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CHAPTER I.

The Origins.

The first known reference to Hamlet occurs in Nash's Preface to Menaphon, a novel written by Greene and published in 1589. This reference has often been commented upon, but by a strange irony of fate, the two critics who came nearest to a discovery of its real significance, damaged their cases by a violent distortion of what were in reality minor facts, with the result that succeeding critics have paid little attention to their hypothesis.[1] As long ago as 1905, Professor Jack pointed out that the reference to Hamlet could not be considered apart from the whole Preface. Unfortunately he went astray at the critical moment, and Professor J.W.Cunliffe[2] has no difficulty in pointing out his error. In the same way,[3] Mr. Richard Simpson, many years before Jack's article appeared, maintained that the Menaphon Preface was only one of many attacks on contemporary plays and playwrights; but he was so anxious to read Shakespeare into/

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(1) Professor A.E.Jack, P.M.L.A. of America XX (N.S.XIII).
(2) Professor J.W.Cunliffe, P.M.L.A. of America XXI (N.S.XIV)
(3) Richard Simpson, The School of Shakespeare (1878), vol.II, p.339.

into every allusion that he closed his eyes to ~~parts~~ FACTS which simply clamoured for explanation. Simpson's work however is too important to be neglected, for he saw quite clearly that it was useless to attempt an interpretation of any one of the pamphlets of Nash and Greene without taking into account the probable reason for ITS APPEARANCE AND its relation to other pamphlets. Had Professor Jack made use of Simpson's theory he might have avoided the mistake which he made; and many of the ingenious Hamlet theories which by reason of their airy unsubstantiality can exist only in an atmosphere of uncertainty and doubt would have been denied sustenance and might have been suffocated at birth.

Greene's Menaphon stands midway between "Perimedes the Blacksmith", March 29, 1588 and "A Groatsworth of Wit Bought with a Million of Repentance" published posthumously in 1592 (entered on State~~smen~~ IONER'S's Register 6th October 1592). They are the three chief sources of information from which a reconstruction can be made of what ~~was~~ was virtually a theatre war. Perimedes marks the beginning of the struggle, Menaphon the crisis, and the Groatsworth of Wit the end.

The one name which runs like the burden of a song through all the attacks of Nash and Greene is Marlowe. At the time when Greene was eking out a precarious existence/

existence writing novels and love pamphlets, Marlowe scored his dazzling success with Tamburlaine. Marlowe was not the man to bear success modestly, and Greene was not the man to bear the success of others with equanimity. If Tamburlaine was what the public desired, then Greene could provide Tamburlaines as well as Marlowe. He therefore discontinued the writing of love pamphlets and turned to the stage. This he discloses in the Prologue to his first play "Alphonsus of Arragon":-

> And this my hand which used for to pen
> The praise of love and Cupid's peerless power,
> Will now begin to treat of bloody Mars,
> Of doughty deeds and valiant victories.

The influence of Tamburlaine is ludicrously apparent on both character and versification alike. The hero rises in the Tamburlaine manner to "the sweet fruition of an earthly crown", and the verse shows that Greene had caught the ring of the "mighty line" at least in its more bombastic moods. Like Marlowe in Tamburlaine, Greene hoped to continue the adventures of his hero in a second part, but the promised play never appeared.

The reason can be guessed from the "Address to the Gentlemen Readers" which Greene prefixed to Perimedes. There he says "I keepe my old course, to palter up some-thing in Prose, using mine old Poesie still, Omne tulit punctum/

Punctum, although latelye two Gentlemen Poets made two madmen of Rome beate it out of the paper bucklers: and had it in derision, for that I could not make my verses iet upon the stage in tragicall buskins euerie word filling the mouth like the faburden of Bo-Bell, daring God out of heaven with that Atheist Tamburlan, or blaspheming with the mad preest of the sonne: ..... such mad and scoffing poets, that haue propheticall spirits as bred of Merlins race, if there be anye in England that set the end of scollarisme in an English blanck verse, I thinke either it is the humor of a nouvice that tickles them with selfe-loue, or too much frequenting the hot house (to use the Germaine proverbe) hath swet out all the greatest part of their wits, which wasts gradatim, as the Italians say poco a poco. If I speake darkely Gentlemen and offend with this digression, I craue pardon, in that I but answere in print, what they haue offered on the Stage!" (1)

There is much in this "dark speech" (to use Greene's own phrase) that is still obscure, but the general drift is clear enough. In the first place, Greene's work of the preceding year "Euphues, His Censure to Folly" had as a motto Ea habentur optima quae et jucunda honesta et utilia. This was a change from his old motto, Omne tulit punctum, and apparently the change had given rise to amusement among his fellows. In addition to that/

(1) Works of Greene:- Edited Grosart Vol.VII pp.7-8

that, the passage makes it plain that his blank verse had been publicly ridiculed by "two gentlemen poets". This means that Alphonsus of Arragon had been attacked, and the absence of the second part is at once explained. The play was so obviously an imitation of Tamburlaine that two dramatists caused two actors to expose the feeble nature of the attempt. Greene resented the exposure, but although the attack cut deep enough to prevent his continuing Alphonsus, he attempts to cover up his own confusion by showing that the works of his traducers are not above reproach. That is the real reason for the presence of the Address.

Of the "two gentlemen poets" one is easily identified. "Atheist Tamburlaine" and "Merlin's race" point to Marlowe and to him alone; but the other cannot be fixed with certainty. He is alluded to under the disguise of the "mad priest of the son". This would seem to be a character in a play written by Marlowe's friend, but if his speech was considered blasphemous by Greene, then it is very probable that the printer who came to print the play (assuming that it was printed) would be of a like mind and would delete the passage. It is therefore unlikely that this reference will ever be satisfactorily explained.

But/

But in this connection it is interesting to notice that the speech of the Player King in Hamlet is an obvious parody on the following lines from Alphonsus.

> Thrice ten times Phoebus with her golden beams
> Hath encompassed the circle of the sky;
> Thrice ten times Ceres hath her workmen hired
> And filled her barns with fruitful crops of corn
> Since first in priesthood I did lead my life.

When the Player King's speech is set alongside, the resemblance between the two is at once apparent:

> Full thirty times hath Phoebus' car gone round
> Neptune's salt wash and Tellus' orbed ground;
> And thirty dozen moons with borrowed sheen
> About the world have times twelve thirties been,
> Since Love our hearts and Hymen did our hands
> Unite commutual in most sacred bands.

These lines are clearly in 'Ercles vein. There is no suspicion that Greene is satirising any play; the author of Hamlet is in this case the satirist. If it is assumed that this speech occurred in the Ur Hamlet and that in revising and rewriting the play Shakespeare allowed it to remain, then it is possible that the other dramatist who assisted Marlowe in ridiculing Greene was the author of Ur Hamlet. There is nothing improbable in this theory, and, if it is admitted that the Player King's speech is a parody on the lines from Alphonsus, it is the only possible conclusion; for there is no reason why Shakespeare should have satirised Alphonsus of Arragon as late as 1600.

That Hamlet as it exists in the Second Quarto and in the Folio/

Folio was used as a vehicle of stage personalities is well known; but there is evidence from the First Quarto that the Ur Hamlet also contained reference to contemporary events. Hamlet advises the players as follows:

> And doe you heare? let not your Cloune speake
> More than is set doune, there be of them I can tell you
> That will laugh themselves, to set on some
> Quantitie of barren spectators to laugh with them,
> Albeit there is some necessary point in the Play
> Then to be observed: O t'is vile and shewes
> A pittiful ambition in the foole that vseth it
> And then you haue some agen, that keepes one sute
> Of iests, as a man in Knoune by one sute of
> Apparell, and Gentlemen quotes his ieasts doune
> In their tables, before they come to the play, as thus:
> Cannot you stay till I eate my porrige? and, you owe me
> A quarter's wages: and, my coat wants a cullison,
> And, your beere is soure: and, blabbering with his lips,
> And thus keeping in his cinkapase of ieasts.(1)

Mr. Dover Wilson has already pointed out that two of the five jests "my coat wants a cullison" and "your beere is soure" are to be found in Tarleton's Jests published in 1611. There is little doubt therefore that he is the clown pilloried here. Tarleton belonged to the Queen's men, which, it should be noted was the company which first produced Alphonsus of Arragon, and he died in September 1588. Hamlet must have been produced before that date as a sneer at him would have been pointless after that.

Perimedes/

(1) The Bodley Head Quartos. Hamlet p.41.

Perimedes was entered in the Stationer's Register in March 1588 so there is no chronological objection which can be urged against the view that in the Preface to that work Greene was replying to an attack contained in Hamlet. The parody on Alphonsus and the attack on Tarleton indicate that the author of the Ur Hamlet was on bad terms with Greene and Greene's company. It is natural to assume that Perimedes was finished about the time of Hamlet's appearance, and that in the Address to the Gentlemen Readers, Greene took up the cudgels on his own and his company's behalf.

It is unlikely that Marlowe and the author of the Ur Hamlet treated the onslaught in the Preface to Perimedes with silent contempt, for in Greene's next work, Pandosto, published later in the same year, the quarrel is again mentioned. The novel is dedicated to the Earl of Cumberland, and Greene consoles himself with the belief that his noble patron will protect him from "the poisoned tongues of scorning sycophants". The Earl's assistance, however, does not seem to have been of much material advantage, for in Menaphon, which follows Pandosto, new allies are called in. This work marks the turning point in the "theatre war", for the playwrights are separated into two armed camps. Greene was successful in obtaining for Menaphon two sets of commendatory verses from Henry Upchear and Thomas Barnibe and a preface from Thomas Nash/

Nash, who, fresh from the Martin Marprelate controversy, had gained considerable experience and notoriety as a pamphleteer. In this work Greene was putting forth his supreme effort, for even the story itself, if one may judge from his own words, refers to the stage quarrel - "If you find dark enigmas or strange conceits .... I desire you to take a little pain to pry into my imagination." Nobody has as yet solved the mystery of Menaphon, but the commendatory verses of Barnibe and the Preface of Nash make clear Greene's intention. From the former the aggressive nature of Menaphon is made explicit:-

> Come forth ye wits that vaunt the pomp of speech
> And strive to thunder from a stageman's throat
> View Menaphon, a note beyond you reach
> Whose sight will make your drumming descant dote.
> Players avaunt! You know not to delight,
> Welcome sweet Shepherd, worth a scholars sight;

and from the latter the position of the protagonists can be determined.

At the outset Nash endeavours to enrol Greene in the good books of his readers by pointing out that Greene is a University man and one of themselves. But he continues: "I am not ignorant how eloquent our gowned age is grown of late; so that every mechanicall mate abhorreth the English he was borne too, and plucks, with a solemne periphrasis, his vt vales from the inke-horne: which I impute, not so much to the perfection of Arts, as to the servile imitation of/

of vaine glorious Tragedians ..... But heerein I cannot so fully bequeath them to folly, as their ideot Art-masters, that intrude themselves to our eares as the alcumists of eloquence, who (mounted on the stage of arrogance) thinke to out-brave better pennes with the swelling bumbast of bragging blanke verse."(1) With these men, Nash ranks those who, although ignorant of both scholarship and art are foremost in criticising the works of others, and with a sigh of relief he passes to Menaphon which he holds worthy of special praise because it was written in so short a time. After a passing reference to the Marprelate controversy, he returns to his first theme.- "I will turne back to first text of Studies of delight, and talke a little in friendship with a few of our triviall translators" - and the attack on dramatists which had begun in the first paragraph of the Preface is resumed. "It is a common practise now a dayes amongst a sort of shifting companions, that runne through euery Art and thrive by none, to leaue the trade of nouerint, whereto they were borne, and busie themselues with the indeuours of Art, that could scarcely Latinize their neck verse if they should haue neede; yet English Seneca read by Candlelight yeelds many good sentences, as Blood is a beggar, and so forth; and if you intreate him faire in a frostie morning, hee will/

(1) Works of Nash Edited M'Kerrow Vol.III p.311

will afford you whole Hamlets I should say handfuls of Tragicall speeches. But O griefe! Tempus edax rerum whats that will last alwayes? The Sea exhaled by droppes will in continuance bee drie and Seneca let blood line by line, and page by page, at length must needes die to our stage, which makes his famished followers to imitate the Kid in AEsop, who, enamoured with the Foxes newfangles, forsooke all hopes of life to leape into a new occupation; and these men, renouncing all possibilities of credite or estimation, to intermeddle with Italian translations: wherein how poorely they haue plodded, (as those that are neither prouengall men, nor are able to distinguish of Articles) let all indifferent Gentlemen that haue travelled in that tongue discene by their two-pennie pamphlets. And no maruell though their home borne mediocritie bee such in this matter; for what can bee hoped of these that thrust Elisium into hell, and haue not learned, so long as they haue liued in the Spheres, the iust measure of the Horizon without an hexameter?

Sufficeth them to bodge up a blanke verse with ifs and ands, and otherwhile for recreation after their candle-stuffe, hauing starched their beards most curiously, to make a Peripateticall path into the inner parts of the Citie, and spend/

spend two or three howers turning ouer French Dowdie where they attract more infection in one minute than they can do eloquence all daies of their life, by conuersing with any Authors of like argument."(1) This attack is followed by a few critical remarks on contemporary translators and poets, and he passes to Peele "the chiefe supporter of pleasauace now living, the Atlas of Poetrie, and primus verborum Artifex: whose first increase, the arraignment of Paris, might pleade to your opinions his pregnant dexterity of wit, and manifold varietie of inuention; wherein (me iudice) he goeth a steppe beyond all that write."(2) The Address concludes with Nash warning the actors that if the dramatists cease writing for the stage then their days of prosperity will be at an end.

One of the most interesting features of this Address is the manner in which its original intention shows itself. At first sight, it seems to be a review of contemporary letters, but the passages of literary criticism are merely so many halting places where Nash refreshes himself for another onslaught on certain dramatists. Further, Nash must have been well primed by Greene with information about his enemies, for he repeats two of the charges which Greene had used in Perimedes/

(1) Works of Nash, Edited M'Kerrow Vol.III pp.315-316.
(2) Ibid p.323.

Perimedes. There is the same scornful allusion to the use of blank verse, and the same general accusation of frequenting places of questionable repute. Professor Boas, in his zeal to show that every allusion refers to Kyd, says that in "French Dowdie" Nash "may be referring to Kyd's imitation in the Lord General's narrative (Sp.Tr.Act.I 1122) of the Messenger's account, in Cornelie Act V of the Battle of Thapsus."(1) But this does not explain why Garnier should be called Dowdie. The most obvious explanation is to identify the "French Dowdie" of Nash with the "hot-house" of Greene. Like all good controversialists, Nash possessed the gift of tongues, and could ring the changes on a phrase.

The chief interest of the Preface to Menaphon lies in the allusion to Hamlet. This confirms in a surprisingly conclusive manner the theory already suggested:- that it was the author of the Ur Hamlet who along with Marlowe ridiculed Greene. Every allusion in this "war" has a reason behind it, and Nash alluded scornfully to Hamlet because that play had made fun of his friend. But it is not only Hamlet and the author of Hamlet that is attacked by Nash. Professor Boas is at pains to show that any one author is under the lash of Nash, but, when the Preface is considered along with the other pamphlets, this is seen to be impossible. To argue

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(1) Works of Kyd, Edited Boas, p.XXIX.

as Professor Boas does that the use of the plural throughout the Preface is merely a rhetorical device is mere sophistry. Nash's attack is levelled not on one author but on all those who at one time or another had criticised adversely the works of Greene.

Professor Boas[1] puts up a stout defence in favour of the "one poet" theory," and he sees in the passage an attack upon Kyd. He points out in favour of his theory the pun upon the name Kyd; and he explains the reference to those "who intermeddle with Italian translations" as an allusion to Kyd's "Householders' Philosophie" which is a translation of Tasso's "Padre di Famiglia". So far his argument may be allowed to stand, but when he comes to identify the allusions he is on less firm ground. Thus the "hit" at those who "thrust Elisium into Hell" he thinks refers to the following lines from the Spanish Tragedy:

> Twixt those two ways I trod the middle path
> Which brought me to the faire Elisian green;

and he explains the "hexameter" allusion as referring to Kyd's borrowings from the Sixth Book of the AEneid for details of the lower world. The "ifs and ands" allusion he identifies with the cry of Lorenzo to ~~Perlringand~~ PEDRINGANO, Spanish Tragedy II 1 77.

> What Villaine, ifs and ands?

At/

(1) For Professor Boas' defence see generally pp.XXVIII-XXIX and XLV-LIV of the introduction to his edition of Kyd.

At a glance, it is clear that the lines which Professor Boas suggests as the butt of the attack hardly correspond to Nash's own words. Marlowe's Dr. Faustus contains a passage which at once recalls Nash's sneer at those who thrust "Elisium into Hell".

> So Faustus hath
> Already done and holds this principle
> There is no chief but only Beelzebub
> To whom Faustus doth dedicate himself.
> The word damnation terrifies not him
> For he confounds Hell in Elisium.

If "confound" be taken in the sense of "confuse" – a meaning which according to the N.E.D. was common in the Elizabethan age – the passage means that no distinction was made between Hell and Elisium, and Nash is manifestly alluding to such a confusion.

The hexameter allusion is very obscure, and Professor Boas' attempt to explain it in a general way by referring to Kyd's borrowings from Virgil is hardly satisfactory, as it is difficult to see the connection between "spheres" and "horizon" and the lower world. It should be remembered that Nash is addressing an educated audience, and speaking as a scholar among scholars he is pointing out the uneducated nature of this playwright who gives the wrong pronounciation to a word like "horizon". Indeed, he is attacking a mistake such as one who had "small Latin and less Greek" would be likely to make. It is interesting therefore to note that Henry/

Henry VI, IV, 7, 81 contains what seems to be the butt of the attack.

King Edward:- Now for the right, let's harbour here at York
And when the morning sun shall raise his car
Above the border of the horizon
We'll forward towards Warwick and his mates.

Here the metre demands that "horizon" should be pronounced with the penultimate syllable short, and those with a classical ecucation would no doubt shudder at the error. In other words, Nash is very subtly dressing anew the common accusation against Shakespeare:- his lack of a University education.

But that type of Shakespearean criticism which delights in breaking up the plays among many authors has made the Henry VI trilogy suspect as coming from the pen of Shakespeare. It is said that the trilogy is merely a revision made by Shakespeare of older plays, and that it is impossible to say with any degree of assurance that any lines in it are genuinely Shakespearean. If this is so, the identification of any attack with Henry VI does not carry one very far. But the recent researches of Mr. Alexander have thrown new light on the early work of Shakespeare. He has shown that "the Contention" and "The True Tragedy" are not the raw materials from which Shakespeare derived his Henry VI, Parts II and III, but are "pirated editions" of the "true and perfect coppie".(1) This discovery is of the highest importance, for

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(1) Shakespeare's Henry VI and Richard III (Cambridge Univ.Press)

a great many of the "multiple authorship" theories are founded on the assumption that "The Contention" and "The True Tragedy" are first drafts, and it is in these pirated editions that the "other hands" have been seen. Such evidence however proves nothing, for in a pirated edition anything can happen. The most obvious course to take is to recognise the principle that even Homer nods, and that nobody knew better than Heminge and Condell what Shakespeare wrote and what he did not write, and that the inclusion of the plays in the Folio is the strongest piece of evidence in favour of Shakespearean authorship. So far as evidence for the date of the Henry VI trilogy is concerned, the best guide is Richard III. Historically considered, it follows on the heels of Henry VI. It bears the impress of Tamburlaine's influence on both character and versification, and could not have been written later than 1589-90. The trilogy is obviously earlier and must have been written before Richard III, so that chronologically there is no reason why Nash should not refer to it. The allusion which Nash made later in Pierce Penniless 1592 to "brave Talbot" does not refer to Shakespeare's play, but to a play probably written by Peele on the same subject. Indeed, Henry VI must be regarded as Shakespeare's earliest essay in the writing of history plays. His life was one continuous/

continuous development and Henry VI had to precede Henry V just as the Comedy of Errors had to precede the Midsummer Night's Dream and Titus Andronicus, King Lear.

At first sight there seems good reason for identifying with Professor Boas the "ifs and ands" allusions with the line from the Spanish Tragedy

What Villaine, ifs and ands?

but a consideration of the context considerably modifies first impressions. Lorenzo's exclamation is highly dramatic and there is no question here that Kyd is botching up a line with monosyllables to eke out the metre. Professor MacCallum points out that the use of "an if" is a common redundance, and that it may be this that Nash is attacking. If this be so, the play that Nash had in mind must have been Titus Andronicus which contains many lines padded out in this manner.

II 3 123. An if she do, I would I were an eunuch.

II 3 268, An if we miss to meet him handsomely.

IV 4 9 Of old Andronicus. And what an if.

V 1 61 An if it please thee! why, assure thee, Lucius.

VI 3 34 An if your highness knew my heart, you were (1)

Like/

(1) For the identification of the allusions, acknowledgement must be made to different sources. The first two were made independently, but were re-discovered in Dr. McKerrow's edition of Nash and Professor MacCallum's article "The Early Hamlet" in "An English Miscellamy." "The third identification is lifted almost in EXTENSO from the last named writer.

Like the second allusion, this identification will not mean much to those who do not believe in Shakespearean authorship. This is not the place to discuss this question, but the present writer feels safer in the company of Heminge and Condell than of Mr. J.M.Robertson.

A dispassionate review of the whole Preface to Menaphon indicates therefore that allusion is made to three authors:- Kyd, Marlowe and Shakespeare. Now it is interesting to notice that although critics have tended to the view that only Kyd is attacked his claim to inclusion is really the weakest of the three as it rests on the assumption that Nash is punning on his name. The story to which Nash refers is, as has often been pointed out, not from AEsop but from the 5th Eclogue of Spenser's Shepherd's Calendar. There the tale of the Fox and the Kid is told, and the gloss of E.K. that "this tale is much like to that in AEsop's fables, but the Catastrophe and end is farre different" may have confused Nash. A comparison of Spenser and Nash shows that the latter had read and remembered the Eclogue. Thus

> Out of his parke a glass he tooke
> Wherein while Kidde unaware did look.
> He was so enamoured with the newell,
> That nought he deemed deare for the jewell.

Compare Nash "enamoured with the Foxes newfangles". It is clear from the comparison that it is by no means certain that Nash/

Nash is punning: the reference to the Kid in Aesop could quite easily be explained as a literary allusion introduced to give point to the argument.

This circumstance is instanced here to show the flimsy nature of the foundation upon which Kydian authorship has been ascribed to the Ur Hamlet. For the purpose of the present discussion the common view that Nash is punning on the name of Kyd will be retained.

Since three authors are named, it follows that the author of Hamlet must be one of them. But a further question prompts itself. Is the allusion to each author identical? Turning to the Preface, one finds that there is an easily discernible difference. Marlowe and Shakespeare are the victims of a direct attack: their lines are held up to ridicule; but Kyd is attacked only indirectly. An examination of the structure of the attack makes this clear. First there is the scornful allusion to those who can "scarcely latinize their neck verses". This can hardly refer to Kyd, for, as Professor Boas has shown, his classical scholarship was very good. The obvious conclusion is that here Nash is referring to Shakespeare, and when the many similar allusions to Shakespeare's classical attainments are remembered its acceptance does not cause much difficulty. The beginning of the attack therefore may be said to refer to Marlowe and Shakespeare/

Shakespeare, with special reference to the latter. The allusion to Hamlet now follows, which Nash suggests is nothing but English Seneca. But although this is the vogue just now it cannot last for ever, and "his famished followers" (i.e. the followers of Seneca) will be compelled to turn to something else. Being foolish fellows, they would do something silly; for example, they might "imitate the Kid in AEsop". Now the important word here is "imitate". Had Kyd done anything about this time that NEEDY ~~needy~~ playwrights would be glad to do? Well, he had. The document which gives this information will be considered in detail later, but the letter to Sir John Puckering shows that in 1587 Kyd entered the services of a certain lord. When this is remembered, the "Foxe's newfangles" and the "new occupation" became clear at once. To a man like Nash, writing was the only profession worth while and the "new occupation" which Kyd leaped into, the post of secretary to his lord probably, would be to him a living death. Nash could only see in the lord who assisted Kyd, the Fox dressed as a sheep who deceived the kid with pretty knick-knacks and carried him off to captivity and death in a basket. Kyd had specialised in "English Seneca". See what he had come to! These ignorant fellows who had CRITICISED Greene would come to precisely the same end and would be glad to creep into the service/

service of a lord, and, like Kyd, translate twopenny pamphlets from the Italian. Kyd's translation of Tasso had not been very good, Nash suggests, but the plight of the others will be even worse as the following examples will show. He then holds up certain lines to ridicule, and, in his accomplished manner, he winds up the attack by pointing out their lapses from morality.

Marlowe and Shakespeare therefore are the only two persons attacked, and Kyd is introduced merely as a warning. So far from being the main butt of Nash's attack, he is introduced only to point the moral. The Preface to Menaphon therefore does not contain a single scrap of evidence that Kyd was the author of the Ur Hamlet, for his name occurs in a different sentence and in a different sense from the Hamlet allusion. What the Preface does reveal is that the author of the Ur Hamlet was either Marlowe or Shakespeare. This is something certainly, but one would have wished Nash to have been more explicit and to have told exactly who wrote the Ur Hamlet.

The next pamphlet in this "war" which is of interest in this connection is the "Groatsworth of Wit" published after the death of Greene in 1592. In the middle of that work Greene places a letter addressed "To those Gentlemen his Quondam/

Quondam acquaintance, that spend their wits in making Plaies". The "Gentlemen" are Marlowe, Nash, and Peele, and to them he says "Base minded men al three of you, if by my miserie ye be not warned: for vnto none of you (like me) sought those burres to cleane: those Puppits (I meane) that speak from our mouths, those Anticks garnisht in our colours. Is it not strange that I, to whom they al haue been beholding; is it not like that you, to whome they all haue been beholding shall (were ye in that case that I am now) be both at once of them forsaken? Yes trust them not: for there is an upstart Crow, beautified with our feathers, that with his Tygers heart wrapt in a Players hide, supposes he is as well able to bumbast out a blanke verse as the best of you: and being an absolute Johannes fac totum, is in his owne conceit the onely Shake-scene in a country."(1)

This is the first certain reference to Shakespeare, and, naturally, it has frequently been commented upon. Malone's interpretation of the passage in which he said that Greene was alluding to plagiarism on the part of Shakespeare has now been rejected; and the modern point of view is the obvious one:-that Greene is here ridiculing the line

"Oh Tiger heart wrapped in a woman's hide"

which occurs in 3 Henry VI, as an example of the "upstart crows" blank/

(1) Works of Greene, Edited Grosart. vol.XII pp.143-144.

blank verse. The fact that the trilogy is attacked by Greene, confirms to some extent the view set out above that Nash was alluding to the same group in the Preface to Menaphon. That the trilogy was a success is proved by the rival play on the same subject of Peele, and naturally Greene and his friends were jealous at the success of the "Johannes fac-totum" and seized every opportunity of attacking him.

The despicable nature of Greene is shown by his attitude towards Marlowe. He professes to be on terms of personal friendship with him, but, under that guise, he scores his deadliest hit. Marlowe could afford to smile at Greene's attempts to vilify his artistic reputation, but he did not fully consider the lengths to which his enemy would go. Towards Nash and Peele, his real friends, Greene gives the usual death-bed advice of the rake; but while professing to do the same to Marlowe, he exposes to the hilt his atheism. This constituted at that time a capital offence, and although doubtless Marlowe's tendencies were well known among the dramatists, yet those in authority would at least lack proof that he was a self-professing atheist. But all was changed: now everybody knew the real Marlowe. The effect of this exposure had severe consequences and Marlowe attempted, unsuccessfully, to extract an apology from Chettle, the publisher of the Groatsworth of Wit. Pembroke, his patron, banished/

banished him from his company; his every movement was watched; and a warrant was issued for his arrest. As the theatrical history of his later plays shows, Marlowe's last days had nothing in them of the settled native of the Tamburlaine-Edward II period. Greene had shown his "friendship" too well.

As Greene knew, his death-bed manifesto gave rise to much discussion, and Shakespeare as well as Marlowe demanded an apology from the publisher. Chettle's reply which he prefaced to "Kinde Heart's Dream" is interesting. There he says:- "With neither of them that take offence was I acquainted and with one of them I care not if I never be. The other whom at that time I did not so much spare as since I wish I had, for that I have moderated the heate of living writers, and I might have used my owne discretion (especially in such a case) the Author being dead. That I did not I am as sorry as if the original fault had been my fault because myselfe have seen his demeanour no less civill than he excellent in the quality he professes: Besides divers of worship have reported his uprightness of dealing which argues his honesty, and his facetious grace in writing that approves his art."

To this one can only say "Poor Marlowe". Who would have prophesied in 1588 that the author of Tamburlaine would have/

have been treated in this cavalier fashion by a hack printer! Truly Greene's exposure had turned the world against its former darling. The position of Shakespeare as revealed here stands in contrast to that of Marlowe. Marlowe's success is finished; Shakespeare's is yet to come. Those whose hopes had been disappointed in Marlowe were now looking to Shakespeare to realise them! The flaming meteor that was Marlowe has sunk hissing into the sea, but the "bright star" of Shakespeare had appeared on the horizon.

The absence of Kyd's name from Greene's manifesto is of importance as it shows that he was not considered of much account. He is mentioned neither as a friend nor as an enemy, and this of itself indicates that he was no active participater in contemporary dramatic business. Had he been an important factor in this theatre war, like the author of the Ur Hamlet, for instance, Greene would most surely have alluded to him. The Groatsworth of Wit therefore amply upholds the interpretation which has been given of the Menaphon Preface: that Kyd had retired from the stage and had no part in the writing of the Ur Hamlet. Marlowe was living in comparative security, and Greene had deprived him of his lord's patronage. As has been shown, the author of Hamlet had attacked Greene. If Kyd had been the author, would Greene in what he knew to be his last work have let him go without the chance of firing a Parthian shot at him and

degrading him in the eyes of his lord? The absence of Kyd's name from this death-bed attack is one of the strongest arguments against his authorship of the Ur Hamlet.

With the death of Greene the theatre war came to an end, and now the scattered threads can be drawn together. The whole discussion has shown that the authorship of the Ur Hamlet must lie with either Marlowe or Shakespeare. If we were to ask which author, if any, the evidence favours the answer must be Shakespeare. Nash's accusation that the authors who had attacked Greene could "scarcely latinise their neck verse" occurs in the same context as the Hamlet allusion, and fits Shakespeare perfectly. This is of course too slight to take one very far, and other sources of evidence must be tapped to decide the claims of the two playwrights.

This theatre war throws an interesting sidelight on the early life of Shakespeare in London. It shows him embroiled in a quarrel soon after his arrival, and, as an ally he has the chief playwright of the time. This hardly suggests the call-boy at the stage door and the other fables of the Romantic critics of the 19th century. Neither does it suggest the botcher of other men's plays - an interpretation which finds so much favour today. What the "war" does suggest is/

is that Shakespeare found his feet as a playwright very quickly, and was soon accepted as one capable of great things. One cannot imagine Marlowe at the height of his powers and success joining forces with a call-boy or a hack writer; but we can imagine him pleased to enjoy the friendship of a writer of plays - of plays like Hamlet, for example.

CHAPTER II.

Stage History.

No trace of Hamlet is found in any of the records until 1594, when, on the fifth of June, Henslowe notes the account of performances with a fresh heading:- "In the name of God Amen begininge at Newington my Lord Admiralle men and my Lord Chamberlan men as ffolewethe 1594. (1) 9 of June 1594 R/at Hamlet --- viijs" (1)

The date is very significant: the plague was beginning to abate; the companies were returning from the provinces; and as many of these tours had been financial failures, there was much confusion , and temporary arrangements were the rule. One such arrangement which is of importance here is that noted above by Henslowe: the joint performance of the Admiral's men with the Lord Chamberlain's men at Newington Butts from June 3 (5) to June 13 (15). In all, ten performances were given, comprising seven plays, and each company acted its own plays. The seven plays presented are Hester and Ahasuerus, The Jew of Malta, Titus Andronicus, Cutlack, Belin Dun, Hamlet and the Taming of a Shrew.[2] The Jew of Malta, Cutlack and Belin Dun afterwards occur/

~~(1) 9 of June 1594. R/at Hamlet viijs.~~
(1) GREG: Henslowe's Diary Vol.I. p.17.
(2) Greg: Henslowe's Diary Vol. II. p. 84-85.

occaur in the Admiral's lists and must therefore have belonged to that company. The other four plays must therefore belong to the Chamberlain's men. But although they are all old plays none of them were in the lists of Lord Strange's men, so that Derby's men must have aquired them from another company. Of this there is direct evidence. The title pages of the ~~quaters~~ QUARTOS of Titus Andronicus, and the Taming of a Shrew state that thes plays were acted by Pembroke's men. In September 1593, Henslowe wrote to Alleyn: "As for my lorde a Pembrokes wⁿ you desier to knowe whear they be they ar all at home and hausse been this V or sixe weackes for they cane not save ther carges wᵗʰ travell as I heare and weare fayne to pane ther parell for ther carge".(1) This letter shows that the company were in sore straits and were disposing of some of their properties. At the same time certain of their plays came into the hands of the publishers: Edward II, The True Tragedy of Richard, Duke of York in addition to The Taming of a Shrew. All this shows that Pembroke's men were selling their plays to anyone who was willing to buy them. The four plays Titus Andronicus, The Taming of a Shrew, Hester and Ahasuerus, and Hamlet, which/

(1) Henslowe Papers 40.

which the Chamberlain's men presented during the joint season would therefore all come from Pembroke's men.

It is possible that Titus Andronicus passed through Sussex's hands before coming into the possession of the Chamberlain's men as the title page says that the play was acted by Sussex's company. There is one piece of evidence which strengthens this view. Beginning on 26th December 1593 and ending on 6th February 1594, the company was engaged in London. On 24th January1594, Titus Andronicus was produced and is marked by Henslowe "ne". This cryptic sign is usually taken to mean "new" and here it may be regarded in that light in the sense that it was a new play so far as Sussex's men were concerned. When the financial crisis which had occurred in Pembroke's company is borne in mind, the obvious conclusion is that Sussex's men bought the play from them about December or January 1593/4. But the history of Titus Andrunicus is not yet told. It was acted again by Sussex's men on 28th January and for the last time on 6th February, on which date it was entered in the Stationer's Register. This step was doubtless caused by the renewed alarm of plague, and the inhibition of plays by the Privy Council on February 3. Since the joint/

joint season at Newington Butts shows the Chamberlain's men in possession of the play, it must have come into the possession of Derby's men about February 1594. Titus Andranicus therefore, did not pass directly from Pembroke to Derby's men; but there is no reason for believing with Dr. Chamber's that the other ex-Pembroke plays fall into the same category, for if they did, the title pages would have recorded the fact. It is better to consider every play in its own merits than to generalise from any one, and to regard Titus Andranicus as the exception rather than the rule.(1)

It follows from this examination of the stage history of Hamlet that the auther must have belonged to Pembroke's company. Strangely enough, few scholars have given full significance to the fact that dramatists had their plays produced by definite companies just as a modern author usually has all his works published by the same publisher. But this is fundamental for a proper understanding of stage conditions. The different dramatic companies were openly hostile to one another, and although circumstances occasionally caused amalgamations to take place, yet each company jealously guarded its own plays and tried hard to preserve its own individuality. Besides, a certain

amount/

(1) Chambers:- Elizabethan Stage Vol. II. p.95.

amount ofesprit de corps animated the members of each company, and a code of rules undoubtedly existed, which, although indefinite and perhaps unwritten, was none the less effective. This is brought out of the Travelling license of 1593, granted to Lord Strange's men where Alleyn is differentiated from the rest as being a servant of the Lord Admiral, and the "Defence of Cony Catching" (1592) which accuses Greene of selling the Orlando Furioso twice over , once to the Queen's men and again to the Admiral's men. The distinction which the Privy Council license makes between the two companies shows that ~~the~~ to the Elizabethans each actor was recognised as belonging to a definite company; and the scorn which greeted Greene's double-dealing shows that some sort of arrangement must have existed between the Dramatists and the players. The FAILURE to recognise this has been responsible , in many ways, for the grotesque attempts which have been made to divide the early plays of Shakespeare among the different playwrights. Marlowe, Kyd, Greene, Peel and others have all been credited with parts of plays like Titus Andronicus and the Henry VI trilogy; and the calm complacency and sometimes admiration with which this literary dissection has been received has emboldened the possessors of hare-brained theories to impart them to the world; so that at the present day those who/

who have ears to hear can actually listen to the voice of Francis Beaument speaking in Julius Caesar. Scholarship is not required for this type of work; indeed it is rather a drawback. A lively imagination, and a concordance is really the only equipment necessary. If this thesis-hunting of a thesisless maglignity be allowed to continue no work of Shakespeare will be safe, and critics will be afraid to speak lest some nonentity remind them that it has been conclusively proved that a particular play is the work of Rankine, Day, Daburne, Chettle and (unfortunately) Shakespeare.

In the Henry VI trilogy the stage has now been rented when it is orthodox criticism to assert that Greene had a large share in its composition. No account is taken of the fact that he and Shakespeare were bitter enemies and wrote for different companies. At no time did Greene ever write for Shakespeare's company, and it is not too much to assert that not a single play of Shakespeare contained a line of Greene. Similarly, in the case of the other dramatists, no attempt should be made to ascribe a play to two or more authors without first of all ascertaining that at the time of composition they were writing for the same company. The analogy of the drama with the modern newspaper of which the multiple-authorship theorists are so fond/

fond is accurate enough in its way; but just as the "Times" does not send to "Punch" for Sir Owen Seaman to write editorials, so the Admiral's men did not call in the services of Pembroke's playwrights to provide dramas for them. Each company had dramatists of its own upon whom it relied for plays; and although changes were frequent, it is possible by studying the available records to arrive at a fairly accurate account of the different companies to which the more important dramatists were attached in the course of their careers.

With regard to Shakespeare's first dramatic company, scholars are coming more and more round to the view held long ago by Halliwell-Philipps that in his early days he belonged to Pembroke's company. The opinion that he was a member of Lord Strange's men is, on the face of the available evidence, so difficult to maintain that the wonder is that it has obtained such wide-spread acceptance. The two documents which throw light on the composition of Strange's men are the Travelling license granted to the company by the Privy Council on 28th January 1593, and the stage plot of the Seven Deadly Sins. In the first, six names in all are mentioned: "Edward Allen, servant to the right honourable the LordHighe Admiral, William Kempe, Thomas Pope, John Heminges, , Augustine Phillips and Georg Brian being all one/

one Companie servauntes to our verie good Lord the Lord Strange." With this license, the Seven Deadly Sins is closely connected. Between 1589 and 1594 some arrangement existed between Strange's and the Admiral's men, and until recently the stage plot was usually regarded as giving particulars of the personnel of the combined companies. But Dr. Greg has shown that this is not the case. The name of Alleyn does not appear in the plot, and no single actor named in it can be shown to have any connection whatsoever with the Admiral's men. The Seven Deadly Sins therefore gives the names not of the Admiral-Strange combination but of the Strange's men alone. The absence of Shakespeare's name on two documents giving the personnel of the company cannot be explained away. It is proof positive that to whatever company he was attached it was not Strange's.

There is however strong evidence in favour of Pembroke's company. The title pages of many of Shakespeare's early plays indicate that they were acted by Pembroke's men; and in this connection the work of Mr. Alexander is of importance. Titus Andronicus, The Taming of a Shrew and The True Tragedy of Richard, Duke of York all bear the name Pembroke on the title page. In the case of Titus Andronicus, the literary Bolsheviks have gained the day and Francis Meres and Heminge

and/

and Condell stand contra mundun; but with regard to the other two, it has been shown that they are "pirated editions" of the Taming of the Shrew and 3 Henry VI. As both plays must have been written or (as the multiple-authorship theorists would have it) finally revised by Shakespeare before being pirated, this constitutes strong proof, that he was a Pembroke playwright.

Greene's attack of 1592, in which 3 Henry VI is held up to ridicule also favours Pembroke's company. Greene refers to Shakespeare both as an actor and as an author, and, as 3 Henry VI is a Pembroke play, it is inconceivable that he should have written for one company and acted for another. Indeed it can be asserted that so far as is known, no play of Shakespeare was ever acted by Lord Strange's men. There is absolutely no evidence that "Harye the VI" mentioned by Henslowe as having been performed by that company in March 1592 is Shakespeare's 1 Henry VI. As has been mentioned already, it is obviously this play to which Nash refers in his Pierce Penniless 1592, and he would be the last man to praise any work of Shakespeare. The Henry VI trilogy is one continuous play, and the fact that Part III was acted by Pembroke's men, and that Part II, although not bearing any name on the title page, was published when the company was in deep water, makes it frankly impossible that Part I could have been acted by any other company. The obvious explanation/

explanation of Henslowe's Henry VI is that it is a rival piece written probably by Peele the friend of Nash as a counterblast against Shakespeare's trilogy on the same subject. Nash's reference to Talbot means nothing. How could anyone write a play on Henry VI without introducing him?

One last item of evidence might be adduced in favour of Pembroke's company. The title page of the 1594 quarto of Titus Andronicus, entered in the Stationers' Register on 6th February 1594, states that the play was acted by Derby's, Pembroke's, Sussex', and the Lord Chamberlain's servants. Now Long Strange died on 25th September 1593 and Lord Derby who took over the company died shortly afterwards on April 16th 1594 when the company was fortunate enough to secure as Patron the Lord Chamberlain. It has already been suggested that in all probability Pembroke's company were the original owners; that it passed from them to Sussex's in December/January 1593/4; and that finally Derby's men obtained it about February 1594. The mention therefore of what is virtually one company - the Lord Chamberlain's - under the names of Derby's and the Chamberlain's is interesting; for it shows that if the play had been acted by Strange's men - the earlier name of the Derby/

Derby-Chamberlain company - their name would also have appeared on the title page. Dr. Chambers needlessly confuses the issue of assuming that the Strange play Titus and Vespasian was the groundwork of Titus Andronicus, and that it passed from them to Pembroke's men. But there is no necessity for this assumption, nor is the difficulty solved by referring one unknown quantity to another. Indeed, if Titus and Vespasian had been connected with Titus Andronicus, the publishers, who seemed to have been anxious to advertise the play as much as possible would have added the other company without the slightest hesitation. The absence of Strange's name, confirms the view that Pembroke's men were the ~~unjust~~ ORIGINAL possessors of the play, and to those who believe in Shakespearean authorship, it will be additional evidence that he was at one time a member of Pembroke's company.

It is unnecessary in this connection to find out how long Shakespeare remained with Pembroke's company. The question whether he remained with it until the calamity in September 1593 or whether he was for a time in Sussex's company need not be considered. The Christmas holidays of 1594 show him to be definitely a member of the Lord Chamberlain's company, and that is all that matters. When it is remembered that many of his plays passed from Pembroke's men/

men to the Chamberlain's, it is a tempting conclusion that he passed over with them. He may have had something to do with the transference; but whether he had or no, this much is incontestable: he would find in the possession of the Chamberlain's company many of the plays which he had written for Pembroke's company; and among the ex-Pembroke plays was Hamlet.

The company to which Marlowe was attached must now be considered. The chief sources of information on this point are the title-pages of his plays. Tamburlaine, Faustus and the Jew of Malta were all acted by the Admiral's men, so that at the date (OF THEIR COMPOSITION) he must have been an Admiral's playwright. Edward II (1592) however was acted by a different company (Pembroke's company) which indicates that at this time he was no longer writing for the Admiral's men. Now the Jew of Malta is dated 1589, so that Marlowe must have joined Pembroke's some time between 1589 and 1592. There is one interesting piece of external evidence which strengthens the view that Marlowe for some part of his life was a Pembroke playwright. It is on record that Pembroke possessed a chaplain, John Thornborough who afterwards became Dean of York. In Thornborough's Commonplace Book, Marlowe's "Passionate Shepherd" has been found which shows that the poet was not unaquainted with the Pembroke household.(1)

(1) See Ingram - Life of Marlowe.

household.

But unlike Shakespeare, Marlowe did not find a settled home in Pembroke's company. Edward II was the only play which he wrote for it, for the fame which it brought its author was soon to be dimmed by the death-bed attack of a vengeful enemy. In September of the same year, (1592) Greene's Groatsworth of Wit appeared, and there it was proclaimed to a scandal-loving public that its favourite playwright was an atheist. The news spread like wildfire, and ultimately it reached the ears of Pembroke himself who could not "endure his name or sight when he had heard of his condition". Marlowe was therefore compelled to seek a new company, and for that reason his next play "The Massacre at Paris" (1593) was not produced by Pembroke's men but by Lord Strange's men. Greene's attack had fulfilled its purpose all too well. It is no accident that Edward II marks the highest point reached by Marlowe in his work and that his later work is by comparison scamped and hastily finished. Until 1592, he was the man of promise; he was living in peace and security. But after Greene had launched his blow, people turned away from him, and he was hounded from pillar to post. Although Marlowe's life is fragmentary, yet all indications point that his later years were anything but happy and that the assasin's knife probably saved him from the hangman's rope.

Now/

Now the Ur Hamlet was a Pembroke play; it must have been written by a Pembroke playwright; and on external evidence, it must have been written before March 1588. Marlowe at this time was writing for the Admiral's men so that he could not have been the author. The history of the Ur Hamlet and the personnel of the dramatic companies concerned therefore confirm the evidence of the "theatre war" pamphlets: that the author was William Shakespeare.

An attempt will now be made to show the impossibility of Kyd having written the Ur Hamlet. The chief source of information on his dramatic company is his letter which was written shortly after the death of Marlowe in 1593 to Sir John Puckering, Lord Keeper of the Great Seal of England.(1) Kyd was suspected of being the author of some atheistical pamphlets, and in order to clear his name before the eyes of his lord "whom I have served almost these VI yeeres nowe, in credit until nowe" he transfers the blame to the already dead Marlowe. The explicit reference to "VI yeeres" means that since 1587 Kyd had been in the service of a certain lord. But Marlowe had served the same lord. This is brought out by the following remark:- "My first acquaintance with this Marlowe rose upon his bearing name to serve my Lo: although his L.P. never knew his services but in writing for the/

(1) For this letter see Boas' Kyd; also Times Litt, Supp.

the plaiers, ffor never cold my lord endure his name or sight when he had heard of his condition nor wolde indeed the forme of devyne praiers used duelie at his house have quadred with such reprobates."

As has been shown, the evidence that Marlowe was in the service of Pembroke is very strong. Was, then, Kyd in the service of the same lord? Professor Boas does not think so and he suggests Robert Radcliffe, Lord Fitzwalter who became fifth Earl of Sussex on December 14, 1593. The chief objection to Sussex is the one pointed out by Professor Boas himself:- there is no record of any friendship between him and Marlowe. Further, it is hardly at the house of Sussex that one would expect "praiers duelie"; for Manningham reports in his Diary 12th October 1602 that the Earl treated his wife with great cruelty owing to the demoralising influence of his intimate friend Edmund Whitelockem a man of notoriously abandoned life.(1)

No one tallies so well with all the facts as Pembroke. The man wanted is a lord who is patron to a band of players; who comes into the lives of both Kyd and Marlowe; and whose morals, if not perfect, are at least worthy of honourable mention. Pembroke meets all those requirements. His dramatic company was well known and its association with Marlowe is fully/

(1) See D.N.B. Sussex.

fully documented. His wife, Mary Sidney, was the sister of Sir Philip Sidney, and when the many tributes which were paid to Sidney's sister, Pembroke's mother, are remembered, she is perhaps the finest testimony of all to his morals. Further when Kyd refers to the "praiers duelie" he may quite well be referring to the services conducted by John Thornborough, Pembroke's private chaplain.

It might be said that if Kyd entered the services of Pembroke in 1587 then there is no reason why he should not have written the Hamlet. This objection however is refuted by three very important pieces of evidence.

The first can be deduced from Kyd's own words to Puckering. Comparing his own position with that of Marlowe he says "his Lordship never knew his (Marlowe's) services but in writing for the plaiers". Kyd evidently intends that Puckering should draw a sharp distinction between an author EMPLOYED by a lord to provide plays for his dramatic company, and an author ENGAGED in purely a secretarial capacity. Marlowe, he suggests, came into contact with Pembroke only in so far as Pembroke was interested in his players; and he implies that his connection with Pembroke was of a more intimate nature than Marlowe's. Indeed Kyd suggests that he was above writing plays.

Secondly, Kyd tells Puckering that "my first acquaintance with this Marlowe rose upon his bearing name to serve my Lo." Now/

Now Marlowe and Kyd could not be characterised as the Elizabethan prototype of David and Jonathan. Only when Marlowe first joined the company were they at all friendly. Kyd takes great pains to show that he did not know Marlowe well, and although fear makes him over-vehement, yet there is a definite ring of sincerity about his protestations. His friendship at the beginning had been purely accidental and due solely to propinquity, but as soon as he knew the type of man Marlowe was he left him:- "For which, God is my witness, as well by my lord's comanndat as in hatred of his life and thoughts, I left and did refraine his companie." But that early friendship short though it had been, brought Kyd into trouble; for "by some occasion of our wrytings in one chamber twoe yeares synce" Marlowe had left some of his papers, and, these having been found, Kyd was assumed to be the author. "twoe yeares synce", Marlowe and Kyd must have been intimate when they shared the same chamber. On Kyd's own testimony, he could not have discovered Marlowe's real nature, so that the latter must just have lately joined the company. As Kyd's letter was written in 1593, this information therefore fixes the year 1591 as the year when Marlowe left the Admiral's men for Pembroke's:- a date which tallies perfectly with that obtained from the title pages of Marlowe's plays. Now if Kyd did not know Marlowe until 1591, it means that he must have been out of touch with theatrical conditions. Kyd went into

the/

the service of Pembroke in 1587 and Marlowe's Tamburlaine appeared circa 1587-88. Marlowe followed up this success with Dr.Faustus and the Jew of Malta, and all London knew him. Yet Kyd did not know him. This surely argues that when he entered the Pembroke household he had abandoned the stage. It is impossible to imagine anyone actively pursuing the craft of playwright between the years 1587-1590 and not knowing Marlowe. The testimony of Kyd that he did not make the acquaintance of Marlowe until CIRCA 1591, as well as showing that he had left the stage, further suggests that he had left London, and was staying at Pembroke's country seat.

The third piece of evidence is equally conclusive:- the absence of Kyd's name from the "theatre war" pamphlets. This wordy quarrel raged between the years 1588-1592, yet except for the parenthetical remark of Nash his name is not mentioned. Nash, Green, Peel, Marlowe and Shakespeare all play an important part in this, but Kyd finds no place in it as a dramatist. Now had the author of a popular play like the Spanish Tragedy been an active playwright, it is difficult to see how he could have escaped mention. Nash's words are too clear for their meaning to escape notice. He alludes to the patronage which Pembroke had bestowed on Kyd and jeers at his translation from the Italian. The example of Kyd he suggests/

suggests is what the enemies of Greene will be glad to "imitate":- to seek the help of a patron and to translate "twopenny pamphlets" - not write plays, far less a play like Hamlet. When Kyd entered the services of Pembroke his days as a playwright were over, and his contemporaries recognised the fact.

The evidence, both internal and external, thus shows the impossibility of Kyd being the author of the Ur Hamlet. In 1587 Kyd definitely left the stage hoping that he would never be compelled to woo the public again, and although in 1594 another play appeared from his pen, yet, as will be pointed out later, there were good reasons for its appearance.

Indeed it is a mistake to regard the predecessors of Shakespeare as a company of men working together at the same time. One is always tempted to bracket Marlowe and Kyd together as the two men who had the greatest influence on Shakespeare. So far as influence goes, this is correct, but it is rank bad chronology. Dekker in his "Knights' Conjuring" (1609) has a passage which shows the real contemporaries of Kyd. Describing the inhabitants of the grove of Phoebus, Dekker notes two groups of dramatists. In one group "sat learned Watson, industrious Kyd, ingenious Atchlow and (though he had been a player molded out of their pennes) yet because he had been their lover and a register of the Muses, inimitable Bentley". In the second group Dekker places Marlowe, Greene, Peele/

Peele, Nash and the newly arrived Chettle. Those in the second group are well known and are the genuine contemporaries of Shakespeare. The fact that Kyd is not placed among these men, but is placed in a separate group shows that he preceded them. The lives of those in Kyd's group are interesting. Of Atchlow nothing is known, but Watson is mentioned by Meres as one of the best for tragedy. He died in 1592, and after his death William Cornwallis, in whose service he was, wrote that he "could devyse twenty fictions and knaveries in a play which was his daily practyse and his living" Bentley the actor mentioned along with the three dramatists was a member of the Queen's company and remained with it until his death in May 1585.

Since Kyd is bracketted along with an actor and a playwright of the early eighties and placed in sharp contrast with Marlowe, Greene, Peele, Nash and Chettle, it follows that he must have belonged to that generation. Dekker's remark that Bentley was "molded out of their pennes" further indicates that he must have been writing for the stage before the death of Bentley in 1585, and the adjective "industrious" implies that he was a prolific writer. Professor Boas dates the Spanish Tragedy 1585-1587, with a preference for the latter date, but it is more probably nearer 1585 than 1587.(1)

It/

(1) See Philological Quarterly July 1929 and M.L.N. vol.XL p.343.

It should be remembered that Kyd was nearly six years older than Marlowe and Shakespeare, and in those spacious days genius flowered early. On taking up the profession of playwright, Kyd would find himself in the company of men like Atchlow, Watson and the actor Bentley. The conditions were all against steady growth, and unless an author could devise tricks and fancies to capture the public taste he was of little use in the theatre. But the young Kyd had a capable tutor in Watson, and as the opening lines of Act II of the Spanish Tragedy show, where Kyd practically "lifts", the first six lines of Sonnet 47 in Watson's Hecatompathia, the pupil had a great admiration for the master. Under his tuition, he mastered everything that was to be learned about stage technique, and his crowning achievement was the Spanish Tragedy. His name was made and he was the reigning playwright. But his growth had been unnatural, and the intensive nature of his early career had sapped his resources. None of his early work has survived, but Soliman abd Perseda which Professor Boas dates later than the Spanish Tragedy shows a falling-off in power. Only the very greatest practitioners of the craft of letters can bask in the sunshine of established reputations, and to add to Kyd's discomfiture, a band of ardent young men from the Universities was now preparing to challenge his position. Kyd knew that he was worked out and that he was no match for them, but just then/

then, Pembroke, the patron of the arts, offered him a sinecure at his home and thankfully he accepted it. Kyd was never really happy in the theatre: his nature made him unfitted for the uncertain life. The letter to Puckering shows very clearly his attitude towards adventure. Men like Marlowe, Harriot, Warner and Royden horrified him by the recklessness of their thoughts. In the same way, he was no less horrified by the reckless lives of Greene, Peele, Nash and Lodge. One may be sure that when Pembroke held out a helping hand to him, he made up his mind never to write for the stage again.

And during his residence there he never did attempt to woo the public favour through the medium of the stage. Only two works came from his pen: "The Householders' Philosophie", a translation of Tasso's "Padre di Famiglia" which appeared in 1588 and a pamphlet "The Murder of John Brewen" 1592. They are both the type of works that one would expect to come from an author living in retirement. Professor Boas evinces surprise at "The Murder of John Brewen," but it is in reality an excellent example of a leading article. The murder was fresh in everybody's memory, and Kyd commented upon it in such a way as to mould public opinion. His views are highly moral, and it must have been very gratifying to his patron that such a champion of virtue and enemy of vice was in his family. The story/

story is told in such a way as to bring out the moral in the last sentence "The Lord give all men grace by this example to shunne the hatefull sinne of murder, for be it kept never so close, and done never so secret, yet at length the Lorde will bring it out; for bloud is an inceassant crier in the eares of the Lord and he will not leave so wilde a thing unpunished."

For six years Kyd enjoyed this secluded life, but the storm which engulfed Marlowe in 1593 had an equally serious effect on his fortunes. Notwithstanding his appeal to Puckering to intercede on his behalf to Pembroke, he was compelled to leave his patron and cast about for a new means of livelihood. Again he turned to the stage, and in 1594 his translation of Garnier's "Cornelie" appeared. The play is remarkable for many distinctive features. In the first place, it shows the sterility which had afflicted Kyd. It would have seemed impossible for "learned Watson" or "inimitable Bentley" that he would ever be compelled through lack of invention to fall back upon translation. To them it would have seemed the last infirmity of noble minds. Further, the play shows traces of the author's residence with Pembroke, for the idea of translating it at all was probably suggested to Kyd by the Countess of Pembroke's translation of the Marc Antoine. The influence of the latter is strong especially in respect of the strophe form used to reproduce Garnier's choruses/

choruses. It is interesting to note, however, that the play is dedicated not to the Countess of Pembroke, but to the Countess of Sussex, another famous patroness of the arts. Pembroke must have made it clear to him that he would never obtain his protection again, and in dedicating Cornelia to the Countess of Sussex, Kyd was hoping that he would secure a place in her household. The close of his life is lost in obscurity except for the very significant document discovered by Schick wherein Francis and Anna Kyd renounce the administration of the goods of their deceased son Thomas. Apparently his appeal to the Countess of Sussex was in vain, and this very drastic step which his parents took suggest that he died in disgrace towards the end of 1594.

Kyd's life was thus one continual battle against adverse circumstances. His moody taciturn temperament unfitted him to be a playwright in an age when personalities were exchanged with such bitterness. He turned to the stage by compulsion and not by choice, and, although Chapman was in the same position, yet his mind was the more fertile in invention. Kyd wrote plays only when he was hungry: in his early days when he wrote the Spanish Tragedy and in his later days when he wrote (or rather translated) Cornelia. All the evidence shows that during his residence with Pembroke he never wrote a single play.

Before/

Before ~~getting~~ GATHERING up the points which this discussion of the careers of Shakespeare, Kyd and Marlowe have faised, it is worth while pausing to examine the status of the Pembroke company. If that company contained Shakespeare and Marlowe as active playwrights, it means that it is a more important company than Dr. Chambers gives it credit for. From all indications it would seem that Pembroke had a desire to get together a really first-rate company, and with that intention in view, he set about enrolling the leading dramatists of the day. No doubt he was encouraged in his scheme by the Countess of Pembroke, to whom court was paid by nearly every writer of note. Meres compares her in Palladis Tamia to Octavia the sister of Augustus and the patroness of Virgil. Spenser dedicated to her his "Ruines of Time", and in "Colin Clouts Comes Home Again", under the name of Urania, he addresses her as the "ornament of womankind". About 1590, Samuel Daniel was invited by her to take up residence at Wilton to be a tutor to her son William and to her he dedicated "Delia" (1592) and the tragedy "Cleopatra" (1593). Nash in the preface to the 1591 edition of Sidney's Astrophel declared that "artes do adore (her) as a second Minerva, and our poets extol (her) as the patroness of their invention". All these tributes show the important position which the Countess of Pembroke held in the literary life of the time; and if her husband wanted to get together a first-rate dramatic company, he would obtain plenty/

plenty of help and encouragement from her.

As a result of this examination of the records of the time the position at the date of Nash's attack can be reconstructed. It has been shown that this attack constituted only one of the many attacks levelled by Greene and Nash against Marlowe and Shakespeare. The examination of the dramatic companies to which the dramatists were attached has shown that in 1589 Marlowe was an Admiral's man while Kyd and Shakespeare were servants of Lord Pembroke. Also Hamlet has been traced from Pembroke's company to the Derby-Chamberlain company. The author of the Ur Hamlet must therefore be a Pembroke Playwright. Marlowe is ruled out of consideration since he was in the Admiral's company. Kyd need not be considered since he had abandoned writing for the stage. The only dramatist who fits perfectly into the known facts is William Shakespeare.

There are several objections which might be urged against the theory that Shakespeare was the author of the Ur Hamlet. The first is the ommision of Hamlet from Francis Meres' list of plays in Palladis Tamia 1598. At first sight the fact that the play is not mentioned seems to tell heavily against Shakespearean authorship; but it should be remembered that Meres' list is not an exhaustive one: he only mentions six comedies and six tragedies, to show that Shakespeare is both the/

the Plautus and the Seneca of the age. The omission of any play from the list therefore does not mean that it was not written by Shakespeare or that it was not written before 1598.

But it might be argued that Hamlet is an important play, and that had Shakespeare written it, Meres would have mentioned it. Yet it is doubtful if the Ur Hamlet was an important play to the Elizabethans, for the contemporary references to it are far from complimentary. The attack of Nash in 1589, and the allusion of Lodge in his "Wits Miserie and the World's Madness" to "ye ghost which cried so miserably at ye theater like an oyster wife 'Hamlet revenge'" would prevent Meres including so notorious a play in what was really a panegyric of Shakespeare. Further it is questionable if the Ur Hamlet was, even judged by box-office standards, a very popular play. At its presentation at Newington Butts in 1594 only 8/- was realised, which, although not the smallest sum taken during the joint season, is too small for the play to be regarded as an unqualified success. Titus Andronicus, which, judged by present day standards, is a poor piece of work never received half the ridicule poured upon Hamlet, and its success as an acting piece is attested over and over again. Ben Jonson was the first, several years after the publication of Palladis Tamia, in the Induction to Bartholomew Fair (1614), to couple together Titus Andronicus and the Spanish Tragedy and/

and succeeding generations of scholars have followed his lead; but in the ten years or so which elapsed between its date of composition and the appearance of Meres' list, no comment of an unfavourable nature was ever passed against the play. Such considerations might quite well have induced Meres to neglect Hamlet and to place the companion play Titus Andronicus in its stead.

The family relationship between Hamlet and the Spanish Tragedy is also supposed by many scholars to favour Kydian authorship. But parallel passages do not prove this at all: they only prove that the author of Hamlet (whoever he was) had read the Spanish Tragedy. The influence of the Spanish Tragedy is strong on Hamlet, but that is to be expected. The parallel passages most certainly prove influence; but they do not prove authorship. The parallel passage hobby-horse is a dangerous one to ride, and frequently an unskilful rider comes up against the obstacle he wishes most to avoid. Professor Boas quotes Hieronimo's remark shortly before the play scene in the Spanish Tragedy (IV 196-97)

> And if the world like not this tragedie
> Hard is the hap of old Hieronimo.

As a parallel he brings forward from Hamlet,

> And if the King like not the tragedie
> Why then belike he likes it not perdy.

In/

In the Second Quarto "tragedy" reads "comedy" but the difference is trifling. It is obvious that this "parallel" is no parallel at all but is a parody by the author of Hamlet on the lines from the Spanish Tragedy. Indeed the parody is so pointed, that it is nearly sufficient to prove that whoever wrote the Ur Hamlet it was not Kyd.

The text of the Second Quarto and of the Folio yield many parallels with the Spanish Tragedy, but the Golconda of the parallel passage hunter is the First Quarto. It is so corrupt that it is possible to prove anything from it. Reminiscences of many plays other than the Spanish Tragedy are to be found in the text. Polinus says to his daughter

> Come in Ophelia; such men often prove
> Greate in their words but little in their love.

This is surely a memory of Viola's words to Duke Orsino in Twelfth Night,

> We men may say more, sweare more but indeed
> Our shewes are more than will, for still we prove
> Much in our vowes but little in our love.

Similarly the passage

> Well sonne Hamlet, we in care of you but especially
> In tender preservation of your health
> -
> The wind sits faire, ye shall aboarde to night.

recalls Henry V.

> Now sits the wind faire and we will aboarde
> -
> Though Cambridge Scroope and Grey in their dear care
> And tender preservation of our person.

These/

These passages prove as much as the parallels with the Spanish Tragedy - nothing, or anything, as may be desired. The First Quarto is so obviously a pirated edition of the "true and perfect coppie" that it is dangerous to build even the slightest hypothesis upon it, far less an imposing superstructure like that required to prove the authorship of the Ur Hamlet.

The family relationship between Hieronimo and Hamlet, and the echoes of Seneca which occur both in the Spanish Tragedy and in Hamlet have also been regarded by some critics as favouring Kyd's claim to the authorship of the Ur Hamlet. The two claims are really one, for the character of the hesitating avenger as found in Hieronimo and Hamlet can be traced back, not to the earlier miracle and morality plays but to Classical sources. At this time many of the scholarly playwrights felt that only by following classical models could the drama be improved. In tragedy the model chosen was Seneca. As early as 1560, Sackville and Norton had led the way with Ferrex and Porrex or Gorboduc which was praised by Sidney as "full of stately speeches and well sounding phrases, climbing to the height of Seneca, his style", and plays of that type continued to be presented before educated audiences at the Inns of Court and at the Universities. As undergraduates, Greene and Marlowe would witness many such performances, as also would Kyd and Shakespeare, the/

the one as a pupil at the Merchant Taylors' school and the other as a pupil and later as a master at Stratford Grammar School. But classical plays were "caviare to the multitude". The audiences of the popular theatre came not to be edified but to be thrilled; and when Kyd, Greene, Marlowe and Shakespeare came to London they very soon discovered that the plays to which they were accustomed were unsuitable for uneducated audiences. It is the great merit of Kyd that he was the first to strike a balance between the insipidity of the learned play and the boisterousness of the popular. He saw at once the strong points of the Senecan type - its ability to arouse horror and excitement; and by retaining its orderliness of construction and yet presenting the whole action coram populo he produced, in the SpanishTragedy, a play which satisfied the groundlings, and (temporarily) pacified the critics.

The Elizabethan tragic drama was therefore cradled in Seneca and all the playwrights more or less came under this influence. The one play which seems to have given Kyd the greatest help in the characterisation of Hieronimo is the Thyestes. Atreus, the hero of this play, is the source of all the "hesitating avengers" in the Elizabethan drama. Because of wrongs done him by his brother Thyestes, he considers it his duty to be revenged. But difficulties arise which prevent the immediate/

immediate fulfilment of his task. Apart from the purely external difficulties, Atreus is horrified to discover that he is unable to overcome his own hesitation; and in the presence of a slave he bitterly reproaches himself for his cowardice.

> Ignave, iners enervis et (quod maximum
> Probrum tyranno rebus in summis reor)
> Inulte post tot scelera post fratris dolos
> Fasque omne ruptum questibus vanis agis
> Iratus Atreus. 176

Later he works himself into a state of fury and he conceives a diabolical vengeance:

> Nullum relinquam facinus et nullum est satis.

He decoys his brother's children into a wood where he murders them; and later he serves them as food to Thyestes at a banquet held to celebrate the reconciliation of the rivals. The play closes with the lamentations of Thyestes at the murder of his children, and the joy of Atreus at the accomplishment of his task.

One of the most interesting features of the play is Seneca's insistance on the conflict which takes place in the mind of Atreus between his desire for vengeance and his lack of purpose. Again and again, the hero breaks out into violent self-accusation:

> Quid stupes, tandem incipe
> Animosqe sume;

also/

also:

> Anime: quid rursus times
> Etante rem subsidis. Audiendem est Age,

and again,

> Male agis recedis anime: si parcis tuis
> Parces et illis.

The resemblance between these outcries and the reproaches which Hieronimo and Hamlet level against themselves is too obvious to require much stressing. Seneca saw that only effective characterisation could rescue the revenge story from vulgar SENSATIONALISM ; Kyd recognised the same principle; and Shakespeare's masterly use of the soliloquy accomplished perfectly what his predecessors had aimed at.

The influence of Seneca on Hamlet is therefore very great; but this does not prove that Kyd had a share in its composition. The early Shakespeare, like all the other dramatists, came under the spell of the classics. His first poem Venus and Adonis is from Ovid, his first comedy, The Comedy or Errors is from Plautus, his first tragedy Titus Andronicus is from Seneca; and, as has frequently been demonstrated, his "small latin" was sufficient to enable him to read the originals. Indeed the whole question hinges on the problem of Shakespeare's classical attainments. If it is admitted, that he was not wholly ignorant of the classics, the Senecan reminiscences in Hamlet offer no difficulty. Seneca had stood him in good stead for Titus/

Titus Andronicus. Surely the most obvious course for him to take before writing Hamlet was to turn again to Seneca. The Spanish Tragedy would give him help, but it should be remembered that although Kyd played an important part in restoring to English literature the revenge story, the chief motive of the old heroic literature, the Spanish Tragedy never wholly superseded its Latin model. In the case of the sonnet which was also introduced from a foreign source, a different state of affairs existed: the imitations of Wyatt and Surrey constituted the model for succeeding sonneteers. But although the Spanish Tragedy was frequently imitated, yet the Latin model continued to exist alongside the native model. Even Marston's Antonio's Revenge, written circa 1599 owes as much to Seneca as to Kyd. The fact that Hamlet contains echos of both Seneca and Kyd, is therefore no reason for assuming Kyd to be the author. It is indeed, what one would expect.

There is no useful purpose to be served in speculating on the probable nature of the Ur Hamlet. The play, if it ever was printed, has been lost, and it is unlikely that it will ever be found. The loss is a great one, but the loss of the 1600 Hamlet would have been greater; and in matters Shakespearean, one has to be thankful for small mercies. How and when Shakespeare revised the older play must now be considered, for it is here, that Sarrazin advances two of his/

his greatest objections against Shakespearean authorship. He argues that if the original Hamlet was written by Shakespeare at the same time as Titus Andronicus, the style of the two plays as regards metre etc. would be similar. Also, he asserts that whereas in Romeo and Juliet the traditional story is followed faithfully, Hamlet departs largely from the original source - a circumstance which, according to Sarrazin, is unusual in the early Shakespeare. It is possible to quarrel with this latter assertion by pointing to the Comedy of Errors where Shakespeare freely adapts Plautus to his own use; but in general the arguments are legitimate enough and have to be met. At the outset one may say that Shakespeare must have revised the Ur Hamlet very thoroughly; but the circumstances of the revision, or rather re-writing warrant a detailed consideration.

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CHAPTER III.

The Period of Incubation 1588-1600.

The years 1588-1600 are twelve of the strangest years in the whole history of the drama. Tamburlaine stands at one end of the period, Hamlet at the other: the one the incarnation of action, the other of thought. During this short space of time the drama cast off its swaddling clothes and arrived at full-grown splendid maturity. In its childhood there were signs of greatness; but he would have been a rash man to have predicted from these early indications that it would rival if not surpass the greatest of the classical dramas. The services of Kyd and Marlowe to the English drama were complementary, and by their combined efforts it was raised from the status of a present-day revue to the dignity of literature. Although the extravagances of the Spanish Tragedy and Tamburlaine are only too obvious to modern readers, yet their merits exercised a permanent effect on all future plays.

The Spanish Tragedy was really the first play presented on the popular stage to have a definite plot. Kyd recognised that a play consisted of more than a series of detached episodes; he saw that a plot was necessary to tighten up the leisurely movement of the average chronicle play and to impart dramatic/

dramatic interest to the narrative. As has been indicated, much of his inspiration was drawn from Seneca; but he never forgot the audience for whom he was writing; and his grafting of the foreign stock to the national branch was exceptionally well done. In addition, he had a good eye for striking scenes, and the Spanish Tragedy constituted an almost inexhaustible wardrobe of stage effects of which succeeding dramatists made good use. His ghosts marked a great advance on the strictly Senecan ghosts of plays like Tancred and Gismonda and the Misfortunes of Arthur. In these plays, the ghosts were extraneous; but in the Spanish Tragedy they not only acted as prologue and epilogue but remained throughout spectators of the action. Also scenes like the plucking of Hieronimo from his "naked bed", the hanging of the body in the arbour, and the offering of the bloody handkerchief to the old man were entirely new to the stage; while incidents like the play within the play, the madness of Isabella, the love-making in the garden, the exhibition of the body after the mock play as well as minor details of stage business such as the swearing on the sword, and the capture of the villain's accomplice became popular with dramatists and audiences alike through the success of the Spanish Tragedy.

As a poet and as a creator of characters, Kyd cannot be allowed a high place, although Hieronimo was the first of the long line/

line of "hesitating avengers" to tread the boards and Lorenzo the first of Macchiavellian villains. But what he lacked Marlowe possessed: the faults of ths Spanish Tragedy are the virtues of Tamburlaine. Marlowe gave to the drama both poetry and passion. With the sublime self-assurance of youth, he challenges in his Prologue to Tamburlaine, those who had hitherto been providing entertainments for the popular stage:

> From jigging veins of rhyming mother wits
> And such concerts as clounage keeps in pay,
> We'll lead you to the stately tents of war
> Where you shall see the Scythean Temburlaine
> Threatening the world with high astounding terms
> And scourging Kingdoms with his conquering sword.

This was a declaration of war, a manifesto from the haughtiest of playwrights that the metre of Tamburlaine was the only metre suitable for the stage. The many scornful allusions which his contemporaries made to the "mighty line" showed that his challenge was resented; but the most influential critic of all, the public, sided with him and gradually blank verse, the pride of English poetry, asserted its position. In character also, Marlowe was an innovator. Charles Lamb's criticism of Gorduduc would have been heartily endorsed by the Elizabethans but Marlowe showed that blank verse and bloodlessness did not necessarily go together. His characters throb with the rich warm blood of life. There is nothing small/

small and paltry about his conceptions: they are all grand and magnificent. To read Temburlaine's "Credo" is to be aware of the new force which had arisen in Marlowe.

> Our souls whose faculties can comprehend
> The marvellous architecture of the world,
> And measure every wandering planet's course,
> Still striving after knowledge infinite,
> Will us to wear ourselves and never end
> Until we reach the ripest fruit of all.

A divine hunger and thirst after the Unattainable animates all his heroes - Tamburlaine strives after power, Faustus after knowledge and Barrabas after wealth. Compared with the sublime creations of Shakespeare, their simplicity appears almost childish; but Marlowe had effectively demonstrated that it was possible to create characters of flesh and blood within the compass of five acts.

If one man had arisen who had combined the merits of both Kyd and Marlowe the English drama might have assumed the position of a classic before 1590. But Shakespeare was as yet only at the apprenticeship stage and, equally important, the age was not yet prepared for the highest and best in art. The nation had just thrown off the sleep of the Middle Ages to awaken to a consciousness of her own power. Men's views had been changed by the relics of a newly discovered civilization. Hitherto unexplored regions of the world had been discovered. The Pillars of Hercules no longer marked off the known from the unknown/

unknown. England at the moment was bracing herself for the coming struggle with Spain. A wave of enthusiasm had swept over the land: enthusiasm for conquest, enthusiasm for knowledge and above all enthusiasm for country and Queen. But all this restlessness and endeavour, admirable though it appears in retrospect, was that of a child. Wonder followed wonder in such quick succession that men were too dazzled to reflect upon all that was taking place. The senses only were called into play; the intellect lay dormant. For that reason the Spanish Tragedy and Tamburlaine are true mirrors of the age. The stirring scenes, the mouthfilling words, the noise and the colour roused the people to a pitch of enthusiasm. But the emotion of wonder alone was evoked: the deeper issues of life remained untouched. To the Englishmen of the period life was the Great Adventure in which Death was merely an unfortunate accident, and this was the lesson of Tamburlaine. The philosophy of Hamlet that the Great Adventure of life is Death would not have been understood at this time. Great art requires both the man and the moment and neither was as yet ready.

Then with the turn of the last decade of the century a remarkable change occurred. One would have expected the splendid lead of the Spanish Tragedy and Tamburlaine to have been followed in other plays. The Ur Hamlet, Selimus, Alphonsus of/

of Arragon and Richard III all show the influences of Kyd and Marlowe, but the number of such imitations is surprisingly small. There are signs that the interest in tragedy was premature and that nobody could even equal far less improve upon, the work of Kyd and Marlowe. Tragedies therefore went gradually out of fashion and histories took their place. It is interesting to notice that the decline in tragedy was not unnoticed at the time. Nash refers to it in his Preface to Menaphon "But Oh Griefe, tempus edax rerum what's that will last alwaies. The sea exhaled by droppes will in continuance be drie and Seneca let blood line by line and page by page must needs die to our stage." The defeat of the Armada no doubt accounted for the popularity of history plays. England had now vindicated her position among the nations of the world and Englishmen were anxious to hear of the past greatnesses of their country. History plays continued in favour until roughly 1595 when popular taste swung round in the direction of Romantic Comedies, which remained in vogue until the close of the century. The greatness of Shakespeare during the years 1590-1600 tends to conceal the critical state in which the drama lay during that time. The formlessness, the structural defects and the false perspective of the histories all seemed to suggest that the example of the Spanish Tragedy had been forgotten; while the sickly sentimentality, the unreality and the/

the dolce far niente of the Romantic Comedies gave a representation of life completely alien to that of Tamburlaine. Indeed the drama might have been devitalised during these critical years and have come to a close with the death of Elizabeth. Only the Domestic Tragedies which flourished at this time kept alive the spirit of Tragedy and nourished the minds of play-goers on stronger diet than that provided by the Histories and Comedies . To them and to them alone is credit due for bridging the gap between Tamburlaine and Hamlet. They were the propaganda of the tragic period; they prepared the way for the great revival in tragedy which was yet to come; and when it did come, the playwrights found their audiencew prepared for it.

But before the return to tragedy actually, took place, there were many indications in the air that the more sensitive spirits were dissatisfied with the calm complacency of the age. The poems of Donne and the sonnets of Shakespeare strike a different note and show the vague promptings and questionings which were now beginning to stir men's minds. The Renaissance joy in pure loveliness, the patriotic spirit and the romance of the age which had been the keynote of Tamburlaine, King John and the Midsummer Night's Dream had passed away. Definite changes were taking place in England. The Queen was growing old; the courtiers and counsellors who have served her through the Sturm and Drang period were disappearing; and the new generation/

generation to whom her undoubted greatness was only an oral tradition found little to admire in the vain coquettings of an old ugly woman. The singleness of purpose which had inspired her court in the great days of her reign had also been dissipated and cliques and cabals were the order of the day. Events were less stirring; and a period of reflection succeeded a period of action. Men's thoughts began to turn upon themselves and the general attitude was one of inquiry into a life that suddenly seemed to be full of problems and difficulties. Speculation was rife and thinkers began to ruminate on death, madness, the relation of the soul to its "prison of flesh" and kindred topics. In 1588 Tamburlaine had glorified in his life; in 1600 Hamlet asked why he was alive. Nothing was taken for granted: everything was questioned. Satire flourished and the Elizabethan satirists Donne, Lodge, Hall and Marston began to scourge the follies of the age.

In such an atmosphere the tragic drama of England was RE-CREATED. The age now possessed the "high seriousness"; who would provide it with masterpieces? IN COMEDY Ben Jonson stepped into the breach at the critical moment. His purpose, as he states himself, was definitely moral and didactic.

> My strict hand
> Was made to seize on vice, and, with a gripe
> Squeeze out the humour of such spongy souls
> As lick up every idle vanity.

It/

It is a far cry from the Midsummer Night's Dream to Volpone; but the latter represents an age with different ideals and a different point of view. There is nothing in Jonson of the light that never was on sea or land; no magic casements open in the foam to enable the reader to spy into the wonders of fairyland: everything is presented in the searching and often horrible glare of truth. The follies of the time were stripped of their tawdry trappings and stood naked in all their hideousness for men to laugh at. While Shakespeare draw the characters of Bottom and Falstaff with sympathy and understanding, Jonson etched the characters of Volpone and Sir Epicure Mammon with a "saeva indignatio" which produces in one a terrible feeling of the evil and misery in the world.

In tragedy the source is clearly Shakespeare although critics with a commendable eagerness for tracing every stream back to the original rain-drop have given the credit to nearly every other dramatist except Shakespeare. In a question like this, a mere reference to chronology which, at the best, is very doubtful is not enough, and a comparison between pre 1600 and post 1600 tragedy is sufficient to show that the "tragic period" in the drama begins with Hamlet.

Before doing so however, it is interesting to notice where in Hamlet Shakespeare himself broke new ground. It is rarely assumed that Shakespeare possessed any theories of poetry, but surely/

surely it is not improbable that the man who has been the cause of so much theorising in others should have held theories of his own. One may confidently assert that many of the wit combats at the MERMAID, so graphically described by Beaumont, would have a passage from Aristotle as text and that Shakespeare would be called upon to defend his flagrant breaches of the "rules". For it is not sufficiently realised that although the creative works of the period are Romantic in execution, the critical treatises are classical in tone. Furthermore, the wave of scepticism which was sweeping over the land at this time caused a definite interest to be taken in literary questions, and it is impossible that Shakespeare, alive in every fibre of his being to the forces which beat upon the age, should not have been influenced by this tendency. In no sense is Hamlet a "pot boiler": it is Shakespeare's considered opinion on the quarrel between the Romantics and the Classics, and he shows his preference in no uncertain manner. But he realised what many of his fellow Romantics failed to realise, that all art possesses definite rules and that the difference between a Classic and a Romantic lies not in the compliance or the non-compliance with a set of rules but in the attitude of the artist towards the limitations of his art. If the artist believes that his particular medium can express only a part of life, then he is a Classic, if on the other hand, he believes that his art can embrace/

embrace all life, then he is a Romantic. Nobody can read Hamlet without feeling that Shakespeare had unlimited confidence in his own powers as an artist and in the capabilities of his medium. All his efforts are directed towards increasing the illusion that the play is not a play at all but a sector of real life; and what is of importance here, many of the devices which he introduces with this end in view occur for the first time in Hamlet.

The blank verse of the play is now capable of expressing any shade of feeling no matter how fine and transitory. The verse is that of a man who can think in blank verse. There is no hint, as so frequently occurs in the earlier plays, that he was forced to recast his thoughts in order to express them metrically; nor has he become so accustomed to his medium, as in the later plays, that he can leave out connecting words and phrases. In Hamlet idea and expression go hand in hand. Also the poet and the dramatist have become integrated into a single personality. In the earlier plays the lyrical note is predominant and one can frequently imagine Shakespeare the poet writing for the pure pleasure of writing to the intense discomfiture of Shakespeare the dramatist. In Hamlet however there is harmony betweenthe two conflicting elements. The conversation between Hamlet and Horatio where Hamlet is informed about the ghost illustrates this perfectly.

Horatio/

Horatio: It would have much amazed you.

Hamlet: Very like, very like. Stayed it long?

Horatio: While one with moderate haste might count a hundred

Marcellus &) Barnardo) Longer, longer.

The whole effect is gained by the tone of restraint which runs through the passage. One can well imagine what the early Shakespeare would have made of the "amazing" nature of the appearance of the ghost. Further, the contradictory remark of Marcellos and Barnado "Longer! Longer!" shows Shakespeare's ability to place himself in the position of even the unimportant characters and think their thoughts. The matter-of-fact manner in which the conversation is carried on and the interruption of Marcellus and Barnardo produces in the spectators of the play the illusion that they are not members of an audience but adventitious listeners to a conversation.

Even more significant is the fact that Hamlet is the first tragedy of Shakespeare in which a comic scene is introduced. In Titus Andronicus there are no comic scenes, and, although in Romeo and Juliet, the sprightliness of Mercutio and the garrulity of the nurse keep the audience amused, yet the comedy is of a different order from that of Hamlet. In Othello, Macbeth and Antony and Cleopatra, on the other hand, the comic scenes are to all intents and purposes similar to the gravedigger scene in/

in Hamlet which suggests that at the time of writing Hamlet, Shakespeare had satisfied himself that such scenes could be introduced with impunity into tragedy. To the neo-Classic critics such a procedure would appear a gross outrage against art. Sidney expressed himself strongly on tragic-comedy: "But, besides these gross absurdities, how all their plays be neither right tragedies nor right comedies mingling kings and clowns, not because the matter so carried it but thrust in the clown by head and shoulders to play a part in majestical matters, with neither decency nor discretion; so as neither the admiration and commiseration nor the right sportfulness is by their mongrel tragic-comedy obtained. I know Apuleius did somewhat so but that is a thing recounted with space of time, not represented in one moment: and I know the ancients have one or two examples of tragic-comedy as Plautus hath Amphytrio. But, if we mark them well we shall find, that they never, or very daintily, match hornpipes and funerals. So fulleth it out, that having indeed no right comedy in that comical part of our tragedy, we have nothing but scurvility, unworthy of any chaste ears; or some extreme show of owlishness indeed fit to lift up a loud laugh, and nothing else; where the whole tract of a comedy should be full of delight, as tragedy should be still maintained in a well-raised admiration." This/

This wholesale condemnation like that of Milton's later, is interesting as showing contemporary opinion on the matter, but the first really sane consideration comes from Dryden who declared that comic scenes in tragedy tended to neutralise the effect of the tragic scenes. Undoubtedly this was the question which Shakespeare had to solve and the gravedigger scene in Hamlet well repays a close examination, because, from it, an approximation can be obtained of Shakespeare's views on the problem.

In the first place it should be noted that there is only one comic scene in Hamlet. The gravediggers do not belong to any underplot and their meeting with Hamlet is quite a casual one. But although they merely drift across the stage, the part they play is an important one. They are the point of contact between the two enemies, Hamlet and Laertes; they bring the two protagonists of the drama into a death grapple. But the irony does not end here. They are the emissaries of misery and destruction but they themselves escape. All unwittingly, like the Porter in Macbeth and the Clown in Antony and Cleopatra, they play their great part in the drama and then pass off the stage. As the Gravedigger scene occurs between two very critical acts, the incongruity of their appearance is driven home to the audience and the tragic effect is heightened. One may be sure that here Shakespeare/

Shakespeare would be watching in the wings to see that the clowns spoke "no more than was set down for them", and it is significant that when Hamlet appears the Second Gravedigger leaves so that he engages conversation with one only. By removing the Second Gravedigger, Shakespeare lessened the risk of the scene degenerating into a contest of raillery; for the stern eyes of Burbage would be sufficient to wran the First Gravedigger to speak only what was given him, as "some necessary question of the play was then to be considered". To prolong the scene would have been to ruin the effect which it creates. Shakespeare really portrays here in a few rapid strokes the sublime indifference of Death which sweeps off in the prime of life the cultured and the noble and leaves the dregs of humanity to totter in decay to the very end.

Hamlet marks a further advance on Shakespeare's earlier tragedies, in that it is the first in which there is both an inner and an outer conflict. On the surface, the play seems to be concerned with the quarrel between Hamlet and Claudius. But had this been all it would not have wrestled with and conquered time as it has done: it would have been ranked, not with the masterpieces of the Attic drama, but with the Spanish Tragedy and Titus Andronicus. The real attraction of the play lies in the conflict which takes place in the mind/

mind of Hamlet himself. The single-mindedness of Romeo is quite alien to that of Hamlet. He is the creation of a mind which has not yet discovered and probed its own complexity. But the kinship of Hamlet with Lear, Othello and Macbeth is clearly seen. In all the great tragedies the inner conflict which takes place in the minds of their heroes is constantly kept in the foreground.

An examination of other plays written after Hamlet shows that however unwilling critics have been to recognise the importance of Hamlet in the history of the drama, Shakespeare's own contemporaries saw in it a model well worthy of imitation. All the dramatists more or less, with the possible exception of Chapman, came more and more to the view that crisp hard-hitting dialogue was more effective than set speech. It is not difficult to find examples of a wise economy in words and the following from the Atheists' Tragedy of Tourneur where the keynote of the play is struck in half a dozen lines is typical:

Charlemont: Th'art a villain and the sone of a villain.

Sebastian: You lie.

(Fight. Sebastian falls)

Charlemont: Have at thee
Revenge, to thee I'll dedicate this work.
(Enter the ghost of Montferrers)

Montferrers: Hold Charlemont!
Let him revenge my murder and my wrongs
To whom the Justice of Revenge belongs.

Charlemont/

Charlemont: You torture me between the passion of
My blood and the religion of my soul.

(Sebastian rises).

When one reflects what Marlowe would have made of this scene the difference between pre 1600 and post 1600 tragedy is at once apparent.

In the matter of comic scenes the influence of Shakespeare on the drama was not so beneficial. It is possible that King Lear had something to do with the failure of the other dramatists to realise that care and forethought were necessary before comedy could be introduced successfully into tragedy. The comedy in Lear is as Shelley said "universal, ideal and sublime" but it is doubtful if even Aristotle himself could have generalised from it. To the Elizabethans, it must have seemed as if Shakespeare had given his clown a bigger part than was his wont, and the success of the play probably induced other playwrights to follow suit. But they might have taken warning from the fact that Shakespeare never attempted again what he had done in King Lear. He was not such a "barbarian" as some critics would like to make him out to be. He had accomplished in Lear what he had set out to do; but he knew the pitfalls and hidden traps which strewed the path, and one journey was sufficient. His contemoraries, however, were not so wise, and the comic scenes in the Elizabethan drama outside/

outside Shakespeare, consists, with a few exceptions, of the vilest ribaldry and obscenity. The Atheists' Tragedy of Tourneur is completely ruined by the comic underplot circling round Cataplasma, Soquette and Snuffe. It is introduced solely to satisfy the groundlings and could be removed from the main plot as easily as Rowley's underplot was removed from "A Cure for a Cuckold" leaving Webster's part, named by the late Sir Edmund Gosse with rare taste Love's Graduate. Indeed, comic underplots are the bane of the Elizabethan drama, and, on contemplating them, one is at a loss to know whether to wonder more at the stupidity of the playwrights who wrote them or at the magnificent sureness of touch which enabled Shakespeare to satisfy both the groundlings and the demands of art.

The dual nature of the conflict in Hamlet was also noted and copied by Shakespeare's fellows; and, in this connection, the additions to the Spanish Tragedy are of especial interest. Henslowe records that Ben Jonson was paid to revise the "Play" Text unto Mr. Alleyn the 25th of September 1601 to lend unto Bengemen Johnson upon his writtinge of his adyicions in Geronymo the some of XXXXs." This is the first mention of the revival of the Spanish Tragedy and on 22nd June 1602 Henslowe notes that Jonson was paid for further additions. At the present day, some critics/

critics are inclined to doubt that Jonson was responsible for "the salt of the old play", but whoever was the author he certainly realised that in Hamlet, Shakespeare had brought about a revolution in dramatic technique. The added lines, about 300 in number, do not consist of set speeches, but of scraps of dialogue; and there are many passages whixh show an indebtedness to Hamlet.

Thus: Thou liest, I am not mad:
I know thee to be Pedro, and he Jaques
I'll prove it to thee, and, were I mad, how could I.

Compare:

It is not madness
That I have uttered: bring me to the test
And I the matter will re-word which madness
Would gambol from.

Also:

There you may draw me a passion; there you may draw me a passion
Draw me like old Priam of Troy, crying "The House is afire"

Compare:

Come, give us a taste of your quality; come a passionate speech
Aeneas' tale to Dido, and thereabouts of it;
especially where he speaks of Priam's slaughter.

These passages (and many others could be collected) show the influence of Hamlet, and the tenor of the additions indicates that the interpolator was more in sympathy with Shakespeare than with Kyd. He is interested in character rather than in situation, and the sole purpose of the additions is to make clearer Kyd's portraiture of Hieronimo. In order to/

to show the double conflict in the play, he deliberately draws the attention of the audience to the conflict which is taking place in the hero's mind:-

> Methinks since I grow inward with revenge
> I cannot look with scorn enough on death.

This insistence on the inner conflict, occurring as it does in a play which had always been in rivalry with Hamlet and now revised by a rival company because of the latter's success surely points to the conclusion that Hamlet constitutes a landmark in the drama. And the "Adicions" to the Spanish Tragedy are no isolated case. Chettle's Hoffman thrusts away his "clouds of melancholy" before embarking on his career of butchery; Chapman's Clermont (The Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois) is torn between his Stoic doctrines that "never private quarrels should take on them the part of public wrongs" and his duty to his murdered father; Tourneur's Vindici (The Revenger's Tragedy) ~~described as follows~~: "keeps at home full of want, and discontent; and Marston's Malcontent is DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS:-

> In night, all creatures sleep;
> Only the Malcontent that 'gainst his fate
> Repines and quarrels - alas! his goodman toll-clock!
> His sallow jawbones sunk with wasting moan
> Whilst other beds are down, his pillow's stone.
> Malcontent Act III I 170.

Further it is notable that the soldiers which occur in post 1600 drama bear more resemblance to Hamlet than to Tamburlaine whom/

whom one might have considered a better model for a warrior. Clermont, the hero of Chapman's Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois is an honourable murderer "doing" naught in hate and all in honour; and when after much delay he does strike down his enemy he dismisses him with a blessing. Then a messenger enters with the news that his friend has been murdered by the King. The revenge again falls on Clermont, but his doctrines forbid him to wreak vengeance on a King and the only course left open to him is suicide. Similarly in the Atheists' Tragedy of Tourneur, although the hero Charlemont is genuinely eager to avenge his father's death, he is content to live up to the principle that "patience is the honest man's revenge". Tamburlaine would have had little difficulty in disposing of such heroes! This family resemblance to Hamlet is significant as it shown that at this time the influences of the earlier tragic period i.e. 1588-1590 had been completely negatived by the appearance of Hamlet.

Considerations like these immediately suggest the question: "Was this play which at once represents an epoch both in the history of Shakespeare and the drama written by the author in his stride?" Surprisingly enough the majority of critics seem to think so. Before Mr. W.Lawrence brought forward evidence which demonstrated that the first performance of Hamlet/

Hamlet at the Globe Theatre preceded that of the revised Spanish Tragedy at the Fortune, it was orthodox criticism to assert that Hamlet was written at the express wish of the playhouse managers. But the theory that Hamlet is the "Resultat einer Bühner-spekulation", although conferring an immense compliment upon Shakespeare's abilities is too facile. The Merry Wives of Windsor may have been written at the command of Queen Elizabeth and no doubt she was satisfied with the result. But Falstaffs are not created in a fortnight, and, although Shakespeare obeyed the command in the letter, yet he disobeyed it, flagrantly, in spirit. The Falstaff of the Merry Wives is merely an imposter masquerading in the clothes of the real Falstaff. Had Hamlet been written to order, the signs would have been only too visible, and Shakespeare would have played his little joke on Burbage just as he did on Queen Elizabeth.

There is however one critic who recognises that Hamlet is a masterpiece and that Shakespeare was only human. In his address to the British Academy (Shakespeare Section), one of the most illuminating pieces of criticism which has appeared within recent years, Mr. H.Granville Barker comes very near the truth of the whole question. In that essay, he maintains the thesis that Henry V constitutes the turning point in Shakespeare's life. The play was produced at the Globe/

Globe Theatre by the Lord Chamberlain's men in 1599. The exact date can be fixed with a fair amount of certainty as the Prologue to Act V contemplates the triumphant return of Essex from Ireland.

> But now behold,
> In the quick forge and working house of thought
> How London doth pour our her citizens!
> -
> As by a lower but by loving likelihood,
> Were now the general of our gracious empress,
> (As in good time he may) from Ireland coming,
> Bringing rebellion broached upon his sword:
> How many would the peaceful city quit
> To welcome him!

As Essex left England on 27th March and returned on 28th September, unfortunately not in triumph, the play must have been produced within these dates. It is a high sounding drama of patriotism; and in the splendid choruses, which Garrick preferred to the title part itself, Shakespeare inflames the minds of his audience to a heroic pitch:

> Now all the youth of England are on fire
> And silken dalliance in the wardrobe laid;
> Now thrive the armourers and honour's thought
> Reigns solely in the breast of every man.

But although the play reads and acts splendidly many of these touches which make Shakespeare supreme "among the sons of light" are absent. Henry is always King Henry V. Nowhere does Shakespeare illumine his innermost character and lay bare the heart of the man beneath the glittering ornaments of rank. This is so unusual in Shakespeare that it/

it must be insisted upon. Even in Love's Labour's Lost which some critics have held to be his first play an example can be found of this power to throw a flood of light upon a character by means of a seeming chance phrase. After Nathaniel in the guise of Alexander the Great has entertained the company of lords and ladies Costard turns round to the audience and says:

> "There an't shall please you a foolish mild man, an honest man, look you and soon dashed. He is a marvellous good neighbour in sooth and a very good bowler; but for Alisaunder, alas, you see how 'tis a little o'erpated."

It is in such remarks that the wide humanity of Shakespeare finds expression; but with the possible exception of the passage describing the death of Falstaff there is little in Henry V that comes straight from the heart. The King is brave, a good soldier, a generous ruler and a hearty wooer but his qualities are all on the surface: he is painted from the skin inwards, not from the heart outwards.

Another noteworthy feature of the play is the obvious dissatisfaction which Shakespeare shows with the resources of the stage. In the first Chorus he almost despairs of the undertaking:

> But pardon, gentles all,
> The flat unraised spirits that have dared
> On this unworthy scaffold to bring forth
> So great an object. Can this cockpit hold
> The vasty fields of France? or may we cram
> Within this wooden O the very casques
> That did affright the air at Agincourt?

and/

and in the fourth Chorus he seems to show his utter contempt for the stage representation:

> And so our scene must to the battle fly,
> Where (Oh for pity!) we shall much disgrace,
> With four or five most vile and ragged foils
> Right ill disposed in brawl ridiculous,
> The name of Agincourt.

When it is remembered that the man who is here so abjectly as King pardon from the audience had riciduled some four years previously in "the most lamentable comedy and most cruel death of Pyramus and Thisbe", attempts at stage verisimilitude, it is obvious that a crisis had occurred in Shakespeare's life. To the great good fortune of the world however he set about solving his difficulties.

The next three plays which follow Henry V in chronological order are As You Like It, Twelfth Night and Much Ado About Nothing. As has often been suggested, the very titles seem to indicate that Shakespeare was contemptuous of them: As You Like It not As I Like It; What You Will not What I Will; while Much Ado About Nothing speaks for itself. Certain features stand out prominently as common to all plays. The main characters are women not men; take away Rosalind, Viola and Hero and little remains. Further, there are certain characters, which, dramatically considered, have no place in the plays at all. Touchstone and Jaques, The Illyrians, and Benedick and Beatrice could all be removed from the main/

main plot without much difficulty. In these plays, Shakespeare seems to have been exercising and testing his powers of controlling a plot: of letting his mind embrace and keep in order many diverse elements. Hitherto the juggler had been content to juggle with billiard balls: now he has added the Indian Clubs and complicated the pattern.

Julius Caesar follows these three comedies. It is related to As You Like It on the one hand and to Hamlet on the other. Jacques, Brutus and Hamlet, as critics have long pointed out, have much in common with each other. All are predisposed to a life of quiet reflection rather than action, and melancholia sits upon the shoulders of each one of them. Jacques is melancholia by choice, Brutus by nature and Hamlet by force of circumstances. Julius Caesar is further linked with Hamlet by the "evil spirit" of Brutus. The ghost of Caesar and the "majesty of buried Denmark" are revenge ghosts. Both are visitants from another world, the one to warn the enemy that destruction is near, the other to spur on the hesitating avenger to activity. Lastly, as a purely verbal coincidence between the two plays, the following are not without interest. Polonius remarks "I did enact Julius Caesar: I was killed i' the Capitol: Brutus killed me." Horatio declares that he is more an "antique/

"antique Roman than a Dane" and only a quick movement on the part of the dying Hamlet removes the poisoned cup from his reach. This decision on the part of Horatio is reminiscent of the many suicides in Julius Caesar and esp ecially the speech of Cassius (I III).

> I know where I will wear this dagger then
> Cassius from bondage will deliver Cassius;
> Therein ye gods, you make the weak most strong;
> Therein ye gods, you tyrants do defeat:
> Nor strong tower, nor walls of beaten brass
> Nor airless dungeon, nor strong links of iron,
> Can be retentive to the strength of spirit;
> But life being weary of these worldly bars,
> Never lacks power to dismiss itself.
> If I know this know all the world besides
> That part of tyranny that I do bear
> I can shake off at pleasure.

Casca: So can I:
So every bondman in his own hand bears
The power to cancel his captivity

The last honours which Fortinbras pays to Hamlet, and Octavius to Brutus are practically similar:

> Let four captains
> Bear Hamlet like a soldier off the stage.

Compare Julius Caesar (V V)

> According to his virtue let us use him,
> With all respect and rites of burial.
> Within my tent his bones to night shall lie
> Most like a soldier.

The accumulative effect of such evidence suggests that Julius Caesar and Hamlet are closely bound together, not only in point of time but in spirit. In other words, Shakespeare seems/

seems to have made Julius Caesar the testing ground for some of the characters and incidents which he embodies in Hamlet.

Mr. H. Granville-Barker's thesis therefore explains why Hamlet is so important a play; and at the same time use can be made of it to overcome Sarrazin's chief objection to Shakespearean authorship of the Ur Hamlet. So far from Hamlet being a hastily written "pot boiler", it constitutes an attempt at reform as deliberate as Ben Jonson's Every Man in His Humour. Henry V marked the crisis in Shakespeare's life; the three comedies and Julius Caesar show him experimenting with new conceptions; and in Hamlet the splendid results of these experiments are visible. From the spring of 1599 until the late summer of 1600 Shakespeare was slowly and carefully revising and rewriting the Ur Hamlet, the indiscretion of his younger days. It is useless to go to the play itself to discover traces of care and attention - Ars est artem celare; but from As You Like It, Twelfth Night, Much Ado About Nothing and Julius Caesar indications of the experimenting and refashioning which went to the making of Hamlet can be obtained. Furthermore, because of the care which he bestowed upon it Shakespeare effectively removed all traces of his earlier style; and in consequence he departed more than was his wont from the original, since the more he revised/

revised it the further away he must have gone from his source. Thus Sarrazin's objections to the theory that the Ur Hamlet was an early work of Shakespeare lose their weight.

The view that Shakespeare was in some cases a conscious artist has strangely enough never met with much acceptance. The 18th century standpoint that he "lacked art" is substantially that of the present generation. But Shakespeare is more than the poet of Nature: he is the poet of both Art and Nature as Ben Jonson well knew when he said:-

> Yet must I not give Nature all: Thy Art,
> My gentle Shakespeare, must enjoy a part;
> For though the Poet's natter 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' anvile; turne the same .
> (And himselfe with it) that he thinkes to frame,
> Or for the laurell he may gaine a scorne;
> For a good poet's made as well as borne,
> And such wert thou.

In this connection it is worth while remembering that although critics following Charles Lamb, have been unwilling to credit Jonson with the additions to the Spanish Tragedy, yet the evidence that he was responsible for them is as conclusive as could be desired. When Jonson came to write the Memorial Verses for the First Folio one can picture him casting his mind back to the days when Shakespeare and he wrote for rival companies and Henslowe entrusted him with the work of patching

up/

up the Spanish Tragedy in the hope that the revised play would attract the public from the Globe to ~~eht~~ THE Fortune. Jonson would hnow the care which Shakespeare lavished upon Hamlet and it is a pleasing conjecture to suppose that he had Hamlet in mind when he penned these verses. Be that as it may, it is indubitably that Hamlet was no easy play to write; and it was only at the second attempt that Shakespeare could express fully all that he wanted to say. In his youth, he had tried and failed, and in desperation, perhaps, he had flung the play aside. But ten years later, after the composition of Henry V, he was faced with the alternative of resting on his laurels or of going onwards and upwards towards heights hitherto deemed impossible. All the world knows in which direction the choice was made. The play which he had cast aside was the play which would mark the beginning of a new order of things. Experiment and ceaseless endeavour were necessary for success, but the period of incubation passed and Hamlet was born.

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CHAPTER IV.

THE SOURCES OF HAMLET.

Thus far it has been demonstrated that Hamlet is not a play built upon an older play by another author, but a play wholly Shakespearean in execution. The Ur Hamlet was Shakespeare's first attempt at the dramatisation of the story; and the 1600 Hamlet was a revision of that earlier attempt. Scholars for the most part have looked for the source of Hamlet in the First Quarto, because the majority of them have taken it as proved that Kyd's hand could be seen in it. But if the theory advanced here is correct, Q_1 cannot be a source: the source must be found further back. Hamlet is thus removed from the list of the plays with hypothetical and uncertain sources, and falls into the same category as plays like Macbeth and Julius Caesar. This is of the utmost importance in the present discussion, for if a comparison of play and source shows that the latter provides for everything that is in the former, then it confirms the view already expressed, that Hamlet is wholly Shakespearean, and that there is no need to postulate a "ghost" play x by a different hand or hands.

Shakespeare's handling of his raw material is familiar to everyone. From the dry chronicles, he created the epic of England; from biographies, thrice removed from their/

their source, he recreated Ancient Rome; and from interminable novels he rescued the Spirit of Romance. What was in his source a name was galvanised into life in his hands; what was a desert of words, bloomed with poetry and passion; what was mentioned as of no account assumed an awe-inspiring significance. Shakespeare could create anything; but the hint had to be supplied: his imagination had to be stirred from without. But with that economy to which only the adjective Shakespearean can be supplied, he remodelled only where necessary. In general, he preserved the main outlines of the plots from which he borrowed; but his characters ride rough-shod through them. Once he gave the rein to his imagination, there was no saying how a character might turn out. A fat man introduced to please the groundlings might turn out a Falstaff; a Jew for the rabble to bait might become the mouthpiece of a persecuted race. It is in character, therefore, that the greatest discrepancy between source and play arises: the plot of both is to all intents and purposes alike. This is the chief point of contact between the two; but another link is vocabulary. It is one of the most surprising features of Shakespeare's workmanship that the greatest alchemist in words should be indebted to the veriest hacks for the props and buttresses of some of his most memorable lines. His eye was photographic, and the images were made permanent/

permanent in the fixing-bath of the mind. If therefore a comparison of Hamlet with its source shows the same process of transmutation at work; if the narrative is sufficient to provide for the plot and a few turns of phrase; then the existence of the Ur Hamlet from the hand of another writer need not be assumed, as Shakespeare must have gone direct to the source.

At the very outset, however, a difficulty arises. There are two sources to which Shakespeare may have had access, and agreement has certainly not yet been reached as to the one which he would use. About the middle of the sixteenth century, a Frenchman, Francis de Belleforest, began translating a series of tragic stories from the Italian Bandello. The first volume of the Histoires Tragiques was privileged in 1565, and, in the fifth volume, privileged 1570, the story of Hamlet occurs. This tale is taken not from Bandello, but from the Historia Danica of Saxo Grammaticus with which, as other stories show, he was familiar. Belleforest's Histoires were well known in England, and Painter compiled his Palace of Pleasure almost entirely from them; but he did not include Hamlet in that series. When Hamlet was translated into English, it is impossible to say with certainty. The first extant edition of the translation is dated 1608 - eight years after Shakespeare's final version was written; and if this is really the first edition/

edition, Shakespeare must have gone directly to the French. But this is outwith his usual practice; only in the Comedy of Errors does he go to a source written in a language other than English; and it is possible that the 1608 edition is not the first.

Surprisingly enough, little research has been done on this question, and scholars for the most part have been content to follow Elze who declared that the play preceded the translation, and that the translator had Shakespeare before him. In support of this view, he pointed out that in two cases, the English version differed from the French but agreed with Shakespeare.

The first occurs in the passage describing Hamlet's interview with his mother during which the counsellor acts as spy. Belleforest's spy conceals himself under a quilt (lourdier) but the translator differs and he makes the spy hide "behind the arras" - which is the very word used by Shakespeare. This is very interesting, but it is not conclusive, and it is too slender evidence on which to build a theory either way. For it is noteworthy that even Belleforest's word is not a literal translation of Saxo who uses the word "stramentum." If Belleforest could change the "straw" of Saxo into a "quilt," surely the English translator could change Belleforest's "quilt" into "arras." Probably the semi-/

semi-archaic word "lourdier" was unknown to him, and he merely made a guess at the meaning. In this event, arras would be the most obvious word to take, as in Elizabethan literature it is commonly used as a place of concealment. Shakespeare himself uses it in other plays. Twice Falstaff is compelled to hide behind the arras, once in Henry IV and the second time in The Merry Wives of Windsor; and Borachio in Much Ado About Nothing hears from the same hiding place the circumstances of Hero's wooing. As the N.E.D. shows, the word was common in English from an early date, and Elze is rather overbold to say that the use of this word proves that the translator had the play before him.

His other example is even more interesting. In describing how Hamlet discovered the spy, the translator makes him cry out "a rat, a rat." There is no authority for this in Belleforest, and the explanation is purely an interpolation. Since Shakespeare uses this phrase, Elze assumes that the translator took it from him. But the conclusion can be challenged, for Elze omits to mention a significant point. The "rat" exclamation is used twice by Shakespeare: firstly when Hamlet actually uses it, and secondly when Gertrude is reporting the murder of Polonius. What Hamlet says is infinitely the more mouthfilling:-

"A rat, dead for a ducat, dead;"

and/

and if the translator had the play before him, it is difficult to see why he did not use this instead of the feeble cry "a rat, a rat." When however Gertrude's report

> "Behind the arras, hearing something stir
> Whips out his rapier, cries a rat, a rat"

is set alongside the Hystorie account

> "Whereby feeling something stirring under them, he cried a rat, a rat"

the conclusion is almost irresistible that Shakespeare is "lifting" from the translator. If Elze's conclusion is followed, it means that the translator had the choice of two versions and chose the worse. The other conclusion - that Shakespeare is following the Hystorie - is in accord with his practice in other plays: he followed his source in one way, but he improved upon it in another. Just as in the case of the "arras" example, there is as much to be said for the one theory as for the other.

In the Variorium edition of Hamlet, Dr Furness gives his whole-hearted support to Elze's conclusions. He makes a false step however when he adds that the two examples adduced above are the only points where the phraseology is common to both. In the Appendix, a list of almost fifty correspondences will be noted. They are of interest as they at once suggest the correspondences that exist between Julius Caesar and Plutarch.

At the beginning of the play the lines occur:-

"Which had returned
To the inheritance of Fortinbras
Had he been vanquished."

A reference to the Hystorie shows whence the word "vanquished" came:- "The combat was by him accepted with conditions that he which should be vanquished, should lose all the riches he had in his ship,and that the vanquisher should cause the body of the vanquished to be honourably buried." When Hamlet speaks scornfully of his uncle:-

"My father's brother, but no more like my father
Than I to Hercules"

the phrase in the Hystorie at once suggests itself:- "In reading of this hystorie, it seemeth Hamlet should resemble another Hercules." The ghost tells Hamlet:-

"I am thy father's spirit
Doomed for a certain term to walk the night
And for the day confined to fast in fires
Till the foul crimes done in my days of nature
Are burnt and purged away."

With this compare the Hystorie "But they were forced to purge their sins by fire." Polonius' compliment to himself as a man of wisdom and of reach, and his cry of astonishment at the mental subtlety of Hamlet "How pregnant sometimes his replies are" are both reminiscent of a single sentence in the Hystorie. "Men of quicke spirit, and such as had a deeper reach began to suspect that of his devised simplicitye, the hero concealed a sharp and pregnant spirit." Hamlet's beautiful tribute to Horatio as a man:-

"That no revenue hast but thy good spirits" recalls the Hystorie which refers to the [redacted] "lords of small revenue."

Even in the Play-scene, correspondences occur. When the Player King tells the Queen:-

> "And thou shalt live in this fair word behind
> Honoured, beloved"

he seems to be echoing the Hystorie "The princesse was honoured of all men and beloved of her husband." Also the remark that "woman is accursed that feareth to follow and accompany her husband to the death" has its equivalent in the Player Queen's remark

> "In second husband let me be accurst."

In addition to the two examples quoted by Elze where the translator adds to the original there is another. Belleforest makes no mention in his description of the voyage to Denmark of either ship or sea. The translator remedies the omission and translates the French "Maise le ruse Prince Danois" by the English "the subtle Danish Prince (being at sea). Shakespeare has the same:- "Ere we were two days at sea," and one must either assume that he obtained it from the translator or that the translator obtained it from him.

Only a few of the verbal correspondences between

the/

the play and the Hystorie are adduced here,© but it cannot be denied that they show the same relationship as that existing between (say) Coriolanus and Plutarch. It may be said however that in Coriolanus, many of the passages are taken almost in extenso from the source and that this does not occur in Hamlet. To this two answers are ready. North's translation is in itself a classic - while the Hystorie of Hamblet is not. Also the revision which Hamlet underwent must necessarily have removed the completed play farther away from the source. On Elze's theory, the many parallel passages are inexplicable, as unless it is assumed that the writer of the Hystorie translated with Shakespeare's Hamlet at his elbow, he must be credited with a mind equal to that of Shakespeare in retentiveness. But the woodenness of the translation, with its breathlessness, and its confusion of pronouns, is all against a poetical version being beside the redactor. One would imagine that some of Shakespeare's poetry must necessarily have been infused into it; but there is none to be found.

This is the case that can be made against Elze's theory, and no one will deny that it is important; but at the same time there is no doubt that Shakespeare was acquainted with the French version. The word "packet" which is used by Shakespeare as meaning letter or commission is derived from Belleforest; ayant visité le pacquet. "Salary" has its prototype/

© See Appendix.

prototype in the French "salaire," and "cautel" in the French "cauteleux." Neither of these words occurs in the translation. It is therefore very difficult to say which version Shakespeare used; like the Tavern sign in the Spectator there is much to be said on both sides. There is no definite point which can clinch the question one way or another. Had there been no evidence that Shakespeare knew the French version, the evidence of the parallels would be good enough to show that he used the English version. Of course it is possible that he knew the French version originally, but used an English version before writing the play. But this is not the place for such speculations. Both sides have been stated and the reader is free to draw his own conclusions. If he thinks an English version was used, the influence of the source is proved; if he believes in the French version it is naturally still sub judice. But plot and character still have to be considered.

Although the importance of the verbal correspondence is diminished through the uncertainty which exists as to the precise text which Shakespeare followed, yet this does not affect a comparison between play and source for examples of influence on plot and character. It does not matter here whether Shakespeare followed Belleforest or the English translator as the general character effect given in both these works is the same. For convenience sake, the quotations will be given as coming from the English version, but they could quite as well have/

have been given in French.

The first act of Hamlet is in large measure recapitulatory. The actors of the drama are introduced, and the relevancies of their past history made known. Shakespeare's plays are, with few exceptions, remarkably well introduced, and in Hamlet his powers are shown to perfection. The precise relationship of the elder Hamlet, Claudius, Gertrude, and the younger Hamlet to each other is set out clearly and explicitly. So far there is not much attempt at character portrayal, although the elder Hamlet's skill as a warrior is touched upon repeatedly, and the fact that he is "armed at all points exactly cap à pé with

"the very armour he had on
When he the ambitious Norway combated"

serves to emphasise this. In the source, the same characteristic is present. Horvendile was renowned far and wide as a soldier, and his victories over Collere, the king of Norway, made him justly famous. His brother Fengon could not compare with him in this respect; and it is noteworthy that Shakespeare nowhere refers to Claudius as a warrior. Shakespeare leaves no doubts in the minds of his readers which of the two brothers is the better morally. Horatio, an excellent judge, admits simply yet sincerely that he was "a goodly king," and the noise of the banquetting and feasting coming from the chamber of Claudius strikes his ear strangely. But Shakespeare is again following his source, although he tones it down considerably. Horvendile is/

is strongly armed in his own honesty, but Fengon smacks of every sin that has a name.

As soon as the characters are introduced, Shakespeare plunges into the story, and the first difficulty presents itself. After the ghost has revealed to Hamlet the treachery of the king, Hamlet decides to put on an "antic disposition." The question as to whether Hamlet's madness is real or feigned has been frequently discussed, and medical writers especially have tended to regard it as real. But the play itself gives very little support to that view. Whenever Hamlet is in conversation with his friend Horatio, his behaviour is never anything else than depressingly sane. Indeed it constitutes part of the tragedy that so clear-sighted a man cannot find a way to bring about the death of the king. But Horatio is his friend, and in the presence of an enemy, his behaviour shows a startling change. If an enemy comes near him, his guard goes up, and he feigns madness. An excellent example of this occurs in Act IV when Hamlet is telling Horatio of his escape from the ship. During the conversation, a step is heard, and Horatio has just whispered a warning when Osric enters. At once, Hamlet assumes his pose and riddles the interrupter with a broadside of ridicule. This double nature of the "antic disposition" has its roots in the prose narrative. There it is told how "Every day being in the queene's palace..... he rent and tore his clothes/

clothes, wallowing and lying in the dirt and mire, his face all filthy and blacke, running through the streets like a man distraughte, not speaking one worde but such as seemed to proceede of madnesse and meere frenzie..... But the young prince noted well enough, minding one day to bee revenged in such manner that the memorie thereof should remaine perpetually to the world." Shakespeare must have been interested in this aspect of the ancient hero's character, for mutatis mutandis, the above description could refer quite as appositely to the Hamlet of the play as to the Hamblet of the saga.

The latter then goes on to tell how that certain members of the court began to suspect the madness of Hamblet, and they declared "that under colour of such rudeness he shadowed a craftie pollicy, and by his devised simplicitye he concealed a sharp and pregnent spirit." Shakespeare shows how in the same way doubts began to arise in the mind of Claudius that Hamlet's "transformation" was due to more than his father's death and how Rosencrantz and Guildenstern were sent by him to find out the cause of his malady.

But if the King's suspicions regarding Hamlet's madness were such as he dare not utter, Polonius amply made up for his silence. He had no doubts that Hamlet was mad, but he believed that love for Ophelia had turned the mind of the Prince. Half-despairingly, the King agreed to test this theory, and he learns/

learns the worst. The scene in which Hamlet meets Ophelia has its counterpart in the Saga. In the latter, a woman for whom Hamblet had entertained a great affection is appointed to seduce him, but he learned of the scheme from "a gentleman that in Horvendile's time had been nourished with him," and so escaped the danger. The idea in both the prose narrative and the play is the same, but the methods by which it is unfolded, and the results produced are vastly different. Shakespeare has transformed a barbaric scene of sexual passion into a scene of genuine pathos and beauty. Further, the scene shows his extraordinary grasp of stage technique and the amazing economy with which he uses his source. At first sight both scenes end alike: the woman has to suffer the scornful taunts of the hero. But although this is a negative result in the Saga, it is a positive result in the play. The victory for Hamblet is a defeat for Hamlet. The King now sees that Polonius is wrong, and that something is seriously amiss with him.

> "Love, his affections do not that way tend,
> Nor what he spake, though it lacked form a little
> Was not like madness. There's something in his soul
> O'er which his melancholy sits on brood;
> And I do doubt the hatch and the disclose
> Will be some danger."

Hamlet is in great danger, and is unaware that his meeting with Ophelia was of such consequence. His fortunes are at their lowest ebb, and the King is on the crest of the wave. Yet/

Yet he is behaving as inconsequentially as ever, and wasting his time over a company of strolling players. The contrast between the purposeless behaviour of Hamlet, and the calm decisiveness of the King is brilliantly set forth.

But Hamlet escapes the net which Claudius has cast for him, and, with the aid of the players, he pierces the King's secret. The result of the "mousetrap play" is to nullify completely the King's former success, and now it looks as though Hamlet is going to take upon himself the rôle of attacker. There is no authority for the play within the play in the Saga, but the device was common in Elizabethan stage-craft and Shakespeare uses it as it had never been used before. Incidentally, the reason for his divergence from the Saga account of the "Temptation Scene" becomes apparent. The play-scene must of necessity furnish Hamlet with a victory, and to have made the interview with Ophelia turn out to his advantage would have given him too long a run of success. The whole play is a succession of shocks: at one time Fortune favours Claudius, at another time Hamlet. Claudius is triumphant after Hamlet's meeting with Ophelia; but his triumph is short-lived, and after the play-scene he is completely in Hamlet's power. But Hamlet has hardly raised the cup of success to his lips when it is rudely dashed from his hands, and all unwittingly he sets in motion another force against him. This occurs during his inter-

view/

interview with his mother when Polonius is murdered.

This scene well repays a close examination, as much for the fidelity with which Shakespeare follows the source as for the skilful way in which he departs from it. In the Saga, one of the counsellors suggests to the King that Hamblet and his mother should be closeted together. He offers to hide behind the curtains, and listen carefully to everything that passes between mother and son. The King consents to the scheme, and so the trap is laid. But Hamblet frustrates it, for before speaking to his mother, he first of all searches the room, and coming upon the hapless spy, he kills him. In essentials, the scene is similar to the corresponding scene in the play; but the differences of detail are interesting. The first point to be noticed is a time difference. In the story, the scene occurs near the beginning; but in the play the mid-point has already been reached. In the former it is of no particular dramatic interest, but in the latter, it is the first of a series of blows that lead up to the catastrophe. Again Shakespeare's Hamlet discovers the spy by chance; in the Saga, the hero makes a detailed tour of inspection before the interview with his mother. This is part of the general toning-down which Shakespeare makes on the original. Hamblet is a typical Northern barbarian, enjoying murder for murder's sake. He knows that the eavesdropper is not the King, for a proclamation had been issued/

issued stating that he had departed outwith his dominions. Shakespeare omits this, and when Hamlet passes his sword through the arras, he firmly believes that it is the King. Even when he discovers his mistake, he confounds the imagined deed with the real deed, and during his stay with his mother the implications of the mistake have not fully impressed themselves upon his mind. Because of this, no pity for Polonius ever stirs him, as he begins his intimate, heart-searching cross-examination of his mother. Although he is severe, yet he is not cruel. He shows his mother the awful truth, but he does so, not because of any pleasure he extracts from it, but because justice to his murdered father demands it. The opening line "Mother you have my father much offended" is the keynote of the interview, and it is struck again and again until its meaning is made clear to her. The Hamblet of the Saga engages his mother with a vastly different topic. He is full of reproaches at the inhuman behaviour which she has meted out to him. Before her second marriage, he had been the observed of all observers, but now he has suffered a serious fall in dignity. His armour propre has been hurt, and he must be compensated. He takes his mother into his fullest confidence, and tells her what he proposes to do. Herein he differs from Shakespeare's Hamlet who has no plan, and if he had, it is doubtful if he would have sought his mother's help; for he is anxious to spare her as much/

much trouble as possible. In this scene, Shakespeare has transformed the monster of the saga into a man. The one is an impossibility, a libel inhumanity; the other is representative of it.

The prose narrative goes on to tell how that after the murder of the counsellor, the King decided that Hamblet was dangerous and should be removed out of the way. He sends him with two companions to the King of England with instructions that he should be put to death. But Hamblet circumvented the plan; for "whilst his compansions slept, having read the letters, and knowne his uncle's great treason, with the wicked and villainous mindes of the two courtyers that led him to the slaughter raced out the letters that concerned his death, and instead thereof graved others, with commission to the King of England to hang his two companions." The King acted according to, as he thought, Fengon's instructions, so that Hamblet was spared and the two courtiers put to death. All this is familiar through the play, but in point of fact Shakespeare makes scant use of this chapter. He makes no mention of Hamlet's desire to marry the daughter of the English King; nor does he make the slightest use of the long account which is given of Hamlet's behaviour at Court. Shakespeare speeds up the action considerably by making no reference to the visit to England. Whereas Hamblet spent a year in England, Hamlet never reached it. The pirate ship/

ship is an invention on Shakespeare's part, a deus ex machina obviating the use of seven-league boots.

On returning to Denmark, the Hamblet of the Saga finds the court is mourning for him, and his return causes much excitement. The funeral feast was quickly changed into one of rejoicing, and Hamblet "played the butler and a gentleman attending on the tables not suffering the pots or the goblets to be empty." Soon all the courtiers lay drunk on the floor, and Hamblet, binding them fast, set fire to the building. He then sought out the King and put him to death. This scene bears little resemblance to the corresponding scene in the play; yet it should be noticed that Shakespeare took from his source the idea of a banquet; also he stresses the quantity of liquor consumed quite as much as the Saga.

The prose narrative does not end at this point, but continues the adventures of Hamblet until he was finally betrayed by his last wife Hermetrude. The story is not uninteresting, and its connection with the tale of Havelock the Dane is a knotty point in Middle English literature. For the Shakespearean student, however, the main interest in the tale evaporates after the death of King Fengon.

The doubt which exists as to the exact source used by Shakespeare makes it impossible to show conclusively the influence of the Saga on the vocabulary of the play; but the comparison/

comparison which has been undertaken here between the plots of the two shows that Shakespeare took all that was essential for the play from the Saga. The murder of Hamlet's father by his brother, the marriage of Gertrude and Claudius, Hamlet's vow of vengeance and assumption of madness, Hamlet's interview with his mother and the killing of the spy, Hamlet's voyage to England and the consequent deaths of Rosencramtz and Guildenstern, Hamlet's return and the final killing of the King -- all these incidents are derived directly from the Saga.

The influence of the Saga on character is no less marked. As well as the principal characters, the equivalents of Polonius, Ophelia, Horatio, Rosencramtz and Guildenstern, can all be identified without any difficulty. In the prose narrative, they are mere shadows of the characters in the play, but that after all is only Shakespeare's way of dealing with his sources.

A comparison between Polonius and the counsellor of the Saga is of interest, for Shakespeare has preserved the most noteworthy features of the latter - his stubbornness and determination. For all his garrulity, Polonius is no fool, and as soon as he is convinced that Hamlet is in love with his daughter, he makes up his mind to test his theory. He is a real thorn in the flesh of Hamlet, for he is the only person in the play who is not afraid of him. The whole court regard Hamlet/

Hamlet with something more than awe; but Polonius faces up to him manfully, and he meets his death through daring what others feared to do. The same characteristic is present in the counsellor of the Saga. The "Temptation Scene" having failed, the courtiers were satisfied that Hamblet was really mad, but "there was one that above al the rest doubted of Hamblet's practice in counterfeiting the madman." His doubts made him spy upon Hamlet and his mother with disastrous results to himself. Polonius may be a fool in some ways, but there is method in his madness; and Shakespeare found that method in the Saga.

Ophelia is easily identified as the woman appointed to seduce Hamblet. Before the death of his father, he had entertained a great affection for this lady. The courtiers decided to test his madness by placing her in his way, but he was warned of the trap by a special friend, obviously the original of Shakespeare's Horatio. In the Saga, both characters are merely shadows; but in the case of Ophelia, Shakespeare has made scant use of his source. Certain critics have seen in Ophelia, the adventuress, but there is little authority for this in the play. What Shakespeare did was to take this woman of the Saga and relate her to Polonius. In this way, he made her less adventitious and gave a compactness to the play which would otherwise have been absent.

In the Spanish Tragedy, the villain Lorenzo has

only/

only one accomplice Pedringano, but in Hamlet Claudius has two - Rosencramtz and Guildenstern. For introducing two instead of one, Shakespeare found precedent in the Saga. This may seem a detail, but when one considers how interesting he made them, one cannot feel thankful that the Saga contained them in embryo. Goethe's criticism sums them up. "This lightly-stepping approach, this smirking and bowing, this assenting, wheedling, flattering, this whisking agility, this wagging of the tail, this allness and emptiness, this legal knavery, this ineptitude and insipidity - how can they be expressed by a single man? There ought to be a dozen of these people, if they could be had; for it is only in society that they are anything: they are society itself; and Shakespeare showed no little wisdom and discernment in bringing in a pair of them. Besides, they are needed as a couple that may be contrasted with the single, noble, excellent Horatio."*

Chief interest however attaches to the character of Hamlet. Perhaps his chief characteristic is an uncommon acuteness of mind. He knows this himself, and like so many people with self-knowledge he loves to juggle with it, and masquerade under a pose. Under the guise of folly, he conceals deep and hidden truths. His adversaries are always afraid of him because of his ability to read their own thoughts. In an indirect manner he can pose the very question they are

on/

* Variorum edition of Hamlet, p.275.

on the point of asking, and spike their [redacted] guns. That Shakespeare has succeeded so admirably in portraying so difficult a character shows the prodigality of his powers; but the idea for such a character undoubtedly came to him from the Saga. An impish delight in playing tricks upon his enemies is indeed the salient feature of the ancient hero's character. He assumes madness in order to find a method of avenging his father's death; but the pose is also undertaken so that he may scourge the folly of those around him. After the Temptation Scene, the declared that he had been seduced by the temptress, although the courtiers who were hiding saw that no such thing had ever occurred. This seemed convincing proof to them that he really was insane, and Hamblet vastly enjoyed the joke at their expense. The English King also was considerably disturbed by Hamblet's behaviour and was at a loss to account for it. "The King admiring the young prince and behoulding in him some matter of greater respect than in the common sort of men, gave him his daughter in marriage, according to the counterfeit letters by him devised, and the next day caused the two servants of Fengon to be executed, to satisfie, as he thought, the King's desire. But Hamblet, although the sport pleased him well, and that the King of England could not have done him greater favour, made as though he had been much offended." Similarly, when he returned to England/

England, he was asked about his companions, and he showed them two bars of gold "whereat many that already knew his humours presently conjectured that he had plaide some trick of legerdemaine." One may be sure that Shakespeare was fascinated by this ironical nature. Certainly he gave Hamlet a large share of it.

Another characteristic of Hamlet which Shakespeare found in the Saga was his loneliness. Only once is mention made of a friend:- when Hamlet is warned of the woman appointed to seduce him. As has been pointed out, Shakespeare elaborates this friend in Horatio, but otherwise he follows his source. Hamlet is never in the company of friends, and even his mother comes very little into his life. The dramatic effect of this isolated position is very great. He is in the midst of affairs, and yet out of contact with them. The ordinary business of men goes on round about him, yet he is insulated from it; and his isolated position renders him more open to the catastrophe as there is really nobody who can dare advise him what to do. Even Horatio knows that it is dangerous to give advice. Hamlet's passionate outburst

"Unhand me gentlemen
By Heaven, I'll make a ghost of him that lets me,"

makes it clear that he would not hesitate to strike down even his best friend if he was thwarted in his scheme.

The comparison of the Saga with Hamlet has shown

that/

that from it Shakespeare obtained all the raw materials that he needed for Hamlet. It is the genuine source of the play. It offers verbal correspondences; it provides for plot; and most important of all, it provides for all the characters (except Laertes who will be considered later). It may be objected that it does not provide for everything that is in Hamlet, e.g., the ghost, the play within the play, &c. That is quite true, but the same objection could quite well be levelled against Plutarch and Holinshed as the sources of the Roman and History plays. But it is possible to face the objection fairly and squarely, for strictly speaking, there is another source of Hamlet:- the Spanish Tragedy. The Saga provided Shakespeare with the raw materials; the Spanish Tragedy showed him how to use them.

The Spanish Tragedy.

In three points especially is Shakespeare indebted to the Spanish Tragedy. These are the introduction of the ghost, the play within the play, and the madness of Ophelia. At first sight, there does not seem to be any resemblance between the ghost of Don Andrea and the ghost of the elder Hamlet. The one stands quite outwith the play; the other is an integral part of it. Don Andrea influences the actions of none of the characters; the elder Hamlet sets the tragedy in motion by revealing to his son the infamy of Claudius. This is/

is an important difference; but there is an equally important point of resemblance between the two ghosts. Kyd's ghost speaks to nobody, but Shakespeare's speaks to only one character in the play - Hamlet. Marcellus, Barnardo and Horatio all see it, but he speaks to none of them, and he even refuses to address his son in their presence. With Hamlet and with Hamlet alone has he any dealings; the other characters have no interest for him. This characteristic makes the ghost all the more awe-inspiring and terrible. Unlike the ghosts in the later drama which in their tendency to sociability become ridiculous, the ghost in Hamlet keeps itself aloof and dignified. Apart from its interest in Hamlet, it is as much outwith the play as the ghost of Kyd.

Both ghosts have several well-defined characteristics in common. The ghost of Don Andrea is genuinely solicitous about Bel-imperia, and grieves that his lady

> "On whom I doted more than all the world
> Because she loved me more than all the world"

should suffer at the hands of his enemies. The kindness of the ghost in Hamlet also stands out in relief, and if tradition speaks truly it was an ideal part for "gentle Shakespeare." Gertrude may not have been the ideal wife, but she must not be allowed to suffer; and Hamlet is warned

> "But howsoe'er thou pursuest this art
> Taint not thy mind, nor let thy soul conspire
> Against thy mother aught."

Both ghosts have endured the torments of the lower world; but the attitude of Kyd and Shakespeare towards them offers an interesting study in contrasts. Don Andrea tells how

> "In keeping on my way to Pluto's court,
> Through dreadful shades of ever-glooming night,
> I saw more sights than thousand tongues can tell
> Or pennes can write or mortall harts can think."

But Kyd, notwithstanding this proviso, evidently thought that he could describe the horrors, for with the help of Virgil, he puffs his cheeks and swells his chest, and bombasts out a detailed description of the lower world:-

> "Where usurers are choakt with melting golde
> And wantons are imbraste with ugly snakes
> And murderers grone with never-killing woundes
> And perjured wights scalded in boiling lead
> And all foul sinnes with torments overwhelmed."

Shakespeare however knew the power of understatement; in this case, at least, he knew what to leave in the ink-well. Like Homer, who does not describe Helen's beauty directly, but tells the effect it had on others, Shakespeare does not hold the mirror over the abyss of Hell, but places it so that it reflects the faces of those who have peeped into the crater

> "But that I am forbid
> To tell the secrets of my prison house,
> I could a tale unfold, whose lightest word
> Would harrow up thy soul; freeze thy young blood;
> Make thy two eyes like stars, start from their spheres;
> Thy knotted and combined locks to part;
> And each particular hair to stand on end,
> Like quills upon the fretful porcupine."

Shakespeare's treatment of the ghost thus differs from Kyd in degree rather than in kind; but the play-scene in Hamlet is in a different plane altogether from the corresponding scene in the Spanish Tragedy. In Hamlet, it occurs in the middle and marks the crisis of the play; in the Spanish Tragedy it occurs at the end and marks the catastrophe. Various circumstances would no doubt lead Shakespeare to make this change. Certainly, not the least would be the essential difference in the construction of the two plays. Hieronimo does not appear as an avenger until the end of Act II, while Hamlet has embarked on the course before the end of Act I. A stirring scene was therefore necessary to mark the crisis, and the play-scene suited admirably. Further, Shakespeare knew the effect which this scene would have on an audience which still remembered the Spanish Tragedy. When the Elizabethan playgoer saw Hamlet setting the stage for the "mousetrap" play, he would at once conclude that Hamlet would accomplish his object in the manner of Hieronimo. The attentive spectator would notice that there were small points of difference, and, if he knew his Shakespeare, he would be on the outlook for a development different from that in the Spanish Tragedy. But the majority of the Globe audiences would sustain the mental shock of expecting one thing and experiencing another. There is, nevertheless, no resemblance between the state of Hieronimo's mind and Hamlet's mind before the play-scene/

play-scene, and the attentive spectator would duly observe this. Hieronimo has gathered all the evidence he requires, and he writes a play which will wreak vengeance on his enemies. Hamlet, on the other hand, is still building up a chain of evidence, and he only inserts a passage into a play in the repertoire of the strolling players in the hope that Claudius will commit himself. Hieronimo is triumphantly certain as to the outcome and doubts nothing. Hamlet is hopefully uncertain and doubts everything.

But although Shakespeare does not adopt Kyd's catastrophe, he does not neglect it entirely. Before the close of the Spanish Tragedy, Lorenzo and Hieronimo seem to compose their differences

> "But here, before Prince Balthazar and me
> Embrace each other and be perfect friends."

Similarly in Hamlet, Shakespeare follows his usual practice in other plays, by raising a glimmer of hope that the catastrophe might be averted by reconciling Hamlet and Laertes

> "We'll have Laertes and our own son
> Made friends and lovers as befits them both."

The background of the play-scene in the Spanish Tragedy is a banquet, and this makes up the foreground of the catastrophe in Hamlet. The Saga offered a hint for the banquet, but doubtless Kyd's use confirmed Shakespeare's intention. This is typically a Shakespearean scene. Kyd lacked that supreme confidence and restraint which marks the really great things of Shakespeare.

Kyd/

Kyd required both a banquet and a play-scene to make a thrilling conclusion; but Shakespeare saw that two successful scenes could be made out of them, and he utilised the one as a crisis and the other as a conclusion. Shakespeare never did anything by halves. If he borrowed magnificently he exploited what he borrowed to the full.

Ophelia has her roots deeper in the Spanish Tragedy than any other character in the play. She is linked to both Bel-imperia and Isabella. Bel-imperia has a brother Lorenzo, who, like Laertes, has been in Paris, and he takes it upon himself to advise his sister, who, however, replies somewhat tartly:-

> "Brother, you are become an oratour -
> I know not by what experience -
> Too pollitick for me, past all compare,
> Since last I saw you."

Ophelia, somewhat more gently perhaps but none the less surely, objects to the patronising tone of Laertes and reminds him

> "But good my brother
> Do not as some ungracious pastors do
> Show me the steep and thorny path to heaven,
> Whilst like a puffed and reckless libertine
> Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads
> And recks not his own rede."

But this resemblance after all is only incidental; the real equivalent of Ophelia in the Spanish Tragedy is Isabella. The murder of her son Horatio has shattered the light/

light of her world and her mind reels under the blow. Her insanity has nothing in it of the tender piteousness of Ophelia. It is crudely drawn, and Kyd does not bestow upon her that overflowing sympathy with which Shakespeare invests his heroine. The madness of Ophelia is one of the most tear-compelling scenes in Shakespeare. Her lily-like fragility, her utter helplessness, and her confused mingling of the joys she had experienced with the joys she had hoped for blend together into a picture of heart-rending woe. "Sweets to the sweet" murmurs Gertrude as she scatters flowers over her grave; and to this, one can only assent "AMEN" The greatest things in Shakespeare very often spring from trivialities, and it is possible that if Kyd had not made Isabella insane, the story of Ophelia's sorrow might have been absent from Hamlet.

These three scenes make up the major debt of Shakespeare to Kyd, but there are various incidents and devices in Hamlet which are derived directly from the Spanish Tragedy. Kyd's abilities as a master of play construction have been grossly overrated, but he knew what made up a telling bit of stage-business, and Shakespeare was not the man to let the good points in any play escape him. When he penned Hamlet's outburst at the passionate speech of the player

> "What's Hecuba to him or he to Hecuba
> That he should weep for her? What would he do?
> Had he the motive and the cue for passion
> That I have?"

he/

he would have in mind the scene between Hieronimo and Bazulto.

"See, see, O see thy shame Hieronimo:
See here a loving father to his son,
Behold the sorrows and the sad laments
That he delivereth for his son's decease!
If love's effects so strive in lesser things,
If love enforce such moods in meaner wits,
If love express such power in poor estates,
Then shunst thou not, Hieronimo to neglect
The sweet revenge of thy Horatio."

The thought that he is a coward crosses the mind of Hamlet

"For it cannot be
But I am pigeon-livered or ere this
I should have fatted all the region kites
With this slave's offal"

and a similar suspicion occurs to Hieronimo

"Mild as the lamb
Is't I will be revenged? No; I am not the man."

Hamlet's fear that the ghost might betray him

"the spirit that I have seen
May be the Devil"

recalls Hieronimo's doubts at the title of Bel-imperia

"Hieronimo beware - thou art betrayed
And to entrap thy life the train is laid."

Hamlet binds Horatio, Marcellus and Barnardo to silence about the coming of the ghost

"Come hither gentlemen
And lay your hands upon my sword,
Never to speak of this that you have heard;
Swear by my sword."

Similarly, Lorenzo makes his accomplice swear on his sword

"Swear on this cross that what thou sayst is true
And that thou wilt conceal what thou hast told."

Gertrude/

Gertrude notices during the fencing match that Hamlet is perspiring, and she calls him over

> "Here Hamlet, take my napkin, rub thy brows.
> Come, let me wipe your face."

When Hieronimo sees Bazulto weeping, he offers him his handkerchief

> "Here take my handkerchief and wipe thine eyes."

The relationship between the Spanish Tragedy and Hamlet has long been recognised, and it is the chief plank on the platform of those who believe Kyd to be the author of the Ur Hamlet. They close their eyes to the evidence which shows that Kyd had stopped writing for the stage before 1589, but concentrate on the parallels as proving Kyd to be the author of both plays. Kyd formulated his conceptions in the Spanish Tragedy, and found them good - so good, that he repeated them in Hamlet. But this conclusion is invalid, for in no sense are the devices in Hamlet mere repetitions of the devices in the Spanish Tragedy. The author of the Spanish Tragedy did not realise the potentialities of the instruments he was using; not till the author of Hamlet took them out of his hand were they manipulated to their fullest advantage. The means used in both plays may be the same; but there is no kinship between the minds that guide them. The one is wasteful, the other economical; the one assails the audience with frontal attacks, the other knows the power that lies in an outflanking movement; the/

the one is a man of undoubted talent, the other is simply Shakespeare. No one who has examined Shakespeare turning the noble prose of North into the multi-coloured pageant of the Roman plays, or the involved narrative of Holinshed into the epic of England, can fail to realise that the same spirit is revealing to the full the potentialities of the Spanish Tragedy. Of all the poets, Shakespeare possessed in greatest abundance that priceless catalyst, the philosopher's stone, to transform the base metal of an uncouth story into the noble metal of a work of art.

In truth, these scholars who lay so much stress on the Spanish Tragedy forget that it was a wardrobe of effects out of which succeeding dramatists never tired of dressing themselves. To take only one example, exactly the same correspondences as have been noted between the Spanish Tragedy and Hamlet occur between the Spanish Tragedy and Marston's Antonio's Revenge. Antonio belongs to the same family as Hieronimo. Both are scholars interested in play-acting; both are rendered incapable of action by the troubles which assail them; and both resort to the same means to carry out the revenge. The love of Antonio for Mellida recalls the love of Horatio for Bel-imperia; the death of the creature of Piero has its equivalent scene in the Spanish Tragedy in the death of Pedringano; and the design of the villain to marry Millida to Galeatzo is similar in detail to the plan of /

Lorenzo/

Lorenzo to marry Bel-imperia to Balthazar. Stage devices like the banquets, carousals, oaths of the conspirators, the exhibition of the bodies, the accomplishment of the revenge by means of a masque all show that Marston had studied the Spanish Tragedy to good purpose. No attempt has so far been made to ascribe to Kyd a share in Antonio's Revenge, but if parallel passages are regarded as providing an "Open Sesame" to the Hamlet mystery, then the inevitable conclusion is that the world has been sadly deluded in believing Marston to be the author of Antonio's Revenge.

If Marston thought fit to examine in addition to Seneca the Spanish Tragedy as late as 1600 before writing a play with a revenge motive, would Shakespeare first in 1588 and later in 1600 pass it by on the other side? In this connection, Macbeth is of interest as showing that ~~whenever he was in doubt about a particular sound~~ (EVEN IN THIS PLAY) he was not afraid to consult Kyd. The speech of the Captain who describes Macbeth's victory to King Duncan has no equivalent in Holinshed, but it bears a strong resemblance to the speech in the Spanish Tragedy of the General to the King of Spain. The lines which annoyed Matthew Arnold

> "Till that Bellona's bridegroom lapped in proof
> Confronted him with self-comparisons"

may have been suggested to Shakespeare by the line

> "Now while Bellona rageth here and there."

When Duncan tells the Captain

"So well thy words become thee as thy wounds"

the line in the Spanish Tragedy at once suggests itself

"These words, these deeds become thy person well."

The grimly suggestive lines in Macbeth

"Banquo walked too late,
Whom you might say, if it please you, Fleance killed,
For Fleance fled; men must not walk too late"

are surely not without connection with the following from the Spanish Tragedy

"Why hast thou so unkindly killed this man?
Why? because he walked abroad too late."

Lastly it is not too much to say that the speech of the insane Isabella

"So that you say this herb will purge the eye
And this the head? -
Ah! but none of them will purge the heart!
No, there's no medicine left for my disease
Nor any physic to recure the dead"

contains the very pith and marrow of Macbeth's impassioned appeal to the physician

"Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased;
Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow;
Raze out the written troubles of the brain;
And with some sweet oblivious antidote
Cleanse the stuffed bosom of that perilous stuff
Which weighs upon the heart."

Correspondences like these show that Shakespeare [redacted] Kyd in the writing of a play which did not have a revenge motive, and to imagine him neglecting the Spanish Tragedy in the writing of/

of Hamlet is to imagine the impossible.

In the second place, these scholars who believe that the parallels between the Spanish Tragedy and Hamlet point to Kyd's authorship, forget that the influence of the Spanish Tragedy is purely one-sided. It is concerned only with the mechanics of Hamlet. In no sense is Shakespeare's play Kyd's play masquerading under another name: it differs very considerably from it. Perhaps the simplest way of showing this is to narrate the plot of the Spanish Tragedy.

Don Andrea, the lover of Bel-imperia, has been killed in battle by Balthazar who is taken prisoner and brought to the Spanish Court. Bel-imperia is determined to be revenged on him for her lover's death, and with this end in view she plights her troth to Horatio, the son of Hieronimo,

"Ye, second love shall furnish my revenge."

Meanwhile, Balthazar has fallen in love with Bel-imperia, and, along with her brother Lorenzo, he surprises the lovers in the garden. A scuffle ensues, and Horatio is murdered, while Bel-imperia is carried off and held captive. Hieronimo is the first to come upon the body of his son, and he vows to be revenged on the murderers. Bel-imperia contrives to send him a letter in which she gives the names of the murderers; but although confirmation of it is given to him by a note which he/

he receives from the creature of Lorenzo he delayed vengeance. Finally Bel-imperia comes to his assistance, and the murders of Don Andrea and Horatio are avenged.

As this sketch shows, the Spanish Tragedy gave Shakespeare nothing that was fundamental for Hamlet. It could quite well have come into being without the help of the Spanish Tragedy; although this can be conceded, the construction of the play would probably have been different. But there is a vast amount of difference between the framework of a building and the building itself, and it is to the latter that the Kydian authorship critics are blind.

The examination of the Hamlet sources has now been made, and connection between the raw materials and the completed play established. He who probes into Shakespearean sources fulfils to literature a service similar to that which the anatomist fulfils to medicine. The anatomist reduces to its fundamentals the structure of man; but his work ends there: it takes no account of that spark of divinity which raises man above the other animals, and ranks him second only to the Creator Himself. Similarly, all there can be said here is that the Saga and the Spanish Tragedy are the bones of Hamlet. They can be seen and examined; but they are dead. Not until Shakespeare took them up did the ichor flow thought the veins. And this potent life-giving spirit cannot be analysed; as soon

as/

as it is placed in the crucible it vanishes. But with the exception of this unknown quantity, all that was essential for the creation of Hamlet has been examined here. The Saga supplied Shakespeare with the matter; the Spanish Tragedy offered a model for construction; and no more was required. It is impossible to point to a single feature which does not make contact with any one of these works. They are the genuine and direct sources of Hamlet. To postulate an intermediate source in any shape or form would be contrary to the facts of the case. If it is assumed that Kyd was the author of the Ur Hamlet, and that Shakespeare revised it later, something extraneous must needs have been added. But this is not so; and it is the absence of extranea which is the most convincing proof that the two works considered are the only sources of Hamlet and that only one hand was concerned in the writing of it. One can imagine Shakespeare, the contemporary of Marlowe, casting about for material for a play on the lines of the Spanish Tragedy and coming upon the Hamlet Saga. A bloody melodrama was the result, and the public surfeited of tragedies showed its disapprobation. The play was flung aside and lay in the coffers of the Chamberlain's men until about 1600 when it was re-discovered. Again Shakespeare took it up, and after much fashioning and sweating of the line it re-appeared a new being. This may seem a simple thing for so complicated a problem. But what/

what could be simpler than the laws of the Principia, and they read the riddle of the Universe.

CHAPTER V.

Shakespeare the Artist.

Those critics who believe Kyd had a say in the authorship of Hamlet frequently attempt to strengthen their case by asserting that the play contains flaws which can only be explained in the assumption that Shakespeare was hastily revising another man's work. Unfortunately, the detractions of Hamlet have received a very good audience lately; and the almost impossible position has now been reached when Hamlet is praised by the world as perhaps its greatest play and yet condemned by the coterie as an artistic failure. In this discussion the thesis will be maintained that the "inexorable Areopagus of Posterity" is right in its judgment and the coterie wrong.

Before considering the play in detail, it is worth remembering that with the possible exception of King Lear, Hamlet offered more difficulties in the way of construction than any of the plays. It was a task of supreme difficulty to write a play with a hero so inactive as Hamlet. Kyd and Marston tried it, and they were both flying distress signals before their plays were finished; and their task was far simpler than that of Shakespeare, for almost half the play, both Hieronimo and Antonio are in their normal state: the catastrophe which disturbs their mental equilibrium does not/

not occur until well-on in the play. But Hamlet is different. The revelation is made to him at the beginning, so that hesitation grips him immediately. The task before Shakespeare therefore was to make Hamlet's lethargy plausible and bearable through not three acts but five, and he accomplished this self-imposed task far more successfully than either Kyd or Marston. This is quite important, for, by some critics, Kyd has been ~~implied~~ UPHELD as a great master of construction. One can only assume that these critics have had access to materials unfortunately witheld from the rest of the world, for Kyd most decidedly does not show his abilities as a constructive playwright in the Spanish Tradgedy.

In this play there are two revenge plots: one the revenge of Bel-imperia for the murder of Don Andrea, and the other, the revenge of Hieronimo for the murder of Horatio. Although the two strands are woven together as the play proceeds, Kyd makes it quite clear that they are to be regarded as separate; for Bel-imperia avenges her lover by stabbing his murderer Balthazar, and Hieronimo avenges his son by stabbing his murderer Lorenzo. He has however failed to make clear the main plot. The murder of Horatio which sets the revenge of Hieronimo in motion does not take place until the end of the second act. In consequence, the attention of the reader, which, for nearly two acts, has been concentrated on the revenge/

revenge of Bel-imperia is disturbed. To crown all, she disappears from off the stage, being held captive by Lorenzo and Balthazar, and the third act is concerned with the revenge of Hieronimo. Towards the middle of the fourth (and last) act, the two revengers are united, and both accomplish their revenge. Critics have usually considered the revenge of Hieronimo to be the main plot, and, as the title pages of the early editions show - Hieronimo is mad again - it was considered as such in Kyd's own day. But the beginning of the play does not suggest this; it is the ghost of Don Andrea who acts as prologue, and what is seen of Hieronimo in Act I does not shadow forth a tragic character. This flaw in construction is worth stressing, because, those who believe Kyd to be the author of the Ur Hamlet are inclined to suggest that Kyd was equal if not superior to Shakespeare as a constructor of plays, and although what Professor Boas calls "the rich verbal music and penetrating psychology" of Hamlet is due to Shakespeare, any merit in its construction is due to Kyd. Admittedly Shakespeare is careless in the construction of some of his plays, but for general all-round excellence he is supreme among the Elizabethans; and it is worth remembering that even in the plays where he does depart from the standard of his best, it is impossible to find that greatest of dramatic sins -

a/

a main plot introduced through a secondary plot.

In Antonio's Revenge, Marston handles the secondary plot better than Kyd, and there is no doubt which is the main plot. But it is obvious that it is an early play: Marston has the pen in his right hand and the book of rules in his left. There is a woodeness in the construction and a stiff-jointedness in the movement which shows that he has not yet confidence in himself to venture far without artificial helps. The action is divided into practically water-tight compartments: each act is self-contained, and nothing is allowed to spill over from one act into the next. An examination of the play shows this. The first act is occupied with the discovery of the deaths of Feliche and Andrugio; the second with the grief of Antonio at his father's death; the third with the disclosure of the ghost; the fourth with Antonio's adoption of the fool's disguise; and the fifth with the completion of vengeance.

Hamlet contains neither the flaws of the Spanish Tragedy nor the insipidity of Antonio's Revenge. This is because of a remarkable device which Shakespeare introduced in Hamlet.

The peculiar character of Hamlet's nature, grounded as it is in inactivity, opened the play to the danger of becoming a monotonous harping on the same string. Action is the first essential for drama, for it is through action

that/

that the hero reveals himself. But Hamlet cannot do this; he cannot initiate any action. He lacks that creative imagination to shape out into infinity a promontory in which the future lies revealed. He lives solely from day to day; Mr. Micauber is Hamlet in a less tragic position. So far from Hamlet impinging himself upon and controlling the action, it is the action which bears upon him. Shakespeare therefore had to arrange circumstances that he is forced to do something. To a reader of the play, Hamlet's actions seem extempore and purely ad hoc; but confusion worse confounded would have been the result if Shakespeare had seen them in this light. Hamlet's actions all contain a common factor, and that is the King. It is he who guides and controls the action; and in writing the play, Shakespeare must have regarded Claudius not merely as the villian but as the axis round which the whole play revolves. Unlike Macbeth where the motive force is derived from the hero himself, Hamlet, by virtue of the hero being incapacitated for action, derives its momentum from another character; and that character is the King.

It is worth while examining the structure of Hamlet from this point of view, for those critics who have seen flaws in Hamlet have usually criticised Shakespeare for doing (or not doing) what was not in his mind at all. This method of approach is palpably unfair; it is like criticising a giraffe because it is not a man.

The/

The opening scene of the play is masterly. The attention is at once gripped by the sentinels on the watch. With a few deft strokes, the atmosphere, always an important consideration on the Elizabethan stage with its lack of scenery, is established. No sooner has this been done, than the meaningful line breaks in:-

"What! has this thing appeared again to-night".

No better word than "thing" could have been used. It reveals, but yet it conceals; under the guise of giving information it in reality tells nothing. It is a mystery word, and Shakespeare uses it to its fullest advantage. He knows just how long the effect will last, and after slowly dropping hint after hint to rouse curiosity to its highest pitch, he shows the "thing", and the ghost enters. The centre of interest is at once transferred from the soldiers to it, and, taking advantage of this Shakespeare reveals what has happened before. So far, be it noted, the ghost has only revealed itself; it has not spoken to anybody. At the same time an introduction has been made to Hamlet himself, although he has not yet appeared.

The second scene brings forward the King and his court. If first impressions be any criterion of character, the King certainly belies them later, for here he appears in a very favourable light. He regulates his kingdom firmly yet tolerantly/

tolerantly. Young Fortinbras is reported to be stirring up rebellion in the outskirts of the country, and he despatches Cornelius and Voltimand to Norway to get first-hand information. Then Laertes craves permission to journey to Paris, and leave is given generously. Claudius undoubtedly gives the impression that he is man of genuine administrative ability, and no doubt Shakespeare intended that he should. As well as being the arch-plotter, he is the capable ruler; but the two are not incompatible. It is in this scene that Hamlet is introduced, and the two protagonists in the drama are introduced face to face. But Claudius has settled the affairs of state so expeditiously and well that when he turns to Hamlet who is sitting moodily by, the impression is given that of all persons, Claudius is the one to resolve all Hamlet's difficulties. This he is unable to do. He gives good advice, certainly the best under the circumstances, but Hamlet is in no mood to accept it, and the discussion closes on a distinctly hostile note. When the court leaves, Hamlet's soliloquy gives the reason for his hostility towards his uncle; and with the entrance of Marcellus and Barnardo, the loose ends in the first scene are gathered up and the stage is now set up for the meeting of Hamlet with his Father's ghost.

But before this meeting takes place, Shakespeare, following his/

his usual practise, takes a separate scene to introduce the secondary plot. The story embracing the Polonius family resembles that of Gloster and his two sons in King Lear, and, as in the latter play, he introduces it apart from the main plot. But the scene is not pure exposition, for it takes up the incident mentioned in the first scene - the voyage of Laertes to Paris - and carries it a stage further. But most important, it reveals the fact that Hamlet and Ophelia are lovers. It is a quiet domestic scene, of a type very common in Shakespeare. Polonius has thrown aside the trappings of office and stands revealed as the family man. This is after all one of the most searching tests that can be applied to any man: the lion in the club is frequently the bear in the bedroom; and Polonius does not stand it very well. He is kind hearted and well-meaning, but he has none of that intuitive heart-searching sympathy which discovers while professing ignorance. He uses the bludgeon and the bill every time; and when the great crisis of her life comes upon Ophelia she knows that it is useless to go to her father for sympathy, and she languishes upon the bitter thoughts which gnaw at her heart. The scene is pitched upon a low key which serves to throw into relief the stirring scene that follows: the meeting of Hamlet with the ghost. After this scene, Hamlet is in full possesion of the circumstances/

circumstances of his father's murder, and the first act closes with his despairing cry

> The time is out of joint: O cursed spite
> That ever I was born to set it right.

Between the first and second acts an interval of about a month passes. In this period, Hamlet has done nothing except put on an "antic disposition". This has had no effect on the vengeance, but the King is alarmed and Rosencrantz and Guildenstern have been summoned to probe his secret. But the second act introduces another development. Hamlet has appeared to Ophelia in the guise of a distracted lover, and, dutifully, she informs her father. Polonius is all ears, and he at once bethinks himself of the King. Apparently, Claudius, as well as sending for Hamlet's fellow-students, has given a hint to Polonius to keep an eye on Hamlet. However idle Hamlet may be, he certainly is not letting anything slip. Ophelia's disclosures suggest to Polonius that Hamlet is mad because his daughter has spurned his love, and with this idea buzzing in his mind, he rushes off to the King.

The second scene is important, for Claudius is the point de repère of every move. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern arrive, and they are given their instructions. Voltimand and Cornelius follow after their departure with the reassuring news/

news that the rumour regarding Fortinbras has been grossly misinterpreted, and that he only desires a free passage through Denmark in order that he might do battle against the Poles. It is hardly necessary to point out how this links up with the corresponding scene in the preceding act (act I Sc.II). The successful outcome of what might otherwise have been a dangerous position, gives Polonius an opportunity of springing his theory of Hamlet's madness upon the King. It is obvious that Claudius does not think very much of it, but he agrees to test it, and the first decoy - Polonius - is set in Hamlet's track. He retires in confusion, but, as he goes out, he meets Rosencrantz and Guildenstern and he points Hamlet out to them. They are just saved from having their guns spiked by switching the conversation round to the arrival of the players at court. They enter and the player's passionate speech recalls Hamlet to his duty. He bursts out into vehement self-abuse, but in the midst of it, an idea strikes him and he makes up his mind to insert a few lines in the "Murder of Gonzago" which will recall to his uncle the murder of his father. This is the only independent action that Hamlet has done, but it is not a direct but a counter stroke, as the players had been sent by the King to take Hamlet's mind away from the present.

Claudius/

Claudius is doing all the scheming and attacking; and like all the arch-schemers from Nimrod to Napoleon, he knows how to delegate responsibility. To the court, he is the King, the Step-father of Hamlet, anxious and solicitous after his well-being. Yet, unknown to it, the people who are so often in the company of Hamlet, Rosencrantz, Guildenstern and Polonius, are self-confessing spies in his service.

The third act opens on a minor key. Rosencrantz and Guildenstern both report negative results to the King and the theory of Polonius is now to be put to the test. Unwittingly Hamlet disproves it, and the King, thoroughly alarmed, decides to despatch him to England. It is worth while noting that this voyage which is regarded by so many critics as a sign of scamped workmanship is mentioned here. Shakespeare is obviously preparing his audience for it and, after all, it is only another manifestation of that peculiar genius which the King had for scheming and planning. He never attacked without first of all covering his retreat, and with the breakdown of Polonius's plan and the failure of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, a new device had to be called in.

The incidents which follow are the natural result of the entrances and exits of Act II. There Polonius had been the first to enter, then Rosencrantz and Guildenstern and finally/

finally the Players. But in order to avoid monotony, Shakespeare has reversed the order, and the Players enter first. They present the "MOUSETRAP" play and Hamlet's plan works beyond his wildest expectations. Indeed it is too successful. Like Brutus after the assassination of Caesar, he does not know what to do with the instrument of power which has been put into his hands. His purposeless behaviour is in strong contrast to that of the King. CLAUDIUS is temporarily overcome, but not for long. He remembers his precious spies, and first of all Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are sent forward to question Hamlet. But his mind is working as it has never worked before. His mental agility completely baffles them, and they find themselves practically confessing their duplicity. Polonius is also sent in, and again he retires in confusion. But Hamlet has taken note of the messages of both, and he makes up his mind to go and see his mother.

Before this interview takes place, Claudius is shown with Rosencrantz and Guildenstern preparing the commission for Hamlet's voyage to England. Polonius then enters and tells him that he will eavesdrop on the conversation between Hamlet and his mother.

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for Hamlet's voyage to England. Polonius then enters and tells him that he will eavesdrop on the conversation between Hamlet and his mother. This done, the King, weary in spirit, kneels down to pray. Hamlet on his way to his mother comes upon him. He fingers his sword, but he refuses the chance lest the King should go to straightway to Heaven. What an excuse! If Hamlet had only waited and heard the words of the King:-

> My words fly up, my thoughts remain below:
> Words without thoughts never to heaven go.

With what tragic irony does Shakespeare bring out the pitiable nature of Hamlet's position. His opportunity has been allowed to pass; the King is again master of the situation. The scene which follows the interview of Hamlet with his mother and the murder of Polonius - plunge him deeper into the mire. The King has now a valid excuse for sending him to England, and another factor now looms up - Laertes. How will he turn? Will he follow Claudius or Hamlet? On this note of doubt the third act closes.

The fourth act opens with Gertrude telling the King of the murder of Polonius. This is a short scene, as are also the two that follow, the one showing Rosencrantz and Guildenstern as emissaries of the King summoning Hamlet into his presence, and the other showing Hamlet in the King's presence. He is told/

told that he is to be sent to England and his answer is significant as showing his attitude towards his mother's marriage:-

Claudius: Everything is bent
For England.

Hamlet: For England?

Claudius: Aye Hamlet.

Hamlet: Come for England. Farewell dead mother.

King: Thy living father Hamlet.

Hamlet: My mother: father and mother is man and wife: man and wife is one flesh, and so, my mother. Come, for England."

But before Hamlet departs, Shakespeare eleborates the theme which he has begun in Act II Sc.II, and Fortinbras and his forces march across the stage in their journey towards Poland. The behaviour of the army again recalls Hamlet to his neglected duty, and his soliloquy ends on a note distinctly omnious for the King.

Oh, from this time forth
My thoughts be bloody or be nothing worth.

This is the last that is seen of Hamlet in this act.

The fifth scene of the act portrays the madness of Ophelia. This marks the end of the side-issue involving the love of Ophelia for Hamlet, and the theory of Polonius regarding it. At the same time, with startling suddenness the/

the natural result of Polonius' death brings Laertes rushing in with a rabble at his heels.. For a time, the position appears decidedly black for the King, and it looks as though the doubtful factor in the drama is going to unite with Hamlet against him. But Claudius keeps quite cool, and this scene, perhaps more than any other, shows his nerve. He allows Laertes to have his say; but cunningly, although seemingly straightforwardly, he transfers the blame away from himself, and to the dismay of the audience, Claudius enrolls a new ally. Once again, his administrative ability has triumphed.

The following scene shows news of Hamlet's escape being given to Horatio. Then the scene shifts, and Claudius and Laertes are shown discussing the death of Polonius. A messenger enters and the escape of Hamlet is revealed to them. The situation is now critical and instant action is necessary. Without compunction, the King asks Laertes if he is willing to carry out his orders at once. Lartes agrees.

King: Will you be ruled by me?

Laertes My Lord, I will be ruled;
if you could devise it so
that I might be the organ.

Without more ado, the fencing match is arranged.

It is worth noting that while Hamlet is off the stage it/

it is the personages of the secondary plot who occupy the stage. This is also in accord with the practice in other plays. One has only to recollect the prominence given in King Lear to Gloster, and his sons, or most interesting of all, the place occupied by Cleopatra in Antony and Cleopatra to see that this is a Shakespearean touch. The absence of Hamlet from the play cannot be gainsaid; but this does not prove scamped workmanship. The reader is prepared long before for his departure, and even when he is away, he is kept fully in touch with his movements. At the same time, the interest in the play is maintained at a high pitch by the prominence given to the most important characters after Hamlet:- the Polonius family. So far from looking like carelessness, it looks uncommonly like care.

Act V opens with a typically Shakespearean scene, the Gravedigger scene. Casually Hamlet comes upon their labours, and what seemed at first quite an impersonal business, gradually becomes, with the finding of Yorick's skull, more and more personal, until the funeral procession enters when the awful truth dawns upon him and he bursts out,

What! the fair Ophelia!

Only after a struggle is the normal atmosphere again restored, but not before Hamlet and Laertes have come to grips. Once again, Hamlet has played into his enemy's hands.

The/

The second scene opens quietly. A weariness seems to have overtaken Hamlet, and his conversation with Horatio is almost listless. He recovers himself to ridicule Osric who brings from the King the invitation to the fencing match; but there is something almost despairing in his cry: "We defy augury; there's a special providence in the fall of a sparrow." The fencing match takes place in a whirling atnosphere of blood and destruction. At the beginning, Claudius controls every move, but his margin of safety is too small. He forgets that men and women are not puppets, mechanical and soulless: he forgets the chastening effect of death. Both Gertrude and Laertes, the moment before they die, reveal the cause of all the destruction. Claudius left them out of his calculations, but Shakespeare remembered them, and in a whirlwind of passion Hamlet turns upon the King and kills him. His death follows, and the court are left too paralysed to say or do anything. But the play does not end here. Not even Horatio could rebuild the state, and the shadowy figure who has flitted about the background, comes forward - Fortinbras. At a glance, he sees what is amiss, and with a few curt commands he remedies the present evils. No doubt he will save the state. That at least is the impression one gets from the play, and Shakespeare obviously intended that it should arise.

The/

The tragedy runs so smoothly, and the construction is so perfect that it is impossible to imagine the presence of another hand. And the construction is by no means simple. The power that drives the play comes from the King. His sphere of influence is a large one, and the effect of his scheming is seen on figures as shadowy and indistinct as Fortinbras and the King of England, on intermediate groups like Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, Osric and the Players, and on the principal characters themselves. He is the centre of the system and all the other characters revolve round him like the planets round the sun, in concentric circles of varying radii and different velocities. Each circle is complete in itself, but all are necessary for the complete drama. Such a complicated scheme could not have been carried out successfully by the hasty revision of another man's work.

There are several other features of Hamlet which are worth pointing out as they show perhaps even better than a detailed examination the presence of a unifying spirit. The Elizabethan revenge plays are for the most part brutal and even revolting to modern taste, but, although Hamlet deals with a similar theme, such a thought never crosses the reader's mind. This is caused by Shakespeare's skill in the localisation of the play. The motive - revenge as a religious duty/

duty - belongs only to a semi-civilised society. Shakespeare has suggested the barbarity of Elsimere quite enough for the purpose: the single combat of Hamlet's father with the elder Fortinbras, the drunken orgies of the King, and the apparent willingness of the English King to murder Hamlet, all suggest a state from which the mists of barbarism have not yet been dispersed. But a new generation is springing up, the chief representatives of which are Hamlet, Laertes and Fortinbras who have seen:

> Cities of men
> And manners, climates, councils, governments;

and to these men, the society of Elsimere seems outlandish and in need of reform. A period of change is in progress, a time when the old standards are being questioned, and a transvaluation of values is taking place. By thus presenting his society in a state of flux, Shakespeare very subtly reflects the hesitation and indecision of Hamlet. When it is remembered how in other plays he does the same: how the harshness of ~~Londoners~~ CORIOLANUS is reflected in the unbending character of the hero; how the colour of Antony and Cleopatra finds its complement in the voluptuous pleasure-seeking natures of the two principal characters; and how in Macbeth, the blackness which enshrouds the play is a fitting atmosphere for the black thoughts which rankle in the minds of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth: this is surely testimony to the presence of/

of Shakespeare's potent spirit. In Hamlet, the indecision is suggested so subtly, the balance is poised so delicately, that the presence of another mind would have destroyed the illusion completely.

Another interesting feature of the play is the hallowed tone that runs through it. In Hamlet, probably more than in any other of the tragedies, one is made aware of that something after death. By the introduction of a ghost so majestical as the majesty of buried Denmurt, and by means of hints scattered throughout, Shakespeare has linked the play, so to speak, to some higher and vaster power. The atmosphere of mystery is felt by all the characters and by none more than Hamlet. He tells Horatio:

> There's some divinity doth shape our ends
> Rough-hew them how we will;

and before the fencing match, he has a presentiment of evil, which, however, despite the entreaties of Horatio, he shakes off. But the beginning and the end of the play are even more significant. Almost the first words spoken by the ghost to Hamlet are:-

> I am thy father's spirit
> Doomed for a certain term to walk the night
> And for the day, confined to fast in fires
> Till the foul crimes done in my days of nature
> Are burnt and purged away;

and the words spoken by Horatio over the dying Hamlet are:

> Now cracks a noble heart. Goodnight, sweet prince,
> And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest.

Hamlet/

Hamlet will go to rejoin his father, but unlike him, he has worked his way through a Purgatory on earth, and the meeting will take place in Heaven. Shakespeare seems to suggest that the duty which has fallen upon Hamlet has been planned in Hell, executed upon Earth and consummated in Heaven. This is a unity which far surpasses that of the classics. It is a unity not of art but of nature. No two minds however richly endowed could have worked together to form such a splendid conception. It is the product of a single mind working at the height of its powers.

Before considering the character of Hamlet, a word will be said about the grouping in the play. From this point of view, Hamlet is the most Shakespearean of all Shakespeare's plays; all the familiar devices of other plays are in it; Friar Lawrence, Kent, Cassio and Antonio are of the same family as Horatio. Coventry, Patmore calls each of them the "Punctum indifferens". "Each of these characters is a peaceful focus radiating the calm of moral solution throughout all the difficulties and disasters of surrounding fate; a vital centre, which, like that of a great wheel, has little motion in itself, but which at once transmits and controls the fierce revolution of the circumference." Shakespeare could advance further than anybody into the world of/

of imagination and fancy, but he always keeps his feet firmly planted on the solid ground of reality. His world is not wholly populated by people who deviate above and below the normal; he always finds a place for the average man: those

> Who moving others are themselves as stone
> Unmoved, cold and to temptation slow.

Stirring events are taking place in the world around them, and they play no unimportant part in them; but although the blow falls and desolation is all around them, yet they stand unaffected by what has taken place. Lear, Romeo and Juliet and Hamlet are all drawn into the maelstrom, but Kent, Friar Lawrence and Horatio are all flung clear. That they are spared gives a certain hope that the disturbance has been only temporary and that the world is not wholly destroyed. The forces which have broken out will become static again, and peace will return to a broken world. This impression remains at the close of all Shakespeare's tragedies, and is due in no small measure to the punctum indifferens.

Another favourite device in Shakespeare is contrast. In Hamlet it is of a particularly complex nature, as every character is more or less a foil to another. But the contrast germane to the purpose here is that established between Hamlet and Laertes. Both are revengers, but the one is purposeful and/

and resolute and the other hesitating and uncertain. In the Spanish Tragedy and Antonio's Revenge, a similar contrast has been drawn; but the resemblance between these plays and Hamlet ends there. By a very slight change Shakespeare has doubled the influence of the purposeful avenger on the play. In Hamlet, Laertes unlike Bel-imperia and Pandulfo is the enemy and not the friend of the hesitating avenger. This may appear a trifling change, but there is no doubt that Shakespeare made it because he saw the difficulty which Kyd and Marston had in bringing their plays to a conclusion. In the Spanish Tragedy, Hieronimo commits suicide, but such an ending is clearly unsatisfactory because he has fulfilled his duty, and although his home is ruined, yet the reader does not feel, as in the case of Othello, that suicide is the only course left open to him. In Antonio's Revenge, Antonio enters a religious order after the completion of the revenge. This may be considered an improvement on the Spanish Tragedy but such an ending would not suit Shakespeare. Here it is necessary to tread warily, but whether or not Shakespeare is considered as having a definite theory of tragedy, all the plays which critics agree to call tragedies end with the death of the hero. Hence the capital difficulty which Shakespeare had to overcome lay in the bringing about of Hamlet's death; and he solved it by making Hamlet the common enemy of both Claudius/

Claudius and Laertes. It is worth while noticing, too, how this change has so to speak, shifted the centre of gravity of the revenge play. In the Spanish Tragedy and Antonio's Revenge, the attentions of the reader during the last act are divided between the hero and his friend on the one hand, and the villain on the other; and he wonders if the villain will escape. In Hamlet, on the other hand, Claudius and Laertes are united against Hamlet; and he wonders if the hero will escape.

The way is not to a certain extent prepared for a consideration of the character of Hamlet. Professor Bradley has pointed out that it is only since the Romantic Revival that the peculiar fascination of Hamlet has been felt. This is a pity, because although the services of Romantic criticism to literature are very great, it often requires a cold douche of New-classic straightforwardness to bring it back into its proper senses. A Romantic critic generally tends to appreciate not the character before him, but his own conception of what the character should be. This tendency is seen in even the best criticisms of Hamlet, e.g. of Coleridge and Goethe. Coleridge's conception of Hamlet is that of a man in whom "the equilibrium between the real and the imaginary world is disturbed". This view of Hamlet is still popular, but does it not describe Coleridge himself rather/

rather than Hamlet? Goethe's criticism in which he likened Hamlet to an "oak tree planted in a costly vase" has also found acceptance. Here again it is noteworthy that Goethe seems to describe his own heroes Wilhelm Meister, Eduard and Werther rather than Hamlet. In order therefore to reduce the personal element as much as possible, the attempt will be made here to discover Shakespeare's purpose in the characterisation of Hamlet by comparing the play with contemporary works on a similar theme.

The exposition of Hamlet is masterly and in a few hundred lines all the facts are presented. In the first long speech which he makes, Hamlet discloses his state of mind:-

'Tis not alone by inky cloak good mother,
Nor customary suits of solemn black,
Nor windy suspiration of forced breath,
No, nor the fruitful river of the eye,
Nor the dejected "haviour' of the visage,
Together with all forms, moods, shows of grief,
That can denote me truly: these indeed seem;
For they are actions that a man might play;
But I have that within which passeth show.

The speech of Antonio, in Marston's Antonio's Revenge is interesting as it shows the same ~~application~~ AFFLICTION.

I have a thing sits here: it is not grief,
'Tis not despair, nor the utmost plague
That the most wretched are infested with,
But the most griefful, most despairing, wretched,
Accursed, miserable:- Oh for Heaven's sake
Forsake me now.

The/

The precise nature of Hamlet's affliction causes speculation among the members of the court, but Claudius again penetrates the heart of the matter and sums it up in a few words:-

> there's something in his soul
> O'er which his melancholy sits on brood.

This is the only piece of internal evidence which assists in determining the nature of Hamlet's melancholy, but there are several interesting pieces of external evidence which corroborate the testimony of Claudius. In order to appreciate this fully it is necessary to digress into the region of stage history.

Mr. W.T.Lawrence has adduced strong evidence that Hamlet was acted at the Globe in the late summer of 1600.(1) The success of the play seems to have whetted the cupidity of Henslowe, for at this time there are many non-extant plays noted in his Diary, which, judging from their titles, are certainly revenge plays. But to pass from conjecture to fact, there is one note in the Diary which reveals an interesting position.

> "Lent unto Mr. Alleyn the 25th of September 1601 to lend unto Bengemen Johnson upon his writtinge of his adicions in geronymo the some of XXXXs. (2)

This is the first mention of the revival of the Spanish Tragedy, and on the 22nd June 1602, Jonson was paid for

further/

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(1) Times Litt.Supp. April 8, 1926.
2 Henslowe's Diary, Edited W.W. Greg, vol.I p.149.

further additions.[1] A month later Henslowe notes:-

> "Lent unto Thomas Downton to (lend) give unto Harye Chettle in earneste of a tragedye called a Danish the some of XXs". [2]

This play - if indeed it ever existed - has been lost, but on the 29th of December 1602, Chettle gave Henslowe a tragedy Hoffman, which may be the Danish Tragedy.[3] In any case it is perfectly clear that the appearance of Hamlet at the Globe caused Henslowe to revive the companion play the Spanish Tragedy in the hope that Jonson's "additions" would prove as successful as Shakespeare's remodelling of the Ur Hamlet.[4] Apparently, however, the Spanish Tragedy was not very well received, and Henslowe set Chettle to supply the counterblast to Hamlet. Chettle was only too pleased to turn an honest penny and Hoffman was the result. In the writing of it, Chettle kept Hamlet before him, and he attempted to woo the public away from the Globe by offering them the salient features of Hamlet, plus even more startling stage devices. For this reason, Hoffman is of outstanding importance to the student of Hamlet.

Chettle lays the scene of his play in the North of Europe. Bearing in mind the success which Shakespeare had achieved in the insanity of Ophelia, he introduces a mad woman in Lucibella. Her madness is full of Shakespearean reminiscences

as/

(1) Ibid p.168. (2) Henslowe's Diary p.169.
(3) Ibid p.173.
(4) Henslowe at least considered Jonson to be responsible for "the salt of the old play."

as is also the great poisoning scene in Hoffman. But Chettle's conception of the revenger is different from that of Shakespeare. Hoffman (the revenger) is introduced so to speak, at the post: through the whole play he is in a state of mind similar to that of Hamlet in the last act when he shakes off his lethargy and in a frenzy of passion strikes down his enemies. Hoffman's anger is aroused by the sight of his father's body, and, as the play proceeds, he advances from murder to murder without the slightest trace of indecision. Yet in the very first words which he utters (and indeed the first words of the play) Chettle suggests that he has passed through a crisis similar to that of Hamlet, for he enters with the cry

"Hence clouds of Melancholy".

Chettle apparently looked with disfavour on the hesitating avenger, and in one scene he makes fun of him. The answer of Jérome, the imbecile son of Ferdinand, to Mathias is undoubtedly an allusion to Hamlet.

Mathias:- We know your worthiness is experienced
In all true wisdom

Jerome:- true I am no fool
I have been at Wittenberg where wit grows.

When all the circumstances regarding the composition of Hoffman and the many resemblances between it and Hamlet are considered it is highly probable that the opening line

Hence/

"Hence clouds of Melancholy"

is a shriek of defiance at the melancholy hero which Henslowe's rival company, the Lord Chamberlain's men were presenting at the Globe, and it is reasonable to suppose that it would be understood as such by an Elizabethan audience. Hoffman therefore confirms the diagnosis of Claudius that Hamlet is suffering from melancholy.

A full account of the melancholy men can be obtained from the "Characters" of Sir Thomas Overbury published first in 1614. The following is his account:-

> "Is a stranger from the drive: one that nature made sociable, because she made him man, and a crazed disposition hath altered. Impleasing to all, as all to him; straggling thoughts are his content, they make him dream waking; there's his pleasure. His imagination is never idle; it keeps his mind in a continual motion as the poise of the clock: he winds up his thoughts often, and as often unwinds them; Penelope's web thrives faster. He'll seldom be found without the shade of some grove, in whose bottom a river dwells. He carries a cloud in his face, never fair weather: his outside is framed to his inside, in that he keeps a decorum, both unseemly. Speak to him; he hears with his eyes, ears follow his mind and that's not at leisure. He thinks business, but never does any; he is all contemplation, no action. He hewes and fashions his thoughts, as if he meant them to some purpose; but they prove unprofitable, as a piece of wrought timber to no use. His spirits and the sun are enemies; the sun bright and warm, his humour black and cold: variety of foolish apparitions people his head, they suffer him not to breathe, according to the necessities of nature; which makes him sup up a draught of as much air at once, as would serve it thrice. He denies nature her due in sleep, and over pays her/

her with watchfulness: nothing pleaseth him long, but that which pleaseth his own fantasies: they are the consuming evils, and evil consumptions that consume him alive. Lastly he is a man only in show, but comes short of the better part; a whole reasonable soul, which is man's chief pre-eminence, and sole mark from creatures sensible."

This diagnosis is of great help in reconciling the different elements in Hamlet's character. It gives the Elizabethan conception of melancholy, and reveals the ideas which consciously or unconsciously influenced Shakespeare in the writing of Hamlet.

In the first place, it accounts for Hamlet's inaction. As Overbury expresses it, "he (the melancholy man) is all contemplation, no action."

Secondly, it accounts for his imaginative temperament (his imagination is never idle).

Thirdly it explains his pleasure in devising traps for his enemies. (Nothing pleaseth him long, but that which pleaseth his own fantasies).

Fourthly, it explains the dreamlike existence which Hamlet lives; as is especially noticed in the scene where the ghost appears to whet his "almost blunted purpose". (Struggling thoughts are his content: they make him dream waking).

Lastly it explains his loneliness. (As a stranger from the drove.....unpleasing to all as all to him). This characteristic is in accord with the assumed madness of Hamlet: the/

the "antic disposition" makes him even more isolated.

Thus far the exegetic method of interpreting the play according to Elizabethan standards only, has been pursued. This method, however, explains Shakespeare's purpose only in so far as it explains his attempt to adapt his art to these standards:- it can afford no further help. Nevertheless, as a basis for a subjective interpretation it is not without value; but as Shakespeare would not have been for all time had he only been for an age, it still has to be shown how, although accepting the crude Elizabethan psychology he transformed it into something permanent and eternal.

Unlike the Spanish Tragedy and Antonio's Revenge where the hero is shown and characterised in a normal state, Hamlet opens with the Prince suffering from the effects of his father's death. The character of the normal Hamlet has therefore to be reconstructed from hints dropped throughout the play. Fortunately this is not a very difficult matter as there is no lack of information about him. Possibly, the most striking feature of his character consists in the diversity of his accomplishments. He is a courtier, scholar and soldier, fond of pursuits as various as fencing and play-acting. He is respected of those around him, which, when the semi-barbarian nature of the court is considered, suggests both a pleasing disposition and a strength of character which rendered insults dangerous/

dangerous. Those critics who hold the Wilhelm Meister view, shut their eyes to this side of his character and concentrate their attentions on the supposed ill-effects resulting from his attendance at the University of Wittenberg. According to them, it was at Wittenberg that Hamlet formed the habit of pholosophic speculation which rendered him incapable of action. This theory is interesting, but unfortunately it finds no support in the text. Further, in the one place where an interest in philosophy could have been legitimately shown, Shakespeare has refused the opportunity. The scene referred to is that in which Polonius meets Hamlet reading a book. In Antonio's Revenge, Marston had made his hero appear in a similar fashion, reading from a book which is obviously the De Providentia of Seneca. Hamlet does not tell Polonius what he is reading, but he refers to the author as a satirical rogue, and from the account given, it is possible that it is the tenth satire of Juvenal. In any case, it is unlikely that Hamlet would refer to a philosopher, as a "satirical rogue"; and if Shakespeare had intended that Hamlet should be regarded as a philosopher, he would have dropped a hint by naming a book of the same style as the De Providentia.

But leaving the Hamlet of the critics aside and turning to the Hamlet of Shakespeare, it is worth while noting how subtly Shakespeare has reflected Hamlet's nature in the kind

of/

of book he reads. Hamlet with his bitter shafts of irony could expose the sham and pretence of the court of Denmark quite as effectively as Juvenal could the Rome of Domitian. The reading of a book before a soliloquy was a common convention, but in Shakespeare's hands, it lost its conventionality and became a means of portraying character.

Hamlet in fact is an all-rounder. He is a warrior yet a man of letters, a beau among women and a man among men. He can board a ship in battle as well as pen verses for a play. He is the courteous gallant in the boudoir, as well as the boon companion in the men's common-room. But withal he has never lost his sensibility. Shakespeare touches on this again and again. It is only necessary to recall his wonderment at the godlike quality of man; how he praises the memory of his father,

> He was a man; take him for all in all
> I shall not look upon his like again;

and how he describes even Laertes as a very noble youth. Nor is he less sensible towards the evil in the world; for he shudders with horror when he thinks of his uncle's debaucheries and his mother's sensuality. This sensibility is also present in Antonio the hero of Marston's Antonio's Revenge. But unlike Hamlet, he known it himself, and he upbraids heaven for it:-

> Had Heaven been kind
> Creating me an honest, senseless dolt
> A good poor fool, I should want sense to feel
> The stings of anguish shoot through every vein.
> I should not know what 'twere to lose a father.

It heightens the tragedy that Hamlet, unlike Antonio, after all his self-questioning should not know himself completely. His chief characteristic [redacted] lies hidden to him, and without star or compass, he gropes his way blindly through the darkening clouds which encompass him.

Then upon this Sir Philip Sidney of the court of Denmark a terrible tragedy falls. His father dies, and as if that were not enough in itself, his mother marries his father's brother under suspicious circumstances. The double shock stuns Hamlet, and brings melancholy upon him. The Anatomy of Melancholy, which gives the contemporary view of this malady, attributes it as being due, among other causes, to shock. Modern medical science while endorsing this explanation, introduces an interesting modification. According to present day opinion, any shock on any mind, whatever it may produce, will not necessarily cause melancholia; it depends largely on the type of mind. Professor McDougall adopting Jung's classification of minds into the two divisions intravert and extravert points out that a line may be drawn across Europe dividing them off, the introvert to the North and the extravert to the South. The intravert is the introspective mind, paying little attention to the external world, and drawing satisfaction from within itself. The extravert on the other hand hardly knows what self-examination is and takes all pleasures purely from the external world round about. A great shock falling on/

on these types produces vastly different results. The intravert tends to melancholia, the extravert to hysteria; hence the reason why melancholia although common among the natives of the North is almost unknown in the South. In view of this, one can only marvel at Shakespeare's wonderful insight into Nature. There was no precedent among the other revenge plays for his laying the scene of Hamlet in the North. Kyd had laid his scene in Spain and Marston in Italy - two countries where hysteria is commoner than melancholia; but Shakespeare, the seer, from whom nothing seems to have been hidden knew better. Those seeming discoveries are common in Shakespeare. Like Dr. Faustus, the book of knowledge lay before him, and he had mastered it. There are lines in the plays which suggest that he knew of the circulation of the blood before Harvey demonstrated it, as well as many hints which almost make one believe that it was Shakespeare and not Newton who discovered the attraction exercised by the centre of the earth. This intuitive knowledge of racial differences is simply another manifestation of that Godlike mind.

It is the combination of all these various circumstances that make Hamlet such a convincing character. Every detail of his nature and environment hangs together. His melancholy follows naturally as a result both of his mind and the shock upon it; cause and effect dovetail naturally the one into the other. None of the other revenge heroes are convincing because their/

their melancholy is, as it were, superadded; it is purely ad hoc. But Hamlet's character is a unity; and it is surely impossible that a character so unified and so true to life should result from two minds differently endowed and working together over a lapse of years.

The results of this investigation into the Hamlet problems can now be fittingly summed up. The attempt has been made to show that there is no documentary evidence for the view that Kyd was the author of the Ur Hamlet. In the demonstration of this, the history of the early theatre war, the stage history of Hamlet and the dramatic companies of the dramatists concerned were examined, and it was shown that Kyd could not have been the author. At the same time, the lines of inquiry, thus opened up, established that the one dramatist who had the best claims to authorship was Shakespeare himself. In order to make this evidence doubly certain, a comparison was instituted between Hamlet and the original sources, which showed that everything that was essential for Hamlet was in the sources and that there was nothing for which it was necessary to postulate another source. This removed at once that bugbear, the Ur Hamlet as having a possible influence on Shakespeare. Lastly Hamlet was examined from the standpoint of literature, and its unity of structure shown.

No/

No matter how it was broken up and examined, it showed, like a crystal, the same cleavage and fracture throughout.

So much for what has been said; but much has been left unsaid. Only the fringe of ths Hamlet problem has been touched upon here: difficulties like the relation of the different quartos to one another and to the Folio, or the relation of Der Bestrafte Brudermord to the play have not been dealt with. But they have been omitted deliberately. Questions connected with these problens are necessarily speculative, and in matters of speculation one man's opinions are as valuable (or as worthless) as another's. Hence it is that in seeking to throw new light on Hamlet by considering either the quartos or the German play, one must necessarily start from a hypothesis, either new or second hand. Usually, such investigations have assumed Kyd to be the author of the Ur Hamlet; but notwithstanding this agreement as to premises, the only point in which the conclusions agree is that they are all different from one another. Surely this suggests that there is something wrong with the premises. After all, it argues greatly for the truth of any theory when different workers working under different conditions, and from different premises reach the same conclusions; but when the premises are the same and the conclusions different it prompts the thought that there is something radically wrong and that the truth of the/

the premises should be examined. That is the method of science, and that is what has been done here. No opinion, howsoever eminent, has been allowed to pass until it has been examined in the light of the extant documents.

By means of such an examination and re-grouping of the relevant materials, the conclusion that Shakespeare and Shakespeare alone was responsible for Hamlet was reached. Perhaps if this theory were applied to the investigations mentioned above results more trustworthy and more uniform might be obtained; perhaps it is the common factor which will resolve all the Hamlet problems. This is almost too much to hope for, but it is the hope of the present writer.

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APPENDIX.

The following list gives the parallels between the original story of Belleforest, the English translation and Hamlet. The page references in all cases are to Sir Israel Gollancz's edition of the Hamlet sources published by the Oxford University Press, 1926, and the act and scene references to the Globe Edition of Shakespeare.

Belleforest. (p.182) Ce Roy magnanime ayant deffiée au combat corps à corps, Horwendille, y fut receu avec pactes, que celuy qui servit vaincu perdroit toutes les richesses qui servient en leurs vaisseaux, et le vainqueur fervit enterrer hinnestement celuy qui servit occis au combat.

Hystorie (p.183). This valiant and hardy King, having challenged Horvendile to fight with him body to body, the combate was by him accepted with conditions that hee which should be vanquished should lose all the riches he had in his ship, and that the vanquisher should cause the body of the vanquished (that should bee slaine in the combate) to be honourably buried.

Hamlet. (i.i. 84.)

> Dared to combat .....
> .....which had returned
> To the inheritance of Fortinbras,
> Had he been vanquisher.

Belleforest/

Belleforest (p.286. A lire ceste histoire il semblervit VEOIR en Amleth un Hercule envoyé.

Hystorie (p.287). In reading of this history it seemeth, Hamlet should resemble another Hercules.

Hamlet (1. 11. 152)

My father's brother but no more like my father
Than I to Hercules.

Belleforest. (p.240.) Institué en ces folies suyvans la coustume de son pays.

Hystorie. (p.241.) Brought up in these abuses, according to the manner of the country.

Hamlet. (1.4.14.)

But to my mind, though I am native here
And to the manner born, it is a custom
More honoured in the breach than in the observance.

Belleforest. (pp.252-4) Que tous estans chargez de vin, offusquez de viands, fallut que se couchassent au lieu mesme on ils avoient pris le repas, tant les avoit abestis et privez de sens, et de force de trop boire, vice assez familier, et à l'Alemant, et à toutes ces nations et peuples Septentrion - aux - - - - - ces corps assoupis de vin, gisans par terre comme pourceaux.

Hystorie/

Hystorie. (pp.253-5) All of them being ful laden with wine and gorged with meate, were constrained to lay themselves downe in the same place where they had supt, so much their senses were dulled, and overcome with the fire of over great drinking (a vice common and familiar among the Almains, and other nations inhabiting the north parts of the world) - - drunken bodies, filled with wine, lying like hogs upon the ground.

Hamlet. (1. iv. 17.)

> This heavy headed revel east and west
> Makes us traduced and tax'd of other nations:
> They clepe us drunkards, and with swinish phrase,
> Soil our addition;

Belleforest (p.308). Et qui en tout s'est rendu admirable, si une seule tache n'eust obscurcy une bonne partie de ses louanges.

Hystorie.(p.304.) In all his honourable actions made himselfe worthy of perpetuall memorie, if one onely spotte had not blemished and darkened a good part of his prayses.

Hamlet.(1.1.23.)

> Carrying, I say, the stamp of one defect,
> Their virtues else - be they as pure as grace,
> Shall in the general censure take corruption
> From that particular fault.

Belleforest (pp.256-8) Me quitte de celle obligation

qui/

qui n'astraignoit à poursuivre ceste vengeance sur mon sang mesme.

Hystorie. (pp.257-9). Quit me of the obligation that bound me to pursue his vengeance upon mine oune blood.

Hamlet: (1.5.7.)

> Speak; I am bound to hear.
> So art thou to revenge, when thou shalt hear.

Belleforest (p.254). Purgeast ses fautes par le feu.

Hystorie. (p.255.) But were forced to purge their sins by fire.

Hamlet. (1. 5. 11.)

> Confined to fast in fires
> Till the foul crimes done in my days of nature
> Are burnt and purged away.

Belleforest (p.208). Ce qui luy donna un grand elancement de conscience, estimast que les Dieux luy envoyassent ceste punition.

Hystorie. (p. 209). Which was no small prickle to her conscience, esteeming that the Gods sent her that punishment.

Hamlet. (1. v. 86.)

> Leave her to heaven,
> And to those thorns that in her bosom lodge
> Tp prick and sting her.

Belleforest/

Beleforest (p.210) Le plus poltron et cruel vilain de la terre.

Hystorie. (p. 211.) The most wickedest and cruellest villains living upon earth.

Hamlet. (1. 5. 123.)

> There's ne'er a villain dwelling in all Denmark
> But he's an arrant knave.

Belleforest. (p.198) Mais les hommes accors, et qui avoyent le nez long, commencent à soupçonner a qui estoit.

Hystorie. (p.199) But men of quicke spirits, and such as hadde a deeper reache began to suspect somewhat.

Hamlet. (11. 1. 64).

> And thus do we of wisdom and of reach.

Belleforest. (p.198) Et qu'il celvit un grand lustre de bon esprit, souls l'obscurité de ceste fardee subtilité.

Hysterie. (p.199) And by his devised simplicitye, he concealed a sharp and pregnant spirit.

Hamlet. (11. 11. 211.)

> How pregnant sometimes his replies are!

Belleforest (p.196) Qui ne doibt avoir le fiel amer, ni les desirs confits en vengeance.

Hystorie/

Hystorie. (p.199). Who by no meanes ought to have a bitter gall or desires infected with revenge.

Hamlet. (ii. ii. 605).

And lack gall
To make oppression bitter.

Belleforest. (p.236) Et ainsi Amleth, vivant son pere, avoit esté endoctriné en celle science, avec laquelle le malin esprit abuse les hommes et advertissoit ce Prince (comme il peut) des choses jà passees. Je n'ay affaire icy de discourir des parties de divination en l'homme, et si ce Prince, pour la vehemence de la melancholie, avoit receu ces impressions.

Hysterie. (p.237.) And so Hamlet, while his father lived, had been instructed in that devilish art, whereby the wicked spirite abuseth mankind and advertiseth him (as he can) of things past. It toucheth not the matter herein to discover the parts of divination in man, and whether this prince by reason of his own great melancholy had received those impressions.

Hamlet. (ii. ii. 27.)

The spirit that I have seen
May be the devil, and the devil hath power
To assume a pleasing shape; yea and perhaps
Out of my weakness and my melancholy
Abuses me to damn me.

Hysterie. (p.203). But for all that he left not off, still seeking by al meanes to finde out Hamblet's subtility. This is not in the French; it is an interpolation.

Hamlet. (iii. i. 11.)

> And can you by no drift of circumstances,
> Get from him why he puts on this confusion.

Belleforest (p.226.) Et lequoy sert vivre où la honte et l'infamie, sont les boureaux qui tourmentent nostre conscience, et la poltrinnerie est celle qui retarde le coeur des gaillard entreprises et distourne l'esprit les hinnestes desirs de gloire et louange.

Hystorie.(p.227). For why should men desire to live when shame and infamie are the executioners that torment their consciences, and villany is the cause that withholdeth the heart from valiant interprises, and diverteth the minde from honest desire of glorie and commendation.

Hamlet. (iii. i. 76)

> Who would fardels bear?
> To grunt and swear under a weary life - - - -
> Thus conscience doth make cowards of us all
> And enterprises of great pitch and moment
> With this regard, their currents turn awry,
> And lose the name of action.

Belleforest (p.250). Mais que plustost les Dieux luy randroyent/

randroyent son bon sens.

Hystorie. (p.251) But rather hoped God would restore him to his sences againe.

Hamlet. (iii. i. 147).

O heavenly powers, restore him!

Belleforest (p.232). Seigneurs de peu de consequence.

Hystorie. (p.233). Lords of small revenue.

Hamlet. (iii. ii. 63.)

But no revenue hast but thy good spirits.

Belleforest (pp.188-190) Ceste Princesse, qui au commencement estoit honnoree de chacun, pour ses rares vertus, et coutoises, et cherie de son espous.

Hystorie. (pp.189-191) The Princess, who at the first, for her rare vertues and courtesses was honoured of all men and beloved of her husband.

Hamlet. (iii.ii.185)

And thou shalt live in this fair world behind
Honoured, beloved.

Belleforest. (p. 302). Or le plus grand regret qu'eust ce Roy affolé le sa femme estoit la separation de celle, qu'il idolatroit, et s'asseurant de son desastre, eust voulu/

voulu ou que elle luy eust tenu campaignie à la mort, ou luy trouver mary qui l'aimast lui trespassé, à lesgal de l'extreme amour qu'il luy portoit.

Hystorie. (p.303) Now the greatest grief that this King (besotted on his wife) had, was the separation of her whom he adored, and, assuring himselfe of his overthrowe, was desirous either that she might beare him company at his death, or else to find her a husband that should love her (he beeing dead) as well as ever he did.

Hamlet (iii.ii. 186)

And haply one as kind,
For husband shalt thou -

Belleforest (p.304). Que la femme estoit malheureuse laquelle craignoit le suivre et accompaigner son mary à la mort.

Hystorie. (p.305) That woman is accursed that feareth to follow and accompany her husband to the death.

Hamlet (iii. ii. 189)

In second husband let me be accursed
~~None~~wed the second but who killed the first.

Belleforest.(p.222) Tant fortune nous est contraire, et poursuit noz aises.

Hystorie. (p.223.) Fortune so much pursueth and contrarieth our/

our ease and welfare.

Hamlet. (iii.ii. 221.)

Our wills and fates do so contrary run
That our devices still are overthrown
Our thoughts are ours, their ends none of ours.

Belleforest. (p.270) C'est moy qui a mis à effect tout seul l'oeuvre.

Hysterie. (p.27.) It is I alone, that have done this piece of worke.

Hamlet. (iii.ii.252).

'Tis a knavish piece of work.

Belleforest (p.206). Se cachant souz quelque loudier

Hystorie. (p.207). And there hid himself behind the arras.

Hamlet. (iii.iii.28)

Behind the arras I'll convey myself.

Belleforest. (p.248.) Mais Amleth ----- feignit d'en estre fort marry

Hystorie.(p.249.) But Hamlet - - - made as though he had been much offended.

Hamlet. (iii. 4. 9.)

Hamlet, thou hast thy father much offended.
Mother/

Mother, thou hast my father much offended.

Belleforest (p.206). Ou sentant, qu'il y avait dessous quelque ces caché, ne faillit aussi tost d'y donner derans à tout son glaive.

Hystorie. (p.207.) Whereby, feeling something stirring under them, he cried "a rat, a rat!" and presently drawing his sworde thrust it into the hangings.

Hamlet. (iii.iv. 23)

How, now! a rat? Dead, for a ducat, dead!

Belleforest. (p.218). - - - - de son espoux legitime lequel elle regretoit en son coeur voyant la vive image de sa vertu sagesse en cest enfant.

Hystorie. (p.219) - - - - - of her lawful spouse, whom inwardly she much lamented, when she beheld the living image, and portraiture of his vertue and great wisedome in her childe.

Hamlet. (iii.iv.53)

Look here, upon this picture, and on this,
The counterfeit presentment of two brothers.

Belleforest (p.280) J'ay lavé les tasches, qui denigroient le reputation de la Royne.

Hystorie/

Hystorie. (p.281.) I have washed the spots that defiled the reputation of the queen.

Hamlet. (iii.iv.90)

I see such black and grained spots
As will not leave their tinct.

Beleforest. (p.220.) Toutesfois, mon filz, et doux amy.

Hystorie. (p.221.) Neverthelesse, mine oune sweet soone.

Hamlet. (iii.iv.97)

No more, sweet Hamlet!

Belleforest (pp.218-220) Comme ravie en quelque grande contemplation, et saisie de quelque estonnement.

Hystorie. (pp.219-221) As beeing ravished into some great and deepe contemplation, and as it were wholly amazed.

Hamlet. (iii.iv. 112)

But look, amazement on thy mother sits.

Belleforest. (p.216). Ne plourez point pour l'esgard de ma folie, plustost gemissez la fout que vous avez commisse.

Hystorie. (p.217) Weep not (madame) to see my folly, but rather sigh and lament your owne offence.

Hamlet. (iii.iv. 145.)

Lay not that flattering unction to your soul,
That/

That not your trespass, but my madness speaks.

Belleforest (p.278) Amlett qui est le ministre et executeur de si juste vengeance.

Hystorie. (p.279.) Hamlet, the minister and executor of just vengeance.

Hamlet. (iii.iv.175)

That I must be their scourge and minister.

Belleforest. (p.250) Amlett entendrant qu'on l'envoioit en le grand Bretaigne, vers l'Anglais, se douta tout aussi tost de l'occasion de ce voyage.

Hystorie. (p.231.) Hamblet, understanding that he should be sent into England, presently doubted the occasion of his voyage.

Hamlett (iii.iv. 199)

I must to England; you know that?
Alack, I had forgot: 'tis so concluded on.

Belleforest.(p.232) Cogneu la grande trahison de son oncle, et la meschanceté des courtisans qui le conduisoient á la boucherie.

Hystorie. (p.233.) Knowne his uncle's great treason, with the wicked and villainous mindes of the two courtyers that led him/

him to the slaughter.

Hamlet. (iii.iv.201.)

> And my two schoolfellows,
> Whom I will trust as I would adder's fanged,
> They bear the mandate; they must sweep my way,
> And marshal me to knavery.

Belleforest. (p.248.) Mais Amleth, quoy que le jeu luy pleust.

Hystorie. (p.249.) But Hamlet, although the sport pleased him well.

Hamlet. (iii. iv.206)

> For 'tis sport to have the engineer
> Hoist with his own petard.

Belleforest (p.216) Aussi faut il que contre un meschant desloyal, cruel et discourtois homme, on use des plus gentiles inventions et forbes.

Hystorie. (p.217). Hee that hath to doe with a wicked, disloyall, cruell and discourteous man must use craft and politike inventions.

Hamlet. (iii.iv. 209)

> O, 'tis most sweet
> When in one line two crafts directly meet.

Belleforest. (p.206) Puis tirant le galant à demy mort.

Hystorie/

Hystorie. (p.207) Pulled the counsellor (half dead) out by the heeles.

Hamlet. (iii.iv.213)

Indeed this counsellor
Is now most still, most secret and most grave.

Belleforest. (p.228) Fengon - - - - - fut bien estonné n'en pouvent oyr ny vent, ny nouvelle: et pour ceste cause, demanda au fut s'il scavoit point qu'estoit devenu celuy qu'il luy nomma.

Hystorie. (p.229) Fengon - - - - was abashed to hear neither newes nor tydings of him, and for that cause asked Hamlet what was become of him, naming the man.

Hamlet. (iv.iii. 12.)

Where the dead body is bestowed, my lord,
We cannot get from him.
Now, Hamlet, where's Polonius?

Belleforest.(p.300) Ce bon et sage Prince aymant son peuple eust voulu chercher les moyens d'eviter c'este guerre mais la refusant il voyoit une grande tache pour son honneur.

Hystorie. (p.301) Hamlet like a good and wise prince, loving especially the welfare of his subjects sought of all means to avoid that warre, but again refusing it he perceived a great spot and blemish in his honour.

Hamlet/

Hamlet. (iv.iv.53)

Rightly to be great
Is not to stir without great argument
But greatly to find quarrel in a straw
When honour's at the stake.

Belleforest (232). Mais le rusé Prince Danois

Hystorie. (p.233) But the subtile Danish prince (beeing at sea)

Hamlet. (iv.iv. 14.)

Ere we were two days at sea.

Belleforest (p.288) Des ruses du ~~Danois~~ Danois

Hystorie. (p.289). Of the subtilties of the Dane.

Hamlet. (v.i.28)

This is I
Hamlet the Dane.

Belleforest. (p.232) Tandis que ses compaignons dormoyent ayant visité le pacquet et cogneu la grande trahison de son oncle - - rasa les lettres mentionans so mort et au lieu y grava et cisa un commandement à l'Anglais de faire pendre et estrangler ses compaignons.

Hystorie. (p.233) Whilst his companions slept, having read the letters and knowne his uncles great treason - - raced/

raced out the letters that concerned his death, and instead thereof graved others, with commission to the King of England to hang his two companions.

Hamlet. (v.ii. 15)

> Fingered their pocket - - - -
> Devised a new commission, wrote it fair ----
> That on the view and knowing of these contents
> He should the bearers put to sudden death.

Belleforest. (p.264.) Qu'il ne s'esmeuve en rien voyant la face confuse et hydeusement espouventable de la presente calamité.

Hystorie. (p.265.) Let him not be mooved, nor thinke it strange to behold the confused, hydeous and fearful spectacle of this present calamitie.

Hamlet. (v.ii.373.)

> Where is this sight?
> What is it you would see?
> If aught of woe or wonder cease your search.

Belleforest (p.280.) Legitime successeur du Royaume.

Hystorie. (p.281). I am lawful successor in the Kingdom.

Hamlet. (v. ii. 400.)

> I have some rights of memory in this kingdom.

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