

TO THE MOST NOBLE
AND
INCOMPARABLE PAIRE
OF BRETHREN.

WILLIAM

Earle of Pembroke, &c. Lord Chamberlaine to the
Kings most Excellent Majestie

AND

PHILIP

Earle of Montgomery, &c. Gentleman of his Majesties
Bed-Chamber. Both Knights of the most Noble Order
of the Garter, and our singular good
LORDS .

Right Honourable,

*WHilst we study to be thankful in our particular, for
the many favors we have received from your L.L
we are falne upon the ill fortune, to mingle two the
most divers things that can be, feare, and rashnesse;
rashnesse in the enterprize, and feare of the suc-
cesse. For, when wee value the places your H.H. sustaine, wee
cannot but know their dignity greater, than to descend to the reading
of these trifles: and, while we name them trifles, we have depriv'd
our selves of the defence of our Dedication. But since your L.L.
have beene pleas'd to thinke these trifles something, heeretofore; and
have prosecuted both them, & their Author living, with so much fa-
vour: we hope, (that they out-living him, and he not having the fate,
common with some, to be Exequutor to his owne writings) you will
use the same indulgence toward them, you have done unto their
parent.*

parent. There is a great difference, wether any Booke choose his Patrones, of finde them: This hath done both. For, so much were your L.L. liking of the severall parts, when they were acted, as before they were published, the Volume ask'd to be yours. We have but collected them, and done an office to the dead, to procure his Orphanes, Guardians; without ambition either of selfe-profit, or fame: onely to keepe the memory of so worthy a Friend, & Fellow alive, as was our SHAKESPEARE, by humble offer of his Playes, to your most Noble Patronage. Wherein, as we have justly observed, no man to come neere your L.L. but with a kind of religious addresse; it hath been the height of our care, who are the Presenters, to make the Present worthy of your H.H. by the Perfection. But, there we must also crave our abilities to be considerd, my Lords. We cannot goe beyond our owne powers. Country hands, reach forth milke, creame, fruites, or what they have : and many Nations (we have heard) that had not Gummes and Incense, obtained their requests with a leavened Cake. It was no fault to approch their gods, by what meanes they could: And the most, though meanest, of things, are made more precious, when they are dedicated to Temples. In that name therefore, we most humbly consecrate to your H.H. these remaines of your servant Shakespeare; that what delight is in them, may be ever your L.L. the reputation his, and the faults ours, if any be committed, by a paire so carefull to shew their gratitude both to the living, and the dead, as is

Your Lordshippes most bounden,

*John Heminge
Henry Condell.*