor prints the nonsense, aggravated by a change of punctuation; and it stands a fair chance of being made immortal, through the power of immortal dulness.

The writer was, not long since, sorely puzzled by the words, occurring in a proof, — „a few pokerfolk and tinners at St. Ives“ etc. He had read of pokership, and of „pokers and stokers“; but thence no light was thrown on the misprint. At last he did derive a gleam from a Cornish dictionary, which gave pokka, as a mining term; and pokkafolk seemed to impart some sense to the passage. In the event, the recovery of a piece of the manuscript proved that pokerfolk was a misprint for poorer folk!

Displacements of entire lines are of not of unfrequent occurrence; and their effect is to reduce long sentences to the most hopeless chaos. In a paragraph of The Athenæum. Jan. 2. 1864, occurs the following sentence: „a member proposed that yet previous invitation, rose to inquire whether the [another special invitation should be sent. A gentlemen who had taken an active part in voting the] reply to it had been received;“ can anything exceed that medley? yet the cure is simple. Insert the portion enclosed in brackets between the words „yet“, and „previous“; and the whole is reduced to sense. The fact is simply this, that two lines of the column had fallen out, and were restored in the wrong place. This example is of use in attempting the restoration of several corrupt places in Shakespeare.

III.

But the critic is in danger of assuming, on insufficient evidence, that, not a word only, but an entire sentence owes its obscurity to the corruption of words by copyists and printers. It is convenient to consider phrases under three heads: idioms: idiotisms: and idiasms: which may be briefly explained as follows. —

All living languages are in a state of continuous change. Not only words fall into disuse, and other words accrue to the general stock, not only do the orthographical forms in which they are presented to the eye undergo change, but each several word is ever more or less changing its meaning, in scope and in force. Some words (like shy, secure) obtain a signification directly contrary to their former meaning; or (like let, prevent) retain two contrary meanings at once. Others (like piece, lewd) pass from a respectable to a disreputable sense; while others (like liberty, occupy) more rarely lose their ill association, and become decent symbols of speech. The literal sense of some wholly gives way to the figurative, and more rarely the reverse; and a word which is one part of speech becomes another. But not only do words thus change; but all kinds of expression written and spoken, change also. The normal affinities of parts of speech constitute the idiom. The singular phrase, which affords no analogy of construction is the idiotism. There remain phrases and words peculiar to some creative writer; these we call idiasms (*ἰδιασμοι*). At present we shall confine our remarks to complete sentences, and the changes and corruptions of sentences. Thus it appears that the idiom is a grammatical, the idiotism a proverbial, and the idiasm a private and peculiar mode of phraseology.

The idioms of a language change slowly: but the idiotisms are constantly slipping out as pedantries, and creeping in as slang. Shakespeare's works, like all the literature of his day, as might well be expected, contain many idioms which at this day are obsolete or dead. The worst of it is, that we read him so much, and with so little appropriate knowledge and steady reflection, that we get habituated to the sound of his phraseology, and come at last to think we understand it, mistaking the familiar for the intelligible. The same has come to pass of the Authorized Version of the Holy Scriptures. Such an idiom as is involved in the sentence, „We do you to wit of the grace of God," is as dead as a door-nail: yet we read that sentence over and over again, and get so used to it, that it seems as the voice of an old familiar friend, while it is as unintelligible as an unknown tongue. How often, too, have we read that line in Hamlet V. 2.

„Does it not, think thee, stand me now upon?"

But to how many readers is this idiotism intelligible? The same is found in Romeo and Juliet II. 3, and Rich. III. IV. 2. Again,

how often have we read that inimitable scene in 2. Henry IV. I. 2, where Falstaff says of his mercer,

„A whoreson Achitophel! a rascally yea-forsooth knave!
to bear a gentlemen in hand, and then stand upon security."

The idiotism occurs also in The Taming of the Shrew IV. 2; Much ado about nothing IV. 1; Cymbeline V. 5; Hamlet II. 2, and Macbeth III. 1.

Both phrases are of the commonest in Elizabethan Literature. — To stand a person upon is to be incumbent upon a person: to bear in hand is to inspire confidence or belief. They are too familiar to students of early English to need exemplifying here, but it were easy to adduce many instances of both. Others, such as to die and live by a thing, to remember one's courtesy, to cry on a thing, to cry game, etc. have been mercilessly cut up by the editors. In those cases in which a few examples of the phrase have been discovered in contemporary literature, the love of emendation has yielded to the force of evidence. Where that evidence cannot be adduced, the phrase in Shakespeare falls an easy prey to conjectural „felicity".

The slow and comparatively slight changes which the true idioms of the language have undergone, do, in fact, occasion the critic no difficulty.

The expression No is? (for is not?), No did? No have? is a totally obsolete idiom; at least one instance of it occurs in Shakespeare. The variations which are found in the conjugations of verbs have at most led ignorant and pedantic commentators to sneer at Shakespeare for his „bad grammar" and „false concords". On both points the Great Ancient has been modernized, and dwarfed in the process. It has been pretended that he did not write „No had?" or „the voice of all the Gods make heaven drowsy with the harmony", or „renown and grace is dead"; or else the irregularities are explained, by the supposition that „the thought blew the language to shivers"! Accordingly it has been deemed an act of kindness to cure him of those defects. The editors have corrected his grammar, as well as modernized his spelling; but in doing this they have betrayed an amount of ignorance for which they would not otherwise have had the discredit. The Lion has been amply avenged on his foes.

After all that a sound knowledge of early English literature, and conjectural skill can effect in restoring the genuine text of Sha-

kespeare, there still remain a number of corruptions which, like the Ullorxals, are mere printer's Sphinx-riddles. These however, unlike the Ullorxals, consist of entire words, and are cases not so much of corrupt words, as of corrupt idiotisms. Among this family, the following will serve as samples.

1. „I see that men make ropes in such a scarre
That we'll forsake ourselves."
All's well that ends well IV. 2.

2. „For we would count give much to as violent thefts
And rob in the behalf of charity."
Troilus and Cressida V. 3.

3. „That I had no angry wit to be a lord."
Timon of Athens I. 1.

4. „The dram of eale
Doth all the noble substance of a doubt
To his own scandal." Hamlet I. 4.

From the first of these examples, I call the family rope-scarres. In dealing with these the success of the critic has been infinitesimally small. Turning to the collations in the Cambridge Shakespeare, we find that these passages have provoked the following number of conjectures for each. These numbers will testify to the enormous difficulty of the corruptions, and the ill-success that has rewarded criticism. 1—19. 2—15. 3—15. 4—40! At the same time it ought to be added that the relative numbers of conjectures is no infallible test of the inherent obscurity of the passages under criticism. To the obscurity of the passage must always be added the dulness of the critic. The difficulty may lie, as it often does in fact, as much in the perceptions of the recipient, as in the obscurity of the phraseology to be received.

It would be a thankless task to specify the actual number of rope-scarres in the entire text of Shakespeare. The list is considerable: but to our mind, the wonder is that the text is, on the whole, so free from misprisions and dislocations. When we consider the misprints which disfigure so many modern books, that have received the most vigilant supervision, both of editor and „reader", it is to be expected that, at a time when compositors and „readers" were less expert than at present, and when important works were generally issued without any regular editorial su-

pervision, the first folio edition of Shakespeare's plays should exhibit abundant evidence of blunders and oversights. On the whole we are disposed to regard that edition as being quite as free from typographical errors as the majority of dramatic works of that time. Moreover, we are convinced that much of the obstinate difficulty of these rope-scarres is due to the admixture of obsolete idiotisms, Shakespearian idiasms, or forgotten allusions, with certain typographical errors, so that it is not surprising that the mere conjectural critic should find himself unable to successfully amend them, by the mere exercise of his ingenuity and taste.

IV.

The three foregoing sections are intended rather for warning than for instruction or criticism. Let us now apply ourselves to a selection of passages which have received the doubtful benefit of (so-called) emendation. Our warning has been somewhat prolix; but our best excuse will be found in the treatment to which portions of the text of Shakespeare have been subjected at the hands of his censors and critics. So capricious are the objections preferred against particular words and phrases, that it is a sheer impossibility to anticipate them. Accordingly the antiquarian of the English Language, who essays the vindication of the old text in the main, labours under an incalculable disadvantage. To learn the acknowledged peculiarities and difficulties of that text is a labour of love; and to store up those peculiarities and difficulties and in fact all the salient points of Shakespeare's phraseology in an ever ready and lively memory, is but a light prelude to the business that is to follow. With the matters ever consciously before him — „full of eyes before and behind“ — the critic wades through a huge store of the literature of the 16th and 17th centuries, noting down every word, phrase and allusion which can by any possibility throw light on the text of his venerated author. This is the toil which has been achieved by all the leading editors from Steevens to Staunton, with a few exceptions which it is as well to forget. Fit „propædeutic“ is such a course of study and discipline to the more genial and graceful duties of verbal criticism! The labour achieved, the preliminary requrement complied with at the cost of much time and effort, some vain reader of blissful ignorance, but of lively fancy, conceives a liking for what he regards the „game“ of criticism, and rushes into the columns of

some periodical such as the Athenæum or Notes and Queries, to proclaim with flourish of trumpets a new reading. His conjecture is dubbed „an undoubted restoration of a passage which has for 250 years defied exposition or correction!“ Then follows the discovery of a mare's-nest. The criticaster has mistaken the sense of a passage both well known and perfectly understood; whereupon he proposes what he takes for a new conjecture, but which in many cases is an old acquaintance, and may be seen hoarded up in the hortus siccus of the Cambridge Edition, under the sanction of some venerable name. In a few of such cases it is no great tax on the antiquarian to produce his authority for adhering to the old text: but where there are so many Richmonds in the field, one naturally and reasonably grudges the superfluous labour of vindicating what has never been successfully assailed. He rightly feels that faith in the prodigious learning of a Walker or a Dyce is a duty with learners; and that for them to put a word or phrase on its trial merely because they „don't seem to see it“, is an impertinence which every really learned and competent editor would severely reprove, instead of converting his colums into an arena for the display of asinine gymnastics.

As the inquiry we are about to make is „of the dust dusty“ in its extreme dryness and in the antiquity of the literature which will illustrate it, we will introduce it with two or three anecdotes. As both are derived from the store of our forgetive friend Mr. Perkins-Ireland of Knowe-Ware, we will not vouch for their literal truth. Mr. Perkins-Ireland tells us that a literary bore of his acquaintance came to him one day with a pocket-edition of Shakespeare, in which a well known line in King John thus stood:

„Bell, Booke, and Candle shall not course me back.“

The bore was swelled with the importance of a critical discovery: his business „look'd out of him“. „A restoration!“ he triumphantly exclaimed, pointing to the line. „Course is a misprint for curse!“ — Mr. Perkins-Ireland was taken aback by the apparent felicity of the conjecture; but promptly asked his friend for his proofs. Thereupon he produced Lupton's „Too good to be true“, — at page 17 of which he read,

„The best thing the Pope can do is to curse him out again, with Bel, Booke, and Candle.“ This he followed up with a 4to

called „Ariosto's Seven Planets Governing Italie," at p. 23 of which he read,

„Then roares the bulles worse than the Basan host,
Whilst Belles and bookes and candles curses boast."

This he was following up with others: when Mr. Perkins-Ireland cried out „hold! enough! I want no more proofs of the close association of cursing with the bell, book and candle. I knew that well enough before; but I want proof that curse was ever spelt course". The bore thought him too exacting, holding that course was merely an error of the press. But ultimately Mr. Perkins-Ireland himself found course spelt curse, in Leland, and scourge spelt scurge in Richard Hyrde, so he gave up the point, and allowed that, his friend had really hit upon a very extraordinary emendation. Fortunately, however, before breaking up the conference, he had the prudence (we all know our friend's extreme caution) to turn to his Variorum. There to his astonishment he found the line in King John printed thus,

„Bell, Book and Candle shall not drive me back;"

and so it was given in half a dozen other editions at hand. How course came into the text of the pocket edition was a mystery; but it was obviously an error. The bore was, naturally, chapfallen at the discovery that he had been correcting a word which was not in Shakespeare's text.

That's not a bad anecdote: but here's a better. The moral of both is, „you had better look before you leap". It is as dangerous to criticise a passage without verifying it, as it is to do so without consulting the context. Mr. Perkins-Ireland himself was the critic in this case. He was reading Much ado about nothing II. 1, and came upon the passage,

„and then comes repentance, and, with his bad legs, falls into the cinque-pace faster and faster, till he sink [apace] into his grave". The addition of apace was made by his cousin, Mr. Thomas Perkins of Folio 1632 celebrity; and Mr. Perkins-Ireland thought it eminently ingenious. But said he to himself, „what's the meaning of cinque-pace?" Surely it must be some sort of disease: in fact the whole passage reminds one of Falstaff's degrees of sickness and wickedness. So he pulled down his copy of Andrew Boord's „Breviarie of Health", and to his delight found a disease called the Sinkopis, the description of which shewed it to be an

admirable substitute for cinque-pace. But the fates had otherwise willed it; for on his telling us of the emendation, we reminded him of what Beatrice had just said: „Wooing, wedding, and repenting, is as a scotch jig, a measure, and a cinque-pace. Mr. Perkins-Ireland departed „a sadder and a wiser man". The fact is, that emendation is always a ticklish business. The critic can never tell whether the Lion is dead, asleep, or only shamming sleep. He takes a deal of walking round, and tickling with a long straw, and poking with a stick, before one can be reasonably sure that it is safe to come to close quarters with him.

1. It is remarkable that it is not the most difficult passages in Shakespeare that have occasioned the greatest dispute: on the contrary, the most hotly contested questions relate to passages of which the only fault in the eyes of a critic is, that the sense is too obvious. Here is an example in point. Juliet impatiently awaiting the advent of Romeo to her nuptial couch, thus invokes Night,

> „Spread thy close curtain, love-performing Night,
> That runaways' eyes may wink, and Romeo
> Leap to these arms untalked of and unseen."

that is as we understand the passage, untalked of, because unseen: for if there were none to spy out the love-performance, or spy out the approach of the lover, there would be no fear of the affair being talked of. We find that for this word runaways, which appears to us the very word for the place, no less than twenty-six substitutes have been proposed, whereof seven have been inserted in the text. As we do not intend in the case of any other example to furnish a list of the conjectural readings, we will do so in this case, merely to shew with what fatuous imbecility the conjectural critics would fain override the just and appropriate diction of Shakespeare. First, however, we must premise that a runaway, in the language of the time, is the same as a runagate, and means a vagabond or a spy. In Goldyng's Cæsar (fo. 119) we have the very word used as Shakespeare here uses it. He tells us of Cæsar obtaining information of the enemy's movements „from his prisoners and his runaways"; i. e. from his prisoners of war and his spies — vagabonds who prowl about the enemy's camp, and make off with whatever scraps of news they may chance to pick up. Hence it is plain that the runaways whom Juliet wished to blind-fold were those prowling

fellows who used to infest the streets at night, spy out the doings and whereabouts of honest folk, do whatsoever mischief they can, and then runaway, sculk, and hide, to escape recognition and detection. Why, the very sense in question survives to this day in the expression „a runaway knock"! Does it not make one blush for mortal dulness that such a passage should have been singled out for almost exhaustive emendation. Perhaps the best way of presenting these conjectures is to classify them under the leading conceptions which gave them birth.

1. It is conceived that runaways is a misprint for the proper name of the source or sources of daylight, moonlight, or starlight. Hence we are favoured with 4 conjectures: Luna's Mitford: Cynthia's: Walker: Uranus' Anon: Titan's Bullock!

2. It is conceived that runaways is a misprint for something of which the last syllable is day's. This gives us 4 more: rude day's and soon day's Dyce: sunny day's Clarke: noonday's Anon:

3. It is conceived that runaways is a misprint for the name of a mythical person. This gives us 4 more: Runaway's (i. e. Cupid's) Halpin: (this does not vary from the text, save in the capital initial); th' Runaway's (i. e. the Sun's) Warburton: Rumour's Heath; Renomy's (i. e. Rénommée) Mason.

4. It is conceived that the first syllable of runaways is a a misprint for sun: hence we get, sun away Taylor: sun-awake's Brady:

5. It is conceived that the misprint is in the last syllable only of runaways: hence we get, runagates' Muirson: run-astray Taylor: run-abouts Keightley!

6. It is conceived that ware or wary formed part of the word for which runaways stands. Hence we get, unawares Jackson: (the best, by far, of all the proposed substitutes): unwary Taylor: wary one's Anon:

Besides these, there are rumourous and rumourers' Singer: enemies Collier: roavinge Dyce: yonder Leo: ribalds' and roaming Anon: on which miscellaneous repast, both of the wholesome and the baneful, we may well ask a blessing! A safe and speedy deliverance from one and all!

2. We sometimes meet with a conventional phrase, or idiotism, employed by Shakespeare in a sense peculiar to himself, i. e. as an idiasm. The following example is most instructive. We quote from As you like it III. 5.

„The common executioner,
Whose heart the accustom'd sight of death makes hard,
Falls not his axe upon the humbled neck,
But first begs pardon; will you sterner be
Than he that dies and lives by bloody drops?“

The Cambridge Edition records nine monstrous substitutes for the phrase dies and lives. The simple fact is, that this phrase was a recognized hysteron proton; and we are indebted to Mr. R. W. Arrowsmith (Notes and Queries 1. S. VII. 542) for a collection of early examples illustrating its use, which seem to have been entirely overlooked by all the previous editors and commentators. Mr. Halliwell, in his Folio Edition supplements Mr. Arrowsmith's labours, but fails to recognize the fact that none of the examples adduced is precisely in point. That the phrase to die and live, was not uncommonly used by Elizabethan writers for, to live and die is fairly established: but of the phrase to die and live by a thing not a single example has been adduced. Mr. Arrowsmith tells us that to die and live means „to subsist from the cradle to the grave“. Shakespeare's executioner, then, must have been initiated into his „mystery“ pretty early. But one of Mr. Arrowsmith's examples is from a work now before us, „The Pilgrimage of Kings and Princes“: at page 29 of which, we read, „Behold how ready we are, how willingly the women of Sparta will die and live with their husbands“. So that we are gravely asked to believe that, according to this old writer, women of Sparta were so precocious that they „subsisted“ with their husbands „from the cradle to the grave“!

But even if the phrase to die and live by a thing be a Shakespearian idiasm, its signification is as plain as the nose on one's face. It means, of course, to make it a matter of life and death. The profession or calling of a man is that by which he dies and lives, i. e. by which he lives, and failing which he dies. In the face of this simple exposition emendation is a sheer impertinence.

3. Not unfrequently we meet, in the pages of Shakespeare with a word or phrase which, though sounding strange to us, was familiar enough in his day, and still retains a technical use. Here are two examples in point. In 2. Henry IV. IV, 1, we find Westmoreland thus sharply interrogating Archbishop Scroop,

„Wherefore do you so ill translate yourself,
Out of the speech of peace, that bears such grace,
Into the harsh and boisterous tongue of war —
Turning your books to graves, your ink to blood,
Your pens to lances; and your tongue divine
To a loud trumpet, and a point of war?“

For graves Warburton conjectured glaives, which we regard as a most certain restoration: but what can justify any tampering with the concluding expression a point of war. Supposing a critic to have been ignorant of its meaning, we can make every allowance for such a conjecture as Mr. Collier's report of war. But such ignorance is hardly credible; for not only was the term, point of war as common as blackberries in Shakespeare's day, but is still in technical use. It now means a drum-call: such as the ruffle-beat on parade, when the colours are unfurled. Steele in the Tatler used it in the same sense. Scott employs it frequently in Waverley, Woodstock, and The Bride of Lammermoor, in the more ancient sense viz. a call to arms performed on the trumpet. It is of very common occurrence in the old dramatic writers. (See Staunton's Shakespeare. Vol. I. p. 603.)

My second example is from Coriolanus V. 5. where Aufidius says of Coriolanus —

„I — — — holp to reap the fame
Which he did end all his.“

There is not the faintest obscurity about this image; and nothing in it but the inflection „holp“ is entirely obsolete, and that, of course, has never troubled any one. The whole force of suspicion has fallen on the unoffending verb, end! Why in the name of common sense? Aufidius says that he helped Coriolanus to reap the crop; but that Coriolanus ended it, and made it his own. Here no difficulty would be presented to the mind of the rudest midland farmer. Where the farmer sells his crop (be it of hay, corn or pulse) in ricks or stacks, he calls it well-ended: if, however, he thrashes out the whole corn-crop he calls that the ending — and naturally so. Even Milton was up to this:

„When in one night, ere glimpse of morn,
His shadowy flail hath threshed the corn,
That ten days labourers could not end;“
L'Allegro.

This point is very justly taken by Mr. Arrowsmith, in a sensible but exceedingly scurrilous and ill-written pamphlet, entitled „The Editor of Notes and Queries and his friend Mrs. Singer". (The title makes us wonder why the shortest publications have the longest names. One of the Rev. Jos. Hunter's, consisting of barely 23 pages has a title comprizing 68 words and 12 ciphers!) At p. 9. Mr. Arrowsmith gives two newspaper-advertisements in which occurs the phrase „a rick of well-ended hay". We are almost ashamed of insisting on anything so obvious: but where the offending phrase „walks with his head in a crowd of poisonous flies", it is the duty of the critic at once to come to his aid; and the more innocent the phrase, the greater is that duty. In this case no less than five substitutes have been proposed for end, or did end, and three of these have been admitted into the text!

Of these, the one which has found greatest favour is ear for end; which was proposed by Mr. Collier; and, with transposition of reap and ear, was adopted by Mr. Singer. To ear is to plough or till: so that, Mr. Collier's reading makes Aufidius say that he had his share of the harvest which Coriolanus had tilled for himself; (and even this sense is defective, since „did ear" belongs to a later time than „holp"); but this is just the reversal of what Aufidius meant: for the gist of his complaint was that he had shared the toil with Coriolanus, and not the harvest. So Mr. W. N. Lettsom came to the rescue, and proposed (Notes and Queries 1. S. VII. 378) the transposition of ear and reap. But matters were made no better by this: for Fame, as Mr. Arrowsmith promptly pointed out, is the crop; and though we reap the crop, we ear not the crop, but the land. It is noticeable that the clever and shrewd, but waspish critic of Blackwood's Magazine (Augt., Sept. and Oct. 1853), the merciless castigator of *Gnats* and Queries (as he designated Mr. W. J. Thoms' periodical) proposed the same transposition: so wonderfully do wits jump! What a satire on conjectural criticism is this little farce!

4. But what shall we say, when a passage is entirely altered on the supposition that a word meant something which it never did mean, and does not mean at present? yet this has happened to a passage in Troilus and Cressida V. 2. When Troilus finds that Cressid has forsaken him for Diomed, he bursts into a passion of love and indignation, which is in Shakespeare's finest manner. He cries,

„Within my soul there doth commence a fight
Of this strange nature, that a thing inseparate
Divides more wider than the sky and earth;
And yet the spacious breadth of this division
Admits no orifex for a point as subtle
As Ariachne's broken woof to enter."

Shakespeare elsewhere employs very similar imagery: „but I am not to say, it is the sea, for it is now the sky; betwixt the firmament and it you cannot thrust a bodkin's point". A Winter's Tale III. 3:

that is, though the sky and the sea are so widely divided or separated, yet the sea mounts so high that at times a point cannot be inserted between them. To this kind of equivocal division Troilus compares his heart's separation from that of Cressida. In reality the only question that can be rationally raised about the speech in Troilus and Cressida, is, as to the name Ariachne. That is the word of the folio; the 4to of 1609 has Ariachna, and the undated 4to has Ariathna. This variation is thought to favour the supposition that the poet confounded together the two names, Arachne and Ariadne, and possibly, also, the web of the former with the clew of the latter. Arachne was the spinner and weaver, and so subtle, i. e. fine-spun, (subtilis) was her woof, that when it was woven into the web Minerva could not see how the web was made, and, in a fit of jealousy and revenge, tore it to pieces. If Shakespeare did confound together the two fables it was no more than his contemporaries did. Steevens quotes an example from Day's Comedy of Humour out of Breath 1608 (Steevens says 1607)

„in robes
Richer than that which Ariadne wrought," —

Accordingly we may see, if we like, Ariadne in both Ariathne and Ariachne: but after all, it may have been a custom of the time to write Arachne, Ariachne; or more probably, poets and dramatists had a very wide license in spelling proper names.

The point is of no moment. What it is of moment for us to see is that by Ariachne Shakespeare meant the spider into which Arachne was transformed, and which in Greek bears the same name: that the woof he meant is finer than ever was produced by human hand, the woof of the spider's web: those delicate transverse filaments which cross the main radial threads or warps, and which

are perhaps the nearest material approach to mathematical lines! Thus has Shakespeare in one beautiful allusion wrapt up in two or three little words the whole story of Arachne's metamorphosis; the physical fact of the fineness of the woof-filaments of a spider's web; and an antithesis effective in the highest degree to the vastness of the yawning space between earth and heaven! For what orifice could be imagined more exquisitely minute than the needle's eye which would not admit the spider's woof to thread it? And all this argosy has been wrecked by two transpositions.

Mr. Thomas Keightley, a gentlemen held in honour more for his School Histories than for his criticisms on Shakespeare, proposed in Notes and Queries (2. S. IX. 358) what he considered an emendation of the passage we are considering; and he has since incorporated this change with the text of a complete edition of Shakespeare's works. He proposed, in effect, to transpose „as subtle“ and „to enter“; and then to transpose the second and third lines. By this compound transposition, and cutting down Arachne to her proper proportions, (putting out her i) the passage is fitted up thus:

„And yet the spacious breadth of this division,
As subtle as Arachne's broken woof,
Admits no orifex for a point to enter.“

But this is rank nonsense. How can a „spacious breadth“ be as subtle, or fine-spun, as a thread? It is easy to see that the whole farrago sprung from one sad mistake, which would hardly have been excusible had it been made by one of the small boys for whom Mr. Keightley wrote his histories. He must have taken woof to mean a web, instead of, as it ever did and still does mean, the cross thread used in weaving.

Again we feel almost ashamed to have to resort to minute explanation of what every educated Englishman ought to know. In the operation of weaving, the threads which are stretched on the frame are called the warp, or warps, and the single thread which is woven into it by means of the shuttle is called the woof; and the two combined in a texture is called the web. This three-fold distinction has been scrupulously observed by all accurate writers from very early times. One or two examples, from the literature of Shakespeare's day, of the use of woof, may be acceptable, though supererogatory. „S. Hierome would have Paula to handle woll, — — — and to learne to dresse it, and to holde and occupie a rocke, [i. e. distaff] with a wooll basket in her lap, and

turne the spindle, and drawe forth the thread with her own fingers. And Demetrias — — — he bad have wooll in her hands, and her selfe either to spinne, to warpe, or else winde spindles in a case for [i. e. in order] to throw woofe off, and to winde on clews the spinning of others, and to order such as should be woven." — „For should I call him a weaver that never learned to weave, nor to draw the woffe, nor to cast the shuttle, nor strike the web with the slaye?" R. Hyrde's Translation of L. Vives' „Instruction of a Christian Woman". Book I. chap. 3, and Book II. chap. 4.

5. Sometimes the word or idiotism presents no kind of difficulty, yet the passage is meaningless to modern ears, owing to the loss of some allusion of the time, which everyone then understood in a moment. For example, in Love's Labour's Lost V. 1. Armado says to Holofernes, „I do beseech thee, remember thy courtesy; — I beseech thee, apparel thy head". Neither Capell nor Malone understood it, and therefore proposed emendations. The latter wished to insert not: „remember not thy courtesy", i. e. pay no more regard to courtesy, but put on thy hat: as we should say, do not stand on ceremony with me. This was an absurd proposition, seeing that the phrase is so common with the early dramatists; and, in a curtailed form, occurs in Hamlet. Yet Mr. Dyce (Few Notes p. 56) adopted Malone's conjecture. But he returned to the old text at the instance of the writer, who gave, in The Illustrated London News a MS. note of Mr. Staunton's, which will now be found in Mr. Staunton's Editions of Shakespeare Vol. I. p. 83. Not only did Mr. Dyce fail to acknowledge this service, but spoke contemptuously of the notes, of which this was one, not perceiving that one and all were Mr. Staunton's[1]). But the origin of the expression, remember thy courtesy, has never been given. This is as follows: the courtesy was the removal of the hat from the head, and that was finished as soon as it was replaced. If any one from ill-breeding or over-politeness, stood uncovered for a longer time than was necessary to perform the simple act of courtesy, the person so saluted reminded him of the fact that the removal of the hat was a courtesy: and this was expressed by the euphuism, Remember thy courtesy, which thus implied, „complete your courtesy, and replace your hat".

Here is another instance in point. In The Merry wives of

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[1]) See Dyce's Shakespeare. 1853. Vol. I.: CCXVI., and p. 581 Note (13).

Windsor II. 3, the host says to Dr. Caius, „I will bring thee where Mistress Anne is, at a farm-house a-feasting, and thou shalt woo her. Cried game? said I well?“ Cried game? has been superseded, in several modern editions by cried I aim? a conjecture of Douce. Various other substitutes have been proposed. But why supersede the old text?

There cannot be a doubt that under the words cried game lurks an allusion of the time which has now to be hunted out. If cried game be cried I game, we apprehend the allusion is not far to seek. In hare-hunting, a person was employed and paid to find the hare in her form. He was called the hare-finder. When he had found „her“, he cried out Soho! to betray the fact to the pursuers; he then proceeded to put her up, and „give her courser's law“. What, then, can cried I game? mean but have I cried Soho? have I descried the game. Descried, too, was written cried: so that cried game, in the language of the day would mean descried game. Now, in the play before us, there was a chase after Mistress Anne Page. She was the hare, and in default of Cupid (who was notoriously a bad hare-finder — as in Much Ado About Nothing I. 1) — the host undertook the office, and having given Dr. Caius the cry, forthwith proceeded to put up the quarry.

6. Some expressions in the text, which were then, and still are, grammatical and significant, have been altered, because their force is spent. They once had a sort of proverbial point, which is now wholly gone from them; hence they readily become the prey of ingenious guessers. One instance will be sufficient to exemplify the class. In As you like it III. 5 we read.

„Who might be your mother,
That you insult, exult, and all at once,
Over the wretched.“

If emendation were wanted here, surely a happier suggestion was never made than that of Warburton, who proposes to read, rail for all. Earlier in the same play (I. 1) we have, „Thou hast rail'd on thyself“. Compare also Lear II. 3.

„being down, insulted, rail'd
And put upon“ etc.

Yet the text is most certainly right. There is hardly a commoner phrase, more especially at the end of a verse, than all at once i. e. tout-à-coup. Compare Henry V. I. 1.

„Nor never Hydra-headed wilfulness
So soon did lose his seat, and all at once,
As in this king."

The reader who desires to see corroborative examples from the writers of the time, may consult Mr. Staunton's edition of Shakespeare, Vol. II. p. 65. In this case the Cambridge editors give us a truly wonderful collection of conjectures, one of which is domineer, which Warburton thought a likely word to get misprinted all at once! and this feat of dulness is capped by another, which consists of three French words!

7. A strict methodical discussion of classes of readings, even if it were practicable, would not be of any very great advantage: so we have not attempted it. We will now proceed to two of the cases in which Shakespeare has metaphorically employed the image — a sea: viz. a sea of wax, and a sea of troubles. The pedantic poet in Timon of Athens I. 1, addresses the painter in the following tumid and bombastic terms:

„You see this confluence, this great flood of visitors.
I have in this rough work [shewing his Ms.] shaped out a man
Whom this beneath world doth embrace and hug
With amplest entertainment: my free drift
Halts not particularly, but moves itself
In a wide sea of waxe: no levell'd malice
Infects one comma of the course I hold;
But flies an eagle's flight, bold and forth on,
Leaving no track behind."

In this passage, my free drift, and a wide sea of wax are contrasted with the notion of halting particularly, and levell'd malice. In other words, the poet is contrasting generality with particularity. The visitors who throng the ante-room and presence-chamber of Lord Timon, are compared by the poet to a sea at flood-time, and are therefore designated a confluence and a great flood. Timon is said to be embraced with amplest entertainment by this flood; and the poet disclaiming personal censure, declares that his „free drift moves itself in a wide sea of waxe". What is the meaning of waxe? Every one knows that the verb to wax means to grow; and the old English writers employ it indifferently of increase and decrease; a thing, with them, may wax smaller or greater, weaker or stronger. To wax

was to change condition simply. But more strictly it was and is used in opposition to wane. If anything changes its condition it either waxes or wanes. In this restricted sense, Shakespeare in several places uses the verb to wax, of the sea.

„Who marks the waxing sea grow wave by wave."
Titus Andronicus III. 1.

His pupil age
Man-enter'd thus, he waxed like a sea."
Coriolanus II. 1.

The old editors and commentators seem not to have had the faintest suspicion of the meaning of the expression, „a wide sea of wax". Hanmer and Steevens explain it as an allusion to the Roman and early English practice of writing with a style on tablets coated with wax, so that the poet in Timon must be supposed to have literally „shaped out" his man in wax, as much so as if he had modelled him. All the editors have followed in this rut; even Messrs. Dyce and Staunton, of whom better things might have been expected. The only emendation that has been made on waxe is Mr. Collier's verse, which Mr. Staunton rejects, though he still thinks waxe a misprint for something. Very strange indeed is all this speculation, in the face of the certain fact that waxe or wax, occurs as a substantive, in the very sense of expandedness, (or growth) in two other places in Shakespeare, and once in Ben Jonson. Here are the passages.

„Chief Justice. What! you are as a candle, the better part burnt out.

Falstaff. A wassail candle my lord; all tallow: if I did say of wax, my growth would approve the truth."
2. Henry IV. I. 2.

„Why he's a man of wax."
Romeo and Juliet I. 3.

„A man of wax" is a man of full growth. Of Falstaff it would mean a man of ample dimensions; of Romeo it means, a man of puberty, „a proper man". Again in The Fall of Mortimer, a fragmentary drama by Ben Jonson, we read,

„At what a divers price do divers men
Act the same thing! another might have had,

Perhaps the hurdle, or at least the axe,
For what I have, this crownet, robes, and waxe."

Here waxe is „personal aggrandisement — the substantive accomplishment of the verb to wax great". (Collier, Coleridge and Shakespeare p. 129.) Let us hope that we have heard the last of „the waxen tables of the ancients"!

In Hamlet III. 1 we read.

„Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
And by opposing end them?" —

The question implies an option, either to endure the troubles or to end them „with a bare bodkin" or otherwise: If a sea of troubles be taken to mean a troublous sea (somewhat as in Timon of Athens, a sea of wax means a waxen sea, i. e. a sea at flood time) the phrase „to take arms against a sea of troubles", expresses as futile a feat as to „wound the still-closing waters". Would Shakespeare have put such a catachresis into the mouth of the philosophical Hamlet? The doubt thus engendered has manifested itself, us usual, in a plentiful crop of emendations, which in this case are all ingenious, with one exception. By far the best is Mr. A. E. Brae's conjecture of assay for a sea. In the presence of that we think it impertinent to name its rivals. It is not only singularly clever, and in its ancient orthography easily mistakeable for a sea, but it gives a sense, force, and dignity to the passage which is in Shakespeare's best manner. But this is not enough.

In the first place let us cleary realize the fact that the simile, a sea of troubles, sorrows, griefs, dangers etc. is as old as Adam, and is found in all languages: e. g. it occurs twice in the Prometheus Vinctus; in Italian it is common, as the pelago di travagli of Sansovino quoted by Mr. Staunton ad l; and in French we have the phrase être assiegé par un déluge de maux, a phrase which comprizes Shakespeare's text, and Mr. Brae's charming emendation. It has been contended by Johnson, Malone, Warburton (in his second thoughts), Caldecott, De Quincey, Mr. Staunton, and others, that the want of integrity in the metaphor is no argument against Shakespeare having written the passage as it stands. Caldecott (Specimen of a New Edition of Shakespeare. 1819.

p. 65) says „He [Shakespeare] uses it [the simile] himself everywhere and in every form: and the integrity of his metaphor is that which by him is of all things the least thought of". In support of this assertion he refers to three passages in Shakespeare, not one of which bears it out. The fact is that Shakespeare employs sea of figuratively seven times only: viz. Timon of Athen's I. 1. Sea of wax: — Ibid. IV. 2. Sea of air: Pericles V. 1. Sea of joys: — Henry VIII. III. 2. Sea of glory: — Ibid. II. 4. Sea of conscience: — I. Henry VI. IV. 7. Sea of blood; and the case in question. In each of these cases, except the last, which is on its trial, the integrity of the metaphor is strictly preserved. Shakespeare further employs sea metaphorically in other constructions, but he always respects the integrity of the figure. Spenser too has the metaphor repeatedly (see the Faery Queen: Book I. Cant XII. St. 14. — Book III. Cant IV. St. 8. — Book VI. Cant IX. St. 31 etc. — and at the last reference he has the actual phrase seas of troubles): but not once does he do violence to the metaphor. The simile is also common with prose-writers. In Rd. Morysine's Translation of L. Vives „Introduction to Wisdom" Book IV., we have the metaphor „sea of evils"; and in Kingsmyll's Comforts in Afflictions" (signature B. fol. 6) we have seas of sorrows: and in both cases is the integrity of the metaphor preserved. Are we, then, to believe that Shakespeare departed from this conscientious custom, in one passage where a sea is not an improbable misprint of assae, (or assay)?

We are thus presented with the horns of a dilemma; viz. on the one hand the imputation of a lame metaphor to Shakespeare's most philosophic character, and on the other, a conjectural emendation. Now it seems to us that there is a way out of this dilemma. There is one consideration which has been entirely ignored. When Hamlet talked of ending his sea of troubles, or, as he afterwards describes it, shuffling off his mortal coil, he had a covert consciousness, a conscience in fact, which paralyzed the hand he would have raised against his own life; viz. that this so-called ending and shuffling off, was a mere delusion, just as much so as repelling the advancing waves of the sea with shield and spear. Is not the metaphor, then, sound and whole? Mr. Samuel Bailey in his discussion of the passage in question has the following remark: „The objection is not to the methaphorical designation a sea of troubles, [who ever said it was?] but to the figurative absurdity implied in „taking up arms against a sea of troubles", or indeed

against any other sea, literal or imaginary. I question whether any instance is to be found of such a fight in the whole compass of English Literature". (The Received Text of Shakespeare": p. 39.) Why restrict the compass to English Literature? But the instance is to be found in various literatures. In Ritson's „Memoirs of the Celts" (p. 118) occurs the following passage which is a translation from Ælian: „of all men, I hear that the Celts are the most ready to undergo dangers. — — — So base, indeed, do they consider it to fly, that frequently they will not escape out of houses tumbling down and falling in upon them, nor even out of those burning, though themselves are ready to be caught by the fire. Many, also, oppose the overwhelming sea: there are some, likewise, who taking arms rush upon the waves, and sustain their attack, extending their naked swords and spears, in like manner as if they were able to terrify or wound them." The same tradition is referred to by Aristotle in his Eudem. Eth. III. 1:

οἷον οἱ Κελτοὶ πρὸς τὰ κύματα ὅπλα ἀπαντῶσι λάβοντες.

See also Arist. Nicom. Eth. III. 7.

I think then, Hamlet's soliloquy might be fairly paraphrased thus:

> „To exist: or to cease to exist: that is the question for me to decide. Whether 'tis nobler to screw up one's mind to the point of endurance, and thus to brave the surrounding sea of troubles; or to imitate the fabled feats of the Celts, and taking arms, rush upon the waves with swords and spears, as if able to terrify or wound them. Doubtless it is nobler to endure unshaken; and is it not also more prudent? For, it seems more than probable, that the attempt to end our troubles by self-destruction, would be as futile as that of the Celts to vanquish the ocean; and that after death itself we should find ourselves overwhelmed with evils of which know, nothing, and which therefore, for aught we know, may be greater than those from which we should have escaped. Thus does consciousness make cowards of us all."

All things considered then, in the case before us we elect to adhere to „the received text", and refuse to allow even the most admirable of emendations to allure us from our allegiance to the consistent metaphor of Shakespeare.

8. Some of the obscurities in Shakespeare's text arise from the consilience of two obsolete expressions. Here is one example, in which a word employed in an obsolete sense forms part of a phrase which is itself of obsolete construction. In Hamlet I. 4. Horatio tries to dissuade Hamlet from accompanying the ghost, lest it should

> „assume some other horrible form,
> Which might deprive your sovereignty of reason,
> And draw you into madness."

The verb to deprive is at present used in the sense of bereave or rob; but in Shakespeare's day it meant ablate or dis appropriate. Thus, in Lucrece st. CLXX.:

> „'Tis honour to deprive dishonour'd life."

But the passage from Hamlet contains yet another archaism, viz. to deprive your sovereignty of reason, i. e. the sovereignty of your reason: and this obsolete phraseology was not peculiar to verse. Here is a prose example which occurs in a letter of Sir Thomas Dale 1616 (the year in which Shakespeare died). He calls Virginia „one of the goodliest and richest kingdoms in the world, which being inhabited by the king's subjects, will put such a bit into our ancient enemy's mouth as will curb his hautiness of monarchy," i. e. the haughtiness of his monarchy.

All this was misunderstood by the Rev. Joseph Hunter, who in his Few Words proposes to transpose „your" and „of" in the passage we are considering, so that the line objected to would stand thus

> „Which might deprive of sovereignty your reason,"

a substitution which deprives ~~his~~ Shakespeare's eloquence of language, and draws it into twaddle.

9. Occasionally it is the figurative language of the text which throws the critic off the scent, and thus leads him to infer a corruption which does not exist. The best example of this which we can call to mind is, a passage in Much ado about Nothing: IV. 1. Leonato learning that Hero has fainted under the shock of her disgrace, cries.

> „Do not live, Hero; do not ope thine eyes:
> For, did I think thou wouldst not quickly die,

Thought I thy spirits were stronger than thy shames,
Myself would on the rearward of reproaches
Strike at thy life."

This is the reading of the quarto, which has the spelling rereward. The military metaphor has perplexed the critics. The war is between Hero's spirits and her shames or reproaches. The latter has, in the onset, assailed her, and she lies insensible. Then, says Leonato, if they fail to kill her, owing to the opposing strength of her spirits, I myself will come as a reserve in their rear, and reinforce them; they have conquered her; I will slay her. Not perceiving the integrity of the metaphor, for which rearward (the reverse of voyward, vayward, or vanguard) is absolutely required, they have proposed several substitutes, whereof the most plausible is Mr. Brae's conjecture, reword. Even if the text were faulty, we should object to it, because its adoption would make Leonato's speech inconsistent with itself. He wishes his daugther not to survive the reproaches she has already suffered. But to make him say, „did I think thou wouldst not quickly die," — — upon the repetition of these charges I myself would „strike at thy life", would be to make his design on her life dependent on the renewal of the verbal reproaches against her; which is out of the question. The objection to reward (regard) the reading of the folio 1623, or to reword on the ground of its prosody is absurd. Reward or reword might be either an iambus or a trochee. Reflect (Fletcher) relapse and secure (Shakespeare), regret (Drant) recluse (Donne), are all used occasionally as trochees. The real objection to reward is, that the sense of regard was alrealy obsolete when Shakespeare wrote; that to reword is, that it is inconsistent, with the context, and violates the integrity of the metaphor. Besides, the word rearward is essential to its integrity, as shewing that Leonato intends to come on the heels of the reproaches, to inflict a speedy death on their wounded yet surviving victim. Compare the same metaphor in the 90th Sonnet of Shakespeare:

„Oh! do not, when my heart hath scap'd this sorrow,
Come in the rearward of a conquer'd woe; etc. —
But in the onset come;"

Passages upon passages crowd upon us, clamouring for advocacy and defense, which, as yet are suffering the crying wrongs of emendation, as if the Promethean bard were here chained to the rock of pedantry, and a good-natured vulture were preying on his

vitals. But we trust enough has been done both by way of warning and of criticism, to shew that ignorance of the spelling, language and customs of Shakespeare's day, is an absolute disqualification for the serious work of criticism, even more so than the insensibility of such men as Steevens and Johnson.

The text is beset with difficulties to the ordinary reader, which are occasioned far more from the presence of obsolete phraseology and of allusions to obsolete customs and forgotten events, than from corruption; so that to an ignorant reader who is impatient of obscurity, profuse emendation is a positive necessity. But unhappily ignorance, insensibility, and literary ambition concur to convert a reader into a criticaster of Shakespeare's text. The result, is that passages, eminent for their sense and beauty, for the purity of their construction, the selectness of their words, the dignity or fitness of their thoughts, are defaced by the meddling clumsy boor whose vanity has induced him to play the critic. Such is the fate that has befallen, among many other passages of faultless excellence, that most lovely of all that ever flowed from the great soul of the poet, viz. the speech of Prince Pericles when he calls on Helicanus to wound him, lest he should drown in the sweetness of „the great sea of joys" that rushed upon him: till at length we are glad to find a fitting vent for our grief and indignation in the words of Milton, addressing the shade of Shakespeare thus:

„See with what haste these dogs of Hell advance
To waste and havoc yonder world, which thou
Hast made so fair!"

V.

Happy indeed shall we be if our remarks induce the verbal critic to spare the works of Shakespeare as he loves them. But, at the same time, we concede the fact of corruption in many passages, and the probability of corruption in many others. Conjectural criticism then being thus allowed, it were well if binding canons of emendation could be imposed on all as a common basis of operations. Such a preliminary would obviate a vast and useless expenditure of inventive sagacity, and the antiquarians would be spared a world of superfluous research. There are certain considerations which might assist the critics in the determination of that basis. In the first place, the hopelessness of certain classes of

emendations may well be allowed to put them out of court, however felicitous they may be:

(1.) Where there is no close resemblance between the ductus literarum of the word or words to be supplanted, and that of the word or words to be supplied, regard being had either to their MS. or printed form. E. g. we can not expect that tributary streams will ever be accepted for „wearie very means"; that Her own suit joining with her mother's grace will ever supersede „Her insuite comming with her modern grace", or that prospice funem will ever take the place of „the prophecy".

(2.) Where the substituted word is insolens: e. g. tame chetah for „tame cheater": young chamalls [Angora-goats] for „young scamels": to which may be added several of the proposed emendations of Strachy. At the same time it should be remembered that some words can more readily substantiate their claims than others: e. g. rother for „brother" is a good word enough, and that it was not wholly unknown to Shakespeare is proved by Rother Street in the very town where he was born and died. Yet no example of the use of rother, an ox, has even been discovered in the literature of Elizabeth.

We concede to Thomas De Quincey that it is hard that a man who has to do the work of commenting, should have to undergo the additional task of understanding his author. But at the same time, it is respectfully suggested that it would materially conduce to economy of thought and research if the verbal critic would take the trouble to read the context of the particular word or phrase on which he contemplates an operation, and keep his speculations to himself until he can adduce some evidence in favour of one conjecture over its rivals in each case. Nobody cares to be told that the word in the text is a misprint for this, that, or the other, as is the custom of several critics of this day, to whom the great Becket seems to have allotted the rags which served him for a mantle!

The truth is that emendation is the fruit of enormous study and research on the one hand, and of rare sensibility and sense on the other. The successful conjectures are comparatively few; and few also are those critics who have exhibited any remarkable sagacity in this kind of speculation. As a sample of successful emendation the following may be cited with eminent satisfaction.

Gown which uses.
Gum (Pope) which oozes (Johnson). } Timon of Athens.

It is the pastor lards the brother's sides, The want that makes him leave.
It is the pasture (Rowe) lards the brother's sides, The want that makes him leane (Singer). (Fo. 1632). } Timon of Athens

It will not cool my nature.
It will not curl by (Theobald) nature. } Twelfth Night.

Her insuite comming.
Her infinite cunning (Walker). } Alls well that ends well.

Till that the wearie very means do ebb.
Till that the wearer's (Singer) very means do ebb. } As you like it.

And as a bud I'll take thee.
And as a bride (Staunton) I'll take thee. } Comedy of Errors.

Our arms in strength of malice.
Our arms in strength of amitie (Singer). } Julius Cæsar.

Thy paleness moves me.
Thy plainness (Warburton) moves me. } Merchant of Venice.

A table o' green fields.
'A babled (Theobald) o' green fields. } Henry V.

For I do see the cruel pangs of death Right in thine eye.
For I do see the cruel pangs of death Riot (Brae) in thine eye. } King John.

I have retired me to a wasteful cook.
I have retired me to a wakeful couch (Swynfen Jervis). } Timon of Athens.

Of course, in order to appreciate the actual duty done by each emendation it is necessary to make the passage to which it applies a special study. All that the mere presentation of them to the eye can do, is to shew the reader that the ductus literarum of the conjecture is sufficiently near to that of the text: which is also the case with the majority of unsuccessful attempts.

If much has been achieved, there remains yet much to do. Only look at the word Strachy, and see how little we have advanced towards a solution of the riddle from the time when Hanmer altered it to Stratarch, and Warburton to Trachy. The last suggestion is Mr. Halliwll's, viz. that it does duty for Strapchy,

i. e. Striapchy (Russian: Стряпчій). But it seems eminently unlikely that Shakespeare should have known this word; and, if he did, that he should have used it. The word means both Chief-Cook and advocate, from the verb Striapat to cook; it being supposed that the advocate must cook his case, so as to make it palatable to the judge. The word has no connexion whatever with Satrap, which has also been lately proposed as a substitute for Strachy: to such shifts are we reduced with this seemingly irreducible corruption! In the meanwhile it would he well to remember that Strachey is a proper name in England to this day. What does it mean?

With Scamel we have better success. That too is a family name, peculiar to Wiltshire and Somersetshire: but that is Scamel, A. S., a bench: so that we are no fowarder by that discovery. But it is, by no means an unlikely misprint for Staniel, a species of Hawk which builds in the rocks; and so far, the conjecture of Theobald has a peculiar fitness for the place. The probability of Staniel being the word intended is heightened by the discovery, that in Mr. Thomas Wright's „Volume of Vocabularies", in a Nominale MS. of the 15th century, (p. 252. col. 1), under the head „Nomina avium domesticarum", the word is misprinted Stamel; and in another place the name Stammel (woven stuff) is misprinted Scammel; whence we may infer that it is not easy for a compositor to discriminate between t and c, on the one hand, and m and ni on the other. Allow the concurrence of both misprints, and Staniel becomes Scamel. We may, perhaps, consider this word quite redeemed from the limbo of Ullorxals.

We have reserved for consideration, as a final example of the portentous difficulty of emendation, in a case, too, which imperatively demands it, the celebrated Rope-scarre at the opening of the fifth act of Much ado about nothing. Leonato, refusing the consolations of his brother, says,

„Bring me a father that so loved his child,
Whose joy of her is overwhelned like mine,
And bid him speak [to me] of patience."

„To me" was added by Ritson; and also independently conjectured by Mr. Barron Field. Leonato concludes.

„If such a one will smile, and stroke his beard,
And sorrow wagge, cry hem, when he should groan,

Patch grief with proverbs, make misfortune drunk
With candle-wasters: bring him yet to me,
And I of him will gather patience."

Here are two difficulties. The first has been plausibly bridged over by transposing And and cry; wag, meaning, according to this interpretation, as in it does in so many other places, budge. The objection to this is, that it is inconsistent with the philosophic character of the person whom Leonato invests with his own wrongs and sorrows.

Here, then, is a case which is fit for emendation: but in order to deal with it successfully, we must first cope with the other difficulty. Of all the commentators Jackson alone proposes an emendation for candle-wasters; viz. caudle-waters. What it means it is hard to say; for no such word is known to have ever existed, though caudle, (a sort of posset) is familiar enough. We need not pause to consider the merit or demerit of this singular suggestion; for it is nonsuited on the ground of insolentia. But regarding candle-wasters as a genuine word, what was its meaning? Mr. Staunton says (Ed. vol. I. p. 730) that it means „Bacchanals, revellers". I venture to think that the editor has here gone beyond the voucher of his authorities. I doubt whether a single example can be adduced of candle-waster in that sense.

It is to us passing strange that, the the word drunk in this passage should have been uniformly interpreted in its literal sense, and candle-wasters understood to mean drunkards, who sit up o' nights to booze. Of all absurd things, there is nothing more painfully absurd, than the attempt to literalize a metaphor. Surely Shakespeare never meant Leonato to deny the possibility of his drowning his troubles in drink; for that were the easiest as it is the most vulgar pis-aller. Whatever is meant by making misfortune drunk with candle-wasters, it must have been some achievement which in his circumstances was very difficult of performance; so difficult that he pronounced it impossible. Now Whalley succeded in unearthing two examples of the use of candle-waster and lamp-waster, and one of candle-wasting, which throw considerable light on the passage.

„Heart, was there ever so prosperous an invention thus unluckily prevented and spoiled by a whoreson book-worm or candle-waster?"

Ben Jonson: Cynthia's Revels III. 2.

„He should more catch your delicate court-ear, than all your head-scratchers, thumb-biters, lamp-wasters of them all."

The Antiquary, by Shackerley Marmion. 4to 1641.

„I which have known you better and more inwardly than a thousand of these candle-wasting book-worms."

The Hospitall of Incurable Fooles etc. 4to 160.

From these extracts we gather that a candle-waster is a book-worm; literally a consumer of „the midnight oil", a nocturnal student; and the term, (like Grub-street of a century later) was always applied contemptuously. The conclusion is, that to make misfortune drunk with candle-wasters is to drown one's troubles in study, after the manner of candle-wasters; and what fitter pendant could be found to the preceding phrase to patch grief with proverbs?

So far, then, all is clear and indisputable. We may now recur to the former part of Leonato's speech, in which the real crux lies:

„If such a one will smile and stroke his beard
And sorrow wagge, cry hem! when he should groan," etc.

To stroke the beard and cry hem! (what the French call — faire le sérieux) is the very picture of a sententious pedant who would talk down or scold down the first gush of natural feeling, whether of grief or of rage. Such was Achilles' epitome of Nestor in Troilus and Cressida I. 3., where that chief is described as amusing himself with Patroclus' mimicry of the Trojans:

„Now play me Nestor; hem and stroke thy beard!"

It seems to follow, then, that the words „And sorrow wagge" — must, be an error for some phrase expressive of choking, smothering or suppressing sorrow. Hence I venture to think, that, supposing there has been no dislocation of the text, Tyrwhitt's conjecture of gagge, for wagge, at least preserves the continuity of the thought, and the integrity of the image. To attempt to settle the question definitely in favour of this or that conjecture would at present be mere waste of time. The interpretation we have given of the purport of the passage cannot, we think, be successfully assailed; and that may help the student to a solution of the textual difficulty.

Mr. Staunton, who finds, as we have said, a bacchanalian allusion in the phrase to make misfortune drunk with candle-wasters, persuades himself that the former part of the speech bears out that view. He contends that cry hem, means to sing the burden of a roystering song. To all which we say, that (1) no example of either the one or the other phrase, employed in those senses, has ever been adduced; (2) if a dozen examples in point were found, the case would be in no wise mended; for the interpretation in question is logically inconsistent with the context. Leonato, it must be observed, is giving a reason for rejecting the counsel of his brother. That counsel is that Leonato should not indulge but restrain his grief. To reply, „shew me a man who has my weight of wrongs, and is yet an example of stoical or cheerful endurance, and I will heed you," is logical and ad rem: but to reply: „shew me a man who has my sense of injury and drowns it in roystering songs and drinking bouts", etc. would be wholly irrelevant; such a rejoinder would imply that Antonio had been recommending his brother to plunge in a sea of drunken revelry. But further, Leonato is ~~fabling~~ a man who having as great troubles should exhibit a preternatural fortitude in suppressing them. Now a man who should, with that view, sit up o' nights to drink and sing, would be simply mad, or self-deceived. He would be exhibiting the very reverse of fortitude; and of such an one Leonato could not possibly gather patience. But still further, ~~he~~ we might also employ the argument (already stated), that the very gist of Leonato's rejoinder is, that the prescription of his adviser is impracticable: that the man could not be found who, overwhelmed by his (Leonato's) weight of troubles, would be able to patch his grief with proverbs, or make his misfortune drunk with candle-wasters. If this last phrase is to mean, drown his misfortune in drink, in the company of bacchanals, Leontes is made to say that this — the common resource of ill-starred mortals lacking fortitude — is an impossibility.

The contemplation of this particular passage gives us hope of its ultimate redemption, but at the same time fills us with general despair for the fate of Shakespeare's text. Few, indeed are the difficult passages in Shakespeare in which the drift can be so safely determined as in this. If it is necessary in this instance to drag the skin-deep meaning into strong light, and to expose its every turn to the most searching study, and that too against so learned and intelligent an editor as Mr. Staunton, what chance

is there for the great bulk of difficulties in the text, where the sense is deep-laid and recondite, and demands an exposition which would be a tax on the energies of both the critic and his student.

In this passage, we have an example of an inchoate restoration. Here is one of actual restoration — or what seems to be such: we read Coriolanus II. 1.

„Your prattling nurse
Into a rapture lets her haby cry“ etc.

On this curious phrase, Mr. Justice Blackstone (Shakespeare Society's Papers I. 99) remarks.

„A *Rapture* is an odd effect of crying in Babies. Dr. * * * would read it *Rupture*. Only Qu.: If crying ever produces this effect? I have since enquired, and am told that it is usual.“ Perhaps most fathers and mothers know that such is the fact. But Blackstone might have learned it from a sixteenth century work: „Phiorauante's Secrets“, 1582, p. 5. Where we read.

„To helpe yong Children of the Rupture.
The Rupture is caused two waies, the one through
Weacknesse of the place, and the other through much
Criyng.“

This emendation was independently proposed by two other critics; (See the Cambridge Edition of Shakespeare, Vol. VI. p. 316); and seems as good as an emendation can be: yet it has never been adopted, because it has been thought credible that Shakespeare would have called a baby's fit, a rapture. Credat Judæus Apella.

We conclude this essay with a restoration which is not due to conjectural ingenuity, but to the authority of Ben Jonson. According to him, Shakespeare, in his Julius Cæsar III. 1, wrote as follows.

Cæsar. Thy brother by decree is banished:
If thou dost bend and pray and fawn for him,
I spurn thee like a cur out of my way.
Met. Cæsar, thou dost me wrong.
Cæsar. Cæsar did never wrong but with just cause,
Nor without cause will he be satisfied.
Met. Is there no voice more worthy than my own,“ etc.

and some what later (III. 2), we read.

„Sec. Cit. If thou consider right of the matter,
Cæsar has had great wrong.
Third. Cit. Has he, master?

But the folio (our only authority for Julius Cæsar) does not give Metellius' remark, but continues Cæsar's address thus,

„Know, Cæsar doth not wrong, nor without cause
Will he be satisfied."

Now, this is à propos of nothing. There is nothig in Cæsar's speech preceding these two lines to lead to the denial „Caesar doth not wrong": and the second line is unfinished.

To Ben Jonson's Sylva (one of the most interesting prose-works of that time) we are indebted for the preservation of the text in III. 1, as we have given it. But the editors, with a strange perversity, will not have it; and Pope had the temerity to propose substituting in the reply of the third citizen, in III. 2, the altered line,

„Cæsar had never wrong, but with just cause,"

thus making the plebeian a sympathizer with Brutus. The text in III. 1, as we have given it was charged on Shakespeare as a blunder, and Ben Jonson tells us that Shakespeare changed it in consequence. It is a curious example of dulness, that in the only case in which we have contemporary testimony concerning the structure of a passage in Shakespeare, all the editors reject it, and the Cambridge Editors go so far as to charge Jonson with a lapse of memory; and this, too, in the face of the additional facts that the text of the folio is defective, and that Jonson reverts to the matter of the charge against Shakespeare in his Staple of News.

Where then was the blunder? We say it is Jonson's, and his fellow censors': for surely Cæsar may have done violence to the feelings of Metellius (i. e. wronged him) on account of his brother, and yet have been justified in doing so. The public acts of a public man often entail private wrongs, while they are not only expedients of necessity, but concessions to a supreme duty to the state. Not a criminal is executed but some innocent relative is wronged by his execution. The duty of conditioned yields of course to that of unconditioned moral obligation.

With anything but pleasing auguries we bring this somewhat desultory essay to a close. Though wishing to treat our opponents

with all the courtesy prescribed by the laws of arms, we have not been loth to strike in earnest in support and vindication of a literary heritage which is, in our eyes, far too precious to be made the sport of every ingenious guesser whose vanity impels him to turn editor or critic. There are dramatic works enough for such men to try their „prentice hands“ upon, without intruding into that paradise „where angels fear to tread“. For the fashion of this day in dealing with the text of Shakespeare we have no kind of respect, hardly any tolerance. We have yet to learn what right a combination of dulness, ignorance, arrogance and bad taste has to respectful usage; and of such stuff are the later critics of Shakespeare made, with one or two honorable exceptions.

Of the mass of their rubbish we have taken no kind of note in the preceding remarks. In a few select cases we have endeavoured, with such knowledge and ability as we have, to shew how superior is the received text to the readings by which it has been proposed to supersede it: and where we have failed in the performance of our task we have faith enough in that text to take the whole blame on ourselves.

Yet we concede the fact that there are some hideous corruptions in the editions which have reached us from the 16th and 17th centuries; and we therefore welcome every humble, reverent, learned, and genial attempt to remedy those blemishes by conjectural criticism. Of the attempts which are being made we entertain but little h ope.We look around us, and amid the band of self-constituted medicines, who sedulously offer us their nostrums, we recognize but few who possess the requirements of criticism. To Messrs. Dyce and Staunton we owe much; but there are critics who have not taken any professional stand in connexion with English Literature, to whom we lie under obligations which have been but scantly acknowledged. In the department of dramatic criticism the Rev. J. C. Halpin stands foremost; and in the no less important department of conjectural criticism Mr. A. E. Brae has few rivals. At the same time we are glad to acknowledge some excellent emendations have been made by Dr. Wellesley of Oxford, and for a few conjectures of extreme ingenuity we are indebted to Mr. Swynfen Jervis, the „S. Verges“ of Notes and Queries.

We at present enjoy advantages which Shakespearians of a past generation sighed for and despaired of. The ancient texts have been reprinted with marvellous accuracy, and may be pru-

chased at a very small outlay. We have almost exhaustive collations in the foot-notes of the Cambridge Edition, and we have the recent editions of Messrs. Dyce, Halliwell and Staunton, along with others of less excellence. With these materials we ought not be long without an editio princeps of the Great Bard; a task we commend to the united energies of the gentlemen we have named.