

tearing or cutting, or indenting through the vacant space, and a part given to each of the contracting parties. The fact that the indented line of one matched that of another was proof of the genuineness of the document, and this indenting was then actually necessary to constitute an indenture, and was a well-known document in common use. While Shakespeare uses the word sometimes correctly, as we have said, sometimes he uses it in such a way as to negative any argument in favour of his having any special appreciation of its legal significance, as the following will illustrate :

"For if a King bid a man be a villain, he's bound
"By the indenture of his oath to be one." (1)

An oath of allegiance to a sovereign was never in the form of an indenture, and there was no oath attaching to an indenture, so Shakespeare has here used the word erroneously, unless we conclude that by *indenture* he simply meant the zigzag stability of the oath in question, but, in the latter interpretation the expression loses all legal significance.

"'Tis semper idem, for absque hoc nihil est ;
"'Tis all in very part." (2)

Shakespeare's use of *absque hoc* was probably not intended to be used in any legal sense whatever. As it is put into the mouth of a comedian, it was more likely intended for nonsense. It is the only time Shakespeare attempts to use the term.

He seems to have a very vague idea of *jointure* in his loose employment of the idea in

"Therefore our sometime sister, now our queen,
"The imperial jointress of this warlike state." (3)

(1) "Pericles, Prince of Tyre," Act I., Scene 3.

(2) "King Henry IV.," Part II., Act V., Scene 5.

(3) "Hamlet, Prince of Denmark," Act I., Scene 2.