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New Camps or Old ?

A FEW ADDITIONAL WORDS

ON

THE MOMENTOUS QUESTION

Respecting the E and the A

IN THE NAME OF

Our National Dramatist.

It is said that his surname was Quixada or Quesada, for, in this particular, the authors who have mentioned the subject do not agree. There are, however, very probable reasons for conjecturing that he was called Quixana. But this is of little importance to our story. Let it suffice that, in narrating, we do not swerve a jot from the truth.—*The Life and Adventures of Don Quixote de la Mancha.*

BRIGHTON :

PRINTED BY MESSRS. FLEET AND BISHOP.

1880.

1738

St. Augustine
211

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A FEW WORDS, &c.

A FEW weeks ago, under the impression that it would be as well, if it were possible, that there should be uniformity in the printed orthography of the name of our national dramatist, I ventured to issue a little tentative pamphlet on the subject. The question was obviously an excessively trivial one in itself, and the idea of its discussion, had it referred to any but the greatest of England's sons, would have been positively ludicrous. No one would have imagined that such an enquiry could have raised the smallest of storms in the minutest of teapots. Nevertheless, the few pages alluded to created in their way quite a little hubbub. Besides an excellent leading article in one of the prominent London dailies, there were a score of other notices showing the interest a resuscitation of an old difficulty had excited. One writer, indeed, in a letter in the Daily News of December the 20th, was positively stimulated to compare the reluctance to adopt the shorter form of the poet's name with the fearful obstruction of "Toryism" to everything that is correct and proper. From the expressions used by the individual in question it may be inferred that, in his opinion, the Tories, having done their best to prevent the introduction of Free Trade and the Reform Bill, are now completing their iniquities by spelling the

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name of the great dramatist in the way in which he himself printed it in the first editions of his own poems; that the vagabonds who write *Shakespeare* are bucolic and pig-headed Conservatives, and that the angels who prefer *Shakspeare* are advanced and enlightened Radicals. As if to crown this edifice of bluster, in another journal I was personally battered merely because I had had the audacity to advocate the retention of the *e* and the *a*. When Bedreddin Hassan was told that his life was to be forfeited for omitting to add pepper to the cream-tart, he could hardly have been more astonished than myself at this funny display of gratuitous irritability.

In contrast to those who take such a vital interest in the suppression of the *e* and the *a* that they allow their little feelings to run away with them in the face of opposition, there are others who ridicule the idea of the matter being worth discussion at all. The latter view is well put in the *Echo* of December the 4th in allusion to my pamphlet,—“ he adopts Shakespeare, with which nobody can quarrel ;—indeed, nobody would quarrel with him if he spelt the name backwards ;—it is of more importance to read Shakespeare’s works, and, above all, to understand and profit by them, than to give reasons for putting in or leaving out an *x* in his name.” Certainly, for ourselves and to our-

selves the immortal text is all-sufficient, and the elucidation of that text is the only really good use of Shakespearian criticism, but surely there is a respect due to the memory of the greatest name in our literature. It is not courteous to that memory to speak as if it were of no sort of consequence whether we alluded to the great poet as William Shakespeare or as Tony Lumpkin. With due deference, therefore, to the opinion of our reverberating contemporary, I shall endeavour to follow the lead of my adverse critics in treating the subject as one of the most serious and weighty enquiries of the present day, as, in short, the great problem of all, the momentous question whether we are to discard or retain the *e* and the *a* in the spelling of the name of our national dramatist. My chief fear is that the enquiry into this important mystery may not be approached with the complete solemnity due to an investigation of such paramount gravity ; but it shall at all events be treated fairly and dispassionately.

Previously to opening a discussion of this kind it may be well to observe that, in treating a subject which involves a consideration of the usages of a remote age, it is essentially necessary to eliminate from our minds any influence exercised by the knowledge of those of our own. This is especially necessary in the present instance. In these days a person's

signature is, in nine hundred and ninety-nine cases out of a thousand, absolute evidence of the acknowledged orthography of his own name and of that of his family. In Shakespeare's time, a person's signature, in a corresponding number of cases, was no evidence at all of the correct orthography of his own name or of that of his relatives.

The truth of this latter position can be demonstrated by hundreds of illustrations. Colonel Chester, one of the best living authorities in such matters, after mentioning the numerous instances he had met with of capricious forms of early signatures of the same name in the University books at Oxford, writes, —“my experience among other records has been the same, and I should as soon doubt the existence of Hollingbury Copse as the position you assume, that there was no settled orthography of surnames in the time of Shakespeare.” But although the fact is acknowledged by all who have carefully examined the subject, a few examples* should be given for the sake of the many who have had no opportunity of doing so. Thus, Lord Robert Dudley's signature was Dudley or Duddeley, and his wife's, Duddley. Allen, the actor, signed his name at

* It should be mentioned that some of these examples are also given in my former pamphlet.

various times, Alleyn, Aleyn, Allin, and Allen, while his wife's signature appears as Alleyne. Henslowe's autographs are in the forms of Hensley, Henslow, and Henslowe. Samuel Rowley signed himself Rouley, Rowley, and Rowleye. Burbage sometimes wrote Burbadg while his brother signed himself Burbadge. One of the poet's sons-in-law wrote himself Quayney, Quayneye, and Conoy, while his brother, the curate, signed, Quiney. His other son-in-law, Dr. Hall, signed himself Hawle and Hall. Alderman Sturley, of Stratford-on-Avon, signed his name sometimes in that form and sometimes, Strelly, both forms being used in letters written to the same person in the same year, 1598. Sir Walter Raleigh signed both Rauley and Ralegh, and Sir Philip Sidney both Sydney and Sidney. An actor contemporary with Shakespeare wrote himself Downton, Dowten and Dowton. The signature of a sixteenth century earl was Shrewsbury, that of his wife Shrowesbury. Different members of the Trevelyan family sign themselves, Trevelyan, Trevilian, Trevillian, Trevelyan, Trevelian, Trevylian. Richard Hathaway sometimes so wrote his name and sometimes Hathway. Thomas Nash, who married the poet's grand-daughter, signed himself both Nash and Nashe. Simon Trap, curate of Stratford-upon-Avon, wrote his name Trapp and Trappe. In a manuscript

pedigree of 1613 at the Herald's College a gentleman signs his name Payne, his nephew's signature on the same day in the same manuscript being Pain. Shakespeare's parents could not write at all, and the only signatures of any of their children known to exist are those of the poet, and that of his brother Gilbert, the latter signing his name Shakespere, that is, with the important central *e*. These instances will suffice for the demonstration of the main position, that in former days there was no established nominal orthography. As Sam Weller observed, "it all depended upon the taste and fancy of the speller, my Lord," and it would be difficult to state the usage of Shakespeare's time in more forcible language. It is curious that there are still to be found lingering traces of the old uncertainty. My old friend, Mr. Joseph Clarke, F.S.A., of the Roos, tells me of a small tradesman in the country whose signature was capriciously either Travers or Travis. Upon his father, an old man, being asked which was the correct form, he replied that "one way was as good as the other." Professor Baynes furnishes me with a still more curious example in that of a Somersetshire gardener who writes his name Nipcote, his brother, Nitcote, while other members of the family use such variations as Nepcot and Netcot.

It is obvious then, even to the typical school-

boy, that it would be unreasonable to attempt to follow individual signatures in the modern orthography of names of the Shakespearean period. If we were to do so, we should write Lord Dudley and Lady Duddley, Lord Shrewsbury and Lady Shrowesbury, Thomas Quayney and the Rev. George Quiney, Mr. Allen and Mrs. Alleyne, Mr. Payne and his nephew Mr. Pain, Alderman Sturley in one month and Alderman Strelly in the next, Dr. Hall at one period of his life and Dr. Hawle at another. When mentioning the great dramatist we should be at liberty to write his name in two or three ways, but not in the form used by his brother Gilbert Shakespere, and in alluding to another great poet we could write Milton, but his second daughter must be introduced as a Millton. Heywood the epigrammatist would become Heywod, Lords Leicester and Warwick must appear as Leycester and Warwyke, Herrick would be Hearick, Nichols would be transformed into Nycowlles, and so on to any number of similar inconvenient variations.

It is simply casual ingenuity which suggests the deflection of caprice into ignorance under the accusation that Shakespeare, and those numerous contemporaries who varied their signatures, did not know how to spell their own names. Well, they didn't, for the simple reason that names in those days had not been subjected

to any rules of orthography, that the attainment of what we should call orthographical accuracy was at that time impossible, and it is obviously improper to sneer at them for indulging in a fanciful practice then as common with the learned as with the illiterate. One of the most accomplished scholars of the sixteenth century signed himself either Ascham or Askham, and it might of course be said that he did not know how to write his own name, but it would be fairer to observe that there was in those days no established orthography, no method of spelling sanctioned by usage or authority either in surnames or Christian names, or in the English language generally. We have already seen that there was none in surnames, and as to Christian names the varieties are equally perplexing. Shakespeare's friend and neighbour, Mr. Shawe, spelt his in the following very extraordinary number of ways, — Julyus, Julius, Julie, Julyne, Jule, Julines, Julynes, July, Julye, Julyius and Julyles. As for orthography in language either in books or manuscripts of the Shakespearean period all who are familiar with such matters know that the same word is frequently spelt in half-a-dozen various forms in a single page.

The choice of the pronunciation of Shakespeare's name is of course a question independent of the form in which it should be printed. The

general instinct seems to be adverse to the ancient orthoepy of Shaxpere, and the main reason against the prudence of adopting the short form is that it might encourage the name to be so spoken. There can be little doubt that the poet was generally called Shaxpere or Shaxper in the provinces, but certainly not always. In the earliest known document respecting any member of the poet's family, one which refers to property at Snitterfield near Stratford-on-Avon, the name of his grandfather is given as Shakespere, showing the first syllable to be long, and in the local manuscripts in which his father is continually mentioned, the name of the latter is variously written, Shakspeyr, Shaxspere, Shacksper, Shakspere, Shakyspere, Shakespere, Shaxpeare, Shakspeir, Shakysper, Shaxpere, Shakspeare, Shackespere, Schackspere, Shakspeyre, Shaksper, and Shakespeare, without the slightest notion of uniformity. The transcriber of the parish register is the most consistent, the majority of entries in that record being Shakspere, but even there we have also the forms of Shakspeer, Shaxspere, and Shakspeare. The poet's intimate friends had clearly no notion that they were to spell his name in any particular fashion. Richard Quiney in 1598 addressed his celebrated letter "to my loveinge good frend and countreyman Mr. Wm. Shackespere." Alderman Sturley speaks of him in

the same year as Mr. Shaksper. The great dramatist's kinsman and solicitor, Thomas Greene, wrote his client's name Shakspear, Shakspeare, and Shakspurre, and Mrs. and Mr. Hall, the poet's daughter and son-in-law, who must have known the correct orthography, had there been any settled form at the time, spell the name Shakspeare in the monumental inscription to him while it is Shakespeare in that to his wife. Can anything more clearly show that nominal spelling was in those days a simple matter of chance or fancy?

There were occasional and rare exceptions, the most notable and illustrative being that of "rare Ben," who, although he apparently did not take the trouble to remonstrate with those friends who wrote and printed his name Johnson, appears, judging from the dozens of his signatures in existence, to have invariably written Jonson. This was probably to distinguish it from the commoner name, and, to the best of my belief, although I have not had the opportunity of verifying the fact, the shorter form is used in all his own printed dedicatory epistles. If Shakespeare's case were at all similar, if we had possessed numerous examples of his uniform signature* at various periods of life, and if the name

* But this in itself would go for very little. A celebrated earl invariably signed himself Leycester, yet no writer, treating of the Elizabethan period, would consider it necessary to introduce that antiquated orthography.

in his dedications had appeared in the same form, then there would have been of course an end of the matter. But the facts do not bear out an important similarity. In those deeply interesting epistles to Lord Southampton, the only letters of the great dramatist known to exist, attached to the only works we can confidently believe to have been issued with his sanction, there the name appears in its full proportions with both the *e* and the *a*. These dedications are to my mind absolutely conclusive of the general question.

There is no good pretence for raising a doubt of the generally acknowledged fact that these poems were issued under Shakespeare's immediate authority. The personal character of the dedications might alone suffice to indicate that this was the case. Not only was there no theatrical management to interfere with the copyright, as was the case with respect to most if not all of his plays, and no symptoms of the bookselling special interest in either of the publications, but both of them were printed, as Mr. Payne Collier* was the first to point out, by a native of Stratford-on-Avon and the son of one of John Shakespeare's intimate friends. Every circumstance, indeed, connected with the pub-

* This mention of my old friend's name gives me the opportunity of observing that, although, as it has been recently stated,

lication of *Venus and Adonis* and *Lucrece* tends to show that they were printed under the author's sanction.

Under any circumstances, it is evident that Shakespeare had a voice in the matter with the printer or publisher when he proceeded to dedicate a second work to the same nobleman. Can any one believe that, if the great dramatist had really cared to have his name spelt without the *e* and the *a*, he would have permitted the longer form to remain in the second dedication? Is it not clear that, whatever phases his signature may have assumed, he either wished, or, at the very least, tacitly admitted that he did not dislike his name appearing as Shakespeare in his own printed works? Another piece of corroborative evidence is at the end of a poem which he contributed to *Chester's Loves Martyr*, 1601, and which could hardly have been inserted without his direct sanction. As if to place the

I was the founder of the old Shakespeare Society, yet it was entirely owing to Mr. Collier's influence and active co-operation that the Society was ever established. Under his judicious and genial management every variety of Shakesporean opinion received friendly attention, the Society, during the thirteen years (1841 to 1853) of its existence, doing good and useful work quietly and amicably. Alas that it was not resuscitated on its original basis of common-sense criticism when my late dear friend, Howard Staunton, so ardently desired and had practically commenced its revival in 1872! Let me here gratefully add how much I personally owed in early life to Mr. Collier's kind and unselfish encouragement.



Threnos.

Beautie, Truth, and Raritie,
 Grace in all simplicitie,
 Here enclosed, in cinders lie.

Death is now the *Phoenix* nest,
 And the *Turtles* loyall brest,
 To eternitie doth rest.

Leaving no posteritie,
 It was not their infirmitie,
 It was married Chastitie.

Truth may seeme, but cannot be,
 Beautie bragge, but tis not she,
 Truth and Beautie buried be.

To this vine let those repaire,
 That are either true or faire,
 For these dead Birds, sigh a prayer.

William Shake-speare.



matter beyond all doubt, his name is there printed with both the disputed letters and with a hyphen. See the annexed facsimile of the conclusion of this poem. The printed literature of Shakespeare's time is all but unanimous in the adoption of the longer orthography, and in it there are very few instances indeed of the omission of either the *e* or the *a*, while there are numerous examples of the occurrence of the full name with a hyphen, as in the poem just mentioned. It is, in fact, exceedingly curious that one form of a name of such easy variation should have been so generally adopted in print at a time when there was great laxity in such matters in printed books as well as in writings. Thus, in the interesting collection, *England's Parnassus*, 1600, while the name of one poet is spelt in four different ways,—Achilley, Achelly, Achellye, Achely,—and rare Ben's appears both as Johnson and Jhonson, that of the great dramatist is uniformly printed Shakespeare in upwards of forty instances in that small volume. I will now proceed to a consideration of the poet's five acknowledged signatures, the only examples of undoubted authenticity known to exist.

1. Indenture of Bargain to Shakespeare of a house in Blackfriars, 10 March, 1613,*

* The original indenture of conveyance to Shakespeare, dated on the same day, is in my possession, and one of my choicest treasures. This deed, that which was enrolled in Chancery, is

the original deed being now in the Guildhall Library. Here the signature is unquestionably Shakspeare, reading the contraction as *er*, and considering that which follows the *e* as a mere flourish. Sir F. Madden, indeed, reads the last syllable *per* and thinks that the contraction is for the final *e*. The same result follows from either theory, but the latter one would, I fancy, be more likely to be correct if it had referred to a document of an earlier date. The former is confirmed by what is apparently a very careful facsimile made by the elder Ireland soon after the discovery of the indenture, his original tracing being now in my possession.

2. Mortgage Deed of the same house, dated 11 March, 1613, now in the British Museum. Here again we have a contracted form, the only written letters of the second syllable being *spe*, but the mark of contraction is different from that in the previous deed, it appearing in this one as if it were an *æ* in the published facsimile of 1790, and *u* in recent copies, in either case implying, to judge from the usual meaning of abbreviations of the time, that an *æ* was one of the letters of what was intended. The contraction is also clearly given as an *æ* in Malone's

in fine and perfect condition, with the original official note of enrollment on the outside. It is endorsed,—*Walker et Shakspeare et al.*

original tracing made in the year 1784, and although he afterwards thought "that what was supposed to be that letter was only a mark of abbreviation with a turn or curl at the first part of it, which gave it the appearance of a letter," this latter notion was a mere conjecture hazarded without the advantage of another reference to the original (*Inquiry*, 1796, pp. 118-120), and is an opinion which will not stand the test of a close examination. Many years ago, the original deed now in the Museum was kindly brought to my house by its then owner, Mr. Troward, and my late valued friend, Mr. Fairholt, took the greatest pains on that occasion to make an accurate tracing of the poet's signature. The engraving from that facsimile may be seen in my folio edition of *Shakespeare*, vol. i. p. 209, and there the contraction is more like α than u , encouraging a suspicion that the top part of the former letter has been obliterated by the handling of the deed during the long period that has elapsed since the autograph was first traced by Malone. Whether there is a probability in this suggestion might perhaps be decided by the use of a microscope; but, at all events, the form of *Shakspeare* cannot in this instance be admitted with anything like certainty.

The exact interpretation of this second autograph is, however, of little moment in our en-

quiry, for, as it has been well observed, "the contractions exhibited by these two signatures neutralize their evidence," and Shakespeare clearly intended by using those contractions that his name should be included within the narrow limits of the seal-labels. There are then, as absolute evidences of the poet's usage in his signatures, merely the three appended to the will, and these must be examined in detail,—

1. The first is now extremely indistinct, having suffered from the wear and tear of the manuscript. That it was originally Shakspeare may be safely concluded from the facsimile made by Steevens in 1776. Dr. Farmer also personally examined the document when it was in a more perfect state, and he confirms this reading in a manuscript note of his in my possession.

2. There is more doubt about the second one, the space between the *þ* and the *r* apparently indicating the original presence of two letters, which were read *ea* by Dr. Farmer, but, judging from the best facsimiles, and without a new inspection of the original, it is my conviction that here we should read Shakspeare, the minute blank between the *e* and the *r* being occasioned by the intervention of the loop of a letter hanging from the body of the will. Here again the microscope might be of use.

3. In the last autograph the second syllable appears to be *speare* in all the facsimiles, as it does in that of Steevens made in the year 1776, and then so accepted by Malone. The latter writer, indeed, afterwards changed his opinion, not, however, from a second examination of the original, but merely because an anonymous correspondent was of opinion that "though there was a superfluous stroke when the poet came to write the letter *r* in his last signature, probably from the tremor of his hand, there was no *a* discoverable in that syllable," *Inquiry*, 1796, p. 118. The notion of the tremor of the hand is simply gratuitous, the will having been executed more than a month before the death of the poet, and there being no evidence that he was then invalided. Be this as it may, the correspondent's surmise cannot invalidate the authority of Steevens's own tracing, in the original of which, still preserved, the letter *a* is clearly exhibited, the accuracy of the facsimile being ratified by the following note, — *G. Steevens delineavit accurante et testante Edmondo Malone, 1776.* That there are two letters between the *p* and the *r* seems beyond a reasonable doubt, and a writer in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for June, 1789, reads *speere*, but surely the formation of the writing supports our first interpretation. But what about the first syllable of the auto-

graph? A distinguished scholar has just pointed out to me—and it is, as in the case of the management of the egg by Columbus, most singularly curious so obvious a fact should have escaped the notice of all others—that the character following the letter *k* is the then well-known and accepted contraction for *es*. There cannot be a doubt on this point, and therefore the poet's last signature appears in his own selected literary form of Shakespeare.

Malone expatiates on the "very extraordinary circumstance that a man should write his name twice one way, and once another, on the same paper," Inquiry, p. 117; but it is not certain that the three signatures were written on the same day. At that period, the two first would not necessarily require the attendance of witnesses, and might have been added when the will was first copied ready for signing in January, or at any time between then and Lady Day.* On a careful examination it will be seen that the last signature differs somewhat in formation from the others, especially in that of the capital letter W. But even supposing that all the signatures were attached to the will on the same day, a

* There was so much laxity in such matters excepting in the presence of witnesses at the final signature, it is not at all unlikely that the day of the later month is incorrect. At all events it is singular that the will should be executed on the very same day of March on which it was originally dated in January.

variation in their forms would not be more extraordinary than that of Walter Roche, the poet's schoolmaster, signing his name twice in different ways on the same day in the same document, or than Margaret Trevelyan at a later period writing her own name and that of her husband with different spellings in the very same line,—“ Margaret Trevelyan, for her husband George Trevelian.” Sir William Brown, who signed indiscriminately in at least three different ways, spells his name Browne in a letter to Lord Sidney, May 24th, 1604, and Broune in another letter written on the very next day to the same nobleman. A little more research would no doubt produce many other like examples, although the extraordinary laxity formerly displayed by nearly every one in the orthography of surnames scarcely requires more confirmatory evidence. This is, in fact, the whole gist of the matter, that the forms of autographs were in those days no reliable guides for an uniform printed usage, and, as I ventured to say in my other pamphlet, “ to follow signatures would revolutionize the whole system of early nominal orthography, and lead to preposterous results.”

Now, in conclusion, with a flourish of magnanimity. If it be possible that any student, after perusing the above luminous exposition, can wish to discard the *e* and the *a*, he has my solemn assurance that I shall not have the

slightest inclination either to roar him down or quarrel with him on that account. On the contrary, if such an individual appear and will favour me with a visit, he shall be received with all the attention due to a *rara avis* at my primitive and ornithological bungalow. Although my library is small it includes some of the choicest Shakespearean rarities in the world, and there is also an unrivalled collection of drawings and engravings illustrative of the life of the great dramatist. A mere glance over the latter will occupy a summer's day. And the feast of reason shall be irrigated by the flow of port, claret, or madeira, and by what is not now to be seen every day of the week, really old sherry. If, unfortunately, he has forsworn racy potations and not discovered that good sherris-sack "ascends into the brain and dries there all the foolish, and dull, and crudy vapours which environ it," then are there our deep chalk wells yielding an inexhaustible supply of the pure aqueous element as bright and sparkling as the waves and atmosphere of Brighton herself.

J. O. HALLIWELL-PHILLIPPS.

Hollingbury Copse,

Brighton.

January, 1880.

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