

PR
2893
H19
1884

PR

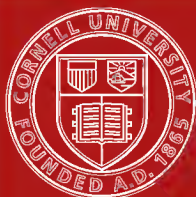
2893

H19

1884z

CORNELL
UNIVERSITY
LIBRARY





Cornell University Library

The original of this book is in
the Cornell University Library.

There are no known copyright restrictions in
the United States on the use of the text.

THE STRATFORD RECORDS
AND
THE SHAKESPEARE AUTOTYPES.

SECOND EDITION.

THE STRATFORD RECORDS
AND
THE SHAKESPEARE AUTOTYPES.

SECOND EDITION.

AND FOR YOUR [PALEOGRAPHICAL] WRITING AND READING, LET
THAT APPEAR WHEN THERE IS NO NEED OF SUCH VANITY.

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.

THE STRATFORD RECORDS
AND THE
SHAKESPEARE AUTOTYPES.

A BRIEF REVIEW

OF

Singular Delusions that are current
at Stratford-on-Avon.

BY THE SUPPOSED DELINQUENT.

[James O. Halliwell-Phillips]

THE SECOND EDITION.

HAVE I NOT SEEN DWELLERS ON FORM AND FAVOUR
LOSE ALL, AND MORE, BY PAYING TOO MUCH RENT?

BRIGHTON :
PRINTED BY JOHN GEORGE BISHOP.

1884-1885.

Lo
12

A.612259

PREFACE.

Singular misconceptions being prevalent at Stratford respecting my record-work and the treatment that I have met with in that town, I am tempted to devote a few pages to the subject ; and the rather as those delusions have lately assumed a definite form and made a public appearance in the columns of an important local journal. The following, for example, is the commencement of a recent leading article in the *Stratford-on-Avon Herald*, a newspaper which has a large circulation in the town and neighbourhood,—

The Stratford Corporation are in possession of many very interesting records extending from the earliest times, but it is only recently that the value of these documents has dawned upon the Corporate mind. They were permitted to lie in the muniment-room at the Birthplace unclassified, uncalendared, uncared for, and this indifference to their existence, had it continued, would have led ultimately to their decay, and consequent loss to the town. A little time ago attention was directed to the condition of these records, and the Corporation was prevailed upon to appoint a committee to superintend their classification and calendaring. Mr. Hardy, a gentleman in every way qualified for the work, was entrusted with the task of reducing these records from their chaotic state to something like order, and it is admitted

that, so far as the work has proceeded, he has admirably discharged his duty. Of course gentlemen endowed with special talent of this kind require adequate payment for their services, and already Mr. Hardy's account amounts to £180.

A few days previously the Chairman of the local Record Committee, speaking of course with authority, informed the Council, referring to the unbound records of the Guild, that "they were now gradually decaying and losing their value."

If these allegations are correct, then it follows that I have grossly neglected my duty in a work undertaken for a Corporation that did me the honour some years ago to entrust me with the arrangement of their records. How far the implied accusations are correct will be gathered by the public from the statements that follow.

Then, again, the Stratford Herald, in another recent leader, observes,—

This can be said *from our own knowledge* that Mr. Halliwell-Phillipps has been treated *with the greatest courtesy* by the Stratford Corporation *and by every individual member of it*; and that, if he thinks this treatment has not been extended to him, his mind has received a particular bias from people whose mental condition renders them incapable of imparting to him the truth.

If there is no mistake in the statements that are here italicized, it follows that, after an intimate connexion with Stratford for nearly forty years without exchanging a cross-word with anybody, I was suddenly transformed into one of those ungracious old fellows who rush into quarrels without any kind of provocation.

Being naturally reluctant that statements favouring this impression should go forth unchallenged, I have drawn up, in the latter part of this brochure, an explicit account of the circumstances which induced me to believe that I had been vexatiously treated. It is for the public to say, upon a review of those circumstances, if I have arrived at such a conclusion on insufficient grounds, or if I can be fairly represented at Stratford as an imaginative person who sees nothing but discourtesy in the very centre of æsthetic amenities.

J. O. HALLIWELL-PHILLIPPS.

Hollingbury Copse, Brighton,

December, 1884.

NOTE.

Page 6, line 26. His (F. O. H.-P's) mind has received a particular bias from people whose mental condition renders them incapable of imparting to him the truth.—Whatever can be the real meaning of this extraordinary paragraph? If the notion is that I have been influenced by baseless gossip, then the Stratford Herald has been falling into the identical error it has had the charity to warn me against, or otherwise so unfounded an insinuation would never have found its way into its columns. I may, however, be wrong in this surmise, for there is so much in the article in which the above paragraph occurs which is of so extremely mysterious a character that, as poor Tom Hood used to say of the middle-cut of salmon, it is impossible to make either head or tail of it.

THE RECORDS.

It is about forty years since I was introduced to the Stratford records. They then and for long afterwards mainly consisted of thousands of separate documents which had been collected into boxes and were therein preserved, the ancient ones tangled with the modern in wild confusion.

A considerable number of the documents had been crumpled and slightly mutilated, but nothing like decay had set in, nor were they in any way in a dangerous state. There was, it is true, no end of dust, but that is an object in a record-room as welcome to the eyes of a paleographer as that of drain-pipes in a clay-field is to a farmer. Records are very rarely injured by dust, whilst its presence is an indication of the absence of moisture, their greatest and most dangerous enemy. If they are placed in a damp room, their ultimate destruction is a question of a single generation, and when once fungi have been permitted to take root unchecked for even a very few years, all the efforts of the most skilful binders in the world will be unable to repair the damage. Here there was nothing of the kind.

But although there was no urgency so far as the safety of the records was concerned, they were in an exceedingly inconvenient condition for literary reference, and the town-clerk—the late Mr. W. O. Hunt—was extremely anxious to have them put into thorough working order. We had several discussions on the subject, but most, if not all of them, concluded with one of his favourite speeches,—“Where’s the money to come from?” As the *Stratford Herald* well remarks, in reference to the engagement of a record-reader, “of course gentlemen endowed with special talent of this kind require adequate payment for their services”; and, in this case, what with the usual fees, travelling and hotel costs, all necessarily extending over a considerable period, the records could not possibly have been put into accessible order and calendared under an expenditure which, as Mr. Hunt said over and over again, the Corporation neither would incur, nor would be justified in incurring, for such a purpose.

I cannot recall the precise date, but some years afterwards I offered to arrange and calendar all the documents from the earliest times to the year 1750 without fee. The offer was at once accepted by the Corporation, who were not, as was expressly stipulated, to be put

to any kind of expense beyond that which was necessary for binding.

With respect to the majority of the records, my voluntary offer was made in Shakespearean interests and in those of my own tastes, so that the Corporation were under little obligations to me beyond those to be met by the indulgent consideration usually extended to honorary workers. The task was to me a most pleasurable one, the work being in itself its own exceeding great reward. The members of the Corporation were also in every way most kind and obliging, scarcely a day passing without one or other looking in to see if I wanted anything to render my working more convenient. But there was none of that fussy interference which would have rendered the whole affair a nuisance instead of a pleasure. They had the sagacity to be aware that a good and useful work was in hand, and, believing that I knew what I was about, had the good sense to let me do it in my own way. There was, moreover, none of that tiresome intrusion of advice-giving in matters which they had never studied. To the best of my recollection the only question ever put to me respecting the interior of a document was by one of the aldermen, a scientific chemist, who, taking up from the table an ancient

demurrer, wished to know which was the right side upwards? This was far better and more sensible of him than attempting to give what must necessarily have been an unsound opinion either on the document itself or on my method of work. It was no more disgrace to my kind friend, the chemist, not being able to decipher an old record than there would have been to me in my owning that I might have poisoned somebody had I made up one of his prescriptions.

The first and most tedious part of my business was to separate the modern and ancient records. When this task had been effected, it appeared that there were no fewer than 5823 separate ancient documents all of which of course were to be arranged and calendared. For reasons that will be presently shown there were 954 of these records which it was not thought expedient to send to the binders. The remaining 4869 records, after each one had been duly numbered and calendared, were confided to Mr. Tuckett, the binder to the British Museum, and who, being in the daily habit of binding manuscripts for the national establishment, was the most efficient person for the task that could have been selected. In Mr. Tuckett's hands every document requiring mending was neatly repaired, and the whole were delivered

to the Corporation substantially bound in 29 volumes ; ever since which time there is not a single document amongst the 4869 that could not, by the aid of the calendar, be readily found in two or three minutes. It follows, therefore, that my implied shortcomings must be restricted to the above-named 954 documents, and now we shall see upon what grounds such implications can be founded.

The 954 unbound documents consist of,—1. The Town Charters.—2. Expired and surrendered leases.—3. A few miscellaneous documents.—4. The unbound records of the Guild. It will be most convenient to speak of each of these divisions in its order.

1. Every lawyer is aware how extremely imprudent it is to disturb in the minutest degree even the external integrity of original title-deeds, and Mr. Hunt specifically excluded the Charters of Incorporation from binding operations. It was his opinion that the miscellaneous ancient documents were valueless for legal purposes, but that the Town Charters partook of a different character. Although many of their provisions had been abrogated by the Municipal Reform Act, there were some important ones that were still in force, and he thought that if intricate legal questions were to arise on the

wording of those charters, as was the case in the seventeenth century in a litigation between the Corporation and the Vicar, it would at all events be advisable, if not essential, that they should be produced before the Court in exactly their original state.

2. Expired and surrendered leases, 719 of which are in the Record Room, are about the least interesting and valuable of all descriptions of records. They are very rarely of any use excepting in the determination of boundaries, and the greater portion of the Stratford collection is exceptionally worthless owing to the descriptions of parcels being generally repeated over and over again in precisely the same terms, even the names of owners of adjoining properties being frequently continued for generations after their respective deaths. Nearly all, if not all, that there can be of positive interest, although the early ones may be occasionally useful for reference, is given in the printed Calendar, pp. 118 to 166; and as all these leases are placed in divisions for each Ward, there is no difficulty in any one accustomed to research finding what may be wanted. They are mostly in exceedingly good condition, and although there are a few that might be the better for repairs, there are none in a state of cumulative

decay. Indentures of this kind are, moreover, more expensive and troublesome to bind than the earlier Guild Records, and the repairing and binding of 119 of the latter have just cost the Corporation somewhere about £50. At the same rate the binding of these 719 leases would have cost £300, and I cannot help thinking that it would have been very thoughtless on my part if, entertaining so strong an opinion as to their very small literary value, I had involved the Corporation in so large an expenditure, or even in a quarter of it, for such an object.

3. About a dozen unbound documents, consisting mainly of rolls, constitutions of local trading companies, &c., all of which were either inconvenient for, or not thought to be worth, binding.

4. The unbound records of the Guild are of a kind that are more easily bound than those last-mentioned, but they are of a class that are seldom enquired after. As to these of Stratford, with the exception of those which relate to the building of the Guild Chapel, there are none of more special interest than that which attaches to thousands of similar guild records in many other towns. There are none of them of the least Shakespeare-biographical value, and they all belong to one of the few classes of the Town

Records that no Shakespearean student would dream of troubling his head about. They would of course be of use to the county topographer, but of none in any of those branches through the inclusion of which the Stratford Records have attained their chief distinction. There was no doubt a section of these documents that admitted of repair, but in the absence of the fear of accruing injury, and considering how extremely few were the persons to whom they were of interest, I did not feel myself authorized in putting the Corporation to the expense of having them bound. It is upon a portion, little more than one half, of these unbound guild records that the sum of £180 has recently been expended, viz., £64 by the Corporation and the remainder by the Chairman of the Record Committee, the former sum, however, including the cost of framing the Charters of Incorporation. I am glad indeed to find that so much money can now be cheerfully expended at Stratford in such a direction, but I must be allowed to enter a protest against the insinuation that my shortcomings have rendered the outlay a matter of necessity.

I must also be allowed to protest against the insinuation that I surrendered my work into the hands of the Corporation, leaving

a number of unbound records in a dangerous and perishing condition. I was neither so careless nor so indifferent to the due execution of the trust that had been confided to me. No mildew had set in,—the rarity of consultation put on one side the question of wear and tear,—and whatever repairs might have been thought acceptable in the luxury of order, there were none that could not have been deferred for an indefinite period without the slightest accruing injury to any of the documents. It must be recollected that I was entrusted with the direction of the binding and repairs, that I was dealing with public money, and that I should not have been justified in involving the Corporation in an expenditure beyond that which was prudently necessary. It was Mr. Hunt's express desire that every reasonable precaution should be taken to limit the cost, and the result was that 4869 records, duly bound, calendared and repaired, were delivered to the Corporation at a considerably smaller outlay than the sum of £180 which has just recently been expended upon the four Town Charters and the 119 records of the Guild.

It is only two or three years ago that the Royal Historical Commission deputed Mr. Jeaffreson, one of the ablest paleographers in

the employ of the Government, to inspect the records of Stratford, and the excellence of their then condition is specially alluded to in his Report to the Commission. Having also myself, in the course of my researches, personally examined the ancient records of very nearly seventy corporate towns in England and Wales, it may not be thought either irrelevant or presumptuous if I venture to express my conviction that the Stratford records, previously to recent operations, were in at least as good a condition as those in any of the towns referred to, and that condition is, in not a few instances, practically unexceptionable.

There is only one piece of neglect of which I have been really guilty. I certainly did forget to mark the unbound records with the numbers given to them in the Calendar, but the inconvenience (if any) that has been created by this oversight must have been very inconsiderable. If any number of persons had wanted to consult the unbound records, the Town Clerk would infallibly have called my attention to the subject, and the defect would have been at once remedied. The identification of records, after a calendar has once been made, is one of the easiest of

paleographical tasks, and there could have been no difficulty whatever in the matter.

It only remains to add that the calendar of the records, which I had made for the use of the Corporation, was printed in 1863, without any expense to them, in a thick folio volume, in which considerably over six thousand records are described at sufficient length for ordinary purposes. It is scarcely necessary to observe that, if expense were no object, the descriptions could be so extended that a calendar might be made to occupy ten or even twenty volumes, and if the Stratford Herald can persuade the Chairman of the Record Committee to engage Mr. Hardy for the production of such an extended work, it would deserve and receive the gratitude of all Shakespearean students. But that journal has no right to assert that the records have been "permitted to lie in the muniment-room at the Birth-Place unclassified, uncalendared, uncared for;" and that they were in a condition that necessitated their reduction "from their chaotic state to something like order," statements conveying the implication that I had thoroughly deceived the Corporation, and involving me in the somewhat humiliating necessity of placing upon record a history of my own labours. Per-

haps, however, the Stratford Herald is to be commiserated rather than blamed, if, as is of course possible, it has either been made the victim of a foolish hoax, or if, to make use of the elegant language it has addressed to myself, "its mind has received a particular bias from people whose mental condition renders them incapable of imparting to it the truth."

STRATFORD AMENITIES.

If the Stratford Herald, in mentioning this subject, had restricted itself to observing that the Corporation, *as a body*, have always treated me with "the greatest courtesy," no one would have been justified in disputing the assertion. I have ever felt grateful to them for the kindness with which they have treated me in their collective capacity, for the consideration with which they have invariably received the perhaps somewhat too numerous suggestions and requests that I have ventured to make, as well as for the very friendly terms in which they have always expressed the several resolutions that they have been generously desirous of passing in my favour. But when the Herald proceeds to observe, from its "own knowledge," that I have been "treated with the greatest courtesy by every individual member" of the Corporation, it has forgotten for the moment certain speeches that have been reported in its own columns.—The story shall be told as briefly as possible.

In the Spring of last year I offered to be at the risk of producing autotypes of a large number of the Shakespearean town records, the loss (if any) on the publication to be borne by

myself, the profit (if any) to be handed over to the Corporation. The spirit in which this proposal was received will be gathered from the following extract from a report of the proceedings that took place at the meeting at which my offer was formally accepted.

THE MAYOR said that Mr. Phillipps had undertaken to supply autotypes at his own risk, and he (the Mayor) thought the offer a generous one, and ought in some way to be entertained by the Council. He wanted the opinion of the Council on the subject.

ALDERMAN COX,—It has reference to the records of the Council?

THE MAYOR,—Yes.

MR. HODGSON,—Which are kept in the Shakespeare Museum?

THE MAYOR,—Yes.

ALDERMAN BIRD thought it was a very desirable thing to do; but he should disagree with the Corporation taking the risk. The public would be vastly benefited by the publication.

THE MAYOR considered Mr. Phillipps's offer very liberal indeed. (Hear, hear.)

MR. HODGSON,—These valuable documents would go out of our possession, I presume, into the custody of Mr Phillipps.

THE MAYOR,—Necessarily.

MR. HODGSON said that before they did lend them, if the Council were of opinion that they should comply with the latter part of Mr. Phillipps's letter—and he hoped the Council would do so, for he thought it a very nice one—every care should be taken that the documents should be

carefully numbered and registered.—*Report of the Council Meeting, as given in the Stratford-on-Avon Chronicle, 9 March, 1883.*

Now it will surely be conceded that, after this, I should have been fully justified in requesting the town-clerk,—and that the town-clerk would have been equally justified in consenting,—to send me to my own residence any documents that were intended to be autotyped, he of course keeping a register of every one so forwarded. Not caring, however, to incur this responsibility, I went a few months afterwards to Stratford to ascertain if the autotyping could not be done on the spot. It fortunately happened that there was an experienced autotyper in the town itself, and it unfortunately happened that the record-room was so narrow and so badly lighted that the accurate reproduction in it of a single document was an utter impossibility. Under these circumstances I took one document at a time (fourteen in all) to the artist's studio, a few hundred yards off, taking care to see that it was at once protected between sheets of plate glass, and, as soon as it was photographed, returning it myself to its place in the record-room before I took out another. By pursuing this method there was never more than one document absent at a time from the record-

room, and that under circumstances which precluded the possibility of its being injured.

It is almost incredible, but it is nevertheless a fact, that this harmless and beneficially-intended action of mine was invested by Mr. Charles Flower, one of the most active members of the Corporation, with the dignity of a high crime and misdemeanour. Even if I had been a stranger in the town, yet, having the sanction of the Mayor (see p. 22)—a sanction taken for granted by the Town Council—to the personal loan of the above-mentioned records, and acting, be it ever remembered, in the interests of the Corporation not in those of my own, it would not have been a graceful act on the part of a member of that Corporation to have instituted a complaint respecting what was at most a technical irregularity in the very limited step that had been taken. Believing myself, however, to have been the accredited literary servant of the Corporation, I can scarcely describe the more than amazement with which I shortly afterwards received the intelligence, from two of the county newspapers, that a censure had been publicly uttered against my mode of procedure.

The circumstances that had surrounded my dealings with the records made this attack upon

me peculiarly singular and ungracious. When the Corporation accepted my offer respecting them, I was necessarily invested with an exceptional trust, and was as much responsible for their safety and preservation as the Town Clerk or any other official. Not only this, but so far from the Corporation having objected to the temporary removal of a document from one part of the town to another, while I was preparing the Calendar, and with the full sanction of everybody, I repeatedly took one or other over to Mr. W. O. Hunt's house, and sometimes to Mr. Wheler's, their local topographical knowledge often enabling me to complete a description when otherwise I should have been at fault. I remained in this kind of quasi official position for over twenty years, not one of the three town-clerks who have held office during that period withdrawing the once generally appreciated confidence merely because its bestowal was no longer of much importance to the town in a commercial point of view. The result was that, during the whole of that period, and until Mr. Charles Flower suddenly commenced to take so absorbing an interest in the records, whenever I visited Stratford, efficient study being out of the question in the dim light of the record-room, I have always felt myself

at liberty to take a volume of documents either into the Museum, or, by their unvarying kind permission, into the residence of the custodians. While thus engaged I have been favoured with occasional visits by members of the Corporation, not one of whom ever dropped the remotest hint that I was exceeding my legitimate prerogatives. It has been oddly enough suggested that if these privileges are conceded to me, an inconvenience might arise from the Corporation being expected to grant the same powers to every one else. Assuredly they might be, but only to the every one else who had arranged and calendared their records for them. And, anyhow, if new regulations had been thought to have been advisable, they might surely have been enacted without a public complaint being made against me for having worked under the old ones.

THE "GREATEST COURTESY" SPEECH.

When I replied to the adverse criticism to which I had been subjected, it was generally considered that I did so with too much animation, and that I allowed irritation to "out-run the pauser reason." But it appeared to me from the very first that an objection to the propriety of my action, under the unique position I held in respect to the records, no matter in what or in how mild terms that objection was raised, practically conveyed a slur upon my conduct; and that I correctly appreciated the intentional significance of the original attack will be obvious from the following remarks which Mr. Charles Flower afterwards made in a speech delivered before the Town Council,—

Mr. Halliwell-Phillipps had drawn very largely on his imagination, and possibly his conscience might have told him that *irregular* was the mildest term that could have been applied to those proceedings. He was not aware—he did not think any member of that Council was aware—before reading that pamphlet that fourteen most valuable documents had been removed from the record-room without the knowledge of the Mayor, or any member of the

Corporation, or even of the Town Clerk. He thought a stronger word than *irregular* might be applied to those proceedings.

If the Stratford-on-Avon Herald considers that this language is that of "the greatest courtesy," that journal must belong to a new and advanced ethical school that would exclude so old-fashioned a person as myself from a seat upon its polished benches.

It is clearly insinuated in the above speech that I had not acted in a straightforward manner, and that my "conscience" was most probably aware of that interesting fact; but it is easy enough to see on reflection that the speech is rendered innocuous by its palpable animosity. Its worst feature, as it now appears to me, is that it entirely ignores my long and friendly connexion with the town, as well as that which ought to have been known, after a lengthened experience, not only "to the Corporation but to every individual member of it,"—the impossibility of any action of mine respecting their records not having been taken in what I believed to be the truest interests of the Shakespearean student and of those of the people of Stratford.

A CONTRAST.

Subsequent proceedings showed unmistakably that the attack made upon me was wholly of a gratuitous character, and that it was not the outcome of a preternatural anxiety for the safety of the records.

Shortly after the delivery of the speech last quoted, Mr. Charles Flower, as chairman of the Record Committee, practically controlled the management of the records, and one of his very first acts was to sanction the transmission of 119 of them to London! There would have been nothing singular in any one else confiding the documents to the perfectly safe custody of the national Record Office, but it is curious that a gentleman who had taken alarm at the risk incurred by my diminutive proceedings should have unhesitatingly encountered another which, however small, was obviously a greater one. If it was proper to incur the latter risk, it follows that Mr. Charles Flower, who had never worked at the records at all, was perfectly right in sending 119 of them over a hundred miles away to be absent for months, while I, who had fagged at them for years, was perfectly wrong

in moving 14 a few hundred yards, not a single one of that 14 being permitted to be away from its domicile for more than two or three hours.

The nature of the escort under which the 119 records were conveyed to the metropolis has not transpired. Perhaps Mr. Charles Flower, emulating my care, took one at a time to London, returning it to its place at Stratford before he undertook the responsibility of carrying another. Even in that case he would have submitted them to a greater risk than I did, while the "conscience" of each of us remains, I presume, similarly affected.

ADDITIONAL NOTES.

Needles and pins ! needles and pins !
When a man calendars his trouble begins !

The preceding pages contain a reprint of a little tract in the form in which it originally appeared. These additional notes are elicited by an article in last week's Stratford Herald, in the course of which appear the following observations,—

A few words may be said respecting Mr. Halliwell-Phillipps's earlier labours in connection with the Corporation documents. *These, it must be admitted, have been considerable, but they seem to have ended when the records of Shakespearean interest were exhausted.* Mr. Halliwell-Phillipps has the frankness to confess that the work was undertaken in "Shakespearean interests and those of his own taste." Engaged in the task to which Mr. Halliwell-Phillipps has devoted the greater portion of his life, one can form some idea of what to him would be the value of the documents in the possession of the Corporation. *Without access to them, would he have been able to compile those copious "Outlines" and voluminous "Notes" which are read with so much interest not only by Shakespearean scholars, but by every student of the immortal poet?* If people were so mercenary as to look upon these matters

from a business point of view they might be disposed to assert that Mr. Halliwell-Phillipps had received a *quid pro quo* for his labours. We will not do him the injustice which his champions in the Press are trying to inflict upon a fellow-townsmen. We will believe that he engaged in the work, having the highest objects in view, and the real interests of the town at heart. Too great a latitude has been given to our remarks, which should only have been applied to those records which did not particularly interest Mr. Halliwell-Phillipps—that were, in fact, in his opinion, of no Shakespearean value. Having used expressions which implied more than we were justified in assuming, we tender to Mr. Halliwell-Phillipps, in all sincerity, our humble apologies. *But may it not be assumed that the records which he deemed of no importance were of the highest value to the Corporation, and, therefore, to the town? If these were found to be decaying and in a chaotic state, was it not the duty of some one who was cognisant of their value to see that this decay was arrested and the documents duly calendared?*

It would have given me much pleasure to have accepted these “humble apologies” if their effect had not been neutralized by the passages here italicized—passages which are all founded on erroneous information, and which in a new form repeat the implications that were originally challenged, and are evidently meant to convey the impression that I not only made an important offer to the Corporation solely in my own interests, but that I neglected to carry out effectively the terms of my offer in all directions in which those interests were not

affected. The three passages alluded to will now be separately considered.

1. *These, it must be admitted, &c.*—The notion that my labours “seem to have ended when the records of Shakespearean interest were exhausted” is not borne out by the facts. If this had been the case, my task would indeed have been an easy one. The Corporation records include only twelve documents in which the great dramatist himself is mentioned. In addition to these, there are one containing a notice of his mother, four that mention his uncle Henry and two his grandfather Richard. Then there are twenty-nine separate documents in which there are notices of his father, John Shakespeare, who is also frequently mentioned in entries, mostly very brief ones, in the Chamberlains’ Accounts, in the Council Books, and in the proceedings of the Court of Record. Out of the more than six thousand records belonging to the Corporation the above make the sum-total of those that relate to the poet and his family, and, if the Calendar had been restricted to the latter, a small pamphlet instead of a thick folio volume would have sufficed for their description.

2. *Without access to them, &c.*—The Herald

is under a delusion in thinking that a large number of extracts in my *Outlines of the Life of Shakespeare* have been derived from the Corporation records. A careful examination of the last edition will show that, exclusive of documents that were printed long before I was born, *the aggregate of extracts from those records would make only about nine pages of that work!* Much of what there is of Shakespearean interest in the Stratford records is of the highest value, but most of the materials for the biography are preserved in other collections.

3. *But may it not, &c.*—Here is a reiteration of notions that it was hoped had been satisfactorily disposed of. There was no accruing decay to arrest, as has been already explained at pp. 9, 14 and 17. The utmost that can be said is that a small proportion of the unbound records would have been the better for repairs if expense had been no object, but I can only be fairly censured in the matter for having been too sparing of the Corporation money. The suggestion that I have omitted to calendar records “of the highest importance to the Corporation” is entirely without foundation. *With the exception of some half-dozen documents that have been added to the Record-Room since the Calendar was printed, I have therein described*

every ancient document in the possession of the Corporation, however small may have been its value in my own estimation. Under this system over eight hundred miscellaneous records of the Guild have been "duly calendared," although numbers of them are useless indentures referring to properties that are now impossible of identification, while scarcely any of them bear even in a remote degree on my own studies.

So much for the attempts to convey the notion that I failed in my duty to the Corporation. A few words may now be added respecting the explanation which is given of the singular language quoted at p. 8, but which is really no explanation at all. It appears that one or more persons have been amusing themselves by forwarding to the Stratford Herald, and even "going to the expense of setting-up in type" paragraphs that have been displeasing to that sensitive journal. Its statements of last week were the earliest intimations I had that any paragraphs had been sent to the Herald, or that any one had incurred printing expenses in the matter. And how in the world their transmission could under any circumstances have been expected to have influenced me is beyond ordinary powers of conjecture.

The Herald concludes its leader with the following observations,—

The taunt about the “great courtesy speech” of the Chairman of the Record Committee would have come with better taste if reference had also been made to the “great courtesy letter” of the same gentleman which preceded that speech, and to which Mr. Halliwell-Phillipps did not vouchsafe a reply.

These words would appear to imply that I have suppressed a letter of importance in the fair consideration of the speech quoted at pp. 27, 28. This is not the case. Immediately following the receipt of the letter referred to, before any sort of legitimate time allowed for a reply had expired, and without the excuse of intervening provocation, *another* “greatest courtesy” speech against me had been delivered. All this has been explained in a former pamphlet. One fails to understand how a courteous letter, received under such circumstances, can justify the subsequent delivery of speeches of an opposite description.

In conclusion, let me add that I had hoped that a letter that I addressed to the Corporation in January last, one which was most conciliatory in its tone and ordered to be entered on their minutes, would have closed all matters of dispute. So far from this being the case, the

Chairman of the Record Committee shortly afterwards initiated another movement against me. It is true that the latter was connected with an institution which was outside the direct influence of the Corporation, but, in a town like Stratford, where the most active leaders belong to both societies, anything like the resumption of pleasant work was obviously impossible.

No one who has been at the trouble to peruse the foregoing remarks will be surprised to hear that my work of every description for Stratford has arrived at a termination. The town, as I have already explained, is under no special obligations to me for my work in the records, a task that was most congenial to my tastes even independently of Shakespearean associations. Stratford is not the only town whose records I have gratuitously arranged, but it is the only one in which circumstances have tended to render work of the kind in any way irksome, and, I fully believe, the only one

wherein the vexatious individual opposition that I have encountered would not have been immediately silenced by a general remonstrance. O tempora Shakespeareanæ ætatis! O mores Shakespeareani!

30 January, 1885.

