SHAKESPEARE – THE INDIVIDUAL

WALTER BAGEHOT

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EDITOR'S INTRODUCTORY NOTE

Precision in the estimation of Walter Bagehot is mildly taxing. He seems not to have been fastidious about his literary legacy. Quite possibly he died too young to become so – he died at the age of fifty-one. Much of his output comprised unattributed journalism, most commonly under his own editorship of *The Economist*. As an illustration of the uncharted nature of his work, consider the heft of the authoritative project of Norman St John-Stevas's *Collected Works* – conceived and commissioned in 1959 as a definitive eight volume edition, its culmination came only with the publication in 1986 of the fifteenth volume.[1]

Even that output which we have always known to be Bagehot's often exists in different versions. So with the Shakespeare essay now under review. We cannot even be certain in allocating it a title. It appears first in *Prospective Review* for July 1853, entitled merely *Shakespeare* and carries a footnote which refers us to the two works of contemporary criticism (Guizot and Collier) to which the essay, in accordance with contemporary publishing convention, might very loosely be said to be a response. It is next revised by Bagehot in his own collection of essays, *Estimates of Some Englishmen and Scotchmen* (1858) and given the title *Shakespeare – The Individual*.[2] It is this amended version of the essay which is (with minor typographical corrections) included in Richard Holt Hutton's edition of Bagehot's literary essays published in 1879, two years after Bagehot's death.[3] Hutton however favours yet another title, *Shakespeare – The Man*. It is that title which has persisted in various reprints (largely and perhaps surprisingly American and often now available in facsimile on the internet) though with a

[1] Walter Bagehot, *The Collected Works,* ed Norman St John-Stevas (London: The Economist, 1965-1986) 15 volumes. Referred to in this edited edition as '*Collected Works*'.
[2] Walter Bagehot, *Estimates of Some Englishmen and Scotchmen* (London, Chapman and Hall, 1858).
[3] Walter Bagehot, *Literary Studies*, ed Richard Holt Hutton (London, Longmans, Green and Company, 1879) 2 volumes.

bewildering array of commas, semi-colons, colons and hyphens in mid title.[4] It was the title *Shakespeare – The Man* which was used by the first two assemblers of putative collected works – Forrest Morgan (five volumes) in the United States in 1891 and Mrs Russell Barrington (ten volumes) in London in 1915.[5] [6] For the same reason as St John-Stevas I however revert to *Shakespeare – The Individual* as 'the final title approved by Bagehot.'[7]

The text in this edition therefore takes as its basis the essay as revised and titled by Bagehot himself for inclusion in *Estimates of Some Englishmen and Scotchmen*. However, the paragraphs inserted into that edition by Bagehot are now distinguished by square brackets. For ease of comparison also included in the main body of my text, but shown square-bracketed and italicised, are those passages from the original 1853 *Prospective Review* version of the essay which Bagehot had excised for *Estimates*. To be clear, any italicised text not within square brackets refelects Bagehot's own style. In compiling my own footnotes I have taken account of, but not reproduced, the useful footnotes (they refer to the Shakespearean works that Bagehot quoted in his original essay – Bagehot himself gives his reader no such assistance) made by Morgan and which Mrs Russell Barrington largely adopted in her *Works and Life*. Any footnotes now appearing are therefore the product of this current editor. Bagehot did attach two slight endnotes at the end of the version in *Estimates* – these are now acknowledged and reproduced in my footnotes.

I have mentioned that there can seem to be a greater American affection for Bagehot's work than British and, as a reflection of that sentiment, I reproduce in this volume the idiosyncratic Prefatory Note from a 1905 reprint of the McClure,

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[4] See for example the McClure Phillips, (New York, NY: 1901) edition accessible at http://www.ebooksread.com/authors-eng/walter-bagehot/shakespeare-the-man-an-essay-hci.shtml

[5]Walter Bagehot, *The Works*, ed. Forrest Morgan (Hartford, CT: Travelers Insurance Company 1889) 5 volumes.

[6] Walter Bagehot, *The Works and Life*, ed. Mrs Russell Barrington (London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1915) 10 volumes.

[7] *Collected Works,* vol i, p173.

Phillips and Company version of *Shakespeare: The Man*, itself an acknowledged copy of Forrest Morgan's 1891 edition of the text.[8] The author of the Note is the intriguing Viola Roseboro' – there seems to be uncertainty as to whether the adoption of the apostrophe was her own affectation or one inherited from her father. Roseboro' was the Fiction Editor at McClure – Stephanie Gorton's modern appreciation of a forgotten literary life can be found in the *Paris Review* dated 24 February 2020.[9]

Roseboro's Note is a staunch defence of Bagehot's biographical method in *Shakespeare: The Man/Shakespeare – The Individual*. Its tone would probably give Bagehot some pleasure since it tends to accord to Bagehot the very quality he so valued in Shakespeare, that is to say an experiencing nature.

Toward the end of the Bagehot essay (at footnotes numbered 101 and 102) I have recognised what I believe are hitherto unattributed quotations from the *Introductory Observations* to *Cymbeline* and to *King Lear* offered by Samuel Maunder in his edition of *The Plays of William Shakespeare*.[10] Bagehot bequeathed no library - his will was a simple document of some one hundred and fifty words specifying three small bequests of particular shares and money and a loyal residuary donation to his widow.[11] Thus this new attribution gives us our best notion of the edition of *The Plays* that Bagehot had before him as he composed the essay. Maunder's single volume contains only the plays - the quotation from the

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[8] Walter Bagehot, *Shakespeare: The Man*, (New York, NY: McClure Phillips and Company, 1905) Facsimile available online at https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=hvd.hwkc4y&view=1up&seq=19&skin=2021

[9] Stephanie Gorton 'The Strange, Forgotten Life of Viola Roseboro' in *Paris Review*, 24 February 2020, also accessible online at https://www.theparisreview.org/blog/2020/02/24/the-strange-forgotten-life-of-viola-roseboro/

[10] Samuel Maunder (ed.), *The Plays of William Shakespeare, Collated from the editions of the Late George Steevens Esq., Edward Malone Esq., and Dr. Johnson* (J.W. Southgate and Son, London, 1840). The entire edition was reprinted in 1851 without any alteration by L.A. Lewis of London. That 1851 edition is available as a public domain reprint from Nabu Press (Charleston, SC, 2012).

[11] The Will is reproduced in *Collected Works,* vol xv, p. 323.

poetry must have been copied from another volume or even possibly dredged from Bagehot's compendious memory, though the accuracy of recitation of the passage from *Venus and Adonis* suggests otherwise. Bagehot in his everyday journalism was most decidedly not above hurried misquotation/paraphrasing. He seems to have been rather more assiduous on this occasion. Maunder's volume was published in 1840, the year before Bagehot went up to University College London, and was reprinted in 1851, two years before the initial iteration of *Shakespeare – The Individual*. In keeping with Bagehot's speed of work (see for example footnote 3 to the essay where I speculate on Bagehot having consulted *The Penny Cyclopedia*) the Maunder edition is a handy and, by the standards of the day, certainly not prolix edition. For the texts of the plays it makes no secret of its debt to Steevens, Malone and Johnson while Maunder's own additional *Introductory Notes* for each play are generally only one or two pages in length and openly derivative. Tellingly Maunder (1785 – 1849) merits no mention in Schoenbaum's authoritative *Shakespeare's Lives*.[12] Nor does the prolific Maunder find his way into the pages of *Britannica*. There is however a mildly dismissive reference to him in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, 1895-1900 edition, wherein he is styled a mere 'compiler'.[13] Nonetheless his compilation of Shakespeare's plays seems to have been adequate for the quick eye of Walter Bagehot. Possibly the precocious Walter took his copy with him when he ventured to London to start his university education. References to quotations from Shakespeare's plays are therefore given in two formats – firstly from the modern and easily accessible *RSC Complete Works*, but secondly, and for completeness, from the *Maunder Edition* which I assert Bagehot to have been using. The Maunder edition does not contain line numbers thus the Act and Scene numbers for those references are given and the page number from Maunder. A reference thus appears: '4.4.136 / 4.3, p. 215 '. It will be clear from this example (from *The Winter's Tale*) that there is the perennial awkwardness of aligning different

[12] S. Schoenbaum, *Shakespeare's Lives, Revised Edition* (Oxford: OUP, 1991).
[13] *Dictionary of National Biography, 1895-1900, Vol. 37* (London: Elder, Smith and Co.) pp. 91-92.

editions of Shakespeare – in this instance the Maunder edition elides Scenes 1 and 2 of Act 4 thus producing the different numbering.

VIOLA ROSEBORO'S PREFATORY NOTE

Writings about Shakespeare and his Works pour forth in an ever-increasing stream; great volumes are made caskets for a few stray biographical items, and these jewels are packed in a superabundant padding of suppositions, studies of his times and remarks (not always stimulating) about his poetry. His sonnets offer as good a field as ever for the exercise of ingenious persons who like superior riddles; and this sort frequently exert themselves therein as independently of any sympathy for poetry as if they toyed with the traditional Chinese puzzle. The people whose Shakespearean comment is of high value must always be few enough, - that is an obvious corollary of the Poet's greatness; sometimes from an actor or an actress has come a flash of comment that should be gratefully remembered; after all, Shakespeare is eminently theatrical, and playhouses and players are invaluable when all detractions have been made, for keeping us in normal relation to the great entertainer, the first mover of hearts. Emerson called him the 'World's Master of Revels' in gentle derogation, but perhaps Shakespeare would have accepted the title in a different spirit.

But if Shakespeare was the supreme playwright he was also a great deal more, and to his heights and depths how few are there to help us! Coleridge, Lamb, yes; but, among many serviceable commentators those critics are always rare who can fan or fire in our hearts such direct love of a great author, as it is criticism's highest office to foster. Bagehot may well be counted as one of the little group who so serve Shakespeare, though he does so indirectly; his conscious end is to gratify worshippers already sound in the faith with some sure conclusions as to what manner of man Shakespeare was. Here Bagehot stands alone; no one else half so well equipped has ever attempted the same thing. Shakespeare tops his fellow artists of all time because he was so many-sided, such an all-around man; so much we can all dimly see, but to go any further, to sympathetically apprehend such a nature on such data as we possess, - well, we do not get much assistance there from any Dryasdust, busy collecting dates and comparing editions.

Walter Bagehot brought to his biographical essays the psychological insight of a first-class novelist. He watched the play of mind and temperament in the personality of actual men as Meredith or Thackeray observe it in their own creations, and few novelists were ever equipped with a keener comprehension of the mental processes of varied types, or a more enlighteningly humorous mental sympathy; - that is to say, within certain limits, Bagehot had true imagination. In some directions his imagination was strengthened because he did not live the womanish inactive life usual to artists, but was always in the thick of practical affairs; was a man of business, - as was Shakespeare himself.

It is curious to watch Bagehot's influence widen and deepen, not mainly through the praises of professional critics, but by the slow, sure contagion of enduring private enthusiasm. Only sound enthusiasms endure, and given the suffrages of the elect a man's fame is safe. In such wise Bagehot came early into a goodly measure of his own. But the Bagehot lover sees in his author not one whose audience should be fit and few, but a writer peculiarly equipped to speak to that great body of men who run the world's affairs, whose possession of ability is proven by their power, and who yet find most essayists too remote, too fine-spun;- the men who read their Scott and their Burns and their Shakespeare, but who inevitably pass by Pater, for instance, and who are apt to find even Lamb too bookish, too aloof from the arena of their lives. It is not by coming down that Bagehot stands to enlarge and delight them; it is not his limitations so much as his breadths that appeal to them; he includes such of their own perceptions and understandings as the bookman usually lacks.

The completest edition of Bagehot in the world, the first comprehensive edition of his works ever published, was a curious outcome of practical men's delight in him, and that it is an American edition is another proud fact added to that glorious chronicle of superior appreciations which perhaps begins with the record of our behaviour to "Sartor Resartus" and does not end in noting that the first full edition of Meredith's novels came from Boston.

With no over-weening faith in the Democracy of dreams, Bagehot was yet a forerunner of that dramatic literature which, along with a flood of print, quite unrelated to literature to be sure, is now slowly making itself felt as a new force, or at least a force growing to novel proportions. It was Bagehot himself who originated the saying, since variously accredited, that the trouble with literature was that 'so few people who can write know anything." Democracy in divers ways tends to set those who know life (which is what he is talking about) to trying to write. In helping them to the art it is hardly so effective; but Bagehot himself was as truly literary as he was thoroughly conversant with the world, and the "faults of his qualities" are trifling. He was built for a robust popularity, and nothing he wrote better sustains that assertion than his essay on 'Shakespeare: the Man.'

We have all been sorely bored with disquisitions on this theme, heavy papers given up to unfounded inferences and guesses at once shallow and ponderous. Bagehot does not go far in developing hidden details of Shakespeare's external history; he knows human beings and the ways of artists too well to think psychological insight can discover dates from sentiments, or fix the details of a man's love affairs by the style of his verses. But he speaks as one having authority on many personal traits; he is sure of some things; and whoever questions his conclusions (surely Dryasdust must – incapable as he is of crediting the existence of either a theatrical manager or a poet), the doubters are sure to be fewest among the artists who work in the same elements Shakespeare subdued to his mighty ends, and among the men who are influential in a busy world akin to that the manager of the Globe exploited so profitably.

Viola Roseboro'

SHAKESPEARE—THE INDIVIDUAL[1]

The greatest of English poets it is often said, is but a name.[2], 'No letter of his writing, no record of his conversation, no character of him drawn with any fulness by a contemporary,' have been extracted by antiquaries from the piles of rubbish which they have sifted.[3] Yet of no person is there a clearer picture in the popular fancy. You seem to have known Shakespeare—to have seen Shakespeare—to have

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[1] Bagehot's essay was by footnote and nominally (in accordance with publishing convention) a response to Guizot and Collier: respectively, *Shakespeare et son Temps: Etudes Litteraire*, Par M. Guizot, (Paris, 1852); *Notes and Emendations to the Text of Shakespeare's Plays from early Manuscript Corrections in a Copy of the Folio*, 1632, *in the possession of R. Payne Collier, Esq., F.S.A*, (London, 1853). Bagehot seems to have been working from the French edition of Guizot's literary study although an English translation (translated by its Anglophone author) subsequently appeared in the United States – *Shakespeare and His Times* (Harper and Brothers, New York, 1855). The 1852 publication was a republishing of the piece Guizot had written in 1821 as a preface to that year's new French edition of Shakespeare's Complete Works, in which Guizot was responsible for nineteen of the translations.

> As for the Collier piece, this was a seemingly scholarly offering from an established editor of Shakespeare editions which transpired to be based on fraudulent material. The academic furore it sparked was enough to inspire a book on the whole episode, from which Collier's reputation never recovered: C.M. Ingleby, *A Complete View of the Shakespeare Controversy*. (London: Nattali and Bond, 1861).

[2] Shakespeare is unquestioningly taken to be canonical. International bardolatry was an established nineteenth century phenomenon so Bagehot's assertion of preeminent greatness is not controversial.

[3] 'No letter of his …' is from historian/critic Henry Hallam and is a familiar trope of Shakespearean scholarship. However if, as is entirely possible, Bagehot lifted this quotation from the handy resource of the *Penny Cyclopaedia* (Hallam's words are in the opening paragraph of the entry on Shakespeare - 'William Shakespeare', *The Penny Cyclopedia*, 21, (1841), (p. 337)) then he chose to ignore the wealth of genealogical material which that entry goes on to discuss. Bagehot also overlooks the praise of Shakespeare's contemporaries, most signally Ben Jonson, that prefaces the First Folio and which was reproduced in the more exhaustive Shakespearean editions of Victorian England. The Maunder edition (hereinafter '*The Maunder Edition*') that I assert was used by Bagehot when penning his Shakespeare essay (see my Introductory Note) does not find space for those prefatory items and we might suggest that Bagehot was too ready (for his provocative purpose) to retail as received wisdom Maunder's own tone: 'the reader will perceive that less is known of Shakespeare than almost any writer who has been considered as the object of laudable curiosity'. (*Maunder Edition*, p. viii).

been friends with Shakespeare. We would attempt a slight delineation of the popular idea which has been formed, not from loose tradition or remote research, not from what some one says some one else said that the poet said, but from data which are at least undoubted, from the sure testimony of his certain works.

Some extreme sceptics, we know, doubt whether it is possible to deduce anything as to an author's character from his works. Yet surely people do not keep a tame steam-engine to write their books; and if those books were really written by a man, he must have been a man who could write them; he must have had the thoughts which they express, have acquired the knowledge they contain, have possessed the style in which we read them.[4] The difficulty is a defect of the critics. [A person who knows nothing of an author he has read, will not know much of an author whom he has seen.] [*It is only very acute critics who are so sceptical. People in general think literary composition a specially significant fact; they say, 'He wrote a book', as if it were a thing by itself, a gigantesque fact no way paralleled in their experience, and from that book they think they could, if they wished, derive a good deal of information about him. We shall accordingly assume that Shakespeare wrote his plays, and to satisfy the critics, now and then state the argumentative process, by which we obtain the conclusions concerning Shakespeare, that we may advance.*][5]

First of all, it may be said that Shakespeare's works could only be produced by a first-rate imagination working on a first-rate experience. It is often difficult to make out whether the author of a poetic creation is drawing from fancy, or drawing from experience; but for art on a certain scale, the two must concur. Out

[4] The tame steam-engine quip seems to be an uncredited purloining of the joke essayed by Walter Scott (1771-1832 – historical novelist , poet and playwright and a great literary hero of Bagehot) in his Introduction to *The Betrothed* (Philadelphia, PA: The Gebbie Publishing Company, 1896) pp. xvii-xxv. First published 1825.

[5] The assumption that Shakespeare did indeed write his plays was not an assumption yet widely questioned – the Anti-Stratfordian wave would begin its wider agitation with the publication of Delia Bacon's *The Philosophy of the Plays of Shakespere Unfolded* (London: Groombridge and Sons, 1857). S. Schoenbaum magisterially describes/dismisses this as 'a streak of crazed lightning flashing across the spring sky' in his *Shakespeare's Lives* (Revised Edition, Oxford: OUP, 1991) p. 385.

of nothing, nothing can be created. Some plastic power is required, however great may be the material.[6] And when such works as 'Hamlet' and 'Othello,' still more, when both they and others not unequal, have been created by a single mind, it may be fairly said, [that not only a great imagination but a full conversancy with the world was necessary to their production. The whole powers of man under the most favourable circumstances, are not too great for such an effort. We may assume that Shakespeare had a great experience.] [*that not only a marvellous fancy, but also a full conversancy with the world by feeling and eyesight, is necessary to their creation. The best narratives require the best subject matter. Homer could not have so delineated Agamemnon or Achilles, if he had not through lengthy years sung his ballads at the banquets of princes.[7] It is easy to see this; the great critics are admirers of the sculptures of Phidias, but even modern Greeks are aware that he worked upon excellent marble.[8] And though this truth is not a new discovery or a difficult theorem, it is nevertheless a fact that has corollaries. If we know this about Shakespeare we really know more about him than we do about most people, and we will hazard our logical reputation by endeavouring to prove this in detail.*]

To a great experience one thing is essential, an experiencing nature. It is not enough to have opportunity, it is essential to feel it. Some occasions come to all men; but to many they are of little use, and to some they are none. What, for example, has experience done for the distinguished Frenchman, the name of whose essay is prefixed to this paper?[9] M. Guizot is the same man that he was in

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[6] Bagehot uses 'plastic' in its now near-obsolete sense – a power to mould or shape.

[7] Homer (c. 8th. Century BC) – the reputed author of the two foundational epic poems of Greek mythology – *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*.

[8] Phidias (c. 480 -430 BC) – Greek sculptor, painter and architect, creator of the statue of Zeus at Olympia that was one of the Seven Wonders of the World.

[9] Despite Bagehot's rather tepid enthusiasm, one can only concede that Guizot was a man of huge accomplishment – historian, politician, statesman, he was Prime Minister of France for a year before being removed at the establishment of the Second Republic in 1848. A liberal moderate he earned sufficient suspicion among the emerging new left to justify inclusion in the list of Reactionaries deprecated in the opening paragraph of 'The Communist Manifesto', reproduced in *Marx/Engels Selected Works*, trans. Samuel Moore (Moscow USSR: Progress Publishers, 1969) pp. 98-137.

1820, or, we believe, as he was in 1814. Take up one of his lectures, published before he was a practical statesman; you will be struck with the width of view, the amplitude and the solidity of the reflections; you will be amazed that a mere literary teacher could produce anything so wise; but take up afterwards an essay published since his fall—and you will be amazed to find no more. Napoleon the First is come and gone—the Bourbons of the old *régime* have come and gone—the Bourbons of the new *régime* have had their turn. M. Guizot has been first minister of a citizen king; he has led a great party; he has pronounced many a great *discours* that was well received by the second elective assembly in the world. But there is no trace of this in his writings. No one would guess from them that their author had ever left the professor's chair. It is the same, we are told, with small matters: when M. Guizot walks the street, he seems to see nothing; the head is thrown back, the eye fixed, and the mouth working. His mind is no doubt at work, but it is not stirred by what is external. [*When (so goes the mythical narrative) the people cried, 'A bas Guizot', he only said, 'Messieurs, que dites-vous?'*][10] Perhaps it is the internal activity of mind that overmasters the perceptive power. Anyhow there might have been an *émeute* in the street and he would not have known it; there have been revolutions in his life, and he is scarcely the wiser.[11] Among the most frivolous and fickle of civilised nations he is alone. They pass from the game of war to the game of peace, from the game of science to the game of art, from the game of liberty to the game of slavery, from the game of slavery to the game of license; he stands like a schoolmaster in the playground, without sport and without pleasure, firm and sullen, slow and awful.

A man of this sort is a curious mental phenomenon. He appears to get early—perhaps to be born with—a kind of dry schedule or catalogue of the universe; he has a ledger in his head, and has a title to which he can refer any transaction; nothing puzzles him, nothing comes amiss to him, but he is not in the least the wiser for anything. Like the book-keeper, he has his heads of account, and he knows them, but he is no wiser for the particular items. After a busy day, and after

[10] '*A bas Guizot'* et seq – 'Down with Guizot!' 'Gentlemen, what do you say?'
[11] '*Emeute*' – a riot.

a slow day, after a few entries, and after many, his knowledge is exactly the same: take his opinion of Baron Rothschild, he will say: 'Yes, he keeps an account with us'; of Humphrey Brown: 'Yes, we have that account, too'.[12] Just so with the class of minds which we are speaking of, and in greater matters. Very early in life they come to a certain and considerable acquaintance with the world; they learn very quickly all they can learn, and naturally they never, in any way, learn any more. [*The Scotch are said to have something of this sort; they never know their own experience better than the experience of others; they may have been in Egypt, and they know its longitude; they have not been in Kamschatka, but they know the longitude of that too: and they don't comprehend that it is possible to learn anything else.*] Mr. Pitt is, in this country, the type of the character.[13] Mr. Alison, in a well-known passage, makes it a matter of wonder that he was fit to be a Chancellor of the Exchequer at twenty-three, and it *is* a great wonder.[14] But it is to be remembered that he was no more fit at forty-three. As somebody said, he did not grow, he was cast. Experience taught him nothing, and he did not believe that he had anything to learn. The habit of mind in smaller degrees is not very rare, and might be illustrated without end. Hazlitt tells a story of West, the painter, that is in point: When some one asked him if he had ever been to Greece, he answered: 'No; I have read a descriptive catalogue of the principal objects in that country, and I

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[12] Baron Salomon Mayer von Rothschild (1774 – 1855) – the head of the Vienna branch of the Rothschild banking empire, elevated to the Austrian peerage in 1816 and to the higher rank of Baron in 1822. The Rothschild family were identified with huge wealth and notable philanthropy. As for Humphrey Brown this appears to be a dismissive reference to the Whig MP of that name (1803 – 1860) who held the seat of Tewkesbury between 1847 and 1857 making contributions to debate in five only of the years he was in the House - https://api.parliament.uk/historic-hansard/people/mr-humphrey-brown/index.html .

[13] The reference is to Pitt the Younger (1759 – 1806), Chancellor at twenty-three and Prime Minister at twenty-four, a position he held for more than eighteen years.

[14] Most probably a reference to Sir Archibald Alison (1792 – 1867), historian whose *History of Europe* in ten volumes ran through ten editions and was translated into most European languages as well as into Arabic and Hindustani. Bagehot cites Alison mildly disparagingly ('the Tory historian') in his essay 'The Character of Sir Robert Peele', *Collected Works,* vol. iii, pp. 241 – 271 (p. 247). The reference to Pitt has not however been identified.

believe I am as well conversant with them as if I had visited it'.[15] No doubt he was just as well conversant, and so would be any *doctrinaire.*[16]

But Shakespeare was not a man of this sort. If he walked down a street, he knew what was in that street. His mind did not form in early life a classified list of all the objects in the universe, and learn no more about the universe ever after. From a certain fine sensibility of nature, it is plain that he took a keen interest not only in the general and coarse outlines of objects, but in their minutest particulars and gentlest gradations. You may open Shakespeare and find the clearest proofs of this; take the following:-

> When last the young Orlando parted from you,
>
> He left a promise to return again
>
> Within an hour; and, pacing through the forest,
>
> Chewing the food of sweet and bitter fancy,
>
> Lo, what befel! he threw his eye aside,
>
> And, mark, what object did present itself!
>
> Under an oak, whose boughs were mossed with age,
>
> And high top bald with dry antiquity,
>
> A wretched ragged man, o'ergrown with hair,
>
> Lay sleeping on his back: about his neck

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[15] William Hazlitt (1778 – 1830), literary critic and essayist. St. John-Stevas reports a diary entry of Bagehot's wife dated 9 June 1867 that Bagehot was writing an article on Hazlitt – that article is noted as lost (*Collected Works,* vol. i, p. 21). The painter referred to is Benjamin West (1738 – 1820) of whose work Hazlitt opined that it was 'not poetry but prose': Tate Papers, No. 24, Autumn 2015. See also note 63 below.

[16] This advocacy of the ability to bend with experience is an early chime of the elegant pragmatism (some critics would describe it as unprincipled) that underpins one of Bagehot's best remembered works, *Physics and Politics*, which posits such 'animated moderation' as a prerequisite for the achievement by a state of an 'Age of Discussion' – the latter the apogee of political development (*Collected Works*, vol. vii, pp. 13 – 144).

A green and gilded snake had wreath'd itself,

Who with her head, nimble in threats, approach'd

The opening of his mouth; but suddenly

Seeing Orlando, it unlink'd itself,

And with indented glides did slip away

Into a bush: under which bush's shade

A lioness, with udders all drawn dry,

Lay crouching, head on ground, with cat-like watch,

When that the sleeping man should stir; for 'tis

The royal disposition of that beast,

To prey on nothing that doth seem as dead:

This seen," etc., etc.[17]

Or the more celebrated description of the hunt:—

And when thou hast on foot the purblind hare,

Mark the poor wretch, to overshoot his troubles,

How he outruns the wind, and with what care

He cranks and crosses, with a thousand doubles:

The many musets through the which he goes

Are like a labyrinth to amaze his foes.

Sometime he runs among a flock of sheep,

To make the cunning hounds mistake their smell,

And sometime where earth-delving conies keep,

[17] *As You Like It* (4.3.96 – 117 / 4.3, p. 165).

To stop the loud pursuers in their yell;

And sometimes sorteth with a herd of deer;

Danger deviseth shifts; wit waits on fear:

For thee his smell with others being mingled,

The hot scent-snuffing hounds are driven to doubt,

Ceasing their clamorous cry, till they have singled,

With much ado, the cold fault cleanly out;

Then do they spend their mouths: Echo replies

As if another chase were in the skies.

By this, poor Wat, far off, upon a hill,

Stands on his hinder legs with listening ear,

To harken if his foes pursue him still;

Anon their loud alarums he doth hear;

And now his grief may be compared well

To one sore sick that hears the passing bell.

Then thou shalt see the dew-bedaddled wretch

Turn and return, indenting with the way;

Each envious briar his weary legs doth scratch,

Each shadow makes him stop, each murmur stay:

For misery is trodden on by many,

And being low, never relieved by any."[18]

It is absurd, by the way, to say we know *nothing* about the man who wrote that; we know that he had been after a hare. It is idle to allege that mere imagination would tell him that a hare is apt to run among a flock of sheep, or that its so doing disconcerts the scent of hounds.[19] But no single citation really represents the power of the argument. Set descriptions may be manufactured to order, and it does not follow that even the most accurate or successful of them was really the result of a thorough and habitual knowledge of the object. A man who knows little of Nature may write one excellent delineation, as a poor man may have one bright guinea. Real opulence consists in having many. What truly indicates excellent knowledge, is the habit of constant, sudden, and almost unconscious allusion, which implies familiarity, for it can arise from that alone,—and this very species of incidental, casual, and perpetual reference to 'the mighty world of eye and ear,' is the particular characteristic of Shakespeare.[20]

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[18] *Venus and Adonis* (679 – 708).

[19] This assertion strikes a particular chord with Bagehot, himself a keen huntsman who kept and rode to hounds. The enthusiastic character of his horsemanship was such as to prompt his greatest friend Richard Holt Hutton to include the following in his obituary of Bagehot in the *Spectator* (which Hutton edited) of 31 March 1877: 'He was a dashing rider, too, and a fresh wind was felt blowing through his earlier literary efforts, as though he had been thinking in the saddle' (reproduced in *Collected Works,* vol. xv, p*.* 36). The Shakespeare essay decidedly belongs to this early period of Bagehot's work.

[20] William Wordsworth, 'Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey, On Revisiting the Bank of the Wye, during a Tour. July 13, 1798' in, *The Complete Poetical Works of William Wordsworth*, vol. ii (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1919).

William Haley,in his *Literary Appreciation* of Bagehot (*Collected Works*, vol. i, pp. 84 – 106)) opines that Wordsworth occupied 'first place' in the young Bagehot's poetic affections (p.92). This taste seems to have endured - in the 1864 Bagehot essay 'Wordsworth, Tennyson and Browning; or Pure, Ornate, and Grotesque Art in English Poetry' (*Collected Works*, vol. ii, pp. 321 – 366) Bagehot labels Wordsworth as the purest of poets. The essay (designated by Haley in his 'Literary Appreciation' as 'far from being one of Bagehot's best writings' – *Collected* Works, vol. I, p. 102) sees Bagehot venturing clumsily into theorised

In this respect Shakespeare had the advantage of one whom, in many points, he much resembled—Sir Walter Scott.[21] For a great poet, the organisation of the latter was very blunt; he had no sense of smell, little sense of taste, almost no ear for music (he knew a few, perhaps three, Scotch tunes, which he avowed that he had learnt in sixty years, by hard labour and mental association), and not much turn for the *minutiæ* of Nature in any way. The effect of this may be seen in some of the best descriptive passages of his poetry, and we will not deny that it does (although proceeding from a sensuous defect), in a certain degree, add to their popularity. He deals with the main outlines and great points of Nature, never attends to any others, and in this respect he suits the comprehension and knowledge of many who know only those essential and considerable outlines. Young people, especially, who like big things, are taken with Scott, and bored by Wordsworth, who knew too much. And after all, the two poets are in proper harmony, each with his own scenery. Of all beautiful scenery the Scotch is the roughest and barest, as the English is the most complex and cultivated. What a difference is there between the minute and finished delicacy of Rydal Water and the rough simplicity of Loch Katrine! It is the beauty of civilisation beside the beauty of barbarism. Scott has himself pointed out the effect of this on arts and artists.

> Or see yon weather-beaten hind,
>
> Whose sluggish herds before him wind,
>
> Whose tattered plaid and rugged cheek
>
> His Northern clime and kindred speak;
>
> Through England's laughing meads he goes,
>
> And England's wealth around him flows;

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criticism and launching (unsuccessfully) the neologism 'literatesque', intended to convey in literary terms an equivalent to 'picturesque' in the visual arts.

[21] In the 'Literary Appreciation' (op. cit.) Haley notes, in his consideration of 'Shakespeare – The Individual', that 'Bagehot wrote of Shakespeare with respect. When he turned to Scott he dipped his pen in the ink of affection'. (p. 98).

Ask if it would content him well,

At ease in those gay plains to dwell,

Where hedgerows spread a verdant screen,

And spires and forests intervene,

And the neat cottage peeps between?

No, not for these would he exchange

His dark Lochaber's boundless range,

Not for fair Devon's meads forsake

Ben Nevis grey and Garry's lake.

Thus while I ape the measures wild

Of tales that charmed me yet a child,

Rude though they be, still, with the chime,

Return the thoughts of early time;

And feelings roused in life's first day,

Glow in the line and prompt the lay.

Then rise those crags, that mountain tower,

Which charmed my fancy's wakening hour.

Though no broad river swept along,

To claim perchance heroic song;

Though sighed no groves in summer gale,

To prompt of love a softer tale;

Though scarce a puny streamlet's speed

Claimed homage from a shepherd's reed,

Yet was poetic impulse given

By the green hill and clear blue heaven.

It was a barren scene and wild,

Where naked cliffs were rudely piled,

But ever and anon between,

Lay velvet tufts of loveliest green;

And well the lonely infant knew

Recesses where the wallflower grew,

And honeysuckle loved to crawl

Up the low crag and ruined wall.

. . . . . .

From me, thus nurtured, dost thou ask

The classic poet's well-conned task?

Nay, Erskine, nay—On the wild hill

Let the wild heathbell flourish still;

Cherish the tulip, prune the vine,

But freely let the woodbine twine,

And leave untrimmed the eglantine.

Nay, my friend, nay—Since oft thy praise

Hath given fresh vigour to my lays,

Since oft thy judgment could refine

My flattened thought or cumbrous line,

Still kind, as is thy wont, attend,

And in the minstrel spare the friend.

Though wild as cloud, as stream, as gale,

Flow forth, flow unrestrained, my tale.[22]

And this is wise, for there is beauty in the North as well as in the South. Only it is to be remembered that the beauty of the Trossachs is the result of but a few elements—say birch and brushwood, rough hills and narrow dells, much heather and many stones—while the beauty of England is one thing in one district and one in another; is here the combination of one set of qualities, and there the harmony of opposite ones, and is everywhere made up of many details and delicate refinements; all which require an exquisite delicacy of perceptive organisation, a seeing eye, a minutely hearing ear. Scott's is the strong admiration of a rough mind; Shakespeare's, the nice minuteness of a susceptible one.

A perfectly poetic appreciation of nature contains two elements, a knowledge of facts, and a sensibility to charms. Everybody who may have to speak to some naturalists will be well aware how widely the two may be separated. He will have seen that a man may study butterflies and forget that they are beautiful, or be perfect in the 'Lunar theory' [without knowing what most people mean by the moon.][23] [*without knowing that the moon is silent or the stars sublime.*] Generally such people prefer the stupid parts of nature—worms and Cochin-China fowls. But Shakespeare was not obtuse. The lines—

Daffodils

That come before the swallow dares, and take

The winds of March with beauty; violets dim,

But sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes,

Or Cytherea's breath."[24]

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[22]Walter Scott, 'Marmion' (Edinburgh: J. Ballantyne and Company, 1808).
[23] 'Lunar theory' – the millennia-old and continuing attempts to account for the movements of the Moon, dating back to the ancient (c. 500 BC) Babylonian astronomers through to, in modern times, complex computer modelling. A leading Victorian practitioner was John Couch Adams – see note 25 below.
[24] *The Winter's Tale* (4.4.136 – 140 / 4.3, p. 215). *The Maunder Edition* actually omits the word 'Or' from the final line of the quotation. Bagehot (or his editor) seems to have corrected this omission.

seem to show that he knew those feelings of youth, to which beauty is more than a religion. [*Some people's minds are like animated dictionaries. Unless they have got a precise word for anything they feel they know nothing about it, and where the words stop their minds stop too. They have the whole universe laid down on a flat map, like Mercator's projection, and divided into little parallelograms of latitude and longitude. Talk of the ocean in a calm, that is Hydrostatics, parallelogram No I; talk of it in a storm, that is Hydrodynamics, a distinct science, parallelogram No II. But that the ocean ever passes from one state to the other; that it is one thing all the time, which, after being in a state of transition, from being the first becomes the last; that the names of hard words are not real things, but imaginary things like the lines of latitude and longitude, this these sort of people cannot learn. They have no picture of the universe or any part of it, but merely an inventory, which is very good as far as it goes, but which must be incomplete, since the number of things is infinite and number of words few and scanty. Now Shakespeare was not of this sort. He would not have felt the difficulty of Dr Whately and the other logicians about general terms.*[25] *Minds like his (and didactic writers like ourselves are bound to elucidate this, for it is frequently forgotten) are preserved from verbal fallacies and argumentative crotchets, by their acute and thorough knowledge of the things themselves. They can verify their results at every stage. People with slower senses and less vivid imaginations are offered to establish certain aspects and recondite principles, and reason down from them to more practical and useful knowledge. And this is quite right; it is essential to them, and it is valuable for the world, but quicker people see the results at once. If we had eyes to see the planet Neptune, it would not have been necessary for Mr Adams to consume his valuable time in calculating where it was.*[26] *The more perfect our senses, the less is the use of argument. A man who has*

[25] Richard Whately (1787 – 1863), cleric, logician, sometime Archbishop of Dublin and prolific author. His most enduring work is his treatise on *Logic*. He also wrote a brief text *Introductory Lessons on the British Constitution* (London: John W. Parker and Son, 1854). That text predates Bagehot's own and more famous *The English Constitution* by thirteen years. Whately's text is a thorough but brief taxonomy of the operation of Britain's mixed constitution but, unlike Bagehot, it lacks any speculation on quite why it works.

[26] John Couch Adams (1819 – 1892), astronomer who (in parallel with, but not in tandem with, Frenchman Urbain Le Verrier) divined the existence and position

a picture of the world in his mind will not want Natural Philosophy to inform him about it, nor will he be misled by verbose ratiocination.[27] *Shakespeare may not have lifted 'the painted veil that those who live call life'; but anyhow he knew what was painted upon it; he was not to be imposed upon by physics or metaphysics.*'][28]

In his mode of delineating natural objects Shakespeare is curiously opposed to Milton.[29] The latter, who was still by temperament, and a schoolmaster by trade, selects a beautiful object, puts it straight out before him and his readers, and accumulates upon it all the learned imagery of a thousand years; Shakespeare glances at it and says something of his own. It is not our intention to say that, as a describer of the external world, Milton is inferior; in *set* description we rather think that he is the better. We only wish to contrast the mode in which the delineation is effected. The one is like an artist who dashes off any number of picturesque sketches at any moment; the other like a man who has lived at Rome, has undergone a thorough training, and by deliberate and conscious effort, after a long study of the best masters, can produce a few great pictures. Milton, accordingly, as has been often remarked, is careful in the choice of his subjects; he knows too well the value of his labour to be very ready to squander it;

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of the planet Neptune solely by mathematical means. For *Britannica* this work constituted 'an unsurpassed intellectual feat'.

[27] OED traces the gradual understanding of the term 'Natural Philosophy' as it mutates away from the sciences in general to the emerging and specific subject of physics. By 1865 *Chambers Encyclopaedia* it is cited in OED thus, 'Physics in its narrow sense … is equivalent to Natural Philosophy, which, until of late years, was the term more commonly used in Great Britain'.

[28] Bagehot's exclusion of this lengthy paragraph from his own final version of the essay is intriguing. It seems to be an uncharacteristic example of Bagehot as sage editor of himself. Because Bagehot instinctively wrote in such a manner as to reveal more about himself than his stated subject, the excised passage tends to set up its author as one of the privileged visionaries who need not be burdened by the exigencies of logic or pure science.

[29] John Milton (1608 -1674). Bagehot admires Milton greatly but finds him less accessible than Shakespeare and his beloved Scott, both with their precious 'experiencing nature'. Bagehot returned to the subject of Milton in his 1859 essay ('John Milton', in *Collected Works,* vol. ii, pp. 109 – 148) and makes his point more explicitly, lacing admiration with qualification but doubting that anything has ever been written 'which gives so true a conception of the capacity and dignity of the mind by which it was produced' (p. 148).

Shakespeare, on the contrary, describes anything that comes to hand, for he is prepared for it whatever it may be, and what he paints he paints without effort. Compare any passage from Shakespeare—for example, those quoted before—and the following passage from Milton:—

Southward through Eden went a river large,
Nor changed its course, but through the shaggy hill
Passed underneath ingulfed; for God had thrown
That mountain as His garden mould, high raised
Upon the rapid current, which through veins
Of porous earth, with kindly thirst up-drawn,
Rose a fresh fountain, and with many a rill
Watered the garden; thence united fell
Down the steep glade, and met the nether flood,
Which from its darksome passage now appears
And now divided into four main streams
Runs diverse, wandering many a famous realm
And country, whereof here needs no account;
But rather to tell how,—if art could tell,—
How from that sapphire fount the crispèd brooks,
Rolling on orient pearl and sands of gold,
With mazy error under pendent shades
Ran nectar, visiting each plant; and fed
Flowers worthy of Paradise, which not nice art
In beds and curious knots, but Nature boon
Poured forth profuse on hill, and dale, and plain,

> Both where the morning sun first warmly smote
>
> The open field, and where the unpierced shade
>
> Imbrowned the noontide bowers. Thus was this place
>
> A happy rural seat of various view;
>
> Groves whose rich trees wept odorous gums and balm;
>
> Others whose fruit, burnished with golden rind,
>
> Hung amiable (Hesperian fables true,
>
> If true, here only), and of delicious taste:
>
> Betwixt them lawns, or level downs, and flocks
>
> Grazing the tender herb, were interposed:
>
> Or palmy hillock, or the flowery lap
>
> Of some irriguous valley spread her store;
>
> Flowers of all hue, and without thorn the rose.[30]

Why, you could draw a map of it. It is *not* 'Nature boon,' but 'nice art in beds and curious knots'; it is exactly the old (and excellent) style of artificial gardening, by which any place can be turned into trim hedgerows, and stiff borders, and comfortable shades; but there are no straight lines in Nature or Shakespeare.[31] Perhaps the contrast may be accounted for by the way in which the two poets acquired their knowledge of scenes and scenery. We think we demonstrated before that Shakespeare was a sportsman, but if there be still a sceptic or a dissentient, let him read the following remarks on dogs:—

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[30] Milton, *Paradise Lost, Book IV*, lines 223-256 (Glasgow: R and A Foulis, 1750. First published 1667).

[31] 'There are no straight lines' etc. suggests itself as a quotation from someone else rather than a Bagehot original. However the phrase, 'There are no straight lines in nature' is generally attributed to Spanish architect Antoni Gaudi (1852 – 1926) who quite clearly cannot be the source. Peter Holbrook in *Shakespeare's Individualism* (Cambridge: CUP: 2010, p. 141) gives the credit squarely to Bagehot.

> My hounds are bred out of the Spartan kind,
>
> So flewed, so sanded; and their heads are hung
>
> With ears that sweep away the morning dew,
>
> Crook-kneed and dewlapped like Thessalian bulls;
>
> Slow in pursuit, but matched in mouth like bells,
>
> Each under each. A cry more tunable
>
> Was never holloa'd to nor cheered with horn
>
> In Crete, in Sparta, nor in Thessaly.[32]

'Judge when you hear'. It is evident that the man who wrote this was a judge of dogs, was an out-of-door sporting man, full of natural sensibility, not defective in 'daintiness of ear,' and above all things, apt to cast on Nature random, sportive, half-boyish glances, which reveal so much, and bequeath such abiding knowledge.[33] [*It is with mind as with the eye, for the philosophers (and what is more the opticians) tell us, that the way to see the most of objects, is not to stare straight at them with the nose, like a beggar at the baker's shop, but to glance slightly and as it were casually aside. So it may be observed the side-long and sportive glance of the sportsman give him a healthier, a freer, and a juster acquaintance with the best charms of the best scenes, than the most elaborate study of the professional tourist in search of the picturesque.*] Milton, on the contrary, went out to see Nature. He left a narrow cell, and the intense study which was his 'portion in this life,' to take a slow, careful, and reflective walk.[34] In his treatise on education he has given us his notion of the way in which young people should be familiarised with natural objects.[35] 'But,' he remarks, 'to return to our institute; besides these constant exercises at home, there is another opportunity of gaining pleasure from pleasure itself abroad; in those vernal seasons of the year when the air is calm and pleasant,

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[32] *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (4.1.111 – 119 / 4.1, p. 112).
[33] *Richard II* (5.5.45 / 5.5, p. 288). Once again Bagehot betrays his enthusiasm for the hunt.
[34] *Psalm 17:14.*
[35] Milton, *Tractate of Education*, ed. E.E. Morris (London: Macmillan, 1895. First published 1644) pp. 24-25.

it were an injury and sullenness against Nature, not to go out and see her riches and partake in her rejoicing in heaven and earth. I should not therefore be a persuader to them of studying much in these, after two or three years, that they have well laid their grounds, but to ride out in companies, with prudent and staid guides, to all quarters of the land; learning and observing all places of strength, all commodities of building and of soil, for towns and tillage, harbours and ports of trade. Sometimes taking sea as far as our navy, to learn there also what they can in the practical knowledge of sailing and of sea-fight.' Fancy 'the prudent and staid guides'. What a machinery for making pedants. Perhaps Shakespeare would have known that the conversation would be in this sort: 'I say, Shallow, that mare is going in the knees. She has never been the same since you larked her over the fivebar, while Moleyes was talking clay and agriculture. I do not hate Latin so much, but I hate "argillaceous earth"; and what use is *that* to a fellow in the Guards, *I* should like to know?' Shakespeare had himself this sort of boyish buoyancy. He was not 'one of the staid guides'. We might further illustrate it. Yet this would be tedious enough, and we prefer to go on and show what we mean by an experiencing nature in relation to men and women, just as we have striven to indicate what it is in relation to horses and hares.[36]

The reason why so few good books are written, is that so few people that can write know anything. In general an author has always lived in a room, has read books, has cultivated science, is acquainted with the style and sentiments of the best authors, but he is out of the way of employing his own eyes and ears. He has nothing to hear and nothing to see. His life is a vacuum. The mental habits of Robert Southey, which about a year ago were so extensively praised in the public journals, are the type of literary existence, just as the praise bestowed on them shows the admiration excited by them among literary people.[37] He wrote poetry

[36] Bagehot's dislike for detail (certainly in matters biographical) resurfaces in his 'John Milton' (op. cit.) which (as had been 'Shakespeare – The Individual' in its original incarnation) is ostensibly a review, in this case of Masson's *Life of Milton*. Bagehot makes clear his view on Masson's exhaustive method : 'it has been composed upon a principle that is utterly erroneous' (p. 109).

[37] Robert Southey (1774 – 1843), Romantic poet, friend of Wordsworth, Poet Laureate from 1813 to his death.

(as if anybody could) before breakfast; he read during breakfast. He wrote history until dinner; he corrected proof-sheets between dinner and tea; he wrote an essay for the *Quarterly* afterwards; and after supper, by way of relaxation, composed the 'Doctor'—a lengthy and elaborate jest.[38] Now, what can any one think of such a life—except how clearly it shows that the habits best fitted for communicating information, formed with the best care, and daily regulated by the best motives, are exactly the habits which are likely to afford a man the least information to communicate. Southey had no events, no experiences. His wife kept house and allowed him pocket-money, just as if he had been a German professor devoted to accents, tobacco, and the dates of Horace's amours.[39] And it is pitiable to think that so meritorious a life was only made endurable by a painful delusion. He thought that day by day, and hour by hour, he was accumulating stores for the instruction and entertainment of a long posterity. His epics were to be in the hands of all men, and his history of Brazil, the 'Herodotus of the South American Republics'.[40] As if his epics were not already dead, and as if the people who now cheat at Valparaiso care a *real* who it was that cheated those before them. Yet it was only by a conviction like this that an industrious and caligraphic man (for such was Robert Southey), who might have earned money as a clerk, worked all his days for half a clerk's wages, at occupation much duller and more laborious. The critic in *The Vicar of Wakefield* lays down that you should *always* say that the picture would

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[38] Southey, *The Doctor* (seven volumes published, initially anonymously, between 1834 and 1847). Published in one volume, ed. J.W. Warter (London: Longman, Green and Company, 1865). Comprises a vast miscellany of comment, poetry, quotations, and obscure tales – this includes the original version of *The Story of the Three Bears*.

[39] Quintus Horatius Flaccus (65 – 8 BC), known in the English speaking world as Horace. This seems to be a throwaway reference to a selection of Horace's romantic *Odes* though quite why Bagehot uses the French 'amours' is uncertain. A 1792 revision of an English translation of Horace includes in its prefatory material a catalogue of translations of the poet which in turn mentions '*Les Amours d'Horace*' printed in Cologne in 1739 – David Watson (trans.) revised by William Crakelt, *The Works of Horace Translated into English Prose* (London: T. Longman and Others, 1792) p. xxxv.

[40] Herodotus (c. 484 – c. 425 BC), Greek historian and author of the *Histories*, his account of the Greco-Persian Wars. Herodotus has been ascribed the description 'The Father of History' for his painstaking research methods. Southey's *History of Brazil* appeared in three volumes between 1810 and 1819.

have been better if the painter had taken more pains; but in the case of the practised literary man, you should often enough say that the writings would have been much better if the writer had taken less pains.[41] He says he has devoted his life to the subject—the reply is: 'Then you have taken the best gersdicius and Ænœway to prevent your making anything of it'. Instead of reading studiously what Bursidemus said men were, you should have gone out yourself, and seen (if you can see) [what they are.] [*something for yourself. Lord Bacon tells us that someone in his time boasted in Latin, 'Decem annos consumpsi in legendo Cicerone', and echo answered in Greek, 'ove, You ass.'*][42]

After all, the original way of writing books may turn out to be the best. The first author, it is plain, could not have taken anything from books, since there were no books for him to copy from; he looked at things for himself. Anyhow, the modern system fails, for where are the amusing books from voracious students and habitual writers? Not that we mean exactly to say that an author's hard reading is the cause of his writing that which is hard to read. This would be near the truth, but not quite the truth. The two are concomitant effects of a certain defective nature. Slow men read well, but write ill. The abstracted habit, the want of keen exterior interests, the aloofness of mind from what is next it, all tend to make a man feel an exciting curiosity and interest about remote literary events, the toil of scholastic logicians, and the petty feuds of Argos and Lacedæmon; but they also tend to make a man very unable to explain and elucidate those exploits for the benefit of his fellows.[43] What separates the author from his readers, will make it proportionably difficult for him to explain himself to them. Secluded habits do not tend to eloquence; and the indifferent apathy which is so common in studious persons is exceedingly unfavourable to the liveliness of narration and illustration

[41] Oliver Goldsmith ((1728 – 1774) Anglo-Irish novelist, playwright and poet), *The Vicar of Wakefield* (London: Barnes and Noble, 2007. First published 1766).
[42] Francis Bacon (1561 – 1626), *Proficience and Advancement of Learning* (London: Henri Tomes, 1605). '*Decem annos*' et seq. – Ten years have I passed in the study of Cicero. '*Ove*' – ass.
[43] Argos – a city in the Greek Peloponnese, one of the oldest continuously occupied municipalities in the world, it also features in Greek mythology and amongst its disputants was Lacedaemon, mythical king of Laconia.

which is needed for excellence in even the simpler sorts of writing. Moreover, in general it will perhaps be found that persons devoted to mere literature commonly become devoted to mere idleness. They wish to produce a great work, but they find they cannot. Having relinquished everything to devote themselves to this, they conclude on trial that this is impossible. They wish to write, but nothing occurs to them. Therefore they write nothing, and they do nothing. As has been said, they have nothing to do. Their life has no events unless they are very poor. With any decent means of subsistence, they have nothing to rouse them from an indolent and musing dream. A merchant must meet his bills, or he is civilly dead and uncivilly remembered. But a student may know nothing of time and be too lazy to wind up his watch. In the retired citizen's journal in Addison's *Spectator,* we have the type of this way of spending the time: Mem. Morning 8 to 9, 'Went into the parlour and tied on my shoe-buckles'.[44] This is the sort of life for which studious men commonly relinquish the pursuits of business and the society of their fellows.

Yet all literary men are not tedious, neither are they all slow. One great example even these most tedious times have luckily given us, to show us what may be done by a really great man even now, the same who before served as an illustration—Sir Walter Scott. In his lifetime people denied he was a poet, but nobody said that he was not 'the best fellow' in Scotland—perhaps that was not much—or that he had not more wise joviality, more living talk, more graphic humour, than any man in Great Britain. 'Wherever we went,' said Mr. Wordsworth, 'we found his name acted as an *open sesame,* and I believe that in the character of the *sheriff's* friends,

[44] *The Spectator* was a daily publication which ran between 1711 and 1712, not to be confused with the weekly paper of the same name founded in 1828 and still published today. The earlier incarnation was the work of its two proprietors, Joseph Addison (1672 – 1719) and his friend Richard Steele (1672 – 1729), with Addison marginally the more prolific. The magazine took the form of essays delivered from the pens of imaginary members of a London club. Its tone was one of reason and moderation in immoderate times. The words suggested by Bagehot appear to be a parody of the journal's tone, perhaps inspired by a recollection of the entry for March 4 1711 ('Wednesday, eight o'clock,. Tongue of my shoe buckle broke.'), *Spectator, No. 317*, in *Spectator; with Notes and a General Index,* vol. ii, (New York: Samuel Marks, 1826).

we might have counted on a hearty welcome under any roof in the border country.'[45] Never neglect to talk to people with whom you are casually thrown, was his precept, and he exemplified the maxim himself. 'I believe,' observes his biographer, 'that Scott has somewhere expressed in print his satisfaction, that amid all the changes of our manners, the ancient freedom of personal intercourse may still be indulged between a master and an *out-of-door* servant; but in truth he kept by the old fashion, even with domestic servants, to an extent which I have hardly ever seen practised by any other gentleman. He conversed with his coachman if he sat by him, as he often did, on the box—with his footman, if he chanced to be in the rumble. Indeed, he did not confine his humanity to his own people; any steady-going servant of a friend of his was soon considered as a sort of friend too, and was sure to have a kind little colloquy to himself at coming or going.'[46] 'Sir Walter speaks to every man as if he was his blood relation,' was the expressive comment of one of these dependants. It was in this way that he acquired the great knowledge of various kinds of men, which is so clear and conspicuous in his writings; nor could that knowledge have been acquired on easier terms, or in any other way. No man could describe the character of Dandie Dinmont, without having been in Lidderdale.[47] Whatever has been once in a book may be put into a book again; but an original character, taken at first hand from the sheepwalks and from Nature, must be seen in order to be known. A man, to be able to describe—indeed, to be able to know—various people in life, must be able at sight to comprehend their essential features, to know how they shade one into another, to see how they diversify the common uniformity of civilised life. Nor does this involve simply intellectual or even imaginative pre-requisites, still less will it be facilitated by exquisite senses or subtle fancy. What is wanted is, to be

[45] The 'Open Sesame' anecdote is related for example in *Chambers's Papers for the People,* vol. v, Paper No. 40 (Edinburgh: William and Robert Chambers) p. 21.
[46] The standard and massive life of Scott was that published by his son-in-law, J. G. Lockhart in seven volumes in 1837 – 1838 and it is this gargantuan biography to which I presume Bagehot refers. That edition was later supplemented by two volumes of Scott's own journal and a slightly expanded biography to comprise a ten volume edition (Cambridge, MA: Houghton, Mifflin and Company,1901).
[47] Dinmont is a character in Scott's *Guy Mannering* (Edinburgh: James Ballantyne and Company, 1815).

able to appreciate mere clay—which mere mind never will. If you will describe the people,—nay, if you will write for the people, you must be one of the people. You must have led their life, and must wish to lead their life. However strong in any poet may be the higher qualities of abstract thought or conceiving fancy, unless he can actually sympathise with those around him, he can never describe those around him. Any attempt to produce a likeness of what is not really *liked* by the person who is describing it, will end in the creation of what may be correct, but is not living—of what may be artistic, but is likewise artificial.

Perhaps this is the defect of the works of the greatest dramatic genius of recent times—Goethe.[48] His works are too much in the nature of literary studies; the mind is often deeply impressed by them, but one doubts if the author was. He saw them as he saw the houses of Weimar and the plants in the act of metamorphosis. He had a clear perception of their fixed condition and their successive transitions, but he did not really (if we may so speak) comprehend their motive power. So to say, he appreciated their life, but not their liveliness. Niebuhr, as is well known, compared the most elaborate of Goethe's works—the novel *Wilhelm Meister*—to a menagerie of tame animals, meaning thereby, as we believe, to express much the same distinction.[49] He felt that there was a deficiency in mere vigour and rude energy. We have a long train and no engine—a great accumulation of excellent matter, arranged and ordered with masterly skill, but not animated with overbuoyant and unbounded play. And we trace this not to a defect in imaginative power, a defect which it would be a simple absurdity to impute to Goethe, but to the tone of his character and the habits of his mind. He moved hither and thither through life, but he was always a man apart. He mixed with unnumbered kinds of

[48] Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749 – 1832), German poet, novelist and playwright. Bagehot did not author an essay on Goethe but he is referenced in Bagehot's earliest known publication, his (probably over-enthusiastic) review of Philip James Bailey's (1818 – 1902) epic poetic retelling of the Faust myth, *Festus*. Bagehot was twenty-one when he wrote this review ('Festus', in *Collected Works,* vol. i, pp. 113 – 141). In putting Bailey's text in its context Bagehot is blunt: 'the "Faust" of Goethe is by very much the very finest version of the tale'. (p. 115).

[49] Goethe, trans. Thomas Carlyle, *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship and Travels* 1829, (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1855).

men, with courts and academies, students and women, camps and artists, but everywhere he was with them, yet not of them. In every scene he was there, and he made it clear that he was there with a reserve and as a stranger. He went there *to experience.* As a man of universal culture and well skilled in the order and classification of human life, the fact of any one class or order being beyond his reach or comprehension seemed an absurdity, and it was an absurdity. He thought that he was equal to moving in any description of society, and he was equal to it; but then on that exact account he was absorbed in none. There were none of surpassing and immeasurably preponderating captivation. No scene and no subject were to him what Scotland and Scotch nature were to Sir Walter Scott. 'If I did not see the heather once a year, I should die,' said the latter; but Goethe would have lived without it, and it would not have cost him much trouble. In every one of Scott's novels there is always the spirit of the old moss-trooper—the flavour of the ancient border; there is the intense sympathy which enters into the most living moments of the most living characters—the lively energy which *becomes* the energy of the most vigorous persons delineated. 'Marmion' was 'written' while he was galloping on horseback. It reads as if it were so.

Now it appears that Shakespeare not only had that various commerce with, and experience of men, which was common both to Goethe and to Scott, but also that he agrees with the latter rather than with the former in the kind and species of that experience. He was not merely with men, but of men; he was not a 'thing apart,' with a clear intuition of what was in those around him; he had in his own nature the germs and tendencies of the very elements that he described.[50] He knew what was in man, for he felt it in himself. Throughout all his writings you see an amazing sympathy with common people, rather an excessive tendency to dwell on the common features of ordinary lives. You feel that common people could have been cut out of him, but not without his feeling it; for it would have deprived him of a very favourite subject—of a portion of his ideas to which he habitually recurred.

[50] '[T]hing apart', from Lord Byron's (1788 – 1824) 'Don Juan' (initially published serially between 1819 and 1824) (Halifax: Milner and Sowerby, 1837).

Leon.

What would you with me, honest neighbour?

Dog.

Marry, sir, I would have some confidence with you, that discerns you nearly.

Leon.

Brief, I pray you; for you see 'tis a busy time with me.

Dog.

Marry, this it is, sir.

Verg.

Yes, in truth it is, sir.

Leon.

What is it, my good friends?

Dog.

Goodman Verges, sir, speaks a little off the matter: an old man, sir, and his wits are not so blunt, as, God help, I would desire they were; but, in faith, honest as the skin between his brows.

Verg.

Yes, I thank God, I am as honest as any man living, that is an old man, and no honester than I.

Dog.

Comparisons are odorous:—*palabras,* neighbour Verges.

Leon.

Neighbours, you are tedious.

Dog.

It pleases your worship to say so, but we are the poor duke's officers; but, truly, for mine own part, if I were as tedious as a king, I could find in my heart to bestow it all of your worship.[51]

. . . . . .

Leon.

I would fain know what you have to say.

Verg.

Marry, sir, our watch to-night, excepting your worship's presence, have ta'en a couple of as arrant knaves as any in Messina.

Dog.

A good old man, sir; he will be talking; as they say, When the age is in, the wit is out; God help us! it is a world to see!—Well said, i' faith, neighbour Verges:—well, God's a good man; an two men ride of a horse, one must ride behind:—An honest soul, i' faith, sir; by my troth he is, as ever broke bread; but God is to be worshipped: All men are not alike; alas, good neighbour!

Leon.

Indeed, neighbour, he comes too far short of you.

[51] *Much Ado About Nothing* (3.5.1 - 17 – 17 / 3.5, pp. 93-94).

Dog.

Gifts that God gives,"—etc., etc.[52]

……..

"*Stafford.*

Ay, sir.

Cade.

By her he had two children at one birth.

Staff.

That's false.

Cade.

Ay, there's the question; but, I say, 'tis true:

The elder of them, being put to nurse,

Was by a beggar-woman stol'n away:

And, ignorant of his birth and parentage,

Became a bricklayer, when he came to age;

His son am I; deny it, if you can.

Dick.

Nay, 'tis too true; therefore he shall be king.

[52] *Much Ado about Nothing* (3.5.23 – 32 / 3.5, p. 94)

Smith.

Sir, he made a chimney in my father's house, and the bricks are alive at this day to testify it; therefore, deny it not.[53]

Shakespeare was too wise not to know that for most of the purposes of human life stupidity is a most valuable element. He had nothing of the impatience which sharp logical narrow minds habitually feel when they come across those who do not apprehend their quick and precise deductions. No doubt he talked to the stupid players, to the stupid doorkeeper, to the property man, who considers paste jewels 'very preferable, besides the expense'—talked with the stupid apprentices of stupid Fleet Street, and had much pleasure in ascertaining what was their notion of 'King Lear'. In his comprehensive mind it was enough if every man hitched well into his own place in human life. If every one were logical and literary, how would there be scavengers, or watchmen, or caulkers, or coopers? Narrow minds will be 'subdued to what' they 'work in'. The 'dyer's hand'[54] will not more clearly carry off its tint, nor will what is moulded more precisely indicate the confines of the mould. A patient sympathy, a kindly fellow-feeling for the narrow intelligence necessarily induced by narrow circumstances—a narrowness which, in some degrees, seems to be inevitable, and is perhaps more serviceable than most things to the wise conduct of life—this, though quick and half-bred minds may despise it, seems to be a necessary constituent in the composition of manifold genius. 'How shall the world be served?' asks the host in Chaucer.[55] We must have cart-horses as well as race-horses, draymen as well as poets. It is no bad thing, after all, to be a slow man and to have one idea a year.[56] You don't make a figure,

[53] *Henry VI Part II* (4.2.106 – 117 / 4.2, p. 386).
[54] 'Sonnet 111', lines 6 – 7: 'And almost thence my nature is subdued / To what it works in, like the dyer's hand'.
[55] From the General Prologue of *The Canterbury Tales*, Geoffrey Chaucer (c. 1340 – 1400). Modern language edition, trans. Nevill Coghill (London: Penguin, 2012).
[56] It becomes an archetype of Bagehot's political writing that he places great faith in the power of mediocrity as a sustaining force: 'In many matters of business, perhaps in most, a continuity of mediocrity is better than a hotch-potch of excellences'. From *The English Constitution* (*Collected Works,* vol. v, pp. 165 – 396) p. 319.

perhaps, in argumentative society, which requires a quicker species of thought, but is that the worse? [*Some people like to argue after their dinner, others like to sleep; but let no man say to his fellow, 'Because thou arguest not, I have no need of thee'. Let each be after his kind, and one does his work in a morning as well as the other.*]

Hol.

Via, Goodman Dull; thou hast spoken no word all this while.

Dull.

Nor understood none either, sir.

Hol.

Allons, we will employ thee.

Dull.

I'll make one in a dance or so, or I will play on the tabor to the worthies, and let them dance the hay.

Hol.

Most dull, honest Dull, to our sport away.[57]

And such, we believe, was the notion of Shakespeare.

S. T. Coleridge has a nice criticism which bears on this point.[58] He observes that in the narrations of uneducated people in Shakespeare, just as in real life, there is a

[57] *Love's Labour's Lost* (*5*.1.102 – 107 / 5.1, p. 128).
[58] Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772 – 1834), noted Romantic poet and critic. Bagehot did not subject Coleridge Senior to his critical gaze but wrote an early and sympathetic appreciation of Coleridge's sometime wastrel son, Hartley Coleridge (1796 – 1849) ('Hartley Coleridge', *Collected Works*, vol. I, pp. 143 – 171) who had, after his parents' estrangement, been raised in the home of Robert Southey (nn. 37, 38 and 40 above). As to Coleridge on Shakespeare, Bagehot

want of prospectiveness and a superfluous amount of regressiveness. People of this sort are unable to look a long way in front of them, and they wander from the right path. They get on too fast with one half, and then the other hopelessly lags. They can tell a story exactly as it is told to them (as an animal can go step by step where it has been before), but they can't calculate its bearings beforehand, or see how it is to be adapted to those to whom they are speaking, nor do they know how much they have thoroughly told and how much they have not. 'I went up the street, then I went down the street; no, first went down and then—but you do not follow me; I go before you, sir.' Thence arises the complex style usually adopted by persons not used to narration. They tumble into a story and get on as they can. This is scarcely the sort of thing which a man could foresee. Of course a metaphysician can account for it, and, like Coleridge, assure you that if he had not observed it, he could have predicted it in a moment; but, nevertheless, it is too refined a conclusion to be made out from known premises by common reasoning. Doubtless there is some reason why negroes have woolly hair (and if you look into a philosophical treatise, you will find that the author could have made out that it would be so, if he had not, by a mysterious misfortune, known from infancy that it was the fact),—still one could never have supposed it oneself. And in the same manner, though the profounder critics may explain in a satisfactory and refined manner, how the confused and undulating style of narration is peculiarly incident to the mere multitude, yet it is most likely that Shakespeare derived his acquaintance with it from the fact, from actual hearing, and not from what may be the surer, but is the slower, process of metaphysical deduction. The best passage to illustrate this is that in which the nurse gives a statement of Juliet's age; but it will not exactly suit our pages. The following of Mrs. Quickly will suffice:—

> Tilly-fally, Sir John, never tell me; your ancient swaggerer comes not in my doors. I was before Master Tizzick, the Deputy, the other day; and, as he said to me,—it was no longer ago than Wednesday last,—Neighbour

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possibly alludes to Coleridge's recorded aphorisms on *Hamlet,* particularly on the natures of Hamlet and Polonius – see *The Table Talk and Omniana of Samuel Taylor Coleridge* (Oxford: OUP, 1917) pp. 65 – 66: 'A man of maxims only is like a Cyclops with one eye, and that eye placed in the back of his head'.

> Quickly, says he;—Master Dumb, our minister, was by then;—Neighbour Quickly, says he, receive those that are civil; for, saith he, you are in an ill name:—now, he said so, I can tell you whereupon; for, says he, you are an honest woman, and well thought on; therefore take heed to what guests you receive: Receive, says he, no swaggering companions.—There comes none here;—you would bless you to hear what he said:—no, I'll no swaggerers.[59]

Now, it is quite impossible that this, any more than the political reasoning on the parentage of Cade, which was cited before, should have been written by one not habitually and sympathisingly conversant with the talk of the illogical classes. Shakespeare felt, if we may say so, the force of the bad reasoning. He did not, like a sharp logician, angrily detect a flaw, and set it down as a fallacy of reference or a fallacy of amphibology. This is not the English way, though Dr. Whately's logic has been published so long (and, as he says himself, must now be deemed to be irrefutable, since no one has ever offered any refutation of it).[60] Yet still people in this country do not like to be committed to distinct premises. They like a Chancellor of the Exchequer to say: 'It has during very many years been maintained by the honourable member for Montrose that two and two make four, and I am free to say, that I think there is a great deal to be said in favour of that opinion; but, without committing her Majesty's Government to that proposition as an abstract sentiment, I will go so far as to assume two and two are not sufficient to make five, which with the permission of the House, will be a sufficient basis for all the operations which I propose to enter upon during the present year'. We have no doubt Shakespeare reasoned in that way himself. Like any other Englishman, when he had a clear course before him, he rather liked to shuffle over little hitches in the argument, and on that account he had a great sympathy with those who did so too. He would never have interrupted Mrs. Quickly; he saw that her mind was going to and fro over the subject; he saw that it was coming right, and this was enough for him, and will be also enough of this topic for our readers.

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[59] *Henry IV Part II* (2.4.56 – 64 / 2.4, p. 316).
[60] See note 25 above

We think we have proved that Shakespeare had an enormous specific acquaintance with the common people; that this can only be obtained by sympathy. It likewise has a further condition.

In spiritedness, the style of Shakespeare is very like to that of Scott. The description of a charge of cavalry in Scott reads, as was said before, as if it was written on horseback. A play by Shakespeare reads as if it were written in a playhouse. The great critics assure you that a theatrical audience must be kept awake, but Shakespeare knew this of his own knowledge. When you read him, you feel a sensation of motion, a conviction that there is something 'up,' a notion that not only is something being talked about, but also that something is being done. We do not imagine that Shakespeare owed this quality to his being a player, but rather that he became a player because he possessed this quality of mind. For after, and notwithstanding, everything which has been, or may be, said against the theatrical profession, it certainly does require from those who pursue it a certain quickness and liveliness of mind. Mimics are commonly an elastic sort of persons, and it takes a little levity of disposition to enact even the 'heavy fathers'.[61] If a boy joins a company of strolling players, you may be sure that he is not a 'good boy'; he may be a trifle foolish, or a thought romantic, but certainly he is not slow. And this was in truth the case with Shakespeare. They say, too, that in the beginning he was a first-rate link-boy; and the tradition is affecting, though we fear it is not quite certain. Anyhow, you feel about Shakespeare that he could have been a link-boy. In the same way you feel he may have been a player.[62] [You are sure at once that he could not have followed any sedentary kind of life.] [*He could not have been a tailor; nor written long letters about nothing: he would have looked too much out of window, and signally failed in a diplomatic office.*] But wheresoever there was

[61] Possibly a reference to the stock character type in ancient Greek comedy, also known as 'senex iratus'. The phrase 'heavy fathers' has been applied in particular to this type in Molière's (1622 – 1673) French dramas.

[62] In fact since the time of Rowe's edition of the complete Shakespeare and certainly by the time of the writing of 'Shakespeare – The Individual', it was widely known that Shakespeare had been a player. In the First Folio his name is given pride of place in the list of 'Principal Actors'. See more generally Schoenbaum (op. cit.) pp. 16 – 19. See also note 70 below.

anything *acted* in earnest or in jest, by way of mock representation or by way of serious reality, there he found matter for his mind. If anybody could have any doubt about the liveliness of Shakespeare, let them consider the character of Falstaff. When a man has created *that* without a capacity for laughter, then a blind man may succeed in describing colours. Intense animal spirits are the single sentiment (if they be a sentiment) of the entire character. If most men were to save up all the gaiety of their whole lives, it would come about to the gaiety of one speech in Falstaff. A morose man might have amassed many jokes, might have observed many details of jovial society, might have conceived a Sir John, marked by rotundity of body, but could hardly have imagined what we call his rotundity of mind. We mean that the animal spirits of Falstaff give him an easy, vague, diffusive sagacity which is peculiar to him. A morose man, Iago, for example, may know anything, and is apt to know a good deal; but what he knows is generally all in corners. He knows number 1, number 2, number 3, and so on, but there is not anything continuous, or smooth, or fluent in his knowledge. Persons conversant with the works of Hazlitt will know in a minute what we mean.[63] Everything which he observed he seemed to observe from a certain soreness of mind; he looked at people because they offended him; he had the same vivid notion of them that a man has of objects which grate on a wound in his body. But there is nothing at all of this in Falstaff; on the contrary, everything pleases him, and everything is food for a joke. Cheerfulness and prosperity give an easy abounding sagacity of mind which nothing else does give. Prosperous people bound easily over all the surface of things which their lives present to them; very likely they keep to the surface; there are things beneath or above to which they may not penetrate or attain, but what is on any part of the surface, that they know well. 'Lift not the painted veil which those who live call life,' and they do not lift it.[64] What is sublime or awful

[63] William Hazlitt (1778 – 1830), essayist and critic of huge renown. Not untypically Bagehot relegates a great body of criticism to a lower rank by the application of a swift glibness. Doubtless Hazlitt might be numbered among those whose 'experiencing nature' was deficient. See also note 15 above.
[64] Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792 – 1822), from 'Sonnet: Lift Not the Painted Veil' in *Miscellaneous Poems* (London: William Benbow, 1826) p. 23.

above, what is 'sightless and drear' beneath,—these they may not dream of.[65] Nor is any one piece or corner of life so well impressed on them as on minds less happily constituted. It is only people who have had a tooth out, that really know the dentist's waiting-room. Yet such people, for the time at least, know nothing but that and their tooth. The easy and sympathising friend who accompanies them knows everything; hints gently at the contents of the *Times,* and would cheer you with Lord Palmerston's replies.[66] So, on a greater scale, the man of painful experience knows but too well what has hurt him, and where and why; but the happy have a vague and rounded view of the round world, and such was the knowledge of Falstaff.

It is to be observed that these high spirits are not a mere excrescence or superficial point in an experiencing nature; on the contrary, they seem to be essential, if not to its idea or existence, at least to its exercise and employment. How are you to know people without talking to them, but how are you to talk to them without tiring yourself? A common man is exhausted in half an hour; Scott or Shakespeare could have gone on for a whole day. This is, perhaps, peculiarly necessary for a painter of English life. The basis of our national character seems to be a certain energetic humour, which may be found in full vigour in old Chaucer's time, and in great perfection in at least one of the popular writers of this age, and which is, perhaps, most easily described by the name of our greatest painter—Hogarth.[67] It

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[65] Ibid. Three years after his Shakespeare essay, Bagehot turns his attention to Shelley (*Collected Works,* vol. i, pp. 433 – 476). Bagehot repeats his critical method of knowing the man by his work: 'No writer has left so clear an image of himself in his writings', (p. 433). Bagehot concludes of Shelley that, 'The peculiarity of his style is his intellectuality', (p. 475).

[66] Henry John Temple, 3rd Viscount Palmerston (1784 – 1865), English statesman, sometime Tory, sometime Whig, eventually the first Liberal Prime Minister. He held various government offices almost continuously from 1807 to his death, most often as Foreign Secretary. In 1851 his off-colour views on Louis Napoleon's self-coup led to Palmerston's resignation as Foreign Secretary. These views were not dissimilar to the youthful cynicism of Bagehot's own published letters written from Paris at the time of the coup which scandalised the readers of the *Inquirer* and set Bagehot on his journalistic course.

[67] William Hogarth (1697 – 1764). Bagehot's designation of Hogarth as England's 'greatest painter' tells us rather more about Bagehot's view of the English than it does about Hogarth. Bagehot always had an affectionate contempt for the dullard

is amusing to see how entirely the efforts of critics and artists fail to naturalise in England any other sort of painting. Their efforts are fruitless; for the people painted are not English people: they may be Italians, or Greeks, or Jews, but it is quite certain that they are foreigners. [We should not fancy that modern art ought to resemble the Mediæval.] [*The reason is, that people are taught that modern art ought to resemble the Mediaeval. It has been overlooked, that the great places for art in former times, were churches and chancels, that now they are dining-rooms and galleries.*] So long as artists attempt the same class of paintings as Raphael, they will not only be inferior to Raphael, but they will never please, as they might please, the English people. What we want is what Hogarth gave us—a representation of ourselves. It may be that we are wrong, that we ought to prefer something of the old world, some scene in Rome or Athens, some tale from Carmel or Jerusalem; but, after all, we do not. These places are, we think, abroad, and had their greatness in former times; we wish a copy of what now exists, and of what we have seen. London we know, and Manchester we know, but where are all these? It is the same with literature, Milton excepted, and even Milton can hardly be called a popular writer; all great English writers describe English people, and in describing them, they give, as they must give, a large comic element; and, speaking generally, this is scarcely possible, except in the case of cheerful and easy-living men. There is, no doubt, a biting satire, like that of Swift, which has for its essence misanthropy.[68] There is the mockery of Voltaire, which is based on intellectual contempt; but this is not our English humour—it is not that of Shakespeare and Falstaff; ours is the humour of a man who laughs when he speaks, of flowing enjoyment, of an experiencing nature.[69]

English, certainly in contradistinction to the Irish and the French, whom he found ill-equipped for quiet government by the very fact of their intelligence. *Britannica* (1959) has it that Hogarth claims his unique position among English artists not as painter or engraver but as, 'a humorist and a satirist upon canvas. Regarded in this light he has never been equalled'.

[68] Jonathan Swift (1667 – 1745), Anglo-Irish satirist, author, poet and cleric.

[69] Voltaire, nom de plume of Francois-Marie Arouet (1694 – 1778). Voltaire did much to bring Shakespeare to the attention of eighteenth-century continental Europe but manifested a growing animus against Shakespeare on account of the Englishman's departure from classical forms - see for example *The Cambridge*

Yet it would be a great error if we gave anything like an exclusive prominence to this aspect of Shakespeare. Thus he appeared to those around him—in some degrees they knew that he was a cheerful, and humorous, and happy man; but of his higher gift they knew less than we.[70] A great painter of men must (as has been said) have a faculty of conversing, but he must also have a capacity for solitude. There is much of mankind that a man can only learn from himself. Behind every man's external life, which he leads in company, there is another which he leads alone, and which he carries with him apart. We see but one aspect of our neighbour, as we see but one side of the moon; in either case there is also a dark half, which is unknown to us. We all come down to dinner, but each has a room to himself. And if we would study the internal lives of others, it seems essential that we should begin with our own. If we study this our *datum,* if we attain to see and feel how this influences and evolves itself in our social and (so to say) public life, then it is possible that we may find in the lives of others the same or analogous features; and if we do not, then at least we may suspect that those who want them are deficient likewise in the secret agencies which we feel produce them in ourselves. The metaphysicians assert that people originally picked up the idea of the existence of other people in this way. It is orthodox doctrine that a baby says: 'I have a mouth, mamma has a mouth: therefore I'm the same species as mamma. I have a nose, papa has a nose: therefore papa is the same genus as me.' But whether or not this ingenious idea really does or does not represent the actual process by which we originally obtain an acquaintance with the existence of minds analogous to our own, it gives unquestionably the process by which we obtain our notion of that part of those minds which they never exhibit consciously to others, and which only becomes predominant in secrecy and solitude and to themselves.

History of English and American Literature, vol. iv, eds. Ward, Waller, Trent, Erskine, Sherman (Cambridge: CUP, 1907 – 1921) chapter xii, section 5.

[70] In typical and breezy journalistic manner Bagehot flies in the face of his earlier bald statement that there is a lack of bibliographic detail of Shakespeare. In this he follows Maunder's similarly unsourced brevity ('he [Shakespeare] was indisputably a kind-hearted man' - p. vi) in his three page *Life* at the beginning of his edition, itself culled from Nicholas Rowe's classic 1709 *Some Account of the Life* that prefaced Rowe's edition, the first true edited edition. Rowe (1674 – 1718) was Poet Laureate for three years from 1715.

Now, that Shakespeare has this insight into the musing life of man, as well as into his social life, is easy to prove; take, for instance, the following passages:—

"This battle fares like to the morning's war,

When dying clouds contend with growing light;

What time the shepherd, blowing of his nails,

Can neither call it perfect day nor night.

Now sways it this way, like a mighty sea,

Forc'd by the tide to combat with the wind;

Now sways it that way, like the self-same sea

Forc'd to retire by fury of the wind:

Sometime, the flood prevails; and then, the wind:

Now, one the better; then, another best;

Both tugging to be victors, breast to breast,

Yet neither conqueror, nor conquered;

So is the equal poise of this fell war.

Here on this molehill will I sit me down.

To whom God will, there be the victory!

For Margaret my queen, and Clifford too,

Have chid me from the battle; swearing both

They prosper best of all when I am thence.

Would I were dead! if God's good will were so;

For what is in this world but grief and woe?

Oh God! methinks it were a happy life,

To be no better than a homely swain:

To sit upon a hill, as I do now,

To carve out dials quaintly, point by point,

Thereby to see the minutes how they run:

How many make the hour full complete,

How many hours bring about the day,

How many days will finish up the year,

How many years a mortal man may live.

When this is known, then to divide the time:

So many hours must I tend my flock;

So many hours must I take my rest;

So many hours must I contemplate;

So many hours must I sport myself;

So many days my ewes have been with young;

So many weeks ere the poor fools will yean;

So many years ere I shall shear the fleece;

So minutes, hours, days, weeks, months, and years,

Pass'd over to the end they were created,

Would bring white hairs unto a quiet grave.

Ah, what a life were this! how sweet! how lovely!

Gives not the hawthorn bush a sweeter shade

To shepherds, looking on their silly sheep

Than doth a rich embroider'd canopy

To kings, that fear their subjects' treachery?

O yes, it doth; a thousand-fold it doth.

And to conclude,—the shepherd's homely curds,

His cold thin drink out of his leather bottle,

His wonted sleep under a fresh tree's shade,

All which secure and sweetly he enjoys,

If far beyond a prince's delicates,

His viands sparkling in a golden cup,

His body couchèd in a curious bed,

When care, mistrust, and treason wait on him."[71]

……...

[71] *Henry VI Part III* (2.5.1 – 54 / 2.5, pp. 399 - 400).

“A fool, a fool!—I met a fool i’ the forest,

A motley fool!—a miserable world;—

As I do live by food, I met a fool;

Who laid him down and basked him in the sun,

And railed on lady Fortune in good terms,

In good set terms,—and yet a motley fool.

‘Good-morrow, fool,’ quoth I: ‘No, sir,’ quoth he,

‘Call me not fool, till heaven hath sent me fortune:’

And then he drew a dial from his poke,

And looking on it with lack-lustre eye,

Says, very wisely, ‘It is ten o’clock:

Thus may we see,’ quoth he, ‘how the world wags;

’Tis but an hour ago since it was nine;

And after an hour more, ’twill be eleven;

And so, from hour to hour, we ripe and ripe,

And then, from hour to hour, we rot and rot,

And thereby hangs a tale.’ When I did hear

The motley fool thus moral on the time,

My lungs began to crow like chanticleer,

That fools should be so deep-contemplative;

And I did laugh, sans intermission,

An hour by his dial."[72]

No slight versatility of mind and pliancy of fancy could pass at will from scenes such as these to the ward of Eastcheap and the society which heard the chimes at midnight.[73] One of the reasons of the rarity of great imaginative works is that in very few cases is this capacity for musing solitude combined with that of observing mankind. A certain constitutional though latent melancholy is essential to such a nature. This is the exceptional characteristic in Shakespeare. All through his works you feel you are reading the popular author, the successful man; but through them all there is a certain tinge of musing sadness pervading, and, as it were, softening their gaiety. Not a trace can be found of 'eating cares' or narrow and mind-contracting toil, but everywhere there is, in addition to shrewd sagacity and buoyant wisdom, a refining element of chastening sensibility, which prevents sagacity from being rough, and shrewdness from becoming cold. He had an eye for either sort of life:—

Why, let the stricken deer go weep,

The hart ungallèd play;

For some must watch, and some must sleep,

Thus runs the world away.[74]

In another point also Shakespeare, as he was, must be carefully contrasted with the estimate that would be formed of him from such delineations as that of Falstaff, and that was doubtless frequently made by casual, though only by casual, frequenters of the Mermaid. It has been said that the mind of Shakespeare contained within it the mind of Scott; it remains to be observed that it contained

[72] *As You Like It* (2.7.12 - 33 / 2.7, p. 158).
[73] That is to say at The Mermaid Tavern, the site of Hal's revels with Falstaff.
[74] *Hamlet* (3.2.234 - 237 / 3.2, p. 680).

also the mind of Keats.[75] For, beside the delineation of human life, and beside also the delineation of Nature, there remains also for the poet a third subject—the delineation of *fancies.* Of course these, be they what they may, are like to, and were originally borrowed from, either man or Nature—from one or from both together. We know but two things in the simple way of direct experience, and whatever else we know must be in some mode or manner compacted out of them. Yet 'books are a substantial world, both pure and good,' and so are fancies too.[76] In all countries, men have devised to themselves a whole series of half-divine creations—mythologies Greek and Roman, fairies, angels, beings who may be, for aught we know, but with whom, in the meantime, we can attain to no conversation. The most known of these mythologies are the Greek, and what is, we suppose, the second epoch of the Gothic, the fairies; and it so happens that Shakespeare has dealt with them both, and in a remarkable manner. We are not, indeed, of those critics who profess simple and unqualified admiration for the poem of 'Venus and Adonis'. It seems intrinsically, as we know it from external testimony to have been, a juvenile production, written when Shakespeare's nature might be well expected to be crude and unripened.[77] Power is shown, and power of a remarkable kind; but it is not displayed in a manner that will please or does please the mass of men. In spite of the name of its author, the poem has never been popular—and surely this is sufficient. Nevertheless, it is remarkable as a literary exercise, and as a treatment of a singular, though unpleasant subject. The fanciful class of poems

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[75] John Keats (1795 – 1821), Romantic poet whose work was not well received in his lifetime but attracted attention after his early death. In his essay, 'Tennyson's Idylls' (1859, *Collected Works,* vol. ii, pp. 179 – 207), Bagehot compares Keats with Tennyson and Shelley, finding that Keats is defective in that he writes only 'for young people' (p. 180) but that he shares with Shelley the gift of presenting 'poetry to the world in its pure essence' (p. 181). As for Keats himself, he greatly admired (as does Bagehot though not in such formalistic terms) Shakespeare's 'negative capability'. For a discussion of this see Stephen Hebron on the British Library website: https://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/john-keats-and-negative-capability .

[76] Wordsworth, 'Personal Talk', in *Poems of Wordsworth*, ed. Matthew Arnold (London: Macmillan, 1879) p. 214.

[77] Bate and Rasmussen's conjectural chronology in *RSC Complete Works*, places the poem in 1593 when Shakespeare was twenty-seven. In the context of note 75 above, Keats was dead at twenty-five.

differ from others in being laid, so far as their scene goes, in a perfectly unseen world. The type of such productions is Keats's 'Endymion'. We mean that it is the type, not as giving the abstract perfection of this sort of art, but because it shows and embodies both its excellences and defects in a very marked and prominent manner. In that poem there are no passions and no actions, there is no [art] [*heart*] and no life; but there is beauty, and that is meant to be enough, and to a reader of one and twenty it is enough and more. What are exploits or speeches? what is Cæsar or Coriolanus? what is a tragedy like 'Lear,' or a real view of human life in any kind whatever, to people who do not know and do not care what human life is? In early youth it is, perhaps, not true that the passions, taken generally, are particularly violent, or that the imagination is in any remarkable degree powerful; but it is certain that the fancy (which though it be, in the last resort, but a weak stroke of that same faculty, which, when it strikes hard, we call imagination, may yet for this purpose be looked on as distinct) is particularly wakeful, and that the gentler species of passions are more absurd than they are afterwards. And the literature of this period of human life runs naturally away from the real world; away from the less ideal portion of it, from stocks and stones, and aunts and uncles, and rests on mere half-embodied sentiments, which in the hands of great poets assume a kind of semipersonality, and are, to the distinction between things and persons, 'as moonlight unto sunlight, and as water unto wine'.[78] The Sonnets of Shakespeare belong exactly to the same school of poetry. They are not the sort of verses to take any particular hold upon the mind permanently and for ever, but at a certain period they take too much. For a young man to read in the spring of the year among green fields and in gentle air, they are the ideal. As First of April poetry they are perfect.

The "Midsummer Night's Dream" is of another order. If the question were to be decided by "Venus and Adonis," in spite the unmeasured panegyrics of many

[78] Alfred, Lord Tennyson (1809 – 1892), Poet Laureate in succession to Wordsworth, from his 'Locksley Hall' (Boston, MA: Ticknor and Fields, 1869. First published 1842). As to Bagehot's neologism 'semipersonality' this is unrecognised in OED but would seem to be concomitant with Bagehot's reference to 'half-embodied sentiments'.

writers, we should be obliged in equity to hold, that as a poet of mere fancy Shakespeare was much inferior to the late Mr. Keats and even to meaner men. Moreover, we should have been prepared with some refined reasonings to show that it was unlikely that a poet with so much hold on reality, in life and Nature, both in solitude and in society, should have also a similar command over *un*reality: should possess a command not only of flesh and blood, but of the imaginary entities which the self-inworking fancy brings forth—impalpable conceptions of mere mind: *quædam simulacra miris pallentia modis,* thin ideas, which come we know not whence, and are given us we know not why.[79] But, unfortunately for this ingenious, if not profound suggestion, Shakespeare, in fact, possessed the very faculty which it tends to prove that he would not possess. He could paint Poins and Falstaff, but he excelled also in fairy legends. He had such

> Seething brains;
>
> Such shaping fantasies as apprehend
>
> More than cool reason ever comprehends.[80]

As, for example, the idea of Puck, or Queen Mab, of Ariel, or such a passage as the following:—

> *Puck.*
>
> How now, spirit! whither wander you?
>
> *Fai.*
>
> Over hill, over dale,
>
> Thorough bush, thorough briar,

[79] Cited by Forrest Morgan as from Lucretius, *De Rerum Natura*, I, xxiv. English version, trans. David R. Schatt (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2008). '*Quaedam simulacra'* et seq. – 'Some statues are pale in strange ways'.
[80] *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (5.1.5 – 7 / 5.1, p. 113).

Over park, over pale,

Thorough flood, thorough fire,

I do wander everywhere,

Swifter than the moones sphere;

And I serve the fairy queen,

To dew her orbs upon the green:

The cowslips tall her pensioners be

In their gold coats spots you see;

Those be rubies, fairy favours,

In those freckles live their savours:

I must go seek some dew-drops here,

And hang a pearl in every cowslip's ear.

Farewell, thou lob of spirits, I'll be gone;

Our queen and all our elves come here anon.

Puck.

The king doth keep his revels here to-night;

Take heed the queen come not within his sight.

For Oberon is passing fell and wrath,

Because that she, as her attendant, hath

A lovely boy, stolen from an Indian king;

She never had so sweet a changeling:

And jealous Oberon would have the child

Knight of his train, to trace the forests wild:

But she, perforce, withholds the lovèd boy,

Crowns him with flowers, and makes him all her joy:

And now they never meet in grove, or green,

By fountain clear, or spangled star-light sheen

But they do square; that all their elves, for fear,

Creep into acorn-cups, and hide them there.

Fai.

Either I mistake your shape and making quite,

Or else you are that shrewd and knavish sprite

Call'd Robin Good-fellow: are you not he

That fright the maidens of the villagery;

Skim milk; and sometimes labour in the quern,

And bootless make the breathless housewife churn;

And sometimes make the drink to bear no barm;

Mislead night-wanderers, laughing at their harm?

Those that Hobgoblin call you, and sweet Puck,

You do their work, and they shall have good luck:

Are not you he?

Puck.

Thou speak'st aright;

I am that merry wanderer of the night.

I jest to Oberon, and make him smile,

When I a fat and bean-fed horse beguile,

Neighing in likeness of a filly foal:

And sometimes lurk I in a gossip's bowl,

In very likeness of a roasted crab;

And, when she drinks, against her lips I bob,

And on her wither'd dew-lap pour the ale.

The wisest aunt, telling the saddest tale,

Sometime for three-foot stool mistaketh me;

Then slip I from beneath, down topples she,

And *tailor* cries, and falls into a cough;

And then the whole quire hold their hips, and loffe;

And waxen in their mirth, and neeze and swear

A merrier hour was never wasted there.—

But room, Fairy, here comes Oberon.

Fai.

And here my mistress:—Would that he were gone![81]

[Probably he believed in these things. Why not? Everybody else believed in them then. They suit our climate. As the Greek mythology suits the keen Attic sky, the fairies, indistinct and half-defined, suit a land of wild mists and gentle airs. They confuse the 'maidens of the villagery'; they are the paganism of the South of England.][82]

[*These lines are, as it were, the locus classicus of fairy literature, and like the conception of the ghost in Hamlet, derives much additional force from the fact that the audience, before whom it has to be acted, as well as the poet himself, undoubtingly believed in the existence of such beings. Why should we believe Shakespeare superior to all his country-men and all his age? Witchcraft and its legends, ghosts and their legends, fairies and their legends – such were the foibles of our ancestors. Anyhow, the spirit world lies above us and around us. No Act of Parliament may abolish it, and how and where it influences our common life, we cannot prove or discern. To each age be its own strength, and also its own weakness. Superstition was possibly the weak point of other times – our foible is Mesmerism; - is it to be proved we have gained much?*][83]

Can it be made out what were Shakespeare's political views? We think it certainly can, and that without difficulty. From the English historical plays, it distinctly appears that he accepted, like everybody then, the Constitution of his country. His lot was not cast in an age of political controversy, nor of reform. What was, was from of old. The Wars of the Roses had made it very evident how much room there was for the evils incident to an hereditary monarchy, for instance, those of a controverted succession, and the evils incident to an aristocracy, as want of public spirit and audacious selfishness, to arise and continue within the realm of England.

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[81] *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (2.1.1 – 60 / 2.1, p. 104).
[82] 'maidens of the villagery' – *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (2.1.35 / 2.1, p. 104)
[83] Mesmerism is the pseudo-science named for its pioneering practitioner, Franz Anton Mesmer (1734 – 1815), termed by him 'animal magnetism'. Mesmer believed in the influence of the stars upon health by reason of a subtle and invisible fluid. 'He [Mesmer] himself never grasped the psychological and physiological implications of his treatment' (*Britannica*).

Yet they had not repelled, and had barely disconcerted, our conservative ancestors. They had not become Jacobins; they did not concur—and history, except in Shakespeare, hardly does justice to them—in Jack Cade's notion that the laws should come out of his mouth, or that the commonwealth was to be reformed by interlocutors in this scene.

Geo.

I tell thee, Jack Cade the clothier means to dress the Commonwealth, and turn it, and set a new nap on it.

John.

So he had need, for 'tis threadbare. Well, I say it was never a merry world in England since gentlemen came up.

Geo.

O miserable age! Virtue is not regarded in handycraftsmen.

John.

The nobility think scorn to go in leather aprons.

Geo.

Nay more: the king's council are no good workmen.

John.

True; and yet it is said, Labour in thy vocation; which is as much as to say, as let the magistrates be labouring men, and therefore should we be magistrates.

Geo.

Thou hast hit it, for there is no better sign of a brave mind than a hard hand.

John.

I see them! I see them![84]

The English people did see them, and know them, and therefore have rejected them. An audience which, *bonâ fide,* entered into the merit of this scene, would never believe in everybody's suffrage. They would know that there is such a thing as nonsense, and when a man has once attained to that deep conception, you may be sure of him ever after. And though it would be absurd to say that Shakespeare originated this idea, or that the disbelief in simple democracy is owing to his teaching or suggestions, yet it may, nevertheless, be truly said, that he shared in the peculiar knowledge of men—and also possessed the peculiar constitution of mind—which engenders this effect. The author of 'Coriolanus' never believed in a mob, and did something towards preventing anybody else from doing so. But this political idea was not exactly the strongest in Shakespeare's mind. We think he had two other stronger, or as strong. First, the feeling of loyalty to the ancient polity of this country—not because it was good, but because it existed. In his time, people no more thought of the origin of the monarchy than they did of the origin of the Mendip Hills. The one had always been there, and so had the other. God (such was the common notion) had made both, and one as much as the other. Everywhere, in that age, the common modes of political speech assumed the existence of certain utterly national institutions, and would have been worthless and nonsensical except on that assumption. This national habit appears as it ought to appear in our national dramatist. [A great divine] [*Mr Maurice*] tells us that the Thirty-nine Articles are 'forms of thought; inevitable conditions of the religious understanding: in politics, 'kings, lords, and commons' are, no doubt, 'forms of thought,' to the great majority of Englishmen; in these they live, and beyond these they never move.[85] You can't reason on the removal (such is the notion) of the English Channel, nor St. George's Channel, nor can you of the English

[84] *Henry VI Part II* (4.2.4 – 16 / 4.2, p. 385).
[85] A reference to John Frederick Denison Maurice (1805 – 1872), English theologian and prolific writer. Like Bagehot the son of a Unitarian. Educated at Trinity College, Cambridge but prevented from taking his degree because of his refusal to accede to the Thirty-nine Articles of the Church of England.

Constitution, in like manner. It is to most of us, and to the happiest of us, a thing immutable, and such, no doubt, it was to Shakespeare, which, if any one would have proved, let him refer at random to any page of the historical English plays.[86]

The second peculiar tenet which we ascribe to his political creed, is a disbelief in the middle classes. We fear he had no opinion of traders. In this age, we know, it is held that the keeping of a shop is equivalent to a political education. Occasionally, in country villages, where the trader sells everything, he is thought to know nothing, and has no vote; but in a town where he is a householder (as, indeed, he is in the country), and sells only one thing—there we assume that he knows everything. And this assumption is, in the opinion of some observers, confirmed by the fact. Sir Walter Scott used to relate, that when, after a trip to London, he returned to Tweedside, he always found the people in that district knew more of politics than the Cabinet. And so it is with the mercantile community in modern times. If you are a Chancellor of the Exchequer, it is possible that you may be acquainted with finance; but if you sell figs it is certain that you will. Now we nowhere find this laid down in Shakespeare. On the contrary, you will generally find that when a 'citizen' is mentioned, he generally does or says something absurd. Shakespeare had a clear perception that it is possible to bribe a class as well as an individual, and that personal obscurity is but an insecure guarantee for political disinterestedness.

> Moreover, he hath left you all his walks,
>
> His private arbours and new-planted orchards
>
> On this side Tiber; he hath left them you,

[86] In the tumble of opinions that Bagehot spills into his prolific journalism, he often unwittingly trips himself up. His use of the word 'immutable' here is an example of seeming inconsistency with his work in *The English Constitution* and *Physics and Politics*, most particularly his diagnosis of the operation of 'animated moderation' upon a sustainable constitution. He is best understood as admiring the dull English polity, its outer structures immutable but their contents subject to incremental and desirable change.

> And to your heirs for ever: common pleasures,
>
> To walk abroad and recreate yourselves.
>
> Here was a Cæsar! when comes such another?[87]

He everywhere speaks in praise of a tempered and ordered and qualified polity, in which the pecuniary classes have a certain influence, but no more, and shows in every page a keen sensibility to the large views and high-souled energies, the gentle refinements and disinterested desires, in which those classes are likely to be especially deficient. He is particularly the poet of personal nobility, though, throughout his writings, there is a sense of freedom, just as Milton is the poet of freedom, though with an underlying reference to personal nobility; indeed, we might well expect our two poets to combine the appreciation of a rude and generous liberty with that of a delicate and refined nobleness, since it is the union of these two elements that characterises our society and their experience.

There are two things—good-tempered sense and ill-tempered sense.[88] In our remarks on the character of Falstaff, we hope we have made it very clear that Shakespeare had the former; we think it nearly as certain that he possessed the latter also. An instance of this might be taken from that contempt for the perspicacity of the *bourgeoisie* which we have just been mentioning. It is within the limits of what may be called malevolent sense, to take extreme and habitual pleasure in remarking the foolish opinions, the narrow notions, and fallacious deductions which seem to cling to the pompous and prosperous man of business.

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[87] *Julius Caesar* (3.2.244 – 249 / 3.2, p. 533).

[88] Bagehot, twice in two sentences, betrays his love of finding dichotomies. Here it is 'rude and generous liberty / delicate and refined nobleness', and 'good-tempered sense / ill-tempered sense'. This style of argument finds its most famous outlet in the 'dignified / efficient secret' of the *English Constitution*. We can see, in the early *Shakespeare* essay that this school of argument is already in Bagehot's mind. That Bagehot superimposes his own way of thinking onto Shakespeare is both a strength and weakness of 'Shakespeare – The Individual', as Haley (op. cit.) identifies: 'The essay does not at any point make us want to go back to Shakespeare – that is not its purpose – it does make us want to go on with Bagehot'. (p. 98).

Ask him his opinion of the currency question, and he puts 'bills' and 'bullion' together in a sentence, and he does not seem to care what he puts between them. But a more proper instance of (what has an odd sound), the malevolence of Shakespeare is to be found in the play of 'Measure for Measure'. We agree with Hazlitt, that this play seems to be written, perhaps more than any other, *con amore,* and with a relish; and this seems to be the reason why, notwithstanding the unpleasant nature of its plot, and the absence of any very attractive character, it is yet one of the plays which take hold on the mind most easily and most powerfully.[89] Now the entire character of Angelo, which is the expressive feature of the piece, is nothing but a successful embodiment of the pleasure, the malevolent pleasure, which a warm-blooded and expansive man takes in watching the rare, the dangerous and inanimate excesses of the constrained and cold-blooded. One seems to see Shakespeare, with his bright eyes and his large lips and buoyant face, watching with a pleasant excitement the excesses of his thin-lipped and calculating creation, as though they were the excesses of a real person. It is the complete picture of a natural hypocrite, who does not consciously disguise strong impulses, but whose very passions seem of their own accord to have disguised themselves and retreated into the recesses of the character, yet only to recur even more dangerously when their proper period is expired, when the will is cheated into security by their absence, and the world (and, it may be, the 'judicious person' himself) is impressed with a sure reliance in his chilling and remarkable rectitude.

It has, we believe, been doubted whether Shakespeare was a man much conversant with the intimate society of women. Of course no one denies that he possessed a great knowledge of them—a capital acquaintance with their excellences, faults, and foibles; but it has been thought that this was the result rather of imagination than of society, of creative fancy rather than of perceptive experience. Now that Shakespeare possessed, among other singular qualities, a

[89] Hazlitt, *Characters of Shakespeare's Plays* (London: C.H. Reynell, 1817). 'The height of moral arguments which the author has maintained in the intervals of passion or blended with the more powerful impulses of nature, is hardly surpassed in any of his plays' (p. 236).

remarkable imaginative knowledge of women, is quite certain, for he was acquainted with the soliloquies of women. A woman, we suppose, like a man, must be alone, in order to speak a soliloquy. After the greatest possible intimacy and experience, it must still be imagination, or fancy at least, which tells any man what a woman thinks of herself and to herself. There will still—get as near the limits of confidence or observation as you can—be a space which must be filled up from other means. Men can only divine the truth—reserve, indeed, is a part of its charm. Seeing, therefore, that Shakespeare had done what necessarily and certainly must be done without experience, we were in some doubt whether he might not have dispensed with it altogether. A grave reviewer cannot know these things. We thought indeed of reasoning that since the delineations of women in Shakespeare were admitted to be first-rate, it should follow—at least there was a fair presumption—that no means or aid had been wanting to their production, and that consequently we ought, in the absence of distinct evidence, to assume that personal intimacy as well as solitary imagination had been concerned in their production. And we meant to cite the 'questions about Octavia,' which Lord Byron, who thought he had the means of knowing, declared to be 'women all over'.[90] [*As we observed formerly, in case of field-sports, no man would know how a hare would run, unless he had been after a hare; so no man could know what opinion of a wife of 'holy, cold, and still conversation,' would be entertained by a princess of the Cleopatra sort, except by personal acquaintance.*

Cleo.
What majesty is in her gait? Remember
If e'er thou look'dst on majesty?

Mess.
She creeps;
Her motion and her station are as one;
She shows a body rather than a life:

[90] Byron's *Journal* 16 November 1813, in *Lord Byron, Selected Letters and Journals*, ed. Leslie A. Marchand, (Cambridge, MA: Bellknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1982) p. 85.

A statue, than a breather.

Cleo.

Is this certain?

Mess.

Or I have no observance.

Char.

Three in Egypt

Cannot make better note.

Cleo

He's very knowing,

I do perceive't – there is nothing in her yet:-

The fellow has good judgement.[91]

Pondering in a recluse solitude, we conjectured that this was experienced.] But all doubt was removed and all conjecture set to rest by the coming in of an ably-dressed friend from the external world, who mentioned that the language of Shakespeare's women was essentially female language; that there were certain points and peculiarities in the English of cultivated English women, which made it a language of itself, which must be heard familiarly in order to be known. And he added, 'Except a greater use of words of Latin derivation, as was natural in an age when ladies received a learned education, a few words not now proper, a few

[91] *Antony and Cleopatra* (3.3.24 – 35 / 3.3, p. 550). Bagehot's omission of this quotation from his final version seems a little odd, given that the Byron reference to these very 'questions about Octavia' has been left intact.

conceits that were the fashion of the time, and there is the very same English in the women's speeches in Shakespeare.[92] He quoted—

Think not I love him, though I ask for him;

'Tis but a peevish boy:—yet he talks well;—

But what care I for words? yet words do well,

When he that speaks them pleases those that hear.

It is a pretty youth:—not very pretty:—

But, sure, he's proud; and yet his pride becomes him;

He'll make a proper man. The best thing in him

Is his complexion; and faster than his tongue

Did make offence, his eye did heal it up.

He is not tall; yet for his years he's tall:

His leg is but so-so: and yet 'tis well.

There was a pretty redness in his lip;

A little riper and more lusty red

Than that mix'd in his cheek; 'twas just the difference

Betwixt the constant red, and mingled damask.

There be some women, Silvius, had they mark'd him

[92] The source for this quotation has not been located but it does not, as its context might suggest, seem to be from Byron's Notebooks.

In parcels as I did, would have gone near

To fall in love with him: but, for my part,

I love him not, nor hate him not; and yet

I have more cause to hate him than to love him:

For what had he to do to chide at me?

He said, my eyes were black, and my hair black,

And, now I am remember'd, scorn'd at me:

I marvel, why I answer'd not again:

But that's all one;[93]

and the passage of Perdita's cited before about the daffodils that—

take

The winds of March with beauty; violets dim,

But sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes,

Or Cytherea's breath;[94]

and said that these were conclusive. But we have not, ourselves, heard young ladies converse in that manner.

Perhaps it is in his power of delineating women, that Shakespeare contrasts most strikingly with the greatest master of the art of dialogue in antiquity—we mean Plato. It will, no doubt, be said that the delineation of women did not fall within Plato's plan; that men's life was in that age so separate and predominant that it

[93] *As You Like It* (3.5.110 – 134 / 3.5, p. 163).
[94] *The Winter's Tale* (4.4.136 – 140 / 4.3, p. 215).

could be delineated by itself and apart; and no doubt these remarks are very true. But what led Plato to form that plan? What led him to select that peculiar argumentative aspect of life, in which the masculine element is in so high a degree superior? We believe that he did it because he felt that he could paint that kind of scene much better than he could paint any other. If a person will consider the sort of conversation that was held in the cool summer morning, when Socrates was knocked up early to talk definitions and philosophy with Protagoras, he will feel, not only that women would fancy such dialogues to be certainly stupid, and very possibly to be without meaning, but also that the side of character which is there presented is one from which not only the feminine but even the epicene element is nearly, if not perfectly, excluded. It is the intellect surveying and delineating intellectual characteristics. We have a dialogue of thinking faculties; the character of every man is delineated by showing us, not his mode of action or feeling, but his mode of thinking, alone and by itself. The pure mind, purged of all passion and affection, strives to view and describe others in like manner; and the singularity is, that the likenesses so taken are so good—that the accurate copying of the merely intellectual effects and indications of character gives so true and so firm an impression of the whole character,—that a daguerreotype of the mind should almost seem to be a delineation of the life. But though in the hand of a consummate artist, such a way of representation may in some sense succeed in the case of men, it would certainly seem sure to fail in the case of women. The mere intellect of a woman is a mere nothing. It originates nothing, it transmits nothing, it retains nothing; it has little life of its own, and therefore it can hardly be expected to attain any vigour. Of the lofty Platonic world of the ideas, which the soul in the old doctrine was to arrive at by pure and continuous reasoning, women were never expected to know anything. Plato (though Mr. Grote denies that he was a practical man) was much too practical for that; he reserved his teaching for people whose belief was regulated and induced in some measure by abstract investigations; who had an interest in the pure and (as it were) geometrical truth itself; who had an intellectual character (apart from and accessory to their other character) capable

of being viewed as a large and substantial existence.[95] Shakespeare's being, like a woman's, worked as a whole. He was capable of intellectual abstractedness, but commonly he was touched with the sense of earth. One thinks of him as firmly set on our coarse world of common clay, but from it he could paint the moving essence of thoughtful feeling—which is the best refinement of the best women. Imogen or Juliet would have thought little of the conversation of Gorgias.[96]

On few subjects has more nonsense been written than on the learning of Shakespeare. In former times, the established tenet was, that he was acquainted with the entire range of the Greek and Latin classics, and familiarly resorted to Sophocles and Æschylus as guides and models.[97] This creed reposed not so much on any painful or elaborate criticism of Shakespeare's plays, as on one of the *a priori* assumptions permitted to the indolence of the wise old world. It was then considered clear, by all critics, that no one could write good English who could not also write bad Latin. Questioning scepticism has rejected this axiom, and refuted with contemptuous facility the slight attempt which had been made to verify this case of it from the evidence of the plays themselves. But the new school, not content with showing that Shakespeare was no formed or elaborate scholar, propounded the idea that he was quite ignorant, just as Mr. Croker 'demonstrates' that Napoleon Bonaparte could scarcely write or read.[98] The answer is that

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[95] George Grote (1794 – 1871), banker, politician, historian. Grote's output of historical tomes puts even Bagehot to shame, most notably his twelve volume *History of Greece* first published between1845 and 1856, (Reprint, New York, NY: Harper and Brothers, 1875). Grote was a Radical Liberal with a far greater trust in the wisdom of the public than possessed by Bagehot and a consistent advocate for an extended franchise and the secret ballot. Bagehot nonetheless admires Grote and, on Grote's death in 1871, contributes a glowing tribute to *The Spectator*: '"Those who go down to posterity," said Mr. Disraeli, both wittily and wisely, "are about as rare as planets," and Mr. Grote will be one of the few in this generation'. (*Collected Works,* vol. ii, p. 369 – 373) p. 373.

[96] Gorgias (c. 483 – 376 BC), Greek sophist and rhetorician. Little of his work survives and it is a lost work, *On Nature or on That Which Is Not*, that, possibly unfairly, has earned him the soubriqet 'the Nihilist', since it is reported to have argued that there is no being.

[97] Sophocles (497 – 465 BC) and Aeschylus (525 – 456 BC) were Greek tragedians.

[98] John Wilson Croker (1780 – 1857), Anglo-Irish politician and writer. A Tory MP who demonstrated a particular and partial interest in French political affairs. He contributed more than thirty articles to the *Quarterly Review* on French

Shakespeare wrote his plays, and that those plays show not only a very powerful, but also a very cultivated mind. A hard student Shakespeare was not, yet he was a happy and pleased reader of interesting books. He was a natural reader; when a book was dull he put it down, when it looked fascinating he took it up, and the consequence is, that he remembered and mastered what he read. Lively books, read with lively interest, leave strong and living recollections; the instructors, no doubt, say that they ought not to do so, and inculcate the necessity of dry reading. Yet the good sense of a busy public has practically discovered that what is read easily is recollected easily, and what is read with difficulty is remembered with more. It is certain that Shakespeare read the novels of his time, for he has founded on them the stories of his plays; he read Plutarch, for his words still live in the dialogue of the "proud Roman" plays; and it is remarkable that Montaigne is the only philosopher that Shakespeare can be proved to have read, because he deals more than any other philosopher with the first impressions of things which exist.[99] On the other hand, it may be doubted if Shakespeare would have perused his commentators. Certainly, he would have never read a page of this review, and we go so far as to doubt whether he would have been pleased with the admirable discourses of M. Guizot, which we ourselves, though ardent admirers of his style and ideas, still find it a little difficult to *read;*—and what would he have thought of the following speculations of an anonymous individual, whose notes have been recently published in a fine octavo by Mr. Collier, and, according to the periodical

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politics, the sequence ending in 1851 with Louis Napoleon's self-coup, which he abhorred. This is the very point at which Bagehot, with his letters to *The Inquirer* from revolutionary Paris, enters the scene with his contrarian views. For an account of Croker's writing on France see *The Victorian Web* at https://victorianweb.org/authors/croker/1.html .

[99] Michel de Montaigne (1533 -1592), French essayist and philosopher. Held to have been hugely influential, not least on the mature Shakespeare who is thought to have read John Florio's 1603 translation. 'Montaigne is one of the few great writers who have invented a literary kind. The essay as he gave it had no forerunner in modern literature and no direct ancestor in the literature of classical times' (*Britannica*, 1959). The first volume of Florio's translation was published in 1603 (London: David Nutt). It is notable that, like Shakespeare, Montaigne was greatly influenced by Plutarch. For a full analysis of the Shakespeare/Plutarch link see T.J.B. Spencer, *Shakespeare's Plutarch* (London: Peregrine, 1964).

essayists, 'contribute valuable suggestions to the illustration of the immortal bard'?[100]

> The Two Gentlemen of Verona.
>
> Act I. Scene I.
>
> P. 92. The reading of the subsequent line has hitherto been
>
> - ''Tis true; for you are over boots in love';
>
> but the manuscript corrector of the Folio, 1632, has changed it to
>
> - ''Tis true; *but* you are over boots in love,'
>
> which seems more consistent with the course of the dialogue; for Proteus, remarking that Leander had been 'more than over shoes in love, with Hero, Valentine answers, that Proteus was even more deeply in love than Leander. Proteus observes of the fable of Hero and Leander—
>
> - 'That's a deep story of a deeper love,
> - *For* he was more than over shoes in love'.
>
> Valentine retorts—
>
> - ''Tis true; *but* you are over boots in love'.
>
> *For* instead of *but* was perhaps caught by the compositor from the preceding line.'

It is difficult to fancy Shakespeare perusing a volume of such annotations, though we allow that we admire them ourselves. As to the controversy on his school learning, we have only to say, that though the alleged imitations of the Greek tragedians are mere nonsense, yet there is clear evidence that Shakespeare received the ordinary grammar-school education of his time, and that he had

[100] See note 1 above as to the later notoriety of Collier's offering.

derived from the pain and suffering of several years, not exactly an acquaintance with Greek or Latin, but, like Eton boys, a firm conviction that there are such languages.

Another controversy has been raised as to whether Shakespeare was religious. In the old editions it is commonly enough laid down that, when writing his plays, he had no desire to fill the Globe Theatre, but that his intentions were of the following description: 'In this play, "Cymbeline," Shakespeare has strongly depicted the frailties of our nature, and the effect of vicious passions on the human mind. In the fate of the Queen we behold the adept in perfidy justly sacrificed by the arts she had, with unnatural ambition, prepared for others; and in reviewing her death and that of Cloten, we may easily call to mind the words of Scripture,' etc.[101] And of 'King Lear' it is observed with great confidence, that Shakespeare, '*no doubt,* intended to mark particularly the afflicting character of children's ingratitude to their parents, and the conduct of Goneril and Regan to each other; *especially* in the former's poisoning the latter, and laying hands on *herself,* we are taught that those who want gratitude towards their parents (who gave them their being, fed them, nurtured them to *man's* estate) will not scruple to commit more barbarous crimes, and easily to forget that, by destroying their body, they destroy their soul also'.[102] And Dr. Ulrici, a very learned and illegible writer, has discovered that in every one of his plays Shakespeare had in view the inculcation of the peculiar sentiments and doctrines of the Christian religion, and considers the 'Midsummer Night's Dream' to be a specimen of the lay or amateur sermon.[103] This is what Dr. Ulrici thinks of Shakespeare; but what would Shakespeare have thought of Dr. Ulrici? We believe that '*Via,* goodman Dull,' is nearly the remark which the learned professor would

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[101] *The Maunder Shakespeare*,p. 563. Maunder contributed 'Introductory Observations' for each play and this is an extract from the essay on *Cymbeline*. As to my suggestion that this is the edition of Shakespeare from which Bagehot worked when writing his essay, see the *Introductory Note* to this edition

[102] Ibid. p. 621.

[103] Hermann Ulrici (1806 – 1884), German philosopher. Bagehot appears to be responding to his 1839 *On Shakespeare's Dramatic Art*. The polyglot Bagehot may be responding to the German original although there had been an English translation, trans. J.W. Morrison (London: Chapman Brothers, 1846).

have received from the poet to whom his very careful treatise is devoted.[104] And yet, without prying into the Teutonic mysteries, a gentleman of missionary aptitudes might be tempted to remark that in many points Shakespeare is qualified to administer a rebuke to people of the prevalent religion. Meeting [a certain religionist] [*an Evangelical*] is like striking the corner of a wall. He is possessed of a firm and rigid persuasion that you must leave off this and that, stop, cry, be anxious, be advised, and, above all things, refrain from doing what you like, for nothing is so bad for any one as that. And in quite another quarter of the religious hemisphere, we occasionally encounter gentlemen who have most likely studied at the feet of Dr. Ulrici, or at least of an equivalent Gamaliel, and who, when we, or such as we, speaking the language of mortality, remark of a pleasing friend: 'Nice fellow, so and so! Good fellow as ever lived!' reply sternly, upon an unsuspecting reviewer, with—'Sir, is he an *earnest* man?'[105] To which, in some cases, we are unable to return a sufficient answer. Yet, Shakespeare, differing, in that respect at least, from the disciples of Carlyle, had, we suspect, an objection to grim people, and we fear would have liked the society of Mercutio better than that of a dreary divine, and preferred Ophelia or 'that Juliet' to a female philanthropist of sinewy aspect. And, seriously, if this world is not all evil, he who has understood and painted it best must probably have some good. If the underlying and almighty essence of this world be good, then it is likely that the writer who most deeply approached to that essence will be himself good. There is a religion of week-days as well as of Sundays, of 'cakes and ale' as well as of pews and altar cloths.[106] This England lay before Shakespeare as it lies before us all, with its green fields, and its long hedgerows, and its many trees, and its great towns, and its endless hamlets, and its motley society, and its long history, and its bold exploits, and its gathering power, and he saw that they were good. To him, perhaps, more than to any one else, has it been given to see that they were a great unity, a great religious object;

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[104] *Love's Labour's Lost* (5.1.103 / 5.1, p. 128).
[105] Gamaliel: in Old Testament times the name signified a prince of the Tribe of Manasseh. However, Bagehot's intended reference is taken to be to Gamaliel the Elder (1st century AD, precise dates not known), a leading legal scholar and member of the Sanhedrin, the formal legal tribunals of Judea.
[106] *Twelfth Night* (2.3.89 / 2.3, p. 53).

that if you could only descend to the inner life, to the deep things, to the secret principles of its noble vigour, to the essence of character, to what we know of Hamlet and seem to fancy of Ophelia, we might, so far as we are capable of so doing, understand the nature which God has made. Let us, then, think of him not as a teacher of dry dogmas, or a sayer of hard sayings, but as—

A priest to us all,

Of the wonder and bloom of the world—[107]

a teacher of the hearts of men and women; one from whom may be learned something of that inmost principle that ever modulates—

With murmurs of the air,

And motions of the forests and the sea,

And voice of living beings, and woven hymns,

Of night and day and the deep heart of man.[108]

We must pause, lest our readers reject us, as the Bishop of Durham the poor curate, because he was 'mystical and confused'.

Yet it must be allowed that Shakespeare was worldly, and the proof of it is, that he succeeded in the world. Possibly this is the point on which we are most richly indebted to tradition. We see generally indeed in Shakespeare's works the popular author, the successful dramatist; there is a life and play in his writings rarely to be found, except in those who have had habitual good luck, and who, by the tact of experience, feel the minds of their readers at every word, as a good rider feels the mouth of his horse. But it would have been difficult quite to make out whether the profits so accruing had been profitably invested—whether the genius to create

[107] Matthew Arnold (1822 – 1888), 'The Youth of Nature' in *Poems, New and Complete Edition* (New York, NY: Thomas Y. Cowell and Co., 1897) p. 265.
[108] Shelley,' Alastor', in *Miscellaneous Poems* (op. cit.) p. 53.

such illusions was accompanied with the care and judgment necessary to put out their proceeds properly in actual life. We could only have said that there was a general impression of entire calmness and equability in his principal works, rarely to be found where there is much pain, which usually makes gaps in the work, and dislocates the balance of the mind. But happily here, and here almost alone, we are on sure historical ground. The reverential nature of Englishmen has carefully preserved what they thought the great excellence of their poet—that he made a fortune.[109] It is certain that Shakespeare was proprietor of the Globe Theatre—that he made money there, and invested the same in land at Stratford-on-Avon, and probably no circumstance in his life ever gave him so much pleasure. It was a great thing that he, the son of the wool-comber, the poacher, the good-for-nothing, the vagabond (for so we fear the phrase went in Shakespeare's youth), should return upon the old scene a substantial man, a person of capital, a freeholder, a gentleman to be respected, and over whom even a burgess could not affect the least superiority.[110] The great pleasure in life is doing what people say you cannot do. Why did Mr. Disraeli take the duties of the Exchequer with so much relish?[111] Because people said he was a novelist, an *ad captandum* man, and—*monstrum horrendum!*—a Jew, that could not add up.[112] No doubt it pleased his inmost soul to do the work of the red-tape people better than those who could do nothing else. And so with Shakespeare: it pleased him to be respected by those whom he had respected with boyish reverence, but who had rejected the imaginative man—on

[109] At this point in the *Estimates* version of the essay Bagehot has the following footnote: 'The only antiquarian thing which can be fairly called an anecdote of Shakespeare is, that Mrs. Alleyne, a shrewd woman in those times, and married to Mr. Alleyne, the founder of Dulwich Hospital, was one day, in the absence of her husband, applied to on some matter by a player who gave a reference to Mr. Hemmings (the "notorious" Mr. Hemmings, the commentators say) and to Mr. Shakespeare of the Globe, and that the latter, when referred to, said: "Yes, certainly, he knew him, and he was a rascal and good-for-nothing." The proper speech of a substantial man, such as it is worth while to give a reference to'.
[110] Bagehot does little more here than to crib and shrink Maunder's already brief *Life*,(pp. 6 -9 in *The Maunder Shakespeare*).
[111] Disraeli was Chancellor on three occasions (in each case in Lord Derby's governments) the first occurring in 1851.
[112] '*Ad captandum*'– to capture the masses; '*monstrum horrendum*'– a horrible monster.

their own ground and in their own subject, by the only title which they would regard—in a word, as a moneyed man. We seem to see him eyeing the burgesses with good-humoured fellowship and genial (though suppressed and half-unconscious) contempt, drawing out their old stories, and acquiescing in their foolish notions, with everything in his head and easy sayings upon his tongue,—a full mind and a deep dark eye, that played upon an easy scene—now in fanciful solitude, now in cheerful society; now occupied with deep thoughts, now, and equally so, with trivial recreations, forgetting the dramatist in the man of substance, and the poet in the happy companion; beloved and even respected with a hope for every one and a smile for all.

We have now done.[113] We know we have made little of a great subject, but we have done our best: and as for our not having said anything new or original, we know that this is unnecessary, for if we only printed unanticipated speculations, how small would be the size of this periodical and at what large intervals would it not come forth among mankind![114]

[113] This final paragraph has generally been omitted from reprints of the essay (see for example the American printing cited in my Introductory Note) but appears in both *The Prospective Review* and in *Estimates*.
[114] At this point in *Estimates* Bagehot gives the explanatory footnote: '*The Prospective Review*'.