"I Do Know Your Tongue": The Shakespeare Editions of William Rolfe and H. H. Furness as American Cultural Signifiers

Stephen Petersen
Salem-Teikyo University

Follow this and additional works at: https://uknowledge.uky.edu/kentucky-review
Part of the English Language and Literature Commons
Right click to open a feedback form in a new tab to let us know how this document benefits you.

Recommended Citation
Available at: https://uknowledge.uky.edu/kentucky-review/vol13/iss1/2

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the University of Kentucky Libraries at UKnowledge. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Kentucky Review by an authorized editor of UKnowledge. For more information, please contact UKnowledge@lsv.uky.edu.
"I Do Know Your Tongue":
The Shakespeare Editions of William Rolfe and H. H. Furness as American Cultural Signifiers

Stephen Petersen

Editions and Archetypes

In the United States in the second half of the nineteenth century many Americans were turning their country’s freedom and prosperity into achievements which stirred the imaginations of their fellow citizens. Two notable and prolific editors of Shakespeare, Horace Howard Furness and William James Rolfe, achieved these remarkable results in their field. Their achievement mirrored their culture and, in particular, the relationship of that culture’s unique elements to the freedom and prosperity from which they arose. Examining their work, separately and in comparison with each other’s, reveals interesting and entertaining facts about Shakespeare in a crescent America and provides insight into concepts at the center of America’s cultural self-image.

Rolfe and Furness were champions; not in the popular sense of winners, but in the etymological sense as representatives of the honor of a people on a contested field (champs). They displayed to advantage opposed impulses in American culture through their work in editing the two most significant U. S. editions of Shakespeare’s plays between the American Civil War and the First World War. It did not earn them a prominent place in history, but the enduring contribution of these American Shakespeareans lay in voicing and reconciling opposed tendencies, in their fledgling culture, toward tradition and innovation. Furness’ extraordinary concentration of scholarship placed a finished and polished American in the pantheon of the most eminent editors of Shakespeare. Rolfe opened the temple by diffusing a shared Shakespeare into the channels of Americans’ shared strengths. Both were archetypically American achievements. They exhibited the
ebullience and indomitability by which Americans are sometimes caricatured to the world: the boldest, the biggest and the best. Yet both achievements rested in the shadow of the cultural monument of Shakespeare, the chief poet of the world’s chief power, the British Empire at its zenith.

For the American cultural experience, the meaning of Rolfe’s and Furness’ divergences from each other has manifold sources and implications. By itself, their biographical data, though suggesting directions for further examination, does not challenge the assumptions of conventional “high” and “low” cultural oppositions. They were almost exact contemporaries. Furness lived from November 2, 1833 until August 13, 1912. Rolfe lived from December 10, 1827 to July 7, 1910. Though they were friends and correspondents over a long period of time, a social gulf separated their early years. In contrast to William Rolfe, whose father was a hatter, Horace Howard Furness was born into as distinguished a family as the United States could produce in the 1830’s. His father was a famous Philadelphia preacher and abolitionist, yet worldly enough to have actress Fanny Kemble as a dinner guest. Rolfe did not take an earned degree; Furness was Harvard Law. Furness was a dynast. His father, wife and son participated in his work and his nephew edited his letters. Rolfe’s sons took up teaching on the college level. Facts about the careers of these important editors are slightly more suggestive but still predictable. Rolfe worked to popularize Shakespeare and to make his works, and literature in general, the currency of equality in a new and expanding nation. The work of Furness, whose wealth gave him, among other things, greater detachment from the circumstances of his time and place, formed a link with past scholarship. Rolfe wrote as a teacher whose normative voice would necessarily be manifest. Furness did not need to be as insistent on correctness: his detachment and links to the past gave him a much longer perspective of the time in which errors were to be detected. It is not as individuals, however, but together, as complementary representatives of American character, that Furness, who like his namesake moved confidently among the world’s powerful and wealthy, and Rolfe, who like the prototypical modern advanced by schooling, employment interviews and hard work, speak to the breadth of Shakespeare’s cultural address during the United States’ expansion into preëminence.
Their work as Shakespearean editors is the common ground for comparing Rolfe and Furness. In the years between the Civil War and World War I, Americans compounded a culture from elements of frontier self-sufficiency and new-money dependence on British refinement. That experience shines forth from Rolfe's and Furness' careers and editions. Mining the data of these editions exposes the rich seam of a new culture. Although the editions reveal genuine cultural conflict and antagonism, more profoundly their similarities and contrasts portray a reconciling breadth of spirit. Specifically, this essay will use the editions to provide a point of departure to examine two oppositions within their cultural ground: one between the commercial and the artistic (specifically literary) and another between nationalist and cosmopolitan social views. A basic opposition between tradition and innovation is contained in both. A useful and accurate, but also interestingly congenial, description of the complexity of American culture emerges as it becomes clear that both editors worked from both sides of that opposition.

The Rolfe and the Furness Versions of The Merchant of Venice

A threshold analysis of an edition is a description of its characteristics as a book: how it is printed and bound, where and to whom it is sold and what, besides a bare text, it offers its readers. Perhaps more so than any of the other editions of Shakespeare from this period, Rolfe's and Furness' books are virtual pictures of the divergent cultural strains reunited in the process of centralizing Shakespeare as a cultural situs. In a rich way, the editions hold information about their makers' culture. Thus in the context of this essay, understanding how Rolfe and Furness championed their fellow citizens begins with their editions of the plays. Such an examination of the editions adumbrates the culture that produced them by alluding to the productive circumstances, including their authors' lives, most significant for their further exploration. This examination will proceed first from noting the similarities of the two editions and then the unique features of each.

Both editors' first editions of a Shakespearean play were published within a year of each other. Both were from important publishing houses, Rolfe's from Harper and Furness' from Lippincott. Both were large, respected and managed well enough to survive to the present day. Because the publishers had no standard expectations for this ground-breaking work, both editions were
framed according to their editors' preconceptions of the goal to be achieved. Since both were from persons without reputations as Shakespearean editors, Lippincott relied upon Furness' personal wealth and Harper's relied upon Rolfe's record in producing science textbooks. Both offered a single play, annotated and explained with various introductions and appendices. Both are well made, durable books.

Though the cover of a book might not tell its contents, it states clearly to whom it was addressed and what its author considered it to be. Furness' volume is a large octavo (9.5 x 6.5 inches). Its nearly 500 pages make it sufficiently thick (1.75 inches) to display a horizontal, gold-embossed title on the upper part of its spine: THE | VARIORUM | SHAKESPEARE | MERCHANT OF VENICE | FURNESS. The embossing includes decorative bars under the third and fourth lines of this title and a stylized sun under the last. Lippincott's name is embossed within a simple device at the bottom of the spine over three plain bars running its width. The coat of arms thought to have been taken by Shakespeare is embossed in gold on the front cover and embossed dry on the back. Rolfe's duodecimo (4.75 x 6.75 inches) volume is barely a half-inch thick. The spine bears the title of the play only, printed vertically. In gold lettering, the cover has SHAKESPEARE'S | MERCHANT OF VENICE | EDITED BY | WILLIAM JAMES ROLFE. [...] Except for a single line beneath Rolfe's name, there are no flourishes or devices.

Furness' book impressed with its authority and Rolfe's coaxed with its accessibility. The Furness book has the appearance of one to be consulted. The decorations and horizontal printing on the spine serve to identify it on its shelf where it is kept with the other important books. Viewed together on the shelves, other books of the set and other sets might reinforce the message of the repeated portions of the title that knowledge is a unified, orderly and harmonious whole, the literary portion of which is structured by a canon. Shelved sets of matching volumes of complete works of a canonically defined group of authors suppress the claims to literary status of the innumerable tracts and yarns which cannot be relied upon. The size and costly execution of the Variorum corresponds to Bibles, law books, official records and dictionaries, all of which establish standards. Furness' work became authoritative by setting a new standard in editing.

Rolfe's small book is designed to be accessible; it is one to be used. It is easily handled and discloses the nature of its contents.
immediately and unequivocally. Its cover makes clear Rolfe’s position relative to the text. No heraldry hints at a reservation for an inner circle and no Latin requires a guess at its sense. A number of pictures (about 25) leaven the text. It can be carried, stored or dropped and, if ever put on a shelf, would fit in with novels, school books and practical guides to farming or mechanics. Though not priced to compete with the very cheapest books—fierce competition among publishers was giving rise to the “dime novel” in this period—almost anyone wishing to buy it could afford to do so. In the late 1800s, when wages were between one and two dollars per day, Rolfe’s books were going for 56 cents (whereas Furness’ were priced at 4 dollars).

The contents of the two volumes confirm the impression conveyed by their exterior features. Rolfe’s work emphasizes Shakespeare. It assembles existing facts about him and the play to present his work to Americans at large. Furness emphasizes the study of Shakespeare and, as one such study, his work points to itself as one American’s achievement. With over one hundred pages of matter not treated at all in Rolfe’s edition, including, for example, the transcription of large portions of an early eighteenth-century version of the play, it attempts to exhaust the field and stand above it. Thus one edition is a work of encouragement and the other of competition. Even Furness’ text is challenging: it is that of the First Folio set forth with its Jacobean orthographic and typographic archaisms. The text, the notes of textual variants and the variorum critical notes are given on each page. Some three-quarters of the lines are annotated. This and the fullness of the variorum commentary make Furness’ notes more extensive than Rolfe’s by a factor of five. In contrast to Furness, who begins with the text, Rolfe first introduces Shakespeare with a biographical sketch and eases into the play itself with a brief history of its development. His endnotes do not complicate the pages of the text, which is modernized, corrected and expurgated.

Either text is fittingly seen as serving or as arising out of a culture at once seeking to display the richness and efflorescence of its Western European mentors and seeking to do so without marking out an elite who would belie its grounding in the principles and aspirations of 1776. It was a culture happy to have an easy, quickly absorbed version of Shakespeare but also willing to admire one that only leisured study could produce. The two
editions are parts of a mechanism of internal and external self-improvement on the national level.

Culture as Self-improvement

As practitioners of American Shakespearean scholarship, Rolfe and Furness produced editions that recognizably and measurably bettered the American national image. Both editors contributed to that better image in differing ways. Neither way, however, lay within the parameters of a cultural schema defined simply as progress toward democraticization or toward control of the unlettered weak by the lettered powerful. The breadth of Shakespeare studies as a mode of self-improvement embraced Rolfe and Furness while they pursued apparently opposed means thereto.

Furness' achievement was to be measured in terms of the eminence of the United States' cultural product. Putting together a second set of variorum editions of the plays was a monumental achievement in and out of the circle of Shakespeareans. Furness served the scholarly community by updating the 1821 (Boswell - Malone) variorum but worked a far more exceeding and patriotic weight of glory by making an American text the Talmud of the English literary Lawgiver and legitimizing parallel movements of cultural initiative from Britain to the United States. In a way that could not be asserted even in the case of Emerson, British cultural domination of the United States was no longer unassailable after the fame of the Variorum volumes spread. After the waning of the Victorians, who were already then established and accepted on both sides of the Atlantic, American writers and critics would set the literary agenda for the English-speaking world, at least as partners with the British.

Rolfe's achievement was to be measured, on the other hand, by the dispersal of cultivated practices within the American populace. Thus, the reversal of British cultural hegemony was broad as well as profound. It would be one thing if a dedicated sect of U. S. scholars had erected a sort of Shakespearean Masada, if American and Europeans alike had been permitted to see Furness' work as isolated from the principal currents of American culture. But Shakespeare was beginning to be recognized by every American and becoming a property of a burgeoning middle class. Abetted by the pioneering popular editions of Rolfe, Shakespeare was becoming a best seller.
Rolfe and Furness were alike in having little to guide them except a characteristically American desire to do something better. The university scholars who contributed reports to William Payne's study of the place of English in higher education had not, at the time of that study, begun to place much emphasis on their status as professionals. It was as Shakespeareans, not professors, that those who were doing scholarship in that area were aiding or critiquing one another. Seeking tangible improvements in his own status, in that of his career and in that of his nation, Rolfe anticipated the trend toward professionalization even in his work as a schoolmaster. In his editing, Rolfe showed himself more knowledgeable about making a living from scholarship than the emerging professionals with whom Gerald Graff has associated the general trend to professionalization with its consequent democratization of authority within literature and, more generally, the liberal arts. Likewise, Furness obtained a better product out of his moneyed leisure than the 18th century (the forebears of the elitist cultural monopolists decried by some of today's cultural critics) and put the products of the cultivated leisure class in the service of national improvement. Rolfe's vision of what was better for Americans shows a lot of pioneer toughness, even crudeness. From his editor's chair, Rolfe hectored his American colleagues to produce more accurate and sophisticated Shakespeare scholarship. His vision of an improved scholarship rested upon hard work, thoroughness and popular acceptance rather than upon a system of degrees and professorships. He did not seek the detachment of an academic, but took it on himself to evaluate the work of all comers. Nevertheless, Rolfe sensed and internalized the increasing professionalization of literary studies. Although he never earned a college degree, he identified himself as a master and doctor when those honorary degrees were given him. In this light, Rolfe, incessantly correcting other critics and editors, is like As you instructing the Shepherd and his son. His own credentials open to question, he worked to exclude Shakespearean amateurs from the academic court by setting himself up as the arbiter of standards for Shakespeare scholarship. Rolfe got out about five hundred columns for The Literary World and The Critic, in which nearly every Shakespearean topic passed under the judgment of his pen. Necessarily, many of the works he judged were naive and shallow, but nothing was beneath his notice. By its primacy and popularity,
Shakespeare scholarship was a model for all other in the liberal arts. All looseness and vulgarity in writing style and all haphazard and careless research factored into the American scholarly product, and all of it that came within the purview of Rolfe's "Shakespeariana" column was subject to his censure.

There was plenty to censure. High standards of scholarship were the exception rather than the rule in the formative days of Rolfe's career. The literary lawlessness permitted by meagre copyright protection and the infancy of the academic press was, to some, sufficient warrant to offer shoddy pastiches as research or scholarship. Finding G. Q. Colton's Shakespeare and the Bible to be just such a collection, he took both work and author to task. It might seem best to ignore such a sham or merely to identify it and go on to worthier topics. But Rolfe seems to have delighted in the exposure. The following quotations are from five instances in the less-than-thousand-word piece in which Rolfe villifies the plagiarist, either for the plagiarism or for his own work:

_We were inclined to regard the steel portrait of Mr. Colton as a very appropriate frontispiece..._

...we think he must have a "soft cheveril conscience" as the old lady in Henry VIII tells of...

...many of [Colton's own parallels] are not properly "parallel passages" [four examples cited]

...even [the] omissions are often the merest "scissoring," with no care to patch up the connection [two examples cited]

And one, final, crushing blow:

_We will only add that Mr. Colton, in his abridgment of the English work, does not omit, as we might have expected he would, the following from the beginning of Chapter II. § 11:

_We are told in Measure for Measure of a certain "sanctimonious pirate that went to sea with the Ten Commandments, but scraped one—the eighth—out of the Table" (i. 2)

_He does not italicize eighth, as the Bishop28 does; and he has omitted the following sentence of the original:

I am afraid that conduct similar in effect to this pirate's is still only too common—among landsmen; as we may conclude it was in Shakespeare's day. (World, 88, 108)
Colton had descended little, if at all, below the prevailing standards of American publishing. Rolfe was applying a new standard but it was not the aristocratic one of taste. Taking notice of popular treatments of Shakespeare, he responded to them with popular epithets and with the fervor of one in a free debate among peers. Rolfe valued Americanness and used it as the platform for national improvement.

The character of Americans as he found (and embodied) them—competitive, materialistic, ambitious—Rolfe could use as the basis for an improved literary profession. The need to distinguish that improvement from Christian spiritual growth lay beneath the mutual and open hostility between him and fellow popular Shakespeare editor Henry Norman Hudson. The chasm which separated the two editors’ conceptions of Shakespeare as a means of self-improvement was never so expressed, but worked itself out in arguments over minor matters. One form which their disagreement took was a debate over annotation appropriate for student or amateur editions. It was Hudson’s position that “variorum” notes did not belong in school editions, but Rolfe advocated fuller annotation. Such differences cannot account for the acerbity of their quarrel. It lay in their recognition of each other as *parvenus* (i.e., partly unimproved with respect to the society in which they moved) with conflicting ideas of what was wanted. Hudson emerged from backwoods preaching to become a Shakespearean through his largely self-educated preparation: the very image of the bumptious American. To compete with the likes of the Cambridge dons behind their eponymous edition Rolfe needed to avoid any such image. Being in the quarrel was, of course, a badge of the same Yankee brashness he had brought to bear on Colton. Hudson had turned, early in his life, to Shakespeare scholarship as his chief occupation, but remained active as a Christian pastor. The inevitable mixing of preaching and scholarship set Hudson apart. To Rolfe, wanting to see himself as one discoursing in the groves of Parnassus, Hudson’s zealous advocacy of the reading of the plays for reasons of their spiritual ideas must have seemed like a frontier revival. Hudson brought the fervency and moral positivism of Biblical evangelism to the editing and teaching of Shakespeare. Rolfe was, in all good faith, accommodating himself to a milieu of increasingly deistic Unitarianism. Each, in any event, commended Shakespeare to thousands.
Furness remained in character as he sought to express, through his work, himself and his vision for his country just as Rolfe made his own scrappy, Yankee mercantilism the basis for his vision of the cultural growth to be brought about through the popularization of Shakespeare. Furness never corrected the work of others. The contributions he offered, founded upon political leadership, social eminence and financial security, focused on large, long-term projects of which the Variorum was only the most renowned. He served successively on commissions supervising military hospitals, investigating the authenticity of various spiritualist and psychic claims and reporting on the condition of the Boston Library. He also participated in a Bible translation project and, until age prevented him, was much sought for his public readings of the plays. Apart from his uncharacteristic exchange in the Athenaeum with William Aldis Wright over the claims made for the first variorum volume, Furness did not contend for his point of view, but offered his services liberally. The fifteen volumes of the New Variorum he produced were his primary occupation and all he published for forty years. As new and as rough as it might have been, America exhibited in Furness the circumstances of leisure, intelligence and education to produce a series of works unequalled anywhere. As just stated, in his criticism of amateurs, Rolfe established rational and clear standards for others to follow. As they were based on the character of Americans, he made them appear attainable. Not so Furness. On the new American socio-economic base he set an edifice of achievement which represented the abilities of the entire nation, but which was also the apotheosis of those abilities. Those unimpressed with the Variorum, like scoffers who set down Aristotle’s possession of universal and encyclopaedic knowledge to the mere paucity of things to know in his day, might lessen Furness’ accomplishment by making it a mere product of his time: he began just fifty years after the previous variorum and fifty years before the avalanche of commentary with which today’s scholars contend. The work, however, speaks for itself. No one can examine the Variorum without admiration.

The Cultural Opposition Revealed in the Differences in Motivations for Writing

The positions of Furness and Rolfe in the formation of American culture define an opposition between practices empowered by art and practices empowered by commerce. Rolfe’ s popularization of Shakespeare required him to forge a link with the commercial life
of the nation with its attendant scrappiness and insistence on property. Furness took the multitude for granted. Instead of heeding a call to enter the life around him, he envisioned a gentlemen’s club dedicated to Shakespeare and linked himself to its past and present members. Rolfe made his study a means to live; Furness made his the expression of his life.

The commercial element which was behind Rolfe’s editing and which was a key to the success of his editions originated not only in his perception of the needs for school texts but in the more general competitive pattern he applied to the educational system in which he began his career. That pattern was affirmed in his early work with school texts and his unending efforts to promote his work as the product of a reliable authority. He was personally competitive and exacting. In his short autobiography, he painstakingly sets forth how highly qualified the other applicants were and how he beat them in interviews for each headmaster position he held. The autobiography also contains more than one story illustrative of his passion for correctness in matters of grammar. In his “Shakespeariana” columns in The Literary World and The Critic his competitiveness often looked like faultfinding. He labored for distinction by being exactly right. To maintain his position—as either headmaster or leading editor—he was under a continual obligation to prove himself most qualified. An estimate of Rolfe as a literary professional must measure the commercial pressures which led Rolfe to a strategy of building up his own work by tearing down that of others.

Consciously or otherwise, Rolfe deftly positioned himself within an expanding market for school books. When he was about thirty years old and had been what, in today’s educational system, would be a high school teacher and principal for about ten years, he was noticed by F. J. Child. “For several years”, as one of the biographical dictionaries puts it, Rolfe “did not realize that he was the pioneer of a sweeping reform in American secondary education.” Francis J. Child, the great proponent of literary study at Harvard, must have seen in Rolfe an energetic co-laborer and, in 1859, arranged for his honorary Harvard M. A. Until 1865, when he published, with a co-author, his first textbook, he wrote for local newspapers and journals and lectured on literature and education, all the while retaining a headmaster’s position. By 1868, having published seven school texts (all with co-authors), he was able, having a wife and children, to retire from the schools.
Starting in the text business with these seven, Rolfe, thereafter, by all accounts, turned out 137 more. Although it appears from a letter from Furness that Rolfe was disappointed with sales in 1871, by 1883, when the fortieth volume of his Shakespeare set neared completion, a quarter of a million copies of those already published had been sold. Before 1898, the total had reached "considerably more than half a million" (Critic, 87, 358). In 1932, Henry Simon noted that they were "still widely used" (114). At the time of the writing of the entry for Rolfe in the 1937 Dictionary of American Biography, no other edition of Shakespeare had been so widely used.

Although Rolfe had the right product at the right time, its success depended in no small measure on its perception in the market. Rolfe's passion for detail and capacity for patient culling led him to adopt a strategy of pointing to the errors of his fellow scholars as evidence of his own superiority and, by inference, that of his editions. Marshalling the mistakes of other editors and authors thus became his lifelong practice. One instance of this from late in his life is pointedly illustrative. Written just before his death, there is a poignancy in his letter to the editor of The Nation in which he decries some few lapses of memory on the part of prominent authors. Even Rolfe's clear prose is scarcely adequate to the intricacy of the errors he cites. The self-justification underlying the offer of the information ostensibly for its own intrinsic interest is indicated by Rolfe, an "editor and critic," in his opening sentence:

Authors are apt to be strangely forgetful of facts in their own literary history, and have therefore sometimes misled editors and critics in their comments and annotations. (1910, 650)

The first case of forgetfulness is that of American essayist J. R. Lowell, the second, Tennyson and the third, W. E. Gladstone, an essayist born in the same year as Tennyson. All are trifling matters, but the third involves merely a citation. It is so convoluted that forgetting it is nothing compared to understanding it, even after the fact. Rolfe concluded it was "curious" that Gladstone should forget a piece of his own writing. What is more curious is that Rolfe's age and stature did not raise him above portraying his quest in the matter as a duel by which Rolfe had "more than one 'bad quarter of an hour,'" wherein Gladstone replied "somewhat curtly," in which the lapse or mistake or whatever it was had
grown into a "supposed injustice" and from which an honorable retreat could be made only by reference to Gladstone's senectitude and to his death shortly after the publication of the piece containing the lapse (The Nation, 1910, 650-1). The poignancy comes in Rolfe's preservation of his scrappiness into the very twilight of his life. Yet, it is also logical because Rolfe the editor-controversialist, polymath-dropout, scholar-businessman embodied those contradictions of the American character. In his life and work, Rolfe shaped the very contradictions to make Shakespeare a part of the American cultural presence.

Arguably, Rolfe needed this pugilistic, confrontational stance to make a success of marketing a respectable yet mass-audience edition of Shakespeare by an American. Many Americans were still Tories at heart. In one of his letters to Judge Norris, Joseph Crosby states explicitly an attitude against which Rolfe constantly battled. Crosby assumes British is better.

Have you got Rolfe's new edition of King Richard II? It is, like the rest of these eds., very nicely edited & printed, perhaps a little fuller than his earlier eds.—I like his books better than either Hunter's or the "Collins' Series;" but not nearly so well as the "Clarendon Press Series." Rolfe has too many references, & not enough originality. In fact, I do not see one single new thought, reading, idea, or explanation in this Rich. II. 

In exaggerating the little difference between Rolfe's and the Clarendon editions, Crosby was an early victim of the spatial view of culture. What made "high" culture high was its unreachableness for the many. A great admirer of Furness, he was an avid collector of expensive and antique editions and other Shakespeariana. This acquisitive mode of appreciating Shakespeare drained him financially and made him restless with his midwest venue. Opposed to Crosby's parochial elitism was Rolfe's popularization. Maintaining that opposition made Rolfe a propagandist who continued to write until two weeks prior to his death. Rolfe's career was dedicated to making literature, with an emphasis, of course, on Shakespeare, so much an integral part of his culture as to be able to live by it. Speaking of his methods of exciting his students' curiosity, including encouraging them to discuss literary questions among themselves, he made the connection between pitching his effort at the capacities of ordinary
people (i.e., not specialist-scholars) and the ordinary concern for earning a living in a passage in his autobiography.

This awakened an interest in the subject throughout the community, and affected the social atmosphere of the entire village; and that influence, as I have been surprised to learn, continues to the present time. The children and grand-children of my pupils have perpetuated it.

[.. .] I must explain briefly what I mean by saying that this work—or play, for it was play rather than work, though it led to more of profitable work than teaching in a country village generally does—... came to have a most influential bearing upon my after life... (44)

Furness made no such connection with the ordinary. As the practices of the arts are marked by their temporal distancing and detachment, by their removal, through a confraternity of practitioners, from the daily concerns of the people and by their source in the individual, so was Furness' scholarly career unconnected with the fray which Rolfe's strident and persistent contention discloses. As Rolfe linked his career and his writing to commerce, Furness moved his into the realm of the arts.

The contrasting temporal, social and psychological pattern of the artistic or literary is revealed throughout Furness' work. In his edition of The Merchant of Venice, he established his own preferences among the opinions he records, but never so as to demean those he rejects. In presenting Karl Elze's proposal for a source of the character Shylock, he stated that the German critic was one "whose opinions are always entitled to a respectful hearing." Furness indicated something less than his own full enthusiasm for Elze's opinion only by saying that it is one Elze "maintains with earnestness" (322). Of F. G. Fleay's attempt to connect an entry in Henslowe's diary with a play allegedly Dekker's51 and to make it the source of The Merchant of Venice, Furness commented only that he "cannot find that Fleay anywhere supplies the proof of this identity" (324). Furness had reviewed Fleay's evidence extensively: devoting about 5,000 words to the subject, he reprinted some and summarized the rest of the supposed source play. Furness concluded that the connection was tenuous, that Shakespeare had not likely seen the play and that it was "wretched, wretched stuff" (330), but still was assiduous to avoid any ad hominem criticism. Instead, he praised Fleay:
I find it impossible to believe that Fleay would ever have asserted that [the source play] was the foundation of Shakespeare's play had he ever read it. It is the positiveness of Fleay's assertion, and the high position which Fleay holds among Shakespeare scholars, that have made it seem at all worth while to devote so much space to it.

(331)

Furness kept up his support of the literati even after their demise. He took what, in other hands, might have been a reproach to W. W. Goodwin, a Harvard professor, and transformed it into a generous compliment. The subject is sufficiently revealed in the quotation.

It is to [Goodwin] that I owe the suggestions that in The Agamemnon an illustration might be possibly found of a treatment of Dramatic Time similar to Shakespeare's Double Time. [. . .] It is greatly to be regretted that a pressure of many duties has kept these pages from being enriched with Dr Goodwin's promised investigation of the question, and that the task has therefore fallen, instead, into my unskilful [sic] hands. (341-2)

Even where Furness could muster no sympathy whatever with an idea, he was more than fair to its proponent. Such was the case with the Rev. N. J. Halpin, whose 1849 book The Dramatic Unities of Shakespeare proposed to explain Shakespeare's art of treating the passing of time in The Merchant of Venice by positing the substitution of a demand note, i.e., one payable upon presentation, for the promissory note made payable three months from the date of its making. As Furness unfolded Halpin's theory, he quoted at length from him and explained what could not conveniently be quoted. He made Halpin's best case and, by his comments on it, clearly separated the errors of the case from the man who made it. By the substitution of one promissory note for another, Furness wrote,

Halpin introduces a device which . . . I am sorry to say, degrades the whole play; and for which I cannot see that he has a tittle of evidence. (335)

Halpin had purported independently to have arrived at and to have applied to The Merchant of Venice another theory, cited with approval by Furness, of a Professor Wilson. Carefully pointing out
the differences of the two, and patiently marshalling Halpin’s examples of what he supposed to be erroneous interpretations of references to time in the play, Furness only observed that “Halpin shows [...] that he failed to appreciate” Wilson’s work and that errors of characters and audience collected were Halpin’s “pronouncements” (336 -7). Furness’ summation contextualized, within the Variorum, his treatment of Halpin’s work and, within the realm of scholarship, Halpin’s treatment of the question of time in the play.

Unless a theory which we believe to be erroneous bids fair to become popular, and we fear the spread of contagion, it seems to be a sad waste of time or labour to refute it. No such fear need be anticipated from this theory of Halpin. There is no likelihood that a convert will be found to this thimberligging device of a substituted bond, which its author never would have started, I think, had he had an inkling of Professor Wilson’s ‘dual time.’ It is well to note it as an inexplicable vagary of a clever scholar, and there an end.

The style and tone which Furness employs in his edition to separate his co-laborers from the neediness and competition of the larger world bespeak a smaller world of leisure and sophistication. As gracious as such a way of living and working might appear, it had dangers no less than those posed by Rolfe’s. Rolfe’s commercially based popularization could be disarmingly rough, but Furness’ artistic removal could be overly refined. Furness enjoyed frequent fishing trips to Florida, a family excursion to the Grand Canyon in a private railroad car and the assistance of domestic servants in city and country homes. The world did not challenge his view of it as his oyster and permitted him to portray himself in a light unacceptable to late twentieth-century sensibilities. “I . . . caught . . . [a] Jew-fish and when I got it to the beach . . . I proudly placed my foot on it and exclaimed, ‘so perish all the enemies of the Church!’ . . . One day I caught a whip-ray . . . his skin makes a beautiful table-cover” (II, 74). Likewise, it seems strange that he should write to his sister (and his nephew-editor should reprint): “Verily, the sub-strata of all large cities are vile, and the lowest class in London seems to me to be the vilest of all, —not so cruel as in Paris, but more barbarous. When you come to think of it, ’tis only the literary class in England with which we have any sympathy” (90). The unreflecting acceptance of privilege freed him to devote himself to the important task he had
undertaken but limited his vision of those who ultimately were to profit from it.

The Cultural Opposition Revealed in the Uses of Nationalism

Opposing forces within their culture bore upon the work of Rolfe and that of Furness. One result of this was that whereas they produced editions which did not compete with one another, those editions embodied opposing conceptions of the role of forces from outside their culture. At approximately the same time as Furness and Rolfe put forth their editions, the British team of William Clark and William Aldis Wright were issuing similar ones. Their Cambridge edition, complete for all plays in 1863, insofar as it aimed for thorough scholarly retrospection corresponded to Furness' work whose edition of Romeo and Juliet, the first of the fifteen plays he edited, was published in 1871. Clark and Wright's single-play Clarendon editions, were directed, like Rolfe's, to students and amateurs. Three plays of this series were out by 1869. Rolfe's first play (The Merchant of Venice) came out in 1870. These coincidences of date and purpose led to assessments of the works based on the nationalities of the editors. Relative to the single-play editions of his British counterparts, Rolfe actively asserted the superiority of his editions as they were American, whereas Furness, who enjoyed patriotic promotion by others, looked upon his work as international or supranational.

Rolfe claimed that American educational needs were better answered by his American editions. He had at least three reasons for such an appeal to patriotism. First, on a personal level, Rolfe received little public acclaim. As much as he strove for the honor of American scholarship and for the success of the American academic enterprise generally, Rolfe could not but know that Americans would measure national success by international standards. That measure was being met by the Variorum editions and even by Hudson's complete edition. But because the concept of a simple and inexpensive edition was not such a blockbuster, Rolfe's work received relatively little notice in the press. Rolfe wanted the recognition as a scholar to which his editions entitled him. To shake the presumption of the superiority and priority of the products of the Oxbridge establishment, he asserted that his work was different from what England had to offer and that it was better for Americans. For the recognition of his work, Rolfe had to rely on means at his own disposal. Furness' work was everywhere
acclaimed by others. Furness was given honorary degrees at Cambridge and Halle. Reviews of the Variorum volumes began in 1871 and voiced enthusiasm for his work through the next forty years until his death. Rolfe sought to divert some of the power of this avalanche of literary pride through an early, “buy American” campaign on behalf of his own work.

A second reason for the patriotic slant to Rolfe’s self-recommendation is founded on a comparison of editions. The Rolfe and Clarendon editions were not, indeed, easily differentiated except by their publication information. Insofar as that difference operated as a principle of selection, it worked in favor of the British, since the Clarendon press was then (and, arguably, still is today) foremost in the English-speaking world. The only differences between the editions when they were newly published in 1870 were Rolfe’s omission of line-numbering and Clark and Wright’s omission of illustrations; otherwise, the two editions were virtual twins. They are the same size and the type, paper and binding are similar. Both are expurgated. Each has the same scheme of annotation.

All in all, the big difference between the editions was their national origin. Rolfe made the best of that and evoked nationalist sentiments to proffer his own. This was not pretense on his part, but an habitual way of looking at the world in terms of the improvement and success of his community of interest within it. Rolfe included Furness, as an American scholar, in that community. In an article in The Critic (37, 313-9). Rolfe argued for the superiority of Furness’ Variorum over Clark and Wright’s Cambridge edition, a position never taken by Furness himself. That Rolfe, in his article, was primarily motivated by a desire to establish the cultural independence and leadership of the United States—motivated, that is, by nationalism—appears from his creation of categories in which the Variorum could better the Cambridge edition. To uphold American scholarship, Rolfe faulted the Cambridge editors for failing to cite the sources of their readings, for omitting variorum commentary and for miscellaneous inaccuracies of the type only Rolfe might find (Critic, 1900, 318). In view of the attention to detail which Rolfe was able to sustain, it is likely (since Furness himself discovered them) that both editions contained inaccuracies of various magnitudes. As for the sources of their readings and variorum commentary: neither was part of the plan the Cambridge editors had attempted to execute.
The third reason for Rolfe's literary patriotism was its tie to commerce. Rolfe's keen sense of what was possible commercially taught him that he was in the business of selling books as well as editing them and that the Clarendon editions were his most redoubtable competitors. To establish his as the superior work, he could not use the tactics by which he had monitored the errors of his countrymen. Not even Rolfe could find errors in the Clarendon edition: it was simple and yet based on the enormous scholarly achievement of its parent Cambridge edition. Nor could the scholarship of its editors be impugned. In his preface, as well as in such pieces as his review of a Variorum volume noted above, Rolfe planted the suggestion of a difference between British and American pedagogy. He used his position as a respected teacher to argue that his edition took account of that difference in a way that the Clarendon did not. Starting from his patriotism, he promoted himself as a world-beating American scholar and he promoted his books on traits keyed to his fellow-citizens' identities as Americans.

Rolfe's desire for public recognition of his work, his sensitivity to the similarity of his work to others' and his need to be successful commercially were all addressed in the presentation of a patriotic vision of America first and foremost. He made this presentation in two specific claims in the original edition of *The Merchant of Venice*. He first asserted that his work was "planned, and nearly completed [...] but laid aside" three years earlier. There is no reason to doubt it, but none given for stating it, either. The reason, gleaned from the preface as a whole, for giving the timetable of the initiation and completion of his work, is that Rolfe wished to present his edition as utterly independent of the Clark and Wright editions. The three years' interval which he claimed, would have put the starting date of Rolfe's edition in 1867, well ahead of the date of the first Clark and Wright school (i.e., Clarendon) edition of which at least *The Merchant of Venice, Richard III* and *Macbeth* had been published when Rolfe's came to press. According to Rolfe's preface, this *Merchant* edition came into his hands in the last stages of the preparation of his edition and he gave credit in every instance in which he drew directly from it. Secondly, Rolfe claimed not only the independence of his edition (because of its priority in time), but also its superiorit to the British study edition. Rolfe pronounced the Clarendon edition "excellent" but stated: "from my experience as a teacher, I [do] not consider it exactly suited to the wants of our cis-Atlantic schools" (vi). He nowhere explains in what respects
the British edition is unsuitable, but the judgment of his experience is clearly against its use for American students as anything other than a secondary resource.

Although as time went on and he became more confident about his sales, Rolfe became generous toward Clark and Wright's work, he was not being cynical or even disingenuous in claiming a special fit between his editions and the American pupils for whom they were destined. Not surprisingly, the claim fit his needs but it was not for that reason alone insincere. Rolfe was not using shared patriot sentiments to advance his private interests; he was responding to those sentiments out of private conviction. His earlier work in the field of Shakespeare, an edition of George L. Craik's *The English of Shakespeare*, did not offer itself as an American alternative. In the preface he stated that he wanted it for his own classes and that he hoped it would be of use to other students of Shakespeare. Rolfe's preparation of an edition of Craik was a more arduous alternative to simply pirating the British edition: copyright protection for British books was still two decades in the future. Rolfe produced an American edition because Americans were attuned to the difference between taking British cultural commodities whole, as mercantile imports, or using them as raw materials to which valuable American improvements were added. Rolfe's was the bully era of San Juan Hill and manifest destiny. Americans' attitudes toward intellectual learning in general and Shakespeare in particular could be soured with the suspicion that they were essentially British practices. Thus, insofar as Americans had a stake in establishing American scholarship, the Clarendon was indeed not "exactly suited" to their wants. Rolfe understood the resistance to what was alien in British culture. Engendering an American cultural identity through literary study required that British literature be, in some measure, alien. Rolfe was keen enough to see that American texts were suited to American students because they were American.

In a nearly Olympian remove for such concerns about American-ness, Furness' edition stood on an international footing. The reasons that moved Rolfe to stand on patriotism had no weight with Furness. Furness had all the fame he wanted. His edition was unique. Nor did he have any reason for anxiety about its commercial success. The *Variorum* is, in part, a record of the worldwide reception of Shakespeare. In the *Variorum* edition of *The Merchant of Venice*, there are 25 pages of selections from British
critics and 15 from German. The list of scholars, critics and editors on whom Furness draws for his notes is similarly international in character. Among his 120 first-scene annotations, each sometimes referring to more than one authority, Furness included but ten references to the work of Americans, which, of the ten thousand words used there, did not, in total, amount to more than a few hundred. In the notes for the same portion of Rolfe’s edition, all the information was allowed to appear as Rolfe’s own except for three references, one each to Pope, Rowe and Warburton. This difference speaks to a difference in the purposes of the two sets of notes and indicates Furness’ relative transcendence of contemporary historical and geographical boundaries.

Furness saw such transcendence in his own work. In this light, the sting of his derogatory reference to non-literary Londoners as a cultural sub-stratum is somewhat palliated. The world’s few who find their scholarly inclinations abetted by all of their nation’s emoluments and perquisites will, as the means of communication permit, form ties with one another. Rolfe’s editing revealed his ties to the quotidian institutions of public education and commerce and thence to broadening and inclusive trends in American culture. In Furness’ case his ties to an international circle of scholars worked to bridge the parochialism of national feeling so as to encourage experimentation and specialization.

Thus, Furness downplayed the competitive aspect of the relation of his work to Clark and Wright’s. Although American journalists and critics eagerly pointed out the ways in which the Variorum had beaten the Cambridge edition, Furness knew (and knew that the international community of scholars knew) that the two editions resembled each other only superficially. There had been, initially, a misunderstanding over the relation of the two works to each other. But even this spat, which began with a letter to the Athenæum from Wright, was engendered not by either party or even by the works themselves, but by publisher (and hence, promoter) Lippincott’s prospectus of the forthcoming Variorum edition of Romeo and Juliet. Writing to the Athenæum, Furness replied to Wright and then each party wrote one more letter in rebuttal. Wright let Furness have the last word, and both parties’ letters were salted with formal expressions of politeness. The opposition was not that of Briton and American, but of gentleman and gentleman. A short time later, they began direct correspondence which was carried on for some forty years. It was a warm exchange punctuated by small gifts,
photographs, family visits and, of course, information about the editing of Shakespeare.\textsuperscript{75}

Undoubtedly at the behest of Wright, Cambridge University bestowed upon Furness the honorary \textit{Litterarum Doctor} which Furness sailed to England to receive. The theme of transnationalism escaped no one. The London \textit{Times} account of the proceedings mentioned the abolitionist work of Furness' father, that it was "a cause for rejoicing among Englishmen" that a U. S. citizen had devoted himself to "one of the chief glories of their common tongue" and that Furness had "woven a fresh bond of union between the old world and the new" (II, 39). Yet the tension with nationalism is implicit. England was not insensible to the potential of the United States. The contents of the \textit{Times} article indexed a response which attempted to recuperate\textsuperscript{76} or contain Furness' remarkable achievements, seen by the British as contestatory practices. The \textit{Times}' hidden text read that to the extent Furness had surpassed any Englishman, it was as he worked on an English poet, shared the English tongue and was a scion of the distanced liberalism then undergirding English political thinking.

\textit{The Source and Current of Cultural Development}

Both Furness and Rolfe worked to improve their culture in definable and measurable ways. Included in the formation of their motives for this work (not to say their ideologies behind it), were two sets of opposing forces: commerce/art and nationalism/cosmopolitanism. It has been the burden of the preceding sections of this essay to characterize the processes in which these motives were applied. Both editors tapped both cultural oppositions to carry out their work by which they brought about improvements in U. S. culture. A further, and here concluding, implication of this analysis of their work is that normative assessments of cultural activity or artefacts in terms of high and low, because they are likewise mutually implicating, distort and reduce their value. This implication is drawn from the fact that both sets of oppositions examined can be seen in terms of an underlying opposition: tradition and innovation. In this light, an intriguing reversal can be seen. Rolfe is innovative and Furness, traditional, in terms of the opposition of literature and commerce: the reverse is true of the other. It is Furness who is the innovator and Rolfe who is the traditionalist when the opposition is that of nationalism and internationalism.
As he edited the texts of the plays, Rolfe innovatively applied simple pioneer virtues. That such was his practice was known, but not valued even by the end of his career. It happened that Rolfe’s death and that of F. J. Furnivall occurred in the same year. One of the obituary articles (with, perhaps, some lapse in taste) covered the lives of both men in a stylistically direct comparison. In the crowning irony of Rolfe’s quest for vindication of his achievement, he was denied the title of editor.

If Dr. Furnivall was known as an editor of texts, Dr. Rolfe was known rather as a popularizer of Shakespeare. Certainly many have found an appreciation of [...] Shakespeare [...] because of the Rolfe propaganda.

The idea of the “many” and of “popularization” in connection with the literary, in Rolfe’s lifetime, was new, but “propaganda” not only suggests the behavioralist view of human life undergirding capitalist commerce, but anticipates the psychological and anthropological aspects of modernist literary thought. The same obituary writer noted that Rolfe “always used the simplest possible English.” On the other hand, Furness’ traditional stance escaped notice. Despite the claim on his title page—“A New Variorum Edition of Shakespeare” (emph. supp.)—Furness’ editing was based on a tradition of amateurs reaching back to Shakespeare himself. Tradition’s clinging to the past is not a lovely image, but Furness almost literally evoked it when he spoke of his editing as “touching hands” with former editors. In his use of the leisure of wealth and position, in his assumption of immanent standards, in his participation in readings of the plays—even in such things as Horace Howard Furness, Jr. continuing to edit Variorum volumes—Furness’ traditionalist approach to his role as Shakespearean editor plainly appears.

Yet each is also the other. Furness looked forward to twentieth-century scholarly practices and enabled innovation by maintaining contacts with European scholars. He was a channel which had its source in the interchange of scholars whose citizenship was cosmopolitan. Rolfe was traditional, as nationalists are, in extolling the value of their own cultural practices and institutions. He was, as another biographical entry put it, “a true child of his time” in his venerative retailing of Shakespeare to the humblest household and least promising student.
Editions, in a preeminently salient way, reflect and reconcile a basic antinomy of mind and matter. The opposition is represented in the editions so that one term of it, one half of the dichotomy it contains, points to the other. This is precisely the case in the work of Furness and Rolfe. Ideological forces contributing to what might otherwise be termed "high" and elitist practices (i.e., authoritative tradition) of the one editor and "low" and popular practices (i.e., democratic innovation) of the other arose alternately from each pole of a single opposition. The editions of Shakespeare produced by either of them drew upon and represented an essentially unified culture as they supplemented and called into existence one another.

APPENDIX

BIBLIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION ON ROLFE’S AND FURNESS’ EDITIONS


The 1885 edition was reprinted at various times through at least 1911 by the American Book Company (the name of Harper’s education division which it sold off to maintain solvency) and by Harper. Some reprints are based on the slightly revised 1903 edition. The latter is dedicated to Furness, has a new preface and additional textual apparatus.

There is no Preface. The textual apparatus consists of a Shakespearean biography similar in tone to that of Bulfinch (q.v.), published five years earlier, to which is added a summary of the textual history. This latter concludes by saying that the only American editions of any critical value are those of Verplanck (1847), Hudson (1855 and 1881) and White (1857-65 and 1883).

The Introduction covers the earliest references to the play (Meres’, the Stationer’s Register and the Quartos) and a sketch of the sources. Also included are “critical comments” by Schlegel, Jameson, Hazlitt, Knight, White (these from the introduction in White’s 1861 edition of the play) and Dowden (from the Literature Primers series).

There are some dozen or fifteen engravings, either of subjects illustrating the scene or plot or of formal devices to decorate the book.
For the 185 lines of the first scene, there are 66 notes requiring some 2,200 words of text. Many of these notes, being now keyed to lines, annotate more than one subject. (Rolfe’s line numbers are given here in parentheses following the ordinal number of the note.)

1. (Scene I) absence of act and scene divisions in F1
2. (1) def. of sooth, philological comment
3. (3) expl. of came by it
4. (8) pron. of ocean
5. (9) expl. of argosies
6. (11) expl. of pageants
7. (12) expl. of do overpeer
8. (13) expl. of curtsy
9. (15) expl. of venture & forth
10. (17) expl. of still
11. (24) text. variation in “might do at sea”
12. (27) expl. of Andrew and emend. of docks
13. (28) def. of vailing
14. (35) note of stage business inferred from text
15. (38) ref. to Abbott’s *Shakespearean Grammar*
16. (40) ditto
17. (42) def. of bottom
18. (50) expl. of Janus
19. (52) def. of peep
20. (54) expl. of pl. sense of other; accentuation of aspect
21. (56) expl. of Nestor
22. (61) def. of prevented
23. (67) def. of exceeding strange
24. (74) def. of respect
25. (78) ref. to other use of “stage”
26. (79) expl. of play the fool
27. (81) ref. to other use of “liver”
28. (82) expl. of heart cool
29. (84) emend. alabaster
30. (85) comment on jaundice
31. (89) comment on cream and mantle
32. (90) note on ellipsis of who
33. (91) def. of purpose
34. (93) expl. of who should say; text note on Sir Oracle
35. (96) expl. of therefore only are reputed wise
36. (97) comment on when/who I am very sure
37. (102) expl. of fool gudgeon
38. (108) def. of moe
39. (110) def. of gear
40. (116) ref. to Abbott re: shall/should
41. (124) ref. to A. re: adverbial use of something, expl. of swelling port
42. (125) expl. of elliptical continuance
43. (126) expl. of make moan to be abridg’d
44. (130) def. of gag’d
45. (136) def. of still
46. (137) expl. of within the eye of honor
48. (139) expl. and pron. of occasions
49. (141) def. of flight
50. (142) def. of advised
51. (143) def. of to find the other forth
52. (144) def. of childlike proof
53. (146) expl. of like a wilful youth
54. (148) def. of self
55. (154) def. of circumstance
56. (156) def. of in making question
57. (160) def. of prest (gives anc. and mod. Fr., It., Spn. and Lat. and ex. from Pericles)
58. (161) ref. to rich-left in Cym.
59. (163) expl. of sometimes
60. (165) def. of nothing undervalued
61. (166) expl. of Brutus’ Portia
62. (170) expl. of golden fleece
63. (175) ellipsis of rel. prn. which; def. of thrift
64. (178) def. of commodity
65. (183) def. of presently
66. (185) expl. of to have it of my trust; comment on final rhymed couplet. [This last is buried, as it were in the preceding note. One would find it only by seeking the explanation of “to have it of my trust.”]


There are two distinct sets of notes. Following the text there are, in mid-page, notes giving the textual variants of virtually all editions extant in Furness’ time. Of these notes, there are 130 for the list of dramatis personae and first scene. A system of abbreviations and conventional symbols and expressions keeps each note to a half-column line or two. The critical notes are printed below the
textual notes. In contrast to the brevity and conciseness of the textual
otes, the critical notes frequently fill over half the page and often
must borrow a whole page from the text to finish the annotation of a
long-established crux. These notes contain the eponymous portion of
the Variorum, the comments of various editors who are identified by
name. Furness puts his own notes among these. The 120 critical notes
and comments for the first scene (including the dramatis personae)
run to some 10,000 words. Considering both the textual and critical
notes, only in the following lines is there nothing annotated:

4 - 7, 24 - 26, 35, 37, 40, 65, 70, 74, 79 - 80, 82, 86, 91, 93, 98,
109 - 110, 112, 114 - 115, 117, 119, 127 - 128, 130, 132 - 133, 137,
141, 143 - 144, 148, 157, 159, 162 - 163, 166, 168 - 169, 171,

This is a total of 53 unannotated lines out of 195, about a quarter.

The printed text is that of the first Folio, including the Elizabethan
punctuation, orthography and printing conventions. The editors of
the Norton facsimile (of the first folio) chose not to follow Furness’
line numbering from which it departs in the first line of the play, that
being line 5 in Furness and TLN 4 in the facsimile whose editors did
not count one of the title, the act designation, the stage direction or
the speech heading which precede the first line.

An appendix of 207 pages includes entries on the text, the date of
composition, the sources, the duration of the action, Lansdowne’s
version, actors, costumes, “Jews in England,” A Dramatic Reverie, law
in the trial scene, English criticisms, German criticisms, Jordan’s
ballad, music, plan of the work, list of editions collated in the textual
notes, list of books and an index.

“To read and to enjoy SHAKESPEARE, any text, from the Shilling
Edition upwards, will suffice. […] But to study SHAKESPEARE as
we would a Greek Poet, dwelling on every line and syllable,
weighing every phrase and every word, then we need a text as near
as may be, in point of time at least, to the author’s hand.” (Preface)

The Cambridge edition is “conservative” (I,i, SD, note) but follows
Steevens in adding a third of the Sal/Sol characters at III, ii, 228.
Rolfe is noted as doing so as well: Steevens was followed “even
down to the conservative Cambridge Edition and to Rolfe.” (ibid.)

References are to his own edd. if possible, but otherwise to the Globe
Edition.
"The title quotation is taken from *The Merchant of Venice*, II,v, 83. Lorenzo makes this remark to Jessica to imply that he already has in his mind the gist of what she is trying to say. See n. 3, below.

1 Such an accommodation of the goals of a revolution to human cultural rootedness is one of the necessary operations for a revolutionary *polis* seeking control and legitimacy. In the case of the French and Russian revolutions, although terror at first forestalled such an accommodation, old patterns of public thought imprinted themselves on revolutionary procedures. As time passed, the French backed into their tradition of monarchy and the Soviets adopted the Czarist judicial system. Such experiments were not unknown in America following the revolution. New Jersey, one of the original thirteen colonies, established universal suffrage and a unified judiciary (*i.e.*, without a chancery—the traditional seat of kingly initiative and intervention in the working of the judicial system), reforms which were undone by the early nineteenth century. By the late nineteenth century the site of such tensions was cultural rather than political.

2 The real frontier and all that it entailed was disappearing in this period. Frederick Jackson Turner’s well known theory describes a process on the threshold to an understanding of modern America. The most striking assertion which Turner makes about the effect that the frontier had on the minds of those behind it is that even while modern economic conditions began to prevail, the American intellect continued to exhibit traits typically useful in frontier life. The result was that to the frontier, the American intellect owes its striking characteristics: "that coarseness and strength combined with acuteness and inquisitiveness; that practical, inventive turn of mind, quick to find expedients; that masterful grasp of material things, lacking in the artistic but powerful to effect great ends; that restless, nervous energy; that dominant individualism, working for good and for evil, and withal that buoyancy and exuberance which comes with freedom" ([17]). [Frederick Jackson Turner. "The Significance of the Frontier in American History." *The Turner Thesis Concerning the Role of the Frontier in American History.* Ed. George Rogers Taylor. rev. ed. Boston: D. C. Heath and Company, 1956. 1 - 18]. The formative background of the American intellect is chronicled in Richard Hofstadter’s landmark work, *Anti-intellectualism in American Life* [New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1963]. If Hofstadter is right, anti-intellectualism not only informed the U.S. reception of Shakespeare, but is the theoretical center of most cultural antitheses. Hofstadter’s study defined three areas of anti-intellectualism. First, Americans looked upon intellectual pursuits as tied to the Old World aristocracy and church hierarchy: an intellectual in the U. S. had an aristocratic and priestly inheritance in a democratic and anticlerical land. Intellectualism’s impracticality was a second area of objection. Busy descendants of pioneer farmers and tradesmen had no time for a meditative posture already connected with Old World injustices. According to Hofstadter, the intellect is an evaluator of evaluations and works in the service of the truth, but Americans tended to judge
intellectual achievements like business achievements. Evangelism contributed a third major element to the latter-nineteenth-century anti-intellectual inheritance. Among major religious sentiments, many American Christians were turning to those considered evangelical. Such sentiments often appealed to their emotions in despite of reason and, hence, to an anti-intellectual bias.

One of the most important studies which adopt this dichotomy is Lawrence Levine’s 1990 release from Harvard University Press, *Highbrow/Lowbrow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America*. Reducing the consideration of the reception of Shakespeare to questions of hegemony, Levine’s study found an undesirable elitism in assertions of value in cultural goods that have not arisen spontaneously and recently from the masses. With specific application to Shakespeare, Levine used Van Wyck Brooks’ metaphor of high and low culture to suggest concerted action by “cultural leaders” (184) to deprive the populace of its rollicking fun with Shakespearean snippets and parodies. He analyzes these actions by the leaders as assertions of cultural authority which result in the “construction of reality through definitions of fact and value” (228). He offers two reasons for this act of deprivation: to train the masses about civil conduct and modes of appreciation and to reserve the viewing of the plays as means of conferring distinction upon their audiences. In envisioning the U. S. reception of Shakespeare as a forced reimposition from above of that which was stolen from below, Levine posits an irreconcilable opposition of high and low in which the former rules the latter. Levine did not recognize that the profuse richness of the United States permitted many modes of cultural satisfaction to be pursued simultaneously. Instead, he saw that pursuit as a process in which the economically privileged created institutions of culture and then controlled access to those institutions.

Levine saw cultural control from on high as inexorable: in his reliance upon the spatial metaphor of high and low culture, Levine lumped together as low culture all institutions that cut across societal subgroups. “[C]ultural fare . . . shared by all segments of the population belong[s] ipso facto to the lower rungs of the cultural hierarchy” (234). Thus, the cultural unity emblematicized by, for example, the Astrodome counts only as low culture, despite the fact that sports fans, male and female, move in every level of society. The animus behind Levine’s argument is not ultimately against the influence of leaders—one of his examples is Carnegie—over what was stocked in the libraries or played in theatres and concert halls, but against the possibility of shared meaning. The argument leads to the conclusion that the wisdom and mature understanding of Shakespeare (as opposed to his reflection of his own historical situatedness) cannot have enduring or transcendent value because fact and value are cultural creations.

Levine has taken the sentiment against snobbish cultural pretensions, ridiculed and parodied since classical times, as a means to mount a refutation of a specific cultural content—always, as he admits, in the custody of a minority and in danger of extinction. The argument that “how to behave” at a concert can be consciously and authoritatively established through cultural institutions assumes that human institutions are born anew each generation, innocent of millennia of patient accretion of
knowledge and practice. Because Levine's thesis assumed that all members of society equally desire to participate in a single mode of a single “high” culture, it emphasized hegemonic oppositions and minimized the extent to which “the construction of reality” arises continuously from all human activity and embraces all forms of culture. Determinations of “fact and value” occur in all cultural acts.

My consideration of Rolfe & Furness rejects “high” and “low.” It endeavors to avoid labeling cultural activity arbitrarily. By its focus on Rolfe’s and Furness’ editions of Shakespeare, it departs from related studies as it continuously reintegrates what is commonly considered culturally low or high, commercial or artistic, and physical or noetic. Getting out an edition of one of the plays engages an editor in a process of reintegration across these divisions. Rolfe and Furness had to make decisions about the ideas they would emphasize in the play alongside decisions about paper and bindings. Together, both types of decisions imply antecedent decisions about the audience and market for the book. Editions are cultural assessments: they indicate which treatments of Shakespeare were thought to be salable. They embody and define a relationship among matter, mind and humankind.

Other works of relevance to Shakespeare’s presence in American culture which seem to accept an imposed high culture are Gerald Graff’s *Professing Literature* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987] and Michael Bristol’s *Shakespeare’s America, America’s Shakespeare* [London and New York: Routledge. 1990].

4 Miss Kemble was a renowned Shakespearean actress who made a great reputation in the United States and thereafter returned to England. She played leading roles in the plays, but she also gave dramatic readings. These readings consisted of recitations (not necessarily from memory) of all of the parts in various scenes of one or more plays. The young Furness, who was then destined for a career in law, was much taken with Kemble’s beauty, grace and skill. When he developed his own Shakespearean career, Furness himself gave such readings for which he was eagerly sought out. In her later years, Kemble presented the then famous Furness with a glove supposed to have been associated with Shakespeare’s own person. The impression that Kemble might have made upon Furness and their continued friendship permits the inference that a measure of Furness’ devotion to the plays was due to her.

5 He edited Macaulay’s *Lays of Ancient Rome* jointly with his son, John Carew Rolfe. In *The Critic*, a biographical article on Rolfe describes his son, John C. Rolfe, as a professor at "the Michigan State University" [1898, 359]. The biographical reference work *American Authors* gives his affiliation as “the univers[ity] of Michigan” [New York, 1938. 661] Like the opposites discussed in this essay, in certain perspectives the University of Michigan and Michigan State University are merged.

6 In a letter to Rolfe, Furness was very explicit about this chain of scholars, using, in his description of it, the tangibly vivid metaphor of touching hands: “By touching hands with Collier, I reach back through Malone to Steevens, to Dr. Johnson, to Capell, to Theobald, and to Pope” [Furness, Horace Howard Jr., ed. *The Letters of Horace Howard Furness*. 2 vols. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1922, II, 56].
I. e., the Roman poet Horace who was the friend of Caesar and Maecenas whose names metonymically suggest, respectively, power and wealth.

Because it was a standard play for the 1865 - 1914 period in which Rolfe and Furness worked, The Merchant of Venice is used here in an exemplary way. Furness' first edition was Romeo and Juliet, published in 1871. His edition of The Merchant of Venice was published in 1888 [Horace Howard Furness, ed. A New Variorum Edition of Shakespeare. The Merchant of Venice. Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Company, 1888], within five years of Rolfe's first revision of his edition of that play, which was the one he had chosen for his first edition. The discussion is based on this slightly revised 1883 version of Rolfe's original 1870 edition [William J. Rolfe, ed. The Merchant of Venice. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1870].

Harper's ran into financial trouble in the last part of the nineteenth century. One of its remedial measures was to spin off its educational publishing to the American Book Company. Rolfe's editions of the plays continued, thereafter, to be published under both imprints.

In 1880, the average rate of pay for a non-farm laborer was $1.16 per day; for a carpenter, $2.15 [U. S. Dept. of Commerce Bureau of the Census. Historical Statistics of the United States. White Plains, N. Y.: Kraus International Publications, 1983, p. 165, Series D 730 & 738].

Neither Rolfe, his bibliographer, any of his biographers, the Publisher's Weekly nor any commentator consulted in preparing this essay has offered a rationale for this odd figure of a price. The books were originally offered for 90 cents, thus the 56-cent figure may represent a reduction based on some mathematical formula figuring the revenue and expense for the volumes.

This price is mentioned by Joseph Crosby. Hamlet came out in two volumes each of which was $4. In the same letter, Crosby registers some shock that Furness had incurred, yet could sustain, a $3,000 loss on the Variorum Hamlet. The series as a whole eventually sold in sufficient numbers to be profitable [John W. Velz and Frances N. Teague. One Touch of Shakespeare: Letters of Joseph Crosby to Joseph Parker Norris, 1875 - 1878. Washington: Folger Books-The Folger Shakespeare Library, 1986, 315]. A "New" Variorum edition was priced at $60 when it was published in 1990.

A tabular presentation reveals the emphases of each editor:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Pages†</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Pages†</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bio. Sketch of Shakesp.</td>
<td>0 8</td>
<td>Lansdowne (18 C) version</td>
<td>63 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Text of play</td>
<td>268 82</td>
<td>Actors</td>
<td>16 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textual notes</td>
<td>(+ xii</td>
<td>Costumes, Scenery</td>
<td>8 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Critical notes</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>Jews in Eliz'n England</td>
<td>5 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History of text</td>
<td>5 *</td>
<td>Alt. version/Law of trial sc.</td>
<td>20 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date of composition</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Selected criticism</td>
<td>40 25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source of plot</td>
<td>45 2</td>
<td>Music</td>
<td>5 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration of action</td>
<td>13 &lt;1</td>
<td>Abbrev. &amp; Index</td>
<td>14 3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

† Furness' pages are about twice the size of Rolfe's, but his print is slightly larger

* Rolfe gives the textual history and comment on the date of composition as the "History of the Play."
A representative sample and description of the textual apparatuses, in particular the notes, for both editions of *The Merchant of Venice* is set forth in the Appendix.

This schema is that of the confrontation of high and low framed by Levine and Graff and others. See above, n. 3.

Second, that is, to the 1821 Boswell-Malone variorum edition.

At the same time, notably, Americans were investing heavily in *material* Shakespeareaniana, the leading example among many being William Clay Folger whose collection formed the basis of the library named for him.

William Morton Payne, ed. *English in American Universities*. Boston: D. C. Heath & Co., 1895. Payne published a book of reports by professors at the leading American universities describing the state of English studies. These reports may be read for their writers' attitudes about the proper methods and goals of higher education as well as for information about the specific content of their curricula.

Francis Child, the leading exponent of literary studies at Harvard, presumably the moving spirit of Rolfe's honorary Harvard degree, recognized Rolfe's forward-looking approach to literary studies carried out in the schools in which he was headmaster (one of these being Cambridge, Massachusetts). It is an interesting coincidence that Furness was a student of Child. They corresponded for many years and Furness was always very deferential toward Child. George L. Kittredge, the major American editor in the period following that of the present study, began his career editing English and Scottish ballads for the Riverside series (which included the then standard American edition of Shakespeare of R. G. White revised by W. A. Neilson) with Child's daughter, Helen Child Sargent.

See above, n. 3.

For a list and discussion of these earlier editors and critics of Shakespeare, see Arthur Sherbo's *The Birth of Shakespeare Studies*. [East Lansing: Colleagues Press, 1986].

In effect, Rolfe was working in the field of popular culture before it was legitimized as an academic discipline.

Rolfe went three years to Amherst, working, all the time, at various writing, editing and publishing jobs. He obtained a teaching post after his third year and felt that the degree of Bachelor of Arts would be of not sufficient value to him to warrant deferring the start of his teaching career. The transfer of his energies from school master to Shakespearean editor occurred at about the same time as his honorary Harvard M. A. Amherst later awarded him both the B. A. and the M. A.

*The Winter's Tale*, IV, iii.

On those occasions when another's work met with his approval, he did not hesitate to present himself as giving praise on behalf of "the great majority of the best critics" (See *The Literary World*, 1888, 108).

Cited, after the manner of Rolfe, hereafter in the text as (Name, [year], [page]). Subsequent references in the same paragraph are to just the year and page.

Colton does credit his source but not, for Rolfe, prominently or specifically enough. Today, critics would likely regard Colton's work as
popular rather than scholarly, and as one in the area of religious studies. The plagiarized author was a churchman.

28 That is, Bishop Wordsworth, the author of the original English work. The eighth commandment forbids stealing (Exodus 20:15).

29 Furness never alluded to Hudson's emphasis upon Shakespeare as spiritual sustenance. Furness corresponded with Rolfe and Wright, but very little if at all with Hudson. He is quoted in the What Edition of Shakespeare Shall I Buy?, an advertising pamphlet for one of Hudson's editions of the plays, from the Shakespearian as follows: "Will you kindly send a copy, as far as issued, of the 'Harvard Shakespeare,' to the care of Samuel Timmins, Esq., Birmingham, England, for the 'Shakespeare Memorial Library,' and add the remaining volumes as they successively appear. Also, please send a copy to the care of Dr. Reinhold Köhler, Weimar, Germany, for 'the Library of the German Shakespeare Society,' adding the remaining volumes. Please send the bill, including transportation, etc., to me, and it will give me great pleasure to remit to you at once. I scarcely know how I can better show my high appreciation of this noble edition, with its happy mingle of illustration, explanation, and keen, subtle, sympathetic criticism, than by placing it where English and German scholars can have free access to it, and learn from it the wealth of love and learning which in this country is dedicated to Shakespeare" (2-3).

30 Hudson's expurgated school and family edition has 30 notes for The Merchant of Venice, Act I, scene 1; his "Student's Handy Edition" (Estes and Lauriat's reprint of his original edition) has only 6. Rolfe's has over 60. The quarrel is reviewed in Rolfe's "Shakespeariana" column in The Literary World 15 (1884): 94-95. He there refers to the Rolfe versus Hudson pamphlet of about three thousand words, which Hudson printed and circulated to present his side in the matter.

31 The very distinguished Cambridge edition of Britons William Clark and William Wright was the basis of their later Clarendon edition, very similar to and the chief rival of Rolfe's school editions of the plays. They are discussed in the following two sections of this essay.

32 In the issue of The Literary World which followed that in which Rolfe presented a tedious defense of his conduct in his relations with Hudson, Rolfe changed his mind on Hudson's Harvard edition: "[w]e must say in all frankness that more careful examination of some of the volumes ... led us to modify the favorable opinions we had expressed." He does, however, praise Hudson's work in "the analysis of character and in general aesthetic comment and discussion" (84, 120). By 1884, this faint praise was something of a truism. The syzygy of bibliographic or philological weakness with aesthetic strength applied to Hudson's work was made, in much the same terms as Rolfe uses, in correspondence among Joseph Crosby, Parker Norris and Furness at least as early as '76. Rolfe may have adopted this opinion from Furness. The latter's letters to Rolfe (indexed in Furness' nephew's edition of his letters, see n. 6) evinced a gentle paternalism toward him which bespeaks an otherwise tacit mentorship.

33 Rolfe attended one of these readings (Furn. Let., II, 70).

34 See below.
The plays edited and their dates of publication are indicated below. Some volumes were revised during his lifetime by his son, H. H. Furness, Jr.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Play</th>
<th>Date of Publication</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>R&amp;J</td>
<td>1871</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mac</td>
<td>1873</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ham</td>
<td>1877</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lear</td>
<td>1880</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oth</td>
<td>1886</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MV</td>
<td>1888</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AYLI</td>
<td>1890</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temp.</td>
<td>1892</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MND</td>
<td>1895</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WT</td>
<td>1898</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ado</td>
<td>1899</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TN</td>
<td>1901</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LLL</td>
<td>1904</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A&amp;C</td>
<td>1907</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cym</td>
<td>1913 (posthumous)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


36 This should not be confused with the periodical *Shakespeariana*, published variously in New York and Philadelphia. Rolfe offered corrections to this magazine, too (see, e.g., *World*, 84, 80). Editing a Shakespearean column is another means of editing Shakespeare. The commentary that appeared in such columns filled the appendices of Furness. Rolfe’s procedures in his column in assembling and examining the scholarly writing of other Shakespeareans will thus be compared to Furness’ in his *Variorum*. Both sets of writings are organized as responses to the theories and observations of others. They turn on the same topics: Shakespeare’s text, his life, the dates of the plays, the plots and characters and the critical appraisal of all these things.

37 Even Furness, who repeatedly characterized his work on his variorum as a labor of love, once (one can imagine with some weariness) begged Rolfe never to ask him what he meant in print. He told Rolfe he would soon have the next variorum volume “in [his] critical hands” (*Furn. Let.*, II, 49).


39 According to Henry W. Simon, whose definitive *The Reading of Shakespeare in American Schools and Colleges* [New York: Simon and Schuster, 1932] carefully portrays most of the personalities who figured in the canonization of Shakespeare in the American educational establishment, Child, who took “the highest rank in his class in all subjects” at Harvard (1846), was first appointed there in the math department (80). The early school texts edited by Rolfe were in the field of science. Beginning with Francis Bacon and continuing through the plays-as-literature movement, the study of English like Greek then the German higher criticism and philological approaches, the relation of science and literature is a key problem in cultural study. Rolfe, as a school book editor, attempted to mediate between the extremes of the two approaches. His contemporary single-play editors took positions varying from the almost purely philological, such as that of Francis B. Gummere who took a degree at Freiburg, to that of Henry Hudson who, although preparing a well-crafted edition, saw its value to be to assert Shakespeare’s moral and spiritual value.
The figure of 144 volumes written or edited seems to have come from Rolfe himself. The Dictionary of American Biography gives the number as what Rolfe had “reckoned” in 1907. The number appears in American Authors, Reader’s Encyclopedia of American Literature (“nearly 150”) and similar works. In the Cambridge Public Library’s Bibliography of Rolfe’s work, some 70 to 80 (depending on what is counted as a book) titles of books can be counted. The other 70 or so include subsequent editions of listed works and additional volumes of multi-volume works embraced in a single title. The titles counted do include, as separate items, Shakespeare’s plays, poems and sonnets. Rolfe was also very prolific in writing for the press. In his autobiography, Rolfe estimates that the collection of his “contributions to periodicals and other printed matter” would fill 40 volumes [51].

Furn. Let. I, 177.


Other than the totals mentioned, specific sales figures are not available. Extracts from the 1907 bibliography of Rolfe’s writings nonetheless reveal a continuous stream of works the demand for which is high enough to warrant multiple editions.

1883 | Princess: a medley, by Alfred Lord Tennyson. | Same. [3d ed.] 1895. [etc.]

1884 | Select poems of Alfred Lord Tennyson. | Same. [Enl. and rev. ed. 1896.] [etc.]

1887 | Enoch Arden, and other poems, by Alfred Lord Tennyson. | Same. Rev. and enl. ed. 1895. [etc.]

These entries indicate brisk sales in departments of Rolfe’s work besides Shakespeare. It is certainly safe to infer that his editing kept him financially comfortable. (Knowing of Rolfe’s passion for exactness, one wonders if, at age 80, he noticed his bibliographer’s inconsistencies in presenting this information. 1883 has the designation of the edition in brackets and the date out of brackets; 1884’s designation and date are both in brackets and, for 1887, no brackets are used. In 1887 “enl.” precedes “rev.” This order is reversed in 1887.)

In contrast to his noble position in American education generally and in Shakespeare studies in particular, Rolfe’s rough treatment of others struggling in his nascent discipline bespeaks an American trait to which others saw Shakespeare as the antidote. As of those disciples who wanted their Master to emulate Elijah by calling fire down from heaven to consume their detractors, we are struck by the humanness of one laboring for so great a cause who yet seemed sometimes to know not what manner of spirit he was of.

There are many examples of pointing to others’ mistakes and of the harsh terms in which Rolfe did it in his “Shakespeariana” columns. Rolfe himself had proclaimed the Americanness of his editions to be part of their value, yet he never notices that nationalist issue in a review of George
Wilkes' *Shakespeare from an American Point of View* (New York: Appleton, 1882 [?]). Instead he belittles the author's claims of discovery ("one on which he especially plumes himself") of the age of Juliet's nurse, cites the author's errors in the spelling of Furnivall, Spedding and Kreyssig and ridicules, as a "Yankee Daniel come to judgment" his support of Collier (World 82, 116). In another case, Rolfe admits that White's plan for his Riverside Shakespeare is carried out with "skill and ability," but calls White's prefatory remarks about the appropriate amount of annotation "irrelevant and rather ill-natured sneers." Generally praising the work, he nonetheless maintains a running travesty of White's "washerwoman" test of the need for annotation (to annotate only what a 19th-century female laborer could not comprehend) (84, 29). In addition to harsh comments, Rolfe also spent some of his passion for detail on White's work. In a review of White's (posthumously published) *Studies in Shakespeare*, Rolfe, after cataloguing its contents, undertakes to dispute in detail White's criticisms of Schmidt's *Lexicon*. He expends nearly 600 words correcting White correcting Schmidt in three specific instances—all in a short column devoted to Shakespeare in general. In another column he includes discussion of using "had better" versus "would better" that appears to have no occasion but a disagreement with his own editor (i.e., of The Literary World) (84, 80-1). His review of Field's *Medical Thoughts of Shakespeare* providing titles of four similar works and seven specific references in the plays to medical matters is informative and reflects Rolfe's learning. Yet the tone and direction of the review is dismissive and not one word of praise is printed (84, 184). Even while contending with the compression necessary to notice the publication and content of a "fresh and valuable" paper (85, 392), Rolfe exhibits so keen a delight in minuitiae that he stops to give an example from the paper of a lack of agreement between a noun and verb separated by a long, compound prepositional phrase. Half of the notice is taken up with the illustration of this and three other, similar, grammatical errors on the part of the paper's author.

Compounding the arcaneness of this essay, the subject of the forgotten writing by Gladstone is a tribute to Tennyson (the second forgetter). (Rolfe, of course, was the editor of a popular edition of Tennyson—a popular poet.) In the most summary form, Rolfe's disquisition on Gladstone's forgetfulness adduces the following facts:

1. In his edition of "In Memoriam" Rolfe ascribed a tribute to Arthur Hallam to W. E. Gladstone. [Hallam was a writer and scholar who was a friend to Tennyson and the subject of the latter's "In Memoriam."]
2. Gladstone, receiving a copy of the edition from Rolfe, asserted that the tribute was not his.
3. Rolfe then instituted a "search through twenty or more books on Tennyson" and found the tribute in a study by Tainsh (here Rolfe enumerates the editions of Tainsh's study).
4. Rolfe wrote to Gladstone, citing Tainsh and requesting clarification and he received no reply.
5. A "Memoir" of Tennyson by his son was published two years later with the tribute quoted.
6. This "Memoir" is quoted for its attribution of the tribute as from a review by Gladstone (whose work containing it is cited), and for the characterization of that review by the author of the "Memoir."

7. Gladstone's work, "Gleanings of Past Years," wherein Tennyson's son found the tribute for inclusion in the "Memoir," cites the original publication of the tribute and footnotes an addition for the "Gleanings" version.

8. Tainsh took the tribute from the second publication making a single, accidental change: the omission of the word "growth" (noted and specified by Rolfe).

48 Ibid. Velz and Teague, 1986, 189. In fact, the editions can be distinguished only by careful examination and the importance of their differences is merely subjective. See below.

49 Crosby was careful to limit his Zanesville Shakespeare club to twenty serious persons.

50 Part of that admiration was purely for Furness' money and comfortable situation. Crosby continually sought to acquire valuable books and was prosecuted for forging a promissory note in an attempt to forestall the bankruptcy of his grocery business. He fled to Canada to avoid incarceration.

51 This was a supposed source play called Joseph the Jew of Venice which was known only in a German version proposed by Fleay to have been a lost version of Dekker's Jew of Venice.

52 That is, had Shakespeare ever read the play, a matter, of course, destined always to be one of speculation.

53 This smaller world is perhaps best represented in the Philadelphia Shakespeare Society. Judging from the annual dinner of 1881, these meetings, like Furness' life, were high-spirited, leisurely and urbane. The program fills four well set-up folio pages in which the evening's events and menu are described amidst quotations from Timon of Athens, the play which had formed the "winter's study" of the Society. There are ten wines, cognac and Chartreuse, seventeen courses, interrupted midway for sorbet and cigarettes and concluded by coffee and cigars. The wines and liqueurs are, as is still the custom, listed to the left of the column of courses and both lists are embellished with quotations from the play so ingeniously appropriate that a brief extract scarcely does justice to the effect of the whole. It is noted that all citations are from the first folio.

54 Furness described his travel plans in a letter. "We shall travel in luxurious style. Next Saturday a car with five bedrooms, a parlour, kitchen, etc., will be on the Railroad siding here at Wallingford, and we shall leisurely board it with all our 'duds' and belongings, and in this car we

---

Steinberger Cabinet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ser.</th>
<th>Mes.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Please your Lordship, here is the Wine.</td>
<td>Entomb'd vpon the very hemme o' th' sea.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III, i. 32.</td>
<td>V, iv, 66.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timon.</td>
<td>Luci.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yellow, glittering, precious.</td>
<td>What a wicked Beaff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV, iii, 25.</td>
<td>III, ii. 49.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tim.</td>
<td>I'm Misanthropos, and hate Man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IV, iii, 53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

FISH

Soft-Shell Crabs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ser.</th>
<th>Mes.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Please your Lordship, here is the Wine.</td>
<td>Entomb'd vpon the very hemme o' th' sea.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III, i. 32.</td>
<td>V, iv, 66.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Timon.</td>
<td>Luci.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yellow, glittering, precious.</td>
<td>What a wicked Beaff.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV, iii, 25.</td>
<td>III, ii. 49.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tim.</td>
<td>I'm Misanthropos, and hate Man</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>IV, iii, 53</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There were only eleven present at the dinner, but 100 copies were printed.
shall live until it restores us to Wallingford three or four weeks hence. The cook is said to be the best in the service. ‘We’ consists of my daughter, her husband . . . , their two children of nine and eleven, a valued friend—an eminent physician,—Dr. Willie . . . and myself” (Furn. Let., II, 150).

55 Volume I of the original (Cambridge) edition was the product of John Glover and William Clark, volumes II - IX were edited by Clark and Wright. Of the Clarendon (student) editions, only the first three were the products of Clark and Wright, the rest of the series was edited by Wright working alone. Any of these editions or others based on them may be referred to as Clark and Wright editions. The Cambridge edition refers to the original nine-volume edition of the plays and the Clarendon edition refers to the school editions.

56 The differences of Furness/Cambridge, unlike those of Rolfe/Clarendon (for which see text, below) have some moment in two respects. First, the Cambridge edition does not attempt to present variorum commentary, but only the various textual emendations proposed through the years. Second, Furness finally decided not to attempt to present a text. His first four volumes have, in somewhat lessening degrees, a “Furness” text and the remaining twelve reprint, long s’s and all, the First Folio.

57 Rolfe was concerned about his own honor and position. Although not to the extent of Furness, Rolfe was recognized by his contemporaries. Homer B. Sprague, in the preface to his student edition of The Merchant of Venice, defers to an edition of Rolfe’s: “In the text and in the numbering of the lines we have usually followed the admirable edition of Rolfe. His books should be in the hands of every reader of Shakespeare.” In one of his Shakespeariana columns, Rolfe reprinted in full a letter and poem from Mary Cowden-Clarke in which she expresses her appreciation that Rolfe had dedicated his “Friendly Edition” to her (World, 84, 454-5).

58 This acclaim was frequently put in terms of implicit comparisons of the Variorum to the work of European scholars. Praising it as wise, lucid and eloquent, one Atlantic Monthly review approvingly quotes Furness’ claim that “foreigners” were barred as emenders of Shakespeare’s text [76.454 (1895): 273]. Another, like Rolfe’s ([Critic, 1900, 318] see text, below), made unfavorable comparisons between the Cambridge edition and the Variorum by pointing out that the former was complete “only” as to readings and had the “further deficiency” of failing to note the adoption or rejection of them by subsequent editors [70.418 (1892): 273].

59 Though not enjoying among Anglophones the fame and prestige of Cambridge or Oxford, Halle was an important institution. After a royal foundation in the city of that name in the Kingdom of Saxony (now a German state) late in the 17th century, Halle incorporated the University of Wittenberg, thus acquiring that institution’s associations with Martin Luther and becoming one of the principal seats of protestant theology. Furness’ honorary degree from Halle represented the accolade of form for critics and higher critics who would revolutionize Biblical criticism and, thereafter, literary study and whose early proponents were already advocates of rigidly materialistic, scientific and philological approaches to literature and pedagogy.
In the half-century following the Civil War, the capacity of the United States for expansion and progress seemed unlimited. Furness' astounding coup in the world of letters handily demonstrated that capacity according to a reviewer writing in *The Nation*, who told his readers that "this work can hardly fail to mark a most important era... for the American people" ('73, 476). Other reviews of the *Variorum* took up Furness himself and pointed to his seizing the laurel from the English. *The Atlantic Monthly* not only dubbed Furness the "great American editor," but lauded him for allowing the United States "her honorable satisfaction with possessing the greatest living Shakespearean" ('90, 127). T. M. Parrott, in his edition of *The Merchant of Venice*, calls Furness' *Variorum* "that magnificent monument of American scholarship" (iv).

Robert Adams, for example, in *The Land and Literature of England* [New York: Norton, 1983] refers to the Clarendon Press as "a division of the Oxford University Press still famous for the elegance and accuracy of its products" (245, n.). In addition to the honor of its press, the Clarendon edition's source in the Cambridge edition was the basis for much esteem in the U.S. as well as in England.

When Rolfe chose to number the lines of his editions, (at least by 1883) he used the Clark and Wright numbering. In 1864, J. M. Jephson's edition of *The Tempest* was issued by the Macmillan Company. Five years later, the "Clarendon" editions began with *Richard II*, *Macbeth* and *The Merchant of Venice*. Jephson's and the Clarendon used line numbering and the size and format (introduction, text with endnotes) used in many editions even today.

In the closing scene of the play, for example, with its plays on bedfellows and marred pens, Clark and Wright delete 24 lines to Rolfe's 34. This difference rather reflects varying practice in rendering the cut scene intelligible and artistic than opinions on the gentility of the thoughts expressed. Both editions aimed to remove the same offenses.

There are about 70 notes to the first scene of each edition of *The Merchant of Venice* using about (within 5%) the same number of words in those notes. Both place the notes at the end of the play. Three-quarters of these notes cover the same subjects in generally the same manner. Variances between the two sets of notes do not fall readily into a pattern. If the categories of philological, metrical, textual and allusive are used to sort the notes, Clark and Wright's are about evenly divided among them. Rolfe has comparatively more philological, and fewer textual, notes. If this small difference was maintained beyond the sample of the first scene, it might still be thought only to mean that the previous work of the editors—Rolfe's first Shakespearean work was an edition of Craik's *English of Shakespeare*; the innovation of Clark and Wright's prior and renowned Cambridge edition was essentially textual—showed through to their present. An inventory of the variances for Act I, scene 1 is as follows (references are to line numbers):
In their uncharacteristic disagreement carried on in the pages of the Athenaeum, neither Wright nor Furness had argued for the superiority of either edition, but had rather taken exception to each others’ claims about them. See below, nn. 73 and 74 and text.

A single play, annotated with philological, historical and literary references, published in a handy, cheap book was a nineteenth-century innovation. It was tied to contemporary popularization and vernacularization of literary education and advances in book manufacturing. Despite Americans’ inventiveness in these fields, however, the British appear to have first offered such a student edition of Shakespeare (perhaps in Jephson’s, see above, n. 62). It cannot be doubted that Rolfe, the American pioneer of such editions, saw some British edition prior to making his own. Rolfe adopted most of the practices employed by the British editors. Like Jephson’s and Clark and Wright’s, his editions opened flat and could be held easily; they were cheap and contained a volume of textual apparatus—notes, glossaries, introductory material and illustrations—roughly equal to that of the text.

Ironically, Rolfe’s use of the expression “cis-Atlantic” evokes gallia cisalpina of imperial Rome and reinscribes the metropolitan-colonial relationship.

In 1884, when asked about the best one-volume edition (a field in which he had made no entry), he cited the “unique position” of the Globe edition, another of the Cambridge-derived editions, as the standard in terms of line-numbering etc., but did not recommend it because the “type [was] too fine.” He did not recommend any American edition, but one published by Routledge (World, 84, 120). Still later, in the general introductory material to the notes in his last revision (1903) of his edition of The Merchant of Venice, he offered a more expansive commendation:

The numbers of the lines in the references (except for the present play) are those of the “Globe” edition (the cheapest and best edition of Shakespeare in one compact volume), which is now generally accepted as the standard for line numbers in works of reference ... [citing examples of such works]. (126)

Except for minor differences, which flowed from expurgation, Rolfe numbered his “present play” like the Globe as well.

In its preface, there is praise for Webster’s (American) dictionary as “the first English Dictionary yet published which may be safely taken as an authority on the etymology of the language” (vi).

Rolfe’s early professional experience took place immediately before and after the Civil War. Britain did not unequivocally support the Union.

42 THE KENTUCKY REVIEW
His praise overflowed even into the terms of religion. Hence *The Atlantic Monthly*: “No Shakespearean editor has worked on a scale so grand as that of Mr. Furness. The rare balance of qualities that he brings to his work constitutes what is almost infallibility of judgment” (70 [1892]: 275). And *The New York Times*: “one is tempted to regard this Variorum [as coming from] the beneficent influence of some vast impersonal force of nature so that there has come to be a religion of [its] lovers” (13 June, 1903: 379).

These references (with the quantity noted in parentheses) are to Homer Sprague (1), Richard Grant White (2) and William Rolfe (3). The other 4 are references to an unpublished manuscript of Furness’ friend, George Allen, whose loss to scholarship Furness mourns in the final “Plan” section of his *Appendix*. Allen was one of the members of the Philadelphia Shakespeare Society (see note 53, above). In the first scene, the ten references to Americans are among 120 notes in all. The four Americans referred to are outnumbered by about thirty Europeans.

As might be expected in a quarrel carried on in the public press by parties on opposite sides of the Atlantic, the issue is not clearly joined. The Lippincott prospectus for the forthcoming *Variorum* stated that it would collate “not only the textual variations of the quartos and folios as given in the Cambridge edition [...] but also the various readings of the different editions since 1821,” giving rise to the inference that non-folio, non-quarto readings were not in the Cambridge edition. To Wright’s assertion that “all” such readings were included, Furness qualified his use of “readings” to refer to “a concise, accurate, faithful digest of all the various notes of the learned editors before and since 1821,” but not before disputing, with a list of omissions, Wright’s use of “all” to qualify the inclusiveness of the Cambridge collation and denying that he would not hereafter use that edition as he had proposed. These two additions in the counterclaim brought Wright to assert that Furness was “compelled to take” the work of the Cambridge editors, which, of course, Furness denied (See *Furn. Let.*, I, 161 - 168).

Such expressions as “I am therefore much beholden [...]” “I cheerfully apologise [...]”, “I doubt not that he will discharge his duty as editor with the most scrupulous conscientiousness [...]” and “So highly have I for many years past esteemed the Cambridge Edition [...]” are found throughout. Wright not only held his peace in Furness’ rebuttal, but it was he who initiated their personal correspondence with a note commending Furness’ *Romeo and Juliet* after it had come from the press.

Another matter which might be a lacuna in Furness’ posture of unflappable *politesse* concerns a gift he made to Lord Acton, a mutual acquaintance of himself and Wright. When Acton had expressed interest in the *Variorum* and in a publication of the Pennsylvania Historical Society, he sent him several volumes of each the receipt of which Acton never acknowledged. In the ensuing year, he twice mentioned the matter in two letters to Wright, each time vowing to send Acton nothing else. “I shan’t send him *Twelfth Night* when it’s out. Catch me!” (II, 70). “I’ll send copies to Skeat and Sandys, but sorra a one will I send to Lord A” (II, 73). Acton died a year later.
In the context of Shakespeare studies, Margaret Ferguson in her “Afterword” to *Shakespeare Reproduced: The Text in History and Ideology* [Eds. Jean E. Howard and Marion F. O’Connor. New York & London: Methuen, 1987. 272 - 283] applies this phrasing of the concept of containment of counter-cultural activity to activity within a culture. In the pre-World War I United States, Britain was seen as holding cultural hegemony in such a way that contestatory practices could be aimed at it rather than domestic targets.

Even in this format, Rolfe came up short on press coverage. In this American publication, his life was given only about two thirds the number of words as that of Furnivall, an Englishman.

Ibid., “Two Shakespearean...,” note 77.

See note 39, above.

In an essay contributed to the same anthology as Ferguson’s (above, n. 76), Robert Weimann [“Mimesis, Representation, Authority” 260 - 272] stressed the sheer pleasure that the plays offer as evidence of their irreducibility to expressions of material (i.e. only historical) forces: all manifestations of Shakespeare cannot be made merely “ideological gestures of subversion or rehearsal. [A]ny criticism... would... condemn itself... if... fun... were... theoretically ostracized... [I]t cannot exclusively be defined in terms of ideological structures and categories, any more than other forms of corporeal activity, such as eating, laughing, smiling, and sneezing can be reduced to ideological gestures of subversion or rehearsal” (272). It is just to such “forms of corporeal activity” as earning a living, furnishing a house and passing the day that the artistry of Shakespeare is put when an edition of his plays is produced. However, this forceful and (once stated) obvious truth is denied in many of the culturally based studies of Shakespeare. Levine (see above, n. 3 and text) denied it as he alleged the displacement of the popular and communal burlesques of Shakespeare by a politicized theatre which affirmed class structures. Erring in the opposite direction, Esther Dunn [*Shakespeare in America*. New York: Macmillan, 1939] tied her account of the American reception of Shakespeare so closely to the people’s behaviour and character that it often did not rise above mere description of their “eating, laughing, smiling and sneezing.” Neither study discerned the underlying opposition (and consequent interdependence) of mind and matter whether in its analogous forms of corporeal and ideological, physical and noetic or in less inclusive oppositions. These oppositions are contained in and symbolized by an edition. Weimann’s insight reveals the interplay of such factors as pleasure—ethereal factors—with the pulp and steam needed to produce a book as the irreducible basis of cultural investigation. Launching Shakespeare into the stream of commerce with the production of an edition represents the introduction of the content of a work which has transcended historical customs and periods into a specific material-historical plane.