The First Editors of Shakespeare (Pope and Theobald). The Story of the First Shakespearian Controversy and of the Earliest Attempt at Establishing a Critical Text of Shakespeare by Thomas R. Lounsbury

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The First Editors of Shakespeare (Pope and Theobald). The Story of the first Shakespearian Controversy and of the earliest attempt at establishing a Critical Text of Shakespeare. By THOMAS R. LOUNSBURY. London: D. Nutt, 1906. 8vo. xxii + 579 pp.

Professor Lounsbury's series of books on *Shakespearian Wars* has reached its third volume. After having dealt with *Shakespeare as a Dramatic Artist* and with *Shakespeare and Voltaire*, he proceeds to discuss, not so much the history of the emendation of Shakespeare's text—that would have been an instructive, though, in some ways, melancholy, record of much misplaced ingenuity—as the history of eighteenth century quarrels and ill humour and bad taste. It is possible that the cause of learning has been advanced by these controversies; it is certain that injustice was done; and it is probable that even yet we do not know the whole truth about the lies, the jealousy and the petty vanities that helped to cloud the reputation of Theobald. Professor Churton Collins's article entitled *The Porson of Shakespearian Criticism*, published many years ago, was a step in the right direction, Professor Lounsbury's book should do much to clear away further cobwebs and a variorum edition of *The Dunciad* would be an effective helpmeet.

Those who know Professor Lounsbury's previous contributions to literary history, notably his Chaucerian studies, will know what to expect in the present volume. It is a painstaking, exhaustive, scholarly survey of Theobald's treatment of Pope, Pope's treatment of Theobald and Pope's and Theobald's treatment of Shakespeare. The introductory chapters, leading up to a consideration of the main theme, are intentionally brief. A more thorough treatment of the earlier period would have been preferable, especially as it has been found necessary to lengthen the work in other ways, e.g. the consideration of later eighteenth century editing has been postponed until a fourth volume of the *Shakespearian Wars* can be published. Of especial value is the chapter devoted to the *Grub-street Journal*, and the manner and methods of newspaper criticism are set forth with first-hand knowledge of the periodical literature of the eighteenth century. Theobald was attacked 'with an activity that never slept and a malignity that never tired,' largely because he had ventured to work in a field wherein some one else had begun to work. This, though 'the labourers are few,' seems to have been deemed then, as in earlier and later times, a sufficient reason for misrepresentation and abuse.

Although Professor Lounsbury works hard to establish the reputation of Theobald, he is not blind to his defects; certain errors of Theobald's edition are pointed out even as certain merits of Pope's labours are indicated in an earlier chapter. It is as a contribution to the literary history of Pope and his circle that the book will be most useful in spite of its somewhat discursive nature. We shall look forward with interest to the completion of the task. The index of eight pages seems to be of quite inadequate assistance to the preceding 590 pages of text.

A. R. WALLER.