

PREFACE

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with regard to Webster. I did not think it necessary to make a bibliography of books on the wider subjects.

It may seem, in some cases, as if I contradicted myself in different parts of the book; as, for instance, when I say that it is impossible to understand a play wholly from the text, and later seem to believe that I *do* understand plays wholly from the text. I think I have not really contradicted myself. Part of the business of the earlier chapters is to prevent the necessity of continually repeated qualifications throughout the work. To express my exact meaning on each occasion would have meant covering the page with "in so far as it is possible"s, and "I think"s, and "possibly"s, and "perhaps"s; which makes the style feeble and muffles the idea. I have, perhaps, gone too far in this direction already.