

**SHAKESPEARE  
ALLUSION -  
BOOKS, PART I**

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Shakespeare Allusion - Books, Part I by C. M. Ingleby

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**C. M. INGLEBY**

**SHAKESPEARE  
ALLUSION -  
BOOKS, PART I**



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ALLUSION-BOOKS.

PART I.

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## GENERAL INTRODUCTION.

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A SECTION of our Reprints appears under the title of *Allusion-Books*. By this term we intend to cover not only those books which afford some *allusion*, or indirect reference, to Shakspeare or to a work of his, but also those which directly deal with either: i. e. which mention him by name as the author of such and such a poem or play, or as a poet worthy of praise or of blame. This distinction is important, and it is but right, once for all, to insist upon it. Let us take an extreme instance of each term. In the *Inferno* of Dante (Cant. III.) occur these lines:

e vidi l'ombra di colui  
Che fece per viltate il grand rifiuto,

as to which it is still a debateable question, who is specially signalized under the description of the man "who made, through baseness, the great refusal": in fact, three different interpretations have found supporters. If, as has been suggested, the reference be to Celestine the Fifth, this is an extreme instance of an *allusion proper*. De' Quincey, in his admirable essay on *Style* (Works, Black's ed., vol. x. p. 254), has a note on the *Cassandra* of Lycophron, in which he speaks of the "symbolic images, which should naturally be intelligible enough to us who know the several histories" of the Trojan heroes, "but which (from the particular selection of accidents or circumstances used for the designation of persons) read like riddles without the aid of a commentator." De Quincey strictly calls these, *allusions* to the persons in question; "as if," he remarks, "I should describe Cromwell by the expression, '*unfortunate tamer of horses*,' &c. &c., or a noble lord of the last century as '*the roaster of men*.'" (Essay on *Jean Paul Richter*: Works, vol. xiii. p. 124.) Carlyle's works, again, are like Jean Paul's in this respect: full of *allusions*, often of the most obscure kind, to persons and events. To this day many of the *allusions* in the works of our old poets are uncertain. Assuredly "he who left untold," &c., in *Il Penseroso*, is Chaucer; but whether the next allusion be to Spenser only, or to Bojardo as well, remains an open question.

But, on the other hand, when a writer is named, or mentioned in terms which *directly* identify him, it is not strictly correct to call such a reference, an *allusion*, since there is no by-play, or side-glance at an incident or event which may serve as the middle term of identification. Thus when Henry Willobie's anonymous eulogist writes

And *Shake-speare* paints poor *Lucrece* rape,

one can hardly say that the *Rape of Lucrece* or its author are *alluded to*; they are *directly noticed*. But notwithstanding, it is a fact that a vast number of such notices involve an indirect reference to the writer or the writing; and we may surely be allowed, for the sake of convenience, to employ a title, to cover all our Reprints in this Section, which faithfully describes the greater part of them, and is applicable, with some little license, to nearly all.

The first instalment of our *Allusion-Books* consists of the following:—

I. Green's *Groats-worth of Wit*; bought with a million of Repentance. We know of no copy of the first edition, nor, in fact, of any edition earlier than that of 1596. We have therefore reprinted Mr Henry Huth's copy of that edition. The British Museum Library has a copy of the edition of 1617. The Bodleian Library, Oxford, has copies of the editions published in 1621 and 1629: the former of which, by a very common error of the press, reads "Tygres head," instead of "Tygers (or Tygres) heart," in the passage containing the famous allusion to Shakspeare and his Third Part of Henry VI.

The title of this work is not *The Groats-worth of Wit, &c.*; but *Green's Groats-worth of Wit, &c.*, and herein lies matter for speculation. It was a practice with the writers of that time to combine some name, *not always* that of the author, with the title: e. g. *The Countess of Pembroke's Passion, Willobie his Avis*, &c. In the case of Robert Greene's remarkable tract, as in that of *Avisa*, there was a special motive for the prominence accorded to the author's name in the title. It was one of Greene's posthumous works, and was revised and curtailed by his literary executor Henry Chettle, before it saw the light. At that day Greene's name had an extraordinary prestige, owing to the quantity and popularity of his literary productions, both in prose and in verse, dramatic and lyric. Accordingly Chettle puts Greene's name first, not only to bespeak the interest, and provoke the curiosity, of the public, but also to remind the reader of Greene's recent death and Chettle's editorship.

As Robert Greene died on Sept. 2 or 3, 1592, we may safely

refer the manuscript to the summer or autumn of that year: and as *Kind-Hart's Dreame* (which contains an allusion to *Green's Groats-worth of Wit*) was entered on the registers of the Stationers' Co. in Dec., 1592, it follows that Greene's book was printed and published between those two dates. That portion of this singular tract which entitles it to a place among our *Allusion-Books* is the address, (following on the main story, and immediately preceding Greene's farewell,) "To those gentlemen his quondam acquaintance, that spend their wits in making plays;" which deals with five play-makers (not counting Shakspeare), but is specially addressed to three of them. These three have been identified as (1) Christopher Marlowe, (3) George Peele, and (2) Thomas Nash. This address is eminently suggestive of the low estate of the players at that date, and the discredit which attached to the writers who supplied them with copy. Only ponder the scorn with which John Day, and John Davies of Hereford (the admirer, if not the actual friend, of Shakspeare and Burbage), say of the player's vocation. The former (if, as the late Mr Bolton Corney conjectured, he were the author of *Tae Returne from Pernassus*, 1606, acted in 1602) puts the following speech into the mouth of *Studioso* (Actus 5, scena 1):

Fayre fell good *Orpheus*, that would rather be  
King of a mole hill, then a Keybars slave:  
Better it is amongst fillers to be chiefe,  
Then at [a] plaiers trencher beg reliefe.  
But ist not strange this [these] mimick apes should prize  
Unhappy Schollers at a hireling rate.  
Vile world, that lifts them up to hye degree,  
And treads us downe in groveling misery.  
*England* affordes those glorious vagabonds,  
That carried eartst their fardels on their backes,  
Coursers to ride on through the gazing streetes,  
Sooing it in their glaring Satten suites,  
And Pages to attend their maisterships:  
With mouthing words that better wits have framed,  
They purchase lands, and now Esquiers are made.

(the last couplet not improbably alluding to Shakspeare). To this *Philomusus* replies,

What ere they seeme being even at the best,  
They are but sporting fortunes scornfull jests.

John Davies writes thus:

Good God! that ever *pride* should stoop so low,  
That is by nature so exceeding hie:  
Base *pride*, didst thou thy selfe, or others know,  
Wouldst thou in *harts* of *Apish Actors* lie,  
That for a Cue wil sel their *Qualitie*?  
Yet they through thy persuasion (being strong)