

AN  
INQUIRY  
INTO THE  
AUTHENTICITY  
OF CERTAIN  
PAPERS AND INSTRUMENTS  
ATTRIBUTED TO  
SHAKSPEARE, &c.



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# INQUIRY

INTO THE

## AUTHENTICITY

OF CERTAIN

### MISCELLANEOUS PAPERS

AND

### LEGAL INSTRUMENTS,

PUBLISHED DEC. 24, M DCC XCV.

AND ATTRIBUTED TO

SHAKSPEARE, QUEEN ELIZABETH,

AND

HENRY, EARL OF SOUTHAMPTON:

ILLUSTRATED BY

FAC-SIMILES OF THE GENUINE HAND-WRITING OF THAT  
NOBLEMAN, AND OF HER MAJESTY;

A NEW FAC-SIMILE OF THE HAND-WRITING OF SHAKSPEARE,  
NEVER BEFORE EXHIBITED;

AND OTHER AUTHENTICK DOCUMENTS:

IN A LETTER ADDRESSED TO THE  
RIGHT HON. JAMES, EARL OF CHARLEMONT,

By EDMOND MALONE, Esq.

DEMENS! QUI NIMBOS ET NON IMITABILE FULMEN  
AERE ET CORNIPEDUM PULSU SIMULARAT EQUORUM.

VIRG.

LONDON:

Printed by H. Baldwin:

FOR T. CADELL, JUN. AND W. DAVIES,  
(SUCCESSORS TO MR. CADELL,) IN THE STRAND.

M DCC XCVI.



1741-78

0617

## DIRECTIONS TO THE BINDER.

Stitch the Engravings at the lower part of the plate, and then fold them in.

Plate I. is to face p. 111.

Plate II. to face p. 137.

Plate III. to face p. 189.

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### PLATE I.

No. I. Part of Queen Elizabeth's *pretended* Letter to Shakspeare; copied from the *fac-simile* in MISCELLANEOUS PAPERS.

No. II. Conclusion of a Letter from Queen Elizabeth to James the Sixth of Scotland. MSS. Cotton. Caligula. C. ix. p. 307.

No. III. Conclusion of a Letter from the same Queen to a person unknown. MSS. Cotton. Vespasian. F. 3. p. 13. b.

### PLATE II.

No. IV. Superscription of Lord Southampton's *pretended* Letter to Shakspeare. Copied from MISCELLANEOUS PAPERS.

No. V. A *pretended* Receipt given by John Heminges to Shakspeare. From the same Collection.

No. VI. A genuine Autograph of John Heminges; from a deed executed by him in 1617-18.

No. VII.

- No. VII. Two lines of a theatrical Account,  
*pretended* to have been written by Shakspeare;  
copied from MISCELLANEOUS PAPERS.
- No. VIII. A *pretended* autograph of Shakspeare;  
copied from the same Collection.
- No. IX. Part of Shakspeare's *pretended* Letter to  
Lord Southampton.
- No. X. A new Autograph of Shakspeare; from  
a Deed executed by him, March 10, 1612-13,  
in the possession of Albany Wallis, Esq.
- No. XI. XII. XIII. Autographs of Shakspeare,  
copied from his Will.
- No. XIV. Autograph of Richard Burbadge, from  
a deed executed by him, Dec. 22, 1593.
- No. XV. Autograph of John Duke, the player;  
from Henslowe's MS.
- No. XVI. Autograph of Joseph Taylor, the  
player; from a deed executed by him in  
1612.
- No. XVII. Autograph of Nat. Field, the player;  
from a Letter written by him.
- No. XVIII. Autograph of Chapman, the poet,  
from Henslowe's MS.
- No. XIX. Autograph of R. Hathwaye, the poet,  
from Henslowe's MS.
- No. XX. Autograph of Massinger, the poet,  
from an original Letter.

No. XXI. Autograph of Robert Dudley, Earl of Leycester; from an original in my possession.

PLATE III.

No. XXII. Part of Lord Southampton's *pretended* Letter to Shakspeare; copied from MISCELLANEOUS PAPERS.

No. XXIII. Part of a genuine Letter from Lord Southampton to Lord Keeper Williams, in 1621. MSS. Harl. 7000. p. 46.

No. XXIV. Part of a genuine Letter from Lord Southampton to a person unknown. MSS. Cotton. Vespasian. F. 13. p. 311.

CORRECTIONS.

PAG. L.

26. 16. *For* Elizabethe, r. *Elyzabethe*.

78. 12. Add this other instance of the substantive *Complement* used by Shakspeare in the present sense:  
“ Saving in dialogue of *complement*—”

K. JOHN, Act I.

88. ult. of note. *For* in Sept. r. 6th Sept.

97. 4 from the bottom. *For* take such care, r. *have been so anxious*.

15. *For* Elizabeth, r. *Elyzabethe*.

101. 15. *For* MIDSUMMER'S, r. MIDSUMMER-

113. n. 56. l. 2. *For* vol. i. r. vol. F.

210. 2 of Note. *For* set down in, r. “ *sette onne*.”

243. 10. In part of the impression, *for* original, r. *originals*.

IT IS PLAIN, THAT IN THIS SLIPPERY AGE WE  
LIVE IN, IT IS VERY EASY TO MAKE A BOOK LOOK  
AS OLD AS YOU WOULD HAVE IT.

LORD CH. JUSTICE, in Lady Ivy's Case ;  
STATE TRIALS, Vol. VII. p. 572.

But hear ME further : Japhet, 'tis agreed,  
Writ not, and Chartres scarce could write or read,—  
In all the Courts of Pindus guiltless quite ;  
But pens can forge, my friend, that cannot write.

POPE.

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A

LETTER

TO THE

EARL OF CHARLEMONT.<sup>1</sup>

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MY DEAR LORD,

THOUGH I have had the honour and pleasure of your lordship's friendship and correspondence for twenty years, during which time I have been in the habit of occasionally furnishing you with an account of what was doing here in the literary world, I

<sup>1</sup> As my noble friend's name appears in the List of Subscribers prefixed to the MISCELLANEOUS PAPERS, &c. here examined, I am authorized by him to say, that he subscribed to that work at the request of a gentleman who furnished him with a splendid PROSPECTUS of it, which he carried from hence to Ireland; and that if Lord C. had known as much of it as he now does, he would not have given either his name or his money to the publication.

do not recollect ever to have employed my pen on any topick more interesting than that which I mean to make the subject of this letter. In mentioning your long-continued kindness to me, I trust I shall not be charged with any idle vanity ; a weakness, if I at all know myself, most foreign from my nature and disposition. If the desire *laudari a laudato viro* be natural and excusable, I surely may be allowed to feel some degree of pride in the consciousness of having so long enjoyed the friendship of him, whom all who know him personally love and esteem, and whose virtues and attainments are admired and venerated wherever the name of Englishman is known.

It has been said, and I believe truly, that every individual of this country, whose mind has been at all cultivated, feels a pride in being able to boast of our great dramatick poet, Shakspeare, as his countryman : and proportionate to our respect and veneration for that extraordinary man ought to be our care of his fame, and of those valuable writings that he has left us ; and our solicitude to preserve them pure and unpolluted by any modern sophistication or foreign admixture  
what-



INT.

Part of Q. Elizabeth's.

Pretended Letter.

See Miscellaneous Pieces. p. 4.

Alas! didst not die, your pretty Virgins  
good Master! I am through the hands  
of our Lord's hands, and our Lord  
compensate her own the great capital

Elizabeth

N<sup>o</sup> II.

MSS. Cotton.  
Catalogue C. ix. p. 107.

Q. Elizabeth's  
Spurious  
Alphabet.

Her genuine  
Alphabet.

a b c d e f  
a b c d e f

Your best Wishes  
Affectionate Sister  
Elizabeth

N<sup>o</sup> III.

Nº II.

MSS. Cotton.

Caligula C. ix. p. 107.

Q. Elizabeth's  
Spurious  
Alphabet.

Her genuine  
Alphabet.

a b c d e f f g h i k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z  
 a b c d e f f g h i k l m n o p q r s t u v w x y z

Nº III.

Vespasian

E. 3. p. 23. b.

I thank you good Lady for so good her  
 services than Comen Cornuio for we be  
 in st rail of other Memorials I failt  
 not to Locke in my best Memorye

23<sup>th</sup> the  
 Greene

Elizabeth

music and with wellblowne we greet you well. &c.

Longmate sc.

whatsoever. Strongly as I am impressed with this sentiment, I hasten to discuss a question in which the reputation and character and history of my great MASTER are necessarily and immediately involved ; and I am the more anxious to seize the present moment, because, in this interval of the political warfare, the cause of Shakspeare and the Muses has a chance to be heard.

PREVIOUS to the publication of my edition of this great poet's works in 1790, I had collected some curious circumstances relative either to himself, his family, or estate, which I appended by way of notes to Mr. Rowe's very meagre Life of him ; and which, according to the modern mode of *making* books, after having been properly sliced and hashed and stewed, have been served up in a late work, without any acknowledgment where the ingredients of the literary mess were found. Since that time I have pursued my inquiries on the same subject with unremitting ardour ; and have amassed such an accumulation of materials for a more regular Life of our poet, as have exceeded my most sanguine expectations, and are now swelled to such a size as to

form a considerable volume. In my researches into the early history of the Stage<sup>2</sup>, I have been equally successful, and have obtained such curious and valuable accessions to what I formerly published on that subject, as to ascertain, with a degree of precision beyond my hopes, the actual state of our theatres and the performances they exhibited, almost up to the time when Shakspeare appears to have commenced his dramattick career.— With all this ardour of inquiry, and all this mass of information, your lordship will easily judge how much I must have been surprized in the beginning of the last year, when I was informed that many original pieces were discovered, in the hand-writing of this poet, which had never before been heard of; and how much that surprize was increased, when I found from the information of various

<sup>2</sup> When the Books of the late Mr. Topham Beauclerk were sold by auction in April 1781, I neglected (I know not by what accident) to purchase or even to examine the lot numbered 4137, which was sold for 3l. 6s. and contained seven small tracts; among which was one relative to our ancient stage, that I have never met with. If these sheets should fall into the hands of the purchaser, (with whose name I am unacquainted, the Sale-Catalogue having been mislaid,) he will oblige me by favouring me with his address.

intelligent persons who had viewed and examined the supposed originals, that every date affixed to these papers, and almost every fact mentioned in them, were alike inconsistent with the history of the time and with all the ancient documents of which I was possessed. These extraordinary manuscripts are at length given to the publick, by whose judgment their authenticity or spuriousness will, if I mistake not, be very speedily ascertained.

It is not at all to be wondered at, that the possessor and discoverer of these curiosities should set a very high value upon them, and thinking them to be genuine ancient manuscripts, should publish them in a splendid form : those persons also who are convinced of their authenticity, have a perfect right to adorn the shelves of their libraries with what they think a valuable treasure : but in this free country every intelligent reader claims a right to judge for himself, uninfluenced by any authority but that of right reason, and the best information he can procure ; and by the judgment of the intelligent part of the publick must the fate of these papers be finally decided. To aid those in  
the

the course of their investigation, who, though they may fall within this description, may not be endowed with your lordship's sagacity, or may not have devoted so many years as you have done to the most curious literary researches, as well as to all the liberal arts, is the object of the present inquiry ; which, with your permission, I mean to lay before that tribunal by which the adjudication on one of the most important questions that has for many years been agitated in the literary world must now be given.

IN his Preface the Editor informs us, that all the scholars, all the men of taste, antiquaries, and heralds, who viewed them previous to their publication, have “ unanimously testified in favour of their authenticity ; and declared, that where there was such a mass of evidence internal and *external*, it was impossible, amidst such various sources of detection, for THE ART OF IMITATION to have hazarded so much without betraying itself, and consequently, that *these papers can be no other than the production of Shakspeare himself.*”

WHAT is meant here by *external* evidence,

dence, it is not easy to conjecture. The writer should seem to have supposed that the labels and seals appendant to the deeds, because *exterior*, were *external evidence*: but neither these, nor the faded ink and discoloured paper or parchment, in my apprehension, come within that description. The only external evidence, strictly speaking, that has been produced, is the narrative, which I shall presently transcribe, stating that these treasures were found in a nameless place, in the custody of a nameless person. If these profound Scholars, Antiquaries, and Heralds are satisfied with that account, I can only say that they are very easily satisfied; and that, if the hand-writing is also to be considered as external evidence, their credulity on that head is perfectly consistent with the satisfaction which they feel in the manner in which these papers have been ushered to the publick.—In the position that “it was impossible so much could be hazarded without betraying itself,” I entirely agree with these gentlemen: the fabrication of these manuscripts, by whomsoever made, *has* accordingly betrayed itself almost in every line; so as to shew, beyond a possibility of doubt, that not a single piece in this collection was the production