

CONTENTS

	Page
GENERAL PREFACE, - - - - -	iii
EDITOR'S PREFACE, - - - - -	v
INTRODUCTION, - - - - -	7
DRAMATIS PERSONÆ, - - - - -	36
THE TRAGEDY OF KING RICHARD II, - - - - -	37
NOTES, - - - - -	105
OUTLINE OF SHAKESPEARE'S PROSODY, - - - - -	185
GLOSSARY, - - - - -	200
INDEX OF WORDS, - - - - -	209
GENERAL INDEX, - - - - -	211

INTRODUCTION.

I. LITERARY HISTORY OF THE PLAY.

§ 1. RICHARD THE SECOND, the second in historical order of Shakespeare's English Histories, was first printed in 1597, having been written, probably, Texts. three or four years earlier. The first edition (in quarto), which is also the first authentic edition of any of Shakespeare's undoubted plays, was entered in the Stationers' Register on Aug. 29th, 1597, and bears the following title:

"The | Tragedie of King Ri- | chard the se- | cond. | *As it hath bene publikely acted | by the right Honourable the | Lorde Chamberlaine his Ser- | uants.* | LONDON | Printed by Valentine Simmes for Andrew Wise, and | are to be sold at his Shop in Paules church yard at | the signe of the Angel. | 1597 |".

A portion of the edition seems to have been printed from a corrected version of the MS.; of this portion a single copy remains, in the library of the Duke of Devonshire.¹ All specimens of the edition omit the deposition scene, act iv. 154-318, and it was probably omitted in the representation also, as too dangerously suggestive, in spite of the sympathy it awakens for Richard, at a time when the dethronement of Elizabeth was being enjoined as a duty upon her Catholic subjects. "Wot ye not, I am Richard II.?" Elizabeth is reported to have said. The omission was repeated in the second edition, 1598. It was only in the third, 1608, when Elizabeth's death had removed the main objection to it, that this part of the scene was published, the addition being announced on the title-page of some copies in the words: "With new additions of the Parliament Sceane and the deposing of King Richard".

¹ A useful Facsimile of this has been edited by Messrs. W. A. Harrison and W. P. Daniel.

But it is certain that the 'additions' formed part of the original play, both because they are indistinguishable in style from the rest, and because the words which immediately follow in the earliest text, "A woeful pageant have we here beheld" (iv. 319), can only be applied to the deposition scene. A fourth quarto edition, in 1615, shows the continued popularity of the play. In the first folio edition of Shakespeare, 1623, the text of the fourth quarto was in the main reproduced, but with the omission of several passages which it was perhaps usual to omit on the stage. "In the 'new additions of the Parliament Scene' it would appear that the defective text of the quarto had been corrected from the author's MS. For this part therefore the First Folio is our highest authority; for all the rest of the play the first quarto affords the best text."¹ A fifth quarto was printed in 1634, from the Second Folio (1633); its readings "sometimes agree with one or other of the earlier quartos, and in a few cases are entirely independent of previous editions."²

§ 2. Of the performances of the play during Elizabeth's and James's reigns we have no certain details. There are, indeed, three records of the performance of plays upon the story of Richard; but one refers certainly, and another probably, to a play or plays other than Shakespeare's; while as to the third there is no evidence either way.

(i) On the eve of the intended outbreak of Essex's conspiracy, Feb. 8, 1601, 'the play of deposing King Richard II.' was performed before the conspirators, at the instigation of one of them, Sir Gilly Merrick, apparently by way of whetting their appetite for the similar enterprise they had in hand. The players, we are told, had at first demurred, on the ground that "the play was old and that they should have a loss in playing it, because few would come to it"; but an extra payment of 40 shillings was offered them, "and thereupon played it was."³ The only

¹ *Cambridge Shakespeare*, vol. iv. ix.

³ Bacon's speech in Merrick's trial.

² *Ibid.*

player whose name we know, Augustine Phillips, belonged to Shakespeare's company, the Lord Chamberlain's Servants. On the other hand, the description of the play as old and unpopular, and the still stronger term used by Camden in describing the event ("exoletam tragoediam de tragica abdicatione regis Ric. II."—'an obsolete tragedy'), make it very improbable that this was Shakespeare's play.

(ii) The second performance is that recorded to have taken place on board the ship of Captain Keeling, off Sierra Leone, on Sept. 30, 1607. The record occurs in the captain's journal. "Sep. 30. Capt. Hawkins dined with me, when my companions acted Kinge Richard the Second." It is worth noting that *Hamlet* had been acted on Sept. 5, and that on Sept. 31 (Captain Hawkins having again been invited to a 'fish-dinner') *Hamlet* was again acted: "which I permitt", the captain naively adds, "to keepe my people from idlenes and unlawfull games or sleepe". Cf. *Notices of Dramatic performances on board the ship Dragon in 1607*,...ed. Rundall, 1849; quoted by Halliwell, *Outlines of the Life of Shakespeare*, p. 517. Here the collocation of *Hamlet* affords a faint presumption that Shakespeare's *Richard* was meant, but hardly more.

(iii) The third performance was that described by Dr. Simon Forman, 30th April, 1611, at the Globe. But as this contained Wat Tyler's revolt and other scenes of bloodshed and violence not found in Shakespeare's play, it has interest here only as showing the popularity of the subject. It is possible that this was the old play of 1601. We are not therefore entitled to assert (with the Clarendon Press Editors) that there were *two* plays on the subject besides Shakespeare's.¹ Possibly, as Prof. Hales suggests, the old play was in *two parts*.

In the Restoration period the play held its ground, after

¹ The existence of an old play is confirmed by Shakespeare's evident assumption that his audience were familiar with the subject in some detail. What could they otherwise have made of such an allusion as York's to the "prevention of poor Bolingbroke about his marriage" (ii. i. 167), of which not a word is said elsewhere in the play?

undergoing extensive alteration at the hands of the third-rate poet and psalm translator, Nahum Tate. In the eighteenth century it was further 'adapted' by Theobald and by Goodhall,¹ and, again, in 1815, by Wroughton, for the memorable performance by Edmund Kean. This last adaptation, says Hazlitt, who witnessed that performance and wrote a critique of it, "is the best that has been attempted: for it consists entirely of omissions, except one or two scenes, which are idly tacked on to the conclusion".² The growing reverence for Shakespeare was, in fact, restricting the business of the 'adapter'. Hazlitt (one of the finest of English dramatic critics) thought Kean's playing of Richard too energetic; he "made it a character of passion...whereas it is a character of pathos". A generation later, and the play enjoyed one of the earliest of those faithful and painstaking 'revivals' in which Mr. Irving, in our own day, has taken the lead. It has been felicitously described by Mr. Pater in his *Appreciations*,—"the very person of the king based on the stately old portrait in Westminster Abbey, 'the earliest extant contemporary likeness of any English sovereign', the grace, the winning pathos, the sympathetic voice of the player, the tasteful archaeology confronting vulgar modern London with a scenic reproduction, for once really agreeable, of the London of Chaucer. In the hands of Kean the play became like an exquisite performance on the violin".³ Yet the play is not well adapted to attract a popular audience. Its studious avoidance of the grosser kinds of effect, of noise and bustle, of obvious and harrowing tragedy, make it "ill-suited", as Coleridge says, "for our modern large theatres".⁴ On a first reading or hearing it may seem bald: its wealth of poetry and meaning are disclosed only by intimate study. It has therefore always been more a favourite with the critic than with the general reader. But the critic's estimate of it has been

¹ Ward: *Hist. of Dram. Literature*, i. 388.

² *Criticisms of the English Stage*, p. 220.

³ W. Pater: *Appreciations*, p. 203.

⁴ S. T. Coleridge: *Lectures, &c.*, ed. Ashe, p. 256.

extraordinarily high. "In itself, and for the closet," says Coleridge,¹ "I feel no hesitation in placing it as the first and most admirable of all Shakespeare's purely historical plays." And the most brilliant and sagacious of German critics of Shakespeare, F. Kreyssig, endorses Coleridge's judgment upon what he calls "this masterpiece of political poetry".²

II. THE DATE OF THE PLAY.

§ 3. The only definite date at our disposal in connexion with the production of *Richard II.* is the publication of the first quarto edition in 1597. The play was probably written several years earlier; but the probability rests wholly upon internal evidence. One piece of external evidence has indeed been alleged:—the resemblance (pointed out by Grant White) of certain passages of this play to certain others found in the second edition of Daniel's narrative poem *Civil Wars*, published in 1595; but these show, at the most, that one of the poets borrowed from the other; that is, that *Richard II.* was produced either before 1595 or—after.³ Instead of helping us, therefore, to the date of *Richard II.*, this fact can only be interpreted at all when that date is known. We are thus thrown back upon internal evidence.

§ 4. Internal evidence of date, in questions of Shakespearian criticism, is derived chiefly from three classes of facts, which differ much in definiteness and in cogency; facts of *metre*, of *style*, and of *construction*. Metrical facts are the most definite and palpable of all facts of literary form. The variations in a poet's use of rhyme

¹ S. T. Coleridge: *Lectures, &c.*, ed. Ashe, p. 256.

² Kreyssig: *Vorlesungen*, i. 178.

³ Prof. Hales appositely refers to the rebuke civilly enough administered to 'sweet honey-dropping' Daniel in the *Return from Parnassus* as indicating on which side the 'theft', if there was one, probably lay—

"Only let him more sparingly make use
Of others' wit, and use his own the more,
That well may scorn base imitation."

or rhythm, of pauses or double-endings, can be observed and stated with a good deal of precision; and where these variations are known to have proceeded continuously, in the same direction, they give us a clue to the date of any doubtful work. Even when we do not know this, but only that there is a broad difference between his earlier and his later practice, we obtain a presumption as to the date of work which in metrical character approaches either extreme. Now there are four points of metre in which Shakespeare's earlier and later practice are wholly unlike or even diametrically opposed. These are (i) *rhyme*, which steadily diminishes, from *Love's Labour's Lost*, where it occurs in 62 verses out of every 100, to *A Winter's Tale*, where it occurs in none; (ii) 'double-endings',¹ which increase from 1 *Henry VI.*, 8 per cent, to *Tempest*, 35 per cent; (iii) 'light-endings', which increase from *Taming of the Shrew*, 8 per cent, to *Cymbeline*, 46 per cent; (iv) 'speech-endings not coincident with verse-endings' (i.e. the same line divided between two or more speakers), which increase from *Henry VI.*, 1 speech in 100, to *A Winter's Tale*, 88 in 100.²

These tests are obviously not of equal value. The use of *rhyme*, in particular, as essentially deliberate and conscious, inevitably underwent fluctuations. "We can perceive that Shakespeare deliberately employs rhyme for certain definite purposes. It would be an error to conclude that *A Midsummer Night's Dream* preceded *The Comedy of Errors* because it contains a larger proportion of rhyming lines, until we had first decided whether special incentives to rhyme did not exist in the case of that comedy of Fairyland."³

So again, the 'double-ending test' is of little use to us in studying the first half of his career; since it is pretty evident that, during this time, he made experiments, admitting double-endings now more and now less freely, and only after 1600

¹ For the explanation of these terms see Dowden's *Primer*, p. 39 f.

² The numbers are taken from the latest and most exact computation, that of G. König in his *Der Vers in Shakespeares Dramen* (Trübner, 1888).

³ Dowden, *Shakspeare Primer*, p. 45. The whole of this page should be carefully studied.

settling down into a growing habituation to their rich and varied effects. Thus the two parts of *Henry IV.* were no doubt written in immediate succession: but the 1622 blank verses of the First contain 60, the 1417 of the Second, 203 'double-endings'.

The value of test (iv) is somewhat diminished by the relative scantiness of the material on which it is based,—the figures here denoting *speeches* not *lines*. But both (iii) and (iv) are superior to the others in being far less liable to vary with the variations of subject-matter. They are *traits* of expression, like the habitual pitch or key of a speaker's voice; not *means* of expression, like his use of emphasis or accent.

The four tests may then be dealt with in two ways. We may reduce the risk of error by taking their collective evidence, or we may consult the more trustworthy tests alone. Neither plan can yield more than a presumption; but a presumption multiplied a certain number of times becomes a formidable argument. The following table gives the results of the tests as applied to the English *Histories*, and also, for convenience of comparison, to *Romeo and Juliet*, *Henry VIII.*, as being of a much later time, and only in part Shakespeare's, is neglected. The plays are arranged in the order which results from the collective evidence of the tests. It will be seen that this closely corresponds with the evidence of (iii), the most trustworthy, taken alone—

	(1 H. 6)	2, 3 H. 6	R. 3	(R. and J.)	K. J.	R. 2	1 H. 4	2 H. 4	H. 5
Test i.	10.0	3.0	3.5	17.2	4.5	18.6	2.7	2.9	3.2
„ ii.	8.2	13.7	19.5	8.2	6.3	11	5.1	16.3	20.5
„ iii.	10.4	10	13.1	14.2	17.7	19.9	22.8	21.4	21.8
„ iv.	0.5	1.0	2.9	14.9	12.1	7.3	14.2	16.8	18.3

The evidence of metre then affords a double *presumption* that *Richard II.* falls between *Richard III.* and *Henry IV.*, and is nearly contemporary with *Romeo and Juliet* and *King John*. It also entitles us to urge that the extraordinary abundance of rhyme, nowhere approached in Shakespeare's

other Histories, marks a deliberate experiment and not a phase of growth. Those, moreover, who place our play before *Richard III.* because it contains about five times as much rhyme, are bound to place it also before such obviously immature plays as the second and third parts of *Henry VI.*, which contain still less rhyme than *Richard III.* How such a 'deliberate experiment' may be accounted for we shall see presently.

§ 5. *Richard II.* is conspicuous among the Histories for a certain rhetorical ingenuity of style, a lavish use of point and epigram, which, like its wealth of rhymes, can only be paralleled in the early comedies, and perhaps in *Romeo and Juliet.*

This quality, however, instead of being equally diffused throughout the play, is principally concentrated in the speech of two characters—Richard and Gaunt. It is a dramatic artifice rather than an involuntary trait of style. Shakespeare has made a certain delight in epigrammatic word-play characteristic of both. Such a habit accords obviously enough with Richard's other traits—with his brilliant but puerile fancy, with his boyish turn of mind in general. It surprises more perhaps in the ripe and 'time-honoured' Lancaster; but that Shakespeare used it deliberately is even clearer in his case than in Richard's. "Can sick men play so nicely with their names?" the dying Gaunt is asked, as he pauses in his string of bitter jests. "No, misery makes sport to mock itself", is his reply. Throughout Gaunt's part verbal epigram is made to contribute to express the deep and eloquent passion of his nature, just as in Richard it gives point to his facile fancy. It is a mark of Shakespeare's middle period thus to discriminate character by the aid of distinctions of style in verse. In his early work all drawing of character is comparatively broad and superficial; in his later, the effect is got rather by profound insight into men's thoughts and feelings themselves, than by nice imitation of their modes of utterance. While, however, the style of *Richard II.* is by

no means that of a very early play, it stands clearly apart from that of the later histories. The blank verse, though often singularly eloquent, has still a touch of constraint, of symmetrical stateliness, of art not wholly at ease; while that of *Henry IV.* has a breadth and largeness of movement, an unsought greatness of manner, which marks the consummate artist who no longer dons his singing robes when he sings.

§ 6. The immense variety of subjects which Shakespeare handled, and the (after all) limited number of his plays, makes it much harder to detect the changes in his method of construction than the changes in his metre or his style. We can rarely be quite sure that a change which seems due to riper art is not prompted by difference of subject. The nearest approach to *criteria* of such change is the following. (1) In the early comedies there is an evident delight in *symmetry of plan* (as in the three lords and three ladies of *Love's Labour's Lost*, the two pairs of twins in *Comedy of Errors*, &c.; cf. Dowden, p. 38). (2) In the Histories there is a growing emancipation from two influences—that of historical tradition, and that of his great contemporary Marlowe. Let us examine *Richard II.* from these two points of view.

(a) As will be seen more in detail in the next section, *Richard II.* is conspicuous for its close agreement with the Chronicle. The deliberate variations are insignificant, and there is no approach to the free and prodigal invention which produced the Falstaff scenes of *Henry IV.*, though the tradition of "the skipping king", who "ambled up and down With shallow jesters and rash bavin wits",¹ provided an opening for them. But this close agreement must not be confounded with servility such as we find in much of *Henry VI.* If Shakespeare here follows history closely it is because history happens to provide him with what he wants. If he does not materially alter what he takes, it is because he has carefully selected what did not need to be materially altered. It is

¹ *Henry IV.* iii. 2. 60.

significant that, though the play is called *Richard II.*, it deals not with the reign, but only with the catastrophe which closed it—a single event of absorbing interest, which gives the play a classical unity of effect quite foreign to the tumultuous complexity of the previous histories. A contemporary dramatist had, as we have seen, made a *Richard II.* on the older plan—a chronicle history in which the exciting events of the former part of the reign are crowded together. One trace only survives in Shakespeare's play of the earlier, cruder method—the scenes in the fifth act relating to Aumerle's conspiracy—a somewhat irrelevant appendix to the essential action of the drama.¹ This criterion, therefore, so far as it goes, supports the view that the play falls between *Richard III.* and *Henry IV.*

(b) The relation of *Richard II.* to the influence of Marlowe throws a more definite light upon its date. In 2 and 3 *Henry Edward II.* and *VI.* Shakespeare was perhaps his coadjutor, in *Richard II.* *Richard III.* he wrote under the spell of his genius; in *Henry IV.* he is entirely himself. *Richard II.* is the work of a man who has broken decisively with the Marlowesque influence, but yet betrays its recent hold upon him, partly by violent reaction and partly by involuntary reminiscence. In *Richard III.* he had treated a subject of Marlowesque grandeur and violence in the grandiose manner of Marlowe; in the story of Richard II. there was little scope for such treatment. Marlowe had himself, however, in *Edward II.* shown how powerfully he could handle the tragedy of royal weakness; and the resemblance of subject throws into strong relief the different methods of the two dramatists. Marlowe has woven all the available material into a plot full of stirring incident and effective situations, extending in time from Edward's accession to his death. Shakespeare, as we have seen, has isolated a single momentous event from the story of Richard's reign, and treated it with a severity and repose quite foreign to Marlowe. Edward's infatuation for his favourites is made, with extra-

¹ Prof. Hales suggests that these scenes may even contain portions of the old play.

ordinary effect, the ground of his ruin; those of Richard appear for a moment like shadows in his train, but have no sensible influence upon his destiny. The grim horror of Edward's end is brought before us with appalling and remorseless power; but Shakespeare seems to avoid the obvious and facile pathos of physical suffering. He gives us the prolonged agony of the deposition, and the brief emotion of the parting with his queen, but he adds a touch of heroic dignity to his death. Edward's queen is an active, though secret, agent in his ruin; Richard's (a child in reality) is used by Shakespeare in a quite un-Marlowesque way to bring home to us by her devotion his personal charm. How fine, yet how different, are the strokes of pathos which these two relationships are made to evoke!—Richard's queen waiting in the street for the fallen king to pass on his way to the Tower—

“But soft, but see, or rather do not see
My fair rose wither”:

Edward, from his reeking dungeon, covered with filth, unnerved by hunger and sleeplessness, sending that last message to his queen—

“Tell Isabel the queen I looked not thus,
When for her sake I ran at tilt in France,
And there unhors'd the Duke of Cleremont”.

In a word, while Marlowe seeks intrinsically powerful situations and brings out their power by bold and energetic rather than subtle strokes, Shakespeare chooses incidents the tragic quality of which has to be elicited and disclosed by delicate character-painting. Into this he has thrown all his genius; in this lies the worth and distinction of a drama which in wealth of interest and in harrowing power by no means equals Marlowe's dramatic masterpiece.

Richard II. was, then, not the work of a disciple of Marlowe; it bears the marks of decisive reaction from his influence. That it is not free from occasional reminiscences will appear in the Notes.¹ It is difficult, then, to resist the conclusion that it was written later than *Richard III.*

¹ Cf. especially notes to act iv.

§ 7. To sum up this somewhat complicated discussion, the evidence of *metre* points to a date between *Richard III.* and

Henry IV.; that of *style* is at least compatible with this position; that of *construction* hardly admits of any other. Now *Richard III.* is with practical certainty assigned to the years 1590-3; *Henry IV.* to 1596-7. This leaves us with 1593-5 as a period within which *Richard II.* almost certainly falls. The palpably greater maturity of *Henry IV.* points to the earlier rather than the later part of this period as its actual date. The tolerably firm ground thus obtained enables us now to suggest a reason for the anomalies of metre and style already spoken of: viz. that in abandoning Marlowe's methods in construction, Shakespeare adopted also with some energy the rhymed verse which Marlowe had eschewed, but in which his own triumphs had been won.

Two other plays, connected with ours by various slight links, must belong to nearly the same date,—*Romeo and Juliet*, and *King John*. The latter, sharing with *Richard II.* the absence of prose, is, judged by metre, a little earlier; judged by construction, and especially by the infusion of *comedy*, rather nearer to *Henry IV.*, the Comedy-History *par excellence*.

III. THE SOURCE OF THE INCIDENTS.

§ 8. Shakespeare drew the materials for this, as for the other English Histories, in the main from the *Chronicle* of Holinshed, and apparently, as the Clarendon Press Editors point out, from the second edition (1586), which alone contains a detail used in ii. 4. 8 (see note). A slight detail here and there is perhaps due to Holinshed's predecessor, Hall. The picture of Mowbray's career in Palestine (iv. i. 97) may be an expansion of a hint in Stowe's *Annals* (1580). The commitment of Carlisle to the custody of the Abbot of Westminster was derived from some unknown source. There is no reason to suppose that Shakespeare knew more of the history of

Richard than he found in these books. We have, therefore, in studying the origin of the play, to take note solely of his way of handling the story as they tell it. If their story diverges from history, and he follows them, the fact may be important for the historical student, but has only a secondary interest for the student of Shakespeare.¹

As already stated (§ 6), none of the Histories diverges so slightly from Holinshed as *Richard II.* The process of converting shadows into living and breathing men has involved very little change of outline. The actual divergences fall under three heads: alterations of *time* and *place*,—alterations affecting *character*,—*new* characters and new incidents.

§ 9. The first class of divergences are inevitable in any dramatic treatment of history. What we think of as a single 'historical event' is commonly made up of a crowd of minor incidents happening in different places and on different days. The dramatist concentrates them into a single continuous act.² We have several instances of this in *Richard II.* The following are the most important. The rest are pointed out in the Notes.

(a) i. 3. Bolingbroke's leave-taking and the partial remission of his sentence immediately follow the sentence itself. Holinshed makes him take leave of the king later, at Eltham, and there receive the remission of four years.

(b) ii. 2. The death of the Duchess of Gloucester is anticipated, in order apparently to add to the helpless embarrassment of York (cf. ii. 2. 98 f.).

(c) iii. 2. The surrender of Flint Castle to Northumberland is *retarded*; see note.

(d) iv. 1. The events of three separate meetings of Parlia-

¹The most important divergences from history are, however, pointed out in the Notes to *Dramatis Personæ*. The fullest treatment of them is in Riechelmann's *Abhandlung zu Richard II. Shakespeare und Holinshed*, 1860.

²Shakespeare's liberties with time (elsewhere far greater) have the highest critical approval. Cf. Goethe's proverbial saying, "*Den Poeten bindet keine Zeit*" (the poet is not fettered by time), *Faust*, part ii. act 2; and elsewhere, still more strongly: "all that survives of true poetry lives and breathes only in anachronisms".