

CHAPTER SIXTY-NINE



OF ALL THE mistaken pronouncements into which the theory of the Shaksper authorship has led its apologists, one of the most incongruous is the statement that *Timon of Athens*, *Pericles*, and *Cymbeline*, belong to the dramatist's final "serene" period. Dowden goes so far as to say, regarding *Timon*, "We may perhaps style the most impressive Shakespearian parts as an after-clap of the thunders that volley in *Lear*." He also makes the paradoxical statement that "the well-to-do householder of Stratford saw that the limited practical nature escapes the great risks, the vast errors, to which the man who, in Browning's phrase, would 'love infinitely to be loved' is liable."

We submit that a man of such "limited practical nature" as the "well-to-do householder of Stratford" is incapable of conceiving the temperament and motives of the opposite type. Byron, who knew something about creative art, said that "in order to depict strong passions, it is necessary to have experienced them."

Actually, Timon is the younger Lear, who, though he had lost his good name, had somehow weathered the storm of disaster, compromised, and resolved to "use the olive with my sword." (V.4.82.) In the revision, which was evidently made during the '90's, after at least one version of *Lear* had been written, Alcibiades, who had been Gascoigne in 1576, became partially Oxford himself, the side of him which had bowed to Authority; but his "good name" was lost with Timon. "Timon hath done his reign."

It is not only his identity as the great poet-dramatist which, during the 1590's, he has renounced: it is also his hope of recognition as consort of the Queen, which means his son's recognition as her heir. Now the references to himself as the Sun—the resplendent Knight of the Sun, as he had been in 1581—who is also Phoebus, will be understood.

Alcibiades. How came the noble Timon to this change?

Timon. As the moon does, by wanting light to give;
But then renew I could not like the moon;

There were no suns to borrow of. (IV.3.66-8.)

In other words, the Queen (the moon) could renew herself from Oxford-Phoebus (the sun, giver of light and life) and have a son. But Oxford could not claim him; thus, like Timon, he had nothing. He was bemoaning that very thing in the Sonnets, and so this passage—which, without the hidden meaning, seems pointless—clearly belongs to the revision.

Another which also does is Timon's bitter speech in its final form (V.1.215 *et seq.*):

Come not to me again; but say to Athens,
Timon hath made his everlasting mansion
Upon the beached verge of the salt flood;
Who once a day with his embossed froth
The turbulent surge shall cover: 't' hither come,
And let my grave-stone be your oracle.
Lips, let *sour words* go by and language end:
What is amiss plague and infection mend!
Graves only be men's works and death their gain!
Sun, hide thy beams! Timon hath done his reign.
First Senator. His discontents are unremovably
Coupled to nature.

The cynic Apemantus, frequently called a dog—from the derivation of cynic—has much in common with Thersites, similarly called a dog, again and again, and also with Caliban. Although chiefly Burghley at first, he now stands partly for those playwrights who, for a time, goaded by their malicious jealousy of their rival's influential position and popular success, wrote snarling satires on Oxford. Nashe called them "mongrels." Stephano and Trinculo, in the revision of *The Tempest*, belong in part to this same *genre*. Macclente, of *Every Man Out*, who does every spiteful thing he can to trap Puntarvolo-Oxford and bring disaster upon his plays, is precisely such a man. He is admittedly Jonson himself, with a recognizable dash of Chapman, however. Apemantus jeers at Timon:

... thou'dst courtier be again
Wert thou not beggar. (IV.3.242-3.)

No wonder Timon says,

Let sour words go by and language end:
Graves only be men's works and death their gain!

Timon is incontestably the younger Lear. When the world comes crashing down about Lear's head, it is the end. Lord Oxford would seem to have begun writing *King Lear* at the turn of the decade,

¹ Some two hundred and thirty years later another disillusioned English poet would be writing a similar epiphany for himself: "There lies one whose name was writ in water."

1589-90, under the influence of du Bartas's *Weeks*, with Coligny as one historic prototype. But the finished drama, as we know it, belongs to a later date, the latter years of the King Earl's life, and resounds with the mingled plaintive and tumultuous minor chords which bring the tragic symphony to its close.

Instead of being an "after-clap of the thunders that volley in *Lear*," this play is the germ of that ripper fruit of its author's genius, which was present in his youthful mind, as were many contributory ideas expressed in his early poems and embodied in his mature work. He must have returned to it during the period of financial distress, in 1589-92, about the time Nashe was reminding him that he had been an "infinite Maecenas" to writers, for the play shows many signs of his ripened powers. Incidentally, Timon speaks of "the plague" (V.1.138); and there was a terrible one on the Continent, presumably in England also, in 1576, while another struck England in 1592.

Swinburne called *Timon* a "poem terrible in its declamatory power," with certain portions "among the greatest products of Shakespeare's genius." But Oxford left as it was much of the old part, it may be because he wished to put his best into *Lear*. This is why *Timon of Athens* is so uneven. *The Solitarie Knight* is, of course the "old play" from which the dramatist is supposed to have "borrowed" in writing *Timon of Athens* sometime during the reign of King James!

Throughout the '90's the Earl continued to revise his other dramas. Some he altered to make the original Alençon the present Fair Youth, or characters who had been himself the Fair Youth—as in the case of Prince Hal, for example. Launcelot, in *The Merchant*, who insists upon being called "Master Launcelot"—or Master Little Spear, foregoing his nobility for a plain citizen's title, "Master William Shakespeare"—is another instance of alteration to fit new conditions. (This is why the Fair Youth can be called "Mr. W.H." in the dedication of the Sonnets.) References to contemporary events were added to the old, earlier ones, but the former allusions were left in, so that posterity might know "their birth and where they did proceed."

Thus we have in many of the plays recognizable "abstracts and brief chronicles" of at least two separate times. Some of the early ones, such as *Cymbeline* and *Pericles*, perhaps *Titus Andronicus*, *The Comedy of Errors* and *The Taming of the Shrew*, the author probably cared too little about thoroughly to revise. It is of course possible that Chapman had a hand, as certain commentators have believed, in a revision of *Cymbeline* after Oxford's death: some of the verse has a sort of turgidity characteristic of Chapman and almost never found even in Oxford's earliest work. It is possible that the Earl had been now and then too outspoken and that Chapman had been called in to tone parts of it down. But the play is so personal to its original

author that one is loath to concede an appreciable part of it to anyone else.

It is certainly the young Oxford described in the passage about Posthumus (I.1.43 *et seq.*) and his life at court, where the King

Puts him to all the learnings that his time
Could make him the receiver of; which he took
As we do air, as fast as 'twas minister'd,
And in 's spring became a harvest; liv'd in court,—
Which rare it is to do,—most prais'd, most lov'd;
A sample to the youngest, to the more mature
A glass that feated them....

Not only "the glass of fashion" but, this would seem to imply, one who held "the mirror up to nature to show virtue her own *feature*"; a glass, that is, that showed them their feats, as well as their features. We may be sure this strange word was chosen for its full implications, undoubtedly for the correspondence with Hamlet, who also dramatized the actions of the court.

Oxford must have touched up the old play a little after Anne Cecil's death, for Imogen is a far more sympathetic character than Ophelia, or Cressida, though she too has been influenced by her father to set her heart upon a descendant of a noble house (the Leonati):

Imogen. Sir,
It is your fault that I have lov'd Posthumus;
You bred him as my playfellow, and he is
A man worth any woman, overbuys me
Almost the sum he pays. (I.1.143-7.)

And it must have been Oxford, who, remembering or re-reading in remorse, Anne's piteous letters, wrote:

Imogen. False to his bed! What is it to be false?
To lie in watch there and to think on him?
To weep 'twixt clock and clock? if sleep charge nature,
To break it with a fearful dream of him,
And cry myself awake? (III.4.40-4.)

It was none other than Oxford, surely, who wrote so morosely of "banishment" in this play, and Oxford who, in the person of Posthumus, said

... I will be *ever* to pay, and yet pay still ... By your pardon, sir, I was
then a young *traveller* ... (I.4.38 *et seq.*)
and he who wrote:

His fortunes all lie speechless, and his *name*
Is at last gasp. (I.5.52-3)

Certainly it was Oxford who compared the chaste and unassailable Imogen to "the Arabian bird" (I.6.17) and who wrote the

"Golden lads and girls" song—he himself having been one of the golden lads—as well as the exquisite "Hark! hark! the lark at heaven's gate sings," a later version of his acknowledged *Song of Tityo*:

None but the *lark* so shrill and clear;
Now at *heaven's gate* she claps her wings,
The morn not waking till she sings,
Hark, hark.

This song in *Cymbeline* may belong partly to the early '90's, when he undoubtedly wrote the despondent Sonnet 29, with the lines,

Like to the *lark* at break of day arising
From sullen earth, sings hymns at *heaven's gate*;
but that it was in the early version too is indicated by this use of "been" in line 26:

And winking Mary-buds begin
To ope their golden eyes;
With every thing that pretty *been*
My lady sweet, arise:
Arise, arise! (II.2.24-8.)²

Other passages belong unmistakably to the later period. Posthumus's soliloquy upon the perfidy of woman (II.5) is that of the poet of the Dark Lady Sonnets. Belarius's animadversions upon court-life (*Cym.*: III.3-44 *et seq.*) are set to the key of Sonnets 25, 124, and 125, as in Posthumus's,

... Poor wretches, that *depend*
On greatness' favour dream as I have done;
Wake and find nothing (V.4.127-9),

which also recalls Sonnet 87,

In sleep a king, but, *waking*, no such matter;

while Posthumus speaks in the spirit of Sonnet 146—

Within be fed, *without* be rich no more—
when he says (V.1.31-3):

Gods! put the strength o' the Leonati in me.
To shame the guise o' the world, I will begin
The fashion, less *without* and more *within*.

With regard to the book—"O rare one"—which Posthumus finds, wherein his future is foretold (V.4.133), one suspects it is the for-

² Some editions have pedantically changed "been" to "is." A corresponding use of the word in this manner is found in *Pericles*, written within a twelvemonth of *Cymbeline*:

Pericles. A gentleman of Tyre, my name Pericles;
My education *been* in arts and arms. (II.3.81-2.)

It occurs again, Chorus, II, 1, 28; this showing the influence of Chaucer.

bidden *Book of Prophecies*, the secret *Book of Babes* evidently having been referred to in *Pericles*. (I.1.94-5.) Posthumus says:

Who has a book of all that monarchs do,
He's more secure to keep it shut than shown.

There is much revealed in *Cymbeline* regarding the sons of the sovereign, the true heirs of Cymbeline's kingdom—that is, to the throne of England. This alone could explain why the play was never printed before it appeared in the First Folio, when the identity of Belarius was obliterated along with that of the dramatist. People would have comprehended too much. To the suspicious and alert it would have been only too obvious that Belarius represented the banished Earl of Oxford and the two boys Elizabeth's two sons. Who else could they have been?

One is puzzled to find Oxford portraying Arthur Dudley, the Queen's son by Leicester, and Southampton, her son by him, as though they were on an equal footing; for he certainly considered Southampton Elizabeth's rightful heir. Yet the scene in which Belarius and the boys are introduced (III.3) is Wales; and it was actually to Milford Haven in Wales that Arthur Dudley went in 1580: the "Milford Haven" of *Act II, scene 4*. The sole way we can explain what seems to be an all but superhuman impartiality—to say nothing of such bold candor—is by taking account not only of Oxford's determination to tell the absolute truth, but also of the fact that, while bent upon reminding the Queen that she had two sons, he nevertheless regarded Dudley as a bastard and Southampton as legitimate.

An indication that part of this section of the play belongs to the 'go's is the use of a word which occurs only once again throughout the poet's work, and then in Sonnet 100, line 9. The word is "resty." Balarus says:

... weariness
Can snore upon the flint when *resty* sloth
Finds the down pillow hard (III.6.33-5)—

a reflection voiced by other characters representing the author.

In the matter of *Pericles*, the scholars have made varying pronouncements covering a wide range of opinion, including even the notion that Shakespeare "borrowed" from Wilkins's novel about *Pericles*, of 1608! It was Swinburne again, corroborated by Watts-Dunton, who recognized the true author's hand, "the strokes of profound and sublime humour, of passionate and living truth." It seems never to have occurred to any of these scholars that *Pericles* might have been an early play retouched here and there by the dramatist's maturer hand; or that it was not the poor quality of the play which constrained the editors of the First Folio to omit it, but rather the

revelations, insistent suggestions—call them what you will—of the very Gower whom they would so casually dismiss as the contribution of another writer.³

Gower's story of Antiochus and his daughter—which is the answer to the riddle that the King poses and Pericles, in revulsion, solves—is one which deeply impressed Oxford. We have shown that it underlies some of the cryptic remarks Hamlet makes to Polonius, and his curious behavior, as well as Ophelia's allusion to the baker's daughter. It dogged at his mind. He set it down in *Pericles*, in the opening chorus and again in *Act I*. Gower, in the chorus to *Act II*, repeats it:

Here have you seen a mighty king
His child, I wis, to incest bring;
*A better prince and benign lord,
That will prove awful both in deed and word.*

The "better prince" is Pericles-Oxford, whose "word" will indeed prove "awful," or awesome.

Gower relates how Pericles escaped from Antioch and set forth soon after his arrival at Tyre, leaving Helicanus to rule in his stead. But Antiochus, who fears that Pericles will reveal his shameful secret, sends Thaliard to murder him. And so again he

... put forth to seas,
Where when men been, there's seldom ease;
For now the wind begins to blow;
Thunder above and deeps below...

He narrowly escapes shipwreck, as Lord Oxford had narrowly escaped death by pirates who had mysteriously attacked his ship when he, after having been told in Paris the story of his wife's unfaithfulness, set sail immediately for England. He wrote this play during the following year. He was in a bad state of mind. And now this is the last word we shall say on the unpleasant subject. *Selah*.

Pericles, probably the play performed before the Queen, in a somewhat different version, by the Children of Paul's on December 29, 1577, contains many allusions relevant to that period, as well as to its author. Oxford seems to have used it as a sort of quarrying-ground for subsequent work, as he used *Murderous Michael*, later *Arden of Feversham*, for *Macbeth*. Escanes recalls Escalus of *Measure for Measure*; there is a Cleon here, a Cloten in *Cymbeline*; Marina has much in common with Perdita of *The Winter's Tale*; Thaisa, believed dead, lives in seclusion for fourteen years, after the manner of

³ Dryden, more astute than most, said *Pericles* was Shakespeare's first play. Looney believed it was the first one Oxford wrote after his return from the Continent in 1576. This may be the case; it is the record which puts *Timon* first in performance at court.

Hermione; there are suggestions even of *Twelfth Night*; and Dionyza is a recognizable forerunner of Lady Macbeth, even in speech.

Coriolanus took on deep minor tones in a 1601 revision, though this was not the first time it had been recast. Indeed, like many of the plays, it shows signs of several alterations—of having been brought periodically up to date, kept topical. As we have already observed, Coriolanus would seem, in the initial version, *circa* 1580, to have been historically Sir Francis Drake,⁴ and later, Sir Walter Raleigh,⁵ although in both cases there is a psychological admixture of Oxford himself, who becomes in the final version, Menenius.

The attitude of Coriolanus towards the mob was identical with that of Raleigh, of whom Hume records that, while he was being driven through the streets in his coach to his trial,

as one Mr. Hicks wrote to Lord Shrewsbury, "it was almost incredible what bitter speeches they, the mob, exclaimed against him . . . which generated hatred of the people would be to me worse than death; but he neglected and scorned it as from base and rascal people."⁶

In Menenius's description of himself we have a sketch of Oxford at the turn of the century:

I am known to be a humorous patrician,⁷ and one that loves a cup of hot wine with not a drop of allaying Tiber in 't; said to be something imperfect in favouring the first complaint; hasty and tinder-like upon too trivial motion; one that converses more with the buttock of the night than with the forehead of the morning. *What I think I utter, and spend my malice with my breath.* (II.1.48-56)

Nothing could be truer of him than this last statement. It was this tendency which set him apart from Burghley, who retained his malice until the end. We are told this very thing about Brutus-Oxford in relation to Cassius-Burghley in *Julius Caesar*. (IV.3.109-12.)

When Cominius informs Menenius that he is "Ever right," Coriolanus agrees:

Menenius, *ever, ever.* (II.1.196.)

If corroboration be needed that Menenius was devised by Lord Oxford to represent himself, it may be found in the fact that this is the only character in the play whose traits he does not derive from Plutarch. Menenius is merely described by Plutarch as one of "the pleasantest old men, and the most acceptable to the people." This

⁴ E.T.C.: *Hidd. All.*; p. 276; and Benson: *Sir Francis Drake*; p. 16.

⁵ The single-handed attack upon the town of Corioli, at the close of 14 is like that of Raleigh at Fuyal when Essex failed to appear. See Hume: *Sir Walter Raleigh*; pp. 297 ff. According to Camden, Essex himself similarly stormed the gates of Lisbon, in 1589.

⁶ Op. cit.; p. 265.

⁷ The protagonist of Jonson's *Every Man Out of His Humour*, "the humorous knight," Pantarvolo.

latter phrase gives a special clue, for whoever stood for the Earl himself had a high place in the affections of the people, as he knew he did.

Burghley's maneuverings, which receive their share of honest and unflattering notice in the early versions, become Robert Cecil's in the final one. In the 1601 revision of *Coriolanus*, the rebel is transformed with adroit and masterly strokes into the Earl of Southampton, with a protective coating of Essex. The portrayal is discreet, but it is unmistakable. Menenius adopts the role of father.

Ward says, apropos of the Essex-Southampton conspiracy, "Lord Oxford's true feelings . . . will probably never be known. He never referred to it in any of his subsequent letters to Sir Robert Cecil." Of course nothing is more sure than that whatever letters existed upon this of all subjects, would have been completely destroyed.

But Lord Oxford puts his "true feelings" about Southampton's part into this drama. It would be interesting to know whether Essex became jealous of the ability and the high claims of the younger Earl, as Aufidius does of Coriolanus; Raleigh had of course become very jealous of Essex. Naturally, it would have been impossible for Oxford to make his dramatic account too realistic; so that part of the action may belong primarily to an earlier version and hardly at all to the situation of 1601. But Sicinius-cum-Brutus did not have to be altered, since Robert Cecil was a near-replica of his father, an unscrupulous politician and opportunist. Concerning Sicinius, Volumnia speaks of "his foxship"—thus furnishing a hint, if one were needed.

During the 1590's, as Burghley's age and infirmities increased, he had watched with consternation the rising power of Raleigh and Essex; but he went to enormous pains to see to it that his son, Robert Cecil, became his successor in office. Raleigh had been his lifelong friend, but the younger Cecil ruined him. Essex hated both father and son to the point of detestation; and they reciprocated. By 1597 Burghley would have known Southampton's paternity, if indeed he had not known it all along. Nothing is more likely than that he influenced the Queen in her policy of thwarting the young Earl's ambitions and keeping him down, by warning her that if he became too eminent, she might be deposed. Robert Cecil would certainly have done so.

Brutus [of *Coriolanus*]. A worthy officer in the war; but insolent, Overcome with pride, ambitious past all thinking, Self-loving.

Sicinius. And affecting one sole throne, Without assistance. (IV.6.30-3.)

This is plain speech about the "self-loving" Southampton, who was the rightful heir, "affecting one sole throne;" or so, apparently Burghley and Robert Cecil feared.

A story is told of Southampton's attacking Ambrose Willoughby in the palace grounds because of certain orders he had carried out. The latter

pulled out some of the Earl's hair in the *mêlée*, and the Queen thanked Willoughby for daring to perform his orders impartially, especially to so close a friend of Essex as Southampton. To cause such a disturbance in the precincts of the palace was to expose the offender to the loss of his right hand, but Elizabeth told Willoughby: "You would have done better if you had sent Southampton to the porter's lodge (that is, to the guard) to see who would dare to fetch him out!"⁸

The "banishment"—potent word—stands, in this version of the play, for the Queen's humiliation of Southampton, her refusal to recognize his "special bravery in action" at sea, in 1597—after which he ran away to the Continent—followed later by her rescinding his commission as General of the Horse.

The hero is bitter with resentment. Cominius, his friend, says of him:

... Coriolanus
He would not answer to; forbade all *names*:
He was a *kind of nothing*, titleless,
Till he had forg'd himself a name o' the fire
Of burning Rome. (V.1.1-15.)

Arrogant in his sense of abuse, the young Earl was evidently ready to burn up the earth to achieve his rights.

There is trouble in the air:

There hath been in Rome strange insurrections; the people against the senators, patricians, and nobles. (IV.3.13-5.)

Perhaps Southampton had offered his services to Essex against an England ruled by Cecils as Coriolanus offered his to Aufidius against the Rome of Sicinius and Brutus, and for the same reason:

My birth-place hate I, and my love's upon
This enemy town. (IV.4.23-4.)

And perhaps Essex was simply using him, as Aufidius used Coriolanus, privately resolving,

... When, Caius, Rome is thine,
Thou art poor'st of all; then shortly thou art mine. (IV.7.56-7.)

But we do not know that this was the case, though the inference is that Oxford thought so.

⁸ F. Chamberlain: *The Sayings of Q. Eliz.*; p. 173.
One is supposed to question Mr. Chamberlain's easy verdict that it was Southampton's close friendship with Essex which made it dangerous to oppose the hot-headed young Earl!

We may take it that Cecil besought Oxford to plead with Southampton, as Sicinius and Brutus besought Menenius:

Sicinius . . . But sure, if you
Would be your country's pleader, *your good tongue*,
More than the instant army we can make,
Might stop our countryman.

Brutus. Only make trial *what your love can do*
For Rome, towards Marcus.

Menenius. . . . I'll undertake it:
I think he'll hear me. . . . (V.1.35 *et seq.*)

The older man's efforts to see the rebel are piteous, and so is his unsuccessful plea:

Menenius [to the Guard]. I tell thee, fellow,
The general is my lover: I have been
The book of his good acts, whence men have read
His fame unparallel'd, haply amplified

... with all the size that *verity*
Would without lapsing suffer. (V.2.13-18.)

How could he say more lucidly that this man is his true love, celebrated in the "book" of Sonnets, where "men have read" (and will read, "beyond all date, even to eternity,") "his fame unparallel'd?" This was reckless, even for de Vere. Cecil would not have failed to take note.

Menenius appeals to Coriolanus:

The glorious gods sit in hourly synod about *thy particular prosperity*,
and love thee no worse than *thy old father* Menenius does! *O my son!*
my son! thou art preparing fire for us; look thee, *here's water* to quench it. I was hardly moved to come to thee; but being assured none but myself could move thee, I . . . conjure thee to pardon Rome. . . . (V.2.66 *et seq.*)

It is only his son's "particular prosperity" he prays for: he could never abet treachery against his sovereign. For once, Lord Oxford allows himself to use the forbidden word. "O my son! my son!" It is profoundly moving. There is a double meaning in "here's water": the water being tears, and also the symbol of his hereditary office. The Lord Great Chamberlain "brings water for"—in this case—his son's "stain."

But the younger man sends him away, as would have been the case in the actual event; nevertheless it hurts him to have done so.

Coriolanus. This last old man,
Whom with a crack'd heart I have sent to Rome,
Lo! he above the measure of a father:
Nay, *godded me* indeed. (V.3.8-11.)

As indeed Oxford had "godded" his son, the *roi soleil*, making him Adonis and Apollo, conferring immortality upon him.

The stubborn warrior almost breaks down before his wife and child:

Coriolanus. . . . *Like a dull actor now,*
*I have forgot my part,*⁹ *and I am out,*
Even to a full disgrace.
... O! a kiss
Long as my exile, sweet as my revenge! (V.3.40-5.)

This farewell is reminiscent of the parting of Richard II from his wife. Richard was also *le roi soleil*. We have spoken before of the sun-symbolism in *Richard II* and of the fact that, in his effigy at Westminster Abbey, he is clad in a robe decorated with the sun, his emblem, shining through the clouds.

The ensuing converse between Coriolanus and Volumentia must have been designed by the heartbroken father sternly to show an unnatural woman, his Queen, what a Roman mother could be and could accomplish with her noble, though misguided and recalcitrant, son. Even the stubborn Elizabeth must have softened when she heard the headstrong man cry:

O, mother, mother!
What have you done? . . .
... O my mother! mother! O!
You have won a *happy victory* to Rome. (V.3.182-5.)

At the tragic close of *Coriolanus*, Aufidius makes a speech like that of Fortinbras upon the death of Hamlet:

My rage is gone,
And I am struck with sorrow. Take him up:
...
Beat thou the drum, that it speak mournfully;
Trail your steel pikes, . . .
... *he shall have a noble memory.* (V.5.147-54.)

This, "a noble memory," was all the Poet could bequeath to the Fair Youth, but he intended with his whole heart that he should have that.

There is a passage in this great drama which we should like to broadcast to all the universities of every English-speaking land, so

⁹ As an *unperfect actor* on the stage,
Who with his fear is *put beside his part*. (Son. 23.)

This sonnet says, "O! let *my books* be then the eloquence," etc. And it may not be a coincidence that, in both this sonnet, to which he calls attention, and this play, he speaks of his books. Not merely the poems, he means, but the plays also, record his love—as this play does. Southampton had a wife and child at the time he joined the conspiracy.

resoundingly that the professors of English literature could no longer turn a deaf ear. Coriolanus—and now he is Shakespeare himself speaking from his prophetic soul—scorns the tyranny of custom (II.3.120-3):

What *custom* wills, in all things should we do't,
The dust on antique time would lie unswept,
And *mountainous error* be too highly heap'd
For truth to o'er-peer.