CHAPTER VI

SHAKESPEARIAN THEME, BIOGRAPHICAL, LITERARY, FOLK AND LEGENDARY
The Shakespearian world as theme has inspired a number of modern short plays. It is interesting to notice what field they cover and what they leave out. The great tragedies and the comedies are not retold and no attempt made to "modernize" Shakespeare as was often done for the Restoration stage. We find, instead, a tendency to give a different version of isolated characters as in Harris's play "Ophelia"; Hamlet becomes a harlequin at the hands of W.S. Gilbert. Other plays of the group are concerned with the problem of rehearsal and of the actors' parts. There is thus an endeavour to present aspects of the Tudor theatre.

The Dark Lady, Mary Fitton, has exercised the imagination of several dramatists in this century. No conclusive evidence has been found for her identification. Mary Fitton's portraits give her brown hair. On her tomb she is, however, painted dark. In writing about her Shaw accepts the evidence of the tomb, knowing that it is likely to be wrong. In his long preface he states the problem and the explanation for his preference. This seems, however, more a personal matter than the outcome of a judicial attitude. But the Dark Lady of Shaw's conception is a minor figure. Her behaviour is
farcical, her jealousy for the Queen abashes her beyond the power of words and makes her tremble at the thought that she had offended the Queen. She parts the Queen and the playwright while they stand with their hands clasped, and in doing so throws down her lover. The only other action for which she is notable is the contribution of a phrase or two to the poet's vocabulary. Shakespeare in noting down in his commonplace-book words and expressions of a striking character conforms to an image which seems to be a true picture in the opinion of Shaw. There is no doubt that if he did not actually go about, pencil in hand, he certainly possessed a memory which enabled him to utilize the resources of the colloquial speech even without this kind of procedure. David Scott Daniell's "The Queen and Mr. Shakespeare" is also about a meeting between the poet and the Queen. Her Majesty accompanied by the Lord Chancellor pays a visit to the poet's lodge. The Queen requests him to describe Falstaff in love which he does in "Merry Wives" and Shakespeare sues her for the grant of a coat-of-arms for his father. "The Second Best Bed" by Cyril Roberts attempts an inside view of Shakespeare's home after death and the publication of the will. "The Instruments of Darkness" by Margaret Wood is based upon the reaction of the serving men to the tragedy about to take place in Macbeth's castle.
In Maurice Baring's "The Rehearsal" the Dark Lady is only alluded to at the time Lady Macbeth is being dressed for the rehearsal. She has to have a black wig instead of a brown one. This is a precaution that she may not be taken for Queen Elizabeth or Mary Fitton whom Maurice Baring regards as fair rather than dark. A more elaborate treatment of Mary Fitton is found in H.P. Rubinstein's Night of Errors. Here the Dark Lady is introduced in male attire and as meeting the Earl of Southampton, her other lover. The place is Gray's Inn and Mary Fitton wants to conceal herself as a student of the law. Her purpose is to hear Shakespeare's sonnet being read. Finally, she snatches the manuscript from Southampton and reads it. The sonnet is No. 144 in which the poet refers to the Dark Lady as the "worser" spirit and her friend the "better angel... A man right fair." There is apparently a conflict between the claims of the two, until it is decided one way or the other, the poet will live in suspense. The Dark Lady in her boyish garments is shown to be witty, interesting and self-possessed. She has a personality which comes out in the slight contest with Southampton and in a certain assertiveness of disposition. There is a conversation with Mistress Anne whom she confuses with Anne Hathway and later makes up for the misunderstanding by some
half-serious enquiries about affairs at Stratford at the poet's home. Shakespeare is ready to surrender the Dark Lady to the Earl. He has evidently behaved like Proteus and the parallel to his "The Two Gentlemen" is mentioned. Shakespeare himself is Valentine, the true lover of Silvia, and Proteus, the traitor. Southampton sees the point and also the insult implied. Shakespeare smooths the insinuation down by suggesting that in return he will ask for the discharge of his debts to the Earl. In Shaw's "The Dark Lady of the Sonnets" the motive of jealousy is also introduced. Shakespeare who appears as "the man" in the play bribes the warder with a gold coin to gain admission to his mistress. The warder made communicative by this generous present, tells him that the Earl of Pembroke makes sonnets by moonlight and to the same lady too! He says: "Last night he stood here on your errand, and in your shoes." Pembroke is Shakespeare's friend and the discovery makes him utter in anguish, "Thou, too, Brutus! And I called him friend!" Thus Shaw differs from Rubinstein in making Pembroke the rival instead of Southampton. Apparently, they both base their views on the Sonnets. "There have been many guesses, (as regards the Dark Lady) but nobody really knows who she was. It seems reasonable to identify her with

2. Ibid., p.863.
3. Ibid., p.863.
the mistress stolen from Shakespeare by his friend." (F.E. Halliday: "A Shakespeare Companion, 1564-1964": Penguin p.463). Halliday also thinks that neither Pembroke nor Southampton is addressed by Shakespeare in the Sonnets as they were both too young at the date for such notice.

The Bacon-Shakespeare controversy is revived in Squire's "The Clown of Stratford". Shakespeare is a black-mailer in this play and Bacon the actual author, avoiding scrupulously all direct contact with the stage from consideration of personal prestige. "The Tempest" is seen at the rehearsal stage in Walker's "The Great Globe Itself". There are criticisms and Shakespeare accepts some of these as valid but the play is not hailed as a masterpiece except by one of his future editors, and the proposal that a complete edition should be brought out, is made with Shakespeare's approval.

The approach to the Shakespeare theme reveals the two extremes of caution and reckless invention in the form of an unrestrained fancy.

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1. "The Dark Lady of the Sonnets" is published in 1910 with a long preface in the usual Shavian style. The play
is mainly in normal prose although some quaint expressions like "amen," "I have also stole from a book," "and a woman goeth in man's attire and maketh an impudent love to her swain," are reminders that the aim is to reproduce not only a very curious scene but also certain atmospheric effects. Written in a light vein it offers some facts about Shakespeare's attitude and artistic habits which are at least plausible, for very little about Shakespeare can be established as true biography. About his protean habits he tells the warder of the Palace of Whitehall: "I am not the same man two days together: sometimes Adam, sometimes Benvolio, and anon the Ghost."4 The reaction on the poor Beefeater is very naive: "A ghost! Angels and ministers of grace defend us!"5 Shakespeare makes a note of this as also of other expressions he uses, such as the following: "Frailty, thy name is woman!"6 "A snapper-up of unconsidered trifles,"7 "you cannot feed capons so."8 The Queen whom he meets is guilty of Mary's death. Her somnambulism and words are later ascribed to

4. Ibid., p.861
5. Ibid., p.861
6. Hamlet, I.2. 146
7. Winter's Tale, IV.3. 26
8. Hamlet, III.2. 100
Lady Macbeth: "Out, damned spot." "All the perfumes of Arabia will not whiten this Tudor hand." "Who would have thought that woman to have had so much blood in her!" "What's done cannot be undone." "Season your admiration for a while ..." To the Dark Lady he owes the expression, "of ladies most deject and wretched,..." Shakespeare is thus seen utilizing the resources of the spoken language for his greatest dramatic effects and is having access to them in the form of living speech unconsciously uttered. There is a farcical scene in which Mary Fitton strikes down the Queen and the Poet, who stood with their hands clasped, and retreats with horror on recognizing Her Majesty. The scene is no less farcical in which Shakespeare engages in hot words with the Queen to prove that his pedigree is higher than the Queen's, his mother being an Arden and the only wife of his father John, whereas Henry VIII has six wives and Queen Elizabeth could hardly be sure that her mother was actually faithful to her husband.

The most important thing is to be found not in such scenes but in a quiet talk with the Queen about a proposal Shakespeare had to make. This was to establish a National Theatre. But the Queen said, this could not materialize in less than three hundred years by which time as she

9. Hamlet, I.2. 192
10. Ibid., III.1. 164
observes, his "works will be dust also." But Shakespeare promptly replied: "They will stand, madam: fear not for that." ¹¹ The Queen's prophecy about the theatre was true enough, but she underestimated Shakespeare, though not as completely as the words would seem to imply. What she said to the warder indicated better her attitude: "Lead him forth; and bring me word when he is safely locked out; for I shall scarce dare disrobe until the palace gates are between us." ¹² The wielder of imperial power had only one equal to her in stature and that was the wielder of imperial imagination which Shakespeare was. Hence the caution. The Queen could easily have taken offence at what Shakespeare said about her birth. But he recovered magnificently from the rising anger of the Queen by an adroit compliment. Although great in wit, it was not for this that she was adored. The reason was that the caprice of nature made her the most wondrous piece of beauty the age hath seen. After this she is completely disarmed.

Shakespeare is made to comment upon two of his plays "As you Like It" and "Much Ado About Nothing" describing them as pot-boilers. "I have writ these to

¹¹ Shaw's "The Dark Lady of the Sonnets", p.874.
¹² Ibid., p.874
save my friends from penury"13, says Shakespeare. What he regrets is that "these two filthy pieces drive their nobler fellows from the stage," and his proposal for a National Theatre anticipates the idea of modern repertory theatre which will play "those pieces of mine which no merchant will touch, seeing that his gain is so much greater with the worse than with the better."14

The magic of Shakespeare is not the same as the magic of Prospero. Shakespeare cast a spell by his use of words and he knew the greatness and beauty of words as no one has ever done. The view is well expressed by Shaw when he puts the following praise into the mouth of Shakespeare for the tool he uses with a power, unequalled before or since. He is the king of words. He says: "The power I speak of is the power of immortal poesy. For know that vile as this world is, and worms as we are, you have but to invest all this vileness with a magical garment of words to transfigure us and uplift our souls til earth flowers into a million heavens,"15 As he quotes the Bible the Queen whose identity is still unknown to the playwright warned him not to speak of holy things, the Queen being the Head of the Church. Shakespeare addresses the unknown lady as the

13. Ibid., p.872
15. Ibid., p. 866.
Queen of his Church when she spoke the words: "All the perfumes of Arabia." Comically enough, the poet challenges the Queen to speak like her, and until this power is proved to be the Queen's, he will acknowledge the lady, he is speaking to, as his sovereign. For in her gift for words Shakespeare seems to notice a superiority even to his own and hence his readiness to pay homage.

2. "The Clown of Stratford" by Sir John Squire is written, as the author himself says, on the very unlikely assumption that Bacon did write Shakespeare. Shakespeare's role in this play is to blackmail the philosopher and he demanded five hundred pounds as a bribe to keep his mouth shut regarding the authorship. Bacon refers to his latest play "The Tempest" with a happy ending and all his attempt to get Shakespeare to talk about it or take the least interest fails and he tells Bacon brusquely "I've got to shoulder every piece of rubbish you write. What about all that stuff about "To be or not to be?" How would you like to have "Atheist!" shouted after you in the streets of Stratford? And all those dirty words, too. I wonder you aren't ashamed of yourself! I've got to stand the racket of all this. And I'm entitled to my pay; so put that in your
pipe and smoke it." Bacon loses his temper and shouts at him "You impertinent dog! I refuse. (Makes to ring) I'll have you kicked out of the house." Shakespeare coolly responds with a threat which certainly takes the wind out of his sails: "Very well, my Lord Verulam, my Lord High Chancellor, by this afternoon all London will know that you wrote those plays." As he goes away he raises the demand to seven hundred and fifty pounds and Lady Verulam advises his taking bribe as a way out, but assures him that if he can conceal his authorship he may be "pretty sure still of dying in the odour of sanctity." Bacon is reluctant at first to consider the proposal but he yields at the end. As he paces up and down the room he utters the well-known soliloquy "To-morrow and to-morrow and to-morrow", etc. The author's purpose is to revive a theme which is as dead as anything can be, and at the same time to suggest how the myth arose in an age when earnings from the stage were not regarded as respectable. Shakespeare is presented here as a contemporary without resort to Elizabethan stage properties as a mode of introducing the theme.

17. Ibid., p.151
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid., p.153
3. W. S. Gilbert writes "Rosencrantz and Guildenstern" as a free version of the Shakespearean play. He presents it in three tableaux. We are told that King Claudius wrote a five-act tragedy which was hissed off the stage on the very first night of its performance. The King was quite naturally annoyed by this reception and declared that "To mention it is death, by Denmark's law!" Ophelia was sought for as a bride by Hamlet, the prince. Unwilling to marry him and giving her heart to Rosencrantz, a plot was now contrived to get the prince out of the way. In the meantime, we are told that Queen Gertrude alarmed by her son's tendency to long soliloquy sent for Rosencrantz and Guildenstern "two merry knaves" to devise such revels in the court as shall abstract Hamlet's meditative mind from sad employment. Guildenstern now cunningly suggested revival of the condemned play of the King. The proposal was accepted by Ophelia and Rosencrantz, and the play was performed with Hamlet in the leading part. The performance made the King furious and he threatened death penalty for the violation of the law. He said, "-my son-my play-both worthless! Both shall together perish!" And on Hamlet's saying, "I can't bear death.- I'm a philosopher!" the death sentence was commuted into one of life-long exile. Ophelia while

21. Ibid.
22. Ibid.
commending England as the place of his exile said, "If but
the half I've heard of them be true/They will enshrine him
on their great good hearts," at which the King observed,
"If such race there be - /(There may be - I am not a
well-read man)/They're welcome to his philosophic brain - /
So, Hamlet, get thee gone - and don't come back again!" Blank verse is used throughout the play but the tone is
comical and Hamlet's walking into the trap laid for him
shows that he has none of that penetration which Shakespeare
gave him. This is Ophelia speaking, "Hamlet is idiotically
sane/With lucid intervals of lunacy."

There is a travesty of sense in these lines in
keeping with the well-known Gilbertean style of composition.
The original motive of revenge is not found here and Hamlet
is represented as in the habit of soliloquising whether
alone or in company. Parts of "To be or not to be" are
repeated by Hamlet and when he comes to the sentence "But
that the dread of something after death" - Rosencrantz offers
his clownish comments "That's true - post mortem and the coroner -/
Felo-de-se-cross roads at twelve P.M."

It is clear that Gilbert wants comedy and farce and
the material and treatment are oriented for the purpose. In
fact, the prince's mother wants the good offices of Ophelia
to cure him of his habit of soliloquy. Apparently, Hamlet's

23. Ibid., p.84
24. Ibid.
25. Ibid., p.73
26. Ibid., p.76
27. Ibid.
case is eccentricity without cause and the specific remedy is marriage which does not, however, take place because Ophelia's heart is pre-engaged. But this is putting the matter seriously when the author aims only at a light effect and uses the situation for the purpose of evoking laughter.

4. "Ophelia"²⁸ by T. B. Morris develops the strain of character in Shakespeare's Ophelia, especially seen in her swan-like end. She lives in our memory as a sweet personality. The Queen's scattering of flowers on her grave and the last words she speaks over it are among the things that underline this aspect of her character. This strain in spite of its sweet appeal is not all an expression of passivity. In Hamlet her willing submission to her brother's desires and her father's will as regards her behaviour with the Prince, however, imply this passivity. There is an element of dreaminess in her of which the best expression is provided not by her speeches but by her songs after the murder of Polonius. Shakespeare's Ophelia, apart from the songs, is colourless. The songs import a quality of enchantment:

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\begin{align*}
\text{He is dead and gone, lady,} \\
\text{He is dead and gone;} \\
\text{At his head a grass-green turf,} \\
\text{At his heels a stone.}²⁹
\end{align*}
\]
In this simple description is shed the very lustre of imagination. A girl who could think and feel like this needed a more fostering care at the hands of her creator so that the beauty she possesses may be enhanced by a rich quality of the spirit and both uniting together present a personality of greater charm and complexity.

T. B. Morris seems to explore this possibility when he puts the following words into her mouth:

I have no lover, I,
It seems, had never a lover, but of dream,
For I am all alone.  

This would imply that she lived in isolation from all concerns. Prince Hamlet loved her, this was to her a very great and valuable experience. Yet she was not certain that it gave her a secure foothold in a man's heart. The Prince was mentally unbalanced and she would not accept a marriage in the hope of being a queen. To her, love was fulfilment needing no other aid to make its power prevail. When she saw that Prince Hamlet was past recovery she had a dream of Hamlet, dragging a murdered man upon a chilly stair. She

29. Hamlet, IV.5.29-32
saw something which had not yet happened. Like persons of great imagination Ophelia could see the shape of things to come; the vision, not the fact of the murder, was a decisive moment in her life and it made her retire into the ivory tower of imagination, as it were, hugging a dream of some Eastern Prince and declaring to her mother that she had never loved Hamlet. In saying this she was not telling a lie; she was only transferring her allegiance from intractable reality to a dream. Its delicate quality seemed all the more appealing for being a part of her own essential self.

Later came the shock of the assassination and it proved that, for her, dream was more real than anything in the world outside. In Shakespeare's play she dies pursuing a dream or vision. Morris's play emphasizes the dream and thus completes a picture Shakespeare left fragmentary. Morris has several characters not found in the Shakespearian play; Ophelia's mother, her nurse, her page, and two young girls are described as friends of Ophelia. They are important as a means of making a more intimate approach to her character. Ophelia's relation with the mother seems a formal affair by the side of that of the old nurse. The latter is anxious that she should be happy and not be made an "apotheccary's assistant" while the mother wants her social elevation, whatever the cost. Ophelia wishes to remain a maid, to live in a country among flowers and her mind...
runs very much on the river out of which she makes a series of images. These have a melancholy quality and it is perhaps the author's intention to introduce the river images as an evidence of the intuitive power which enabled her to forestall the future, for it was in a river or some sort of pool where she was drowned. Whether she speaks of flowers or of her dreams she seems to assume that her part in the business of living is at an end, and that she can at best dwell among dead memories.

5. "The Mousetrap" by J. Darmady is concerned with the inset play in "Hamlet" and Hamlet's instruction about the performance itself and his contribution of sixteen lines of verse to round off the story to be dramatized. We have here an account of the stage life from within, the quarrel about the parts, the difficulty of impersonation of a female role by a boy and other connected affairs. Everything is said in a vigorous language and the commotion on the stage creates a sense of fearful excitement pointing to a tragic end. What worried the actors was the fact that the King left the court before the show had ended. All the courtiers followed the King except the Prince who with "one sole gentleman" remained behind. The players make conjectures about the King's displeasure and feel that the verses of the Prince explain this unexpected situation. How could they ask for payment and how else could they meet their own expenses? Meanwhile, they
were frightened to hear of the murder of Polonius by the Prince. They were, indeed caught in a mousetrap but so was Polonius. The first player miserably observes:

Why did Fate

Deceive us, promising fortune? First, the message
Sent by the Prince, the order to play at Court -
Everything seemed to point to our advancement -
Then the trap closes - snap! We poor mice hear it. 31

The word "mousetrap" 32 may well describe an inescapable human situation where the feeling of being completely helpless is inevitable and one may without difficulty argue with the third player that:

There must be some plan,
Too great for us to see the whole of it. 33

The play is concluded by the expression of his devout faith in Providence and his desire to cooperate rather than oppose the scheme of things. He says, "If I can be the link,/A little link in a worthy chain's enough,/I do not ask to be artificer!" 34

This resignation to the Divine Will re-echoes Shakespeare's own sentiments and perhaps may also be referred back to the mediaeval conception of the "chain of being."

32. The obvious reference for the word "Mousetrap" is of course Hamlet's explanation to Claudius that the play is called "The Mousetrap" and his earlier reflection, "The play's the thing/Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the King." 2.2.633
33. Mousetrap, p. 198
34. Ibid.
The play is written in blank verse without noticeable variation and the language used is modern English, but occasional reminiscences of Shakespeare's language carry us back to the author's source of inspiration as in the fourth player's words: "Most dull, ditchwater audiences wake at the end!" The fourth actor refusing to play the part assigned to him declares:

But
For me - I am my part! It is myself!
Hinder my words, and you put fetters on me!36

This does not seem to represent the general situation between actors and playwrights. His recalcitrance seems exceptional rather than typical. This idea seems to be supported by William A. Armstrong's "Actors and Theatres". Mr. Armstrong quotes a contemporary view expressed by Richard Flecknoe in the following terms: "It was the happiness of the Actors of those Times to have such Poets (e.g. Shakespeare, Jonson, and Beaumont and Fletcher) as these to instruct them, and write for them; and no less of those Poets to have such docile and excellent Actors to Act their playes, as a Field and Burbidge."37

35. Ibid., p.193
36. Ibid., p.189
One point worthy of note is that the actors speak poetry while rehearsing their parts. Their invitation to perform comes after a long period of idleness and gives them a new confidence. We know that times are hard for the stray players since companies of actors were formed with a closed-door policy. The third player looks at this as capricious because it tends to give opportunity to the worthless while the skilled actors are left without audience. The boy player among them vents an anxious feeling that he will have to face starvation when he grows a beard or when his voice croaks or screeches in a love passage.

6. "The Rehearsal" 39 by Maurice Baring is in prose and relates to the performance of "Macbeth". Once again, we have here an inside view of the stage: renowned actors trying to browbeat the author, and quarrels among actors reducing everything to chaos. While the creative collaboration between playwright and actors on the Elizabethan stage was not unknown, what we see here is carping criticism and obtuseness. For Burbage 40 does not accept even the famous "To-morrow and To-morrow" passage


as suitable for the stage. One reason is that it contains reflections on the stage which he considers unworthy, and as he impersonates Macbeth he demands that the sleep-walking scene should be transferred to Macbeth's part. Burbage wanted a soliloquy in twenty or thirty lines after the reported death of Lady Macbeth. Shakespeare's "To-morrow and To-morrow" was the response and we are not surprised when it does not please the famous actor. Many of the actors are unable to attend, some are engaged elsewhere and the disorder is so great that the play is rehearsed from the fifth act. In spite of all this chaos there is a sense of vitality even in the disorder and what is being done may apparently suggest a careless, unpremeditated procedure, yet the result attained is the result Shakespeare alone could produce.

Burbage is anxious for popular "hits" and points out how these could be secured. Shakespeare's attitude is concerned with something which at the same time satisfies and transcends the popular standard. To accept Burbage's suggestion is, therefore, to repudiate some of the permanent values of his art.

The rehearsal concludes abruptly to the great dismay
of the Producer and the Manager. But we find the actor appearing in the cast of Lady Macbeth, still dressing himself for the role. He is happy, apparently, because the sleep-walking scene is not taken away from him though the Producer and the Manager think that everything is lost. Shakespeare doesn't share their despondency. He advises Lady Macbeth to put on dark wigs so that people may not mistake her for Queen Elizabeth or for Mary Fitton. Thus Maurice Baring accepts the latter as fair. Shaw has no hesitation in making Queen Elizabeth the original for Lady Macbeth. She is responsible for the murder of Mary Stuart and the words she speaks are very apt as an expression of the guilt-consciousness in Lady Macbeth. Shakespeare steals them without hesitation and although plagiarism of the kind may be right for Shakespeare, the question that remains is, are we to believe that Queen Elizabeth murdered Mary with her own hands?

To speak of the actor-dramatist relationship once more, we may note that Burbage in Ralph S. Walker's "The Great Globe Itself" is critical in his comments on "The Tempest" which some others around him seem also to

endorse. In "The Rehearsal" Burbage's attitude remains critical and Shakespeare is not seen here as impressive a personality as he appears to be in "The Great Globe" nor does his voice command as much respect. Obviously, Shakespeare on the eve of his retirement stands higher in esteem than at the time he had still some years of production before him. Shakespeare however, does not surrender his artistic conscience to criticism and although he accepts proposals, the way he works them out is his own. Shakespeare's composure of mind and spirit is not disturbed by the squabbles and misunderstanding among the actors. He seems to dwell apart in his preoccupation to create a beautiful world. 42 Another point mentioned in the play "The Rehearsal" is that Shakespeare could not bring off Duncan successfully on the stage as an actor but appeared instead in the minor role of Seyton whose business in this play was primarily to announce Lady Macbeth's death. The amount of success he enjoyed as actor is uncertain but Ben Jonson did not approve of a dramatist being an actor as well. Walker suggests this fact in "The Great Globe Itself" which may be true enough for all that we know. 43

42. Maurice Baring's view of Shakespeare is shared also by Bernard Shaw in his "The Dark Lady Of The Sonnets" where he represents the playwright as convinced of the imperishable quality of his works.
"The Great Globe Itself" by Ralph S. Walker was first published in 1934. It exploits the theme of collaboration between actors and dramatists in Elizabethan times with reference to the performance of "The Tempest" and shows the casual manner in which Shakespeare builds up the play. For example, the name "The Tempest" is supplied by Ben Jonson who attends the rehearsal, commenting adversely on the play. In his opinion there is tempest at the beginning and also at the end in the sense of confusion pervading the whole atmosphere; such, indeed may be the view of the classically-trained Ben Jonson against romantic elements freely used by Shakespeare. The masque in the fourth act is introduced at Ben's sudden suggestion which he made again to express disapproval of the play as a whole hovering as it did among a multitude of genres without belonging to any one of them.

43. In Ralph S. Walker's "The Great Globe Itself", Ben Jonson tells Shakespeare, 'Well, you mustn't expect me to act. I'm no actor, though I tried acting when I was younger and greener. Acting does a dramatist no good. Actor playwrights have vulgarized the stage - you and your like, Will', p.224.

44. W.W. Greg writes: "Wilson rejects the masque ... as Unshakespearean, and so do certain other critics, though they cannot make up their minds whether the intruder is Beaumont, Chapman, or Heywood. Perhaps Chambers is right in supposing the admitted difference of style to be a deliberate attempt to distinguish the masque from the rest of the piece, such as is evident in the players' play in Hamlet." The Shakespeare First Folio (Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1955), p.421. In speaking about the popularity of masque on the Elizabethan stage Chambers...
does not regard the view as derogatory and seems to think that this ambiguity is an enrichment rather than a weakness. Walker makes it clear that Shakespeare has no pride of achievement. He wrote for the stage and had no expectation of immortality. Walker puts the view into the mouth of Shakespeare in his conversation with Condell. The latter suggested that he would bring out an edition of his works. Shakespeare corrected him and said he would like them to be named simply "Plays". In this modesty there is no Christian exaltation of the spirit but merely a recognition of the special quality of his achievement and perhaps his desire to be remembered for this alone.

observes: "Elizabeth, perhaps as has been hinted upon grounds of economy, perhaps from the more legitimate and attractive motive of a special interest in the dancer's art, used mainly the mask simple. But the pageant was not altogether forgotten, and recurs from time to time amongst the preparations for festivities on some exceptionally elaborate scale." The Elizabethan Stage, Vol.I (1923), p.175. In this context we may also note that with the accession of James I there was a rapid development of the Court masque, owing mainly to Queen Anne's fondness for and participation in the Revels. See Halliday, p.306

Greg also observes that it is foolish to suppose that Shakespeare was indifferent to the fate of his own works. The mere length of Hamlet, of Richard III, of Coriolanus must have made it difficult to produce them on the stage and suggests that he had an alternative mode of publication in view. See, The Shakespeare First Folio, p.2.
About the publication of the Folio by Hemmings and Condell there is no positive information and Walker's explanation may be as good as any that can be given. W. W. Greg comments: "About the inception of the project (i.e. the publication of the plays) we know little. Did it originate with the players who had been Shakespeare's fellows in the King's company, or was their co-operation sought by a publisher or group of publishers?" Greg observes, "it may not appear unduly credulous to believe that in the great folio collection of plays that issued from Jaggard's press in 1623 we indeed have a monument raised by the piety of his old stage-mates 'onely to keepe the memory of so worthy a Friend, & Fellow aliue, as was our Shakespeare.' As regards the collaboration between the actor and the playwright Walker is not very explicit and one would imagine that the actors were as much a help as a hindrance to the playwright. In other plays, concerned with the problem of staging performance, the actors reveal an insensitiveness to the various parts, which has a retarding effect upon the production.

Certain odd incidents in the course of the rehearsal make Shakespeare introduce changes on the spot. From Robinson's falling asleep Shakespeare makes Miranda go to

46. Ibid., p.1
47. Ibid., p.2
sleep, provided Robinson playing the role, does not snore while Prospero speaks. The stage presents a scene of commotion during the rehearsal partly from non-attendance of actors and partly from quarrels among them over the parts they desire to play: Field, a famous actor of female role was not found suitable to play Miranda, Richard Robinson being chosen instead. This supersession is the result of Field's growing ugly in appearance and developing a harsh voice. Similarly, "The Mousetrap" showed the secret worry by a boy actor about having to go out of business as soon as he develops a man's voice. The actors who take part in the rehearsal are all historical persons and include, apart from those already mentioned, Hemmings, Gilburne, Burbage, etc.

Shakespeare in this play is seen bidding farewell to the stage. The cause he mentions is that he is fatigued by the demands of the theatre but there is no Shakespeare-Prosporo identification, which arose from the expression "Shakespeare's Magick" used in the Prologue to Dryden and Davenant's adaptation of the play The Enchanted Island. Such identification has been proved to be misleading by subsequent researches, showing that Shakespeare had literary models for practically every speech and action in the play. The play concludes philosophically with Shakespeare's view that a time will come when he will be forgotten as well as his plays and

the theatre where these were performed. Condell opposed this remark by his suggestion to bring out a complete edition of his works and thus to hand down his memory to posterity. The short play, "The Great Globe Itself" is written in modern prose containing, however, quotations of verses from "The Tempest" being rehearsed by the actors. The dislike of the play by the actors, especially by Burbage, arose from the demand for pathos and passion which "The Tempest" did not satisfy. Condell, however, thought it the best play Shakespeare ever wrote and promised to give it the pride of place in the complete edition he desired to publish with Hemmings as his collaborator. The latter did not think the play a success and was lukewarm in his attitude towards it, half-condemning it as an "ultra-modern comedy". The name of Walker's play and some of its philosophical ideas are obviously taken from the following celebrated passage in Shakespeare's "The Tempest":

And, like the baseless fabric of this vision,
The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve,
And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,
Leave not a rack behind. 49

"The Queen and Mr. Shakespeare" by David Scott Daniell. Here the central interest lies in a visit paid to Shakespeare's lodgings on Bankside, London by the Queen. A comic situation arises from Shakespeare's orders that no visitor should be admitted into his presence as long as he was engaged in writing.

The Queen and the Lord Chancellor enter the residence in spite of the discouraging news of Shakespeare's absence. The Lord Chancellor, however, finds Shakespeare's writing wet as well as his quill retaining fresh marks of ink. He infers that the poet cannot be far away. The visit is made in 1600. Shakespeare is supposed to be engaged in writing "Hamlet". The date is perhaps questionable; "Hamlet" is assigned to a later year by scholars.

Shakespeare appears before the visitors, coming from his bedroom, thus confirming the inference of the great statesman.

The Lord Chancellor and the poet have a few words between them while the Queen stands behind the curtain listening. The poet is seen as very short tempered and tells the Lord Chancellor to go to the Devil for having asked him questions about the Queen and the Government. Her Majesty suddenly appears from behind the curtain and a pleasant

scene follows. The Queen expresses her approval of "As you Like It" and thinks that the scenes of murder as in "Julius Caesar", "Richard II" are likely to put ideas into the heads of people and make her position on the throne insecure. She suggests his writing a play showing Falstaff in a merry role. The knight being dead, it was no easy affair to call him back to life. However, Shakespeare agrees to write his "Merry Wives" in response to this request. Here we have the story usually told about the play's origin.

The Queen and the poet grow a little familiar while the Lord Chancellor starts coughing from a feeling of embarrassment. The Queen reveals an interest in the poet and his family. At the time of her leaving, the poet prays that a coat-of-arms be granted to his father who was an applicant for this and added that he had no personal favour to seek. The play deals with a subject on which some scope for imagination may exist but it is difficult to make Shakespeare's talk convincing unless phrases from his own plays are put into his mouth. This seems the usual practice but the author David Scott Daniell does not follow it. He, however, makes it clear that Shakespeare was jealous of Jonson and that his alacrity to write "Merry Wives" arose from a fear that the work might be assigned to Ben Jonson instead.
In this play Shakespeare's personal life and character seem more prominent than his work as playwright. He accepts the task of writing "Merry Wives" in a fortnight and references are made to some other plays already written. The personal ways of the poet and the Queen's preferences for him seem, however, the main theme.

9. "The Second Best Bed" by Cyril Roberts. Several plays on Shakespeare have been written but this seems to be the only one in which Anne Shakespeare appears and in which an explanation is offered why the second best bed is left to her. After the playwright's death Southampton and Bacon separately call at the poet's residence. They both meet there and decide to buy some of the furniture by way of helping the widow. The poet's daughter, Judith receives them and from her they learn particulars about the family, and about the relationship between Anne and her late husband. Judith said that her father and mother were on very good terms. On this fact Southampton comments sceptically: A man who knew so many women should surely know how to deal with a wife. They bid for the second best bed and hundred crowns are offered. Anne declines to part with it and gives no explanation for this. When the gentlemen retire, she rips open the mattresses only to find some manuscripts of plays.

like "Hamlet" "Richard II" etc. within. This is a
disappointment to Anne. She believed that the fantastic
sum offered as a price was the result of secret information
as regards a hidden treasure. She was, however, no lover of
theatre or of plays and what she discovered never struck her
as being in any way valuable. Anne is seen as a woman with
a personality. The gift of the second bed hurt her pride
but she was not prepared to take more than her legal share.
Judith's readiness to interpret the will flexibly or
Bacon's offer to set it aside on the ground of the poet's
not being of sound mind, was rejected by her with firmness.
The author is perhaps right in making her a woman of strong
will and personality as her chief assets. The play seems
to offer a very reasonable interpretation of her character
and is thus a welcome addition to the things that have
been said in plays and poems about the poet's personal life.

10. "Instruments of Darkness"\textsuperscript{52} by Margaret Wood. The
title is taken from the warning speech of Banquo after the
witches had prophesied Macbeth's advancement to kingship.
The characters of the play belong to the menial world. They
are employed in Macbeth's castle and we see them immediately
before Duncan's visit is announced. One of the characters

\textsuperscript{52} Margaret Wood's "Instruments of Darkness". The Windmill Book of One-Act Plays, Edited by E.R. Wood (William Heinemann Ltd., 1960).
had once been kidnapped by witches. She had since developed a second sight and made all sorts of fearful prophecies. These, in fact, contained anticipations of all that was to happen. The view of the kitchen seems to complete the picture given by Shakespeare. An underground stirring of this kind makes the tension greater still. The actual murder comes later and the play ends with an account of one of the waiting-maid's carrying a drink to Macbeth before retirement at night. The separation of the two worlds, the upper and the lower, does not mean lack of communication between them. In this play the purpose served is that of an abstraction, so that what we see in it, we can study in isolation and then link it up to what follows. By this means is the horror of the foreboding rendered greater by the horror of the actual event. Margaret Wood's separation of the two worlds serves the purpose described, and also provides an opportunity to make us see that the evil in Lady Macbeth was by no means of a fortuitous origin, that it had in fact, existed and had been felt by some of the servants as a power which made them shrink away in terror. This is an interpretation of lady Macbeth which seems harsher than most of us are ready to accept. One with her tenderness of imagination does not seem to be capable of so much evil.
What subtle definition is needed to include determination and strength of purpose along with a power of reflecting on man's tragic brevity of life, we can hardly suggest; but Lady Macbeth who can translate her immediate sensuous impression into such poetic imagery cannot be judged by kitchen standards, however, clever they may be. The kitchen view as an adjunct to what we already know may be interesting, and considering the prevalence of witchcraft and superstition in the period, the picture may be valid to some extent. But it does not help us to understand Macbeth better. This approach from the menial world has a warping effect upon the picture but a view from the same source is likely to be interesting when it produces an effect of humour. But Macbeth being a tragedy the author probably thought any clownishness would be out of place.

11. "Harlequinade" by Terence Rattigan. The play is a rehearsal scene of Romeo and Juliet but unlike some others examined above, it is concerned with the modern stage. The difference between the Tudor theatre and that of present age is obvious but it is not so obvious that the difference is an advantage. For lights have to be lowered below the level of technical feasibility on the stage so as to conceal the ages of Arthur and Edna, impersonating Romeo and Juliet.

53. "It was the owl that shriek'd the fatal bellman, Which gives the stern'st good-night".... Macbeth, Act II Sc. II L 3-4.

The emphasis is not on the poetry but on the realism and this is so little in accord with the spirit of the play that it escapes with a frustrating effect whatever is done to capture it. Edna comments upon this to Arthur: "I was only laughing at your suddenly putting in a thing like that, after our having done this play so many hundreds of times together and never a little jump in fifteen years until now—just before a first night." The theatre where they are playing is apparently an undertaking of some risk. Edna explains the motive inspiring the venture: "You see, dear—I know it's difficult for you to grasp, but the theatre of today has at last acquired a social conscience, and a social purpose. Why else do you think we're opening at this rat-hole of a theatre instead of the Opera House, Manchester?" One of the characters, Jack, accepts the view with enthusiasm although he points out a little later that in the perspective of history it is wrong: "As far as I can see it means playing Shakespeare to audiences who'd rather go to the films; while audiences who'd rather go to Shakespeare are driven to the films because they haven't got Shakespeare to go to...it's an absolutely splendid idea." Jack does not find such a purpose illustrated in

55. Ibid., pp.57-58.
56. Ibid., p.60.
57. Ibid., p.66.
history: "Theatre with a social purpose, indeed! It's a contradiction in terms. Good citizenship and good theatre don't go together. They never have and they never will. All through the ages, from Burbage downwards, the theatre—the true theatre—has consisted of blind, anti-social, self-sufficient, certifiable Gosports." The reference to the Gosports (represented in the play by Dame Maud Gosport) should perhaps be made a little clearer. Jack earlier commented bitterly upon the prevalence of the spirit she and her class stand for: "The Gosports are the theatre. There is no theatre apart from the Gosports." In short, this seems to be realism or naturalism, which gives little or no scope to the expression of the most exalted elements in human nature. Their representation on the stage under modern conditions will give no more than a pantomime in which the harlequin plays the chief part—a harlequinade.

The stage at the rehearsal hour offers a spectacle of great confusion. A baby is heard crying, Arthur and Edna who are supposed to be a married couple are seen to have entered into a bigamous alliance. The discovery is upsetting to Edna but they find to their relief that there is no

58. Ibid., p.73
59. Ibid.
punishment if they both declare that the second marriage was entered into with full knowledge of one existing before, thus rendering it null and void. At the end Joyce who was Jack's fiancée leaves him because she cannot go on the long tours with him or await his return. Then as the play ends, we are made aware of the audience awaiting performance. Nothing that has been done on the stage seems an adequate preparation. For while the actors kept themselves busy with the problems of lighting, they had no time to interpret the characters. They made no attempt to enter the world in which they lived. We learn that "The Winter's Tale" will be rehearsed the next day. But the results may well be anticipated.

In the Foreword to the play the author claims his work as a farce, denying at the same time that it is a "theatrical presentation of unlikely events", which is Rattigan's definition or at least it is one he quotes with approval. For what the play depicts is in his estimate real enough. The alternative view proposed is that it is a tragedy: "For you, I know, would more properly be inclined to call it tragedy; so, too, in all probability, the critics; and so too, perhaps, even that great and still innocent Public who knows so much about the Theatre and so little about Life";... If it is a tragedy it is not that of
an individual life but of the stage itself. To bring life into the picture rather complicates matters.

12. H. F. Rubinstein's *Night of Errors* is published in 1964. Unlike other plays on Shakespeare theme it attempts an interpretation of Shakespeare's drama, seeing in it a symbolical view of life and having a tragic dimension even when the play concerned is a comedy. Bacon appears here as a commentator and exponent. He has more esteem for Shakespeare the playwright than he has for rank and blood. Shakespeare, on the other hand, covets the blood of his betters and is concerned with his applications for a coat-of-arms. Accordingly, he declares that he lacks of what Bacon has. If we analyse the play we find that the themes set forth fall under three several heads.

Regarding the reception of Shakespeare's play in the theatre - Tom, the servant, is enthusiastic but when catechized he fails to mention the name of a single play by him. On the other hand, he attributes "The Spanish Tragedy" to Shakespeare and speaks of its great popularity. In Shaw's "The Dark Lady" Shakespeare asks the warder to come to his play as often as he pleases. "Bring your wife. Bring

60. H. F. Rubinstein's *Night of Errors* (Heinemann, London, 1964)
your friends. Bring the whole garrison. There is ever plenty of room,"⁶¹ says Shakespeare, but to attend "The Spanish Tragedy", he adds, one has to pay for admission.

The second theme is concerned with the Dark Lady. She is introduced dramatically at the moment Southampton reads Sonnet No. 144, containing a reference to her as well as to the Earl himself. The reference is explicit as regards the Earl's being a rival in the affection of the Dark Lady. The affairs at home at Stratford are also introduced in this connection. Mistress Anne reports much uneasiness on the part of the poet's wife because of the intrigue with the Dark Lady. Shakespeare is annoyed but confesses: "If Anne is half-crazed, she is not the only one!" (More calmly) Yes, my old friend, I have been justly punished. But now—it is all over, I think. Ask me no more."⁶² Shakespeare, evidently, understands that he has come to a parting of ways and what follows confirms the view. Shakespeare promises to purchase the largest house at Stratford for his family. We learn that this is possible because he is making profits on his shares in The Globe bought with Southampton's money. The reading of the Sonnet marks a tension between the Earl and the poet. The situation between

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⁶² Night of Errors, p. 7
them, he remarks, is parallel to "The Two Gentlemen of Verona". The famous song "Who's Silvia?" is also alluded to and like Valentine, Shakespeare volunteers to give up his Silvia to the Earl, remarking somewhat acidly that he can write off his debts to him in return. The Dark Lady, in a boyish garb is presented as both witty and vivacious; at the end she makes it possible for the friends to be reconciled by withdrawing from the scene altogether. She is seen being hustled off the stage by the Earl. This was, therefore, a moment of crisis in the poet's life. Finally, we have an analysis of Shakespeare's play "The Comedy of Errors" and also of his own character by Bacon, introduced as a sorcerer. The two great men apparently meet for the first time and Bacon expresses his pleasure at this opportunity. In his view, Shakespeare the poet and the player are two men and they are united to form a single happy personality. He, however, describes himself as a mean creature, a toady, a braggart, and a coward. Shakespeare declares that he is more than two men. "Your gentle Shakespeare harbours whole legions of serpents and monsters." This view is practically the same as Shaw states: "sometimes Adam, sometimes Benvolio, and anon the Ghost." There is a difference in stress. Shaw does not emphasize the evil characters whereas Rubinstein

63. Ibid., pp.18-19.
64. Shaw's "The Dark Lady of the Sonnets", p.861.
finds them to be more representative of Shakespeare's genius than anything else. The third element consists in an attempt at interpretation. Bacon does not see in Shakespeare an affair of influences from various quarters. He sees, instead, mathematics and metaphysics and perhaps also philosophy. Bacon interprets "The Comedy of Errors" as "a convenient cover for deeper designs." The explanation he offers is subtle and Shakespeare accepts it, declaring that his plays are parables. Bacon describes the pattern of "The Comedy of Errors" with great subtlety in the following terms: "Creation descended into multiplicity. In multiplicity we now live amidst errors and terrors, illusions and confusions. The reign of multiplicity is the theme of your play."65 He again says: "Creation, Fall, Awakening, Death, Rebirth, Resurrection — all these are acts of a cosmic drama, reflected in every context from the cycle of the seasons to the succession of the Kings of England."66 This subtlety of interpretation is in accord with modern trends illustrated among others by Wilson Knight and by Auden in his The Dyer's Hand. This is "the deeper design" which had made Bacon take an interest in Shakespeare's plays. The view here taken of Bacon and Shakespeare is a contrast to Sir John Squire's "The Clown of Stratford" where Shakespeare is blackmailer.

65. Rubinstein's Night of Errors, p.22
66. Ibid.
and Bacon author of the plays, a philosopher and a man of public authority and eminence.

13. Vincent Godefroy's "Fail Not our Feast" may be included as the last item under Shakespeare theme. This play has nothing to do with Shakespeare except the title chosen for it. Its inclusion in this section is the outcome of a desire to give at least one example of the pervasive influence of Shakespeare language. What happens in the play itself is not parallel to the situation in Macbeth but the ghostly appearance is. The slight link justifies the title; and there is the further similarity in the invitation without the welcome. But in witnessing or reading the play one cannot help associating it with the Shakespearian world. The result is an access to the company of supernatural beings who are both like and unlike ourselves yet unquestionably real. The choice of the title brings into prominence the essential reality of the supernatural. It's function, is, therefore, like that of the magician's wand.

Nora Blake is the Banquo of this play. Her apparition joins the party which annually met at a friend's house. She was imprisoned on a charge of theft and had committed suicide on the eve of the annual meeting. She did not find her.

welcome very warm. Her antecedents justified the coolness. One friend, Joan Conway, however, was kind and affectionate as ever. Nora Blake's apparition withdrew. Joan soon discovered that what she saw was not Nora Blake but her ghost. This is very much like the story of Mrs. Veal's apparition as told by Daniel Defoe. The supernatural element is likely to be exciting but to some people suspension of disbelief may appear difficult to achieve.

The Shakespeare theme as treated in the short plays examined above is limited to a few major dramas and leave untouched the Histories and the Roman plays.* There are other omissions but not comprehensive enough to constitute separate classes by themselves such as the two mentioned above do. Far more critical in attitude than the earlier periods of Shakespeare study, the twentieth century has not made any attempt at retailoring Shakespeare so as to make the plays approach closer to its own life and ways of thinking. The plays are not all of the same standard but they have all of them enjoyable qualities which we cannot miss whether we read them or see them performed. Various ideas are presented to fill the void in our knowledge of Shakespeare

68. De Foe's "A True Relation of the Apparition of Mrs. Veal" (1706).
* The explanation seems to be that the historical subjects, whether British or Roman, borrowed from Shakespeare, cannot achieve an independent existence outside of the original plays within the limits circumscribing the short play. Their complexities of character and situation evidently require a larger scope.
and his times. Thus the plays not only provide pleasure but also in some degree enlightenment, or at least, a measure of stimulus to our own thinking.

**NOTE**

As regards the identity of "the Friend" in Shakespeare's sonnets various suggestions have been made. The scope, however, for this is limited and we have frequently no more than a rehash of old arguments put forward in favour of one or the other conjecture, Southampton or Pembroke. A. L. Rowse in his *Shakespeare's Sonnets* (Macmillan, London, 1964) is convinced that Southampton is meant. But as regards the Dark Lady he does not find that there is any means of identifying her except the conjectural or speculative argument in which as historian, he disowns interest. Esoteric interpretation comes from an article by J. E. G. Montmorency (Contemporary Review CI, 1912) in which he interprets "the Friend" as Life and Goodness and the Dark Lady as Death and Evil. (Also see Shakespeare Survey Vol.15, Cambridge 1962, p.16).
This chapter has four subsections—Shakespearian theme, the Biographical, the Literary and the Folk and Legendary. The first topic has already been discussed in a preliminary section (IA & IB). Biographical plays have been written on Henry VIII, Thomas Wolsey, Queen Elizabeth, Bacon, Lord Byron, Edmund Kean, Carlyle, Abraham Lincoln, Livingstone, Queen Victoria, Bernard Shaw and Tchekhov. An interesting account is found in one of the plays about a quarrel between Catherine Parr and Henry VIII regarding the colour of Bucephalus. Henry in his anger orders an instant execution but later softens into reconciliation. Nothing important is said about these various people on which some speculative suggestions can be made. The scenes are of different kinds; Bacon is almost penitent, Livingstone in Africa is loving and heroic, Thomas Wolsey deeply learned in law and is ready with a solution for any question that may crop up. Queen Victoria is seen as a patroness of authors, as a mother with a son too high-spirited to submit to control. Lord Byron is not introduced in the play which we shall consider in this chapter, its theme being a love-letter he wrote to one of his mistresses. It may be noted here that the longest Biography by Leslie A' Marchand (John Murray, 1957) does not contain a reference to an identical situation but the
affairs of Lord Byron, not being fully catalogued, provide scope for such speculations as the play embodies. As regards the literary source "Becky Sharp" is an interesting experiment. Victor Hugo's *Les Miserables* supplies "The Bishop's Candlesticks". The other three plays considered in this section owe to classical sources. "A Night of the Trojan War" is derived from the Homeric epic; the criticism of war made in it has, however, a contemporary relevance.

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14. Maurice Baring's "Catherine Parr or Alexander's Horse" is a scene from the life of Henry VIII and that of his wife Catherine Parr, which does not belong to history proper but may still be an authentic interpretation of the King's character and attitude. There is a quarrel at breakfast table over a boiled egg. Catherine is as short-tempered as her royal husband and does not yield ground on any point. If the egg is not properly boiled, it is because she is not trained as cook as one of the King's ex-wives was. Next Henry reads a poem containing a reference to Alexander's horse which he describes as white while Catherine insists that it is black. The King thus opposed, orders her instant execution and sends for the Lord Chamberlain. Catherine,

however, prepares for death without showing the least moderation in her answers declaring firmly that no Tudor could ever listen to reason. The King is mollified rather than irritated by her unbending attitude. He even withdraws the sentence saying that it was not seriously intended. Meanwhile the page returns and reports that Lord Chamberlain was not at home and also that Dr. Butts had said that His Majesty was quite correct as to the colour of Alexander's horse. The page is asked not to deliver the message to Lord Chamberlain and Catherine does not accept even the authority of Dr. Butts as regards the question they were quarreling over. As a play the subject lacks seriousness. The colour of Bucephalus is not a sufficiently intriguing question for an audience's attention. The quarrel itself is frivolous, undignified and ends in an expression of peevishness on one part and of indulgence on the other. No reason is given for the King's changed attitude nor for the Queen's persistence in what obviously is an error. The play is a farce in spite of its historical origin or association.

15. Hugh Ross Williamson's "The Cardinal's Learning" is a play which gives a picture of Wolsey shortly before his fall from power in an Ipswich inn. The Cardinal is, evidently, annoyed by Anne Brancote and his references to her are openly

disparaging. The case against Catherine, apparently, rested upon the interpretation of the terms, "affinity" and "public honesty". The Pope's dispensation had been obtained as regards the first objection but not against the second. The interpretation of "public honesty" not being finally settled, there was scope for the cancellation of the King's marriage. This is mere legal quibbling and the Cardinal realized that the King's justification for declaring his marriage null and void must be based upon the letter of the law. Wolsey was certainly not in favour of Henry VIII's move for second marriage. His fall from power was the consequence. With this later phase of his life the play is not concerned. We see the great Cardinal and his nostalgic feeling for the inn where he had spent his boyhood, attending school. The local school was established by him. This he thought, was the best thing he had ever done. We find in this play evidence of Wolsey's legal acumen and his feeling for the Roman Church on the eve of its alienation under Henry VIII. No attempt is made to present any feature of the Tudor world for the satisfaction of the historical sense. The language is modern with few archaisms worth noticing. At the Cardinal's instance, we learn, the funds obtained by the suppression of the monasteries were utilized in founding colleges at Oxford, and schools elsewhere. He was conscious of a decline in the
religious life of his time and was convinced its remedy could come only through the spread of education.

16. "Queen's Token" by Norman Holland is an historical reconstruction with an added romantic interest. The scene belongs to the year 1603 and the time is a February afternoon. Catherine Howard is in her death bed and requests Queen Elizabeth to pay her a visit. On her arrival she tells the Queen about a ring in her possession which she had indirectly obtained from the Earl of Essex. Although the Queen was violently upset by the reference to Essex she recognized the ring as "A pledge of ... undying friendship. When I gave him this, I told him that, if ever he were in distress and sent this ring to me, he might claim my protection." The countess who received this, knew that Essex was behind the bars, awaiting execution. But taking counsel with her husband she did not deliver it to the Queen. The Queen was in deep anguish and refused to forgive her. That she did not help Essex, in spite of the ring being sent must have seemed a betrayal to the Earl.

The romantic interest to which this incident leads is a speculation made by Janet Seymour, a lady attendant on the dying countess. She was in love and had wondered whether love lasted after one was forty. The Queen's behaviour enlightened her; "I have learned to-day that love lasts into

old age and to the very brink of the grave. Perhaps beyond that, for all that I can tell!"  

The play is a subtle interpretation of the Queen's psychology. Her execution of Essex must have appeared as an appalling act of cruelty. Did it mean that she had ceased to love him, that she was too stone-hearted to love any one? Here the answer is given by the clever invention of a ring as a pledge of love. The Queen's actual attitude was a testimony to love's immortality which Jane so eloquently expressed. This play tactfully vindicates Queen Elizabeth against the charge of being heartless.

17. "The Laughing Mind" by Harold Brighouse provides a brief though interesting glimpse of Queen Elizabeth on one of her tours through the kingdom. The incident described takes place immediately after the Spanish War and the expedition of Carthegena. The play's inclusion in the biographical section may not be justified because of biography strictly speaking, there is little in it yet the little that we have does seem to suggest a good deal about Elizabeth's character and her place in the hearts of her people.

73. Ibid., p. 157.
Alice, an heiress, is about to be forced into marriage with Lord Rivington by her guardian Sir Anthony Beaumont. Her lover Robin Trenchard is away from home fighting the Spaniards. On the eventful day he returns shortly before the Queen's visit and is joyfully greeted by Alice. He is immediately apprised of her situation. The scene of this happy re-union is seen by Sir Anthony and Lord Rivington, who express strong disapproval. Trenchard slaps Rivington in his face but this produces no reaction except a complaint about the pain it caused. Anthony fights in vindication a duel with the returned soldier while Rivington's attempt at stabbing him from behind is foiled by Alice who throws him down, disarming him. It is at this point that the Queen makes her appearance and expresses surprise that nothing was done for her reception. On being made acquainted with the facts of the case, the Queen declared that Rivington was a poet and a courtier. Evidently, this showed that in the contest for Alice's hand, she favoured the claims of the poet. When poor Robin Trenchard, whose heroic exploits in the Spanish War were vividly described to the Queen by a comrade in arms, thought that his fate was sealed by the Queen's obvious partiality. But Her Majesty began to speak in a different tone: "England has another kind of poet, my lord, not poets of the written word, but poets of the acted deed ...."
these gentlemen adventurers who have seen a vision of an England great at home and greater great beyond the seas.74 She now borrows Rivington's sword to confer a knighthood and touches Robin with it using the ceremonial words: "Rise, Sir Robin Trenchard, a knightly gentleman adventurer."75 One of the characters Tibby tells Alice, the Queen has "the laughing mind." This the Queen wanted to hear again. As reward, she asks Sir Anthony to give his purse to the woman. The author provides the following words as comment: "we may note how, characteristically, the Queen gains popularity at other people's expense." The play concludes with the Queen thinking of what the woman had said about her because of its being in accord with a picture of herself as formed in her own mind: "and so, please God, shall ever be a laughing mind."76

A dance is performed by half a dozen girls. The picture is that of merry England, of which the first mention found according to the O.E.D. in Cursor Mundi, a poem in Northern Middle English of the early fourteenth century. The character of Rivington seems to be modelled on that of Etherege's Sir Fopling Flutter (The Man of Mode) and of Captain Whiffle of whom Smollett gives an account in Chapter XXXIV of "The Adventures of Roderick Random". While Morgan, the surgeon's

75. Ibid., p.31
76. Ibid., p.34
first mate advances towards Whiffle with words of self-
introduction, the latter cried with great emotion, "Heaven
preserve me! I am suffocated!- Fellow, fellow, away with
thee - Curse thee, fellow! get thee gone.- I shall be stunk
to death!" The similarity in portraiture is borne out
by Alice's characterization of her aristocratic suitor
as "a scentpot."  

In writing about the world of the sixteenth century
the problem of what kind of language to use necessarily
enters into the author's consideration. T.S.Eliot examined
the question in connexion with his play on Becket, who
belonged to the twelfth century: he said, he could neither
use Anglo-Saxon because it would be unintelligible nor
resort to archaism "because archaism would only have
suggested the wrong period:... The style therefore had to
be neutral, committed neither to the present nor to the past."  

Brighouse uses occasional archaisms but on the whole the
difference from contemporary speech habits is only slight.
We may examine two speeches, one by the Queen, showing power
and originality and another by Rivington having for its
characteristic a certain amount of pretentiousness. Both
contain archaisms. "Queen Elizabeth: When we came here you
sprawled ungainly on the ground: an unseemly posture, was
it not?"

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77. Smollett - The Adventures of Roderick Random, Chapter XXXIV
"Rivington, Nay, Gloriana, if you but knew the galaxy of barbarous mischances that can hap when a man ventures into the country you would never command me out of London again. I but stepped upon this green treachery that the earth wears in the country and my foot slipped as on ice."

Rivington apparently tries to prove that he is a man of delicate and refined sensibility, but as he is neither he only exposes his vacuity. The Queen has, on the other hand, a full control of the situation and a complete knowledge of herself. Hence even her simple statements make a powerful impact.

"The Laughing Mind" may be regarded as a well-made play. The Queen makes a highly dramatic entrance amidst the clash of swords and the comic defeat of the aristocratic suitor. Her award of the beauty to the brave comes at the end of a suspense, which though brief, is well sustained.

18. "The Tree" by Vera I. Arlett is apparently written in the 'forties judging by its inclusion in Marriott's Anthology (1948-49). The play has only four characters and its business is to reveal Bacon's relationship with his wife, and with the widow of Sir Walter Raleigh, whose execution seven years before was ordered by him. He seeks reconciliation

81. Ibid.

with Lady Raleigh and, at the same time, to discover a love intrigue in which Alice, his wife seems involved. In the latter business he was aided by his servant who misled the lady into thinking that his master was away at his country house at Gorhambury. He was, in fact, within earshot and arrived on a signal being given, to surprise the faithless wife's secret. She married immediately after Bacon's death, her gentleman - usher, Sir Thomas Underhill "whom", according to Aubrey "she made deafe and blinde with too much of Venus." The play is a reconstruction on the basis of these facts; it also alludes to Bacon's revocation by a codicil to his will what he had previously given to his wife a few months before his death "for great and just causes." The wife did not show any feeling of shame or penitence on discovery. On the contrary, she defended herself saying that she had no real human relationship with her husband. His philosophical preoccupation left little room for her. Bacon told her that she might do as she pleased but could expect no advancement from his money. The codicil to the will is authority for this view.

The name "The Tree" indicates the central theme. The tree was a gift from Sir Walter Raleigh on his return from the first voyage. It has since grown luxuriantly; as a symbol of friendship it seemed to possess for him a meaning over

which he often pondered in solitude. The knight's widow, Bess, would not forgive him but to Bacon this forgiveness appeared as something to look forward to even beyond this life. What he had done as a judge was done in the course of the law. This should be his sufficient defence. Aubrey has said: "His Decrees in Chancery stand firme, i.e. there are fewer of his Decrees reverst then of any other Chancellor." Bacon's claim that he had acted honestly whatever he had done as judge is vindicated by Aubrey's evidence. Bacon is seen shortly before his death in this play. His mind runs on the life after death. His concern for Bess's forgiveness is genuine. As she kisses the tree and makes to go away she does not completely reject the idea of forgiveness. The philosopher receives consolation from this. Bacon is seen here as a philosopher but a philosopher with an unquiet mind. The things he had done to bring dishonour upon him weighed on his mind. He is, evidently, preparing for death which came a year later. He died in the cause of science as he had lived for it. In "The Clown of Stratford" by Sir John Squire, Bacon is introduced as well as his wife. She persuades him to accept bribe as a means of escape from financial embarrassment. She is the evil counsellor and Bacon acts on her suggestion, although he does so reluctantly. But the domestic peace between the husband and the wife is there left

84. Ibid., p.120
undisturbed. In Rubenstein's "Night of Errors" Bacon is seen as an admirer of Shakespeare and an exponent of the principle of multiplicity. That he had great critical understanding apart from his work as scientist and philosopher, is what has been shown here with subtlety and force of language.

The tree which Raleigh bestowed upon Bacon as a gift from overseas is turned at the end into a symbol. Here the emblem of friendship may seem a little tarnished but what appear as spots of blood are, in fact, an illusion, created by the sunlight filtering through the leaves pointing to him as it were, like a finger of accusation. But such an insinuation against his work as judge may not be tenable as an impartial comment. These unreal spots do not condemn although they may imply a possibility of condemnation.

The tree has a much longer life than man's and what will be its most valuable message? Bacon sees it as the tree of life planted in the garden of Eden which man has forfeited by his act of transgression, but which still remains as a compelling memory, as a source of great hope and expectation. And it is in this aspect that he chooses to regard the gift of friendship, immortal in the cause of whatever most sustains life.
"Lord Byron's Love Letter" by Tennessee Williams.

The play is in prose and the characters are three women and a man, one of them being Irénée Marguerite de Poitevent. She is an old woman with a grand child with whom she lives at the same place and who is herself a spinster, looking after the old woman. The love letter of Lord Byron is a poem which visitors to New Orleans often came to see and pay some money as fee for the privilege. On the particular occasion a matronly woman and her husband enter the parlour of a faded old residence where the document is preserved and they leave the place, playing a trick, so as to escape making payment. The spinster who had to play the role of a showman on such occasions could not help letting the document fall on the ground in a scuffle and the couple escape without payment. She is accused by her grandmother and the last sentence from her is a shrill cry; because the girl had dropped her "grandfather's letter" on the floor. This is an involuntary exposure of a secret so well guarded until then that even the girl herself did not know of it. The introduction of the episode is made both dramatic and effective.

Byron sowed his wild oats with the recklessness of a Lord who had the advantages of genius and good looks. That tale need not, therefore, be spurious. But excursion into the biography of a poet in search of dramatic material has

a certain romantic appeal which may easily be overdone. Byron's intrigues with women are too well known. The time has come to see him from a different angle and thus perhaps to cease to denigrate him.

20. "Monks and A Mummer" by Madge Pemberton. The play is biographical, its interest centering in a visit paid to a Hospice of St. Bernard by Edmund Kean in 1818. The visit, apparently, was unpremeditated, being the result of a sudden wish that seized the famous actor while on a journey. He met there Father Ambrose and was comforted by his words and by the religious atmosphere of peace and content that reigned there. He was asked to play on the piano and as he was doing this he felt giddy and for a while seemed senseless. To Father Ambrose, who attended him at this moment of breakdown, he confessed the haunting sorrow of which he could never rid himself caused by the death of his eldest son. When the boy died at home he was playing a part on the stage of a theatre amidst the applause of the audience. Until then he was poor; now he became rich. But what dismay and misery did he not feel when he came to know of his son's death! At the monastery he saw the St. Bernard dogs risking their lives to save a boy or a man lying amidst the snows. This seemed to Kean a worthy life and he proposed to join the Hospice. But Father Ambrose quoted Shakespeare that all the world's a stage and suggested

that he should continue in his profession. What was needed was a greater measure of charity for fellowmen. In this practice of compassion there was room for the spiritual life and realization and, therefore, little was it necessary that he should seek the isolation of the monastic life.

This play is an imaginative reconstruction of a passage in the actor's life. He seems to seek an answer for a problem which has always existed and still exists. This is the relationship between the normal life of the world and the solitude and retirement of the saint. It is suggested that the two are different and that the difference may be turned to the advantage in the interest of the ordinary life. The flagging human spirit may be sustained by the saint's guidance and inspiration and the world's work will improve when man learns to be more compassionate to his fellows.

21. "The Sage of Chelsea" by L. du Garde Peach. Carlyle is seen in four successive scenes as a boy of nine and then again at the ages of thirty, forty and seventynine. He is seen as ambitious in the play. He marries, corresponds with Goethe and there is a comical-tragical scene relating to the loss of the manuscript copy of his French Revolution. It leads to a gesture of friendship and anguish from John

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Stuart Mill and the insensitive speech of Mrs. Taylor. In his seventyninth year Frederick the Great crowns him with honour and Disraeli visits him with the offer of a pension and Government recognition. Carlyle refuses the pension. The reason he mentioned is that his own private resources are enough to maintain him in comfort. What he deplores is that his wife Jane should have died before the days of his prosperity.

Carlyle is represented as headstrong as his father James, and like him picking up quarrels and using blows to defend his position. In the first scene, James Carlyle is found to have fought with a band of godless gipsies. In this reference he tells his wife, "I'm a Godfearin' man, ye ken, Margaret." Carlyle's attitude to his landlady reveals some elements of eccentricity which his character manifested more fully in later life. Disraeli appears as a polished and refined gentleman who proposes to speak to Carlyle as a fellow-writer. Carlyle's life could have easily been made the centre of the Victorian scene and a picture could have been given of interesting people. Here,

88. Ibid., p.128. Cf. Thomas Carlyle's view of his father: "I call him a natural man;... he was among the last of the true men, which Scotland (on the old system) produced, or can produce; a man healthy in body and in mind; fearing God, and diligently working in God's Earth..." G.M.Trevelyan's Carlyle An Anthology (Longmans, 1953), p.15.
however, the light has been focussed only upon Carlyle. Yet in the course of the play we are not made aware of what exactly earned him the title of "sage". To the Victorians Carlyle was not only an historian, an inventor of phrases, a writer with a strange style, but he was also to them a preacher and prophet. 89

22. "Abraham Lincoln" 90 by John Drinkwater is a play in six scenes, each of these being preceded by songs sung by 'Two Chroniclers', whose function seems similar to that of the Chorus in Shakespeare's Henry V: it is to bind the play into a whole and like the Chorus in Greek drama, to provide a moral commentary on what happens. As the author has said in his Preface to the play, his material has been taken mainly from "Abraham Lincoln" by Lord Charnwood (Constable & Co.Ltd., 1916) but he has admitted that without traversing history, he has "freely telescoped events, and imposed invention upon its movement." The famous speech about popular government "of the people, by the people, for the people" has for example, been ascribed to the day he was martyred (14th April 1865) although actually delivered on the 19th of November 1863. Similarly, Mrs. Otherly

89. According to John Holloway, Carlyle, Disraeli, George Eliot, Newman, Matthew Arnold, Hardy were all sages of the Victorian Age. "Their work reflects an outlook on life, an outlook which for most or perhaps all of them was partly philosophical and partly moral." The Victorian Sage (London, Macmillan, 1953), p.1.

90. John Drinkwater's "Abraham Lincoln" (Longmans, 1942).
and Mrs. Goliath Blow do not belong to history although the conflict of views they represent does. It is in this that we find their justification. It is natural to think of Gandhi as providing a close parallel to Lincoln. In their death and as in the convictions they held there was a close similarity. But Gandhi, although a great leader, remained a private citizen while Lincoln was the head of the State. Thus Lincoln's faith had to meet a severe challenge - the greatest challenge came from the long Civil War, which he met firmly, without temporising with his beliefs.

The play is in one act but six scenes are a clear indication that it lacks the most important characteristic of the short play - a brief unified action. Among the characters Lincoln alone seems real, also the maid Susan. Others are mere abstractions, they are seen for a while because they have to play a role, to advance the action, or to bring forward some aspect of the conflict. Abraham Lincoln has great knowledge of human nature, almost an uncanny sense of what the men about him are doing. He could read their hearts like the open page of a book. He thus detected Seward's revolt and sized up Hook, another of his secret opponent, without difficulty. Mrs. Blow is tackled by him
in a masterly fashion. She is all for destroying the Southerners on a mass scale, and bloodshed did not disturb her in the least. Lincoln immediately brought out one aspect of it from which she shrank in terror:

"Lincoln: Goliath must be getting quite an old man.
Mrs. Blow. Indeed, he's not, Mr. President. Goliath is only thirty-eight.
Lincoln. Really, now? Perhaps I might be able to get him a commission.
Mrs. Blow. Oh, no. Goliath couldn't be spared. He's doing contracts for the Government, you know Goliath couldn't possibly go." (Scene III pp. 40-41).

The play gives us a fair idea about Lincoln but his great variety of temper and action is something beyond its reach. In fact, a great man of Lincoln's stature does not lend himself to portrayal on the stage, least of all under the limitations of the short play.

Mrs. Lincoln seems occupied with trivial matters like keeping the parlour free from tobacco stench. She claims having been responsible for preventing her husband from becoming the Governor of a State so that he could prepare himself for the vastly superior role he played. But leaving aside the claim she does not seem to provide any assistance or inspiration to her husband in the great business of his life. The song of the two Chroniclers immediately before scene IV, lines 9-12, has been praised by discriminating
critics but as an integral part of the play these songs seem to have very little contribution to make. Their entire tone and outlook are different from the prose play, and their presence disturbs rather than aids the progress of the action. In our judgement "Abraham Lincoln" cannot have much interest at the present moment either as drama or literature.

23. "The Pathfinder" by Hermon Ould is a dramatization of the life of David Livingstone in Africa. Its main emphasis is upon what forms the principal mission of Livingstone's life: the interpretation of the Christian message to the Africans and the protection of their lives from the clutches of the slave-dealers. The last scene shows how a little black boy appeals to him against a slave-dealer purchasing him. But Livingstone could not help him. Even if he spent the last farthing he could not buy him back. But he gave him hope and it was not merely based upon the possibility of his future emancipation but also upon faith in man's ultimate goodness. In this double message we find an adequate expression of that deeply religious soul who had trudged fifteen hundred miles through the dark continent and had been sustained during this long trial by the affection and care of a few Africans but principally by his unshaken faith.

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The play is marked by the moderation of its tone. Incidents happen which can easily call forth denunciation in the strongest language but Livingstone is not capable of any such gesture of violence even in the use of language. There is charity in him and a capacity for infinite patience and infinite forgiveness. In fact, in recent times the Christian spirit has hardly been as fully embodied in anyone as in Livingstone.

"Royal Favour" by Laurence Housman was staged in 1938. The central situation is satirical. Queen Victoria received an author, Martin Tupper, at the palace. He appears both servile and boastful. The Queen noticing the weaknesses is still anxious to find his exact value and to give him due recognition for it. The Prince of Wales calls him "an ass" which shocks Prince Albert. We see also Disraeli for a moment. The latter is of the Prince's party. The young man is to be packed off to the continent under a suitable guardian and on the particular occasion he is to lunch alone by way of punishment. The Prince of Wales is pleased at this and Disraeli gives him a wink suggesting that the great minister sympathizes with his attitude.

92. Laurence Housman's "Royal Favour", A Book of Short Plays XV-XX Centuries (Oxford University Press, 1940).

93. A reference to the proposal of the Prince's visit to the continent and elsewhere is made in the play. This is authentic history. Lytton Strachey in his Queen Victoria (London, Chatto & Windus, 1921) mentions it. "The boy was sent on a continental tour with a picked body of tutors, but the results were unsatisfactory." (p.205).
The play gives an idea of royalty in the last century. Everything is clean, well arranged and formalities are scarcely, if ever, broken. It is in the behaviour of the Prince of Wales that we have a foretaste of that outspokenness responsible to some extent for the downfall of the established order which had made the Victorian Age seem so stable. Queen Victoria is represented as uncertain in her literary estimates and unable to form an opinion about the worth of the great writers of her time. Apparently, she has difficulty even in understanding Tennyson. She is, however, an obedient wife and readily identifies herself with the wishes and opinions of her husband.

25. "Under Fire" by Laurence Housman takes us into a room in the Buckingham Palace overlooking the Park where we find Prince Albert moving about impatiently. The day is the 30th May, 1842. There are six characters in the play. The subject is a real episode in Queen Victoria's life. A mad man made an attempt on the Queen's life, - the next day at the same time they go to the Park in order to discover some clue to identify the man so that the attempt

may not be renewed. The Queen does not take the ladies-in-waiting with her as this might involve them in unnecessary risk. They misunderstand the Queen; but later they are filled with gratitude. In this play in comparison with the preceding one the Queen appears as a gracious personality and not merely a weakling in the hands of the Prince. This is evident from the conversation of the Ladies. That day also the mad man made a second attempt. Prince Albert was pleased because in this crisis Victoria behaved like a Queen. But now he was afraid of this kind of risk. Who knows whether the man would attempt to take his life or not? The Queen felt safe with her husband but this apprehension made her anxious at the same time. Albert makes a joke that Queens are always busy with themselves. Victoria, in this play appears a loving wife depending on her husband; but she has her own qualities, nevertheless, — she is cool, courageous and kind. The theme is based on a semi-political event.

26. "Bernard Shaw in Heaven" by H.F. Rubinstein should be classified as a biographical fantasy. On November 2, 1950, Shaw passes away peacefully at the age of ninety-five. When he finds himself translated into Heaven, he does not realize

95. Lytton Strachey in his Queen Victoria (p. 212) quotes the words of the Queen herself as evidence of her calm courage in danger although deeply moved.
the change. It is only when his angel Candida (whom he
briefly hails as "My inspiration - my better self!"
points out the evidence of bodily death that he admits the
fact. This is, however, opposed to the Shavian attitude as
regards immortality, which he looked upon in the Angel's
words as no less than "an unimaginable nightmare." Instead
of teaching others Shaw appears in his transmogrified condition
as learning new lessons and here is change indeed! The first
of his old friends he meets is Frank Harris, introduced as
Daemon, but he does not help the dramatist to gain much new
knowledge. He described an act of Shaw's generosity with
some warmth of feeling. At his death Harris left the manuscript
of his book on Bernard Shaw unfinished. Shaw, he gratefully
recalls, "practically re-wrote it". To his good offices he
owed its subsequent publication and sale, Shaw not taking a
penny for his labours. Shaw next meets Shakespeare. The
two dramatists address each other as "brother" and Shakespeare
notices a close resemblance between his life and that of the
younger dramatist. Shaw's Will was not a successful affair,
nor as Shakespeare declared, was his. But the man who defended
cakes and ale could not identify himself with the Puritan
dramatist. Shakespeare points out that "Laughter is not out of
place in Heaven." Shaw agrees theoretically but questions

96. H. F. Rubinstein's "Bernard Shaw in Heaven", The Pan Book of
One-Act Plays, Selected by J. M. Charlton (Pan Books Ltd.,
97. Ibid., p.81
98. Ibid., p.92
99. Ibid., p.99
whether it has a continued value: "But may not a mind outgrow the childish expression" - Shakespeare, taking the words out of his mouth, adds with great emphasis - "Of merriment? Not in a hundred million aeons, if it grows rightly!"\textsuperscript{100} As regards the difference in their artistic approach, comments which follow bring this out effectively. Shaw declares: "man is asleep and life is dangerous. I made it my business to wake the sleeper up, brother Shakespeare." The conversation may be quoted in full because of the light it throws on the question at issue:

"Shakespeare: That was my business, too. But we went about it in different ways. Yours was the more direct. Shaw: It was the time-honoured method of Chanticleer! With a few variations, perhaps. Your method was certainly less crude. Shakespeare: Less energetic, shall we say? Mostly a whispering in the sleeper's ear, the inner ear. Shaw: The subconscious! Hypnotic suggestion! You were as up-to-date as that? Candida: Wake up yourself, ear! Up-to-date? It was the method tried out in the Garden of Eden. The way of the Serpent. In the Beginning...."\textsuperscript{101}

Rosalind who is Shakespeare's Angel, picks holes in Shaw's theory of a Life-Force: "You preached a Life-Force, moving throughout the created world in a single direction. In Reality, there are forces seemingly at cross purposes, both descending and ascending, in accordance with unchanging

\textsuperscript{100} Ibid., p.100
\textsuperscript{101} Ibid., pp.101-102.
Rubinstein makes Candida and Rosalind a cross between the witches "Familiar" and the nymph Egeria who inspired the wise King Numa. Characters out of a play confronting their creators seem a new idea. This treatment seems to underlie the view that they are their authors' favourites, and at the same time, a source of continuing inspiration.

In all these wordy battles Shaw's role is remarkably passive, and therefore, unconvincing. The English put into his mouth has not the flawless quality distinguishing his style. Occasionally there is a certain departure from normal usage such as we do not see in Shaw's writings. In the following examples "Will" is used in place of "Shall", and thus an important distinction sacrificed without any positive gain: "Will I ever have to go back again - back to earth - or some other planet." 

The comment made by Candida which evokes the exclamation is, "You will appear in the age most truly representing your life on earth." 

"Will I meet them in spirit again?"

102 Ibid., p.105
104 "Bernard Shaw in Heaven", p.85
105 Ibid., p.86
106 Ibid., p.95
The flaw is by no means serious, yet if it appears in Shaw's speech, his characterization seems thereby to suffer. The play receives this rather long notice because it is the only mixture of two genres brought under survey: biography and fantasy. There are many wise things said in this play but cleverness smothers dramatic vitality.

27. "Sunbeams in his Hat" by Louis Macneice is a homage to Tchehov. The play is concerned with the last day in the dying man's life. Incidents of the past are recalled—his meeting with Tolstoy and Gorki and the discussion on art. Tolstoy sought to identify art with religion, Gorki sought for its value in inspiration and Tchehov was busy trying to catch sunbeams on his hat. This experience has supplied the play's title. The difference in attitude is seen in Tchehov's reacting to the beauty of the natural world without taking interest in abstract principles about art. In his thirtieth year he discovered misery in a child of ten at a convict settlement. What he did afterwards led to the amelioration of the condition there. Tchehov's view of Russia was that: "... Russia is a huge ... beautiful ... monster. A monster sunk in lethargy ... destroying its children ... destroying itself. Some day perhaps it will wake—"*107 The last day is naturally pathetic, — a farewell scene must necessarily be so. In the case of the great

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writer these last moments possess a special meaning, for they seem to confirm the reality of the dream that had possessed his soul. Olga, his wife, also notices the sun because in this light is preserved the essence of her husband's message and the source of its power.

Macneice in choosing the last day in the life of the consumptive author has perhaps exposed himself to the temptation of sentimentality. We have a sense of being carried from depth to a deeper depth, which means in other words that he had plunged headlong into sentimentalism.

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28. "Becky Sharp"\textsuperscript{108} by Olive Conway is adapted from the Waterloo chapters of \textit{Vanity Fair}. It is in two scenes. The first opens at a Brussels hotel on June 16, 1815 and the second, at the same place two days later. There are five characters, all taken from Thackeray. The main concern is to show the unscrupulous strategy by which Becky Sharp screws money out of Joseph Sedley, aided by her equally unscrupulous husband Rawdon. Becky utilizes the panic created at Brussels by the battle of Waterloo in extracting a very large sum of money from Joseph Sedley as price for a horse which will carry him to safety. She also takes

\textsuperscript{108} Olive Conway's "Becky Sharp", One-Act Plays of To-day, First Series, (George G. Harrap & Co.Ltd., 1961).
a diamond pin without apology as soon as it is accidentally let fall by Joseph. It turns out that the horse is unnecessary as Napoleon had lost the battle. Yet poor Joseph cannot get back the money. His position is made worse by Rawdon's aspersion that he was intriguing with his wife while he was away at Waterloo. The scene which lends colour to the charge was deliberately contrived by Becky. This was a way of blackmailing the frightened man. Becky and her husband plan a holiday in Paris, feeling prosperous after the transaction. The dialogue is pungent and witty and the characters are true to their originals in Thackeray. Becky is told by Joseph that she is not a nice woman. She owns up the charge with pleasure declaring that Becky Sharp has not changed because she has become Mrs. Crawley. Amelia is a milk-sop and the heroine's role cannot belong to her. In fact, Thackeray does not present any hero in Vanity Fair, as he declares in the title of the novel.

29. "X = o : "A Night of the Trojan War"109 John Drinkwater's play in blank verse was written during the first Great War. The point here stressed is that young men with clear vision will understand that war is cruel and unjust, that all great constructions belong to a peaceful world. We come across sudden deaths and the loss of faith in the future.

as a result. The Trojan heroes are not identified with the Trojan cause nor are the Greeks convinced of their own. After nine years of war most people feel that they have had enough of bloodshed and violence. The play's importance lies in its relevance as criticism of the war still unconcluded between the western powers. From this point of view the dramatist seems bold and outspoken. Evidently, he is no spokesman for the allies. As a play it has the credit of being well-written but what it says does not give a sense of something passionately felt, some idea needing an urgent expression. In a way it takes the old plea of universal brotherhood and implies the futility of war, the destruction of youth and of the hope of a whole generation of men.

The play ends in the death of the very men engaged in the thought of how to usher in a new era of peace, happiness and prosperity; the hand of war cuts them off, while they are still young. The world is thus left poorer by the loss of those with the vision and the ability to build it anew. What brings about the tragedy is not a flaw in their character, not even destiny but the policy of states engaged in destructive war, using the young men as pawns on the chess board of their power politics.
This attempt to give an ancient story a modern orientation is often made. In this particular example the object is to bring home the evil effects of war by an example taken from the Homeric epic. The lesson which it teaches is to be seen on a more magnified scale and applied to our own times.

"The Spartan Girl" by A. J. Talbot is adopted from what he describes as a doubtful tragedy by Euripides. The correspondence with the original is not apparently close. The purpose of the author is not so much to reproduce the Hellenic world as to enjoy the comical effect of putting old wine into a new bottle. The plot is trivial: a girl rejected for not being well-born is later accepted as a bride because she happens to be winner of a valuable prize, a "stream of gold", at a game competition. What is important is the gold she brings to the family exchequer saving the homestead from being confiscated by the state. The anomalies include the broadcasting of the delphic oracle and the wearing of smart modern costume by the heroine and others. The equipment of the girl Phoebe includes a suitcase! Talbot considers humour essential to drama and next only in importance to character.

Among the imitations of the Greek stage are the Sea God Neptune, Chorus of the Ladies' Maids, Bathing Nymphs, etc. All these features, although classical in origin, are handled with levity and the result is highly comical. The play seems to parody the treatment of mythological and historical themes in a modern dress. There are subtle points urged in favour of the practice as well as against it. The author, however, seems to take an extreme case to underline the incongruity and thus does little to contribute to a solution of the interesting question. Expressions like,

A wanton dolphin, sporting past her,
Nibbled her toes to speed her faster.

This is part of the semi-chorus's account of Phoebe's channel crossing in a swimming competition and the kind of help which sustained her. The manner which appears in the verses descends from the comic to the farcical in the denial of normal nature and in the significance given to half-supernatural aid. This is almost a parody of the classical deus-ex-machina. The claim that it is a doubtful tragedy of Euripides is confusing not because of its happy ending, which Aristotle allows to a tragedy, but because of the absence of seriousness. The play is an absurd combination of elements drawn from the ancient and the modern worlds.

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111. Ibid., p.129.
"The Bishop's Candlesticks" by Norman McKinnel. The play is based upon Victor Hugo's *Les Miserables* and belongs to the opening of the century. It was produced in the Duke of York's Theatre in August 1901. The subject-matter is already known to us but the playwright has detached it from a continuous tale and has given it in this form an independent value and significance. The Bishop allows a convict to stay for the night under his roof. From the moment of his arrival he shows a spirit of resentment against any attempt to convert him to a religious life. He swears against Church and Churchmen and shows that his heart hardened against any kind of spiritual appeal. The Bishop offers him excellent food and luxurious accommodation. He could thus take rest without fear of intrusion from outside. As soon as the host withdraws, he is tempted to steal some silver candlesticks which lie to his hand and decides to run away with them. The Bishop who was over-generous to him as a host had told him that he had inherited the candlesticks from his mother. If the convict stayed longer his mind might be influenced and his heart softened with these reflections. He rose up hastily, put the silver stuff into his pockets. As he went out the door banged awakening the Bishop's sister. She discovered

that the man had left and that the candlesticks were gone and asked the Bishop to inform the police warning him that she could do this herself in case he was unwilling. The Bishop burst into tears because the loss was the loss of something closely linked to his mother's memory. But he soon recovered and said that the poor man would have more use for the silver and that it was wrong for him to feel any sorrow at the loss. At this moment some policemen came with the convict. They had seen him in the road at this late hour and had tried to get some explanation. In the scuffle that followed on his refusal the candlesticks fell out of his pocket. They knew them to be the Bishop's. The sister already set herself to brushing them and cleaning them, rejoicing over the recovery. The Bishop peremptorily ordered her to leave and gave the candlesticks to the convict. He told the policemen that they were a gift from him. The police looked very suspicious but they had to go. The Bishop asked the convict to stay for the night but he wanted to leave without delay. The Bishop directed him to a wood through which a solitary path ran to Paris. The convict was deeply moved. This act of charity and forgiveness had converted him. We now feel sure that his life could not run in the old rut. He must live for a higher purpose;
not even a hundred sermons could have produced this change in his attitude. For, what an act inspired by a true religious spirit does for us, is more immediate and transforming than any precept or advice can do. Because of the lesson of Christian charity the play so forcefully communicates, it should be ranked as a religious play. The approach without being in the least doctrinaire, stresses charity as the foundation of the Christian spirit.

32. "The Dark Tower"113 a radio parable play in verse by Louis Macneice. The theme is borrowed from Browning's poem of the same name but except for the spirit and the allegorical purpose, the details are all changed. Roland's family has supplied for generations heroes who undertake the journey to the "Dark Tower".

The mother's character is seen as firm and unbending. She sends her youngest son through the arid lands where hope has never lived for a future of any kind to look forward to. The hero sallies forth armed with a ring presented by his mother. He is haunted by illusion and phantoms on his way but fulfils his mission, though the mother dies in the meanwhile and the ring changes its colour, showing that she did not want him to go forward, being dead herself.

As the author's note says: "The theme is the ancient but ever-green theme of the Quest - the dedicated adventure; the manner of presentation is that of a dream - but a dream that is full of meaning."114

Roland is the most famous of the paladins of Charlemagne. As in Browning's allegory Macneice's also suggest the perennial need of adventure for endowing man with a fullness of stature.

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33. "Robin Hood and the Pedlar"115 by John Drinkwater.

The Sheriff of Nottingham punishes a ballad singer for singing. The measure was opposed by a pedlar. As a result, he too received chastisement. The Pedlar went into the woods and there met Robin Hood and his merry men. They heard the story and planned to teach the Sheriff a lesson. The guardian of the law was cleverly entrapped and was sentenced to be flogged by Maid Marian. The sentence was delivered by the Pedlar who wore a crown. This was said to be a gift of the fairies who visited him over night. But the Sheriff disdainfully refused punishment except under orders of the King. The first surprise sprung upon him was when he discovered that the man who had brought him

114. Ibid., p.23
to the forest was no other than Robin Hood, and the second, when the Pedlar revealed himself to be Richard the Lion Heart. The Royal personage was on a visit to his own kingdom to ascertain how it was governed during his absence and also to learn the correct facts about Robin Hood and his merry men. That these men, apparently lawless, exercised a beneficial influence he could find out from personal enquiry. Accordingly, he authorised them to use the forest as their headquarters without let or hindrance. The Sheriff, however, had to undergo punishment. The romantic quality of Robin Hood's life is presented and his story has an authentic legendary basis. The introduction of the fairy element is a further enrichment of the romantic atmosphere, although devoid of any authentic basis in legend or history. The story of Robin Hood has for generations enthralled the English imagination. No doubt the idealism which made him face trouble and danger has an unfailing lesson to teach.

34. "The Shirt" by Francis Dillon is a radio play in five scenes and is concerned with the melancholia of a rich and powerful king and the attempts to cure it. The trouble is that for a whole year he has not laughed and seems incapable of taking serious interest in anything. Doctors are consulted, people are called in to give advice, and some of the remedies

are also tried out, the king getting more and more vexed as a result. Then the suggestion came that he must wear the shirt of the happiest man for seven days. A list of such men was compiled and the men themselves interviewed. They had money in plenty but some trouble or other worried them. Thus they could not satisfy the test. The queen went abroad on a mission of discovery and although every effort was made, the happiest man was still far from being known. Finally, a beggar was seen. His happiness was the result of complete nonattachment. He was produced in court. The king said, the course before him was simple enough, he was to wear the man's shirt for a week. The beggar said this was not possible explaining that he had no shirt. The unexpected nature of the disclosure made the king laugh and waves of it passed over the whole court. Thus was the happiest man able to communicate happiness. The philosophic basis is the discovery of the fact which the saints have always proclaimed, - little indeed is necessary by way of worldly possession to produce human happiness. The play based upon a folk tale requires a parabolic interpretation for its complete understanding.

That the problem represented does not belong to a particular time is suggested by the shifts in the background in five successive scenes. While a simple society, mainly agricultural in character, provides the starting point, we
travel on to the B.B.C. and the age of psychiatry in quest of a remedy. This fast movement in the dimension of time gives rise to incongruities which are highly comical and at the same time indicate that the business of life does not change its essential character, whatever the changes that may transform the social surrounding and the collective habits of the people. As radio-play the shifts in time are manipulated effectively and the contrasts which possess comical elements are thereby thrown into prominence.