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Title	Unsigned article. "Musings without Method." Blackwood's Magazine, June 1914. [413-1]
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which still listens to the recital of their words and deeds, and they assuredly do not deserve condemnation merely because they are not our own contemporaries.

Yet some there are who go far beyond the limits of justice in speaking and thinking of the dead. Filled with the prevailing hatred of the past, they fall intemperately upon great reputations. They attack those who have passed beyond the reach of their hands as though they were inspired by a feeling of personal enmity. There was once a student of history who, when he left his university, declared that he knew but one ambition: to do something, before he died, to injure the fame of Martin Luther. Luther is still a reputable memory, unscathed by the acrimony of the historian. The fact that the historian, after some four hundred years, should have fed an ancient grudge, proves that he at any rate had a wholesome contempt for impartiality.

However, of all those who have incurred the malice and hatred of indiscreet persons, comes Shakespeare first. The great poet is abused and insulted in many voices and for many reasons. The Baconians, for instance, are unable to speak of him with patience, because they believe that he wears the stolen robes of their hero. With them the word "Stratfordian" is a kind of expletive, with as much definite meaning attached to it as is carried by the adjective which appears to have given a popu-

larity of scandal to a recent play. We hear of "the drunken boor," of "the illiterate clown," who has masqueraded for three hundred years as the writer of tragedies not his own. With a complete absence of humour certain solemnities, lawyers, business men, and others, lash themselves into a fury at the mere mention of Shakespeare's name. They tell us, on the one hand, that Shakespeare could not have written the plays ascribed to him, because very little is known about him. They are sure, on the other hand, that he was certainly a disreputable vagabond, who could not write his own name. This contradictory method of attack is the clearest proof of folly. If they know nothing of him, by what process do they convince themselves of his drunkenness and disrepute? Their lack of logic is explicable only on the ground of private malice. There are still many ardent souls who write and speak of Shakespeare with a bitterness which would not be justified unless he had inflicted upon them a personal injury.

Others abuse the poet for a more easily intelligible if not a better reason. They look upon him as the Athenians looked upon Aristides. The praise which has been heaped upon him irritates them beyond endurance. Away with the just man, they cry. Let us punish him for his too obtrusive virtues. There is no more room, they declare, in the realm of letters for the supreme poet than there was