ascribes to the intervention of Elizabeth, and James to that of some descendants of Oldcastle, one of whom was probably Lord Cobham. There is an allusion to the incident and an acknowledgment of the wrong done to the famous Lollard martyr in the epilogue to 2 *Henry IV.* itself. Probably Shake­speare found Oldcastle, with very little else that was of service to him, in an old play called *The Famous Victories of Henry the Fifth,* which had been acted by Tarlton and the Queen’s men at least as far back as 1588, and of which an edition was printed in 1598. Falstaff himself is a somewhat libellous presentment of the 15th century leader, Sir John Fastolf, who had already figured in *Henry* *VI*.; but presumably Fastolf has no titled descendants alive in 1598.

18. An entry in the Stationers’ *Register* during 1600 shows that *Much Ado About Nothing* was in existence, although its publication was then directed to be “ stayed.” It may plausibly be regarded as the earliest play not included in Meres’s list. In 1613 it was revived before James I. under the alternative title of *Benedick and Beatrice.* Dogberry is said by Aubrey to have been taken from a constable at Grendon in Buckinghamshire. There is no very definite literary source for the play, although some of its incidents are to be found in Ariosto’s *Orlando Furioso* and Bandello’s *novelle,* and attempts have been made to establish relationships between it and two early German plays, Jacob Ayrer's. *Die Schone Phoenicia* and the *Vincentius Ladiszlaus* of Duke Henry Julius of Brunswick.

19. The completion of the Lancastrian series of histories by *Henry V.* can be safely placed in or about 1599, since there is an allusion in one of the choruses to the military operations in Ireland of the earl of Essex, who crossed on March 27 and returned on September 28, 1599. The First Quarto, which was first “ stayed ” with *Much Ado About Nothing* and then published in 1600, is a piratical text, and does not include the choruses. A geniune and perhaps slightly revised version was first published in the First Folio.

20. That *Julius Caesar* also belongs to 1599 is shown, not only by its links with *Henry* *V*. but also by an allusion to it in John Weever’s *Mirror of Martyrs,* a work written two years before its publication in 1601, and by a notice of a performance on September 21st, 1599 by Thomas Platter of Basel in an account of a visit to London. This was the first of Shakespeare’s Roman plays, and, like those that followed, was based upon Plutarch’s *Lives* as translated from the French of Jacques Amyot and pub- lished by Sir Thomas North in 1580. It was also Shakespeare’s first tragedy since *Romeo and Juliet.*

21. It is reported by John Dennis, in the preface to *The Comical Gallant* (1702), that *The Merry Wives of Windsor* was written at the express desire of Elizabeth, who wished to see Falstaff in love, and was finished by Shakespeare in the space of a fortnight. A date at the end of 1599 or the beginning of 1600, shortly after the completion of the historical Falstaff plays, would be the most natural one for this enterprise, and with such a date the evidence of style agrees. The play was entered in the Stationers’ *Register* on January 18th, 1602. The First Quarto of the same year appears to contain an earlier version of the text than that of the First Folio. Among the passages omitted in the revision was an allusion to the adventures of the duke of Württemberg and count of Mompelgard, whose attempts to secure the Garter had brought him into notice. The Windsor setting makes it possible that *The Merry Wives* was produced at a Garter feast, and perhaps with the assistance of the children of Windsor Chapel in the fairy parts. The plot has its analogies to various incidents in Italian *noυelle* and in English adaptations of these.

*22. As You Like It* was one of the plays “ stayed ” from publica­tion in 1600, and cannot therefore be later than that year. Some trifling bits of evidence suggest that it is not earlier than 1599. The plot is based upon Thomas Lodge’s romance of *Rosalynde* (1590), and this in part upon the pseudo-Chaucerian *Tale of Gamelyn.*

23. A play of *Hamlet* was performed, probably by the Chamber­lain’s men, for Henslowe at Newington Butts on the 9th of June

1594. There are other references to it as a revenge-play, and it seems to have been in existence in some shape as early as 1589. It was doubtless on the basis of this that Shakespeare constructed his tragedy. Some features of the so-called *Ur-Hamlet* may perhaps be traceable in the German play of *Der bestrafte Bruder­mord.* There is an allusion in *Hamlet* to the rivalry between the ordinary stages and the private plays given by boy actors, which points to a date during the vogue of the children of the Chapel, whose performance began late in 1600, and another to an inhibition of plays on account of a “ late innovation, ” by which the Essex rising of February 1601 may be meant. The play was entered in the Stationers’ *Register* on July 26, 1602. The First Quarto was printed in 1603 and the Second Quarto in 1604. These editions contain texts whose differences from each other and from that of the First Folio are so considerable as to suggest, even when allowance has been made for the fact that the First Quarto is probably a piratical venture, that the play underwent an exceptional amount of rewriting at Shake- speare’s hands. The title-page of the First Quarto indicates that the earliest version was acted in the universities of Oxford and Cambridge and elsewhere, as well as in London. The ultimate source of the plot is to be found in Scandinavian legends preserved in the *Historia Danica* of Saxo Grammaticus, and transmitted to Shakespeare or his predecessor through the *Histoires tragiques* (1570) of François de Belleforest (see Hamlet).

24. *Twelfth Night* may be fairly placed in 1601-1602, since it quotes part of a song included in Robert Jones’s *First Book of Songs and Airs* (1600), and is recorded by John Manningham to have been seen by him at a feast in the Middle Temple hall on February 2nd, 1602. The principal source of the plot was Barnabe Riche’s “ History of Apolonius and Silla ” in his *Fare­well to Military Profession* (1581).

25. Few of the plays present so many difficulties as *Troilus and Cressida,* and it cannot be said that its literary history has as yet been thoroughly worked out. A play of the name, “ as yt is acted by my Lord Chamberlens men ” was entered in the Stationers’ *Register* on February 7th, 1603, with a note that “ sufficient authority ” must be got by the publisher, James Roberts, before he printed it. This can hardly be any other than Shake- speare’s play; but it must have been “ stayed, ” for the First Quarto did not appear until 1609, and on the 28th of January of that year a fresh entry had been made in the *Register* by another publisher. The text of the Quarto differs in certain respects from that of the Folio, but not to a greater extent than the use of different copies of the original manuscript might explain. Two alternative title-pages are found in copies of the Quarto. On one, probably the earliest, is a statement that the play was printed “ as it was acted by the Kings Majesties servants at the Globe ”; from the other these words are omitted, and a preface is appended which hints that the “ grand possessors” of the play had made difficulties about its publication, and describes it as “ never staled with the stage.” Attempts have been made, mainly on grounds of style, to find another hand than Shake- speare’s in the closing scenes and in the prologue, and even to assign widely different dates to various parts of what is ascribed to Shakespeare. But the evidence does not really bear out these theories, and the style of the whole must be regarded as quite consistent with a date in 1601 or 1602. The more probable year is 1602, if, as seems not unlikely, the description of Ajax and his humours in the second scene of the first act is Shakespeare’s “ purge ” to Jonson in reply to the *Poetaster* (1601), alluded to, as already mentioned, in the *Return from Parnassus,* a Cambridge play acted probably at the Christmas of 1602-1603 (rather than, as is usually asserted, 1601-1602). It is tempting to conjecture that *Troilus and Cressida* may have been played, like *Hamlet,* by the Chamberlain’s men at Cambridge, but may never have been taken to London, and in this sense “ never staled with the stage.” The only difficulty of a date in 1602 is that a parody of a play on Troilus and Cressida is introduced into *Histrio- mastix* (c. 1599), and that in this Troilus “shakes his furious speare.” But Henslowe had produced another play on the subject, by Dekker and Chettle, in 1599, and probably, therefore,