

gate. This Porter comes, talks of hell-gate, the everlasting bonfire, the equivocator who is to come, &c.,—the very subjects he ought to talk of to link the past and future of the play together, and in the very grimly humorous way he ought to talk of these subjects, to suit and yet to relieve the strained feelings of the audience;—and yet he and his talk are “absolutely extraneous” to the play!

6. Again, the writer's statement that “allusions to events passing in our own time in the 17th century,” that is, the date of the play, are “not Shakspeare's method,” is contradicted by the fact that Shakspeare's allusions to events of his time are one of the universally-recognized means of dating his plays. He opens his dramatic work by satirizing the schemes for Academies in Elizabeth's time, by *Loves Labours Lost*,—which also condemns the Elizabethan ladies' habits of painting their faces and wearing false hair, and ridicules the then prevalent Euphuism;—his second play, *The Comedy of Errors*, mentions “France fighting against its heir” (Henri IV), the League against the Huguenots; *Midsummer Nights Dream* alludes unmistakably to the Virgin Queen, Elizabeth; *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* alludes to the warlike expeditions and discovery of islands in her reign (p. 320 above); *Richard II.* alludes to and condemns her “benevolences”—unheard of in Richard's reign—as Mr Simpson points out; *King John* is full of political allusions, as Dr B. Nicholson will one day prove to us; *Henry V.* mentions Essex's expedition to Ireland in 1599; *Merry Wives*, Windsor stories of the day; *Much Ado* alludes to the Queen's insolent favourites; and so on.

7. “Another phrase foreign to Shakspeare is *at quiet*.” This and the ‘goose,’ &c. beg the question at issue, and moreover involve the proposition that ‘all words which occur only once in a play called Shakspeare's, are either certainly or probably spurious.’ If, as in the case of *farmer*, the word is used thrice besides in genuine plays, it is still seemingly an argument against the genuineness of the 4th use. As to ‘in quiet’: as Shakspeare uses both ‘in rest’ and ‘at rest’; there is nothing strange in his using both ‘in quiet,’ and ‘at quiet.’

8. I now turn to Mr Fleay's Paper,¹ and ask you to look at the supposed argument drawn from his Table on p. 354. The no-use it is really of, may be shown thus:—

‘Because the Plays in which we may safely conclude that another hand than Shakspeare's was concerned, range in number of lines from

¹ On Mr Fleay's later insertion about *bonfire*, note that Cooper's *Thesaurus*, 1584, has “Pyra . . . A *bone fier* wherein mens bodies weare burned . . . Erigere pyram, Virgil. To make a *bone fier*.” *Rogus* is defined only “A great fier wherein dead bodies are bourned.” The 1611 (Shakspeare) edition of Cotgrave has no *feu de ioie* under *ioye* or *feu*; but under “*Behourdis*: m. A buatling, rombling, iusting of many men together; also, a blustering of winds,” is “*Feu de behourdis*. A *bone-firc* ;” like Palsgrave's “*Bonnefyre*, feu de behourdis” (A. D. 1530).

3032 to 2358,¹ while his wholly genuine Plays range from 3964 (*Antony and Cleopatra*) to 1770 (*Comedy of Errors*),

'Therefore we may be sure [or safely assume] that *Macbeth*, which contains 1993 lines, is largely spurious.'

This is 'Fortunately,' one of a set of tests 'of great value' (p. 353); and 'given first' I suppose, as of the greatest value!²

To say, or imply, that the late Mr Staunton has 'satisfactorily' shown that *The Tempest* was "finished or altered by some other poet" is surely a mistake. So far as I can find, after careful inquiry, he never showed any such thing. That *Julius Cæsar* was thus finished or altered, is to me as wild a notion as that the scene of Launce and his dog is only an imitation of Shakspeare. While as to *The Two Gentlemen*, Mr Fleay has himself withdrawn his fancy of a second hand in it.

I look on the Paper given out to you to-night as an instance of how far the desire to support the pet theory of the infallibility of that Ryme-test³ can pervert the judgment.

The same perversion of judgment, arising from the same cause, and leading to like results, I see in Mr Fleay's Paper on *Julius Cæsar*.

First as to statements flatly in the face of facts.

1. "The word *press* in the sense of 'crowd' does not occur in Shakspeare." In fact, he uses it twice in the *Rape of Lucrece* :—

Much like a *press* of people at a door,

Throng her inventions, which shall go before. l. 1301.

About him were a *press* of gaping faces,

Which seem'd to swallow up his sound advice. l. 1408.

2. "Home = to thy house, *chez toi*⁴: never used by Shak-

1 2 Henry VI.	3032	Shrew	2671
3 Henry VI.	2904	Titus Andronicus	2525
Henry VIII.	2754	Pericles	2386
Two Noble Kinsmen	2734	Timon	2358
1 Henry VI.	2693		

³ Why should not another black line be drawn under *Lear* whose difference from 1 *Henry IV.* is 128 lines, as against 113, the difference between *King John* and *Julius Cæsar*, and then some theory invented about the enlargement of the first ten Plays in the Table? *Richard III.* would make a fine bit of soap to blow the bubble with.

² See Mr Swinburne's opinion in his Preface to Chapman's *Minor Poems*, &c., p. 50. The 'clamorous harbingers of blood and death' (p. 347) is Shakspeare's, as well as his 'clamorous reports of war' in *Rich. III.*, IV. iv.

⁴ This was first printed "to my house, *chez moi*," and I brought forward these instances, out of many, of the usage :—

"*Fbrd.* I beseech you heartily, some of you go *home* [= to my house] with me to dinner."—*Merry Wives*, III. ii. 81.

"Abbot . . Come *home* [= to my house] with me to supper."

Ric. II., IV. i. 333.

"I pray you *home* to dinner with me."—*Meas. for Meas.*, II. i.

"Sir, I entreat you *home* with me."—*Merchant*, IV. i.

spere." Compare the following, which do not exhaust the list:—

Silvia (to Proteus). You have your wish; my will is even this:
That presently you hie you *home* [= to your house] to bed.

Two Gentlemen, IV. ii. 94.

Shallow. Master Doctor Caius, I am come to fetch you *home*
[= to your house].—*Merry Wives*, II. iii. 55.

Go get you *home* [= to your houses] you fragments.—*Coriol.*, I. i.

Go masters, get you *home*.—*ib.*, IV. vi.

You are most welcome *home*.—*ib.*, V. v. &c.

Volce. (to Roman). You have ended my business, and I will
merrily accompany you *home* [= to your house].—*Coriolanus*, IV.
iii. 40-2.

Who's at *home* [= your house] besides yourself?—*Merry Wives*,
IV. ii.

If you think so, then stay at *home* [= your house], and go not.
ib., II. vii. 62.

Mrs Page. Truly sir, to see your wife. Is she at *home* [= your
house].—*ib.*, III. ii. 11.

And so thoroughly is the usage "home = to *thy* house," Shak-
spere's, that he uses it metaphorically:—

So thy great gift, upon misprision growing,

Comes *home* again [returns to thee].—*Sonnet* 87, l. 12.

Send for your ring, I will return it *home* [to you, its owner].—
All's Well, V. iii. 223.

Secondly, the spelling *Antony* is easily accounted for, because the
hero's Latin name *Antonius* is also given to him in the play (I. i. 56;
II. vi. 119 (Marcus *Anthonus*); III. i. 25—Schmidt), as it is also
in Jonson's *Sejanus*. (Will this be made another ground for Jonson's
supposed alteration of *J. C.*?)

Thirdly. "Shakspere and Jonson worked together on *Sejanus* in
1602-3." There is no evidence for this beyond Jonson's statement,
in his re-cast play, that

"this book, in all numbers, is not the same with that which was acted on
the public stage; wherein a second pen had good share: in place of which, I
have rather chosen to put weaker, and, no doubt, less pleasing, of mine own,
than to defraud so happy a genius of his right by my loathed usurpation."

Is it likely that a play of which Shakspere, about the best part
of his middle time, wrote "good share," would fail; and that when
Jonson re-wrote this "good share," the play would succeed? [Dr
B. Nicholson has since shown cause to believe that Sheppard was
Jonson's helper, as Sheppard claims that he 'dictated' to Jonson
when he wrote *Sejanus*.]

9. Further, consider the mess this new theory as to *Julius Caesar*
puts its adopters into. Mr Fleay's former theory in his last paper
was that Shakspere wrote all his Roman Plays at one time according

to what he (Mr F.) asserted was Shakspeare's habit through life, of using up a book (like North's Plutarch), and then casting it aside. Now he asks us to believe that Shakspeare wrote *Julius Cæsar* in 1600-1 (which is no doubt true), and that at the very time he was engagd on his other Roman Plays, *Coriolanus* and *Antony and Cleopatra*, in 1606-8, he let Ben Jonson alter his *Julius Cæsar* in 1607. Is not this too great a demand on our credulity?

10. Again, as to the "very important argument" from Ben Jonson's *Discoveries*, it makes dead against Mr Fleay's theory. For, as Mr Hales well remarkt to me, if Ben Jonson had really revis'd Shakspeare's *Julius Cæsar*, he would certainly have told us that he, the great Ben, had set his friend's "ridiculous" passages all right. Jonson wasn't the man to hide his light under a bushel.

11. It is hardly worth while to point out that if Shakspeare doesn't use 'Chew upon this,' he does its equivalent 'think upon that' (*Measure for Measure*, II. ii.); that 'degrees' = rungs of a ladder, is used in a metaphor; that the "elements" was used as far back as Wiclif's *Colossians* (see Richardson); that in the *Macbeth* "everlasting bonfire" we haven't a modern gospeller seriously preaching about 'penal fires of torment,' but a Jacobite half-drunken porter humourously describing them, &c. I must add that the 4½ lines taken up on p. 360 by explaining why the 'stilted' passages are not printed, would be more usefully employed in giving us references to these passages. We don't want quotations. As none have been produc'd in answer to my challenge, I conclude that none can be produc'd.

12. The only point in the whole Paper of 28 pages which I can at present accept, is the justification of the Folio reading of 'lane' in *Julius Cæsar*, III. i. 39; and this is taken without acknowledgment from Steevens. See the *Variorum* of 1821, xii. 75:—

"If the *lane of children* be the true reading, it may possibly receive illustration from the following passage in Ben Jonson's 'Staple of News':

A narrow-minded man! my thoughts do dwell
All in a *lane*.

"The 'lane of children' will then mean the narrow conceits of children, which must change as their minds grow more enlarged," &c.

The *Macbeth*-part of Mr Fleay's Paper seems to me to be the carrying out of the practice against which Mr Clark has warnd us: "It would be very uncritical to pick out of Shakespeare's works all that seems inferior to the rest, and to assign it to somebody else:" especially without a careful examination of that somebody else's works, and full quotation of all his parallel passages. But the numbering of the tags, and recalling attention to the weak ones, will be useful.

The *Julius Cæsar* part of the Paper I think mere vagary.

MR HALES said :—I shall have to find fault with Mr Fleay's paper, and I regret very much Mr Fleay is not here himself to-day, as we had expected he would have been, to answer, or try to answer, for himself. With regard to the *Julius Cæsar* paper, of external evidence in favour of Mr Fleay's theory there is not one trace, nor is there a single fragment of definite internal evidence. One remark as to "Chew upon this," upon p. 360. It is argued that this is Jonson's phrase, because a phrase something like it occurs in a play of which Jonson was one of the authors! Yet there is in *Macbeth* :—

"O! I have eaten on the insane root."

I confess I do not think it is worth while spending any more time on the *Julius Cæsar* paper.

About *Macbeth*, I should like to mention two characteristics of this play which Mr Fleay has scarcely recognized, but which cast a great deal of light upon what seem at first difficulties. The one is the astonishing rapidity with which the action of this play proceeds. Amongst Shakspeare's plays *Macbeth* is unique for the frightful pace at which the action moves. See what takes place in a single Act: you are introduced to Macbeth in the midst of his fame, honour, and integrity; and before you get to the end of the first Act you have his moral collapse begun and assured. German critics have well contrasted this play with the play of *Hamlet*, where the action proceeds so slowly—in fact, scarcely proceeds at all, as Dr Johnson says, and though nothing can be more absurd than to place all Shakspeare's plays in pairs, like Plutarch's lives, or a series of twins, there are instances where plays do help to illustrate each other.

The other point about *Macbeth* is that it is remarkable for its obscurity of language. Objection has been taken to some phrases for exaggeration and bombast, but in *Macbeth* there are passages which no man could dream of casting out of that play which are certainly amenable to those charges. Look at the speech of Macbeth, Globe edition, p. 792, b :—

—“Besides, this Duncan
Hath borne his faculties so meek, hath been
So clear in his great office, that his virtues
Will plead like angels, trumpet-tongued against
The deep damnation of his taking off;
And pity, like a naked new-born babe,
Striding the blast, or heaven's cherubim, horsed
Upon the sightless couriers of the air,
Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye,
That tears shall drown the wind.”

Now you see that passage quite parallels those that have been injudiciously rejected by Mr Fleay.