

of Terence; not to mention, that the character of the schoolmaster in the same play could not possibly be written by a man who had travelled no farther in Latin than *hic, haec, hoc*.

In Henry the Sixth we meet with a quotation from Virgil,  
*Tantaene animis coelestibus irae?*

But this, it seems, proves nothing, any more than the lines from Terence and Ovid, in the Taming of the Shrew; for Mr. Farmer looks on Shakespeare's property in the comedy to be extremely disputable; and he has no doubt but Henry the Sixth had the same author with Edward the Third, which hath been recovered in Mr. Capell's profusions. . . .<sup>20</sup>

"That his *studies* were most demonstratively confined to *nature*, and his *own language*," I readily allow: but does it hence follow that he was so deplorably ignorant of every other tongue, living or dead, that he only "remembered, perhaps, enough of his *schoolboy* learning to put the *hig, hag, hog*, into the mouth of Sir H. Evans; and might pick up in the writers of the time, or the course of his conversation, a familiar phrase or two of French or Italian?" In Shakespeare's plays both these last languages are plentifully scattered; but then, we are told, they might be impertinent additions of the players. Undoubtedly they might: but there they are, and, perhaps, few of the players had much more learning than Shakespeare.

Mr. Farmer himself will allow that Shakespeare began to learn Latin: I will allow that his *studies* lay in English: but why insist that he neither made any progress at school; nor improved his acquisitions there? The general encomiums of Suckling, Denham, Milton, &c. on his *native genius*, prove nothing; and Ben Jonson's celebrated charge of Shakespeare's *small Latin, and less Greek*, seems absolutely to decide that he had *some* knowledge of both; and if we may judge by our own time, a man, who has any Greek, is seldom without a very competent share of Latin; and yet such a man is very likely to study Plutarch in English, and to read translations of Ovid.<sup>21</sup>

The ever-alert Boswell carried Colman's question to Dr. Johnson.

Colman, in a note on his Translation of Terence, talking of Shakspeare's Learning, asks, "What says Farmer to this? What says Johnson?" Upon this he observed, "Sir, let Farmer answer for himself: I never engaged in this controversy. I always said Shakspeare had Latin enough to grammaticise his English."<sup>22</sup>

Obviously true, I think, especially when one knows the educational system of the time, but probably implying more training in many other things than Dr. Johnson suspected.

Farmer did not reply to Colman directly, and an incidental reply was hardly more satisfactory than his previous ones.

<sup>20</sup> Colman, G., *The Comedies of Terence* (1768), Vol. II, pp. 389-391.

<sup>21</sup> Colman, *Terence* (1768), Vol. II, pp. 392-394.

<sup>22</sup> Malone, *Variorum*, (1821) Vol. I, p. 368 n.