SHADWELL'S OPERA OF "THE TEMPEST".

To the Editor of "Anglia".

Sir,¹⁾

It seems to me fitting that the readers of your journal should have their attention drawn to a remarkable exemplification of the long arm of coincidence. Were I not a prejudiced witness I should be inclined to characterise the matter referred to as the boldest act of literary piracy on record. But I content myself in submitting the evidence, and leave the choice of phrases to the reader.

"The Athenaeum" of August 25, 1906, (No. 4113) has the hardihood to publish an article by Sir Ernest Clarke on "The Tempest as an Opera", which sets forth precisely as I set forth in the article "Did Shadwell write an Opera on The Tempest?", (Anglia, 1904, xxvii. pp. 205 ff.) that the anonymous quarto of 1674 presents the text of Shadwell's long lost musical perversion of the play. With the calm air of a man explaining a mystery of which he alone has the key, Sir Ernest proceeds to recapitulate all the stale evidence in support of the contention, but fails to justify his obtrusion on public notice by throwing any new light on the subject. The long arm of coincidence is a mighty long arm indeed, when the discoverer of the discovered has no argument to proffer save what has been utilised before. Sir Ernest Clarke's discussion

¹⁾ Folgender brief ging uns zu mit der bitte um veröffentlichung, die wir gern gewähren, in dem wir, gemäß unseren prinzipien, dem verfasser die verantwortung für seine erklärung der von ihm vorgebrachten auffälligen tatsachen überlassen.
Die redaktion.

of the characteristics of the Dryden-Davenant *Tempest* of 1667, of the passage from Downes proving the production of the Shadwell opera, of the fact that all seventeenth century reprints of "The *Tempest*" subsequent to 1670 reproduce the Shadwell text of 1674, all these points have already been made by me in "Anglia".

Seven months after the publication of my article I had an amiable controversy with Dr. Cummings in "Notes and Queries", (10th S. ii. 164, 270, 329) on the subject of "Purcell's Music for The *Tempest*". That discussion resulted in a discovery settling beyond dispute that the quarto of 1674 represented Shadwell's alteration of the Dryden-Davenant play. To "Notes and Queries" of October 22, 1904 I wrote, "Personally I am very thankful to Prof. Cummings for his contribution on this perplexing subject, as one of the facts he educes enables me to decide an important side issue. Hitherto all the editors of Dryden have taken it for granted that the anonymous and misleading 'comedy' of 'The *Tempest*' published in 1674 by Herringman is nothing more than an amended copy of the Dryden-Davenant play of 1670. This was so completely Scott's view that the version of 'The *Tempest*' given in his 'Dryden' is wholly taken from the later quarto. My contention, as first entered upon some few months back in Anglia, that the so called comedy represented the book of Shadwell's opera, can now be maintained beyond dispute. Prof. Cummings points out that in 1680 Pietro Reggio published his 'Song in the *Tempest*. The words by Mr. Shadwell', commencing 'Arise ye subterranean winds'. As this song is printed in Act II. sc. iv. of the 1674 quarto, it follows that that particular version of 'The *Tempest*' must undoubtedly be Shadwell's."

Strange to say, the only item of evidence presented by Sir Ernest Clarke not utilised by me in Anglia is an unacknowledged summary of this point concerning Reggio. It only needed this to make the "coincidence" rounded and complete!

It is a striking commentary on the moral stamina of the English press that none of the many editors of the literary journals to whom I applied for ventilation of this matter had courage enough to deal with it. One replied to me by way

of apology that he did not really think Sir Ernest Clarke could possibly have seen my article in *Anglia*. Suppose we admit that in the ordinary course of events Sir Ernest would not have seen the article — an admission that implies a reflection both on that gentleman's erudition and on the circulation of the journal. Is it equally feasible that Sir Ernest could not have seen "Notes and Queries", a paper subscribed for by every respectable library in the United Kingdom, and to whose indexes constant reference is made by scholars?

Sir Ernest Clarke reminds me of Amerigo Vespucci, who by some brilliant jugglery succeeded in stamping his name indelibly on the two continents discovered by Columbus. Already full honours have been paid him. His intimate friend, Mr. H. B. Wheatley lost no time in writing to the *Athenaeum* to commend his acumen and glorify his powers of research. Whether coincidence or plagiarism, the offence to me appears equally rank. Surely the maxim "*Ignorantia legis excusat neminem*" has the broadest application!

Yours faithfully,

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