such as geography, I have not examined directly, since that would have carried me still further afield, and I fear the reader is likely to agree that I have gone at least far enough already. After all, the present work is only a sketch of a few main roads; the by-paths have not even been sketched.

Perhaps a word should be said on one point of method. Since the question of parallels is certain to arise in connection with the evidence upon Shakspere’s ultimate Latin and Greek sources, I wish to point out specifically that I have not consciously based any conclusion on mere parallels as such. Instead, I have first attempted to put Shakspere’s statement into its total pertinent contemporary background, in order to determine the focus of infection. Once we know that, it is then possible to get some judgment as to whether the focus is proximate to Shakspere or merely ultimate. The difficulty here is that Elizabethans cut so closely over the patterns of each other in their imitations of the classics that frequently they did not realize Brinsley’s hope that there would be no apparent stealing. But at least we can eventually locate in this way the major foci of infection, as Professor Root has done for Shakspere’s mythology. Then we can bring our microscopes to bear.

Once the ultimate source of infection is determined, the problem then becomes one simply of relationships, as in manuscripts. The chief difficulty will be to determine whether there is a missing step or steps in our progression. But where Shakspere repeatedly approaches the original, as in the case of Ovid, or Virgil, it becomes certain that he has used the original in several cases, even though we could not be certain about any one of the individual cases. For our present purpose, the ultimate sources are the important ones anyway, since they show the chief incidences of effect from the Renaissance system upon Shakspere, whether he came directly in contact in grammar school or indirectly through imbibing from his contemporaries. If, therefore, anyone criticizes from the point of view of mere parallels, he has simply failed to grasp the argument. I may add that since imperfect summary and inadequate quotation have caused many, perhaps most errors in the past, I have ordinarily permitted even John Brinsley to end his part in peace, though my fingers frequently itch to throttle him; consequently, I shall take it ’ll if I am blamed for his inability to come to the point.

There is, of course, nothing new or particularly difficult about this general method of procedure. The astronomers are patiently succeeding in the numbering and the description of the stars in the