

Compared with the foregoing Shakespeare's scene over the skull:

"Where be his quiddits now, his quillets, his cases, his tenures, and his tricks? Why does he suffer this rude knave to knock him about the sconce with a dirty shovel and will not tell him of his action of battery? Humph! This fellow might be in's time a great buyer of land, with his statutes, his recognizances, his fines, his double vouchers, his recoveries: Is this the fine of his fines, and the recovery of his recoveries, to have his fine pate full of fine dirt? Will his vouchers vouch him no more of his purchases, and double ones too, than the length and breadth of a pair of indentures?" (1)

so often cited in support of Shakespeare's legal acquirements—pales into insignificance as an exhibition of legal technicalities. We find no term of a legal technical nature in this speech that is not used with equal glibness in the language quoted from his two contemporary dramatists, (2) which was common parlance of the day; and many of the technical legal terms used by these writers are not even to be found in the plays attributed to Shakespeare.

We have seen that Shakespeare borrowed his legal phraseology in King Henry VIII. from Holinshed's and Hall's Chronicles—let us now consider the source of his exposition of the Salic Law in which commentators have found such a marvellous exhibition of Shakespeare's profound legal knowledge. It is granted that, on the face of it, this exposition of the Salic Law seems to indicate great legal erudition on the part of Shakespeare, and it is amazing to note with what reckless credulity so many commentators have founded their arguments in

---

(1) "Hamlet," Act V., Scene 1.

(2) Chapman's "All Fools," Act IV., Scene 1; and Dekker's "Gull's Hornbook."