HEINE LOVED HIM AND HATED HIS COUNTRY

Imogen, *the* constant.
Such a foe, good heavens!
Adelaide Neilson.
(1846-1880)

Katharina, *the* Shrew.
If I be waspish, best beware my sting.
Elsie Leslie.
Photo by Sarony ~ Collection of William Winter.

Mrs. Ford *the* merry wife *of* Windsor.
If I would but go *to* hell *for* an eternal moment or so I could be knighted. ~ ~ ~ ~ ~ ~
Peg Woffington. (1718-1760)

Types of Shakespeare's Women

Lady Macbeth, *the* ambitious *and* remorseless.
Infirm *of* purpose! Give me *the* daggers.
Adelaide Ristori.
(1821-1906)
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"True *and* faithful Juliet."
O Romeo, Romeo! wherefore art thou Romeo?
Adelaide Neilson.
Photo by Sarony. From the Wendell Collection.

Shakespeare's Relation to England Discussed in a Somewhat Acid Manner

From Heinrich Heine's "Shakespeare's Maidens and Women." Charles G. Leland's Translation.

IT is lucky for us that Shakespeare came just at the right time, that he was a contemporary of Elizabeth and James, while Protestantism, it is true, expressed itself in the unbridled freedom of thought which prevailed, but which had not yet entered into life or feeling, and the kingdom lighted by the last rays of setting chivalry still bloomed and gleamed in all the glory of poetry. True, the popular faith of the Middle Ages, or Catholicism, was gone as regarded doctrine, but it existed as yet with all its magic in men's hearts, and held its own in manners, customs, and views. It was not till later that the Puritans succeeded in plucking away flower by flower, and utterly rooting up the religion of the past, and spreading over all the land, as with a gray canopy, that dreary sadness which since then, dispirited and debilitated, has diluted itself to a lukewarm, whining, drowsy pietism. Nor had the kingdom, any more than the religion, in Shakespeare's time, suffered that heavy languid change now known to us as the constitutional form of government, which, however it may have benefited European freedom, has in no way advanced or aided Art.

With the blood of Charles I., the great, true, and last King, all the poetry ran from the veins of England, and thrice happy was the poet who did not live to witness this sorrowful event, which he had perhaps foreboded. Shakespeare has in our time often been called an aristocrat. This I would not deny. I would very much rather excuse his political inclinations when I reflect that his foreseeing poet's eye perceived the dead-leveling Puritan times which were to make an end, with the kingdom, of all enjoyment of life, all poetry and all bright and cheerful Art.

Yes, during the rule of the Puritans in England, Art was outlawed; as when the evangelical zeal raged against the theatre, and even the name of Shakespeare was long extinguished in popular remembrance. It awakens our astonishment when we read in the current literature of that time—for instance, in the "Histrio-Mastix" of the famous Prynne—the outbreak of wrath with which the anathema of the drama is croaked. Shall we blame the Puritans too severely for such zealotry? Truly not: every one is, in history, in the right if he remains true to his indwelling principle, and the gloomy Roundheads only followed the consequences of that anti-artistic spirit which had already manifested itself in the first centuries of the Church, and made its iconoclastic power felt more or less to this day.

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Next to ascetic, religious zeal was the republican fanaticism which the Puritans in their hatred for the old English stage, in which not only heathenism and heathenism tastes, but also royalism and nobility were exalted. I have shown in another place how much resemblance there was in this respect between the Puritans of those days and the republicans of ours. May Apollo and the eternal Muses protect us from the rule of the latter!

In the whirlpool of the priestly and political upsettings and revolutions described, the name of Shakespeare was long lost, and it was nearly a century ere he again rose to fame and honor. Since then his renown has risen from day to day—and he was indeed as a spiritual sun for that country where the real sun is wanting twelve months in the year, for that island of damnation, that Botany Bay without a southern climate, that stone-coal-stinking, machinery-buzzing, churchgoing, and vilely drunken England! Benevolent nature never quite disinherits her creatures, and while she denied the English all which is beautiful or worthy of love, and gave them neither voice for song nor sense of enjoyment—and perhaps endowed them with leathern porter bottles or jacks, instead of human souls—bestowed on them for recompense a large portion of municipal freedom, the talent to make themselves comfortable at home, and William Shakespeare.

Yes, this is the sun which glorifies that land with its loveliest light, with its gracious beams. Everything there reminds us of Shakespeare, and by it the most ordinary objects appear transfigured and idealized. Everywhere the wings of his genius rustle around us, his clear eye gleams on us from every significant occurrence, and in great events we often seem to see him nod—not gently—softly and smiling.

This unceasing memory of and through Shakespeare became significantly clear to me during my residence in London, while I, an inquisitive traveler, ran about from early morn till deep into the night to see the so-called noteworthy objects. Every lion recalled the greater lion Shakespeare. All the places which I visited live an immortal life in his historical dramas, and were known to me from my earliest youth. But these dramas are known in England not only by the cultivated, but by the people, and even the stout beefeater who, with his red coat and red face, acts as guide to the Tower, and shows you behind the middle gate the dungeon where Richard caused the young Princes, his nephews, to be murdered, refers you to Shakespeare, who has described minutely the details of this harrowing history. Also the verger who leads you around through Westminster Abbey always speakes of Shakespeare, in whose tragedies those dead Kings and Queens whose stony counterfeits here lie stretched out on their sarcophagi—and whom he shows to you for eighteenpence—play such a wild or lamentable part.

He himself, or the image of the great poet, stands there the size of life, a noble form with a thoughtful head, holding in his hand a roll of parchment. There may be magic words inscribed on it, and when he moves at midnight his white lips and calls the dead who rest in the vaults below they rise with rusted armor and antiquated Court dresses—the knights of the white and red rose; even the ladies come forth sighing from their resting place, and a clatter of swords, laughter, and curses rings around, just as at Drury Lane, where I so often saw Shakespeare's historical dramas played, and where Kean moved my soul so mightily when he rushed desperately across the stage crying—

"A horse, a horse, my kingdom for a horse!"

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The want of more accurate information as to Shakespeare's life is readily explained when we recall the political and religious storms which burst wildly out soon after his death—calling forth for a time an absolute Puritan dominion, which long after had a cold, deadening influence, and not only destroyed the golden age of Elizabethan literature but brought it into absolute oblivion. When in the beginning of the last century the works of Shakespeare again came to the full light of day, all traditions which could aid in analyzing the text were utterly wanting, and commentators were obliged to take refuge in a criticism which drew from superficial empiricism, and a more lamentable materialism, their last dregs.

With the exception of William Hazlitt, England has given us no commentator of any consequence; in all the works of all the others we find only petty huckstering of trifles, self-reflecting shallowness, enthusiastic mysticism, pedantic puffed-upness which threatens to burst for joy when they can convict the poor poet of an antiquarian, geographical, or chronological error, and thereby bewail that he unfortunately did not study the ancients in the original tongues, and had thereunto but little schooling. He makes his Romans wear hats, lets ships land in Bohemia, and suffers Aristotle to be quoted in the time of Troy! Which was more than an English scholar who had graduated Magister Artium at Oxford could endure! The only commentator on Shakespeare whom I cited as an exception, and who is indeed unique in every aspect, was the late Hazlitt, a mind which was as brilliant as deep, a commingling of Diderot and Borne, combining flaming zeal for the revolution with the most glowing sense of art, ever sparkling with verve and esprit.

But all the glosses and explanations and laborious laudation of commentators was of less practical use as regarded making Shakespeare known to the public than the inspired love with which talented actors produced his dramas, and thereby made them a subject for popular judgment. Lichtenberg, in his letters from England, gives us important intelligence as to the skill and method by which Shakespeare's characters were given on the London stage in the middle of the last century. I saw characters—not the works in their fullness, since to this day British actors have only felt or known what is characteristic, not the poetry, and still less the art. Such one-sidedness of apprehension is found, but in far more limited degree, among the commentators, who were never able to see through dusty spectacles of erudition that which was the simplest and nearest, or the nature which was in Shakespeare's dramas. Garrick saw more clearly into the Shakespearean thoughts than did Dr. Johnson, the John Bull of Learning, on whose nose Queen Mab doubtless cut the drollest capers while he wrote on the "Midsummer Night's Dream"; truly he never knew why he, when at work on Shakespeare, felt more tickling o' the nose and wish to sneeze than over any other poet whom he criticised.

While Dr. Johnson dissected the Shakespearean characters like dead corpses, dealing out thereby his dullest dogmatisms in Ciceronian English, balancing himself with heavy self-conceit on the antitheses of his Latin periods, Garrick on the stage thrilled all the people of England, as he called with thrilling invocation the dead to life, that they might set forth to all their fearful, bloody or gay and festive work. But Garrick loved the great poet, and as reward for that love he lies buried in Westminster near the pedestal of Shakespeare's statue, like a faithful dog at the feet of his master.

Ben Jonson's Famous Tribute

To the Memory of My Beloved Master William Shakespeare, and What He Hath Left Us

TO draw no envy, Shakespeare, on thy name,
Am I thus ample to thy book and fame;
While I confess thy writings to be such
As neither man nor muse can praise too much.
'Tis true, and all men's suffrage. But these ways
Were not the paths I meant unto thy praise;
For silliest ignorance on these may light,
Which, when it sounds at best, but echo's right;
Or blind affection, which doth ne'er advance
The truth, but gropes and urgeth all by chance;
Or crafty malice might pretend this praise,
And think to ruin where it seem'd to raise.
These are, as some infamous bawd, or whore,
Should praise a matron; what could hurt her more?
But thou art proof against them, and, indeed,
Above the ill-fortune of them or the need.
I therefore will begin: Soul of the age!
The applause! delight! the wonder of our stage!
My Shakespeare rise! I will not lodge thee by
Chaucer or Spenser, or bid Beaumont lie
A little further off, to make thee room:
Thou art a monument without a tomb,
And art alive still, while thy book doth live,
And we have wits to read, and praise to give.
That I not mix thee so, my brain excuses,
I mean with great but disproportion'd muses:
For if I thought my judgment were of years,
I should commit thee surely with thy peers,
And tell how far thou didst our Lily outshine,
Or sporting Kyd, or Marlowe's mighty line.
And though thou hadst small Latin and less Greek,
From thence to honour thee, I would not seek
For names: but call forth thund'ring Eschylus,
Euripides, and Sophocles to us,
Pacuvius, Accius, him of Cordova dead,
To live again, to hear thy buskin tread,
And shake a stage: or when thy socks were on,
Leave thee alone for the comparison
Of all, that insolent Greece, or haughty Rome
Sent forth, or since did from their ashes come.
Triumph, my Britain, thou hast one to show,
To whom all scenes of Europe homage owe.
He was not of an age, but for all time!
And all the muses still were in their prime,
When, like Apollo, he came forth to warm
Our ears, or like a Mercury to charm!
Nature herself was proud of his designs,
And joyed to wear the dressing of his lines!
Which were so richly spun, and woven so fit,
As, since, she will vouchsafe no other wit.
The merry Greek, tart Aristophanes,
Neat Terence, witty Plautus, now not please;
But antiquated and deserted lie,
As they were not of nature's family.
Yet must I not give nature all; thy art,
My gentle Shakespeare, must enjoy a part.
For though the poet's matter nature be,
His art doth give the fashion: and, that he
Who casts to write a living line, must sweat,
(Such as thine are) and strike the second heat
Upon the muses' anvil; turn the same,
And himself with it, that he thinks to frame;
Or for the laurel, he may gain a scorn;
For a good poet's made, as well as born.
And such wert thou! Look how the father's face
Lives in his issue, even so the race
Of Shakespeare's mind and manners brightly shines
In his well turned, and true filed lines;
In each of which he seems to shake a lance,
As brandish'd at the eyes of ignorance.
Sweet Swan of Avon! What a sight it were
To see thee in our waters yet appear.
And make those flights upon the banks of Thames,
That so did take Eliza, and our James!
But stay, I see thee in the hemisphere
Advanced, and made a constellation there!
Shine forth, thou Star of poets, and with rage,
Or influence, chide, or cheer the drooping stage,
Which, since thy flight from hence, hath mourn'd like night,
And despairs day, but for thy volume's light.

—*Ben Jonson.*

Portia, *the* "young *and* learned doctor." *of a* strange nature *is the* suit you follow.
Maxine Elliott.

The Globe

WHY fret and fume o'er Shakespeare's playhouse site,
Or place the spot within such narrow bars?
When all mankind has known through centuries' flight
The earth's his "Globe," its footlights are the stars.

—*Eugene Geary.*