

In the Athenæum Library at Boston, is shewn as a curiosity, a volume by an early worthy of New England, named Timothy Dexter. Its title is a "Pickel for the Knowing Ones." So troubled was this writer in regard to the matter of punctuation, that he at length decided to omit the points altogether, giving, however, at the end of his book several pages of all the varieties of stop, with an invitation to the reader "to pepper his dish as he chose." This is the peculiarity on account of which the book is exhibited.

Very much of the literary criticism on Shakspeare has been expended, not on his own genuine words, but on what are in reality typographical misrepresentations of them. The folio of 1623, the first printed collection of the dramatic works of the great poet, is full of errors, either of the press or, antecedently, of the pen. The actors Heminge and Condell were indifferent editors. Seven years after Shakspeare's death they gathered together and gave to the world the plays as they found them in the property-rooms of the theatres—some already badly printed; some still in manuscript, blotted, obscure and worn, taken down in many places from oral tradition and interlarded here and there with portions of the *ad libitum* trifling indulged in by buffo players. Intelligent possessors of a folio appearing in such a condition would naturally, from time to time, check its contents by earlier printed copies of separate plays, and by their own individual knowledge of the text as heard on the contemporary stage. There can be no doubt that very many of the manuscript corrections to be read in Mr. Collier's copy of the date 1632, were made on good authority. It can well be conceived what a field has been here found for the exercise of literary sagacity. After a lapse of two hundred and fifty years the work of emendation may be supposed to be approaching completion. A few more happy guesses, commending themselves to the general understanding and good taste of qualified men,—and, to the already innumerable recensions of Shakspeare, one more will be added, with letterpress everywhere clear of marks of doubtfulness, its subject-matter to be grasped and thoroughly enjoyed, page after page, without interruption from commentator or critic.

A near approximation to such a Shakspeare is to be found in the now widely-known Globe edition, printed in 1864 at the University press of Cambridge, and of which in October last, 50,000 copies had been sold by the Messrs. Macmillan & Co. Into its text many