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SHAKESPEARE AND THE METRICAL PSALMS.

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I.

To a student of English poetry whose mind is preoccupied with its æsthetic interpretation, one could hardly propose an enterprise more futile, not to say vexatious, than the attempt to seek any points of contact between the works of the great dramatist who holds us all beneath his spell and those crude metrical versions of the Scripture Psalms bearing the names of Sternhold and Hopkins, which in Shakespeare's time were bound in at the end of Bible and Prayer Book and sung by the people in the parish churches of England.

To a student with his mind so bent any attempt to bring the dramas and the Psalms into conjunction would seem as irrelevant as to remark that Mount Washington and some little Scotch-Irish Presbyterian church both happened to lie within the bounds of the State of New Hampshire. We know quite well what the literary critics used to say of "Sternhold and Hopkins," when the peculiar motive that originally gave them birth had begun to wane, while yet the rude strains of the Psalms continued to afflict their sensibilities as often as they went to church. We know how the progress of culture has gradually exalted the old playwright into literary supremacy and relegated the old Psalm writers into the obscurity of the Dunciad.

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Now the present writer could, were it worth while, say some things in mitigation of the extreme sentence which literary criticism has passed upon Sternhold and Hopkins and all of that ilk. But the proposal of this paper is less venturesome and possibly more profitable. For our immediate purpose, we need not regard the old metrical Psalms as "literature" at all. We are thinking of metrical Psalmody rather as one of the institutions of the social religion of Shakespeare's time in just the sense that balladry was one of the institutions of social every day life in that time. Now it is obvious enough that the ballads of Elizabethan England were as a class of little literary worth; so much so that the reviser of Mr. Chappell's work on old English Popular Music¹ has on that ground thought it a waste of space to reprint them. They did not, he remarks, attain even to the lowest standard of poetry. Nevertheless Elizabethan balladry was a great social force, widely and deeply affecting the lives and minds, and, as the Puritans thought, the destinies of the English people. And Shakespeare was very much interested in it, possibly because he liked to hear and to sing the ballads, or it may be only because balladry was so prominent a part of the life of his time, that he found it dramatically effective to make use of it to give reality and color to the scenes he depicted. In either case it remains true that balladry plays an important part in his dramatic materials and enters largely into the warp and woof of his dramas. The student of balladry might well revert to them in order to gain "a realizing sense" of the part balladry played in Elizabethan England.

Balladry was a popular institution and not novel in Shakespeare's time. Metrical Psalmody was a Puritan institution, new then, and introduced into England with the distinct purpose (as we shall have occasion to show later on) of rivalling and replacing the popular balladry; and gradually under Puritan influence during the whole of Shakespeare's life becoming more and more an ordinance of church worship. The

¹ *Old English Popular Music*, by Wm. Chappell. New ed. Ed. by H. Ellis Woodbridge, London, 1893, Vol. I, p. vii.

sole purpose of the present paper is to look for any evidence that Shakespeare may have concerned himself in any way with this institution of metrical Psalmody, to study any references he may have made to it in his plays, and to record any use he may have made of the actual language of Sternhold and Hopkins' Psalm versions.

The inquiry has a twofold interest. There are few of us who have attained to the serene unconcern regarding Shakespeare's personality and career which that great Shakespearean, Dr. Furness, expresses with all his native charm in his preface to the Variorum Edition of *Much Ado*, or who share his hope that no further details of Shakespeare's career may ever be discovered. We are inquisitive enough to welcome anything that throws light on Shakespeare the man or in any way connects him with the ideals or institutions of his time. Apart from any interest our inquiry may have in that direction it justifies itself also to the student of the history of Psalmody. He would like very much to get from Shakespeare's dramas as lively an impression of Psalmody-at-work as he gets of its rival balladry-at-play. He welcomes the least allusion to it as possibly measuring the vogue it had attained to at the given date or even possibly suggesting "how it strikes a contemporary."

II.

It is not perhaps usual for an individual student to concern himself very deeply at the same time with the study of dramatic history or art and with that of the history of the Church. Even one who is interested in both subjects is likely to keep the Drama and Church History in separate compartments of his mind, between which there is no flow of ideas and no opportunity for concurrences. This is especially true of students of the periods in which Church and Theatre were regarded as mutually exclusive.

In this way it may get hidden from some of us that the years of Shakespeare's life covered the whole of the great Puritan movement of Elizabeth's reign and incidentally of

the rise and growth of the movement to make the singing of metrical Psalms a part of the worship of every cathedral and parish church in England; not as a matter of taste or convenience but as an application to the sphere of worship of the old Lollard motive and ideal:—"The Bible only."²

Elizabeth came to the throne in 1558. By the end of that year the Marian exiles began to return from the continent, bringing with them a firm attachment to the practice of an exclusively Scriptural Psalmody, and in their hands the actual psalm book they had already printed at Geneva in an uncompleted form. By 1562 the returned exiles had got the metrical Psalms completed and in that year printed in London, "with apt Notes to sing them withal," "Very mete to be vsed of all sortes of people priuately for their solace & comfort." Two years later Shakespeare was born, in April 1564. Two years after that the Psalms were reprinted with a license "to bee soong of the people together, in Churches, before and after Morning and Euening prayer: as also before and after the Sermon, and moreouer in private houses," etc. Their use in home and even in church was pretty well recognized by the time Shakespeare grew old enough to read them, though, as we shall see, a good deal of their Puritan origin and motive was still associated with them in his mind. But he lived to

² It may be noted here briefly that the Metrical Psalter, which for almost a hundred and fifty years served as the only congregational "hymn book" in the Church of England, was based on some versified Psalms which Thomas Sternhold began to make in Henry VIIIth's time, doubtless in imitation of the French poet, Clement Marot, and which were supplemented after Sternhold's death by his friend, John Hopkins, in the time of Edward VI. Some of the Protestant exiles in Mary's time came into close contact with the singing of metrical Psalms that Calvin had set up in his congregation at Geneva, and were so deeply impressed by it that they proceeded to prepare more Psalm versions to be added to those of Sternhold and Hopkins already in hand, with a view of having a complete Psalter for use in English-speaking congregations. Hence "the Genevan taint" of metrical Psalmody which, after the return of the exiles at Elizabeth's accession and their efforts to acclimate Psalm singing in the English Church, was objected to by the high church element who wished the worship to be confined to the letter of the Prayer Book.

see metrical Psalmody a Church rather than a Puritan ordinance, and it is safe to say that not less than a hundred editions of "Sternhold and Hopkins" were published during Shakespeare's life. This circulation, so amazing for its time, is the best evidence of the extent to which metrical Psalmody had permeated English religion and life.

Just what Shakespeare's personal attitude to Puritanism was is a subject of inquiry well within the scope of this JOURNAL, for it cannot too often be reiterated that the great purpose and aim of the Elizabethan Puritan movement was not to substitute the Genevan gown for the surplice and vestments, nor to change the position of the holy table: it was to make the Church of England a Presbyterian Church. But Shakespeare's personal attitude to Puritanism has been a matter of dispute and is still largely a matter of conjecture. It is claimed that his father took the Puritan side, and it is quite certain that Puritanism was a growing power in his home town and parish church of Stratford. Shakespeare's lack of sympathy with Puritanism is strongly maintained in Sir Sidney Lee's *Life of William Shakespeare*, a book so familiar as to make detailed references unnecessary. What can be said on the other side may be found in the preliminary essays in *Shakespeare and Holy Scripture*, by Thomas Carter (London, 1905); a book less known but quite worthy of consultation. One thing at least Mr. Carter clearly proves, and that is that Shakespeare's quotations from the Bible are taken not from the Bishops' Bible of 1568, but from the Puritan Bible, the Genevan (or "Breeches") Bible, first published complete by the exiles at Geneva in 1560. It contained copious notes, tables of Scripture names, a concordance; and in many of its almost innumerable reprints it also included Sternhold and Hopkins' metrical Psalms with the tunes to which they were to be sung. In Shakespeare's time this was the household Bible in England, and it is quite credible that he, like Bacon and other great Elizabethans, was trained in its use and 'saturated with its story.'³ This of itself might ac-

³ Cf. Carter, *op. cit.*, pp. 1-3.

count for any familiarity Shakespeare showed for the Psalms bound in with the household Bible, and we have also to remember two things in that connection: first, that the young were to be encouraged to learn the Psalms and sing them instead of the amatory if not indecent songs of the period;⁴ and second, that the group of hymns and metrical pieces preceding the Psalms in "Sternhold and Hopkins" (one if not two of which Shakespeare may have quoted) were apparently a putting into rhyme of Bible and Prayer Book materials with a view of assisting the memory of the scholar; and thus constituting a sort of religious primer quite as much as (probably much more than) a hymn book.

Such a use of the metrical Psalms in Shakespeare's home and school does not, however, exhaust his connection with them or his opportunity of becoming familiar with them. He lived under the operation of the Elizabethan Uniformity Act (1559) and injunctions which required the attendance of all at church on Sundays and holy days, and enforced it through visitants with full power to inflict fines of money and censures upon those who absented themselves. And the authorities seem to have been very persistent in compelling such attendance; zealous at first to enforce the law against Papists, and later against Puritan objectors to the Prayer Book. So that apart from any question as to Shakespeare's attitude to religion it is reasonable to conclude that he was accustomed to church-going at a period when Psalm singing was establishing itself as an inevitable appendage to Prayer Book worship. It is indeed difficult to think of any way in which Shakespeare could have avoided some contact with metrical Psalmody. The thing was not done in a corner. The Psalm book, with the exception of Bible and Prayer book, was the most frequently reprinted, the most widely circulated book in Elizabethan England. During Shakespeare's entire life Sternhold and Hopkins were the most popular writers in the English language.

⁴ This was a motive announced in common by the early Psalm translators and is made a part also of the title page of "Sternhold and Hopkins."

III.

1. *Shakespeare's references to Metrical Psalmody.*(1) THE WINTER'S TALE: Act IV, scene iii, ll. 39-43.⁵

"Shee hath made-me four and twenty Nose-gayes for the shearers (three-man song-men, all, and very good ones) but they are most of them Meanes and Bases; but one Puritan amongst them, and he sings Psalmes to horn-pipes."

The clown, coming on the scene, thus refers to his father's sheep-shearers, for whose "Sheep shearing-Feast" he is to buy the wherewithal. All but one, it would appear, could sing the current catches in three parts, though with difficulty in getting the tenor part carried. The exception was a Puritan. He would not join in the catches, but sang metrical Psalms alone, though he sang them to gay airs to which horn-pipes were commonly danced.

This passage shows us "the Psalms at work" in the every-day life of the time in a way that strikingly illustrates the original motive that spurred a group of writers in France, Scotland and England to make metrical versions of Psalms in the language of the people. Clement Marot in France justified his as being offered to replace the flippant songs that prevailed at the French court. Wedderburn in Scotland translated Psalms and made his ballads "out of prophaine sangis in godly sangis for avoyding of sin and harlotry," and to cause the young "til put away bawdry and uncleine sange." Coverdale wrote "to give our youth of England some occasion to change their foul and corrupte balletes into swete songes and spiritual hymnes of God's honour." And on the title-page of Sternhold and Hopkins' English psalm book, even after it was authorized for church use, the injunction remained, that the Psalms were to be sung of all the people "for their godly solace and comfort, laying apart all ungodly songes and Ballades which tend only to the norishing of vice and corrupting of youth."

There is nothing in literature that brings home to the mind a clearer

⁵ The scene is numbered as the second in some modern editions. The text of these quotations is, unless otherwise stated, that of the First Folio. The line numbers refer to the Cambridge edition.

conception of the part balladry played in the every day life of Shakespeare's time, or of how general and seemingly almost universal was the extension of the knowledge of music and the ability and the will to sing, than this brief glimpse of sheep-shearers in the field carrying their three-part catches. And, as the flash-light discloses the figure of the Puritan apart, offended by the ballads and fitting sacred words to hornpipes, the whole situation is brought back and made alive again. It may be added that as most of the Psalms were in the common (ballad) meter, it was easy to fit them to ballad tunes and country dances. From the beginning of the movement at Geneva it had been a reproach of Catholic critics that Psalm singers set them to familiar secular melodies, and thus contaminated religion. In all probability the answer would be that the use of tunes already known was the quickest way of getting the Psalms in and vicious ballads out. At all events the melodies printed in the English Psalter for church use were surely sufficiently grave.

(2) THE FIRST PART OF KING HENRY IV: Act II, scene iv, ll. 125, 126.

Falstaff, soliloquizing in his cups, says:

"I would I were a weauer, I could sing psalmes or any thing."

Such is the reading of the Quartos, and now the accepted text, though Vaughan's conjecture "on anything" is tempting. The Folios read: "I could sing all manner of songs."

The allusion here is to a particular phase of Metrical Psalmody in England, which in Shakespeare's time was doubtless conspicuous, but whose influence on English Psalmody has not until lately attracted the consideration it deserves,—the Psalm singing of the French, Walloon and Dutch refugees. They began to come in Edward Vith's time, and Cranmer encouraged the presence of their learned men, notably of John Utenhove, afterward an elder in John à Lasco's London church.* Edward VI gave the foreign Protestants a charter and a church as early as 1550. When Elizabeth came to the throne she again encouraged the persecuted Protestants on the continent to seek an asylum in England, and in 1567 secured a still greater influx of weavers from the Low Country provinces (called Walloons), settling at Canterbury, Norwich and elsewhere, and introducing the weaving of cloths and silks.⁷ These

* Strype, *Memorials*.

⁷ See Burn, *The history of the . . . foreign Protestant Refugees settled in England*, London, 1846, p. 4.

people were in the early flush of the enthusiasm which the singing of metrical Psalms in their own tongue had awakened in France and the low countries; and in England as abroad, we may be sure, their Psalmody was the distinctive note of their religious exaltation. Their numbers, their enthusiasm, and the novelty of the melodies to which the Psalms had been set at Geneva, must have made a great impression upon the religious life of England and upon the fortunes of metrical Psalmody there. The French-speaking immigrants appear to have been dependent on such copies of the French Psalter of Marot and Beza as they brought with them. The Flemish weavers affiliated with the Dutch congregations in London and elsewhere, for whose use Utenhove printed from John Day's London press his *Hondert Psalmen Davids* as early as 1561, while the English Psalter itself was still incomplete. Utenhove set his translations to the melodies of the Marot and Beza Psalter, so that, whether it was in French or Dutch, the tunes of this immigrant Psalmody in England were identical.

The writer on "Music" in the recent *Shakespeare's England* (Oxford, 1916) has gone so far as to suggest that metrical Psalmody was perhaps introduced into England by the Huguenot refugees, and has "no doubt that it was largely spread by the Flemish weavers who fled from the persecutions of Alva."⁸

Shakespeare seems to make another allusion to the fervor of Flemish Psalmody in Sir Toby's question in *Twelfth Night* (II, iii, 57): "Shall we rowse the night-Owle in a Catch, that will drawe three souls out of one Weauerf?" The very casualness of Shakespeare's allusions to "weavers" is the best proof that their Psalm singing was so conspicuous a feature in the life of the time, that an offhand mention of it would be perfectly intelligible to Shakespeare's audiences.

(3) THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR: Act II, scene i, ll. 53-55.

Mistress Ford, testing the truth of Falstaff's words by her experience of his disposition, says:

"but they doe no more adhere and keep place together,
than the hundred Psalms to the tune of Green-sleeues":

So the Folios read, but Rowe's conjecture of "the Hundredth Psalm" for "the hundred Psalms" has been adopted by common consent.

⁸ Vol. II, pp. 19f.

To the present writer no emendation of the Folio text seems to be inevitable. The "hundred Psalms" is a literal translation of the title of the *Hondert Psalmen Davids*, which Utenhove printed at London in 1561 for the use of the Dutch and Flemings. Shakespeare was familiar with their distinctive addiction to Psalm singing in every day life, and, as we have already seen, noted it in a later play. The very peculiar rhythms and the strangeness of the melodies of the *Hondert Psalmen* are what would strike the average Englishman of that musical period as compared with his own ballads and Psalms in simple metre; and "the hundred Psalms" might well become a familiar designation of the Flemish Psalmody embodying these peculiar features. It is at least certain that the *Hondert Psalmen* could not be sung "to the tune of Green-sleeues."

To all this it might be objected that *Hondert Psalmen* had a brief life, would have been laid aside at the publication of Utenhove's complete Psalter in 1566, and forgotten by the date of *The Merry Wives*. But the objection has no force. To people of the Flemish weaver class with simple minds and little money, a Psalm book once purchased was treasured and used for life and handed down as an heirloom. Even in our day of progress and enlarged resources a hymn book in possession is not superseded by a revised edition. There are still Presbyterian congregations contented in the use of *The Presbyterian Hymnal* of 1874, indifferent to the fact that it was recast in 1895 and revised in 1911; and probably as many congregations using the *Hymnal* of 1895 as the revision of 1911.

Assuming that "the Hundredth Psalm" is the correct reading of our passage, it is to be said that there were two renderings of that Psalm in the Psalter of Shakespeare's time.

The first one is in ballad metre and is unsigned. In the complete Psalter of 1562 it begins:—

"In God the Lorde be glad and lyght,
praysse him throughout the yearthe:
Serue him and come before his sight,
with singing and with mirth."

The rendering is above the general level of the Psalter, but without any feature entitling it to be singled out for mention, especially as it has no "proper tune"; the rubric reading, "Sing this as the. Lxxvii" (apparently a misprint for Lxxvii, as later editions read).

The second and more familiar version of "the Hundredth Psalm" is in long metre and in all probability was written by William Kethe. It had appeared in both London and Geneva editions of "Sternhold and Hopkins," as early as 1560-61, but was dropped from the complete London edition of 1562 in favor of that noticed above. It was added

in an appendix in 1564, and in 1565 and in every edition thereafter, it took its place in the body of the book as *the* hundredth Psalm, the other version following it as an alternate. It was set uniformly to the melody still designated "The old Hundredth" or briefly "Old Hundred": i. e., the 100th in the "Old Version" (Sternhold and Hopkins) as against the version of the same Psalm in the "New Version" (Tate and Brady's). The melody had first appeared in the enlarged edition of Calvin's Genevan Psalter printed in 1551, being there set to the 134th and not to the 100th Psalm. The Psalm begins

"Al people that on earth doe dwell":

and, apart from the spelling, the text printed, still as No. 100, in *The Hymnal* of the Presbyterian Church is the same that Shakespeare knew, with the exception of the third line of the second stanza, which the Psalters of his time, following an early printer's error, printed as "We are his flocke" in place of the original "We are his folck" (people). The rhythm of the melody as now sung greatly differs from the original form still sung during Shakespeare's life.

"The Hundredth Psalm" is the best thing in the old Psalter. Shakespeare's reference implies its familiarity even to a theatre audience in his time, and it, together with the verses from the eighteenth, beginning

"The Lord descended from above,
and bowed the heuens hye,"

represents about all of the Old Version of the Psalms that has survived.

If Shakespeare was really referring to "the Hundredth psalm" he was quite correct in saying that "the tune of Green sleeues" did not fit it. An attempt was made to moralize the "Ditty of the Lady Greene Sleeues" soon after its first printing in 1580, but the merrily swinging measures of the tune could not have been made to accord with the L. M. Psalm. The tune was a favorite one in Shakespeare's time, and long afterward it continued to be set to new ballads written for new times. Shakespeare mentions it again in the fifth act of this play (scene v, 18). The tune itself and its history are readily accessible in the work of Chappell already referred to.

2. Shakespeare's Quotations from the Metrical Psalter.

(1) THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR: Act III, scene i, lines 21-24.

Sir Hugh Evans is singing remembered snatches of Marlowe's "Come live with me and be my love" by way of keep-

ing his courage up, but as his heart sinks a line from the saddest of the Psalms obtrudes itself in this way:

"Melodious birds sing Madrigalls:—when as I sat in Pablon: and a thousand vagram Posies. To shallow, &c."

The line "When as we sat in Babylon" is the opening one in the C. M. version of the 137th Psalm in "Sternhold and Hopkins," signed "W. W." for William Whittingham, who had a great share in the translation of the Genevan Bible and a considerable one in the completion of the metrical Psalter. In the Genevan Bible, from which Shakespeare usually gets his Scriptural quotations, the reading is unmistakably different: "By the riuers of Babel wee sate."

(2) THE MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR: Act II, scene i, lines 101, 102.

Pistol says:

"He wooes both high and low, both rich & poor, both yong and old, one with another" . . .

The quotation is from Thomas Sternhold's⁹ version of the 49th Psalm; which begins:

"Al people harken and giue eare
to that that I shall tell:

2. Both high and low, both rich and poore,
that in the world do dwell."

Compare also Pistol in Act I, scene iii, ll. 82, 83, of this same play:

"Let Vultures gripe thy guts: for gourd, and Fullam holds: & high and low beguiles the rich and poor,"

where Pistol goes on in the rhythm (C. M.) of the Psalm:

"And I to Page shall eke vnfold
How Falstaffe (varlet vile)
His Doue will proue; his gold will hold,
And his soft couch defile."

In the Genevan Bible both the rhythm and order of the words are different: "As well low as hie, both rich and poore."

⁹ Not John Hopkins', as in Carter, *op. cit.*, pp. 287 and 288.

(3) THE LIFE OF HENRY THE FIFTH: Act I, scene i, ll. 25-27.

The Archbishop of Canterbury's words:

"The breath no sooner left his Fathers body,
But that his wildnesse, mortify'd in him,
Seem'd to dye too:"

read very much like an indirect quotation from one of the hymns in the Psalter that preceded the Psalms, entitled "The Complaint of a Sinner,"¹⁰ reading:

"That I with sinne repleat,
may liue, and sinne may die.
That being mortified,
this sinne of mine in mee:
I may be sanctified,
by grace of thine in thee."

This hymn was not in the original Psalter of 1562 but was there in 1566, long before Shakespeare could have been called upon as a child to memorize these rhythmical lessons.

3. Shakespeare's Allusions to Metrical Psalms.

There are here and there in the plays words or collocations of words suggesting the vocabulary or manner of the metrical Psalter, and which may or not have grown out of Shakespeare's reminiscences of its language. If he heard the Psalms in church from six years of age up, as may have been the case, it is natural certainly that a phrase now and then should stick. At the same time such allusions are hard to verify and the phrasing of the metrical Psalms was not idiosyncratic. If we can catch a Scriptural allusion differing from the Genevan prose version and agreeing with the metrical, the chances are in its favor as having been recollected from the Psalter.

Of such the most likely instance seems to the present writer to be Duncan's apostrophe to the castle of Macbeth:

"This Castle hath a pleasant seat:"

¹⁰ In some editions this hymn appeared in the group of hymns that followed the Psalms.

Banquo makes a response that plainly carries forward the imagery of the 84th Psalm, and one's mind at once reverts to the metrical version of it:

"How pleasant is thy dwelling place,
O Lord of hosts to mee?
The tabernacles of thy grace,
How pleasant Lord they bee?"

Certainly that rhythmical stanza would become an involuntary possession of any one who often heard it. The Genevan Bible reads: "How amiable are thy Tabernacles!" So also the Prayer Book Psalter uses the adjective "amiable."

Then there is Parson Evans' "Plesse you from his mercy sake" (*Merry Wives*, III, i, 39) which may reflect either the Psalter or the Genevan Bible version of Psalm vi, 4, but occurs in a play rather rich in references to the Psalter. There is also the beautiful prayer, "Open thy Gate of Mercy, gracious God" (*3 Henry VI*, I, iv, 177), which suggests the hymn in the Psalter, called "The Lamentation of a Sinner," beginning:

"1. O Lord turne not away thy face,
from him that lieth prostrate:
Lamenting sore his sinfull life,
before thy mercy gate.
2. Which gate thou openest wide to those
that do lament their sin:
Shut not that gate against me Lord,
but let me enter in:"

and of all the hymns of the Psalter, the most likely to leave an impression on a poet's mind for its own sake.

Various other passages from the dramas, in the judgment of the present writer less pertinent than these, have been noted by Mr. Carter, and can be found by turning over the pages of his book already referred to. In estimating Shakespeare's familiarity with the Psalter, as with the Genevan Bible, it is no more than fair to remember that Scriptural phrases abounded in the colloquial language of his day, and doubtless in many of the books he seems to have read and utilized.

It is clear enough, we think, from the evidence of unquestionable references, that the connection between Shakespeare's dramas and the Metrical Psalms, which we proposed at the outset of this paper as our theme, is real and not fancied, however slight it be. Whether by early training or by church attendance (or by common report, if one chooses to have it so), Shakespeare was sufficiently at home with the Psalter as used in church worship to know that the 137th Psalm would be recognized by its opening line, and that the 100th (if his reference was really to it) would be recognized by its number. He was sufficiently familiar with the Psalter text to be able to quote from it, as he did on several occasions, not greatly to the enrichment of his drama, except in the effective modulation of Parson Evans' song.

We may safely add that Shakespeare was more attentive to the current ballads than to the current Psalms as literary material, and that in any debate as between the respective contribution of Psalmody and balladry to the joy of living he was on the side of balladry. The author of "Venus and Adonis" was not prudish, and the idea of setting a Psalm to a hornpipe in the interest of a stricter morality plainly aroused his sense of humor. But we are not able to see that Shakespeare's handling of the Psalm singing Puritan and the ardent weaver involves his contempt of Psalmody, and we are still less able to see that it necessarily implies hostility to Puritanism. To the dramatist

"All the world's a stage,

And all the men and women merely players."

His characteristic attitude is that of a spectator, and his eager eye is on the watch for good dramatic material. The actors in the great Elizabethan drama of Puritanism played many parts. We do not know how much Shakespeare was interested in the great issues of the drama, or how and where he distributed his applause. All that we are entitled to infer from his words would seem to be that he was much amused by some of the minor parts as taken by Puritan extremists who lacked the saving grace of humor, and whose zeal quenched what native sense of beauty may have been theirs.