

son's pronouncement in 1623 were willing to grant to Shakspeare Art. William Barksted in 1607 says

His Song was worthie merrit (*Shakspeare* hee)
 sung the faire blossome, thou the withered tree
Laurell is due to him, his art and wit
 hath purchast it, *Cypres* thy brow will fit.²⁶

Barksted also was an actor, though not of Shakspeare's company. Was he advertising?

Similarly, John Taylor the water poet, whose admitted educational deficiencies were later to give Dr. Farmer so much pleasure, exposes in 1620 his low standards of Art.

Old *Chaucer*, *Gower*, and Sir *Thomas More*,
 Sir *Philip Sidney*, who the *Lawrell* wore,
Spencer, and *Shakespeare* did in Art excell,
 Sir *Edward Dyer*, *Greene*, *Nash*, *Daniell*.²⁶

But probably it was the good company into which Shakspeare happens to get inserted which here occasions the Art. Taylor, too, was closely acquainted with Shakspeare's fellows.

Someone at Stratford also bestowed both Nature and Art upon Shakspeare before the First Folio was printed in 1623. And such Art!—"Arte Maronem"—no less than Virgil, the highest, would do. For while the grammar school and Shakspeare himself really preferred Ovid as a guide to writing poetry, yet he was hardly the man to take to the grave with you. The semi-prophet Virgil was much more in place there. With Shakspeare, "Qvick Natvre Dide," and

All, y^e he hath writt,
 Leaves living Art, but page, to serve his witt.

Though critics may have doubts as to the quality of the author's Latin—"small *Latine*" perches even over Shakspeare's grave—they yet have none as to his intentions. He meant to attribute the superlative degree both of Art and of Nature to Shakspeare.

Practically throughout Shakspeare's career, then, critics had contended that Shakspeare needed greater Art, and his friends had answered that his work approved his Art. Too, from around 1600, if not somewhat earlier, Jonson as the representative of Art had been

²⁶ Chambers, *Shakespeare*, Vol. II, p. 216.

²⁶ Chambers, *Shakespeare*, Vol. II, p. 226.