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DR. HORACE H. FURNESS DIES IN WALLINGFORD – World's Greatest  
Shakespearian Scholar Passes Suddenly Away – Ill but Short Time

Dr. Horace Howard Furness, regarded as one of the greatest Shakespearian scholars of the century, died at 6 o'clock last night of pneumonia at his home, Lindenshade, at Wallingford, Delaware County, just on the outskirts of Philadelphia.

The famous scholar was taken ill with a hacking cough Monday morning. Owing to his 78 years his immediate family insisted that he go to bed. He expired last night while he was sleeping. The members of his family had been unable to bring themselves to believe he was dangerously ill.

When the end came Dr. Furness was alone. He apparently had gone peacefully to sleep and members of the household forbore from entering his apartment for fear of awakening him. The death was discovered when his son, Dr. Horace Howard Furness, Jr. went to the apartment to see how his father was progressing.

Dr. Furness would have been 79 years old had he lived until November 2 next. He was born in Philadelphia in 1833, the son of the Rev. W.H. Furness and Helen Kate Rogers, both of old distinguished families. He was admitted to the bar in 1869, but having sufficient means almost immediately gave up his entire life to the study of Shakespeare.

Dr. Furness became vitally interested in Shakespeare when he heard Fanny Kemble interpret some of the characters years ago. It was then he began to make a study of the writer and he continued until he was looked upon as one of the greatest Shakespearian authority in the country if not in the world. Dr. Furness also began a collection of Shakespeare relics which he continued until his death, succeeding in gathering the finest collection in the country. It is almost priceless, containing as it does not only relics of Shakespeare himself but relics of all the actors and actresses of a decade who have essayed Shakespearian rolls.

HIS FIRST VOLUME – The first volume of his Variorum edition, which was quickly found to be the most comprehensive edition of readings of the Shakespeare's play ever attempted successfully made its appearance in 1871. This was the tragedy of "Romeo and Juliet." There had been so-called Variorum editions previously, but none had been attempted with so much thoroughness, knowledge and patient delving, to say nothing of the nice scholarship which brought them together, as was found in these columns.

The immediate effect was the renaissance for Shakespearian interest and the discovery that the United States had produced a scholar more than the equal of any that had been extolled in Europe. But all the complimentary notices which the volume received and they came from every great university in Europe where Shakespeare is more than a name, did not affect the simplicity and the modesty of its editor – and he always has refused to be called anything else in Shakespearian matters.

Other volumes from time to time appeared, and were found fully in keeping with the high promise held out by the first. The work on these plays was so monumental that first it became necessary to have at hand a library of great comprehensiveness, who fortunately had at his command ample means for the purpose. The study of each play, with an almost microscopic investigation and measure of every word and phrase, required the greatest knowledge and patience. But these were furnished by the editor of the Variorum edition.

Two years later the tragedy of "Macbeth" in two volumes was published. Then in succession, at intervals of a few years, there were issued: "Hamlet," two volumes in 1877; "King Lear," in 1880, "As You Like It," 1890; "The Tempest," in 1892; "Midsummer Night's Dream," in 1895; "The Winter's Tale," in 1893; "Much Ado About Nothing," in 1899; "Twelfth Night," in 1901; "Love's Labor Lost," in 1904; "Anthony and Cleopatra," in 1907.

In recognition of his work, the University of Halle in 1878 conferred the degree of PhD on Dr. Furness in 1899 received the degree of Doctor of Letters, being one of the few Americans to have been thus honored by Cambridge. It will be recalled that Everett Motley and Lowell were given the gorgeous hood which symbolizes the Doctor of Letters at Cambridge, and whenever it has been necessary for Dr. Furness to appear in academic gown and hood he was found in the hat which someone said looked like the headgear of one of the Dogs of Venice, and the great flowing crimson hood and stripes of the Cambridge Litt. D.

KNEW LEADING ACTORS – Dr. Furness was known to all the great Shakespearian actors of his time. Both was a constant visitor to his house on Locust Street the old days whenever the actor was in the city no tour. Mr. Henry Irving never visited Philadelphia from the first time he came to this country until the last tour of the United States without visiting the Shakespearian authority. Sir Sidney Lee, the modern English Shakespearian authority visited Wallingford, where Doctor Furness has made his home for the last 20 years when he came to this country about ten years ago, and although his own standing as an authority is high, he was willingly shown court to the Philadelphian.

The library and theatrical treasures of Doctor Furness are of the greatest importance. He had what is regarded as probably the finest Shakespearian library in this country, if not in the world. Yet he is known to have been so prodigal of old copies of some of the later volumes that he actually put them up "for copy" in his edition of the plays. He was intimately familiar with every one of the folios of Shakespeare's plays.

In the last few years Dr. Furness, in conjunction with his son, Dr. Furness, Jr., had taken to the study of monkeys and had two monkeys at his place in Wallingford trained to such a high degree of intelligence that it is said they could speak rather incoherently. Dr. Furness was experimenting to prove that it was not mimicry in the monkeys but that they had absolute reasoning power.

Dr. Furness is survived by his son, Dr. H.H. Furness, Jr., and a daughter, Mrs. Horace Jayne.