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LITERARY FORGERIES

E. K. CHAMBERS

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1891

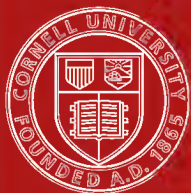
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History and motives of literary forgerie



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*THE HISTORY AND MOTIVES
OF LITERARY FORGERIES
Being the Chancellor's English Essay
for 1891: by EDMUND KERCHEVER
CHAMBERS, sometime Scholar of Corpus
Christi College, Oxford*

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THE HISTORY AND MOTIVES OF LITERARY FORGERIES.

Πολλὰ τὰ δεινὰ κούδεν ἀνθρώπου δεινότερον πέλει.

SOPH. *Antigone*, 332.

Now mark! To be precise—
Though I say, "lies" all these, at this first stage,
'Tis just for science' sake: I call such grubs
By the name of what they'll turn to, dragonflies.
Strictly, it's what good people style untruth;
But yet, so far, not quite the full-grown thing:
It's fancying, fable-making, nonsense-work—
What never meant to be so very bad—
The knack of story-telling, brightening up
Each dull old bit of fact that drops its shine.

R. BROWNING.

THE study of literary forgery ought not to be set down as nothing more than an intellectual pastime. At first, indeed, it may appear to be a by-way of letters, attractive to the mind in certain moments and moods, but in the end leading nowhere, like the curious questionings of Tiberius about the songs the Sirens sang, and the name borne by Achilles among the maidens of Scyros*. Yet in reality there is 'more in it'; it appeals to the student as well as to the 'mere scholar,' and has no less interest for the profound thinker than for the antiquary. There are epochs of history, phases in the development of philosophies and religions, that can only be fully understood when they are illumined by a knowledge of the conditions under which literary forgery springs up and gains credence. The definition of the canon of the New Testament, the growth in power of the see of Rome, the characteristics of primitive poetry, the genuineness of the writings ascribed to Aristotle,—these are among the subjects for a right handling of which such a knowledge is needful.

Nor is its value for the historian and the critic alone. In the eyes of the psychologist, the literary forger is a 'human document' full of facts, an abnormal spiritual growth ready

* Suetonius, *Vita Tiberii*, ch. lxx.

for the knife of analysis, and serving by contrast to advance his studies of the type. The philosopher, in his turn, upon a higher plane of thought, finds in him yet another instrument of the all-pervading elemental ironies. He has a vision of some bookworm, buried in his library and thinking himself, there, at least, secure from the malice and mockery of the world, until a Psalmanaazaar or a Phalaris comes to trip him up, and the laughter of the heavens rings out. And the man of letters, that characteristic product of the century, who blends historian and psychologist, philosopher and critic in one, he too may gather from the same study no less compelling matter for consideration. It presents him with familiar men and ages under fresh aspects, giving him, no doubt, a vision of the seamy side of things, but yet one touched with that charm of novelty which never fails to attract the modern mind.

There is scarcely a sphere of literary achievement in which the forger has not, at one time or another, made his mark. Science and song own him alike, and he plays the part of a parasite upon every branch of the tree of knowledge. The success with which he frequently meets is striking. From the credulity of the vulgar little else could be expected, but among his dupes are not seldom numbered men of learning and acuteness, able and intelligent critics, specialists in the very study which he has chosen for his ravages. Such indeed is the persistence of man in error, that even an exploded forgery, so long as it retains popular interest at all, rarely ceases to find adherents impervious alike to reason and to ridicule. It is difficult, therefore, after a dispassioned perusal of the records of successful impositions, to retain that confidence in criticism as a science and an art without which the garden of literature must seem a pathless waste. Such an experience induces a state of bewildered scepticism, in which the wildest imaginings of the Jesuit Hardouin, *hominum paradoxotatos*, lose their absurdity. Even his crowning theory, that the works of Cicero, Pliny's *Natural History*, Vergil's *Georgics*, and Horace's *Epistles* and *Satires* are the sole genuine relics of antiquity, while the rest of classical history and literature are only an ingenious fabrication of the unlettered thirteenth century, may in time come to have a plausibility of its own*.

An academic essay ought to start with a definition, but in the present case this is impossible, for neither the generic nor the differentiating idea is exactly fixed. Before you define a literary forgery, you must define literature, and that is a task to 'give the boldest pause.' It may be said that a forgery

* *Biographie Universelle*, s. v. Hardouin.

ceases to be literary if it has any object beyond that of being read ; that, for instance, the *Donation of Constantine* is not literary, because it was forged with the object of establishing the temporal power of the Popes. In practice, such a criterion would unduly limit the subject ; thus, it would exclude the love-verses found among the *Casket Letters* ascribed to Mary Queen of Scots : and yet poetry is presumably literature, more or less. It would also be unmanageable, for the object of a forgery depends upon the motive of the forger, and this is, as often as not, a mystery. Therefore, it will be best to dispense with a definition, and to use the term in the loose but sufficiently clear sense which generally attaches to it. It must not however be extended to cover every kind of spurious literature. Whatever the motive, there must at least be the intention to deceive, either by attributing to a real or imaginary author work that is not his, or by passing off as record of fact what is merely fiction. It is not, of course, possible to say, in the case of every spurious writing, especially in the earlier ages of literature, whether the error is due to the art of a conscious forger, or to the folly of readers and editors. But the distinction is an important one. It may be illustrated from the ordinary editions of Chaucer's poems. In these occur a number of poems which cannot be his, but which have been ascribed to him either because they are found in the same manuscript with works that are undoubtedly genuine, or because the early editors, the Stowes and Speghts of the sixteenth century, failed to distinguish his style from that of his imitators. Two of the traditional *Canterbury Tales* will serve as typical instances. The *Tale of Gamelyn* is a ballad of the twelfth or thirteenth century. It has been taken for the *Cook's Tale*, from its position in some of the manuscripts. Possibly Chaucer had set it aside as material on which to found a tale of his own. The so-called *Plowman's Tale* is an alliterative poem in the style of Langley, written probably by the author of *The Plowman's Creed*. These are spurious tales, but they are not therefore forgeries. On the other hand, if we may trust the ingenious theories of Herr Simon of Schmalkanden, the *Parson's Tale*, as it now stands, is an exceedingly clever forgery. Originally it was a treatise on Penitence, put in the mouth of an heretical Wycliffite priest. With this has been interwoven matter from the French *Sermone de Vices et de Vertus* of Frère Lorens, with the purpose of giving an orthodox tone to the whole. Herr Simon sets down the fraud to the pious zeal of the monks of St. Mary's, Westminster, who owned the house in which Chaucer died*.

* *Essays on Chaucer* (Chaucer Society), Nos. ix. xvi. Skeat, *Minor Poems of Chaucer*. Morley, *English Writers*, v. 346.

In itself the term *Forgery* is not a very pleasant one; the associations which it calls up are deterrent; it suggests the dock and the gallows. But, in the present application, it covers numerous cases of very varying ethical complexion, some malignant or sordid enough, others merely humorous. A sense of this discrepancy has led to the invention of the word *Pseudepigraphy*, which, if cumbersome, is undeniably colourless, while the French, with their characteristic talent for elegant euphemism, prefer to speak of *Supercheries*.

The stories of the chief literary forgeries have been told again and again. The narration of them here in any fulness of detail would be *crambe repetita*. It would be equally superfluous to examine the arguments by which the authenticity of any particular work is attacked or defended. That is, in most cases, a matter best left to specialists. This essay will deal with conclusions. Its object will be twofold: in the first place it will attempt to give a general outline of the history of the practice, tracing, so far as may be, its relative frequency and special developments in different ages; in the second, it will endeavour to elucidate the social and intellectual conditions which favour the growth of forgeries, and to analyse the motives in which they have their origin. These two interdependent points of view, the psychological and the historical, will be adhered to throughout.

As soon as man set foot on the slopes of Parnassus, the shadow of the forger fell on the path behind him. The first historian records the first literary fraud. Herodotus narrates how, during the rule of the Pisistratidae at Athens, a certain Onomacritus, whose duty it was to collect and interpret the oracles of Musaeus, was discovered by Lasus of Hermione in the act of making an interpolation in the traditional prophecies committed to his care*. Later writers make it clear that this was only one of a number of forgeries of a similar character. Musaeus and Orpheus were the reputed authors of a mass of poetry, popularly supposed to be pre-Homeric, which embodied a mystic theology and was connected in some obscure way with Thrace. Whether they ever had other than a mythical existence, or whether any of the writings ascribed to them were really of remarkable antiquity, can hardly be determined; but there is abundant evidence that most of the Orphic literature known in historic times dates only from the beginning of the sixth century. Aristotle, a capable critic, as the *Poetics* show, would appear to have ascribed the whole of it to Onomacritus and Cercops the

* Herodotus, Book vii. ch. 6.

Pythagorean*. Ion of Chios declares that even Pythagoras had a hand in the authorship, but this testimony is suspect, for if Suidas may be believed, Ion himself was a flagrant offender. Besides Onomacritus, Cercops and Ion, Suidas mentions some half-dozen other writers of the same period, to whom he attributes definite poems†. We may therefore fairly infer that the manufacture of such pseudo-prophecies was a common practice of the day, resorted to whenever political, personal or controversial exigencies demanded it. But Orphic forgeries were not confined to any one period; it may be doubted if any of the extant fragments are even as old as Onomacritus; they are more probably the handiwork of Alexandrine Neo-Platonists, or even of still later authors. As to the motives which prompted them, conjecture alone is possible; probably they did not differ essentially from those of the numerous forgeries of the later philosophical schools, hereafter to be described. The name of Onomacritus appears again in connection with the Homeric poems. He is said, on the dubious authority of Joannes Tsetzes, to have been employed by the Pisistratidae as a Diaskeuast. Whatever the functions of a Diaskeuast may have been, Onomacritus cannot have fulfilled them very satisfactorily, for we learn from an ancient commentator that he was suspected of tampering with the sacred text of Homer, as well as with that of Musaeus‡. Another Homeric forgery is that ascribed to Pisistratus, or, more usually, to Solon, who is said to have inserted in the Iliad the line which now counts as the 558th of the 2nd book, and which tells how the Salaminian Ajax ranked his ships by the side of the Athenians at Troy. This instance, if true,—and even in Plutarch's time it was disputed,—is especially interesting, because the motive of Solon is so manifest. The Athenians and the Megarians were disputing before the Spartans upon their respective claims to Salamis, and the line was produced in order to prove an ancient link between Athens and the neighbouring island state§. Perhaps it is hardly fair to include such works as the *Homeric Hymns*, the *Margites*, and other poems of the Epic age, in the list of Homeric forgeries; it may have been only a mistake of later ages which attributed them to the poet of the Iliad. Herodotus lets us know that the authorship of some of these

* Philoponus in *De Anima*, i 5, 15; Cicero, *De Natura Deorum*, i. 38.

† Suidas, s. v. Ὀπφειός. Bentley, *Phalaris*, p. 82 (ed. Wagner, Bell and Son).

‡ Jebb, *Homer*, p. 114 n. Schol. on *Od.* xi. 604.

§ Plutarch, *Solon*, ch. x. Arist; *Rhet.* i. 15. The Megarians produced a rival version (Strabo, ix. 394). Cp. the similar use of a quotation from Homer in Hdt. vii. 161.

works was a moot point in his day: sceptical critics already inclined to assume that they were not Homer's*. The same historian alludes to another poem, which later writers treated as a forgery, the Arimaspeia of Aristeas†. It is a curious coincidence that the legend attached to the origin of the Septuagint, which tells how it was translated by seventy scribes, and thence derived its name, may be traced to the forged letter of a second Aristeas, who was in the service of the Ptolemies in the third century B.C. The letter is probably the invention of some Alexandrine living a century and a half later. The forgeries which have been mentioned are the most striking of those belonging to strictly classical times. Bentley, in his *Dissertation on the Epistles of Phalaris*, quotes a number of others. Among these, one is noticeable, alike for its ingenuity and for the deliberate malignity which it betokens. It is that of Anaximenes, who composed and published, in the name of his rival Theopompus, bitter invectives against the three chief states of Greece, Athens, Thebes and Sparta, with the result that the unfortunate historian was unable to appear in any part of the peninsula‡. This incident recalls some of Defoe's political writings§, and also the *Vindication of Natural Society*, which Burke composed in the style of Lord Bolingbroke, partly as satire, but also, doubtless, with the view of throwing odium on the dead statesman||.

Frequent as forgeries were throughout the intenser intellectual life of Greece, their golden age was not come until the days of decadence that followed the partition of Alexander's Empire. The wealthy libraries of Alexandria and Pergamum afforded an opportunity which was not neglected. Ptolemy Philadelphus and the Attalids were rivals in book-collecting, as well as in dominion; each was ready to give good sums for volumes inscribed with the name of a famous author, without too careful a scrutiny into the authenticity of the prize. More than one writer alludes to the impulse thus given to the forger's art¶. There is a valuable passage in David the Armenian, an Aristotelian commentator of the fifth century A.D., of which the gist may be given. He traces the origin of spurious works to five causes. The first is the good feeling (εὐγνωμοσύνη) of philosophers, which leads them to ascribe their own works to their great masters. Hence, for instance, the name of Pythagoras is attached to the

* Herodotus, ii. 117; iv. 32.

† Herodotus, iv. 13-15.

‡ Bentley, *Phalaris*, p. 82; Pausanias, vi. 18. 5.

§ Cp. p. 30.

|| Morley, *Burke*, p. 12.

¶ Galen, *comm. 2 in Hip. de nat. hom.* Ammonius, *Comm. in Arist. Cat.* p. 10.

writings of the whole Pythagorean school. The second is the greed for lucre which leads men to give a false air of antiquity to books, in order to sell them to great kings who pique themselves on their libraries. Such were Ptolemy, who collected the treatises of Aristotle, and Juba the Libyan, who was a follower of Pythagoras. The third cause is the similarity of names, which leads to confusion; the fourth, the failure to distinguish between the editor of a selection and the author of the passages contained in it. Finally, the zeal of bibliophiles leads them to forge rare books in order to win credit for the possession of them*. Clearly, David's third and fourth causes do not fall properly into the category of forgeries, and the first two alone need occupy us. It was chiefly imitations of Aristotle that Ptolemy was duped into buying, and this fact makes it very difficult to determine what were the genuine writings of that philosopher. Diogenes Laertius quotes the titles of 146 works attributed to him, of which very few have descended to us, and which do not include all that we do possess. It is not improbable, as Grote suggests, that Diogenes' authority was Hermippus of Smyrna. Hermippus lived at the end of the third century B. C., and was employed in the Alexandrine library; so that many of the books in the list were probably forgeries†. It is moreover obvious that any newly discovered treatise of Aristotle purporting to come from an Egyptian source, must be looked on with the greatest suspicion.

The motive of the impositions practised on Ptolemy is patent and sordid: probably the number of pseudo-Aristotelian writings was still further swelled by the other practice mentioned by David, which seems to have prevailed in all philosophical schools. A disciple could at the same time pay honour to his philosophical progenitors and gain authority for his own views, by inscribing his treatise with the name of some earlier teacher. It is easy to see how this proceeding may have appeared quite natural and right. The standards of literary propriety that rule in any age are, like all else, relative to that age; the later philosophers were engaged, not in fighting each for his own hand, but in developing the traditional doctrines of a school: after all, what was said was of more importance than who said it, and so long as the new book was written in the common spirit, it was a small matter whether it was attributed to this or that individual. It is only by grasping this point of view that one can avoid bringing the most improbable charges of

* David Armen., *Comm. in Arist. Cat.* 28 a.

† Diog. Laert. v. 21. Val. Rose. *Aristoteles Pseudepigraphus*. Grote, *Aristotle*, vol. i. ch. 2.

wholesale and rather purposeless deceit against entire bodies of respectable thinkers. Even in classical times we find Plato making his master Socrates the mouthpiece of his doctrines, assuredly not from any low motive, but simply from failing to realise the importance to historical criticism of the distinction between one man's utterances and those of another. In Thucydides we find the germ of another custom which had a similar influence. Just as the historian put imaginary speeches into the mouths of his personages, so, in the lecture-rooms of the later Sophists, compositions modelled on the style and sentiments of famous men formed a favourite rhetorical exercise. Such imitations, if successful, might easily be regarded as genuine, and the real author would probably be too much flattered by the error to care about correcting it*.

After the fall of the Ptolemies, civilization, with forgery at its heels, moved further west. David the Armenian expressly mentions the growth of spurious literature at the court of Juba the Libyan†, and we cannot doubt that Rome was similarly favoured. Indeed, from the first century B. C. onwards, the great wealth of the Romans, their zeal for all forms of Hellenic culture, and their utter want of critical faculty seem to mark them out as the natural prey of the versatile Greek. Even as late as about A. D. 52, the consul Licinius Mucianus was deceived by a letter of the hero Sarpedon, gravely shown to him in a Lycian temple‡. Juba appears to have favoured the philosophy of the neo-Pythagoreans, and it is to his lifetime, coinciding as that does with the *Aufklärung* of the Roman world in the first century, that we must attribute the mass of the spurious Pythagorean literature, the reputed works of Archytas, of Timaeus Locrus, of Ocellus Lucanus. To these Mr. Bywater would add the fragments of Philolaus, which some other critics have surmised to be genuine. The temper of mind in which forgeries find ready acceptance is well illustrated by the genesis of these writings. In the eyes of modern criticism, they are discredited by the manifest plagiarisms from Plato and Aristotle with which they abound. This was exactly what enabled them to pass current when they were first composed. The puny minds of later philosophers could not comprehend the greatness of the successors of Socrates. They assumed that, just as they themselves built upon Plato and Aristotle, so Plato and Aristotle must

* Thuc. i. 22: Hatch, *Hibbert Lectures*, 1890, p. 86. Cf. the *declamatiunculæ* mentioned in Erasmus, *Ep.* i. 1.

† *Op. cit.* on p. 8.

‡ Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* xiii. 13.

have borrowed from others who went before them. Even one of the earliest Peripatetics, Aristoxenus, had asserted that much of the *Republic* was taken from the treatise of Protagoras *On Being**. It was still more natural to exaggerate Plato's real debt, first pointed out by Aristotle, to Pythagoras and the Pythagoreans. In the absence of the historic sense, the really elementary character of Pythagoras' speculations was forgotten, and he became an almost mythical figure, looming large in the forefront of Greek philosophy. Stoics and Peripatetics alike claimed him as the progenitor of their peculiar doctrines. Of whom, if not of Pythagoras and his school, could Plato have been the disciple? Mr. Bywater traces the growth of a legend which finally culminated in the Philolaic forgery. Timon the Pyrrhonist (*circ.* B.C. 279) is the earliest authority for the statement that Plato founded the *Timaeus* upon a book which he bought†. Later writers amplify the story: one asserts that Plato was himself a member of a Pythagorean brotherhood and was expelled; another tells us that the book was by Ocellus Lucanus; a third ascribes it to Timaeus Locrus; a fourth even goes so far as to mention the sum paid for it. The final version is given by Hermippus of Smyrna: it relates that the book was by Philolaus and was obtained through a kinsman of his‡. Hermippus does not say that it existed in his time; if it had, it would probably have been in the library at Alexandria, and we should have heard more of it§. In the first century, however, it certainly did exist, for Demetrius Magnes quotes it. Probably therefore this work, from which the existing Philolaic fragments doubtless came, had a merely phantasmal being for at least two centuries, and was at last forged, to prove the truth of the legend||.

The *Epistles* of Phalaris are not in themselves particularly remarkable. They belong to a group of frigid rhetorical fabrications, in which the *Epistles* of Socrates, of Euripides, and, according to most authorities, of Plato, must also be counted. They are famous because they formed the chief subject of contention in the most exciting literary warfare ever waged. The Battle of the Books, in its various aspects of criticism and personality, occupied the attention of men of letters for several brilliant years at the close of the seven-

* Euseb. P. E. x 3. 24. Diog. Laert. iii. 25.

† Aul. Gell. iii. 17.

‡ Diog. Laert., viii. 7.

§ Cp. p. 9.

|| Bywater, *Journal of Philology*, vol. i. Cp. the forgery of the *De Tribus Impostoribus*, mentioned on p. 28. Another parallel case is that of the forged letter of Marcus Aurelius quoted as attesting the miracle of the Thundering Legion. See Lightfoot, *Apostolic Fathers*, i. 474; E. A. Abbott, *Philomythus*, p. 154.

teenth and beginning of the eighteenth century. It was a tilting-ground on which Temple and Wotton, Bentley and Boyle, Swift and Atterbury all tried their mettle. The humour and refinement of the combatants is astonishing enough, but the solid outcome of the controversy, the masterly dissertation of Bentley, compensates for all. It is a monument of encyclopaedic erudition and acutest reasoning, lavished, as learning and logic too often are, upon a subject hardly worthy of them. Except one Russian savant, no one now believes in the authenticity of the epistles: of their date it can only be said that they were written during the first five centuries of the Christian era. They are mentioned by Stobaeus about 480 A.D.* Nor is the name of their author known; Poliziano attributed them to Lucian, but Bentley had little difficulty in showing that they abounded in mistakes of which Lucian would hardly have been guilty †.

With Phalaris we may close for a time the record of classical forgeries. The intellectual interest of the period upon which we now enter lies, not in the lingering old age of Hellenic literature, but in the new elements brought by Christianity into the life of the West. It is abundantly evident that there existed in the ante-Nicene church a large mass of apocryphal literature claiming, more or less, the authority of Scripture, but not destined to be ultimately regarded as inspired. Thus Irenaeus speaks of an ἀμύθητον πλήθος ἀποκρύφων καὶ νόθων γραφῶν ‡: Epiphanius describes a book relied on by his opponents as an ἐπίπλαστον ἀγώγιμον πῖσμα §. Some of these writings are preserved to us; more have perished. They were, roughly, parallel in character to the books of the New Testament as they now stand: there were Gospels, some of them mere variants upon those of the Evangelists, others, the Gospels of the Nativity, covering those earlier years in the life of Christ of which the trustworthy record is so scanty; there were collections of Acts, supplementing the Acts of the Apostles; there were Epistles and other writings ascribed to Apostles or sub-Apostolic Fathers, such as the Epistles of St. Clement or the works of the pseudo-Dionysius, which so profoundly influenced Dean Colet. Of these all may not have been forgeries; many were, perhaps, authentic and only excluded from the canon because they were not believed to be inspired. But the majority were doubtless more or less conscious fabrications, and though it is hardly possible to trace the origin of individual books, yet the general conditions which explain their composition are fairly evident. They seem to spring

* Jebb, *Life of Bentley*, p. 43.

‡ Irenaeus, *Haer.* i. 20, 1.

† Bentley, *Phalaris*, passim.

§ Epiphanius, *Adv. Haer.* xxvi.

from two main motives. Many of them are due to a pious desire to fill up the gaps in the sacred narrative: these are barely to be called forgeries; they were of the nature of romance, not history, rather designed for edification than for record of fact. The writings of the other class are less innocent: they have their rise in the manifold controversies of the Early Church, and were intended to give a false appearance of authority to particular orthodox or heretical doctrines. The Gnostics, the Ebionites, and that curious ascetic body, the Encratites, seem to have been especially addicted to forgery; probably the Gnostics above all, for they were the most Hellenized of the Christian sects, and would naturally carry into religion the old modes of philosophical polemics. As a rule, the individual authors of apocryphal books are unknown, but several are ascribed to one Leucius Charinus at the end of the second century.

It cannot be denied that these forgeries in the most sacred of matters shock the modern moral sense; there are, however, considerations which must be allowed to modify, if not to dispel our censure. The virtue of intellectual uprightness is regarded to-day as the coping-stone of the ethical life, but this sentiment is one of very recent development; it was by no means universal in more primitive ages. The assumption underlying the attitude of an early Christian towards matters of evidence was rather this, that the mere formal accuracy of a statement was of infinitely less importance than the religious or moral value of its content. The germs of such a view may be easily traced in the antecedents of Christianity. On the one hand the Platonic doctrine of the 'noble lie' pervaded Greek speculation and passed by inheritance to the Hellenistic sects*. On the other, the influences of Judaism tended in the same direction. In the East, men have never been deeply enamoured of truth for truth's sake; fact and imagination shade into each other by gentle gradations; the poet generally gets the better of the historian. And so we find a Jewish Apocrypha, generally taking the form of Apocalypses, which leads naturally to that of Christianity, and prepares us to find that a large proportion of the early forgeries had an Oriental origin.

It cannot be shown that the leaders of the Church encouraged the spread of apocryphal writings. The principle that the end justifies the means was not openly proclaimed until the coming of the Jesuits. But in the absence of a central authority it was not easy to exercise an

* Plato, *Republic*, 382 C, 414 B, 459 D.

† Cp. E. H. Palmer on the Eastern origin of the Apocryphal books; *J. of Philology*, vol. iii.

effective supervision over distant and scattered communities. There is, however, a curious passage in Tertullian's polemic against the ministry of women in churches. His adversaries had quoted against him the spurious *Acts of Paul and Thecla*, and Tertullian states that a presbyter in Asia had confessed to having forged this book, out of much love for Paul, and had been deposed from his presbytership*. Forgery was adopted also by the enemies of the Christians as a weapon against them. The *Acts of Pilate*, or at least one version of them, appear to have been composed early in the fourth century by a certain Theotecnus of Antioch, in order to discredit the church in that city.

In such a state of things, it became imperatively necessary that some canon of the Scriptures should be fixed: this does not seem to have been effected by any one act, but rather by a gradual process of sifting the true from the false. The *Muratorian fragment* (A. D. 170-180) gives a list of canonical books, which differs in only a few respects from that at present accepted. The modern list dates from the express definition of an African synod at Hippo in 393 A. D., repeated in 397 A. D. in the presence of St. Augustine. The fact that no General Council was ever called upon to decide the question may be taken as showing that all the Churches were practically in accord †.

After the definition of the canon, the Apocryphal literature becomes of little importance. The interest of Church history soon shifts from points of doctrine to matters of discipline and of temporal dominion. A notable exception is afforded by the creed ascribed to St. Athanasius. As a confession of faith, its validity depends not on the credit of its author, but on its acceptance by the Church, and it is generally admitted that it cannot have been written by the Father whose name it bears. Indeed, it is only in the eighth century that we find it first called after him. Its theology is Augustinian, and develops the doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation in the most minute detail. Probably it dates from the end of the fifth century. Vincentius of Lerinum, Hilary of Arles, and Vigilius of Thapsus have all been credited with the authorship. If it was by Vigilius, it was only one of several similar fabrications. He was bishop of Thapsus about 484 A. D., and composed several works against the Arian and other heresies, generally under the name of some famous controversialist. Among these were twelve pseudo-

* Tertullian, *De Bapt.* 17.

† Cp. for the whole section on the Apocrypha of the Early Church, Westcott, *Canon of the N. T.*; Tischendorf, *De Evang. Apocryph. orig. et usu*, and *When were our Gospels written?* Schaff, *History of the Church*; Salmon, *Introduction to the study of the New Testament*; Plummer, *Church of the Early Fathers*.

Athanasian books on the Trinity, dialogues between Athanasius and Arius, and a tract against the Arian Felician, which he passed off as St. Augustine's. His object appears to have been to attach authority to his writings*.

Two great ecclesiastical forgeries stand out in the Middle Ages, and claim especial attention because they afford a theoretical basis for the whole power of the Roman see. These are the *Donation of Constantine* and the *pseudo-Isidorian Decretals*. They must be treated separately, because, though they occur in the same manuscript, they date from different periods and were intended to subserve different ends. The earlier of the two is the *Donation of Constantine*. It professes to be a deed of gift, by which the great Emperor, in gratitude for his baptism and for the miraculous cure wrought by Pope Silvester, grants privileges to the clergy, and surrenders to the Pope and his successors jurisdiction in matters of religion and church government, and sovereignty over Rome and Italy. It is necessary to distinguish between the supposed fact of the Donation and the document which asserts it: the former is mentioned in at least the later versions of the *Vita Silvestri*, contained in the *Liber Pontificalis*; the latter not until the later part of the eighth century. The oldest existing text is about seventy years later. Clearly the forgery is Roman in its origin. The Greek form of it is a bad translation, and the object of the whole is to exalt the Roman clergy and the bishop of Rome. There is no reason to suppose that it even records an historic event. Dr. Döllinger thinks it likely that it had its origin somewhere between 752 and 777 A. D., at a time when the turbulence of the Lombards in the north and the doubtful friendship of the Byzantine rulers in the east may have suggested to Pope Gregory II the desirability of attempting to establish an independent temporal power. During the Middle Ages the *Donation* was thoroughly believed in, although the Emperor Otho appears to have recognised its spurious character as early as 999 A. D. It suited the temper of a time which accepted cataclysms and ignored development, and could not conceive how the Church could ever have grown rich and powerful, unless it were through some single act of princely generosity. In the eyes of reformers, who found in the wealth of the papacy the cause of all its shortcomings, the act of Constantine was the beginning of the Church's woes. Dante mourns over it in more than one passage †:—

* Schaff, *Hist. of Post-Nicene Church*, ii. 695. *Biographie Universelle*, s. v. Vigilus. The Creed may date only from the 8th century and the influence of Charlemagne in the Church. Cp. Ffoulkes, *Divisions of Christendom*.

† *Inf.* xix. 115-117; cp. *Par.* xx. 55; *De Monarchia*, ii.

‘Ahi Constantin ! di quanto mal fu madre,
Non la tua conversion, ma quella dote,
Che da te prese il primo ricco padre.’

The fraud was exposed in the fifteenth century, mainly through the efforts of Reginald Pecock and Lorenzo Valla, and the facts are now admitted alike by Protestant and Catholic controversialists*.

The *pseudo-Isidorian Decretals* appeared about the middle of the ninth century. A decretal is an authoritative answer given by the Pope in reply to some question on matters of doctrine, discipline or ritual. Such deliverances had been gathered together from early times, and there was a famous Spanish collection of the fourth century. The forgery also bore the name of a Spaniard, Isidore of Seville, who died in 636 A.D. It contained, besides some authentic documents, the *Donation of Constantine*, and a number of others either spurious or interpolated. They extended from the papacy of St. Clement in the first century to that of Gregory in the eighth, and covered the whole ground of orthodox behaviour and belief. Their genuineness was first impugned by Nicholas of Cusa, and was afterwards made the subject of an attack by Calvin. The object of the writer must have been at once to protect the clergy from the secular power and to preserve them from moral decay; he favours the interests of the bishops, rather than that of the Pope. He has been supposed to be Benedictus Levita of Mayence: all that it is safe to assert is that the work was probably done by some Frankish ecclesiastic or ecclesiastics, shortly before it was made public †.

The remaining forgeries of the Middle Ages resemble in character those already discussed. They are generally of monkish origin, and designed to secure dignities or possessions to some religious community. Since the monks were the sole possessors of sufficient learning to read parchments, they were able to manipulate them as they pleased, without much fear of detection. Thus the inmates of Durham Priory, when summoned to Rome in the beginning of the thirteenth century for the decision of the disputes between them and Bishop de Marisco, were able to produce an elaborate series of documents in support of their claims. These professed to date from the foundation of the priory in 1093, but to the eye of the modern historian they are apparent forgeries, fabricated for the purposes of the trial ‡.

* Döllinger, *Fables respecting the Popes of the Middle Ages*. Schaff, *Hist. of the Med. Church*.

† Schaff, *Hist. of the Med. Church*, i. 267.

‡ Greenwell, *Feodarium Prioratus Dunelmensis* (Surtees Society). H. G. Hewlett, in *Nineteenth Century*, Feb. 1891.

The unlimited leisure which the monks enjoyed gave them every opportunity for the composition of diligent and detailed frauds. This characteristic of the religious life led also to the beginnings of the vast mediæval chronicle-literature. Some preliminary falsification of foundation-charters may have been already necessary, before the stricter monastic rule could be stretched to sanction such an undertaking. Browning speaks of *Chronicles*

‘commenced when some old monk
 Found it intolerable to be sunk
 (Vexed to the quick by his revolting cell)
 Quite out of summer when alive and well:
 Ended when by his mat the Prior stood,
 ‘Mid busy promptings of the brotherhood,
 Striving to coax from his decrepit brains
 The reason Father Porphyry took pains
 To blot those ten lines out which used to stand
 First on their charter drawn by Hildebrand.’

Many of the *Chronicles* are veracious enough and inspired by more of the historic sense than could be expected from the age; here and there one is found whose contents are plagiarised or purely fictitious. The *History of Croyland Abbey* is a typical specimen: it bears the name of Ingulphus, who was Abbot up to 1109 A.D. It is really a compilation from Ordericus Vitalis, Florence of Worcester and others, and serves to introduce a number of charters, which are of suspicious authenticity. The date of it is at least a century after that of Ingulphus, and Professor Morley puts it as late as 1415*. The famous French *Chronicle of Turpin* is not even a plagiarism; most of it is a romance, a mere Latin prose version of the *Chanson de Roland*. It falls into two parts. The first five chapters describe a pilgrimage of Charlemagne to Compostella, and are clearly intended to magnify the shrine of St. James. They are written in the third person, and make no pretence to be by Turpin. The remaining twenty-seven chapters are by another hand, written in the first person, as if they were the veritable narrative of Turpin. St. Denys is more prominent than St. James, and there are plain indications that the author was connected with Vienne. Turpin, or Tilpin, was an historical personage in the days of Charlemagne; he was archbishop of Rheims from 753 to 794 A.D. Neither part of the *Chronicle* can be by him: the first belongs to the end of

* *Materials for Eng. Hist.* (Rolls Series), vol. i. Morley, *English Writers*, iii. 24. H. G. Hewlett, in *Nineteenth Century*, Feb. 1891. The most audacious mediæval forgers were the monks of Glastonbury, who ascribed the *Liber Gradalis* (circ. 1150) to Christ himself. Cp. Paulin Paris, in *Romania*, vol. i.

the eleventh century, the second to the beginning of the twelfth. The origin of the larger fragment, which is chiefly filled with the legendary exploits of Charlemagne's paladins, must be found in some event which brought Vienne and Compostella into relations with each other. This is afforded by the life of Gui de Bourgogne, who was archbishop of Vienne until 1119, made a visit to Compostella in 1108, and afterwards became Pope under the name of Calixtus II. It is not by any means necessary to suppose that the Pope himself condescended to the forgery. There is indeed a bull of Calixtus extant in which allusion is made to the Chronicle, but this, we are assured by M. Léon Gautier, is itself spurious. It seems a plausible theory that a monk of Vienne accompanied the archbishop to Compostella, found there the earlier chapters, and attached to them his imaginative sequel*.

Passing from the Charlemagne cycle of romances to that of the Table Round, we come upon the *Historia Regum Britanniae* composed by Geoffrey of Monmouth. The nature of Geoffrey's work is somewhat uncertain; it is hard to say whether he is or is not to be credited with a literary fraud. His own account is that he drew his material from a book which Walter Calenius, archdeacon of Oxford, brought from Brittany. Various attempts have been made to identify this book; some have believed it to be only the ninth-century *Historia Britonum* of the pseudo-Nennius; but it is very probable that it never existed at all, and that the *Historia Regum Britanniae* was compiled from Welsh traditions and embellished by the fertile fancy of the author. Geoffrey's work was completed by 1147 A.D., and had some influence upon at least the later forms of the Round Table romances†.

The last group of fabrications serves to illustrate how closely the literary forger has always followed in the wake of the chief intellectual interests of his age. So long as the struggle between the Church and the temporal power lasted, his energies were expended upon providing documentary evidence for ecclesiastical claims: when the strictly mediaeval forms of literature, the chronicle and the romance, began to develop, these too provided new spheres for his activity. And in the same way, as the Renaissance draws near, with

* Gaston Paris, *de Pseudo-Turpino*. Léon Gautier, *Les Epopées Françaises*, vol. i. ch. 15. Morley, *English Writers*, vi. 66. Saintsbury, *Hist. of French Lit.* p. 127.

† Morley, *English Writers*, iii. 44. Paulin Paris, *Romans de la Table Ronde*, introd. Gaston Paris in *Hist. Litt. de France*, vol. xxx; *Manuel d'Ancien Français*; Huth *Merlin*, introd.; Romania, xii. pp. 371-374. La Borderie, *L'Historia Britonum et l'Historia Britannica*. Aubertin, *Hist. de la Langue et de la Litt. Françaises*.

the widening of the mental horizon the scope of the forger is also widened. In England the promise of the Renaissance was first shown at the close of the fourteenth century, only to be cut off for another hundred years by the French wars and the wars of the Roses. Two curious frauds mark this period; one is the monkish interpolation of Chaucer's *Parson's Tale*, already described, the other the so-called *Voyage and Travaile of Sir John Maundeville*. The author of this entertaining book states that he left England in 1322, that for thirty-six years he travelled in all parts of the earth, Tartary, Persia, Chaldaea, the Holy Land, Ethiopia and India, and that, finally, in 1356, being forced to return home by the rheumatic gout, he wrote an account of his wanderings, first in Latin, then in French and in English. The book is full of extraordinary views on natural history, and of travellers' tales after the fashion of Herodotus. Modern criticism denies that it is a record of actual journeyings; it is in reality an elaborate and ingenious cento of passages taken from a number of earlier itineraries, among which those of William of Boldensele, Jaques à Vitry and Odericus of Friuli are the chief. It is also greatly indebted to the *Legenda Aurea* of Jacobus à Voragine. There is no reason to suppose that the writer ever left the shores of Europe. Moreover he could not have written the English version himself; that is a later and often faulty translation from a French original. His name remains at present a mystery: to that of Maundeville he probably had no right. There are certain allusions in the works of one Jean d'Outremeuse, a chronicler of Liège, which may some day throw light on the matter. We are informed that there was a certain physician at Liège called Jean de Bourgoyne, or John with the Beard. This man, being forced to leave England in 1343 for the murder of an earl, bound himself to travel over three parts of the world, but never got further than Liège. On his deathbed he made the chronicler his confidant, and claimed to be Sir John Maundeville, Earl of Montfort. It may be remarked, in the first place, that these titles are unknown to heralds; in the second, that John with the Beard is mentioned in the *Voyage and Travaile*, and is said to have urged Maundeville to write; in the third, that there was a John de Maundeville banished for the murder of Gaveston in 1312 and pardoned in the next year; there was also a Jean de Bourgoyne banished in 1321 for an attack on the Despensers. There has evidently been some lying somewhere, and it is next to impossible to discover the truth now; but it is hard not to suspect that Jean d'Outremeuse himself had a hand in the fraud, especially when we find

that he used some of Maundeville's material over again in his *Myreur des Histoires**.

In the fifteenth century, after a long interval, men began once again to forge, as they had already begun to read, the classics. The fables written about 1327 by Planudes Maximus, 'that idiot of a monk,' as Bentley calls him, and passed off as Aesop's, form a link between the Renaissance and the Roman age, in which another 'parcel' of pseudo-Aesopic fables had already been written by Babrius†. It does not appear that the invention of printing made things much easier for the forger. He might very well publish a sham antique and trust to the loose scholarship of an uncritical age to save him from the necessity of producing the original; but then there had never been much difficulty in putting off inquisitive friends with a written transcript upon some plea or another. Such a course would now awaken suspicion at once, but our ancestors were far more confiding.

The most notable forgery of the Renaissance was that of Jean Nanni, or Annius, of Viterbo. Annius was a considerable scholar, learned in Latin, Greek and Hebrew; he held an official position in the household of Alexander VI, and, in that lax court, enjoyed a somewhat austere moral reputation. There is indeed a story that he was poisoned by the Pope's 'nephew,' Caesar Borgia, for weariness of his exhortations to virtue. The character of his *Antiquitatum variarum volumina* xvii, published in 1498, is therefore the more surprising. It contained works, until that time unknown, of Berosus, Fabius Pictor, Myrsilus, Manetho, Sempronius, Archilochus, Cato and Megasthenes. The originals were said by Annius to have been found in a journey to Mantua, but there is no doubt that the books are spurious, and very little that Annius wrote them himself. This was the view of Agostini and of Isaac Casaubon, but it was by no means invariably accepted at the time. On the contrary, the fragments went through many editions and found learned defenders‡. One of these was Charles Sigonio of Modena, but then Sigonio was a kindred spirit. Chancing to light upon a fragment of Cicero's book *De Consolatione*, he was struck with the idea of completing it and passing off the whole as genuine. The fraud

* Warner, ed. of *Maundeville* (Roxburghe Club). Morley, *English Writers*, iv. 279.

† Bentley, *Phalaris*, pp. 269, sqq. Since Bentley wrote, a number of fables by Babrius have been found, in 1830, at a monastery on Mt. Athos. The discoverer, Minoides Menas, added some of his own, which were edited by G. C. Lewis. Cf. Rutherford, *Babrius*, introd.

‡ *Biographie Universelle*, s. v. Annius. I. Disraeli, *Cur. of Lit.* vol. vi. Hallam, *Lit. of Eur.* i. 3, 241.

was discovered by his pupil Riccoboni, but Sigonio persistently denied it, and so Ciceronian was his Latinity that he was able to convince the learned world. Nearly three centuries later, the discovery at Modena of some of Sigonio's correspondence revealed the truth*. The forgeries of Nanni and Sigonio in Italy were paralleled in 1529, in Spain, by those of a high church dignitary, Antoine Guevara, archbishop of Montenedo. Guevara, who is known as *historicus mendacissimus*, fabricated a number of letters of Marcus Aurelius and published them in the so-called *Golden Book* (*Libro aureo de Marco Aurelio emperador*). This book is important in the history of literature, through the ornate and affected style (*alto estilo*) of the author. It was translated into English by Lord Berners, and, again, as *The Dial of Princes*, by Sir Thomas North, and became the parent of the fashionable 'Euphuism' of John Lyly†. It is an amusing fact that Rabelais in his early days was the victim of a forgery. He published in 1582 two legal documents which he believed to be genuine relics of Roman antiquity, but which were really due to the humour of two contemporaries, Pomponius Laetus and Jovienus Pontanus‡. But greater scholars than Rabelais have been beguiled; for Bentley records how Muretus imposed upon Scaliger with some Latin verses of his own.§ It has been held that we ought to add to the list of Renaissance forgeries the first six books of Tacitus' *Annals*. The history of these is a little mysterious. There is an apparent reference to them in the writings of Ruodolphus of Fulda, a monk of the ninth century. From that time they are never mentioned or quoted until 1425, when Poggio Bracciolini speaks of some unknown works of Tacitus said to be preserved at Hersfeld, near Fulda. In 1509, they were brought to Rome by one of the Medici, and soon afterwards published. Some dozen years ago, a theory was started that they are an ingenious forgery, due to Poggio Bracciolini himself. It is, however, dismissed by Mr. Furneaux, in his edition of the *Annals*, as hardly deserving of discussion ||.

In England, there is little to record before the seventeenth century. There are the *Casket Letters*, those love-effusions in verse and prose said to have been written by Mary Queen

* *Biographie Universelle*, s. v. Sigonius. Hallam, *Lit. of Eur.* ii. 1, 508.

† *Biographie Universelle*, s. v. Guevara. Landmann, *Shakespeare and Euphuism* (New Sh. Soc. Transactions, 1880-85). Hallam, *Lit. of Eur.* i. 7, 397.

‡ Lang, *Books and Bookmen. Biog. Univ.*, s. v. Rabelais.

§ Bentley, *Phalaris*, p. 82. Boxhornius also was deceived by a poem of Michel de l'Hôpital, *De Lite*, and Wolfius by an Aesopic fable of Père Commire's.

|| Furneaux, *Tacitus Ann.* i-vi. pp. 5, 7.

of Scots to Bothwell, and produced by Moray, in a 'silver box o'ergilt with gold,' as the most damning count in the indictment against his sister and sovereign. The real character of these letters is one of the many mysteries which veil our vision of the 'tragic Mary.' Were they indeed what they professed to be? or were they, as has been rather boldly suggested, written originally to Darnley and then interpolated? or must we set them down as a black forgery of Morton and his henchman Buchanan, who served Mary for a while, and then wrote the infamous *Detectio*? Historians seem unable to agree. Mr. Froude thinks them genuine; Professor Creighton, and Mr. Skelton, the biographer of Maitland of Lethington, who has gone carefully into the evidence, do not. It need only be here said that, if they are a forgery, the infamy of the motive from which they spring must put all others to the blush*.

Considerable difficulty has been caused to historians of literature by what may be called the Shakespeare-apocrypha. The mere fact that a play is entered as Shakespeare's in the Stationers' register, or that it bears his name or initials upon the title-page, is by no means sufficient evidence that it is in any reasonable sense his work. It was by no means every dramatist whose effusions would pay for the printing, and Elizabethan publishers were not above making use of Shakespeare's acknowledged reputation to imp out that of meaner men. Thus for a period of nearly eighty years, up to as late as 1660, we constantly find plays ascribed to the master-dramatist which he cannot possibly have written. Of course a distinction must be made; the latest of these plays, the *King Stephen* or the *Iphis and Ianthe* of the Restoration, he cannot even have seen: of the earlier ones a fair proportion were produced by the King's Players, and in these he may have had a hand. The result is that no external criterion can be set up to distinguish between Shakespeare's own work and that of his fellows. The selection made by Heminge and Condell for the 1623 folio is not sufficient: probably Shakespeare did no more for *Pericles* and *Henry VIII*, which are in that, than he did for *Edward III*, which is not. The subject serves exceedingly well to illustrate the loose ideas of literary property which have prevailed during most ages of the world's history †.

Shakespeare's fame has never paled, and therefore he has

* Froude, *Hist. of Eng.* ix. 396. Creighton, *Age of Elizabeth*, p. 78. Skelton, *Maitland of Lethington*, vol. ii.

† Fleay, *Life and Work of Shakespeare*. Arber, *Stationers' Registers: &c.* *The Passionate Pilgrim* was for long accepted as Shakespeare's through the fraud of Jaggard, a piratical publisher.

always been from time to time the victim of the literary forger. In the last century W. H. Ireland, in this Mr. J. Payne Collier, have been those who have injured him most ; now that he is in question, we may consider them here, in spite of the claims of chronological order. It was in 1796 that Samuel Ireland, a rather insignificant literary man, first began to exhibit at his house a number of Shakespearean relics. These were interesting and varied, and included a letter from the poet to Anne Hathaway, inclosing a lock of his hair, a letter from Queen Elizabeth, a profession of faith, a catalogue of Shakespeare's library, a deed of gift to an ancestor of Ireland's own for saving him from drowning, and another deed appointing Heminge and Condell trustees of his literary property. The account given of the documents was that they had been obtained by Ireland's son, a solicitor's clerk, from a gentleman who wished to remain unknown. It then turned out that there existed in the same hands two forgotten plays of Shakespeare, *Vortigern and Rowena* and *Henry II.* Popular excitement was aroused ; Sheridan came forward and offered to produce *Vortigern and Rowena* on the stage. This he did, and the play was damned amid the laughter of the pit. Then the whole secret came out. Suspicions had already been aroused as to the genuineness of the documents. Malone, the eminent critic, published an elaborate inquiry, in which he attempted to demonstrate their falsity. Before the end of the year his attitude was justified. William Henry Ireland published an *Authentic Account* of the transaction, in which he asserted that the 'literary gentleman' was a myth, and that he himself had written both papers and plays, inspired thereto by his father's enthusiasm for everything connected with the poet. Some years afterwards he repeated his version of the facts at great detail in a volume of *Confessions*. It is not quite certain, however, that it is the true one. Samuel Ireland disclaimed all knowledge of his son's conduct, but Dr. C. M. Ingleby believes that he was the prime mover in the fraud, and that the whole of the Ireland household was occupied in carrying out his design. The same writer states that, even when the truth was discovered, so many people wished to have a specimen of the imitations that Ireland was able to turn his talent to still further account by forging duplicates of his own forgeries*.

The case of John Payne Collier is a very strange one. Few men have done more good work than he in reviving

* Malone, *Inquiry into Shakespeare Papers*. Chalmers, *Apology for the Believers*. Lang, *Books and Bookmen*. Ingleby, *Shakespeare Fabrications*. The story of Ireland forms the subject of Mr. James Payn's novel, *The Talk of the Town*.

the literature of the poet ; he was foremost among the contributors to both the Shakespeare and the Percy Societies. But some strange freak of temperament inspired him with the desire to forge, and he forged liberally and unblushingly. Curiously enough, at the very beginning of his career, he was imprisoned and reprimanded by the House of Commons for falsifying the report of a debate. Shortly after this he turned to literature, and became librarian to the Duke of Devonshire. It is impossible to give a list of all the forgeries by which his *History of English Dramatic Poetry*, his *Memoirs of Alleyn*, and several minor works are disfigured. He seems to have freely falsified documents in Bridgewater House, in Dulwich College Library, even in the State Paper Office and the British Museum. His *opus magnum* was the famous *Perkins Folio*. Already in 1842 he had issued a first edition of Shakespeare, enriched by the emendations made by a seventeenth-century hand on the margin of the Duke of Devonshire's copy of the 1623 folio. In the light of what happened afterwards, we may fairly mistrust these emendations. In 1852, Collier announced that some three years before he had purchased a copy of the second folio Shakespeare of 1632, and that he now found that the margins of this were full of corrections of the text. The book bore the name of Thomas Perkins, and to this early owner, whom he believed to have been almost a contemporary of the poet, Collier ascribed the corrections. It is unnecessary to go minutely into the controversy which raged around the *Perkins Folio* and the volume of lectures by Coleridge on Shakespeare and Milton, published by Collier in 1856 from notes taken at the time when they were given. The lectures are open to suspicion : the *marginalia* on the folio have been proved to be forgeries. In 1859 the book was submitted to critical inspection, and it became apparent that, besides the ink-marks of the 'old corrector,' there existed traces of pencil-marks in a modern hand. By aid of a powerful microscope it was proved further that in many cases the pencil-marks underlay the ink-marks, which could not therefore be of any antiquity. The results of these investigations were published by Mr. Hamilton, of the British Museum, and proved unanswerable. It was still an open question whether Collier was himself the forger or merely a dupe. This was cleared up after his death. Among his papers was found a transcript of one of the interpolated Dulwich records, in which the interpolations had been neatly filled in in Collier's own hand*.

* Collier's publications, *passim*. Stephen, *Dict. of Nat. Biog.* s. v. Collier. Ingleby, *Shakespeare Fabrications* and *Complete View*, &c. Hamilton, *Inquiry*.

The only other Shakespeare forger who deserves mention is George Steevens, 'the Puck of commentators,' as Gifford calls him. Steevens was a bitter rival of Malone, and used to amuse himself by inventing imaginary facts about Shakespeare and communicating them under pseudonyms to some journal which Malone was sure to see. If he was led to quote them, Steevens would gravely correct the error over his own signature. Isaac Disraeli states that it is to the invention of Steevens that we owe the marvellous story of the deadly Upas-tree of Java*.

The seventeenth century affords one great forgery, that of the *Eikon Basilike*, and several small ones. The early history of Spain was manipulated by the Jesuit, Jerome de Higuerra. In his regret that the events which accompanied the conversion of that country to Christianity had not been more fully recorded, he was led to cite Flavius Dexter as an authority on the subject. Now Flavius Dexter was a writer of the first half of the fourth century, and he is quoted by Saint Jerome, but his works have perished. This fact was a difficulty in Higuerra's way, but it was got over by the aid of his fellow-Jesuit Torialba, who succeeded in producing a satisfactory but, unfortunately, spurious manuscript. This he said he had found at the monastery of Fulda, and it was given to the world in 1619. A somewhat similar case was that of the Frenchman Antoine Varillas, who wrote a *History of Heresies*, in which he made free use of purely imaginary authorities; the fraud was discovered, but none the less Varillas died in 1596 in the odour of sanctity. 'Si la réputation de Varillas,' says M. Vigneut-Marville, 'a bronché du côté des lettres, elle est demeurée ferme du côté de la piété et de la vertu. C'était un philosophe chrétien†.' One cannot help contrasting this story with that of M. Daudet's Academician, the elder Astier, who spent a lifetime in the study of history, who was once alluded to by Mommsen, in a note, as *ineptissimus vir*, and who finally committed suicide when he discovered that he had been for years the dupe of a cunning forger‡. The tradition of Annius and Sigonius is continued in this century by Curzio Inghirami, who wrote a number of Etruscan fragments and said he had dug them up in a field. This was in 1637, at Volterra. When the field was examined, a fresh supply of fragments was found, together with part of a chronicle by Prosper Fesulanus, a Roman officer, dating from about

* I. Disraeli, *Cur. of Lit.* vol. vi.

† *Biog. Univ.* s. v. *Varillas*. I. Disraeli, *Curiosities*.

‡ A. Daudet, *L'Immortel*.

60 B. C.* In 1663 a genuine fragment of Petronius was found at Trau in Dalmatia; this was speedily followed by a forged one published by Nodot in 1694 as the discovery of an officer at Belgrade. A third was fabricated in 1800 by Marchena, who pretended to have come upon an unknown manuscript at Saint-Gall.

The *Eikon Basilike*, like the *Casket Letters*, is memorable for its intimate association with one of the tragedies of history. The examination of the printer, Royston, before the Council of State, shows that it was originally intended to issue it, under the title of *Suspiria Regalia*, or *The King's Plea*, during the trial of Charles I, in the hope of influencing public opinion in his favour. It must have been carefully designed to this end. The body of the book consists in a retrospect, apparently by the king's own hand, of the events since the calling of his last Parliament. It deals in a spirit half of vindication, half of apology, with the more dubious parts of his policy, such as the sacrifice of Strafford. Inserted at intervals are appropriate prayers and religious musings, while other prayers, together with a somewhat pathetic letter to his son, written in the presence of imminent death, form a sort of appendix. The printer was not ready in time, and the book did not appear until Feb. 9th, 1649, ten days after the execution of Charles. Viewed apart from the circumstances of its production, the literary value of the book is small; it is composed in a style of second-rate rhetoric: but it was received with favour by the royalists. Forty-seven editions appeared in the course of 1649, and the efforts of the Government to suppress it were ineffectual. Clarendon, writing in April to a friend of the queen, praises it as an 'immortal monument of his intense affection to and value of her Majesty.' Sir E. Nicholas calls it 'the most exquisite pious and princely piece ever written.' We could scarcely expect criticism from such readers. On the republican side, it was not long before doubts of the royal authorship were plainly hinted, and, in August, a pamphlet called the *Eikon Alethine* boldly suggested that it was written by a prelate. This contains a frontispiece in which the king is shown writing at a table, while a divine dictates to him from behind a curtain. These accusations were promptly answered in *The Princely Pelican*. As the best way of neutralising the effect of the *Eikon*, Milton had undertaken to write a counter-blast. This, the *Eikonoclastes*, appeared on Oct. 6. It was Milton's primary object to refute the theory of the king's character and actions put forward in the *Eikon Basilike*; therefore he hardly touches upon the question of

* *Biog. Univ.* s. v. *Inghirami*. I. Disraeli, *Curiosities*.

its authenticity, except in stray phrases aimed at the 'secret coadjutor' and 'household rhetorician,' and in a doubt whether the style was Charles's. The most famous passage in the pamphlet is that in which Milton points out that one of the appended prayers is a plagiarism from Sidney, 'stolen word for word from the mouth of a heathen woman praying to a heathen god; and that in no serious book, but in the vain amatorious poem of Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia*.' The point is noteworthy, because the prayer of Pamela is not found in every edition of the *Eikon*, and certain royalists asserted that it was interpolated by Milton himself. This is incredible, but Dr. Johnson seems to have credited it.

The secret of the real authorship of the *Eikon Basilike* is revealed by the correspondence of a certain Dr. Gauden, 'a churchman,' says Pattison, 'whom his friends might call liberal, and his enemies timeserving.' Gauden had been rewarded by the Parliament for an attack on the policy of Laud; he had afterwards adopted the royalist cause, and, during the Commonwealth, had again turned his coat and signed the Covenant. The claims of such a record upon the court party could not be great, but, upon the Restoration in 1660, Gauden received the bishopric of Exeter. With this he was not content, and, in the course of the next year he began to write to Clarendon, the Chancellor, and Nicholas, the Secretary of State, dwelling upon his services to the late king and demanding further recompense. His early letters are filled with hints of some extraordinary 'service and merit,' and with veiled threats to apply personally to Charles II. Presently he becomes more explicit. On Jan. 21, 1661, he definitely claims to have written the *Eikon*; 'this book and figure was wholly and only my invention, making and designe.' He asserts further that it was conveyed to the king in the Isle of Wight by the Duke of Somerset and Dr. Duppa, bishop of Winchester, that Charles II knew of the fact through the Duke of York, and that Dr. Morley, bishop of Worcester, had imparted the 'arcanum' to Clarendon himself. Upon March 13, the Lord Chancellor replies to Gauden for the first time. In his letter occurs the following passage: 'The particular which you often renewed, I do confesse was imparted to me under secrecy, and of which I did not take myself to be at liberty to take notice; and truly when it ceases to be a secret I know nobody will be gladd of it but Mr. Milton; I have very often wished I had never been trusted with it.' There the correspondence stops, but in March, 1662, Gauden was addressed as the author of the *Eikon* by the Earl of Bristol,

and in the same month he further asserted that Dr. Sheldon, bishop of London, was aware of the truth. In May he was translated to the see of Worcester. There can be no doubt that Gauden's story is the true one. The proof of it rests, not upon his own statement, but upon the attitude of Clarendon. The inference from the following facts is overwhelming. Clarendon practically admits the truth of Gauden's assertion in his letter. Morley, Duppa, and Sheldon were still alive, and could have been at once appealed to, to deny it if it were false. Gauden, a very lukewarm Episcopalian, was promoted successively to two rich benefices. Finally, Clarendon makes no allusion to the *Eikon* in his history. Clearly, he believed Gauden, and, clearly, he had every means of finding out the truth. There is the further evidence of Gauden's wife and his curate, Walker, who both confirmed his account after his death. Walker stated further that Duppa himself had written two chapters of the book. Those who defend the royal authorship have a most flimsy case; they are driven to rely chiefly upon stories of the manuscript having been seen among the king's papers at an early period. Some of these can however be definitely traced to misconceptions. It is not surprising that the partisans of Charles are persistent in their belief in the *Eikon*; the truth goes far to shatter certain illusions about the 'royal martyr,' which for the most part have their source in it. It has often been made evident that any forgery is bound to succeed, whatever the critics may say, which can appeal to prejudice or passion*.

The Protestant sectaries, like the Gnostic heretics, cannot be acquitted of attempting to prop up their doctrines by forgery. The London printers were ready enough to accommodate them. Texts were omitted altogether or sufficiently perverted to bear the desired interpretation. The most famous instance is afforded by the *Pearl Bible*, printed by one Field in 1653. In the authorised version, Acts vi. 3 runs as follows—'Wherefore, brethren, look ye out among you seven men of honest report, full of the holy Ghost and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business.' In the *Pearl Bible*, 'ye' takes the place of 'we.' This may of course be a mere misprint—there were 6,000 *errata* in one Bible of the day; but there is some plausibility in the story that Field received £1,500 from the Independents to make the change, in order that the text might appear to sanction the appointment of ministers by the congregation†.

A truly vexed question in bibliography is the history of

* Masson, *Life of Milton*. Pattison, *Life of Milton*. Symonds, *Life of Sidney*.
Ed. Review, xlv.

† I. Disraeli, *Curiosities of Lit.* vol. vi.

that very rare tract, the *De Tribus Impostoribus*. It is probably a close parallel to that of the fragments of Philolaus. About the beginning of the century, vague rumours of a book of that name, 'vrai chef-d'œuvre d'impïété,' begin to make themselves heard. The Carmelite Geronymo de la Madre de Dios says, in 1611, that it impugned Moses, Christ, and Mahomet, and had been printed in Germany in the year before. He does not seem to have seen the book himself, and, though references to it are numerous in the course of the next hundred years, it is curious that no one could say that he had actually seen it. The wildest stories were current as to the authorship; it was in turn imputed to Frederick Barbarossa, Averrhoes, Campanella, Machiavel, Erasmus, Rabelais, Giordano Bruno, Vanini, Boccaccio, Poggio, Aretino, Ramus, even Milton. Campanella, to escape the charge, declared that it was printed in 1538, thirty years before he was born, but a statement made under such conditions scarcely deserves credit. Sceptics were not wanting, who denied that the book existed; among these were Bayle and Grotius, and there is little doubt that they were right. There is indeed a very rare *De Tribus Impostoribus* now in existence, but that is universally admitted to be a forgery. It is not so certain who forged it, and why. A very likely date is 1698, for, a few years before, Christina of Sweden, who seems to have been unusually anxious to peruse the book, offered 30,000 francs for a copy. The bribe was a big one, and Christina may have been treated no better than Ptolemy in his search for Aristotles. It is often stated that the printer was Staub of Vienna, and the date 1753. Brunet quotes P. Marchand as his authority for the fact that a *De Tribus Impostoribus*, which may, of course, have been in manuscript, was sold in 1716. If so, the 1753 edition was perhaps based on a copy of this. There is yet a third theory, that the Duc de la Vallière and the Abbé de Saint Leger had it printed in 1753, with the intent of beguiling the famous book-fancier, De Bure. This cannot be true, because there is a record by the Duc's librarian, to the effect that his copy was bought in 1765*.

M. Philarète Chasles, an acute critic of our books and manners, has commented upon the prevalence of literary frauds as a characteristic trait of the eighteenth century. 'Il n'y a pas,' he says, 'dans l'histoire littéraire, de groupe plus bizarre que celui des pseudonymes anglais, qui abondent entre 1688 et 1800, ni de question plus neuve et moins expliquée. C'est alors qu'une trentaine d'écrivains, entre

* Gustave Brunet, *De Trib. Imp.* T. C. Brunet, *Manuel du Libraire*. I. Disraeli, *Curiosities of Lit.* vol. vi.

lesquels je choisirai les plus notables, renoncent de parti délibéré aux splendeurs du nom propre, et sacrifient leur vanité à leur intérêt ou à leurs passions. La gloire vient quelquefois les chercher, toujours malgré eux.' It has already been pointed out, that, as civilisation advances, the scope of the forger widens with the widening interests of humanity in general. This is especially the case in the eighteenth century; it is very difficult to classify the numerous crop of fabrications that have to be dealt with. The few, however, of which special mention can be made, fall fairly well under three distinct heads: they are the political, religious or politico-religious, the classical, and the strictly literary.

The first group is a somewhat miscellaneous one; it includes works of very varied character, but all spring from the same kind of motive. Burke's *Vindication of Natural Society* has been already mentioned; it was besides a freak of youth and of slight importance. M. Chasles maintains that many of the fictions of Defoe were intended to be read as veracious narratives and in various indirect ways to aid the cause of nonconformity, of which their author was so eminent a champion. Such would be the *Memoirs of a Cavalier*, and that curious *True Relation of the Appearance of Mrs. Veal* which served to puff the sale of Drelincourt's *Consolations against Death*. The vraisemblance of Defoe's fiction is great, and, whatever his intent, it was certainly taken in many cases for fact. Thus a learned physician quotes medical details in a grave book, taken from the *Journal of the Plague Year*. Defoe was less fortunate in his *Shortest Way with the Dissenters*, which, though conceived in a spirit of the bitterest satire, was taken in earnest, and highly extolled by several churchmen. When the truth was made apparent, it brought him to the pillory†. Since Defoe, and largely through his influence, the fictitious memoir has become a recognised literary type. Indeed, the spheres of the novel and the autobiography tend to overlap considerably; many novels, such as *Villette*, present records of personal experience; many autobiographies appear to be at least touched with imagination. One side of the nonconformist movement is represented by Defoe, another, the hostility to the Jesuits, by the strange impostor George Psalmanaazaar. In his later days, Psalmanaazaar was a blameless and hard-working literary hack, with whom Johnson used to go and sit 'at an alehouse in the city,' whom he admired and esteemed, and never contradicted,

* Chasles, *Le dix-huitième Siècle en Angleterre*, ii. 213.

† Chasles, *op. cit.* ii. 213-225. Morley, *Early Writings of Defoe* (Carisbrooke Library). Minto, *Life of Defoe*.

for he would 'as soon have thought of contradicting a bishop.' The first half of his life was, however, a tissue of falsehood. He has described it himself in his *Memoirs*. His real name and country are uncertain, but he was probably born in the South of France. He took the name of Salmanaazaar or Psalmanaazaar, and passed himself off first as an Irishman, then as a Japanese. At Sluys he fell in with an unprincipled Scotch clergyman named Innys. By him he was induced to play the part of a native of Formosa, who had been brought to Europe by the Jesuits, and had become a convert to the English church. He went to London with Innys, and in 1704 published *An Historical and Geographical Description of Formosa*. This contained a number of impossible stories about that little known island, together with an account of his own conversion, and violent attacks upon the Jesuits, which speedily rendered the book popular. The following is given as a specimen of the language of Formosa*—'Gistaye, O Israel, Jerh vie oi Korian sai Pagot, dan baynaye sen tuen badi tuen Egypto, kay tuen Kaa tuen slapat,' i.e. 'Hear, O Israel, I am the Lord thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, and out of the house of bondage.' Innys pushed himself into promotion by means of his *protégé*, and Psalmanaazaar was able to live on the success of his fraud. At last he was moved to repent by a perusal of Law's *Serious Call*, made a confession, and began to lead a decent and honest life †.

The forgeries of William Lauder sprang out of the hatred of a Jacobite and Tory for the genius of the Puritan Milton. He began by writing articles accusing the author of *Paradise Lost* of plagiarism, and presently reprinted these in a pamphlet with a preface by Johnson. To establish his parallels, he ascribed passages of his own invention either to Milton or to the earlier writers from whom he pretended they were borrowed. Then he became still bolder. He took passages from Hogg's Latin version of the *Paradise Lost*, and interpolated with these Grotius' *Adamus Exul* and the writings of obscure poets, such as Massenius, Taubmannus and Staphorstius. This finally led to his detection by Dr. John Douglas, afterwards bishop of Salisbury, and an Oxford tutor named Bowle ‡.

The classical forgeries of the age are of less importance. In 1738, a Venetian poet, Jean Corradino dell' Aglio, published a new edition of Catullus from a manuscript which

* *Hist. and Geog. Descr. of Formosa*, p. 273.

† *Boswell's Johnson*, ed. Hill, p. 314, app. A. Chasles, *op. cit.* ii. 225-229. I. Disraeli, *Curiosities of Lit.* vol. vi.

‡ *Pattison, Life of Milton*. Chasles, *op. cit.* ii. 229-232.

he said was found at Rome, but which was really due to his own ingenuity*. Another imitation of Catullus was put forward by Marchena, who had already tried his hand on Petronius. Eichstadt of Jena, entering into the joke, professed to have another version of the same fragment, and corrected from it Marchena's errors of prosody†. Of the same type as these are the forgeries of mediaeval Arabic documents, produced by the Abbé Joseph Vella from 1789 to 1794. The object of these was to elucidate the relations of the Turkish and Norman rulers of Sicily, and they were ingeniously inserted by Vella in manuscripts which he had rendered almost illegible. He claimed also to have found an Arabic version of the lost books of Livy, but the only portion he could produce was a manifest translation from the *Épitome* of Florus. It is satisfactory to find that Vella was condemned to fifteen years' imprisonment for his misdoing‡.

As the eighteenth century labours heavily to its close, there becomes visible the dawn of a new epoch of poetry. It reveals itself in the resurgence of the perennial spirit of romance, ardent as ever for beauty, and, above all, the beauty of what is strange, and contemptuous as ever of literary tradition and of literary commonplace. Among those in whom this spirit first found expression must be set for ever the names of Chatterton and of Macpherson. Chatterton is the greatest of all forgers, not because of his success, for after all he deceived none except Dean Milles and a few stupid provincial pedants; all the real critics of his day, Gray and Mason, Warton and Tyrwhitt, were against him. As a man he is interesting for the tragic close that throws a glamour over the whole of his short life; as a poet for the undeniable touch of genius, crude and immature enough, which yet bears the 'promise and potency' of a new song unknown to the Dunciad. He is one of the greatest of those 'inheritors of unfulfilled renown' who star the pages of our literature, and later poets have never been slow to hail him as a pioneer. It is hardly needful to recount the familiar story of the Rowley poems. They were the work of extreme youth, and it seems hardly conceivable that they were ever credited out of Bristol. Professor Skeat has conclusively proved them to be forgeries, if proof were wanting, by tracing the genesis of the Rowley dialect in the inaccurate dictionaries of the day. The manuscripts, too, which still exist, will not bear an hour's examination. But it is impossible to quit the subject without an attempt at the fascinating and insoluble

* *Biog. Univ.* s. v. Corradino.

† Lang, *Books and Bookmen*.

‡ *Biog. Univ.* s. v. Vella. Freeland, *Lectures*.

problem of determining what were the motives of the boy-poet in entering on a career of forgery. If only Browning had 'parleyed' with Chatterton!—but the task would have tried even his power of psychological reconstruction. In the first place it is clear that there were in Chatterton two personalities : one the attorney's clerk, somewhat sordid and given to dubious pleasures ; the other of finer stuff, imaginative, intense, creative. The first of these was glad enough to put a few shillings in his pocket by the forgeries, but it was from the second that in the true sense they came. This Chatterton had his being in the past ; he had learnt to read in a black-letter Bible ; he pored over history and every fragment of antiquity that he came across : above all, the church of St. Mary Redcliffe had enchained his fancy from childhood. As he lay in the wind-blown grass and watched its majestic spire, it became an 'angel-trodden stair' whereby his soul moved back over four centuries, until Canynge, Rowley and John a Iscam were far more real than the Burgums and Catcotts with whom he daily consorted. And of this dream-life his poems were a very vital part ; they must have seemed to come to him across the ages, and not to be his in the same sense as his occasional satires or the love-verses written to please a friend. One more point completes the explanation. He was indeed very proud, very conscious of his mental superiority to his Bristol acquaintance, very eager for renown. When he was six years old he cried out, 'Paint me an angel with wings and a trumpet to trumpet my name over the world.' Rossetti's lines sum up his nature :

'With Shakspeare's manhood at a boy's wild heart,—
Through Hamlet's doubt to Shakspeare near allied,
And kin to Milton through his Satan's pride.'

But it was not in Bristol that he wanted renown ; he had too thorough a contempt for his fellow-citizens ; the savour of their applause would never win his secret. It is not hard to understand how such an one may have deliberately preferred not to break the spell of his dream poetry by writing his name at the bottom, forcing thus into definite consciousness the fact that, after all, it was only the outcome of his own art. In some paradoxical state of mind like this must lie the secret of the Chatterton forgeries*.

Macpherson stands to Gaelic poetry in somewhat the same relation that Chatterton does to that of Middle English. But probably the extent of Macpherson's forgeries has been greatly exaggerated. The domineering personality of Dr.

* *Aldine Chatterton*, Life by Bell, Essay by W. W. Skeat. Masson, *English Poets*.

Johnson, ill informed with facts, has prejudged alike contemporary and subsequent criticism. It was in 1760 that Macpherson published his first translations from the Gaelic, and in 1762 and 1763, he followed these up with the twin epics of *Fingal* and *Temora*. These were the result of a tour through the west Highlands, taken with two other Badenoch men, in search of poetic material. They are poems full of tears, written, according to the translator, by the last of the Fienne, Ossian or Oisín the son of Finn, and preserved by tradition. Since Macpherson wrote, the labours of Celtic scholars have abundantly proved the existence in Scotland and Ireland alike of a mass of literature of the Ossianic type, some of which has lingered in the memory of the peasantry until quite recent times, while other specimens are preserved in the MSS. of James Macgregor, Dean of Lismore, who died about 1551. On the other hand, the epics cannot have been found by Macpherson in their present form; it is doubtful indeed whether there ever was a really primitive epic; and in *Fingal* and *Temora* legends have been gathered together from two distinct cycles, an early heroic one, and a much later Fenian cycle, which first appears in the twelfth century. How much in them is genuine, how much added by Macpherson, specialists in Gaelic must decide; at present they cannot agree whether the Gaelic version published by the Highland Society in 1807 is a translation from the English or the original of it. But it seems safe to assert that there is at least a nucleus of popular poetry, certainly as old as the fifteenth century*.

The dawn of the romantic movement in France presents an instance of a literary forgery parallel to those of Chatterton and Macpherson. In 1803 a man named Vanderbourg published a volume of poems by Clotilde de Surville. It was stated that the authoress was a Provençal lady of the early fifteenth century, and that the manuscript was in the possession of her descendant, the Marquis de Surville. It is not certain whether the publisher or the marquis wrote the poems, but at any rate they do not belong to the date assigned. The language, the metre, and the orthography are not of the fifteenth century, and the ideas expressed are markedly later. Thus there are allusions to Sappho, Lucretius and Catullus, none of whom were discovered until the end of that century, and others which imply a knowledge of the writings of Voltaire and of an astronomical fact first ascertained in 1789†.

* *Ency. Brit.* s. vv. Gaelic, Celtic. Shairp, *Poetry and Poets*, and *Macm. Mag.* vol. xxiv.

† Hallam, *Lit. of Eur.* i. 3, 167. *Biog. Univ.* s. v. Surville. H. G. Hewlett, in *Nineteenth Century*, Feb. 1891.

To the same type belong a number of imitations of primitive forms of literature in various tongues. Such are the Scotch ballads of Cunningham which Cromek was induced to publish, those of Pinkerton, and those with which Robert Surtees of Mainsforth duped Sir Walter Scott. Surtees had the genius to write *Bartram's Dirge* and the *Slaying of Fetherstonhaugh*, and the talent to give them an air of antiquity by leaving lacunae to be filled up by conjectures of his own. Such, too, are some of M. de Villemarqué's Breton ballads, the Macedonian songs of M. Verkovitch, and the collection of Illyrian translations published by Prosper Mérimée under the title of *La Guzla*. Mérimée is responsible too for the *Théâtre de Clara Gazul*, an imaginary Spanish actress. His motive for these *supercheries* was a purely artistic one; he prided himself on his skill in catching 'local colour,' and enjoyed seeing it deceive the critics. Another work of the same author, *Lettres à une Inconnue*, is an instance of the essentially modern kind of literature already mentioned, which is on the borderland of fact and fiction. The writer does not tell us if the emotions he depicts are real or ideal. To do so would be either to break the illusion, or to lay a heart bare for our inspection. An artifice is pardonable which conceals only what no one has a right to see. So too Mrs. Browning's *Sonnets from the Portuguese*, though they record her own experience, were fitly presented to the general public in an impersonal form; only those who could penetrate to the truth were worthy to know it.

With the exception of such as have been already mentioned, the present century has produced but few forgeries; few, at least, that have been as yet discovered. Possibly, the forger has grown more astute; probably, the critics have grown more clear-witted or more scientific. It was the microscope that refuted Collier. About 1836, it was announced that a Greek version of Sanchoniathon's Phœnician history by Philon de Byblos had been found in a Portuguese convent. This was the jest of a student of Brema, F. Wagenfeld. He published a German translation, but the Greek text never appeared. Then there are Mr. Shapira's manuscript of Deuteronomy written upon the ends of synagogue rolls, which M. Clermont-Ganneau detected, and the numerous fabrications of Simonides. Several of the latter were bought by public libraries, and even Dindorf was deceived by one classical fragment. During recent years a number of letters, purporting to be by Byron, Shelley and other great writers, have been forged. A volume of spurious Shelley letters, with a preface by Mr. Browning, was printed, and then withdrawn. Finally, mention must be made of a curious parallel to the

Formosan language invented by Psalmanaazaar. Two Frenchmen, M. Jean Parisot and M. A. Dejouy, elaborated, about ten years ago, a dialect called Tansa, or Taensa, which they located in a town of Taensa, near the Mississippi. They succeeded in imposing on M. Lucien Adam, and published a volume of Taensa songs, under the title *Cancionero Americano*. The fraud was only finally exploded in 1886*.

The foregoing pages contain a summary, necessarily imperfect, of the history of literary forgery, in its various developments, during different ages and among different peoples. The chronological order has been adopted, not merely for convenience, but because, on the whole, it presents the facts in their true mutual relations. In conclusion, an attempt must be made to indicate the general considerations which the survey suggests. In the first place, the literary forger is emphatically the child of his time, and this not merely in the obvious sense that his art is conditioned by the existing limitations of literary science. He is always in touch with the main current of ideas; the chief interests of the epoch to which he belongs are his chief interests. When, as in the Renaissance, men's minds are bent on the classics, he produces classical imitations; when, as at the end of the last century, they turn to primitive and forgotten literatures, these become to him a new source of inspiration. This, perhaps, could hardly have been predicted beforehand; a tendency might have been looked for in men who, after all, are in many cases eccentrics, towards antagonism rather than sympathy with the spirit of their age.

Then again, literary forgery, like every other parasite, can only flourish in a somewhat special environment. It prospers in a society filled with men who are lovers of literature, yet ungifted with the faculty of discrimination; thus it has its vogue at the beginnings of literary movements, before enthusiasm has been tempered by judgment. As the art of the critic grows, the ingenuity of the forger must grow too; the crudities of Chatterton could not be tolerated in our day for a moment. An atmosphere of polemic is especially favourable to it; few men are so enamoured of truth and so careless of victory, that they will scrutinise closely a document which tends to support the creed they are fighting for in politics, philosophy, or religion.

Those on whom the forger preys are often easy victims. No lover of books was ever a thoroughly degraded man, and the upright are the least likely to suspect fraud in others. This is true in a less degree of all kinds of collectors, and all in turn suffer for it. It is not only books and bank-notes that are

* Brinton, *Essays of an Americanist*.

forged. There is a steady demand for spurious coins, for china, even for stamps, as well as for Old Masters by modern hands. The cabinets of entomologists are full of foreign specimens, masquerading as British rarities. In the Blackmore Museum at Salisbury is a unique series of flint implements. They are all the handiwork of a single artist known as Flint-Jack, and few could distinguish them from those really primitive. Booksellers' catalogues, again, which are scarcely literature, though they are on the border-line, often contain imaginary items, at very low prices. If they are asked for, they have, of course, been already sold. A French bibliographer describes a catalogue, the whole of which is a forgery*. Everything, in fact, which has a collector's value affords an opportunity to the unscrupulous.

Finally, the matter may be looked at briefly from the ethical standpoint. Literary forgeries are of many kinds, from the amusing hoax to the most barefaced and impudent imposture. The moral judgment to be passed upon them must vary accordingly. In many cases it can only be tentative, from sheer inability to discover the motive which prompts them. A large proportion are rooted in the love of money, and these it is easy to condemn. Others are innocent enough, and spring merely from a well-developed sense of humour. Of the religious and semi-religious forgeries, a very numerous class, much has been said; they are puzzling, but may fairly claim to be tried only by contemporary moral standards. And many of them are due to perverse applications of a great principle,—the principle that moral truth is in all things higher than that which is merely material, ideal truth than truth of fact. There remain yet a few cases, among which those of Collier and of Chatterton are typical, where neither controversial fervour, nor greed for lucre, nor the spirit of mischief provides an adequate explanation. The most ingenious hypotheses fail to satisfy even those who frame them. It is only the negation of a theory to put them down to some 'little twist of brain,' such as often distorts the actions of the noblest souls and dims the purple of a lifetime.

* Gustave Brunet, *Fantaisies Bibliographiques*.

