is accepted as Shakespeare’s work he must have made Florio’s acquaintance within a year or two after going to London, as in 1591 he appears in the character of a personal friend and well-wisher. In any case Shakespeare would almost certainly have met Florio a few years later at the house of Lord Southampton, with whom the Italian scholar seems to have occasionally resided. It also appears that he was in the habit of visiting at several titled houses, amongst others those of the earl of Bedford and Sir John Harrington. It seems also probable that he may have assisted Harrington in his translation of Ariosto. Another and perhaps even more direct link connecting Shakespeare with Florio during his early years in London is found in their common relation to the family of Lord Derby. In the year 1585 Florio translated a letter of news from Rome, giving an account of the sudden death of Pope Gregory XIII. and the election of his successor. This translation, published in July 1585, was dedicated “To the Right Excellent and Honourable Lord, Henry Earl of Derby,” in terms expressive of Florio’s strong personal obligations to the earl and devotion to his service. Three years later, on the death of Leicester in 1588, Lord Derby’s eldest son Ferdinando Lord Strange became the patron of Leicester’s company of players, which Shakespeare had recently joined. The new patron must have taken special interest in the company, as they soon became (chiefly through his influ­ence) great favourites at court, superseding the Queen’s players, and enjoying something like a practical monopoly of royal representations. Shakespeare would thus have the opportunity of making Florio’s acquaintance at the outset of his London career, and everything tends to show that he did not miss the chance of numbering amongst his personal friends so accomplished a scholar, so alert, ener­getic, and original a man of letters, as the resolute John Florio. Warburton, it is well-known, had coupled Florio’s name with Shakespeare in the last century. He sug­gested, or rather asserted, that Florio was the original of Holofernes in *Lovés Labour's Lost.* Of all Warburton’s arbitrary conjectures and dogmatic assumptions this is perhaps the most infelicitous. That a scholar and man of the world like Florio, with marked literary powers of his own, the intimate friend and associate of some of the most eminent poets of the day, living in princely and noble circles, honoured by royal personages and welcomed at noble houses,—that such a man should be selected as the original of a rustic pedant and dominie like Holofernes, is surely the climax of reckless guesswork and absurd suggestion. There is, it is true, a distant connexion between Holofernes and Italy—the pedant being a well- known figure in the Italian comedies that obviously affected Shakespeare’s early work. This usage calls forth a kind of sigh from the easy-going and tolerant Montaigne as he thinks of his early tutors and youthful interest in knowledge. “ I have in my youth,” he tells us, “ often­times been vexed to see a pedant brought in in most of Italian comedies for a vice or sport-maker, and the nick­name of magister (dominie) to be of no better significa­tion amongst us.” We may be sure that, if Shakespeare knew Florio before he produced *Lovés Labour's Lost,* it was not as a sport-maker to be mocked at, but as a friend and literary associate to whom he felt personally indebted.

But, whatever his actual relation to the Italian scholar may have been, Shakespeare, on reaching London and beginning to breathe its literary atmosphere, would nat­urally betake himself to the study of Italian. At various altitudes the English Parnassus was at that time fanned by soft airs, swept by invigorating breezes, or darkened by gloomy and infected vapours from the south. In other words, the influence of Italian literature, so dominant in England during the second half of the 16th century,

may be said to have reached its highest point at the very time when Shakespeare entered on his poetic and dramatic labours. This influence was in part a revival of the strong impulse communicated to English literature from Italy in Chaucer’s day. The note of the revival was struck in the title of Thomas’s excellent Italian manual, “ Principal rules of Italian grammar, with a dictionarie for the better understanding of *Boccace, Petrarcha,* and *Dante"* (1550). The first fruits of the revival were the lyrical poems of Surrey and Wyatt, written somewhat earlier, but published for the first time in Tottle’s *Miscellany* (1557). The sonnets of these poets—the first ever written in English—produced in a few years the whole musical choir of Elizabethan sonneteers. Surrey and Wyatt were sym­pathetic students of Petrarch, and, as Puttenham says, reproduced in their sonnets and love poems much of the musical sweetness, the tender and refined sentiment, of the Petrarchian lyric. This perhaps can hardly in strictness of speech be called a revival, for, strong as was the influ­ence of Boccaccio, and in a less degree of Dante, during the first period of English literature, the lyrical poetry of the south, as represented by Petrarch, affected English poetry almost for the first time in the 16th century. This influence, as subsequently developed by Lyly in his prose comedies and romances, indirectly affected the drama, and clear traces of it are to be found in Shakespeare’s own work. Surrey, however, rendered the Elizabethans a still greater service by introducing from Italy the unrhymed verse, which, with the truest instinct, was adopted by the great dramatists as the metrical vehicle best fitted to meet the requirements of the most flexible and expressive form of the poetic art. But, although in part the revival of a previous impulse, the Italian literature that most power­fully affected English poetry during the Elizabethan period was in the main new. During the interval the prolific genius of the south had put forth fresh efforts which combined, in new and characteristic products, the forms of classical poetry and the substance of southern thought and feeling with the spirit of mediaeval romance. The chivalrous and martial epics of Ariosto and Tasso repre­sented a new school of poetry which embraced within its expanding range every department of imaginative activity. There appeared in rapid succession romantic pastorals, romantic elegies, romantic satires, and romantic dramas, as well as romantic epics. The epics were occupied with marvels of knightly daring and chivalrous adventure, expressed in flowing and melodious numbers ; while the literature as a whole dealt largely in the favourite elements of ideal sentiment, learned allusion, and elaborate ornament, and was brightened at intervals by grave and sportive, by highly wrought but fanciful, pictures of courtly and Arcadian life. While Sidney and Spenser represented in England the new school of allegorical and romantic pastoral and epic, Shakespeare and his associates betook themselves to the study of the romantic drama and the whole dramatic element in recent and contempor­ary southern literature. The Italian drama proper, so far as it affected the form adopted by English playwrights, had indeed virtually done its work before any of Shake­speare’s characteristic pieces were produced. His imme­diate predecessors, Greene, Peele, and Lodge, Nash, Kyd, and Marlowe, had all probably studied Italian models more carefully than Shakespeare himself ever did ; and the result is seen in the appearance among these later Elizabethans of the romantic drama, which united the better elements of the English academic and popular plays with features of diction and fancy, incident and structure, that were virtually new. Many members of this dramatic group were, like Greene, good Italian scholars, had them­selves travelled in Italy, knew the Italian stage at first