

to show that Shakespeare also appropriated from Holinshed his exposition of the Levitical Law, often quoted in support of the theory of his biblical knowledge and legal training.

Holinshed's and Hall's Chronicles are the source from which Shakespeare obtained the plots and technical legal language and situations in all his English historical plays, paraphrasing the texts of these authors and often literally copying their language, and especially their legal terms, as the following shows :—

SHAKESPEARE.

"I am denied to sue my livery here,  
 "And yet my letters-patents give me leave.  
 "My father's goods are all distrain'd and sold ;  
 "And these, and all, are all amiss employ'd.  
 "What would you have me do? I am a subject  
 "And challenge law : Attorneys are denied me ;  
 "And therefore personally I lay my claim  
 "To my inheritance of free descent." (1)

It will be noted that Shakespeare copied Holinshed so accurately in writing the foregoing, that he even reproduced Holinshed's double plurals in "letters-patents." Other than this, there is nothing so striking as to call for special comment, except the fact that Shakespeare, in following Holinshed, used the legal term "distrained" in a fairly correct sense, in contradistinction to his incorrect use of the word in

"Here's Beaufort, that regards nor God, nor King,  
 "Hath here distrain'd the Tower to his use." (2)

The definition of a distraint is "the act of taking movable property out of the possession of a wrong-doer,

(1) Shakespeare's "King Richard II.," Act II., Scene 3.

(2) "King Henry VI.," part 1, Act I., Scene 3.