of change is troublesome to estimate and inconvenient to adopt, as it involves placing passages where we are not accustomed to look for them; but to the question, did the author write the passage here or there? the matter of *our* trouble or incon­venience is wholly irrelevant. There is, however, one class of cases in which no conclusion may be drawn, documental and intrinsic probability both failing us. This is where two alternative readings, neither of which can have come from the other, have equal external support and equal intrinsic merit. Isolated discrepancies of this kind may be due to some accident to our text at a period now beyond our power to trace. Numerous and striking discrepancies may be due to the fact that there was more than one edition or recension of it in early times, or to the author leaving his work in such a condition that such discrepancies must inevitably gain currency. In the case of dramas, different acting editions will give rise to them.

Up to this point all schools of textual criticism are theo­retically at least in accord. But here begins a divergence which has done more than anything else to discredit the study with the outside world. It emerges because in all judgments on textual matters it is presupposed that they will be acted on, that a reading accepted will remain in the text, a rejected one obelized, enclosed between brackets or removed, and, in this last case, something else substituted in its place.

The “ conservative ” critic's chief concern is for the safety of the traditional and by preference the transmitted text. He urges very rightly that if alteration is carried beyond a certain point it cuts away its own foundation, and so all cer­tainty is destroyed. His objective is the minimum of change. And as the need of making a text compels some sort of de­cision in every case, the “ doubtful ” readings of the tradition, some of which on the evidence would be doubtfully accepted and others doubtfully rejected, will all appear with the ac- cepteds in the text. As to alterations (emendations) that are less than certain, his attitude is clearly if somewhat crudely expressed in the dictum that it is better to leave in the text “ what if not the original reading is at least the remains of it.” The corresponding thesis of the opposite school would be that it is better to present to the reader something which the author might have written than something which he could not: or, in other words, that “ stopgaps ” should be preferred to débris.

An editor of a corrupt and disputed text may reasonably adopt either of two methods of procedure. He may present the text in the purest form which the external evidence warrants, and place all plausible suggestions for its improvement in notes or appendices. The text will be faithful but unreadable, and his work will be that of an honest man but of a textual anti­quarian, not a textual critic, since he declines the duty of “ the restoration of the text, as far as possible, to its original form.” On the other method the editor will provide all necessary information about the evidence for the text in the notes of his critical apparatus; but in the text itself he will give whatever in each case is supported by the balance of the probabilities. Each and every case he will decide on its own merits and without reference to decisions upon the other cases not now before him. Special consideration will be paid to “ doubtful ” readings, which will be distinguished in his work as “ doubtfully ac­cepted ” or “ doubtfully rejected.” Legitimate doubt arises when the evidence *pro et contra of* documental and intrinsic probability is equal, or nearly equal, or when documental probability points strongly to one side and intrinsic probability to another. Illegitimate doubt is the uncertainty of the doubter as to whether he has examined the whole of the evidence. Such doubt is much more frequently felt than acknowledged, and its effect upon critical work is highly injurious. On the one hand, it is apt to take refuge in an uncritical acceptance of the traditional readings, and, on the other hand, to produce a crop of hesitant and mutually destructive conjectures which a reader naturally resents as a needless waste of his time.

The so-called “ conservative text ” is neither an antiquarian’s text nor a critic’s text, but a compromise between the two. When it is conscientiously obtained, it is arrived at by handi­capping, more or less heavily, intrinsic probability as compared with documental probability, or by raising the minimum of probability which shall qualify a reading for admission into the text until it is in agreement with the notions of the editor. Both of these procedures are arbitrary in their principle, and liable to be erratic in their application. The text will suffer whichever course is adopted, and it will suffer the more the more conservative is the editor, as may easily be shown. Thus, to take the latter one, if we suppose that of two editors of equal competence A requires a probability of four-fifths to admit a reading into his text and B a probability of three-fifths only, then in all the cases in which the probability lies between these two fractions B will be right seven times to A’s three, while outside these limits there will be no difference between them.

Many persons appear to suppose that decisions upon doubtful points can be avoided by the expedient of leaving the tradi­tional reading in possession of the text. The rule is a simple one and easy to apply. But owing to the constitution of the human mind it has consequences which possibly they have not contemplated. The great works of classical literature are not studied as pathological specimens, and they will be studied the less the more they contain to repel and disquiet the reader. If a corruption is left in a text when something might be sub­stituted which would at least, as a “ stopgap,” give the sort of sense required, then one of two things must happen. Either the sense of the passage is blotted out for the reader and the conservation of the corruption is tantamount to the ex­punging of the rest of the sentence, or else he will obtain the required sense by wresting the meaning of the other constituents of the context until they furnish it. So far so good: the re­quisite sense has been obtained, but the price has now to be paid. And the price is that the reader’s perception of the signification of the word or words so wrested is dimmed and impaired, and his power of discriminating and understanding them when he meets them again is shot with doubt and error. In dealing with writings in dead languages this is particularly mischievous.

There are two reasons in particular why the part which emendation plays in the shaping of Greek and Latin texts is apt to be overlooked. Most people take their notions of a classical book not from its traditional form but from a “ re­ceived ” or *vulgate* text. This in the case of most writings is fairly readable, because it has been purged by the continuous emendation of scholars during several centuries. But the received conjectures which make this text acceptable have no more authority in themselves than equally good conjectures which have not yet won their way into the text, and it is clearly illogical to treat a text largely built upon conjectures as if it were now beyond the reach of conjecture. Again, it has often happened that readings which have been discovered by con­jecture, and as such received into a text, have afterwards been found to have the support of MSS. Thus in one speech of Cicero, *pro Caelio,* some thirty conjectures of critics were found to be attested by a single recently discovered MS. Such read­ings it is now commonly the practice to transfer to the credit of the MS. and to suppress the fact that they were originally discovered by emendation. These *confirmations,* as they are called, should be carefully recorded in all critical texts, inasmuch as they constitute the most striking justification of the critical method.

Some examples from Shelley’s poems are *Prometheus,* ii. 3, 50, *“ See'st thou* shapes within the mist ” (Zupitza for “ *I see thin* shapes”); *ib.* iv. 4, 242, “Purple and azure, white *and* green, and golden ” *(and* inserted by Rossetti); *Prince Athanase,* 150 sqq. "the rugged path ∣ Where she once saw that horseman toil, with brief I And *blighting* hope, who with the news of death ∣ Struck body and soul as with a mortal blight ” *(blighting,* condemned by Rossetti, is cancelled in the Bodleian MS.).

It is a weakness of conservative critics to extol interpretation (or exegesis) at the expense of emendation. Some have even ventured to say that the successful defence of a passage in a text is a greater service than its successful correction. This is not true. The service to the text is the same, what was previously dark being now made clear. But the emendation