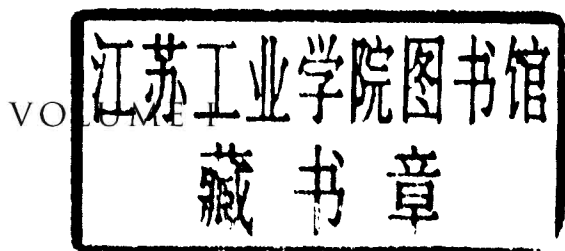




JOHN PAYNE COLLIER

*Scholarship and Forgery  
in the Nineteenth Century*

Arthur Freeman & Janet Ing Freeman



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Henry Crabb Robinson

Francis Egerton, first Earl of Ellesmere

William Cavendish, sixth Duke of Devonshire

Sir Frederic Madden

Alexander Dyce

Richard Heber

William Henry Miller

James Orchard Halliwell (-Phillipps)

Joseph Hunter

Peter Cunningham

Samuel Weller Singer

William John Thoms

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Forged document of 1608 naming Shakespeare

Forged accounts listing a 1602 performance of *Othello*

Page from the 'Hall Commonplace Book'

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Letter from Collier to W. J. Thoms, 1881

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## PREFACE

This is a bio-bibliography: that is, a biography of John Payne Collier (1789–1883), keyed to an account of his published writings over a period of nearly seventy years. That large and influential body of work—editorial, critical, historical, and bibliographical—is what distinguishes Collier, as a student and reviver of early English literature, from a host of industrious contemporaries: he was perhaps the most knowledgeable, and certainly the most active and prolific, commentator of his time on the drama, poetry, and popular prose of Shakespeare's age, bridging the long gap between titans like Thomas Warton and Edmond Malone and the rise of 'scientific' bibliography in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. What distinguishes him further, however, is not the intrinsic merit or originality of his work (although much of it exhibits both, as well as prodigious labour), but the large-scale, pernicious, and pervasive corruption of literary history it has engendered, through a lifetime's supply of misinformation, false evidence, forgery, and fabrication. It is this aspect of Collier's double career that has dominated studies of his oeuvre, with its true, false, and questionable testimony, for more than a century—although no systematic effort has hitherto been mounted to treat the mixture coherently, laying to rest what is spurious, while preserving the valid and valuable.

Collier's positive achievements, and his earned place in the history of scholarship, merit latter-day recognition as well: dozens, even hundreds of discoveries and revaluations have perpetuated his name, through standard editions, compilations of still-pertinent data, and fresh critical appraisals, the last often informed by a poet's eye and ear for the remarkable in a welter of unexplored early text. We have tried to do justice to Collier's good work and assess its significance, and to maintain a balance between (deserved) praise and blame. His long life itself, packed with intellectual incident, mirrors nineteenth-century literary culture in multiple aspects: the worlds of publishing and publicity, newspaper journalism, literary societies, theatres and clubs, librarianship and bibliophilia, and above all the reawakening of public interest in the English literary past. One obituarist called him, with good reason, 'the most successful seconder of Charles Lamb and Hazlitt in reviving a study of the works of the Elizabethan

writers', which in turn 'had so marked an effect upon the poetry of the present century'; and Collier is also to be thanked for preserving, in shorthand reports, early lectures of Coleridge on Shakespeare which would otherwise have been lost to us. His own memoirs of a youth and early manhood passed among literary giants and the minor lights in their train make compelling, if forever untrustworthy, reading: had he done no more than preserve his recollections he would still interest posterity.

This last aspect of Collier's career has played a large part in our study, for the circle of his mentors, friends, colleagues, and adversaries makes a remarkable roll-call. From his early Romantic heroes Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Lamb, and his acquaintances Hazlitt, Godwin, Keats(?), Samuel Rogers, Thomas Campbell, and Leigh Hunt, through early Victorian contacts with Dickens, Thackeray, George Cruikshank, and John Forster, to a late link with Swinburne, Collier dwelt comfortably among literary lions; less celebrated but closer friends and associates included most of the leading English antiquaries and editors, as well as loyal pen-friends in Germany, Scotland, and the United States, and luminaries of the newspaper world (James Perry, Thomas Barnes, John Easthope, and John Walter II), the theatre (Macready, the Kembles), book-collecting and bookselling (Heber, Daniel, Bright, Phillipps, Corser and Huth, R. H. Evans and Thomas Rodd), and public life (Collier's patrons the sixth Duke of Devonshire and the first Earl of Ellesmere, and Chief Justice Lord Campbell). We have paid special attention to several men, some of them biographically neglected, whose interaction with Collier was long-standing and significant: antiquaries and editors Thomas Amyot, John Bruce, Joseph Hunter, Thomas Wright, and W. J. Thoms, Robert Lemon and W. B. D. D. ('Alphabet') Turnbull of the Record Office, the Manchester fabricator James Crossley, the Anglo-Australian Barron Field, 'poor' Peter Cunningham, and William Carew Hazlitt, the essayist's grandson; ballad and early music specialists William Chappell, Edward Rimbault, and J. W. Ebsworth; rival or friendly Shakespearians S. W. Singer, Charles Knight, and Tycho Mommsen of Oldenburg; Americans Francis James Child, Richard Grant White, and H. H. Furness; and the diarist Henry Crabb Robinson, whose upright loyalty to his younger friend, and his avuncular concern for him, endured more than sixty years. Relationships with Collier could and did prove difficult, and among friends-turned-foes we count especially Sir Frederic Madden of the British Museum, whose own intemperate but invaluable diary is among our principal sources, and the best-loved and best-persecuted intimate of Collier's early years, the Rev. Alexander Dyce. James Orchard Halliwell (-Phillipps), perhaps Collier's only rival in the century for productivity in their common areas of research, had his ins and outs too with Collier over some four decades, but remained unestranged at the end. Out-and-out literary enemies

include the expositors of Collier's Shakespearian forgeries, Clement M. Ingleby, N. E. S. A. Hamilton (of the British Museum), the chessmaster/Shakespearian Howard Staunton, and the elusive, obsessed Andrew E. Brae; the 'Prince of Librarians' Antonio Panizzi, whose great catalogue Collier opposed, to his sorrow; and the severe heirs of Collier's pioneering and corrupt editorial corpus, Frederick J. Furnivall and Alexander B. Grosart.

WHATEVER we came finally to think of John Payne Collier—and fifteen years in his company cannot have passed without some sympathy and affection—our initial concern has been with the dark side of his work. As biographers we have tried to respond to the first and last questions everyone asks: Why would anyone with Collier's undoubted abilities gamble so recklessly, and on so many occasions, on hoaxing his audience? Why was it, in the words of Sir George Warner (*Dictionary of National Biography*, 1887), that Collier 'sacrificed an honourable fame won by genuine services to English literature . . . to one fatal propensity'? The temptation to crack this nut cleanly has ever been with us, and to what extent we have succeeded in even denting it our readers may judge; but we hope not to have taken a glib line on the undoubtedly complex motives for a lifetime of intermittent perversity. Although Collier's apologists in his own day and ours have submitted alternative scenarios for the hundreds of falsifications we calendar, involving for the most part alternative blame, there is really (alas) no case at all for Collier as innocent dupe or conspiracy victim. Any attempt to understand John Payne Collier that begins by positing his literary crimes as 'unproven', however charitable or high-mindedly suspended such a judgement might seem, simply forfeits the opportunity to explain him at all.

COLLIER's myriad forgeries and falsifications are by no means dead-letter distractions in the world of modern scholarship: dozens of new works each year are still contaminated by uncertainty or error deriving from Collier, or from the often hapless attempts of his successors to cope with his far-flung dragon's teeth. Were only physical forgeries at issue the task of dismissing them would be easy, but these are comparatively few (see Appendix I), and by far the more insidious mischief is by way of 'report' in Collier's vast range of publication—e.g., 'I have before me' a copy of a now-unlocated text, or 'A friend of mine informs me', etc., etc. Add to these unconfirmed and unconfirmable statements the fact that they proliferate wildly, reappearing from volume to volume via reprint or citation in whatever form Collier adopted or his followers trusted, and the need for root-and-branch pursuit will be clear. Our solution has been to endow our bibliography of Collier's published works—the chronological list of 185 volumes and sets ('A' numbers), more than 500 periodical papers and articles, and a few



linked items—with a list of ‘Questioned Data’ (QD) for each entry, identifying statements that have been suspected in the past as false or misleading, or now deserve to be. Some of these QD, which are numbered sequentially and by entry for easy cross-reference, have turned out to be verifiable, and should help to combat another of Collier’s dangerous legacies: the ‘contagion of forgery’, as we have called it elsewhere, or the shadow cast on genuine evidence by the mere fact of its origin. Other QD may be honest mistakes or misjudgements by Collier—dismissible as such, but not based upon a corrupt or untrustworthy source. In many cases the problem involved is addressed in the main text, to which reference is given. In the interest of preserving narrative coherence in the biography, we have endeavoured to minimize duplication between it and the bibliography by cross-referring instead of repeating. For the convenience of those who want a no-frills synopsis, we have ‘graded’ each QD on a sliding scale, from sans-serif ‘A’ and ‘B’ (certainly or probably genuine) to ‘D’ and ‘E’ (probably or certainly false), via ‘C’ (we simply don’t know), and with ‘H’ (apparently honest mistake) and ‘N’ (no judgement called for) alongside; we have normally resorted to ‘B’ and ‘D’ when the materials involved seem to be clearly genuine or clearly false but remain unlocated. These are no more than summary opinions, based in most cases upon more extended exposition in the text; any new discovery or reconsideration will of course moderate such conclusions, which are restricted to detachable sigla for that reason.

Between our biography and bibliography are five appendices, treating (I) all the physical forgeries now known to us, and some others (‘landmines in waiting’) that probably exist but whose location we have not ascertained; (II) ‘red herrings’—suggestions of forgeries by Collier, beyond those addressed in the text and bibliography, which we believe groundless; (III) pseudonyms employed by Collier in books, periodicals, and collections of essays; (IV) the literature of the ‘Perkins Folio’ controversy, 1852–62; and (V) books dedicated to Collier by his contemporaries. Our MS sources are indicated specifically in the text and footnotes, and there is a narrative summary of their whereabouts at page 1399, followed by a list of printed sources; a list of abbreviations used in the text and notes appears at page xxi, and there is a separate preface to the bibliography at page 1059. While the entire career of John Payne Collier has been our chosen province, and we ourselves have come to regard the light and dark parts of it as complementary, and worth more than case-by-case clearance or censure, object-oriented users of these volumes will have other priorities: our index is designed (in part) to guide them directly to the individual texts and QD they require, with no need of the bio-bibliographical tour.

A final note: our documentation and inductive arguments in the biographical text may seem at times over-zealous, but from the outset of our study we

have been painfully aware of how open to dispute and misunderstanding such matters can be. Without wishing to belabour the obvious or the conceded, we have tried to imagine Collier himself—a trained barrister—peering over our shoulders through every stage, as keen to catch us out in argumentative leaps as we are to present our best case. Readers who will accept that we have not consciously drawn conclusions beyond what extant records confirm may address the citation selectively.

London, February 2003

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A project involving two of us for fifteen years, and in some respects stretching back over another three decades, has incurred a large number of debts, which it is a pleasure to acknowledge.

Our dependence upon prior scholarship is largely recorded at pages 1018–29, with special note of the unpublished research of A. W. Ashby. Here we wish to thank libraries and repositories that have unfailingly welcomed us, allowed us to quote from material in their collections, and often provided services beyond any expectation. In London: the Athenaeum Club, the British Library, the Corporation of London (Guildhall Library and the London Metropolitan Archives), the Trustees of Dr. Williams's Library, Dulwich College Library, the John Murray archive, Lambeth Palace Library, the London Library, the National Art Library (Victoria and Albert Museum), the TNL Archive, the Public Record Office and Family Records Centre, the Roxburghe Club, and the libraries and archives of the British Museum, the Royal Historical Society, the Society of Antiquaries, the Worshipful Company of Stationers, City University, the Institute of Historical Research, the University of London, King's College, and University College. Elsewhere in Great Britain: the Devonshire Collections at Chatsworth; the National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh; the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth; the Central Library, Manchester; the Shakespeare Centre Library and Shakespeare Birthplace Trust Records Office, Stratford-upon-Avon; the Somerset Record Office, Taunton; the Suffolk Record Office, Ipswich; the Trustees of the Trevelyan Family Papers at the Robinson Library, University of Newcastle; the Bodleian Library and English Faculty Library, Oxford; the Pepys Library at Magdalene College, Cambridge; and the libraries of Trinity College, Cambridge, and the Universities of Cambridge, Edinburgh, and Reading. In New Zealand, the Alexander Turnbull Library (National Library of New Zealand, Wellington); and in the United States: the Armstrong Browning Library (Baylor University, Waco, Texas); the Boston Public Library; the Chapin Library (Williams College, Williamstown, Massachusetts); the Clements Library (University of Michigan, Ann Arbor); the Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, D.C.; the H. H. Furness Manuscript Collection (University of Pennsylvania);

nia, Philadelphia); the library of the Grolier Club, New York City; the Humanities Research Center, University of Texas at Austin; the Henry E. Huntington Library, San Marino, California; the New York Public Library; the Newberry Library, Chicago; the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York City; the Rosenbach Museum and Library, Philadelphia; and the libraries of Harvard University (the Houghton and Widener Libraries and the Harvard Theatre Collection), Princeton University, Vassar College, and Yale University (Beinecke Library and the James and Marie-Louise Osborn Collection).

For extraordinary support we thank the Centre for the Book at the British Library, through whose fellowship programme Janet Freeman enjoyed special access to the collections in 1995–96, and—*sine qua non potest esse*—the Elizabethan Club of Yale University, whose more than generous publication subsidy permitted our work to see the light in the form we had envisioned. Our thanks are also due to our editors at Yale University Press, John Kulka, Margaret Otzel, and Ann Hawthorne; to the designer, Charles Ellertson; and to our friend and agent, Jane Gelfman.

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Private collectors who have shared Collierian materials with us include Tyrus Harmsen, Giles Mandelbrote, and Toshiyuki Takamiya. Without our own collection of books and manuscripts we could not have faced up to our task, and that has long depended on hints and offers from colleagues in the booktrade. We are grateful to everyone who supplied us over the years or alerted us to available resources, but in particular to Julian Browning, James Burmester, the late Robert Clark, James Cummins, Roy Davids, Christopher Edwards, Simon Finch, William F. Hale, Martin Hamlyn, A. R. Heath, David Holmes, Jolyon

Hudson, Brian Lake, Anthony and William Laywood, Peter Miller and Tony Fothergill, John Price, Jonathan and Lisa Reynolds, Justin Schiller, Michael Silverman, John Walwyn-Jones, Stephen Weissman, and John Wilson; to Robert Harding and John Manners of Maggs Brothers, Ltd.; and—for nearly thirty years' assistance, encouragement, and indulgence—to the firm and staff of Bernard Quaritch, Ltd., notably Lord Parmoor, Nicholas Poole-Wilson, and the late Edmund M. Dring.

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## ABBREVIATIONS IN THE TEXT AND NOTES

Arber	Edward Arber, ed., <i>A Transcript of the Registers of the Company of Stationers of London, 1554–1640</i> , 5 vols. (London, 1875–94; reprint, 1950 and 1967)
Ashby papers	Bodl. MS Eng.misc.d.1455–56: notes by Arthur William Ashby toward a biography and bibliography of John Payne Collier, ca. 1949–51
BARB	J. P. Collier, <i>A Bibliographical Account of the Rarest Books in the English Language</i> , 2 vols. (London, 1865; reprint, 1966)
Beinecke	Beinecke Library, Yale University
Bentley	Gerald Eades Bentley, <i>The Jacobean and Caroline Stage</i> , 7 vols. (Oxford, 1941–68)
BL	British Library, London
BLM	<i>British Lady's Magazine</i>
BM	British Museum, London (the Museum Library, founded in 1753, became part of the British Library in 1973)
Bodl.	Bodleian Library, Oxford
BoPL	Boston Public Library, Boston, Mass.
Boswell-Malone	William Shakespeare, <i>Plays and Poems</i> , ed. Edmond Malone and James Boswell Jr., 21 vols. (London, 1821)
BRH	<i>Bulletin of Research in the Humanities</i>
Bullough	Geoffrey Bullough, ed., <i>Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare</i> , 8 vols. (London, 1957–75)
Camden Society Minutes	Minute Books of the Camden Society, Royal Historical Society, London
CET	Sir Charles Edward Trevelyan
Chambers, ES	E. K. Chambers, <i>The Elizabethan Stage</i> , 4 vols. (Oxford, 1923)
Chambers, WS	E. K. Chambers, <i>William Shakespeare: A Study of Facts and Problems</i> , 2 vols. (Oxford, 1930)

Child	Francis J. Child, ed., <i>The English and Scottish Popular Ballads</i> , 5 vols. (Boston, 1882–98; reprint, 1957–65)
CMI	Clement Mansfield Ingleby
Crum	Margaret Crum, ed., <i>First-Line Index of English Poetry, 1500–1800, in Manuscripts of the Bodleian Library, Oxford</i> , 2 vols. (Oxford, 1969)
CUL	Cambridge University Library
DAB	<i>Dictionary of American Biography</i> , 20 vols. (New York, 1927–36)
Dawson	Giles Dawson, 'John Payne Collier's Great Forgery', <i>SB</i> 24 (1971), 1–26
Dickens, <i>Letters</i>	<i>The Letters of Charles Dickens</i> , ed. Madeline House and Graham Storey, 12 vols. (Oxford, 1965–2002)
Dickey	Franklin Dickey, 'The Old Man at Work: Forgeries in the Stationers' Registers', <i>SQ</i> 11 (1960), 39–47
DNB	<i>Dictionary of National Biography</i> , 66 vols. (London, 1885–1901)
Dyce Collection	Books and papers of Alexander Dyce, National Art Library, Victoria and Albert Museum, London
EETS	Early English Text Society
EHR	<i>English Historical Review</i>
ELH	<i>English Literary History</i>
ELR	<i>English Literary Renaissance</i>
EMS	<i>English Manuscript Studies 1100–1700</i>
EUL	Edinburgh University Library
FF and FF/K	Books and manuscripts in the collection of Arthur and Janet Freeman, London; 'FF/K' indicates material formerly in the possession of Collier's descendants, some of which was cited by Dewey Ganzel as 'Koop'
FJF	Frederick James Furnivall
Folger	Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, D.C.
Forster Collection	Books and papers of John Forster, National Art Library, Victoria and Albert Museum, London
Furness Collection	H. H. Furness Manuscript Collection, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, University of Pennsylvania
Ganzel	Dewey Ganzel, <i>Fortune and Men's Eyes: The Career of John Payne Collier</i> (Oxford, 1982)
GM	<i>Gentleman's Magazine</i>
Greg	W. W. Greg, <i>A Bibliography of the English Printed Drama to the Restoration</i> , 4 vols. (London, 1939–59)

Halliwell-Phillipps, <i>Outlines</i>	J. O. Halliwell-Phillipps, <i>Outlines of the Life of Shakespeare</i> (unless otherwise stated, reference is to the 7th ed., 1887)
Hamilton	N. E. S. A. Hamilton, <i>An Inquiry into the Genuineness of the Manuscript Corrections in Mr. J. Payne Collier's Annotated Shakspeare, Folio, 1632</i> (London, 1860; reprint, 1973)
Hardy	T. D. Hardy, <i>A Review of the Present State of the Shakespearian Controversy</i> (London, 1860)
Harmsen	Collection of Tyrus Harmsen, Pasadena, Calif.
Hazlitt, <i>Handbook</i>	William Carew Hazlitt, <i>Handbook to the Popular, Poetical, and Dramatic Literature of Great Britain</i> (London, 1867)
HCB	Folger MS V.a.339: the so-called Hall Commonplace Book
HCR	Henry Crabb Robinson
HCR Correspondence	Correspondence, 32 vols., arranged chronologically, Dr. Williams's Library, London
HCR Diary	MSS 101.1-33 (1811-67), Dr. Williams's Library, London
HCR Reminiscences	Reminiscences, 1790-1843, written 1846-59; 4 vols., Dr. Williams's Library, London
HCR Travel Diary	Travel diaries, 1801-66, Dr. Williams's Library, London
Heber sale	Sale catalogues of Richard Heber's books and MSS (London, 1834-37)
HEDP	J. P. Collier, <i>History of English Dramatic Poetry . . . and Annals of the Stage</i> , 3 vols. (London, 1831; reprint, 1970)
HEP	Thomas Warton, <i>The History of English Poetry</i> , 3 vols. (London, 1774-81; reprint, 1968)
HHF	Horace Howard Furness
HLB	<i>Harvard Library Bulletin</i>
HLQ	<i>Huntington Library Quarterly</i>
HMC	Historical Manuscripts Commission
Houghton	Houghton Library, Harvard University
HRC	Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, University of Texas, Austin
Huntington	Henry E. Huntington Library, San Marino, Calif.
IELM	<i>Index of English Literary Manuscripts</i> (1980-)
ILN	<i>Illustrated London News</i>
Ingleby, <i>Complete View</i>	Clement Mansfield Ingleby, <i>A Complete View of the Shakspeare Controversy, Concerning the Authenticity and</i>



- Genuineness of Manuscript Matter . . . Published by Mr. J. Payne Collier* (London, 1861; reprint, 1973)
- JEGP *Journal of English and German Philology*
- JOH James Orchard Halliwell(-Phillipps)
- John Murray archives Archives of John Murray, London
- JPC John Payne Collier
- JPC Diary Folger MSS M.a.29-40, 12 vols. (1872-82)
- JPC Early Diary Folger MSS M.a.219-28: JPC's diary (1811) and notes of lectures by Coleridge, 10 vols. (1811-12)
- JPC Memoirs Folger MS M.a.230, written ca. 1879
- JPC sale Sale catalogue of JPC's books and MSS, Sotheby's (London), 7-9 August 1884
- JWE Joseph Woodfall Ebsworth
- L-A-R R. W. Lowe, *English Theatrical Literature, 1559-1900: A Bibliography*, rev. J. F. Arnott and J. W. Robinson (London, 1970)
- Lee Sidney Lee, *Shakespeares Comedies, Histories, & Tragedies . . . A Census of Extant Copies* (Oxford, 1902)
- Lemon Robert Lemon, *Catalogue of a Collection of Printed Broad-sides in the Possession of the Society of Antiquaries* (London, 1886)
- LOA J. O. Halliwell's 'Letters of Authors', 300 vols., Edinburgh University Library
- Lowndes W. T. Lowndes, *The Bibliographer's Manual of English Literature*, rev. Henry Bohn, 6 vols. (London, 1864; reprint, 1967)
- LSE *Leeds Studies in English*
- McKerrow Ronald B. McKerrow, *Printers' & Publishers' Devices in England & Scotland, 1485-1640* (London, 1949)
- Madden Diary Bodl. Eng.hist.c.140-182: private diary of Frederic Madden, 43 vols. (1819-72)
- Malone, *Inquiry* Edmond Malone, *An Inquiry into the Authenticity of Certain Miscellaneous Papers and Legal Instruments* (London, 1796; reprint, 1970)
- MLN *Modern Language Notes*
- MLR *Modern Language Review*
- Mostyn Papers Mostyn Papers, National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth
- MP *Modern Philology*
- MSC *Malone Society Collections*