

**NOTES & ADDITIONS TO
THE CENSUS OF COPIES
OF THE SHAKESPEARE
FIRST FOLIO**

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Shakespeare First Folio

BY
SIDNEY LEE

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and revised to 24th May, 1906*

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NOTES AND ADDITIONS TO THE CENSUS OF COPIES OF THE SHAKESPEARE FIRST FOLIO.

I.

THREE and a quarter years ago—in December, 1902—I published, by way of supplement to the Oxford facsimile of the Shakespeare First Folio, a 'Census' in which were enumerated all extant copies of the First Folio that were then known to me. Long before my work was published, I had circulated appeals for co-operation wherever there seemed any likelihood that information would be forthcoming. The generous assistance, which was given me both in this country and abroad, enabled my record to reach the large total of one hundred and fifty-eight copies. Whatever the defects of the research, I may fairly claim to have achieved a greater measure of completeness than had characterized earlier explorations in the same field. Some eighty years before, the garrulous bibliographer Thomas Frognall Dibdin declared (in his 'Library Companion') that no more than twenty-six copies of the volume had

come under his notice. Thomas Rodd, the chief London bookseller of the first half of last century, claimed (in 1840) to have compiled a list of eighty copies, but unfortunately he did not print his results, and they have vanished. The bibliographical publisher, Henry George Bohn, in 1863 described somewhat cursorily and confusedly in his new edition of Lowndes' 'Bibliographer's Manual,' thirty-nine copies. In 1897 contributors to 'Notes and Queries,' under Mr. Holcombe Ingleby's enthusiastic leadership, enumerated fifty copies.¹ It was my fortune to increase that number by as many as one hundred and eight copies, of which none, as far as I know, had been publicly described before. It should be understood that I took account of copies in all conditions of cleanliness and completeness.

My 'Census' demonstrated two points, both of which had long been vaguely suspected. In the first place, it plainly appeared that, although extant exemplars in a fine state were few, yet perfect First Folios, far from being 'excessively rare,' were more numerous than perfect copies of other great books of the same era. In the second place, it became obvious that, as soon as we embodied in one systematic survey the more or less imperfect copies of this great collection of Shakespeare's plays, it was difficult to point to a publication of the early seventeenth century which had more triumphantly faced the

¹ Supplementary efforts to describe copies that had found their way to America did not prove more exhaustive. Mr. Justin Winsor in 1875 gave very careful descriptions of eighteen copies in the United States of America, and in 1888 Mr. W. H. Fleming wrote very fully of thirteen copies in the city of New York.

perils of physical decay, and all the wear and tear of handling, to which popular books are always liable.

To a large extent it was pioneer work in which I engaged in 1902, and errors and omissions were inevitable. In spite of the unexpected length to which my list ran, there was no ground for treating it as exhaustive. Within a month of its publication three owners, who had failed to communicate with me earlier, wrote to me of copies which had escaped my observation. Other collectors at later dates gave me similar proofs of the imperfections of my record. Although the new information does not materially affect any published results, it forms an indispensable supplement to the already printed record. I therefore readily accept the invitation of the editors of 'The Library' to give their readers some account of the copies, of the existence of which I was ignorant in 1902, and generally to bring my results up to present date.

II.

At the outset I take the opportunity of making some minor corrections. I have to confess three errors in my account of copies now in America which already figure in the 'Census.'

Of these errors I reckon the most important to be that touching the condition of the copy which is now the property of Mrs. Leiter of Washington (No. LIII).¹ I had been informed by a member

¹ The numbers in roman numerals enclosed in brackets throughout this article, represent the position allotted to the cited copies in my 'Census.'

of the owner's family that the preliminary leaf, headed 'A catalogve of the seuerall Comedies, Histories, and Tragedies contained in this Volume,' was missing. But a recent examination of the copy by Mr. Hugh Morrison, of the Congress Library at Washington shows that the leaf was present though in an unusual place. The copy ought therefore to be numbered in the class of forty-three perfect exemplars instead of in the first division of the second class of eighty imperfect exemplars, in which to my regret I located it.¹ It is less important to note that I somewhat depreciated the condition of the First Folio in the Newberry Library at Chicago (No. CXVII.). I inspected that copy on my visit to the library on 4th April, 1903, and discovered that several preliminary leaves following the title-page which I had reported, from the information given me by a correspondent, to be in facsimile, were in their original state. My description of the fly-leaf and title-page as modern reproductions was, however, confirmed, and consequently the Newberry copy, although it was entitled to a somewhat higher place than I had bestowed on it, does not merit promotion above the second division of my second class. I had placed it in the third division of that class. If I had unwittingly undervalued the Leiter and the Newberry copies, I fear I had overvalued a third American copy. In the case of the First Folio (No. XXXVII.), which belongs to Mr. J. Pierpont Morgan of New York, much detailed evidence has recently come into my hands to show that I

¹ I have already acknowledged this mistake in the 'Athenæum' for January 13th of this year.

had over-estimated its historic interest. Already I had reason to believe that the book had been perfected from the somewhat damaged copy, lacking the portrait and title, which had belonged to the late Leonard Lawrie Hartley. But I did not know what I have been lately told on good authority, that the old binding stamped with the arms of Robert Sidney, second Earl of Leicester (1595-1667), which now distinguishes the book, is a recent substitute, derived from some other ancient tome, for a different old binding, stamped, it is said, with a bishop's armorial bearings, which covered the volume when Mr. Hartley was its owner.¹

Before I deal with the newly-discovered copies, it becomes me to notice such changes as death or some less imperative circumstance has wrought in the ownership of copies which I have already described. At least fifteen of my entries are thereby affected.² Five owners, whose names figure

¹ Mr. Henry R. Davis of Thistleton House, Clissold Road, London, who has followed the history of Mr. Morgan's copy very closely, owns the millboards of its original binding, which was, he tells me, stripped off after Mr. James Toovey bought it for £250 at the Hartley sale on 19th April, 1887. Owners of the volume preceding Mr. Hartley, whom I overlooked, included Sir John Sebright of Beechwood, Hertfordshire, whose collection was dispersed in 1807, and Robert Willis, F.R.S. (1800-1875), the well-known archaeologist and Professor of Mechanics at Cambridge. The copy seems to have been sold by Professor Willis at Hodgson's sale room on 8th April, 1872, for £20 10s., the smallness of the sum being due to some unjustifiable misconception about a leaf in the middle of the volume. Hartley appears to have been the purchaser on that occasion. The volume is numbered 478 in the sale catalogue of the third portion of the Hartley Library, 1887.

² Happily there is no foundation for the newspaper reports that two of the copies described by me (Nos. CXXXVIII and