

## THE SHAKESPEARE PROBLEM

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To the Editor of the Gazette,  
Sir:-

Your thoughtful article of the 14th instant is evidence that this question is a live one and of necessity "bound to reappear ever and anon" until the day when the world will wake up to wonder why there should ever have been any "Question" about it.

The growing adhesion of great names, from Lord Palmerston down to Lord Sydenham in support of the modernist view, lends encouragement to the many lesser voices "crying in the wilderness" against the reactionary Fundamentalists who would impose their out-worn creed upon the credulous mind.

When people accept the Emersonian doctrine of Individualism, do their own thinking, and stand by their reasoned conclusions in face of the dicta of so-called Authority, the coming of "The Day" will be speedily hastened.

With due respect, your caption, "Dethroning Shakespeare", is somewhat inept. It is a matter rather of Dethroning Shaxper and En-throning "Shake-Spears" - the crowning of the King and the elimination of the Pretender whose claim is supported "with a skill and plausibility that excels the evidence in sight".

It is not a question of the skill of the Elizabethan Dramatists, whose productions the London theatre manager - if such, indeed, he was - may or may not have been instrumental in putting on the stage; who never claimed fellowship in the Craft, assumed no rights of authorship, or interfered with the activities of piratical printers trading on this supposition. When the Plays attributed to a "rural yokel" were printed in the Great Folio of 1623, seven years after his death, amended, enlarged and improved from their Quarto form - perhaps connived at or permitted by the "Grand Possessors" of the MSS - as "Mrx William SHAKESPEARES/ Comedies Histories & Tragedies/ Published according to the True Original Copies", they were sponsored by wholly unauthorized persons, prefaced by equivocal and false statements in prose and verse, and disfigured by a palpably "fake" Portrait, the whole cleverly designed to mislead and deceive the uninitiated or those not wilfully blind.

Nor is it a question of that supreme gift - call it "Genius", if you like - which enabled the "tinker Bunyan" to "ascend to the splendid realm he has glorified" nor to "the list of mysterious examples of rapt elevation", which, as you well say, might be almost indefinitely enlarged".

These, extraordinary as some are, may all be accounted for by the natural working of some impelling force influencing a mind predisposed to receive such impressions. Heredity, environment and training all contribute to great achievement, without resort to the obsolete doctrine of Plenary Inspiration, on which some are constrained to rely in attributing to an untaught, uncultured, untrained, "rural yokel" the stupendous, ~~far~~ unparalleled achievement which we know and revere under the significant pseudonym, "Shake-Speare", stored with all the learning of the ages, crammed with the accurate technique of the Law as set forth by a trained legal mind, vibrant with the intimate air