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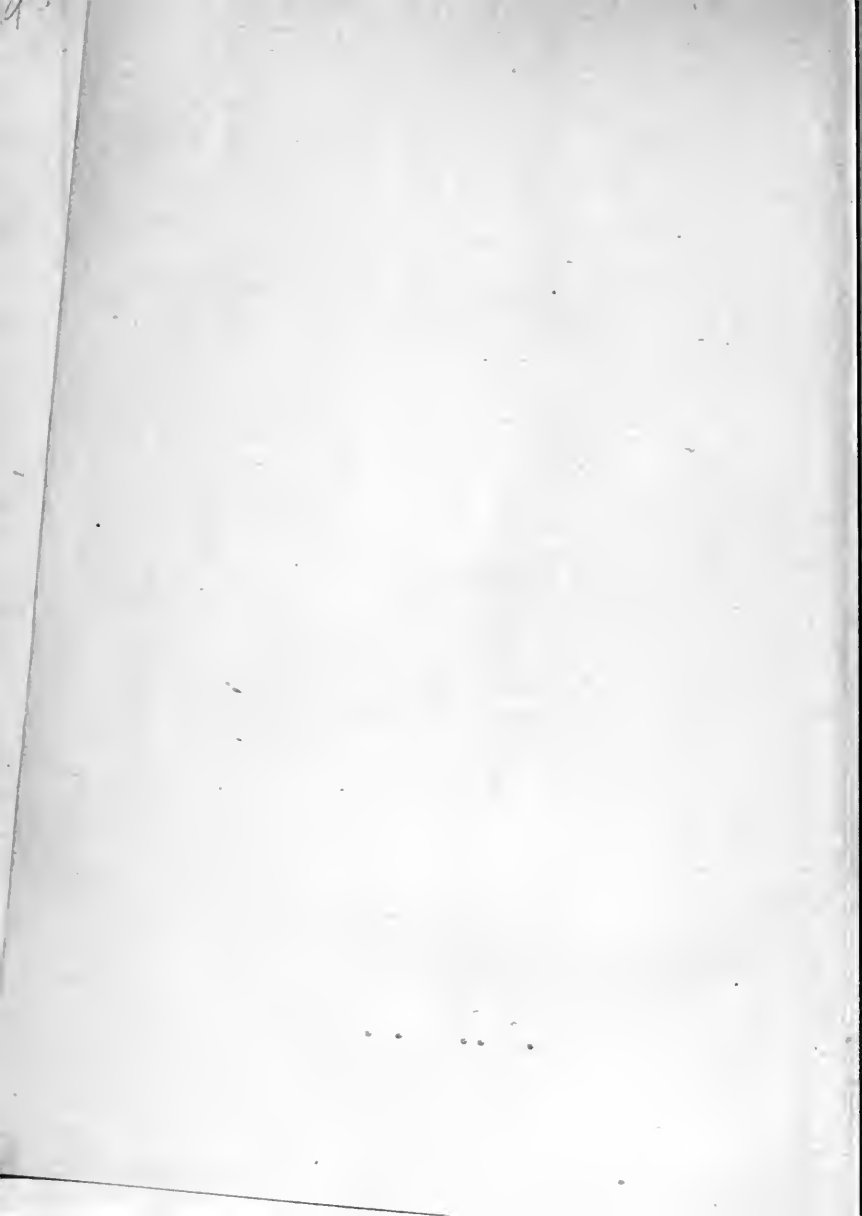
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STORIES

FROM

SHAKESPEARE

VOLUME II.

BY

MARA L. PRATT

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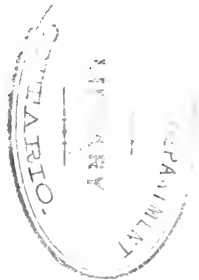
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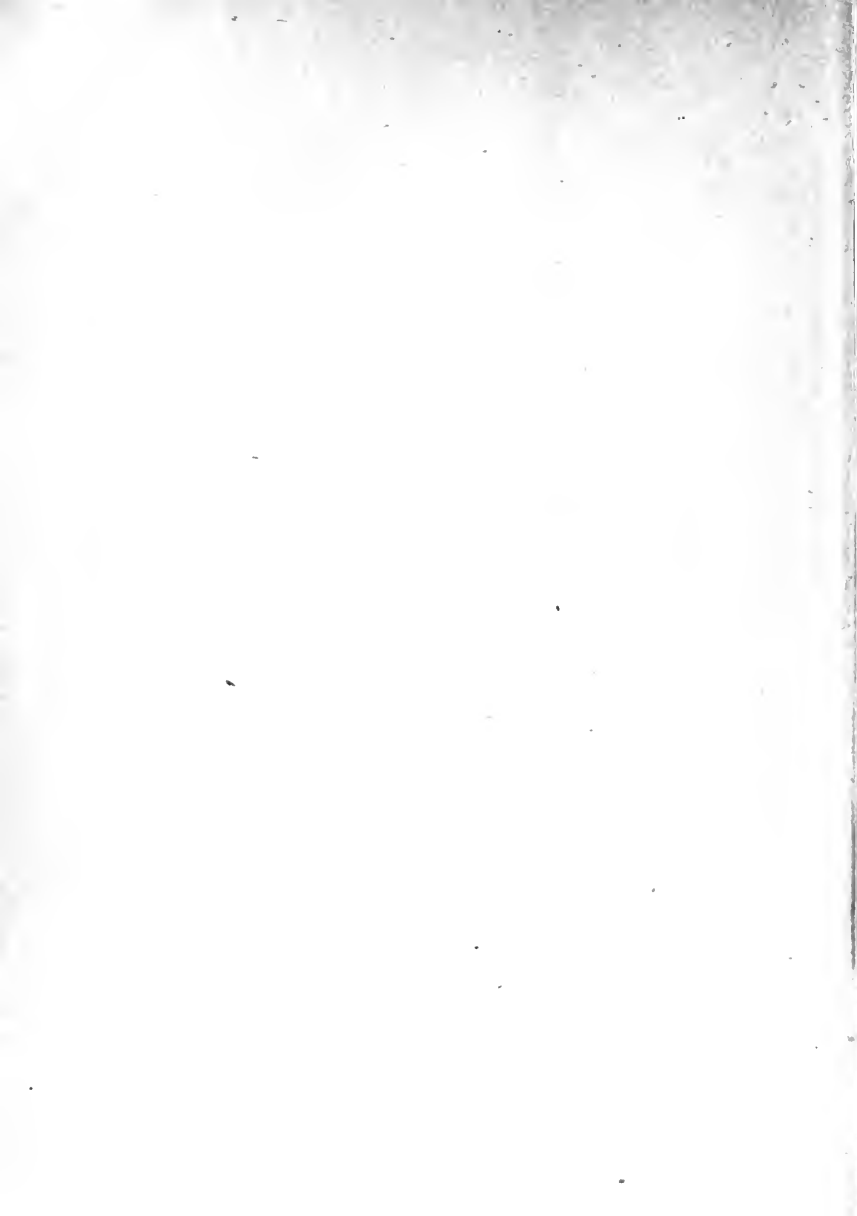
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CONTENTS.

	PAGE.
TIMON OF ATHENS	7
KING LEAR	33
MERCHANT OF VENICE	61
MUCH ADO ABOUT 'NOTHING	83
THE TEMPEST	101
A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM	117
ROMEO AND JULIET	127





TIMON OF ATHENS.



TIMON'S BANQUET.

TIMON OF ATHENS.

In the grand old city of Athens there lived, many long years ago, a rich lord named Timon.

Such a fortune as he had! And such a heart! If there seemed no limit to his wealth, neither was there limit to his generosity. Fast as his boundless wealth seemed to flow in upon him, faster still did it pour out upon all sorts of people, from the rich friends of his own caste to the lowest beggar in the kingdom.

His great house was always open, and his great feasting-hall always filled with guests.

Timon seemed to love everybody; and if one could judge from the throngs of followers and pretending admirers, it would seem that everybody loved him. Certainly, men of all minds and dispositions, from

the smooth-faced flatterer to the cross-grained cynic, tendered their services to him.

If a writer composed a poem, he knew full well that he had only to get a word of recommendation from Timon, and the people of Athens were sure to purchase it at any price; if an artist had a picture to sell he had only to take it to this unwisely generous lord and well he knew his picture was sure of a purchaser; if a jeweler had a precious stone, or a merchant some costly stuffs, they well knew that they had only to take it to Timon with some flattering speech and Timon was sure to pay for it far beyond its worth.

And so it was that his great house was filled with all sorts of goods, useless to Timon, and only serving to encumber the halls. But more and worse than this, was Timon himself fairly beset with all sorts of men fawning about him and pretending love for him — but at heart false and hollow, full of selfishness and deceit.

One visitor at Timon's grand entertainments there was who dared, not unfrequently, to speak the plain truth to this much flattered lord. This man, Apemantus, was a cynic, that is, a philosopher, one who delighted in keen-sighted study into human nature, and who was much given to sharp, cutting retort. Clearly enough did he understand the hollowness of Timon's flattering followers, and no less clearly did he see the weak vanity that underlay even the very generosity of Timon himself.

Apemantus was not at all chary in the distribution of his cynicisms, neither was he any respecter of persons. Timon himself, therefore, came in for his share, and well it would have been, perhaps, had he accepted, now and then, the truth of the cynic's words.

"Good morrow, gentle Apemantus," said Timon, one day, when the cynic entered the great hall.

"When I *am* gentle it will be time enough for thy good morrow," growled Apemantus.

"Thou art proud," answered Timon, reproachfully.

"Yes, proud that I am not like Timon," was the sharp reply.

"But how like you this picture?" asked Timon, hoping to turn the conversation in somewhat more agreeable channels. "What do you think it worth?"

"Not worth my thinking."

"Why not?" exclaimed the painter of it.

"Because you've lied in it."

"Lied?"

"Yes, lied. You have painted Timon as a worthy fellow."

"Then I have not lied. He *is* worthy."

"Yes, worthy enough of thee — and thee of him. He that loves to be flattered is worthy of the flatterer."

Chief among the great throng of fawning parasites were Ventidius, Lucius, and Lucullus — all wealthy lords of Athens. At one time, before Ventidius had become rich, he had been thrown into prison for debt. No sooner did Timon hear of this than he hastened to

release him and pay to the uttermost demands of his creditors, these debts of Ventidius.

Fortunate, indeed, did these followers consider themselves if ever Timon was known to fancy anything that belonged to them. No sooner was the fancy expressed than the object was sent to Timon with profuse apologies for its unworthiness and regrets that it were not ten times its value. For well did these people know that in return would come a gift of untold value, together with the profoundest gratitude of Timon himself.

Often, too, these false-hearted, scheming followers would extravagantly praise and admire some possession of Timon's; for never was the liberal Timon known to be happier than when he could give to any friend he had some gift that that friend should enjoy. Indeed, Lord Timon measured his friends' affection by his own; and so truly happy was he in giving, that he could have dealt out kingdoms to these supposed friends of his, never wearying; and no other reward did he ask than the joy of seeing them happy.

But with such unwise, extravagant liberality as this, even so great a wealth as this of Timon's must sometime be exhausted. Over and over his faithful steward warned him; again and again begged him to look into his affairs and note the condition of his treasury. But Timon was always too busy, too surrounded by friends; and each time the steward

was turned away with some gentle excuse from his over-gentle master.

The time came at last when Timon could no longer shut his ears to the pleadings of his steward. Now, money must be had — and had at once.

“I am amazed,” said Timon, when he had listened to his steward’s full report :

“ Wherefore, ere this time,
Had you not fully laid my state before me ;
That I might so have rated my expense,
As I had leave of means ? ”

“ You would not hear me,” answered the steward,

“ At many leisures I propos’d.
Oh, my good lord,
At many times I brought in my accounts,
Laid them before you ; you would throw them off,
And say you found them in mine honesty.
When for some trifling present, you have bid me
Return so much, I have shook my head and wept ;
Yea, ’gainst the authority of manners, pray’d you
To hold your hand more close ; I did endure
Not seldom, nor no slight checks, when I have
Prompted you, in the ebb of your estate,
And your great flow of debts. My dear-lov’d lord,
Though you hear now (too late) ! yet now’s a time.
The greatest of your having lacks a half
To pay your present debts.”

Tim. Let all my land be sold.

Flav. ’Tis all engaged, some forfeited and gone ;
And what remains will hardly stop the mouth

Of present dues ; the future comes apace :
 What shall defend the interim ? and at length
 How goes our reckoning ?

Tim. To Lacedæmon did my land extend.

Flav. Oh, my good lord, the world is but a word :
 Were it all yours to give it in a breath,
 How quickly were it gone !

Tim. You tell me true.

Flav. If you suspect my husbandry or falsehood,
 Call me before the exactest auditors,
 And set me on the proof.

Tim. Pr'ythee, no more.

Flav. Heavens, have I said, the bounty of this lord !
 How many prodigal bits have slaves and peasants,
 This night englutted ? Who is not Timon's ?
 What heart, head, sword, force, means, but is lord Timon's ?
 Great Timon, noble, worthy, royal Timon !
 Ah ! when the means are gone that buy this praise,
 The breath is gone whereof this praise was made :

Tim. Come, sermon me no further :
 No villainous bounty yet hath pass'd my heart ;
 Unwisely, not ignobly, have I given.
 Why dost thou weep ? Canst thou the conscience lack,
 To think I shall lack friends ? Secure thy heart ;
 If I would broach the vessels of my love,
 And try the argument of hearts by borrowing,
 Men, and men's fortunes could I frankly use,
 As I can bid thee speak.

Flav. Assurance bless your thoughts !

Tim. And, in some sort, these wants of mine are crown'd,
 That I account them blessings ; for by these

Shall I try friends ; You shall perceive, how you
Mistake my fortunes ; I am wealthy in my friends.

“Would that I could think so,” said the steward, as he turned to leave his master. “That thought is bounty’s foe. Being free himself, he thinks all others so.”

Full of cheer, happy in the thought that he should now prove to his doubting steward how true, how noble, how good above all riches were these friends of his, Timon set himself to work to despatch his several servants to the houses of his friends, the friends upon whom in times past he had lavished, without thought or reason, gifts of priceless value.

“Go first,” said he, “to Ventidius ;

He lately

Buried his father ; by whose death he’s stepp’d
Into a great estate : when he was poor,
Imprison’d, and in scarcity of friends,
I clear’d him with five talents : greet him from me ;
Bid him suppose some good necessity
Touches his friend, which craves to be remember’d
With those five talents :— that had, — (*To Flav.*)
give it these fellows
To whom ’tis instant due. Ne’er speak, or think,
That Timon’s fortunes ’mong his friends can sink.

“Go you to Lucullus, and you to Lucius, and you to Sempronius. We’ll see how true these friends of mine shall be.”

Alas for poor Timon's faith in these fawning friends !
Not one of them would help him now.

"Tell your master," said Lucullus, when Timon's servant had told his story, "that I am greatly grieved for him. Tell him that often have I come to his great feasts, my heart burdened that he should set before us such exhibition of unwise generosity. Often have I yearned to warn him, but no occasion came. Tell him this, my boy ; and here are three solidares for you. It may be as well, perhaps, if after all, you tell your master that you could not find me."

"Ye gods, can such things be !" cried the servant, throwing back the solidares in a storm of rage.

"May these add to the number that may scald thee !

Thou disease of a friend, and not himself !

Has friendship such a faint and milky heart,

It turns in less than two nights ? O you gods,

I feel my master's passion ! This slave

Unto his honor, has my lord's meat in him ;

Why should it thrive, and turn to nutriment,

When he is turned to poison ?

O, may diseases only work upon't !

And, when he's sick to death, let not that part of
nature

Which my lord paid for, be of any power

To expel sickness, but prolong his hour !"

"Tell your master," said Lucius, "that it is the greatest affliction of my life that I cannot help him ; but only yesternight did I a great purchase make that

quite disfurnishes me at present of means wherewith to aid him now."

"This, indeed, is the world's soul," said a stranger, who knew what words Lucius sent to his old friend.

"And of just the same piece

Is every flatterer's spirit. Who can call him his
friend

That dips in the same dish? for, in my knowing,
Timon has been this lord's father,
And kept his credit with his purse ;
Supported his estate ; nay, Timon's money
Has paid his men their wages : he ne'er drinks,
But Timon's silver treads upon his lip ;
And yet (oh, see the monstrousness of man
When he looks out in an ungrateful shape !)
He does deny him, in respect of his,
What charitable men afford to beggars !

"For my part," he continued :

"I never tasted Timon in my life,
Nor came any of his bounties over me,
To mark me for his friend ; yet, I protest,
For his right noble mind, illustrious virtue,
And honorable carriage,
Had his necessity made use of me,
I would have put my wealth into donation,
And the best half should have return'd to him,
So much I love his heart ; but, I perceive,
Men must learn now with pity to dispense ;
For policy sits above conscience."

And now came the servant to Sempronius. "O help my gentle master, good Sempronius. Ventidius, Lucullus, Lucius — all have denied him. And now he sends to you."

"What! How! have they denied him? And does he now at this late hour resort to me," cried Sempronius, affecting great anger that he had been thus slighted.

"It shows but little love or judgment in him :
 Must I be his last refuge? His friends, like
 physicians,
 Thrice give him over : must I take the cure upon me?
 He has much disgrac'd me in't ; I'm angry at him,
 That might have known my place : I see no sense for't,
 But his occasions might have woo'd me first ;
 For, in my conscience, I was the first man
 That e'er receiv'd gift from him :
 And does he think so backwardly of me now,
 That I'll requite it last? No : so it may prove
 An argument of laughter to the rest,
 And amongst lords I be thought a fool.
 I'd rather than the worth of twice the sum,
 He had sent to me first, but for my mind's sake ;
 I'd such a courage to do him good. But now return,
 And with their faint reply this answer join ;
 Who bate mine honor shall not know my coin."

"These then are my friends — these, these men! These, the men that I have loved, have feasted, and have heaped with favors!" cried Timon, angry,



TIMON AND HIS CREDITORS.

grieved and mortified. "And see, here flock my creditors ! I'll meet them !"

"What, are my doors oppos'd against my passage?
Have I been ever free, and must my house
Be my retentive enemy, my gaol?
The place, where I have feasted, does it now,
Like all mankind, show me an iron heart?"

"My lord, here is my bill," cried one.

"Here's mine," said another.

Hor. Serv. And mine, my lord.

Both. Var. Serv. And ours, my lord.

Phi. All our bills.

"Knock me down with 'em ; cleave me to the girdle,"
thundered Timon.

Luc. Serv. Alas, my lord,—

Tim. Cut my heart in sums !

Tit. Mine, fifty talents.

Tim. Tell out my blood !

Luc. Serv. Five thousand crowns, my lord.

Tim. Five thousand drops pays that.—

What yours? — and yours?

Serv. My lord,— !

Serv. My lord,—

Tim. Tear me, take me, and the gods fall upon
you.—

And poor half-crazed Timon rushed from the hall.
"Steward ! steward," cried he. "They have e'en
put my breath from me — the wretched slaves !
Creditors — aye devils !"

"My dear lord," cried the steward, rushing to his master's support; for Timon, worn out with rage and excitement, had fallen breathless against the great stone doorway.

"Go, Flavius, go, and go at once. Go bid my friends Lucius, Lucullus, Sempronius — all — yes all. Once more I'll feast these rascals."

"O my lord," begged Flavius, thinking his master surely had gone mad, "you are beside yourself! There is not so much left as would serve out an uncommon table!"

"I know — I know!" answered Timon, his teeth hard set, his eyes burning with an angry light. "That's not your care. Go — go — bid them come — I and the cook will provide the feast."

Imagine the surprise of all the friends of Timon, when it was known that again, so soon, they were summoned to the great lord's house to feast.

"He did it but to try us," said Validius.

"O fools that we were not to know that it was but pretense," groaned Lucius.

"We may as well not go," said Lucullus. "Our chance at Timon's money bags is lost. He knows us now — O, far too well."

"Rather will we go and try our fortunes," answered Sempronius. "We can no more than be dismissed. For one, I can so smooth a story tell that I myself shall half believe it."

At this the false friends laughed, and turned their footsteps toward lord Timon's house.

Kindly and apparently in the happiest mood Timon received his guests. Mean enough and cringing enough were his false-hearted guests.

"With all my heart I welcome you, kind friends," said Timon, as his friends drew about him. "How fares it with you all?"

"Ever at its best when we are with your lordship," flattered one.

"Even as swallows follow summers, so follow we you," fawned another.

"Yes, and even as swallows leave in winter, so leave you me in trouble," sneered Timon, under-breath.

"I trust that it did not inconvenience you that I could not send you the talents that you asked for," began another guest.

"Let not the thought rest with you," answered Timon, cheerfully.

"And I, dear sir, I was so sorry that at just that time —"

"Think not of it. It is past and gone."

"Had you sent only two hours earlier, I should have been so glad —"

"Let it not cumber your thoughts. Kind friends all, let us go now to the banquet hall."

"What can my master mean?" wondered the steward.

But Timon knew. "Now let us sit. Be not formal about our places — sit — sit — the gods require our thanks.

“You great benefactors, sprinkle our society with thankfulness. For your own gifts make yourselves praised; but reserve still to give, lest your deities be despised. Lend to each man enough, that one need not lend to another; for were your godheads to borrow of men, men would forsake the gods. Make the meat be beloved, more than the man that gives it. Let no assembly of twenty be without a score of villains:—The rest of your fees, O gods,—the senators of Athens; together with the common lag of people,—what is amiss in them, you gods make suitable for destruction. For these, my present friends,—as they are to me nothing, so in nothing bless them, and to nothing are they welcome.”

The guests began to look amazed. “A strange grace,” thought they. “Has Timon gone mad?”

But they were not long left in doubt.

“Uncover your dishes,” thundered he. “Uncover, dogs, and lap.”

The dishes were uncovered. In each was nothing but steaming water.

“What does he mean?”

“I know not!”

“But you shall know,” thundered forth Timon again. “Better feast may you never behold,

You knot of mouth-friends! smoke and luke-warm water
Is your perfection. This is Timon's last;
Who, stuck and spangled with your flatteries,
Washes it off, and sprinkles in your faces

Your reeking villiany. Live loathed, and long,
 Most smiling, smooth, detested parasites,
 Courteous destroyers, affable wolves, meek bears,
 You fools of fortune, trencher-friends, time's flies.
 Cap and knee slaves, vapors and minute-jacks!
 Of man and beast the infinite malady
 Crust you quite o'er! — What! dost thou go?
 Soft! take thy physic first,— thou too,— and thou:—”

And with this, Timon threw the water here, there,
 everywhere, over his terror-stricken guests.

“ Stay, I will lend thee money, borrow none.—
 What! all in motion? Henceforth be no feast
 Whereat a villain's not a welcome guest,
 Burn, house! sink Athens! henceforth hated be
 Of Timon, man and all humanity!”

Such confusion, such hurrying forth, such crowd-
 ing!

“ Let me out!”

“ The lord's gone mad!”

“ Where's my cap?”

“ I've lost my gown!”

“ Here, here it is.”

“ Hasten, hasten, let us away from this mad lord's
 house.”

“ Lord Timon's mad! He's mad! he's mad!”

“ 'Tis true. I feel it in my bones. One day he
 gives us diamonds — the next day, stones.”

“ And see, Timon himself hath left before us. See,

there he goes — so mad — so mad. Surely his brain is turned.”

Out into the city, down the long streets, through the busy market place, out through the great gateway of the city Timon fled.

“Let me look back upon thee,” roared Timon, looking
 back upon the hated city. “O thou wall,
 That girdlest in those wolves, dive in the earth,
 And fence not Athens!
 Obedience fail in children! slaves and fools,
 Pluck the grave wrinkled senate from the bench,
 And minister in their steads!

Bankrupts, hold fast!
 Rather than render back, out with your knives,
 And cut your trusters' throats! bound servants, steal!
 Large-handed robbers your grave masters are,
 And pill by law!

Son of sixteen,
 Pluck the lin'd crutch from the old limping sire,
 With it beat out his brains! piety and fear,
 Religion to the gods, peace, justice, truth,
 Domestic awe, night-rest, and neighborhood,
 Instruction, manners, mysteries and trades,
 Degrees, observances, customs and laws,
 Decline to your confounding contraries,
 And yet confusion live? — Plagues, incident to men,
 Your potent and infectious fevers heap
 On Athens, ripe for stroke! thou cold sciatica,
 Cripple our senators, that their limbs may halt
 As lamely as their manners!

Nothing I'll bear from thee,
 thou detestable town !

Timon will to the woods ; where he shall find
 The unkindest beast more kind than mankind.
 The gods confound (hear me, you good gods all,)
 The Athenians both within and out that wall !
 And grant, as Timon grows, his hate may grow
 To the whole race of mankind, high and low !
 Amen."

What a change now from the rich Lord Timon, once the petted, flattered lord — now the savage, half-clothed dweller in his forest cave.

For long, long weeks he lived in the dark forests, eating only the roots and berried fruits, free from the sight of his hated fellow-men. One day, as he was digging down into the soft earth, he struck upon a stone — no — not a stone — "What is't?" said Timon.

"What is here?

Gold? yellow, glittering, precious gold? No,
 gods,

I am no idle votarist; roots, you clear heavens !
 Thus much of this will make black, white; foul, fair :
 Wrong, right; base. noble; old, young; coward,
 valiant;

Ha, you gods! why this? what this, you gods?

"Gold enough is here," continued Timon, "to put me back, had I the mind, among my noble Athenian friends. But no, I'll use this gold to curse them. But hark! is that a drum? It is—and there's an army

— and there's Alcibiades, the banished Alcibiades once our great general."

"What art thou? speak," commanded the approaching general.

"A beast," growled Timon, "like yourself.

The canker gnaw thy heart,
For showing me again the eyes of man!

Alcib. What is thy name? Is man so hateful to thee,
Thou art thyself a man?

Tim. I am *misanthropos*, and hate mankind.
For thy part, I do wish thou wert a dog,
That I might love thee something.

Alcib. I know thee well;
But in thy fortunes am unlearn'd and strange.

Tim. I know thee, too; and more than that I know
thee,

I do not desire to know. Follow thy drum;
With man's blood paint the ground.
Then what should war be?

Alcib. How came the noble Timon to this change?

Tim. As the moon does, by wanting light to give:

Now take this gold. Go you to Athens. Use it,
every piece, to slay the hated people. With it pay
your officers that they may fight with fury against the
city. Level the houses; slay the people. Spare
neither old men nor young men, neither women nor
children. Go. Do as I bid you."

"Strike up the drum!" called the general.

Towards Athens! Timon, farewell. If we succeed we'll visit you again."

"Never let me see thee more."

"Why this? I never did thee harm."

"You spoke well of me."

"Was that harm?"

"Men daily find it so. Away, and take thy soldiers with thee. Now I am alone again. Good Mother Earth, now grant me food — a root."

All this time his old steward, Flavius, had been trying to discover the whereabouts of his master.

To his great joy he comes upon him just as Alcibiade's had left him, and approaches, shocked at his appearance, but Timon does not know him, and waves him away, saying, What's that, a man — another man?

Away! what art thou?

Flav.

Have you forgot me, sir?

Tim. Why dost ask that? I have forgot all men; Then, if thou grant'st thou'rt a man, I have forgot thee.

Flav. An honest poor servant of yours.

Tim. Then I know thee not.

I never had honest man about me, I; all I kept were knaves, to serve in meat to villains.

Flav. The gods are witness,
Ne'er did poor steward wear a truer grief
For his undone lord, than mine eyes for you.

Tim. What! dost thou weep? — come then nearer; — I
love thee,

Because thou art a woman, and disclaim'st
Flinty mankind.

Strange times, that weep with laughing, not with weeping!

Flav. I beg of you to know me, good my lord,
To accept my grief, and, whilst this poor wealth lasts,
To entertain me as your steward still.

Nor was Flavius, the steward, Timon's only seeker.
Hardly had a week sped by when at the entrance of
his cave appeared two senators from Athens.

"Thou sun, that comfort'st, burn! — Speak, and be
hang'd," growled Timon, angry that again his eyes
should fall upon a fellow man.

"For each true word, a blister! and each false
Be as a caut'rizing to the root o' the tongue,
Consuming it with speaking!"

"Worthy Timon," said one of the senators, kneeling:
ing:

Sen. The senators of Athens greet thee, Timon.

Tim. I thank them; and would send them back the
plague,

Could I but catch it for them.

Sen. O, forget

What we are sorry for ourselves in thee.

The senators, with one consent of love,

Entreat thee back to Athens; who have thought

On special dignities, which vacant lie

For thy best use and wearing.

2d Sen.

They confess,

Toward thee, forgetfulness too general, gross ;
 Which now the public body — feeling in itself
 A lack of Timon's aid, hath sense withal
 Of its own fall, restraining aid to Timon ;
 And send forth us,
 Together with a recompense more fruitful
 Than their offence can weigh down by the dram ;
 Ay, even such heaps and sums of love and wealth,
 As shall to thee blot out what wrongs were theirs,
 And write in thee the figures of their love,
 Ever to read them thine.

1st Sen. Therefore, so please thee to return with us,
 And of our Athens (thine and ours,) to take
 The captainship, thou shalt be met with thanks,
 Allow'd with absolute power, and thy good name
 Live with authority : — so soon we shall drive back
 Of Alcibiades the approaches wild ;
 Who, like a boar too savage, doth root up
 His country's peace :

“ Go, senators, go.

If Alcibiades kill my countrymen,
 Let Alcibiades know this of Timon,
 That Timon — cares not. But if he sack fair Athens,
 And take our goodly aged men by the beards,
 Then, let him know, — and tell him, Timon speaks it,
 In pity of our aged, and our youth,
 I cannot choose, but tell him, that — I care not,

And, let him take't at worst ; for their knives care not,
 While you have throats to answer : for myself,
 There's not a whittle in the unruly camp,
 But I do prize it at my love, before
 The reverend'st throat in Athens. So I leave you
 To the protection of the prosperous gods,
 As thieves to keepers.



Go, and may Alcibiades prove your plague, and you
 his. And friends, be this my message to my fellow-
 men. Tell them :

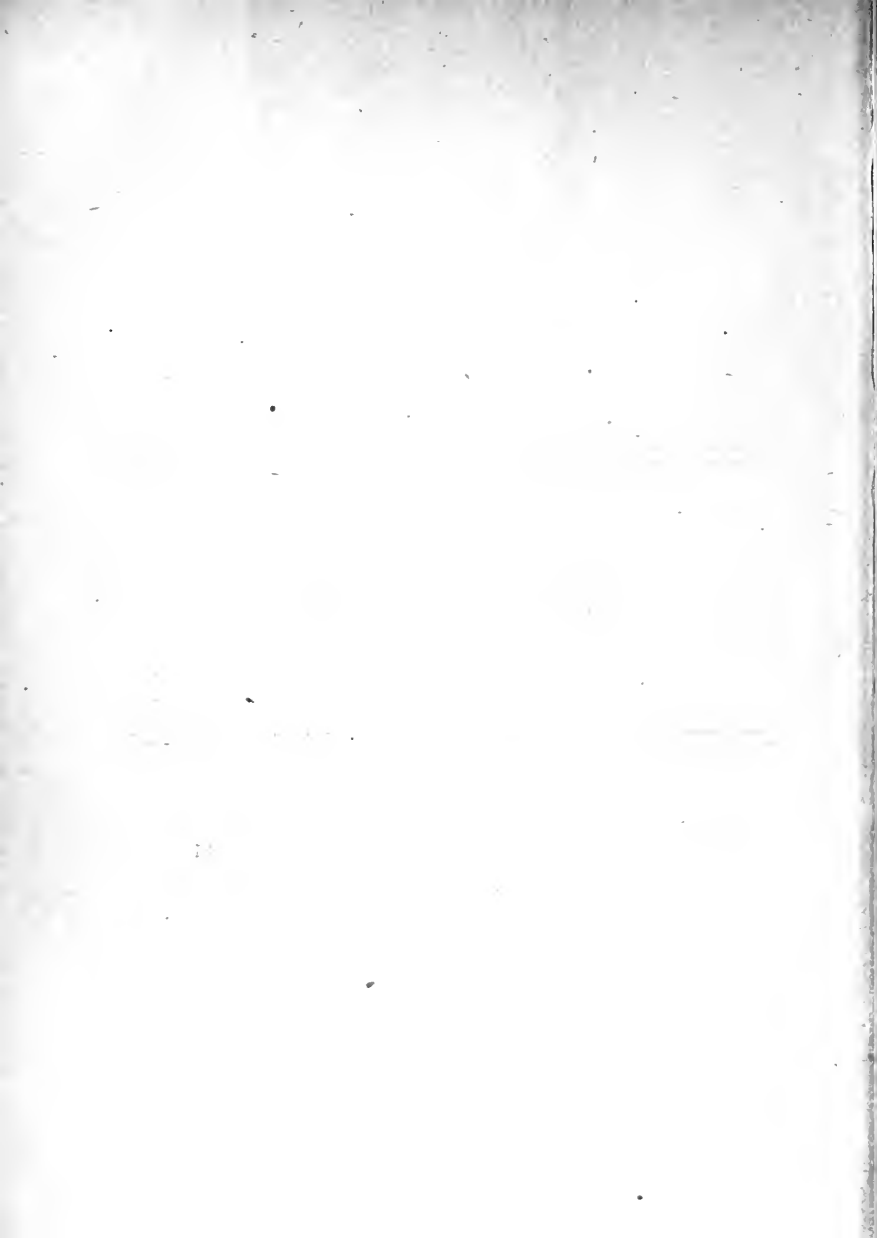
I have a tree, which grows here in my close,
 That mine own use invites me to cut down,

And shortly must I fell it: tell my friends,
Tell Athens, in the sequence of degree,
From high to low throughout, that whoso please
To stop affliction, let him take his haste,
Come hither, ere my tree had felt the axe,
And hang himself:— I pray you, do my greeting.”

“O, come away. He’s mad. We can find no help in him,” said the senators, turning away, puzzled by his strange words.

This was the last sight Timon’s countrymen had of him. For when a few week’s later Alcibiades returned through the forest, he found the cave deserted. Near by on a stone was written, “Timon is dead—Timon, who alive did all living men hate; and who dying cursed all caitiffs left.”

KING LEAR.



KING LEAR.

Long, long ago, in the early history of Britain, lived an old king named Lear. He was now a long way on the journey of life; and tired of the honors as well as of the duties and trials of his kingship, he called his officers to him and said:

“Give me the map there.— Know that we have divided
In three our kingdom: and 'tis our fast intent
To shake all cares and business from our age;
Conferring them on younger strengths, while we
Unburden'd crawl toward death.—

“And now, my daughters,— Goneril, Regan and Cordelia, tell me, each of you, which loves their father best, that he may to that one the largest bounty extend.”

It seems a most ridiculous method of making one's

will, doesn't it? As if any one of us could tell how much we loved another by the mere flourishing of high-sounding words. King Lear seems to have been a foolish old man to think to test his daughters' love for him in any such way as this. We wonder where his kingly wisdom had fled that he should think to judge his daughters' life-long love for him by their words at this moment, ignoring the years of daily proof in deeds, each one of which should have far outweighed whole volumes of words.

But King Lear lived so long ago, we may as well let it pass, foolish as the proceeding certainly was.

Goneril, the oldest daughter and the wife of the Duke of Albany, spoke first.

“Sir, I love you more than words can wield the matter;
Dearer than eyesight, space, and liberty;
Beyond what can be valu'd, rich or rare;
No less than life, with grace, health, beauty, honor;
As much as child e'er lov'd, or father found;
A love that makes breath poor, and speech unable;
Beyond all manner of so much I love you,”

Foolish old Lear, not to see this emptiness, the lack of real, tender love in this gush of words.

“Of all these lands,” answered Lear, pointing to the outspread map, “from this to this -

With shadowy forests and with champains rich'd,
With plenteous rivers and wide-skirted meads,

We make thee lady ; and to thy children
Be this perpetual.

“ And now,” continued he,

“ What says our second daughter,
Our dearest Regan, wife to Cornwall? Speak.”



DIVIDING THE KINGDOM.

“ I,” said Regan, determined not to be outdone by
her older sister,

“ I am made of that self-same metal as my sister,
And prize me at her worth. In my true heart
I find she names my very deed of love ;
Only she comes too short,— That I profess

Myself an enemy to all other joys,
Which the most precious square of sense possesses ;
And find I am alone felicitate
In your dear highness' love."

"My dear, dear daughter," answered the poor foolish old father.

"To thee and thine, hereditary ever,
Remain this ample third of our fair kingdom ;
No less in space, validity and pleasure,
Than that conferr'd on Goneril."

Meantime, Cordelia, grieved and shocked at the words of her sisters, who far too well she knew were wicked, selfish, scheming women, stood silent. "Alas," said she to herself, "if words like these — such false, false words do fill my father's heart with joy, what hope is there for me ; and yet I *know* my love's far richer than my tongue."

"Well, Cordelia, what word have you — you, our fairest and our youngest?"

"Nothing can I say, dear father," answered she.

"Nothing! Nothing!" cried the king, his vanity piqued that one daughter should refuse to heap his ears with flattery. "Nothing! Then you will receive nothing. Speak again before it is too late."

"Unhappy that I am," answered Cordelia, the tears gathering in her beautiful honest eyes. "I cannot heave my heart into my mouth ; and yet, I think, you know I love you."

"Take care! take care!" cried Lear, rising in his anger. "Mend your speech a little lest it mar your fortunes."

"Good my lord,
You have begot me, bred me, lov'd me: I
Return those duties back as are right fit,
Obey you, love you, and most honor you," answered
Cordelia.

"So young and so unloving!" replied Lear, frowning upon her.

"Nay, nay! say rather so young and so true," answered Cordelia, wearily.

"Then let thy truth be thy dower," thundered Lear. "From this time forth I disclaim all care of you and as a stranger to my heart and me, hold thee from this forever; now hence! avoid my sight! Cornwall and Albany, take you Cordelia's third of our fair kingdom. And now I do invest you two with the power of kingship.

Ourself, by monthly course,
With reservation of an hundred knights,
By you to be sustain'd, shall our abode
Make with you by due turns. Only we still retain
The name, and all the additions to a king;
The sway, revenue, execution of the rest,
Beloved sons, be yours: which to confirm,
This coronet part between you."

And the two sons-in-law stepped forward eagerly to receive the coronet,

Such a foolish, rash disposal of his kingdom as this, and in the heat of passion, filled the courtiers with dismay.

"O royal Lear," said the earl of Kent, springing forward, "be just. Cans't thou not see thy youngest daughter does not love thee least."

"Kent, dare speak no more!" cried Lear, trembling with rage.

"Pray do not"—

"Out of my sight!"

"Nay, rather"—

"I say to thee, thou vassal! miscreant!"

On thine allegiance hear me!—

Since thou hast sought to make us break our vow,

And, with strain'd pride,

To come betwixt our sentence and our power;

Our potency made good, take thy reward.

Five days we do allot thee, for provision

To shield thee from diseases of the world;

And, on the sixth, to turn thy hated back

Upon our kingdom: if, on the tenth day following

Thy banish'd trunk be found in our dominions,

The moment is thy death. Away! by Jupiter,

This shall not be revok'd!"

Sadly, the courtiers saw the angry king thus foolishly heap up for himself years of future wretched-

ness. Well did they all know the Dukes of Cornwall and of Albany had no other motive in their fawning flattery than to get the kingdom into their own hands. But it is of little use to reason with an angry man; and the court broke up, the two sisters and their husbands triumphant, Cordelia broken-hearted, and the courtiers, one and all, grieved and full of prophecies of future wretchedness in the kingdom.

"Fairest Cordelia," said the King of France, coming forward, "thou art most rich, though poor: most choice though forsaken; most loved though despised. Thou shalt come with me to be the queen of France. Not all the riches of the world shall buy you from me. Bid them farewell, Cordelia, bid them all farewell. We'll go at once to France."

"Poor, foolish king," said the good Earl of Kent, sorrowfully. "Greatly do I fear thou wilt have sad need of one loyal, loving subject. Indeed, though those hands banished me, has sentenced me to death if I am seen even in the kingdom,—yet I dare not leave thee. Thou wilt have need of me. I have it! I will disguise myself, and in the office of an attendant will so keep near thee to save thee from all harm."

"We will go first to Goneril's home—we and our hundred attendants," said King Lear, complacently. "There with all the honors due our office will we live out our few remaining years in quiet rejoicing that our two noble daughters, Goneril and Regan, with their brave husbands, Albany and Cornwall, shall so wisely rule our kingdom."

Alas for the foolish old king's dream of rest and peace! Only a few days had passed when Goneril's true self appeared, and the old king learned his bitter lessons of ingratitude and selfishness.

Whenever the old king appeared, Goneril's face would blacken with rage and contempt.

"Tell my daughter," said Lear one day, "that I would speak with her."

"Tell the king," replied Goneril, "that I have neither time nor inclination to speak with him."

"Not time? not inclination?" cried the poor old father. "My daughter, my Goneril! not time to speak with me!—What does it mean?"

"It means just this. Your retinue are hourly breaking out in riots and quarrels disturbing the peace and quiet of our court. We cannot bear it longer. And you yourself—"

"Are you our daughter?" asked Lear, filled with sorrow and surprise and anger. "And am I Lear—Lear the king to be addressed like this? Does anyone here know me? Am I waking or sleeping. O, who can tell me, am I Lear?"

"This pretended amazement is equal with your other pranks," replied Goneril, coarsely. "But

I do beseech you

To understand my purposes aright :

As you are old and reverend, you should be wise :

Here do you keep a hundred nights and squires ;

Men so disordered, so debauch'd and bold,
 That this our court, infected with their manners,
 Shows like a riotous inn :
 The shame itself doth speak
 For instant remedy. Be then desir'd
 By her, that else will take the things she begs,
 A little to decrease your train ;
 And the remainder, that shall still depend,
 To be such men as may besort your age,
 Which know themselves and you."

"Darkness and devils!" thundered Lear, now mad
 with rage. "Saddle my horses! Call my train
 together! Prepare my horses!

Ingratitude! thou marble-hearted fiend,
 More hideous when thou show'st thee in a child,
 Than the sea-monster!"

"Your miserable, disorderly rabble make our home
 more like a tavern or an ale house than a graced
 palace!" coldly replied Goneril.

"Detested kite! thou liest.
 My train are men of choice and rarest parts,
 That all particulars of duty know :
 And in the most exact regard support
 The worships of their name.—O most small fault.
 How ugly didst thou in Cordelia show!
 Which, like an engine, wrench'd my frame of nature
 From the fix'd place; drew from my heart all love,

And added to the gall. O Lear, Lear, Lear!
 Beat at this gate that let thy folly in,
 And thy dear judgment out! — Go, go, my people.

O, how sharper than a serpent's tooth it is to have
 a thankless child!

Life and death!

I am asham'd
 That thou hast power to shake my manhood thus;
 That these hot tears, which break from me perforce,
 Should make thee worth them. — Blasts and fogs upon
 thee!

The untented woundings of a father's curse
 Pierce every sense about thee! — Old fond eyes,
 Beweep this cause again, I'll pluck you out,
 And cast you with the waters that you loose,
 To temper clay, — Ha! is it come to this?
 Let it be so: — I have another daughter,
 Who, I am sure, is kind and comfortable:
 When she shall hear this of thee, with her nails
 She'll flay thy wolfish visage. Thou shalt find
 That I'll resume the shape which thou dost think
 I have cast off forever."

"Go to your other daughter," muttered Goneril;
 "but know that I will go before you. I will fill her
 ears with stories of thy behavior — thine and thy
 hundred attendants — until she, too, will drive thee
 out."

And so it was that when Lear and his train arrived at
 Regan's palace, he was received coldly by the servants,

and when he called for Regan was told that she had retired — too weary to receive her coming guests.

“Too weary to receive her father, the king?” asked Lear, a deadly fear coming over him that Regan too might be false.

“Yes, too weary,” answered the attendant, insolently.

In the morning Regan, with Goneril at her side, came before the king.

“I am glad to see your highness,” said Regan, not one tone of love nor warmth in her words.

“O Regan, Regan,” cried Lear, pleadingly, his heart sinking under her cold gaze. “O, Regan, your sister hath pierced my heart with sharp-toothed unkindness. Hardly can I speak to thee, O, Regan, Regan!”

“I pray you, sir, be quiet. I have no fear that my sister hath been scant in her duties to you. You sir,” added she, taking Goneril’s hand, “are old. You should be willing to be guided by one of discretion. Therefore, I say, return at once to Goneril’s house.”

“My curses on her!” thundered Lear.

“Say to her that you have wronged her.”

“I ask her forgiveness! Say I have wronged her! O, Regan, Regan! give me raiment, food and bed. I know that I am old. On my knees I beg you!”

“No more of this, good sir,” said Regan, drawing herself away. “Return you to my sister as you should.”

Again the king's wrath broke forth !



“ Never, Regan ;
 She hath abated me of half my train ;
 Lock'd black upon me ; struck me with her tongue.
 Most serpent-like, upon the very heart : —
 All the stor'd vengeance of heaven fall
 On her ungrateful top ! Strike her young bones,
 You taking airs, with lameness !
 You nimble lightnings, dart your binding flames
 Into her scornful eyes ! Infect her beauty,
 Fall and blast her pride !
 Regan, thou shalt never have my curse :
 Thy tender-hefted nature shall not give

Thee o'er to harshness ; her eyes are fierce, but thine
 Do comfort, and not burn : 'Tis not in thee
 To grudge my pleasures, to cut off my train,
 To bandy hasty words, to scant my sizes,
 And in conclusion to oppose the bolt
 Against my coming in : thou better know'st
 The offices of nature, bond of childhood,
 Effects of courtesy, dues of gratitude :
 Thy half o' the kingdom hast thou not forgot,
 Wherein I thee endow."

" I pray you, father, being weak, seem so," interrupted Regan.

" If, till the expiration of your month,
 You will return and sojourn with my sister,
 Dismissing half your train, come then to me ;
 I am now from home, and out of that provision
 Which shall be needful for your entertainment."

" Return to her — give up my fifty serving-men !

No, rather I abjure all roofs and choose
 To wage against the enmity o' the air
 To be a comrade with the wolf and owl—
 Necessity's sharp pinch ! — Return with her ?
 Why, the hot-blooded France, that dowerless took
 Our youngest born, I could as well be brought
 To knee his throne, and, squire-like, pension beg
 To keep base life afoot : — Return with her ?
 Persuade me rather to be slave and sumpter
 To this detested groom."

"Follow your own choice," sneered Goneril.

"O, daughter, do not make me mad," cried poor old Lear, his love for his child overcoming his anger.

"I will not trouble thee, my child; farewell:
We'll no more meet, no more see one another:—
But yet thou art my flesh, my blood, my daughter;
Or, rather, a disease that's in my flesh,
Which I must needs call mine; thou art a boil,
A plague-sore, an embossed carbuncle,
In my corrupted blood. But I'll not chide thee;
Let shame come when it will, I do not call it:
I do not bid the thunder-bearer shoot,
Nor tell tales of thee to high-judging Jove:
Mend, when thou canst; be better, at thy leisure:
I can be patient; I can stay with Regan,
I, and my hundred knights."

"That cannot be," answered Regan, firmly. "It is not time for you to come. I am not prepared to give you welcome. Listen, sir, to my sister. Dismiss fifty of your hundred useless attendants and return with Goneril. And when you come to me, you shall twenty-five more dismiss. You need no more than twenty-five."

"Wicked creatures, yet do look well-favored when others are more wicked," groaned the old king. "Goneril, I'll go with thee. Thou will allow me fifty—double twenty-five—then thou has twice her love."

"I think you have no need of ten or five," answered Goneril.

"Nor even one," added Regan, not to be outdone.

Lear looked from one to the other. "O my children, O my children !

You heavens give me that patience I need !
You see me here, you gods, a poor old man,
As full of grief as age ; wretched in both !
If it be you that stir these daughters' hearts
Against their father, fool me not so much
To bear it tamely ; touch me with noble anger !
Oh, let not woman's weapons, water-drops,
Stain my man's cheeks ! — No, you unnatural hags,
I will have such revenges on you both,
That all the world shall — I will do such things, —
What they are, yet I know not ; but they shall be
The terrors of the earth. You think I'll weep ;
No, I'll not weep : —
I have full cause of weeping ; but this heart
Shall break into a hundred thousand flaws,
Or ere I'll weep. — Oh, fool, I shall go mad !

Away, away, away from this house !"

Out into the night he rushed, across the wild heath, through the deep forest, up among the cold gray cliffs. There, with the rain beating down upon his head, the lightning flashing and the thunder rolling and crashing on from cliff to cliff, the maddened old king defied the storm :



LEAR DEFYING THE STORM.

“Blow winds, and crack your cheeks! rage! blow!
 You cataracts, and hurricanes, spout,
 Till you have drench'd our steeples, drown'd the
 cocks!

You sulphurous and thought-executing fires,
 Vaunt couriers to oak-cleaving thunder-bolts,
 Singe my white hair! And thou all-shaking thunder
 Strike flat the thick rotundity of the world!
 Crack nature's moulds,
 That make ingrateful man!”

Rumble! rumble! rumble!

“Spit, fire! spout, rain!

Nor rain, wind, thunder, fire, are my daughters:
 I tax not you, you elements, with unkindness,
 I never gave you kingdom, called you children,
 You owe me no subscription; why, then, let fall
 Your horrible pleasure; here I stand, your slave,
 A poor, infirm, weak, and despis'd old man:—
 But yet I call you servile ministers,
 That have with two pernicious daughters join'd
 Your battles, 'gainst a head
 So old and white as this. O! O! 'tis foul!”

But old King Lear is not deserted. The good Earl of Kent has not served his king these weeks in humble disguise of a common attendant, to lose sight now of his poor foolish master. Following the king over heath and through the forest, he watches that no harm shall come to him.

“Alas, good sir,” said Kent, approaching Lear,
 “are you here?”

“ Things that love night

Love not such nights as these ; the wrathful skies
Gallow the very wanderers of the dark,
And make them keep their caves : Since I was man
Such sheets of fire, such bursts of horrid thunder,
Such groans of roaring wind and rain, I never
Remember to have heard : man’s nature cannot carry
The affliction, nor the fear.”

“ Let the great gods,” broke forth Lear again,

“ That keep this dreadful pother o’er our heads,
Find out their enemies now. Tremble, thou wretch,
That hast within thee undivulged crimes,
Unwhipp’d of justice ! Hide thee, thou bloody hand ;
Thou perjur’d, and thou simular of virtue
That art incestuous ! Caitiff, to pieces shake,
That under covert and convenient seeming.
Hast practis’d on man’s life ! — Close pent up guilts,
Rive your concealing continents, and cry
These dreadful summoners grace. — I am a man,
More sinned against, than sinning.”

“ But you are bare-headed,” said Kent, gently.

“ Gracious my lord, hard by here is a hovel ;
Some friendship will it lend you ’gainst the tempest ;
Repose you there : while I to this hard house,
(More harder than the stones whereof ’tis rais’d ;
Which even but now, demanding after you,
Denied me to come in,) return, and force
Their scanted courtesy.”

"Yes, let us go," answered Lear, wearily, "My brain begins to whirl. Come on, my boy. Where is this hovel. Let us go — yes, let us go."

And so the Earl of Kent led the poor, maddened king across the heath to a wretched little hovel, in which he could at least be protected from the fury of the storm.

"Here is the place, my lord. Let us enter. The storm is far too rough for nature to endure."

"Let me alone," groaned Lear.

"Good my lord, will you not enter?"

"Will you break my heart?"

"O rather would I break my own; but let us enter."

Turning sadly to his faithful attendant, the old king said:

"Thou think'st 'tis much that this contentious storm
Invades us to the skin; so 'tis to thee;
But where the greater malady is fix'd,
The lesser is scarce felt. Thou'dst shun a bear;
But if thy flight lay toward the roaring sea,
Thou'dst meet the bear i' the mouth. When the
mind's free,
The body's delicate: the tempest in my mind
Doth from my senses take all feeling else
Save what beats there. — Filial ingratitude?
Is it not as this mouth should tear this hand
For lifting food to 't? — But I will punish home: —
No, I will weep no more. — In such a night

To shut me out!—Pour on; I will endure:—
 In such a night as this! O Regan, Goneril!—
 Your kind old father, whose frank heart gave all,—
 Oh, that way madness lies; let me shun that?
 No more of that. Yes, let us enter.”

In the hovel was a strange, half-dressed man, who, to Lear, seemed mad.

“Away from here! Away! Go to thine own bed and warm thee!” cried the man in the cave.

“Poor man,” asked Lear, pityingly; “did’st thou give all that thou had’st to thy daughters? Did his daughters bring him to this pass? Did he save nothing?”

“He has no daughter, my lord,” answered Kent, patiently.

“Death upon thee, traitor,” shouted the mad king.

“Nothing could have subdu’d nature
 To such a lowness, but his unkind daughters.—
 Is it the fashion that discarded fathers
 Should have thus little mercy on their flesh?
 Judicious punishment! ’twas this flesh begot
 Those pelican daughters.”

“Poor, poor king,” thought the Earl of Kent.
 “Thy daughters’ ill-treatment hath indeed made thee mad. Now, will I, thy faithful attendant, prove myself thy friend.”

Putting King Lear in his own castle, and surround-

ing him with faithful, loving servants, Kent set out for France — to the court of Cordelia.

Poor Cordelia's heart was broken when she heard the story of her poor old father. The king, noble man that he was, still loving his beautiful wife whom he had so nobly taken under his protection when her father and her sisters had turned against her, his anger and his pity roused, summoning his officers, ordered that without delay an army be got in readiness to embark for England. "Dry thy tears, Cordelia, and you yet shall see your father restored to his throne. Our soldiers are brave, our forces large, and soon we will show thy serpent-hearted sisters the bitterness of their wicked deeds."

It was a tender, pitiful sight, the meeting between poor old Lear and his daughter Cordelia.

He was asleep when Cordelia came to his bedside. "O my dear father," said she, bending tenderly over him, and smoothing his hair, now grown so white,

"Had you *not* been their father, these white flakes
Had challeng'd pity of them. Was this a face
To be oppos'd against the warring winds?
To stand against the deep dread-bolted thunder?
In the most terrible and nimble stroke
Of quick, cross lightning? to watch
With this thin helm? Mine enemy's dog,
Though he had bit me, should have stood that night
Against my fire; and wast thou fain, poor father,
To hovel thee with swine, and rogues forlorn,



THE MEETING.

In short and musty straw? Alack, alack!
 'Tis wonder that thy life and wits at once
 Had not concluded all.
 But see; he wakes."

"You do me wrong," said he, "to take me from my grave. Thou art a soul in bliss; but I am bound upon a wheel of fire that mine own ears do scald like molten lead."

"O, father, do you know me?" sobbed Cordelia.

"Yes, I know thee," answered he feebly. "Thou art a spirit. When didst thou die?"

"Poor, poor overtaxed brain—thy breaking heart hath turned thy head."

"Where have I been? Where am I? O I should die of pity to see another thus. Are these my hands—my hands?"

"O father, father," cried Cordelia, "look upon me, and hold your hands in benediction over me."

"I pray, do not mock me:
 I am a very foolish, fond old man,
 Four score and upward, not an hour more nor less;
 And, to deal plainly,
 I fear I am not in my perfect mind.
 Methinks I should know you, and know this man;
 Yet I am doubtful: for I am mainly ignorant
 What place this is; and all the skill I have
 Remembers not these garments; nor I know not
 Where I did lodge last night. Do not laugh at me;

For as I am a man, I think this lady
To be my child Cordelia."

"It is — it is Cordelia — your daughter — your
Cordelia."

But even now the broken-down old man could not
quite understand.

"Be your tears wet? yes, faith. I pray, weep not:
If you have poison for me, I will drink it.
I know you do not love me; for your sisters
Have, as I do remember, done me wrong:
You have some cause, they have not."

"O, father, I have not come to harm you. Fear
not. This is your own kingdom and you are king."

"Do not deceive me," wailed Lear, the pitiful tears
chasing down his pale, withered cheeks.

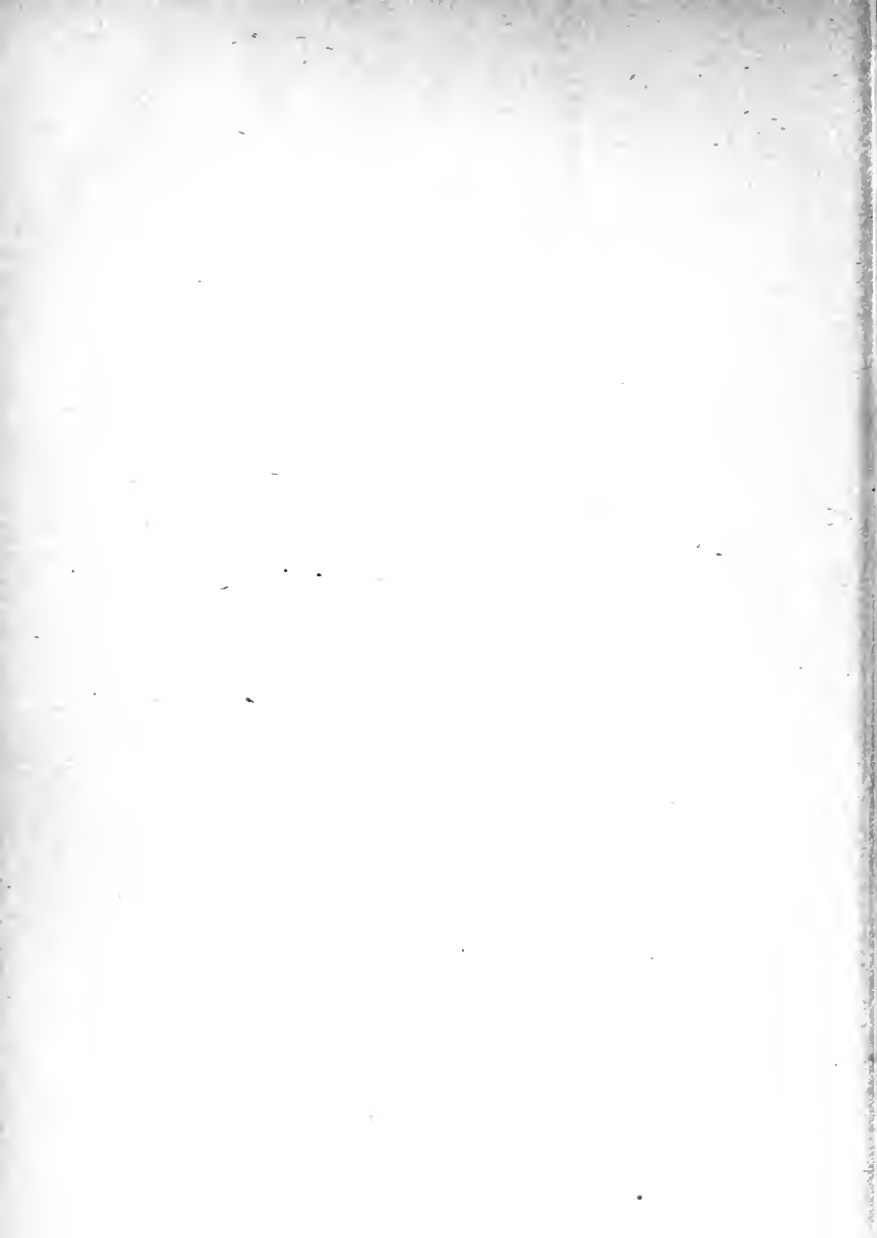
Little by little the old king's reason came back and
Cordelia's loving heart was filled with happiness.
Such plans as she made for the future! Such hopes
had she to see her father again upon his rightful
throne. But stories in real life sometimes end rather
sadly. And as this story of Lear is said to be founded
upon a real, historical fact, I suppose Shakespeare
did not feel at liberty to change its ending simply to
suit our fancy as to how a story should end.

In the battle that followed between Cordelia's army
and the army sent forth by Goneril and Regan,

Cordelia's army was defeated and Cordelia herself taken prisoner.

Goneril and Regan meantime had quarreled between themselves and Goneril had poisoned Regan. Goneril's crime was discovered by her husband and she was put into prison, where, wild with rage and fury, she killed herself.

Poor Cordelia, too, died in prison, and Lear, crushed and broken-hearted, soon followed, saying in his weak, half-wandering way, as his eyes closed in death, "Cordelia, Cordelia stay a little. What is't thou sayest? Yes—yes—her voice was ever soft, gentle, and low; an excellent thing in woman. Look upon her—she'll never come again—look—look—her lips—look—look—look there."



THE MERCHANT OF VENICE.



SHYLOCK.

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE.

In the city of Venice there lived a selfish, greedy, grasping old Jew, called Shylock.

This Shylock was rich — richer than any merchant in the city — and his immense fortune had been amassed, so it was said, by the great interest he would always ask for the loan of his money.

Nothing did this old Jew like better than to seize upon some poor wretch of a merchant driven to the wall, as we say, for the loan of money to tide over his business for a few days. Of such a man, who in his desperation would pay any price for the use of money at just that hour, this old Jew would demand most unreasonable interest; and was accordingly hated by all honest, kind, fair-dealing merchants in the city.

There was one merchant, Antonio, a man who often loaned his money to the poor and distressed without any interest whatever, and who had not a few times by his own help, wrested some poor merchant from the Jew's cruel power.

The Jew hated Antonio and vowed revenge; Antonio, you may be sure, hated the Jew, but with a fine scorn that stoops not to revenge.

Whenever the two met in their business haunts bitter words often passed between them. The Jew would sneer at Antonio for his soft-heartedness and unbusiness-like ways of dealing. Antonio, in his part, did not fear to brand the Jew before all his merchant brotherhood as a mean, thieving dog; a cur — a cut-throat to be feared, avoided, shut out from all business dealings with honest-meaning merchants.

Antonio, generous man that he was, had hundreds and hundreds of friends; but none so dear to him as Bassanio, a noble Venetian, with whom he had grown up from boyhood in the same schools, under the same teachers, amid the same surroundings.

Now this Bassanio was one of those young noblemen who, though he had much rank and a grand title, had very little money. The result was, that like most young noblemen of his kind, he sometimes found himself most sadly embarrassed by debt. Antonio was always ready and willing to help him out of his troubles; and Bassanio, honorable man that he was, never failed in time to return the money with proper

interest — not forgetting to add that which you may be sure was far dearer than the money to Antonio, an honest, generous recognition of the loving friendship that never failed.

One day Bassanio came to Antonio and said :

“ In Belmont is a lady richly left,
And she is fair, and, fairer than that word,
Of wondrous virtues ; sometimes from her eyes
I did receive fair speechless messages ;
Her name is Portia ; nothing undervalued
To Cato’s daughter, Brutus’ Portia.
Nor is the wide world ignorant of her worth ;
For the four winds blow in from every coast
Renowned suitors : and her sunny locks
Hang on her temples like a golden fleece.
O my Antonio, had I but the means
To hold a rival place with one of them,
I have a mind presages me such thrift,
That I should questionless be fortunate.”

Now the substance of this long and somewhat involved speech was, that if he had money enough to go with a train of servants and all the elegant appointments necessary in those days to a man of his station, he felt sure he might win this beautiful Portia whom he loved so much.

Of course Antonio sprang to his assistance. Never had he failed his friend in any time of need ; surely he would not fail him now.

“ I have not,” said Antonio, “ a ducat with me now.

But my ships laden with merchandise stand now outside the harbor. A few days and they will be in port. Meantime, we will go to Shylock, the Jewish dog, and I will borrow from him three thousand ducats."

Accordingly Antonio and Bassanio made their way to Shylock to ask the loan.

There was a wicked gleam in Shylock's black Jewish eyes as Antonio made his errand known.

"How like a fawning publican he looks," growled Shylock to himself, as he listened to the honest, fair-dealing Antonio.

"I hate him, for he is a Christian ;
But more for that, in low simplicity,
He lends out money gratis, and brings down
The rate of usance here with us in Venice.
If I can catch him once upon the hip,
I will feed fat the ancient grudge I bear him.
He hates our sacred nation ; and he rails,
Even there where merchants most do congregate,
On me, my bargains, and my well-won thrift,
Which he calls interest : Curst be my tribe,
If I forgive him ! "

"Come, come, Shylock," interrupted Antonio, impatient with the Jew's self-musing ; "will you lend me the three thousand ducats, with my bond, to be returned to you with interest three months hence?"

Then the Jew turned upon him.

“ Signior Antonio, many a time and oft
 In the Rialto you have rated me
 About my monies and usances,
 Still have I borne it with a patient shrug ;
 For sufferance is the badge of all our tribe :
 You call me — misbeliever, cut-throat dog,
 And spit upon my Jewish gaberdine,
 And all for use of that which is mine own.
 Well then, it now appears, you need my help :
 Go to then ; you come to me, and you say,
Shylock, we would have monies ; You say so ;
 You that did foot me, as you spurn a stranger cur
 Over your threshold ; monies is your suit.
 What should I say to you ? Should I not say,
Hath a dog money ? Is it possible
A cur can lend three thousand ducats ? or
 Shall I bend low, and in a bondsman’s key,
 With ’bated breath, and whispering humbleness,
 Say this,—
Fair sir, you spit on me on Wednesday last :
You spurn’d me such a day ; another time
You call’d me dog ; and for these courtesies
I’ll lend you thus much monies.”

“ And I am as like to call thee so again,” replied
 Antonio ;

“ To spit on thee again, to spurn thee, too.
 If thou wilt lend this money. lend it not
 As to thy friends ; (for when did friendship take
 A breed for barren metal of his friend ?)

But lend it rather to thine enemy ;
Who, if he break, thou may'st with better face
Exact the penalty."

Finding that Antonio was neither frightened nor abashed by his abuse, Shylock "took another tack," as the sailors say.

"Why, how you storm?" said he, pretending to be both surprised and grieved.

"I would be friends with you, and have your love.
Forget the shames that you have stain'd me with,
Supply your present wants, and take no doit
Of usance for my monies, and you'll not hear me :
This is kind I offer."

"How kind," sneered Antonio, moved no more by his flattery than by his abuse.

"This kindness will I show," continued the Jew,

"Go with me to a notary, seal me there
Your single bond ; and, in a merry sport,
If you repay me not on such a day,
In such a place, such sum or sums, as are
Express'd in the condition, let the forfeit
Be nominated for an equal pound
Of your fair flesh, to be cut off and taken
In what part of your body pleaseth me."

"Content," replied Antonio. "I will sign the bond."

"You shall sign no such bond for me," cried Bassanio.

"Fear not, friend," answered Antonio. "There lie my ships laden with merchandise worth thrice three times the value of this bond."

"But I do fear the Jew," answered Bassanio, shaking his head gloomily.

"O father Abraham, what these Christians are," grumbled Shylock.

"Whose own hard dealings teaches them suspect
The thoughts of others! Pray you, tell me this:
If he should break his day, what should I gain
By the exaction of the forfeiture?
A pound of man's flesh, taken from a man,
Is not so estimable, profitable neither,
As flesh of muttons, beefs or goats. I say,
To buy his favor, I extend this friendship;
If he will take it, so; if not, adieu;
And for my love, I pray you, wrong me not."

"I will seal the bond," replied Antonio, impatient, not at all deceived by the Jew's oily words, but secure in the certainty of escape from the cruel bond which the Jew would have him think mere "merry sport."

The rich and beautiful Portia whom Bassanio wished to win, lived not far from Venice. To this home of Portia, Bassanio in due time set forth with his splendid train, accompanied by a noble gentleman, named Gratiano.

We will not linger long upon the scene that may have followed in the beautiful home of Portia when Bassanio arrived. It is enough for us to know that Bassanio was successful in his suit, and there seemed nothing but joy and sunshine ahead for the happy lovers in all their life.

But one day there came a messenger — breathless — his face pale with fear and grief, who said to Bassanio, "A letter from my good master, Antonio."

Bassanio, trembling with dread, for instantly there flashed across him the fear that some way his kind friend had fallen into the power of the cruel Jew, tore open the letter and read :

"Sweet Bassanio, my ships are all lost, my bond to the Jew is forfeited, and since, in paying it, it is impossible I should live, I could wish to see you at my death; notwithstanding, use your pleasure; if your love for me do not persuade you to come, let not my letter."

"O, Portia, Portia," wailed Bassanio,

' Here are a few of the unpleasant'st words,
That ever blotted paper! Gentle lady,
When I did first impart my love to you,
I freely told you, all the wealth I had,
Ran in my veins, — I was a gentleman;
And then I told you true: and yet, dear lady,
Rating myself at nothing, you shall see
How much I was a braggart. When I told you
My state was nothing, I should then have told you
That I was worse than nothing; for indeed,

I have engag'd myself to a dear friend,
Engag'd my friend to his mere enemy,
To feed my means. Here is a letter, lady;
The paper as the body of my friend,
And every word in it a gaping wound,
Issuing life-blood.— But is it true, Salario?
Have all his ventures fail'd? What, not one hit?
From Tripolis, from Mexico and England,
From Lisbon, Barbary, and India?
And not one vessel 'scape the dreadful touch
Of merchant-marring rocks?"

"Not one — not one," answered the messenger;
"and if there were, the time now being past, the Jew
would not take the money. It is Antonio's life he
wants."

"Go, go to your friend, my dear Bassanio," cried
Portia. "Take gold to pay the money twenty times
over. Be brave; take courage; you shall return
again and bring with thee to our home your noble
friend."

"Nerissa," said Portia to her maid, a few days after
Bassanio's departure. "I believe I could save
Bassanio's friend. I will dress myself in the robe of
a counsellor-at-law, you shall be dressed as my clerk,
and together we will go to Venice. From my cousin
Bellario, I have a letter for the judge saying that had
not sickness prevented, he himself would have
come to plead for Antonio, but, since he cannot be
there, he begs the Duke to allow me to plead for him."

Nerissa, whose faith in her beautiful and wise young mistress was exceeded only by her love for her, at once prepared for the journey.

Disguised in their lawyer-like robes, they entered the great hall of justice just as the trial was about to begin.

Presenting her letter of introduction, the Duke said, "You come from Bellario. You are welcome. Take your place. Are you acquainted with this question to-day before the court?"

"I am thoroughly acquainted with the cause," replied Portia, firmly. "Tell me which is the merchant and which is the Jew."

"Antonio and Shylock, stand forth," commanded the Duke.

And now, my young readers, I leave you to the "Trial Scene" as Shakespeare has given it to us. Read over and over Portia's plea for mercy. It is one of the sweetest, tenderest, most beautiful pictures in all English literature.

In this play, which by-and-by you will read just as Shakespeare himself has given it to us, you will see how the author tries to show us a perfect picture of a perfect woman—beautiful, loving, yet wise and womanly. If she is full of philosophy, so she is full of pleasantry.

Shylock, too, is a character to be studied. Don't be satisfied to see him as a mere, mean, revengeful money lender. I know you are rather young to

search down deep into the character in a play, still you can afford to try to study a little in that way. Notice the *strength* Shakespeare makes him represent. He stands as a marvel of power. See how hard and cold he is ; how he clings to his one object—revenge ; watch the dashing, biting sarcasm. Nothing can daunt him ; nothing annoy him ; he cannot be moved by Portia's plea for mercy ; he cannot be touched by ridicule, he cannot even be exasperated by abuse. He has but one thought—"I have suffered through these Christians ; now they shall suffer through me."

THE TRIAL SCENE.

Por. Do you confess the bond?

Ant. I do.

Por. Then must the Jew be merciful.

Shy. On what compulsion must I? tell me that.

Por. The quality of mercy is not strain'd ;
 It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
 Upon the place beneath : it is twice bless'd ;
 It blesseth him that gives, and him that takes :
 'Tis mightiest in the mightiest ; it becomes
 The throned monarch better than his crown ,
 His scepter shows the force of temporal power,
 The attribute to awe and majesty,
 Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings ;



THE TRIAL SCENE.

But mercy is above this sceptr'd sway,
It is enthron'd in the hearts of kings,
It is an attribute to God himself ;
And earthly power doth then show likest God's
When mercy seasons justice. Therefore, Jew,
Though justice be thy plea, consider this —
That in the course of justice, none of us
Should see salvation ; we do pray for mercy ;
And that same prayer doth teach us all to render
The deeds of mercy. I have spoken thus much,
To mitigate the justice of thy plea ;
Which, if thou follow, this strict court of Venice
Must needs give sentence 'gainst the merchant there.

Shy. My deeds upon my head ! I crave the law,
The penalty and forfeit of my bond.

Por. Is he not able to discharge the money ?

Bass. Yes, here I tender it for him in the court ;
Yea, twice the sum : if that will not suffice,
I will be bound to pay it ten times o'er,
On forfeit of my hands, my head, my heart :
If this will not suffice, it must appear
That malice bears down truth. And I beseech you,
Wrest once the law to your authority :
To do a great right do a little wrong :
And curb this cruel devil of his will.

Por. It must not be : there is no power in Venice
Can alter a decree established :
'Twill be recorded for a precedent ;
And many an error, by the same example,
Will rush into the state : it cannot be.

Shy. A Daniel come to judgment ! yea, a Daniel !

O wise young judge, how I do honor thee!

Por. I pray you, let me look upon the bond.

Shy. Here 'tis, most reverend doctor, here it is.

Por. Shylock, there's thrice thy money offered thee.

Shy. An oath, an oath, I have an oath in heaven :
Shall I lay perjury upon my soul?

No, not for Venice.

Por. Why, this bond is forfeit ;
And lawfully by this the Jew may claim
A pound of flesh, to be by him cut-off
Nearest the merchant's heart :— Be merciful :
Take thrice thy money : bid me tear the bond.

Shy. When it is paid according to the tenor :—
It doth appear, you are a worthy judge ;
You know the law, your exposition
Hath been most sound : I charge you by the law
Whereof you are a well-deserving pillar,
Proceed to judgement : by my soul I swear,
There is no power in the tongue of man
To alter me ; I stay here on my bond.

Ant. Most heartily I do beseech the court
To give the judgment.

Por. Why then, thus it is
You must prepare your bosom for his knife.

Shy. O noble judge ! O excellent young man !

Por. For the intent and purpose of the law
Hath full relation to the penalty,
Which here appeareth due upon the bond.

Shy. 'Tis very true : O wise and upright judge !
How much more elder art thou than thy looks !

Por. Therefore, lay bare your bosom.

Shy. Ah, his breast ;
So says the bond ;—Doth it not, noble judge ?—
Nearest his heart, those are the very words.

Por. It is so. Are there balance here to weigh
The flesh ?

Shy. I have them ready.

Por. Have by some surgeon, Shylock, on your charge,
To stop his wounds, lest he do bleed to death.

Shy. Is it so nominated in the bond ?

Por. It is not so express'd ; But what of that ?
'Twere good you do so much for charity.

Shy. I cannot find it ; 'tis not in the bond.

Por. You, merchant, have you anything to say ?

Ant. But little ; I am arm'd and well prepar'd.—
Give me your hand, Bassanio ; fare you well !
Grieve not that I am fallen to this for you ;
For herein fortune shows herself more kind
Than is her custom ; it is still her use,
To let the wretched man outlive his wealth,
To view with hollow eye, and wrinkled brow,
An age of poverty ; from which lingering penance
Of such a misery doth she cut me off.
Commend me to your honorable wife :
'Tell her the process of Antonio's end,
Say how I lov'd you, speak me fair in death ;
And, when the tale is told, bid her be judge,
Whether Bassanio had not once a love.
Repent not you, that you shall lose your friend,
And he repents not that he pays your debt ;
For, if the Jew do cut but deep enough,
I'll pay it instantly with all my heart.

Bass. Antonio, I am married to a wife,
Which is as dear to me as life itself ;
But life itself, my wife and all the world,
Are not with me esteem'd above thy life ;
I would lose all, ay, sacrifice them all
Here to this devil, to deliver you.

Por. Your wife would give you little thanks for that,
If she were by to hear you make the offer.

Shy. We trifle time ; I pray thee, pursue sentence.

Por. A pound of that same merchant's flesh is thine :
The court awards it, and the law doth give it.

Shy. Most rightful judge !

Por. And you must cut this flesh from off his breast ;
The law allows it, and the court awards it.

Shy. Most learned judge !— A sentence ; come, prepare.

Por. Tarry a little ;— there is something else.—
This bond doth give thee here no jot of blood ;
The words expressly are a pound of flesh ;
Take then thy bond, take thou thy pound of flesh ;
But in the cutting it, if thou dost shed
One drop of Christian blood, thy lands and goods
Are, by the laws of Venice, confiscate
Unto the state of Venice.

Gra. O upright judge !— Mark, Jew ; — O learned
judge !

Shy. Is that the law ?

Por. Thyself shall see the act :
For as thou urgest justice, be assur'd
Thou shalt have justice, more than thou desir'st.

Gra. O learned judge !— Mark, Jew ; — a learned
judge !

Shy. I take this offer then, — pay the bond thrice,
And let the Christian go.

Bass. Here is the money.

Por. Soft!

The Jew shall have all justice; — soft! — no haste; —
He shall have nothing but the penalty.

Gra. O Jew! an upright judge, a learned judge!

Por. Therefore, prepare thee to cut off the flesh.
Shed thou no blood; nor cut thou less, nor more,
But just a pound of flesh; if thou tak'st more,
Or less, than just a pound, — be it but so much
As makes it light, or heavy, in the substance,
Or the division of a twentieth part
Of one poor scruple; nay, if the scale do turn
But in the estimation of a hair, —
Thou diest, and all thy goods are confiscate.

Gra. A second Daniel, a Daniel, Jew!
Now, infidel, I have thee on the hip.

Por. Why doth the Jew pause? take thy forfeiture.

Shy. Give me my principal, and let me go.

Bass. I have it ready for thee; here it is.

Por. He hath refus'd it in the open court;
He shall have merely justice, and his bond.

Gra. A Daniel, still say I; a second Daniel! —
I thank thee, Jew, for teaching me that word.

Shy. Shall I not have barely my principal?

Por. Thou shalt have nothing but the forfeiture,
To be so taken at thy peril, Jew.

Shy. Why then the devil give him good of it!
I'll stay no longer question.

Por. Tarry, Jew;

The law hath yet another hold on you.
 It is enacted in the laws of Venice, —
 If it be proved against an alien,
 That by direct or indirect attempts
 He seek the life of any citizen,
 The party, 'gainst the which he doth contrive,
 Shall seize one-half his goods ; the other half
 Comes to the privy coffer of the state ;
 And the offender's life lies in the mercy
 Of the Duke only, 'gainst all other voice,
 In which predicament, I say, thou stand'st :
 For it appears by manifest proceeding,
 That, indirectly, and directly, too,
 Thou hast contriv'd against the very life
 Of the defendant ; and thou hast incurr'd
 The danger formerly by me rehears'd ;
 Down, therefore and beg mercy of the duke.

Gra. Beg that thou may'st have leave to hang thyself :
 And yet, thy wealth being forfeit to the state,
 Thou hast not left the value of a cord ;
 Therefore, thou must be hang'd at the state's charge.

Duke. That thou shalt see the difference of our spirit,
 I pardon thee thy life before thou ask it :
 For half thy wealth, it is Antonio's ;
 The other half comes to the general state,
 Which humbleness may drive unto a fine.

Por. Ay, for the state ; not for Antonio.

Shy. Nay, take my life and all, pardon not that :
 You take my house, when you do take the prop
 That doth sustain my house ; you take my life,
 When you do take the means whereby I live.

Por. What mercy can you render him, Antonio?

Gra. A halter, gratis ; nothing else, for God's sake !

Ant. So please my lord the duke, and all the court,
To quit the fine for one-half of his goods ;
I am content, so he will let me have
The other half in use, — to render it,
Upon his death, unto the gentleman
That lately stole his daughter ;
Two things provided more, — That for this favor,
He presently become a Christian ;
The other, that he do record a gift,
Here in the court, of all he dies possess'd,
Unto his son Lorenzo, and his daughter.

Duke. He shall do this ; or else I do recant
The pardon that I late pronounced here.

Por. Art thou contented, Jew ? What dost thou say ?

Shy. I am content.

Por. Clerk, draw a deed of gift.

Shy. I pray you give me leave to go from hence ;
I am not well ; send the deed after me,
And I will sign it.

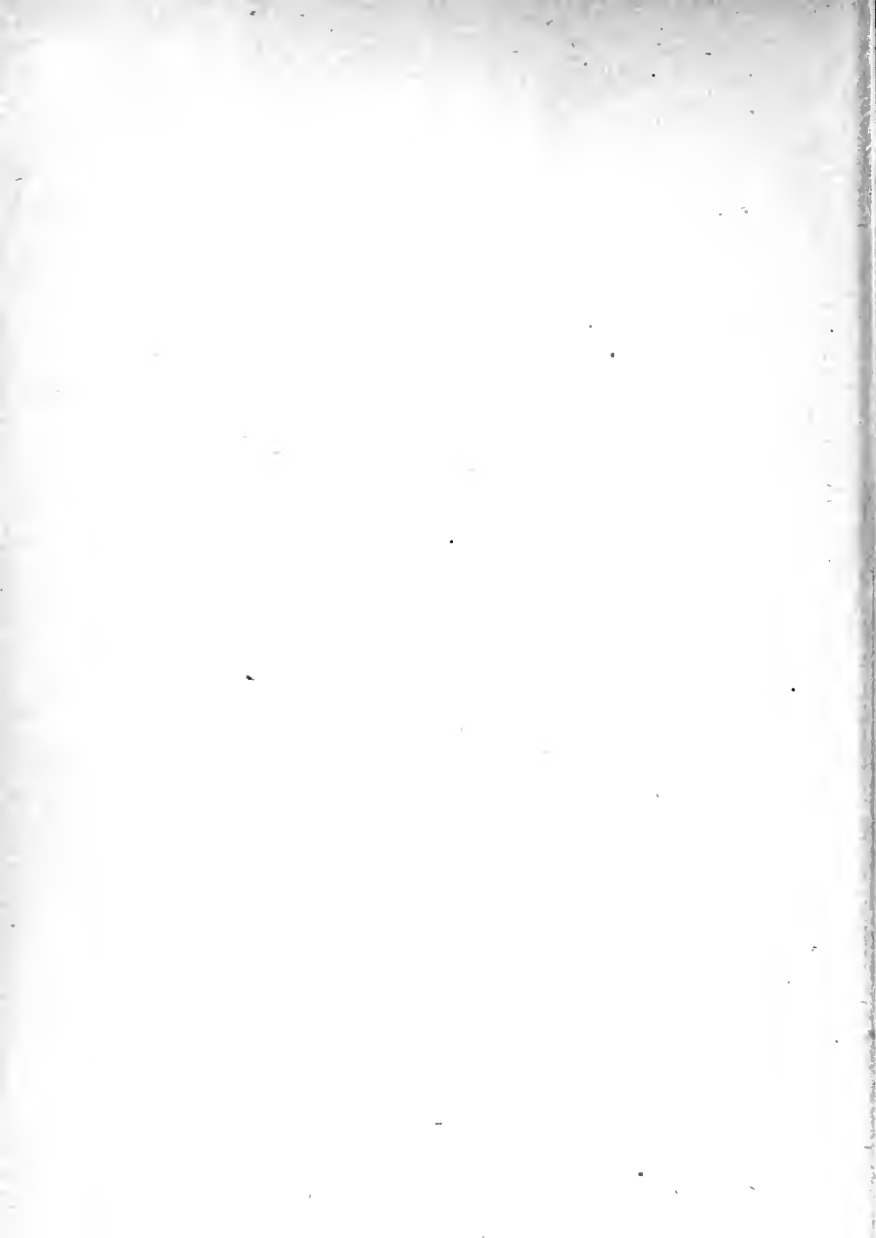
Duke. Get thee gone, but do it.

Gra. In christening, thou shalt have two god-fathers ;
Had I been judge, thou should'st have had ten more,
To bring thee to the gallows, not the font.

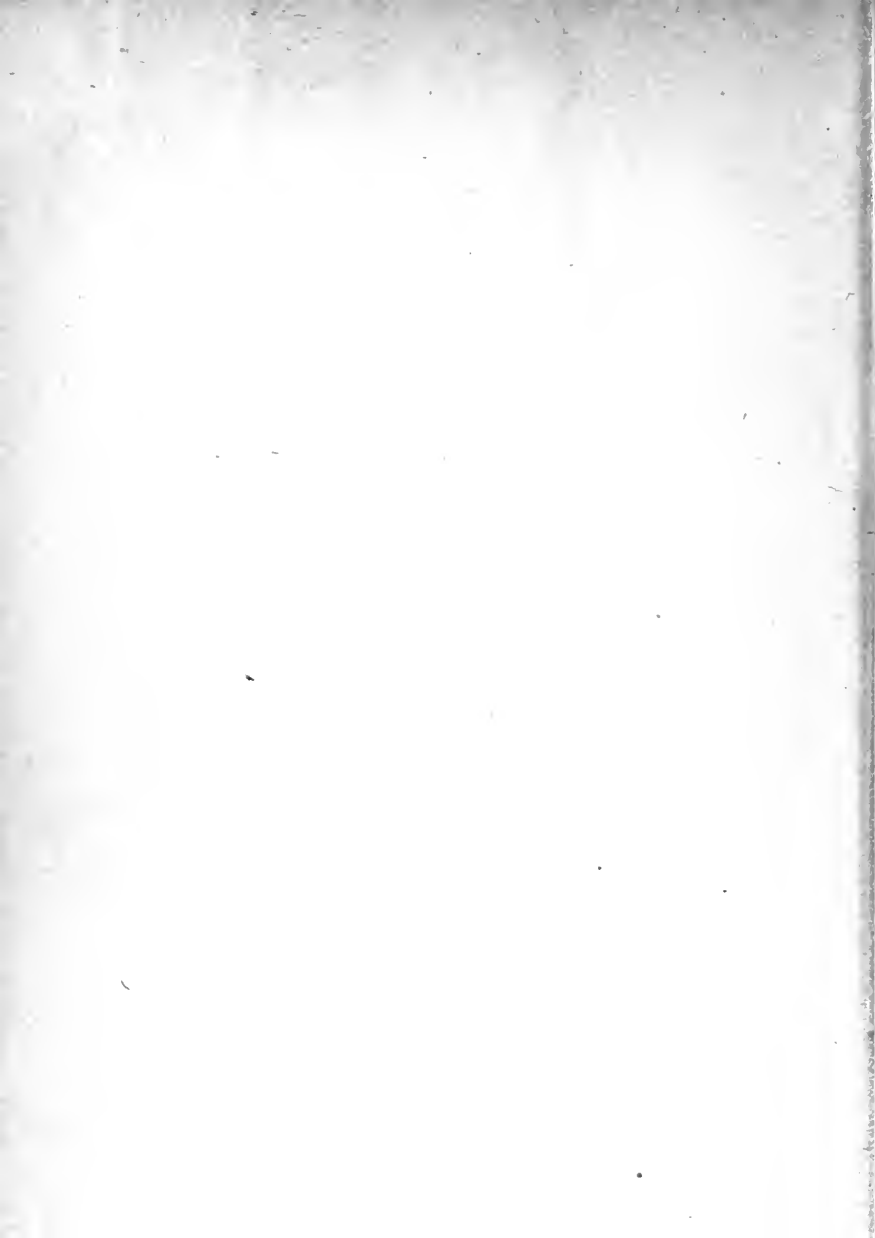
[*Exit* Shylock.

Duke. Sir, I entreat you home with me to dinner.

Por. I humbly do desire your grace of pardon ;
I must away this night towards Padua,
And it is meet I presently set forth.



MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.



MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.

At Messina, in the grand palace of Leonato the governor, lived Hero, his beautiful, gentle-souled daughter, and Beatrice, his brilliant, sharp-witted niece.

Among the many noble guests of Leonato were the Don Pedro, the prince of Arragon and his friends Claudio and Benedick — "the merry Benedick."

From the time Beatrice and Benedick met there was war between them— a sharp, hard war of words.

Sometimes it was amusing to listen to them: fascinating to watch the quick exchange of flashing wit; for so equal were they, surely no one could say which in any combat came off victor.

On this particular visit to Leonato of which Shakespear writes, Beatrice opened fire with saying, as she entered the great hall and found Benedick in lively conversation with his host and his friends.

“I wonder that you will still be talking, Signior Benedick. Nobody marks you.”

Ben. What, my dear Lady Disdain! are you yet living?

Beat. Is it possible Disdain should die while she hath such meet food to feed it as Signior Benedick? Courtesy herself must change to disdain if *you* came into her presence.

Ben. Then is courtesy a turncoat. But it is certain I am loved of all ladies, only you excepted. And I would I could find in my heart that I had not a hard heart; for truly I love none.

Beat. A dear happiness to women! I thank God I am of your humour for that. I had rather hear my dog bark at a crow than a man say he loves me.

Ben. God keep your ladyship still in that mind. So some gentle man or other shall 'scape a scratched face.

Beat. Scratching would not make it worse if it were such a face as yours.

Ben. You are a rare parrot-teacher.

Beat. A bird of my tongue is better than a beast of yours.

And so these two sharp-witted people would go on and on railing at each other. Good-natured enough they would be at the beginning; but too often the wit would grow a little too sharp or a little too personal and one or the other—sometimes one, sometimes the other—would be driven from the field angry or hurt.

At another time when Benedick was telling a long

story to the Prince and his friends of his own adventures in war, Beatrice broke in with, "Indeed, I would wager to eat all the men that ever you did kill."

Now this was a cutting word to as brave a young knight as Benedick truly was; and when, later still, as the prince laughed heartily at Benedick's witty words, Beatrice sneeringly said, "You are, indeed, a king's jester," Benedick's wrath and exasperation with this too brilliant young lady knew no bounds.

All this time the gentle Hero was always quiet and meek before her guests, as in those days it was thought a woman should be. Claudio, himself ready enough to chatter and joke with his companions, admired the gentle Hero the more that she was so unlike himself or Beatrice or Benedick. Such is the law of attraction to one's opposite, I suppose.

"How excellent a wife Beatrice would make for our Benedick," said the Prince one day to Leonato.

"O my lord, my lord!" replied Leonato; "in one week's time they would talk each other mad."

As the days wore on, the Prince began to see that little as Claudio might approve of Beatrice as a companion, certainly his dislike did not include the cousin Hero.

"You will be a lover, presently," laughed the good Prince one day, when Claudio had been pouring praises upon the gentle Hero, "and tire your hearers with a book of words. But if you love fair Hero, cherish

it. I will break it to my friend Leonato, and she shall be thine."

And away the kind Prince went to tell the story to his friend, assure him of Claudio's honor as a gentleman, of his valor as a soldier, of his utter worthiness in every way to be considered as a lover for his beautiful daughter, Hero.

As Hero herself had already fallen quite in love with the noble Claudio and as Leonato had great faith in his friend, the Prince, and therefore in the Prince's friends, you may be sure there was little trouble in bringing about a most happy result.

"Now," said the Prince, to Claudio, "if only Beatrice and Benedick could be brought to regard each other with more tenderness and less sharpness; and I could see my friend Benedick as happy as my friend Claudio!"

"And if I could see my cousin Beatrice as happy as I," said the gentle Hero.

Then these three fell to devising a plan by which they should bring the unruly Beatrice and Benedick into a better feeling towards each other.

Their plan was this. They should watch an opportunity when Benedick sat alone in the garden, as was his custom, reading. Then Claudio with some friend — Leonato if he would agree, — would walk up and down behind the shrubbery, pretending not to know that Benedick was there, and talk of Beatrice's love for Benedick, how pitiful it was, and how that



THE PLOT.

Benedick did not return it and so bless himself and her.

Hero, too, was to watch an opportunity when she should find Beatrice alone ; and with her maid was to



BEATRICE LISTENS.

talk of Benedick's love for Beatrice, recite the story of his brave deeds in battle, of his chivalry to women, and deplore the blindness that kept Beatrice from seeing that all the sharp wit with which he always greeted her was but a covering for a tender, loving, longing heart.

Of course the plan worked to perfection else, we should never have had the comedy of "Much Ado About Nothing." Benedick's kind heart was touched that the beautiful Beatrice should be secretly pining for love of him. Moreover, he was moved with soldierly admiration for her bravery and womanly strength that would have kept her love a secret, even though it broke her heart.

Beatrice, on the other hand, piqued as she always had been with Benedick's indifference to her, felt first a little gleam of triumph that after all his thoughts of her had not been so sharp as his words, then came a womanly tenderness towards the brave man who loved her—and, to make a long story short, Beatrice and Benedick became most excellent friends and, at last, most devoted lovers. The Prince was delighted and everybody seemed happy.

"Alas," sighed Benedick, with a comical expression of make-believe woe; "when I said I would die a bachelor, I did not think I should live to be married!"

But just now, a new guest arrived at the palace. It was a half-brother of the Prince, Don John, one of those wicked, malicious, cruel souls, who delight in nothing so much as causing wretchedness and misery for other people.

Seeing this happy company, the spirit of evil blazed out in him. "I hate the Prince and I hate his friend Claudio," muttered he to himself. "I will revenge myself upon them."



DON JOHN AND BORACHIO.

Calling his friend and servant, Borachio, a man as cruel and as wicked as himself, he laid out this plan before him. "Go you, Borachio, and address thyself to Margaret, Hero's maid. Persuade her to converse with you this night from her window. I meantime will go to the Prince and Claudio, and tell them it is Hero who speaks with you."

Don John then went in search of the Prince to begin his cruel work. He found him as usual with his favorite Claudio, both conversing happily together of the wondrous beauty and graces of Hero.

"Tis well you have such faith in her," sneered Don John.

The Prince started. "What do you mean?" exclaimed he, catching in Don John's face a look that seemed to express much hidden knowledge.

This was, of course, just what Don John wanted. Then pretending to hesitate, to dread the telling, to grieve that such happiness must be killed, such faith destroyed, he told a long story of Hero's faithlessness and offered that evening to conduct them to the very window from which, as he said, Hero was accustomed to converse with some strange man who climbed to her casement.

And so at night, long after Hero was fast asleep on her beautiful couch, dreaming, no doubt, happy dreams of her Claudio, and of the morrow's wedding-day, the three men crept along among the shubbery beneath her window.

Sure enough, there stood Hero — or at least, it seemed so — leaning from her window; there stood the strange man conversing with her.

One glance was enough. All the love in Claudio's heart turned to bitterness. "Tomorrow at the church, where she should have been made my bride, there will I expose her," cried he, blind with rage.

"And I," cried the Prince, "will help you."

Poor, gentle, loving Hero! As on the next day she stood with Claudio at the altar before the priest, think what must have been her surprise, her grief, her sorrow, to hear Claudio, her friend, her lover, to whom she had given her whole honest heart, break forth in such a torrent of abuse, call her such cruel, shameful names!

For a moment she looked upon him, hardly comprehending what he said; then with a moan she sank upon the altar, fainting.

Claudio and the Prince, hard and cruel as their suspicion had made them — suspicion, I think, always makes us cruel — rushed from the church, leaving the unhappy company to their grief.

"There is some misunderstanding — I doubt not but there be treachery — here," said the good priest, lifting the lifeless Hero from the altar.

"O my father, my father!" wailed Hero, when again she opened her eyes and knew where she was and why the people pressed about her.

"She is innocent, Leonato, innocent, innocent!" said the priest, again and again. "Pause a while," begged he of Leonato,

And let my counsel sway you in this case.
Your daughter, here, the princes left for dead:
Let her awhile be secretly kept in,
And publish it that she is dead indeed:



THE MARRIAGE INTERRUPTED.

Maintain a mourning ostentation,
 And on your family's old monument
 Hang mournful epitaphs, and do all rites
 That appertain unto a burial.

Leon. What shall become of this? what will this do?

F. Fran. Marry, this, well carried, shall on her behalf
 Change slander to remorse; — that is some good:

"She, dying, so it must be maintained,

Upon the instant that she was accus'd,
 Shall be lamented, pitied and excus'd
 Of every hearer: for it so falls out,
 That what we have we prize not to the worth
 Whiles we enjoy it; but being lack'd and lost,
 Why, then we rack the value, then we find
 The virtue that possession would not show us,
 Whiles it was ours, — So will it fare with Claudio;
 When he shall hear she died upon his words,
 The idea of her life shall sweetly creep
 Into his study of imagination;
 And every lovely organ of her life
 Shall come apparell'd in more precious habit,
 More moving delicate, and full of life,
 Into the eye and prospect of his soul,
 Than when she liv'd indeed; then shall he mourn,
 (If ever love had interest in his liver),
 And wish he had not so accus'd her, —
 No, though he thought his accusation true.

And so the word went forth that Hero was dead.

"I am so grieved," said old Leonato, "that the smallest twine may lead me."

"Sweet Hero," sobbed Beatrice. "She is wronged — slandered — undone. O, that I were a man! or that I had any friend who would be a man for my sake!"

Benedick, loving Claudio as he did, knowing that somewhere there must be a cruel misunderstanding, nevertheless, for Beatrice's sake, for Hero's sake, for honor's sake, went forth to find the man who had so wildly denounced the gentle Hero, and had left such pain and sorrow where there had been only pleasure and joy.

Duels were the custom in those days — and in no other way could a wrong be righted, so men thought, than by meeting in deadly combat. None but a coward would accept or entertain a thought of a lesser way.

And Claudio and Benedick were no cowards. "I challenge you," said Benedick, "to answer with your sword the injury you have done to Hero."

"And I accept your challenge," answered Claudio.

Our comedy must have become a tragedy had not justice intervened. Even as they spoke, there was brought before them, bound in irons, a prisoner. The prisoner was Borachio himself; being about to be condemned, he was willing, indeed, to disclose the whole wicked plot of Don John, hoping, no doubt, to thereby gain some mercy for himself.

And now Claudio's anger and hate vanished as they had come. "O, Hero! Hero!" cried he, overcome with grief; "Now thy image appears to me in the rare semblance that I loved at first. And thou, O Leonato, I know not how to pray your patience. Yet must I speak. Choose your revenge yourself. Impose upon me whatever penance your invention can lay upon my sin. And yet I sinned not but in mistaking."

"I cannot bid you bid my daughter live," was Leonato's reply;

That were impossible: but, I pray you both,
 Possess the people in Messina here
 How innocent she died; and if your love
 Can labor aught in sad invention,
 Hang her an epitaph upon her tomb,
 And sing it to her bones, — sing it tonight: —
 To-morrow morning come you to my house."

On the morrow, Claudio, full of grief, came from Hero's tomb to the palace where so short a time before all had been so happy.

"Truly he repents," whispered the old priest. "I do not doubt he loved her," said Leonato to himself, noting Claudio's sad, grief-worn face.

Then leading Hero forth, he stood before him. For an instant Claudio stood transfixed; "Hero — Hero — is this Hero that was dead?"



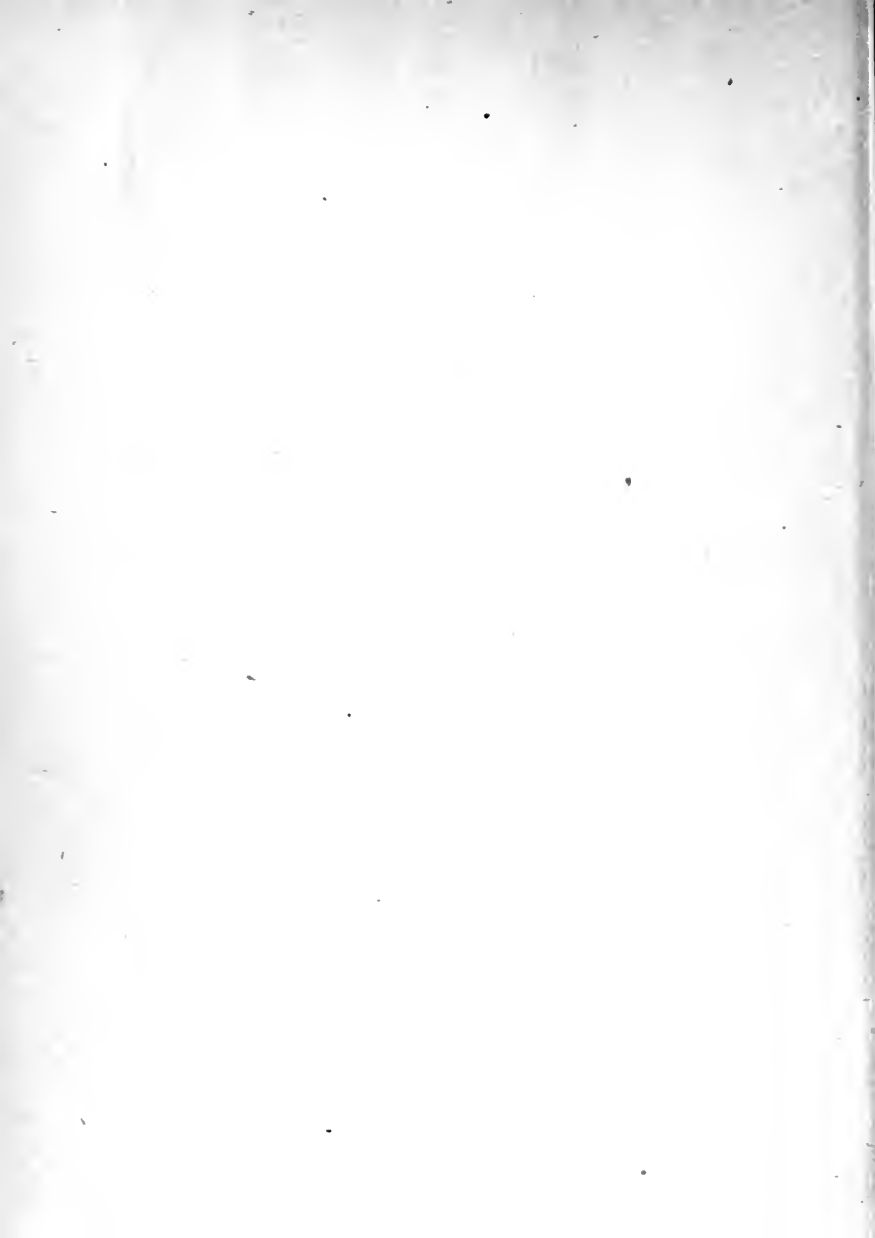
BENEDICK AND BEATRICE.

"Dead only while her slander lived," answered Leonato.

Then followed a long explanation ; there was great rejoicing ; Claudio was forgiven by the gentle Hero, and they were married by the wise old priest.

And Benedick and Beatrice too — mad wits that they were — joined the ceremony. For days and days the palace witnessed but one brilliant festival. In all the land was to be found no happier company than Leonato and the Prince, Claudio and Hero, Benedick and Beatrice.

THE TEMPEST.



THE TEMPEST.

There are two other little plays of Shakespeare's —pretty little stories, almost like fairy-tales —which, perhaps, you will be as glad to read as the heavier and better known tragedies of Macbeth, Hamlet, or Othello.

These two, "The Tempest," and "A Midsummer Night's Dream," are as well known, *in their way*, I think, as those heavier plays we have already read. I wonder if it will not give you an added respect for this wonderful author; if it will not be a proof to you of the broadness of his genius, when you see how easily and freely he seemed to be able to leap from one kind of play-writing to another—from tragedy to comedy, from comedy back to tragedy, and from both to history. Most of our great authors we are content to admire and praise for some one line of excellent writing; but Shakespeare claims our admi-

ration in every way — he is to us poet, philosopher, historian — all.

On a certain beautiful island far out in the sea there lived an old man Prospero, and his daughter Miranda. Prospero had fled to this island when his little daughter was a mere baby, so that she had no recollection of any other home or any other face than that of her father.

It was a strange island — an enchanted island — and when Prospero came there, he found imprisoned in the trees many good spirits. These good spirits had been imprisoned there by an old witch, Sycorax, as her punishment to them for refusing to help her to carry out her wicked schemes.

Proserpo himself had magic powers, and when he came to the island and heard these good spirits moaning in the trees, he released them all. So happy and grateful were they, that ever after they were all his most obedient servants.

One little spirit, light and airy as the very winds upon which he sailed, took great delight in tormenting an ugly old spirit — Caliban.

Ariel and all the other spirits, as to that matter, owed this Caliban a grudge and felt they had a right to put upon him every spite and every insult because he was the son of their old enemy Sycorax.

This Caliban, because he had inherited his mother's

wicked nature, and because he had been taught from his babyhood to do nothing but evil, did not understand the kind, good will of Prospero, had felt only black hate and jealousy towards the freed and happy spirits who served Prospero so gratefully.

Ariel delighted in nothing better than to torment the lazy Caliban, to pinch him and tickle him and roll him into the mud. He liked to spring down upon him in the shape of an ape, and grin and chatter at him, till Caliban was beside himself with rage; and then changing himself into a hedge-hog to roll himself up against Caliban's bare feet; or, changing himself to a bug or a bee, to whizz and buzz about Caliban's ears and bite and worry him, as he tried to sleep in his bed, a filthy bog in the forest.

Now having all these spirits obedient to his will, Prospero had, of course, power over wind and wave, storm and tide.

One day, seeing a great ship coming straight towards the island, he called his daughter to him and said, "My child, do you see that great ship, far out upon the water? Behold, it comes toward our island. It is filled with living beings like you and me. But they must not come here. Spirits of the wind, spirits of the storm, dash upon the ship at sea,—destroy it,—turn it from our island."

"O father, have mercy; save the poor souls on the ship!" cried the daughter, her woman's heart moved to pity.



MIRANDA AND HER FATHER.

"Fear not, my child; the people shall not be hurt, only frightened, and their ship turned away from us. I do this for your good, my only child, to save you from the pain of ever knowing other human beings. Thus far, you have been free and happy because you have known only me, your father. Sit here, by my side and let me tell you the story of our lives.

"It is now twelve years since I left my dukedom and came here with you, a mere baby, to this enchanted isle. You were a princess then, and my only heir.

"I had a brother, Antonio. To him I trusted everything, my commerce, my wealth, all the affairs of my dukedom, that I might bury myself in my books and be happy in my own way, studying deep into the wonders of hidden knowledge.

"But all too late, I learned that my brother, your uncle, was turning the attention and the love of my subjects away from me and towards himself. A wicked ambition had arisen in him, to be himself duke. And to carry out his purpose, he went for aid to my enemy, the King of Naples, and together they drove me from my throne. He carried me in a ship far out to sea; and then set me with thee, afloat in a little boat without sail or mast or oars to guide me — leaving me alone to perish."

"But the gods pitied me, and we were guided by them to this desert isle. But now, go away, my child. The spirit Ariel comes to speak with me. Well,

brave spirit, tell me what you have done for me with this tempest you have set up upon the waters."

"In the ship," began Ariel, "was Ferdinand, the son of the king of Naples. He first fell into the water; and



ARIEL.

while his father lamented the death of his beautiful boy, as he supposed, I carefully drew him safely to the shore. Not a hair of his head is harmed, and his princely garments, though heavy with the sea, shine only more brilliantly than before."

My good Ariel!" cried Prospero. "Now, where is the king?"

"The king and your brother — the brother who stole your throne from you,— I left weeping and searching for the young prince whom they believe to be drowned. Of the whole crew not one is lost, but each, in some part of our shore alone, thinks himself the only one that is saved."

"You have faithfully done your work, my good Ariel," said Prospero. "Now one thing more. Go to the young prince Ferdinand and bring him to me."

Away flew Ariel to the place where the prince, worn out with grief and exhaustion, lay half asleep.

"Come, sir," said Ariel, "follow me. Listen, listen, and follow me.

"Full fathom five thy father lies :
Of his bones are coral made ;
Those are pearls that were his eyes :
Nothing of him that doth fade,
But doth suffer a sea-change
Into something rich and strange.
Sea-nymphs hourly ring his knell :
Hark ! now I hear them,— ding-dong, bell."

This was a strange story of the lost father, the young prince thought. And who could be singing it? Surely no one was to be seen. Still the voice led him on; till at length he stood in the presence of Prospero and Miranda.

"Look!" said Prospero, as the young prince advanced.

"O father, what do I see?" whispered Miranda, half afraid. "Surely this is a spirit!"

"No, my child, this is no spirit; but a man like your own father — a young, handsome man who eats and sleeps and has senses even as we have."

Miranda, who had supposed all men must be old and gray and bowed with age as her father was, was at first dumb with amazement. Ferdinand, who had supposed himself on a desert isle, looked with equal amazement upon the beautiful maiden who stood blushing and smiling before him.

Prospero looked on, and shook his gray head with delight, as he perceived the admiration between the young prince and the young princess. "They shall love each other," said he to himself. "But I must prove this young prince's constancy. I will test him." And so, advancing with an air of sternness, he said to Ferdinand, "Follow me, thou strange youth. Your feet and neck shall be tied together. Sea-water shall be your only drink. Shell-fish your only food. Follow me, young man."

"Until I see a stronger enemy than you, old man, I will not be tied, nor be feasted upon sea-water and shell-fish. I will —" but with one sweep of his magic sword Prospero transfixed him where he stood.

"O father, father, have mercy upon the beautiful youth. He seems to me a good man — a true man,"

begged Miranda, when she saw what her father had done.

"Silence, young woman," thundered Prospero, pretending to be angry with his child. "What know you of youth—you, who have seen only this one, and the ugly Caliban. I tell you most men are as much nobler than this youth here, as he is nobler than Caliban. And now, "young man, turning to the prince, "go to work. Pile up these logs in place. And you, maiden, go to the cave. I will to my studies."

Poor Ferdinand! log-carrying was hard, hard work to him, all unused as was he, a king's son, to labor.

"O do not work so hard, so hard," cried Miranda, coming forth from her cave and finding her lover half dead with fatigue. "My father is with his books at study. Pray rest until he comes again to bid you work."

"I dare not," answered Ferdinand; but so much in love with each other were these two, that the work lagged more and more, and more and more they talked together and smiled upon each other, and grew to love each other.

"Ah, my daughter shall be Queen of Naples," said Prospero to himself, standing near by, invisible, watching the youth and maiden in all they said. "It is just as I would wish, just as I would wish," laughed he to himself. "Now go on, my good prince. Tell the child who you are, and offer to her, to share your principedom and to be your queen."

And Ferdinand, in long, courtly speeches, such as princes are supposed to make, did tell Miranda who he was, and did ask her to share his principedom with him.

"Good, good," chuckled Prospero to himself, "Now, I might as well make myself visible to these children.

"Fear not, my child," said he appearing before them. "I have overheard all you have said, both you and this young prince Ferdinand. You have been honorable. I approve of all you have said. And now, brave prince, if I have seemed severe with you, it was only to test you. See, I make rich amends by giving you my daughter—my daughter, who is, indeed, above all praise. Now I must away."

Then Prospero left them, happy maiden and brave youth, and went to call the good spirit Ariel. "Well, Ariel, what have you been doing? What have you done with the king and the others of the crew?"

"I have left them," laughed the roguish sprite, "half out of their senses with fear, such strange sights and sounds as I have put upon them. When they were weary and hungry, almost to starvation, I set before them a delicious banquet; then, just as they were ready to eat, I appeared before them in the form of a fierce harpy, and the feast vanished before their eyes.

"Then I spoke to them, and reminded them of their cruelty, long years ago, to one Prospero and his

infant daughter, and told them it was for those sins that they now were persecuted. And, good master," continued Ariel, "I think they do now repent deeply, sincerely."



THE BROTHERS UNITED.

"Then bring them hither, Ariel," interrupted Prospero. "If you, a mere sprite, can pity them, surely I, a human being, one with them, can have compassion on them."

Away flew Ariel, happy in his errand, and soon

brought, with others, Antonio, the false brother and the King of Naples into the presence of Prospero.

Weary and hungry, half dead with suffering, the false duke and the king did not recognize Prospero.

One by one he made himself known to them. Truly the brother and the king were repentant. They fell upon their knees before Prospero and with tears begged his forgiveness.

The good Prospero, knowing that they had in all these years never known the happiness of a free, clear conscience, and knowing how on the island they had suffered from fright, from shipwreck, from cold and starvation, was ready indeed to forgive them, wholly and most generously.

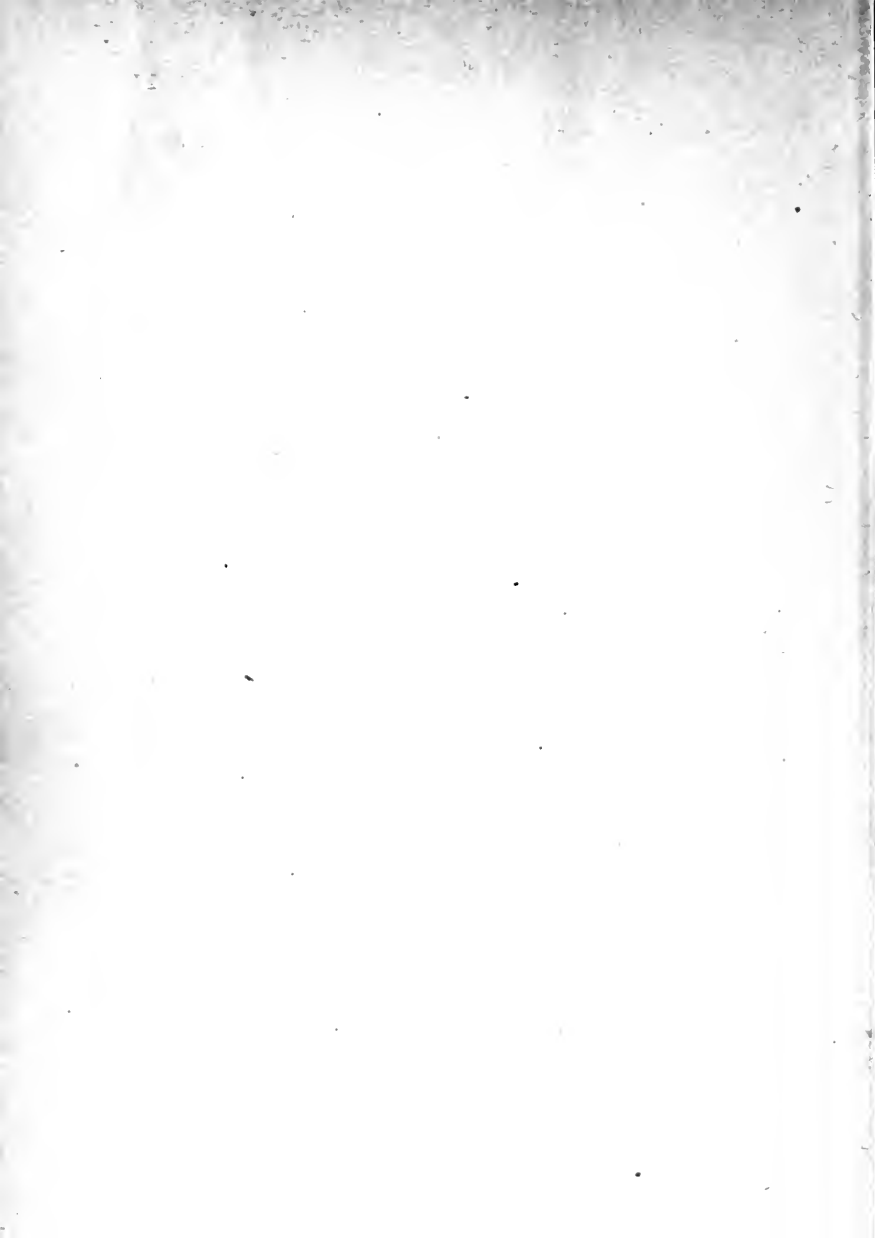
"And now, good king," said Prospero, "let us talk no more about it; henceforth we will bury all the past, and be honest friends. And see, I have here in this cave a gift in store for you — something that will gladden your heart more than kingdoms or riches could ever do."

And leading the king towards the cave, he showed him the young prince, safe and happy, with the beautiful Miranda by his side.

We need not try to describe the scene that followed — the father's joy, the young prince's delight, the explanations that followed, the tears, the embraces, the blessings.

Everybody was happy, everybody was forgiven, everybody was contented; and away they all went

over the sparkling blue sea to their old home. Prospero took possession of his former throne ; Ferdinand and Miranda were married with all the splendor and all the display of ceremony that the rich duke and the great king — both proud, loving fathers — could summon to grace the marriage festival ; and, for all we know, they all lived, as the fairy stories say, henceforth a happy, peaceful life to the very end of their days.



A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S
DREAM.



LYSANDER AND HERMIA.

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM.

In a beautiful moonlit forest lived Oberon and Titania, king and queen of the fairies, with all their little fairy people.

In a city not far away lived a king and his beautiful daughter Hermia. Now Hermia loved a youth, Lysander, while her father, for some reason of his own, was determined she should marry another youth, Demetrius.

"I will go to the Duke," thundered the angry father, "and he shall enforce the law that says the daughter that refuses to marry the man her father chooses for her shall be condemned to death."

Poor Hermia! This was hard indeed; and away she fled to her lover Lysander for protection.

If she had only gone away quietly without telling of her intended escape all might have been well. But alas, maiden-like, she told her secret to her dear companion, Helena; and Helena — beside herself with jealousy because Demetrius, whom she herself loved, cared nothing for her, and could see nothing but the loveliness and sweetness of the gentle Hermia, — hastened to Demetrius and told him of Hermia's intended escape with Lysander.

"I shall follow them!" cried Demetrius.

"And I shall follow you!" persisted Helena, who foolishly imagined that the love she craved from Demetrius, she could in some way force to come to her. As if love could ever be forced!

And so it came about that Hermia and Lysander, fleeing from the cruel law, and Demetrius and Helena jealously pursuing, all entered the great forest at nearly the same hour.

Scolding and weeping, Demetrius passed a great oak, at the foot of which sat Oberon, the king of the fairies.

"Poor lady," said Oberon, as they passed by and he overheard the impatient words of Demetrius and the weeping of Helena. "The youth loves her not, I fear, as she loves him.

"Puck, Puck, come here," called the little king, who was always a friend to all lovers. "Did you see

the sweet Athenian maiden and the disdainful youth who lately passed our path? Go find them. Perchance they may stop to rest and will fall asleep on some mossy bank. If they do, drop into the youth's eye a drop of the juice from the little flower *Love in Idleness*. Then when he awakes he shall love the first living thing upon which his eye doth rest; and as the sweet maiden will be near by, she will be made forever happy."

Now Puck, who was a funny, jolly little sprite, who loved nothing so much as a bit of fun, hastened away to do the bidding of the fairy king.

Soon he came indeed upon an Athenian youth and maiden asleep upon a mossy bank. "All just as my good Oberon would have it," laughed Puck to himself, as he stooped to put the flower-juice in the youth's eye.

But alas, alas! The good king's plans went far astray. For it was Lysander whom Puck found; it was into Lysander's eye that the love-charm was dropped. To be sure it would seem that no harm could be done; for with Hermia at his side, it would seem the most likely thing in the world that his eye should first rest upon that maiden; and as he loved her with all his heart before, how could he love her any more even under a fairy love-charm?

But it didn't happen at all that way, for all it seemed so likely; if it had, why then we should have had no story — no play of "Midsummer Night's Dream."



The cruel Demetrius, intent only on overtaking Hermia, had hastened along through the woods, leaving poor Helena, breathless and tired out, far behind. She, crying as if her heart would break, came upon the bank where Lysander lay.

"Lysander here? asleep?" cried she, stooping over him, "or are you dead? Speak, speak, Lysander. Good sir, if you are alive, awake and speak?"

And Lysander did awake, and Lysander did speak; and such words as the weeping Helena little expected to hear.

"O, thou transparent Helena!" cried Lysander, the love-charm, you see, beginning to work. "Nature here shows her art, that through thy bosom makes me

see thy heart. Where is Demetrius? O how fit a word is that vile name to perish on my sword."

"Do not say so, Lysander; say not so; what though he love your Hermia, Hermia yet loves you; then be content."



LYSANDER AND HELENA.

"Content with Hermia?" broke in Lysander; "No, I do repent the tedious moments I have spent with her. Not Hermia, but Helena, I love! Who would not change a raven for a dove?"

All this and so much more Lysander said, looking the while with the tenderest love upon Helena.

Poor Helena was dazed indeed. Was it not bitter enough that Demetrius scorned her love, without Lysander, Hermia's lover, mocking her woe with such words as these?

Meantime Puck, beginning to fear he had made a mistake in some way, fled to Oberon.

"Hasten, hasten, Puck," said Oberon, full of pity for the gentle Hermia, "you have applied the love-charm wrongly. Find Demetrius, give *him* the love-juice. Then bring the lady Helena to him. Let his eyes first rest upon her that he may love her as he should."

Puck, enjoying the fun, although he meant to be faithful to his master's bidding, hastened away to do as he had been told.

But, O dear! matters, you will say, grew only worse and worse. Now Lysander and Demetrius both began to pour out their extravagant words of love and praise and admiration upon the still more perplexed Helena.

Hermia, too, who so recently had been flying with one of these lovers from the other, was no less puzzled than Helena. Each thought the other in some plot against her. High words followed—a real quarrel began between these two life-long friends. Meantime Lysander and Demetrius, also quarreling, had withdrawn into the deeper wood to fight together—both for the love of Helena.

"Puck, Puck," said Oberon, who had been listen-

ing to all that these youths and maidens had been saying, "you must save these lovers. Follow them quickly into the wood, bring down upon the air a dense fog, lead them astray in the dark that they may lose each other. Lead them on through the wood, till wearied out, they fall asleep. Again drop the flower juice into Lysander's eyes, that he may return to his first love, and both may think it has been but a vexatious dream."

Puck set to work in earnest; for he liked not his master's chiding for his carelessness. He managed to lead Lysander back to Hermia; and there he left them to awake by-and-by and to repeat to each other the terrible dreams they had had during this strange night.

Helena and Demetrius, too, Puck brought together; and when at last, Helena, soothed and quieted by a long, sweet sleep into which, no doubt, Oberon had put sweet dreams, found that Demetrius' words of love were indeed sincere, although she was still surprised and could hardly understand how it could have come about, she accepted with the wonderful graciousness with which we always accept the thing we like, the changed condition of affairs, and harmony was indeed restored all around.

The two maidens, now no longer rivals, became again the loving friends they had always been; all unkind words were forgiven; Demetrius and Lysander agreed to give up their idea of fighting to

kill each other, and peace and happiness was restored.

The good king Oberon and the jolly little Puck, invisible to the lovers, danced and pranced about in true fairy fashion and were as happy as happy could be to see the happiness they had brought about.

The moon smiling softly upon the scene, sank quietly out of sight; the great jolly-faced sun, bursting through the morning clouds, smiled broadly upon the happy lovers, who, hand in hand like happy little children, walked forth from the forest, back to the city whence a few hours before all had fled in such fright and grief — little dreaming how soon all would be turned into joy and harmony.



ROMEO AND JULIET.



ROMEO AND JULIET.

The houses of Montague and Capulet (for in this manner are these old families spoken of) had, for long, long years, been at deadly enmity. Eternal hatred had they sworn towards each other, and often were the streets of the city disturbed by brawls among the servants of these families.

The heads of the two houses, Capulet and Montague, stood high in state; and although for most part they preserved an appearance of courtesy towards each other when they met at court, it was well known that each but waited his opportunity ever to fall upon the other; that each watched jealously and enviously every attention paid by the prince to either family, and that every sign of royal favor was but so much added fuel to this old fire of hate.

The servants of the two houses, although they carried their love of quarrel with something less of dignity than did their masters at the court, were by no means lacking in spirit; neither did they, in their

fashion, ever lose an opportunity to indulge in open warfare.

"Here come Abraham and Balthazar, servants of the house of Montague!" said Sampson, one day, as, with Gregory, another of the house of Capulet, he sauntered along the public highway.

"My naked sword is ready," bawled Sampson, as soon as the servants of the house of Montague were within hearing.

"Wilt thou turn thy back and run?" sneered Gregory.

"Not I," replied Sampson, watching the approach of the enemy; "but we will get the law on our side; we will provoke them to begin the quarrel."

"I will frown at them as they pass by," said Gregory.

"And I will bite my thumb at them; which, if they bear it, is a disgrace to them," added Sampson.

"What! do you bite your thumb at us, sir?" cried Abraham, the servant of the house of Montague, as he drew near.

"I do bite my thumb, sir," answered Sampson with an insolent air.

"Do *you* bite your thumb at us?" turning from Sampson to Gregory.

"I do bite my thumb," answered Gregory, with the same insolent laugh.

And so the quarrel began; how it would have ended, we can never tell; for, in the midst of it, after



THE ENCOUNTER.

Capulet himself and Montague himself, and even Ladies Capulet and Montague themselves, had been drawn into the street, disturbed by the noise they heard, the Prince drew near ;

“Rebellious subjects,” cried the Prince, “enemies to peace,

Profaners of this neighbour-stained steel,—
Will they not hear?—what ho ! you men, you beasts,—
Throw your mistemper'd weapons to the ground,
And hear the sentence of your moved prince.—
Three civil brawls, bred of an airy word,
By thee, old Capulet, and Montague,
Have thrice disturb'd the quiet of our streets ;
If ever you disturb our streets again,
Your lives shall pay the forfeit of the peace,
For this time, all the rest depart away :
You, Capulet, shall go along with me :
And, Montague, come you this afternoon,
To know our further pleasure in this case,
To old Free-town, our common judgment-place ;
Once more, on pain of death, all men depart.”

And now with these two lords, Capulet and Montague, the heads of these two houses, hating each other with such fury, can you imagine anything more wholly unfortunate and out of all order and place, than that Romeo, the heir of the house of Montague and Juliet, the heiress of the house of Capulet, should fall in love with each other !

But this is exactly what these two children did ;

and no end of trouble and pain and death even, did it bring.

"Good-morning, cousin," said Benvolio to Romeo.

"Is the day so young," answered Romeo, wearily.

"Ah me! sad hours seem long!"

"What sadness lengthens Romeo's hours?" asked Benvolio, full of sympathy for his cousin. "Art thou in love?"

"Out" answered Romeo, shortly.

"Out of love?"

"Out of her favor with whom I am in love," answered Romeo, with a true lover-like sigh. "I have lost myself. This is not Romeo: he's some other-where."

"But, tell me, Romeo, who is this you love?"

"What, shall I groan and tell thee?" answered Romeo, with tragic, uprolled eyes.

"Groan? why no; but tell me," answered Benvolio, smiling at Romeo's lack-a-day air.

"But she I love — she hath foresworn to love; and in that vow do I live dead, that lives to tell it now."

"Then, good Romeo, be advised by me; forget to think of her."

"O teach me how I should forget to think! But he that is stricken blind cannot forget the precious treasure of his eyesight lost. Farewell, thou canst not teach me to forget!"

And so saying, Romeo turned and walked away; while Benvolio laughed to think of his cousin's long

face, and to think, how soon, in all probability, he would be ready again to fall in love with the next new pretty face he chanced to see.

Well, well! this was a sad state of affairs, indeed! This Romeo of Montague and Juliet of Capulet in love with each other! Romeo about the streets bewailing his sad fate that he, Romeo, should so love Juliet, who never could love him. And Juliet, at her open lattice, looking out into the moonlight so sweetly sleeping upon the bank, bewailing that she, Juliet, should so love Romeo who never could love her. For not yet did either know that each so loved the other.

But as if all this were not complicated enough, and hopeless enough, there must needs at this very time come to Verona to seek the fair Juliet's hand, a youth named Paris — a fair, honest, noble man, a kinsman of the Prince.

"What say you, Capulet, to my suit?" asked Paris, when he had presented himself to the father of Juliet, and had presented his purpose to him.

"My child is yet a stranger to the world," said old Capulet, tenderly — for he loved this beautiful child of his — this fair Juliet. "But woo her gently, Paris, and if it be her will, then give I my consent."

But neither Capulet nor Paris dreamed of the rival for Juliet's hand and heart. Alas for Romeo! Alas for Juliet!



JULIET.

THE GARDEN SCENE.

Rom. He jests at scars, that never felt a wound—

[*JULIET appears above, at a window.*]

But soft! what light through yonder window breaks!
It is the east, and Juliet is the sun!—
Arise, fair sun, and kill the envious moon,
Who is already sick and pale with grief,
That thou her maid art far more fair than she:

Be not her maid, since she is envious ;
 Her vestal livery is but sick and green,
 And none but fools do wear it ; cast it off. —
 It is my lady ; O, it is my love ;
 O, that she knew she were ; —
 She speaks, yet she says nothing ; What of that ?
 Her eye discourses, I will answer it. —
 I am too bold, 'tis not to me she speaks :
 Two of the fairest stars in all the heaven,
 Having some business, do entreat her eyes
 To twinkle in their spheres till they return.
 What if her eyes were there, they in her head ?
 The brightness of her cheek would shame those stars,
 As daylight doth a lamp ; her eye in heaven
 Would through the airy region stream so bright,
 That birds would sing, and think it were not night.
 See, how she leans her cheek upon her hand !
 O, that I were a glove upon that hand,
 That I might touch that cheek !

Jul.

Ah me !

Rom.

She speaks :—

O, speak again, bright angel ! for thou art
 As glorious to this sight, being o'er my head,
 As is a winged messenger of heaven
 Unto the white upturned wond'ring eyes
 Of mortals, that fall back to gaze on him,
 When he bestrides the lazy-pacing clouds,
 And sails upon the bosom of the air.

Jul. O Romeo, Romeo ! wherefore art thou Romeo ?
 Deny thy father, and refuse thy name ;
 Or, if thou wilt not, be but sworn my love,

And I'll no longer be a Capulet.

Rom. Shall I hear more, or shall I speak at this?

[*Aside.*

Jul. 'Tis but thy name, that is my enemy;—
Thou art thyself, though not a Montague.
What's Montague? It is not hand, nor foot,
Nor arm, nor face, nor any other part
Belonging to a man. O, be some other name!
What's in a name? that which we call a rose,
By any other name would smell as sweet;
So Romeo would, were he not Romeo call'd,
Retain that dear perfection which he owes,
Without that title: — Romeo, doff thy name;
And for that name, which is no part of thee,
Take all myself.

Rom. I take thee at thy word:
Call me but love, and I'll be new baptiz'd;
Henceforth I never will be Romeo.

Jul. What man art thou, that thus bescreen'd in
night,
So stumblest on my counsel?

Rom. By a name
I know not how to tell thee who I am:
My name, dear saint, is hateful to myself,
Because it is an enemy to thee;
Had I it written, I would tear the word.

Jul. My ears have not yet drunk a hundred words
Of that tongue's utterance, yet I know the sound:
Art thou not Romeo, and a Montague?

Rom. Neither, fair saint, if either thee dislike.

Jul. How can'st thou hither, tell me? and wherefore?

The orchard walls are high, and hard to climb;
And the place death, considering who thou art,
If any of my kinsmen find thee here.

Rom. With love's light wings did I o'er-perch
these walls;

For stony limits cannot hold love out:
And what love can do, that dares love attempt,
Therefore thy kinsmen are no let to me.

Jul. If they do see thee, they will murder thee.

Rom. Alack! there lies more peril in thine eye,
Than twenty of their swords; look thou but sweet,
And I am proof against their enmity.

Jul. I would not for the world they saw thee here.

Rom. I have night's cloak to hide me from their
sight;

And, but thou love me, let them find me here;
My life were better ended by their hate,
Than death prorogued, wanting of thy love.

Jul. By whose direction found'st thee out this
place?

Rom. By love, who first did prompt me to inquire;
He lent me counsel, and I lent him eyes.

I am no pilot; yet, wert thou as far
As that vast shore wash'd with the furthest sea,
I would adventure for such merchandise.

Jul. Thou know'st the mask of night is on my
face;

Else would a maiden blush bepaint my cheek,
For that which thou hast heard me speak to-night,

Fain would I dwell on form, fain, fain deny
 What I have spoke ; But farewell compliment !
 Dost thou love me ? I know, thou wilt say — Ay ;
 And I will take thy word ; yet, if thou swear'st
 Thou may'st prove false ; at lovers' perjuries
 They say Jove laughs. O gentle Romeo,
 If thou dost love, pronounce it faithfully :
 Or if thou think'st I am too quickly won,
 I'll frown, and be perverse, and say thee nay,
 So thou wilt woo ; but else, not for the world.
 In truth, fair Montague, I am too fond ;
 And therefore thou may'st think my 'havior light :
 But trust me, gentleman, I'll prove more true
 Than those that have more cunning to be strange.
 I should have been more strange, I must confess,
 But that thou over-heard'st, ere I was ware,
 My true love's passion ; therefore pardon me ;
 And not impute this yielding to light love,
 Which the dark night hath so discovered.

Rom. Lady, by yonder blessed moon I swear,
 That tips with silver all these fruit-tree tops, —

Jul. O, swear not by the moon, the inconstant
 moon,
 That monthly changes in her circled orb,
 Lest thy love prove likewise variable.

Rom. What shall I swear by ?

Jul. Do not swear at all ;
 Or, if thou wilt, swear by thy gracious self,
 Which is the god of my idolatry,
 And I'll believe thee.

Rom. If my heart's dear love —

Jul. Well, do not swear : although I joy in thee,
I have no joy in this contract to-night :
It is too rash, too unadvis'd, too sudden ;
Too like the lightning, which doth cease to be,
Ere one can say — it lightens. Sweet, good night ;
This bud of love, by summer's ripening breath,
May prove a beauteous flower when next we meet.
Good night, good night ! as sweet repose and rest
Come to thy heart as that within my breast !

AN EXILE.

But Romeo was a fiery youth ; and duels and challenges, sudden drawing of the sword and slaying of one's enemy were the fashion of the times.

And so it came about that when Tybalt, a cousin of Juliet's and a Capulet, true to the old family feud, offered to Romeo some insult as a challenge to quarrel, Romeo fell upon him and killed him. For this Romeo was exiled from his country ; but before his flight, by the help of Juliet's old nurse and her confessor Father Laurence, a secret marriage service was performed.

No sooner had Romeo fled the country and the excitement concerning the murder of Tybalt had died away, than Paris, now more in love with Juliet than ever — for every day did the beautiful Juliet grow more beautiful — began to press his suit.

Little heart had Juliet to listen to any lover's pleadings — she, the wife of Romeo.

"Early next Thursday morn, the gallant, young and noble gentleman, the courtly Paris, at St Peter's church, shall happily make thee there a joyful bride!" said her mother, angrily, when Juliet would not listen to her pleadings for the young Paris.

"Now by St. Peter's church, and Peter too, he shall not make me there a joyful bride," answered Juliet, with spirit.

"Here comes your father, girl. Tell him so yourself; and see how he will take it from your hands."

"Well, well, wife," said Capulet, entering, "have you delivered to Juliet our decree that she shall marry Paris?"

"Ay, sir, but she will none of it. She gives you thanks. I would the fool were married to her grave."

"Fie, fie! what, are you mad, my child?"

"Good father," sobbed Juliet, "I beseech you on my knees. Hear me with patience —"

"Hang thee, young baggage!" thundered Capulet. "Disobedient wretch! I tell thee what — get thee to church on Thursday or never after look me in the face. Speak not; reply not; do not answer me. O wife, we scarce thought us blessed that God had sent us but this one child. But now I see this one is one too much, and that we have a curse in having her."

"O God in heaven bless her!" wailed the nurse. "You are to blame, my lord, to rate her so."



JULIET'S REFUSAL TO MARRY PARIS.

“And why, my lady wisdom? Hold your tongue!” roared Capulet; and away he stalked out of the great hall, Lady Capulet by his side, leaving Juliet and her faithful nurse alone to comfort each other.

“O nurse,” moaned Juliet,

How shall this be prevented?

My husband is on earth, my faith in heaven,

How shall that faith return again to earth,

Unless that husband sent it me from heaven

By leaving earth?—comfort me, counsel me

Alack, alack, that heaven should practise stratagems

Upon so soft a subject as myself!—

What say'st thou? hast thou not a word of joy?

Some comfort, nurse.”

“Faith, here tis” replied the nurse, “Romeo

Is banished; and all the world to nothing,

That he dares ne'er come back to challenge you;

Or, if he do, it needs must be by stealth.

Then, since the case so stands as now it doth,

I think it best you married with the county.

O, he's a lovely gentleman!

Romeo's a dishclout to him; an eagle, madman,

Hath not so green, so quick, so fair an eye,

As Paris hath. Beshrew my very heart,

I think you are happy in this second match,

For it excels your first: or if it did not,

Your first is dead; or 'twere as good he were,

As living here and you no use of him.”

"Speakest thou from thy heart?" asked Juliet, surprised that her nurse, who had always pretended such admiration for Romeo, and had indeed aided them in their secret marriage, should say such words.

"From my soul, too : or else beshrew them both," answered the nurse again.

"Well, thou has comforted me marvelous much.
Go in ; and tell my lady I am gone,
Having displeas'd my father, to Laurence' cell,
To make confession, and to be absolv'd."

THE FRIAR'S CELL.

Jul. O, shut the door ! and when thou hast done so,
Come weep with me ; Past hope, past cure, past help !

Fri. Ah, Juliet, I already know thy grief ;
It strains me past the compass of my wits :
I hear thou must, and nothing must prorogue it,
On Thursday next be married to this county.

Jul. Tell me not, friar, that thou hear'st of this,
Unless thou tell me how I may prevent it ;
If, in thy wisdom, thou canst give no help,
Do thou but call my resolution wise,
And with this knife I'll help it presently,
God joined my heart and Romeo's, thou our hands,
And ere this hand, by thee to Romeo seal'd
Shall be the label to another deed,

Or my true heart with treacherous revolt
Turn to another, this shall slay them both :
Therefore, out of thy long-experienc'd time,
Give me some present counsel ; or, behold,
'Twixt my extremes and me this bloody knife
Shall play the umpire ; arbitrating that
Which the commission of thy years and art
Could to no issue of true honor bring.
Be not so long to speak ; I long to die,
If what thou speak'st speak not of remedy.

Fri. Hold, daughter : I do spy a kind of hope,
Which craves as desperate an execution
As that is desperate which we would prevent.
If, rather than to marry county Paris,
Thou hast the strength of will to slay thyself ;
Then is it likely thou wilt undertake
A thing like death to chide away this shame,
That cop'st with death himself to 'scape from it ;
And, if thou dar'st, I'll give thee remedy.

Jul. O, bid me leap, rather than marry Paris,
From off the battlements of yonder tower ;
Or walk in thievish ways, or bid me lurk
Where serpents are ; chain me with roaring bears ;
Or shut me nightly in a charnel-house,
O'er-covered quite with dead men's rattling bones,
With reeky shanks, and yellow chapless skulls ;
Or bid me go into a new-made grave,
And hide me with a dead man in his shroud ;
Things that, to hear them told, have made me tremble ;
And I will do it without fear or doubt,—

Fri. Hold, then ; go home, be merry, give consent

To marry Paris : Wednesday is to-morrow ;
To-morrow night look that thou lie alone,
Let not thy nurse lie with thee in thy chamber :
Take thou this phial, being then in bed,
And this distilled liquor drink thou off :
When presently, through all thy veins shall run
A cold and drowsy humor, which shall seize
Each vital spirit ; for no pulse shall keep
His natural progress, but surcease to beat :
No warmth, no breath, shall testify thou liv'st :
The roses in thy lips and cheek shall fade
To paly ashes ; thy eyes' windows fall,
Like death, when he shuts up the day of life ;
Each part, depriv'd of supple government,
Shall, stiff, and stark, and cold, appear like death :
And in this borrowed likeness of shrunk death
Thou shalt remain full two and forty hours,
And then awake as from a pleasant sleep.
Now when the bridegroom in the morning come
To rouse thee from thy bed, there art thou dead
Then (as the manner of our country is),
In thy best robes uncover'd on the bier,
Thou shalt be borne to that same ancient vault
Where all the kindred of the Capulets lie.
In the mean time, against thou shalt awake,
Shall Romeo by my letters know our drift ;
And hither shall he come ; and he and I
Will watch thy waking, and that very night
Shall Romeo bear thee hence to Mantua.
And this shall free thee from this present shame
If no unconstant toy, nor womanish fear,

Abate thy valor in the acting it.

Jul. Give me, O give me! tell me not of fear.

Fri. Hold; get you gone, be strong and prosperous
In this resolve: I'll send a friar with speed
To Mantua, with my letters to thy lord.

Jul. Love give me strength! and strength shall
help afford.

Farewell, dear father.

And so, comforted by her old confessor's words, yet full of fear, Juliet returned to her home. "I have been," said she to her father, "to my confessor; and there I learned me to repent the sin of disobedient opposition to you and your behests; I am enjoined by Father Laurence that I fall prostrate here and beg your pardon — Pardon, I beseech you. Henceforth I am ever ruled by you."

"My heart, indeed, is wondrous light," replied Capulet, "that this same wayward girl is so reclaimed. Now get thee to bed and rest; good night."

Once in her room, the nurse dismissed, the poor girl prepared herself to follow the Friar's bidding.

"Farewell! — God knows when we shall meet again.

I have a faint, cold fear thrills through my veins,

That almost freezes up the heat of life:

I'll call them back again to comfort me;—

Nurse! — What should she do here?

My dismal scene I needs must act alone.—

Come, phial.—

What if this mixture do not work at all?
Must I of force be married to the county? —
No, no, this shall forbid it:— lie thou there —

[Laying down a dagger.]



What if it be a poison, which the friar
Subtly hath minister'd to have me dead,
Lest in this marriage he should be dishonor'd,
Because he married me before to Romeo?
I fear, it is: and yet, methinks, it should not,
For he hath still been tried a holy man:
I will not entertain so bad a thought.—
How if, when I am laid into the tomb,

I wake before the time that Romeo
Come to redeem me? there's a fearful point!
Shall I not then be stifled in the vault,
And there die strangled ere my Romeo comes?
Or, if I live, is it not very like,
The horrible conceit of death and night,
Together with the terror of the place,—
As in a vault, an ancient receptacle,
Where for these many hundred years, the bones
Of all my buried ancestors are pack'd:
Where bloody Tybalt, yet but green in earth,
Lies fest'ring in his shroud, where as they say,
At some hours in the night spirits resort;—
Alack, alack! is it not like, that I
So early waking,—
O! if I wake, shall I not be distraught,
Environed with all these hideous fears?
O, look! methinks, I see my cousin's ghost
Seeking out Romeo that did spit his body
Upon a rapier's point:— Stay, Tybalt, stay!—
Romeo, I come! this do I drink to thee."

THE BRIDAL MORNING.

The bright sun smiled in upon the beautiful chamber where the maiden lay, so still, so white, so cold.

"Fie upon thee, Juliet!" cried the nurse, entering.
"Fie upon thee to be sleeping late, on this your bridal

morn. What, dressed? Indeed, I needs must wake you. Lady, lady!"

But a look of horror overspreads the nurse's face. "O, help, help! my lady's dead!"

"What means this noise?" asked Lady Capulet, appearing upon the scene.

"O, lady, look. O look! O heavy day!"

"My child, my child!" shrieked the mother. O my child, my child! my life! my only life! Awake! look up! or I will die with thee!"

"Make haste, good wife, make haste to bring Juliet forth from her chamber. Paris, her lord, has come for her. Already he awaits her!"

"O alas, alas! she's dead! she's dead!"

"What! dead! my Juliet dead!" cried Capulet, springing to the bedside; "Alas, alas, she's dead! she's cold! Death lies upon her like an untimely frost upon the sweetest flower of all the field! O wretched day! O woeful time!"

Just now the friar enters the hall below, accompanied by the brave young bridegroom and the musicians. "Come, come," said he, "is the bride not ready to go to the church?"

"To go to the church, yes; but never to return," moaned the stricken father. "O Paris, Paris!"

See there she lies!

Death is my son-in-law, death is my heir;

My daughter he hath wedded! I will die,

And leave him all; life leaving, all is death's."



JULIET'S SUPPOSED DEATH.

"Have I thought long to see this morning's day;
and doth it give me such a sight as this?" wailed Paris,
as he looked upon the pale, cold form.

Lady Cap. "Accurs'd, unhappy, wretched, hate-
ful day!

Most miserable hour that ere time saw
In lasting labor of his pilgrimage!
But one, poor one, one poor and loving child
But one thing to rejoice and solace in,
And cruel death hath catch'd it from my sight."

"O woe! O woeful, woeful, woeful day," moaned the
nurse.

"Most lamentable day! most woeful day,
That ever, ever, I did yet behold!
O day! O day! O day! O hateful day!
Never was seen so black a day as this:
O woeful day, O woeful day!

Par. Beguil'd, divorced, wronged, spited, slain!
Most detestable death, by thee beguil'd,
By cruel, cruel thee quite overthrown! —
O love! O life! — not life, but love in death!

Cap. Despis'd, distressed, hated, martyr'd, kill'd! —
Uncomfortable time! why cam'st thou now
To murder, murder our solemnity? —
O child! O child! — my soul, and not my child! —
Dead, art thou, dead! — alack! my child is dead!
And with my child, my joys are buried!

"Peace, ho, for shame! confusion's cure lives not in these confusions," said the friar, firmly.

"Heaven and yourself
Had part in this fair maid: now heaven hath all,
And all the better is it for the maid:
Your part in her you could not keep from death:
But heaven keeps his part in eternal life.
And weep ye now, seeing she is advanced
Above the clouds, as high as heaven itself?
O in this love, you love your child so ill,
That you run mad, seeing that she is well:
Dry up your tears, and stick your rosemary
On this fair corse; and, as the custom is,
In all her best array bear her to church:
For though fond nature bids us all lament,
Yet nature's tears are reason's merriment."

And so the fair Juliet, on what was to have been her bridal morn, was born to the great tomb—the family vault of the Capulets. There upon the bier she lay, as beautiful, as fair as any lily, and as cold and white.

But how fares it with Romeo? The good friar, true to his promise, dispatched with all speed a messenger to him. But alas! already had news of Juliet's death reached Romeo; and at once beside himself with grief, regardless of the sentence of banishment upon him, thinking only of the dead Juliet, he hastened to the city of Verona.

"Ho, apothecary," called he, arousing at the dead

of night the sleeping drug clerk of the town. "Come hither, man !

I see that thou art poor :
Hold, there is forty ducats : let me have
A dram of poison ; such soon-speeding geer
As will disperse itself through all the veins,
That the life-weary taker may fall dead ; "

"Such deathly drugs I have," replied the drug clerk, "but the city's laws forbid that I should sell them !"

"Out upon thee ! art thou so bare and full of wretchedness and yet shouldst fear to die !"

"My poverty, my poverty, but not my will consents !" groaned the clerk, "Here, take thy poison. Put this in any liquid that thou wilt and drink it off, then if thou hadst the strength of twenty men it would despatch thee straight."

"And here's thy gold," answered Romeo, "worse poison to men's souls, doing more murder in this loathsome world than all the poison thou canst sell."

And away Romeo hastens to the grave of Juliet, there to die beside her.

As he reached the tomb he heard voices—and there were men with torches.

"Sweet flower, with flowers I strew thy bridal bed :
Sweet tomb, that in thy circuit dost contain
The perfect model of eternity ;

Fair Juliet, that with angels dost remain,
Accept this latest favor at my hands ;
That living honor'd thee, and, being dead,
With funeral praises do adorn thy tomb !”

It was the voice of Paris.

“Good, gentle youth,” cried Romeo, rushing upon him ; “tempt not a desperate man ;

Fly hence and leave me ;—think upon these gone ;
Let them affright thee.—I beseech thee, youth,
Heap not another sin upon thy head.
By urging me to fury :—O, be gone !
By heaven, I love thee better than myself :
For I come hither arm'd against myself :
Stay not, be gone ;—live, and hereafter say—
A madman's mercy bade thee run away ”

“I do defy thy conjurations, and do attach thee as
as a felon here,” answered Paris, seeing in Romeo
only the bloody murderer of the fallen Tybalt.

“Wilt thou provoke me? then have at thee, boy !”

“O lord! they fight: I will go call the watch,”
cried the frightened page.

“O, I am slain! I am slain!” cried Paris. “If thou
be merciful, lay thou me in the tomb with Juliet.
Alas, I die, I die !”

“In faith I will,” said Romeo. “But who art thou?
Let me peruse thy face! 'Tis Paris! And here lies
Juliet! Her beauty makes this vault a feasting pres-

ence full of light. O my love, my wife! Death hath no power yet upon thy beauty. Thou art not conquered! Beauty's ensign still is on thy cheek, and death's pale flag is not advanced there! O here will I set up my everlasting rest! Eyes, look your last look! Arms, take your last embrace! And lips, O you, the doors of breath, seal with a righteous kiss a dateless bargain to an engrossing death! Come, bitter conduct! come, unsavory guide! Here's to my love! O true apothecary, thy drugs are quick! Thus with a kiss, I die—I die."

And now the forty-two hours are at an end. In haste, the friar enters the tomb.

"What!" exclaims he, as he approaches; "Alas, what blood is this upon the door! Romeo here! so pale! What Paris, too! And steeped in blood! O Juliet, Juliet, come forth! A greater power than we can contradict hath thwarted our intent!"

"O good friar, where am I!" and Juliet half opened her beautiful eyes. "I remember—I remember where I should be. And there I am. O good friar, where is Romeo."

"Lady, lady," answered the friar, "come out, come out from that nest of death, contagion and unnatural sleep! Come away, come away! thy husband lies there dead! And Paris, too! Come thou with me. I will take thee to the sisterhood of holy nuns!"

But Juliet has awakened. There at her side she sees the fallen Romeo.

“Go, get thee hence!” she cries. “I will not go away. What’s here! A cup closed in my true love’s hand. Poison, I see, has been his timeless end. O churl! drink all, and leave no friendly drop to help me after? I hear a noise! Then I’ll be brief! O happy dagger! This is thy sheath! There rest — so let me die!”

And so endeth this most tragic tragedy, “Romeo and Juliet.”

The moral? Well, I should not like to say. It may be that it is that families should not nourish feuds among themselves. It may be that it is that lovers should kill themselves for each other; it may be that it is that they should *not* kill themselves for each other—at least, not until they are quite sure “all hope is lost.” It may be all of these or none, or still some other moral. But in this can we all agree; that Romeo and Juliet makes a pretty piece upon the stage; it is a very true picture of the semi-civilized times which it represents; it has in it many beautiful lines of choicest English which makes it ever dear to the hearts of those who know and value the beautiful and true in literature.

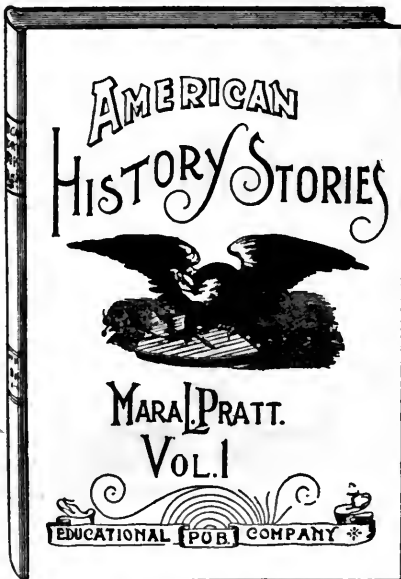
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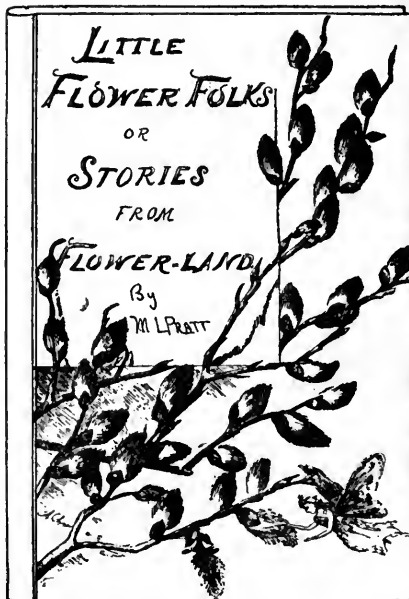


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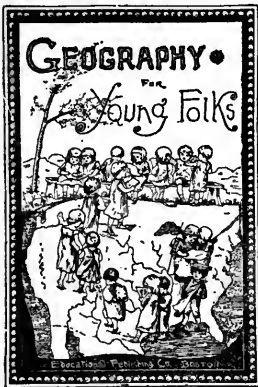
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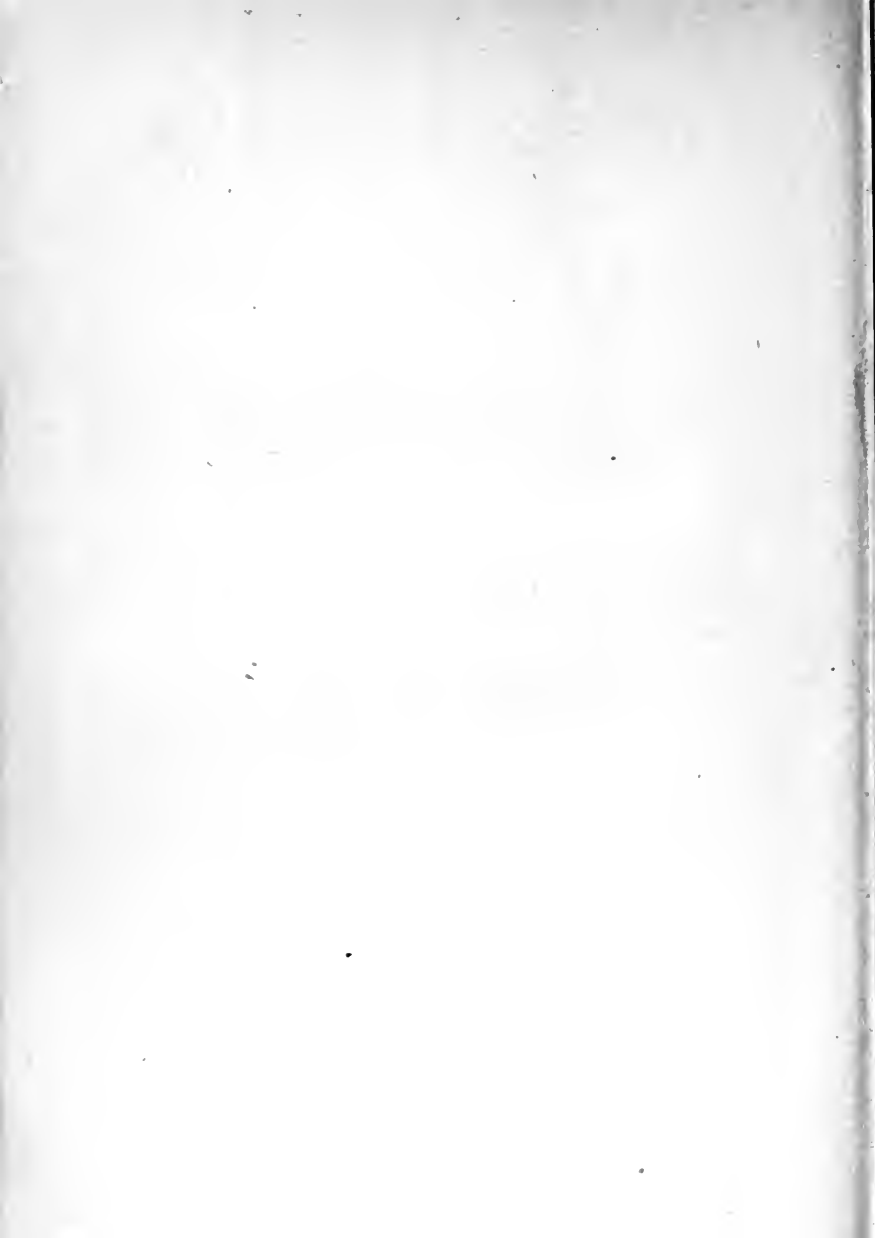
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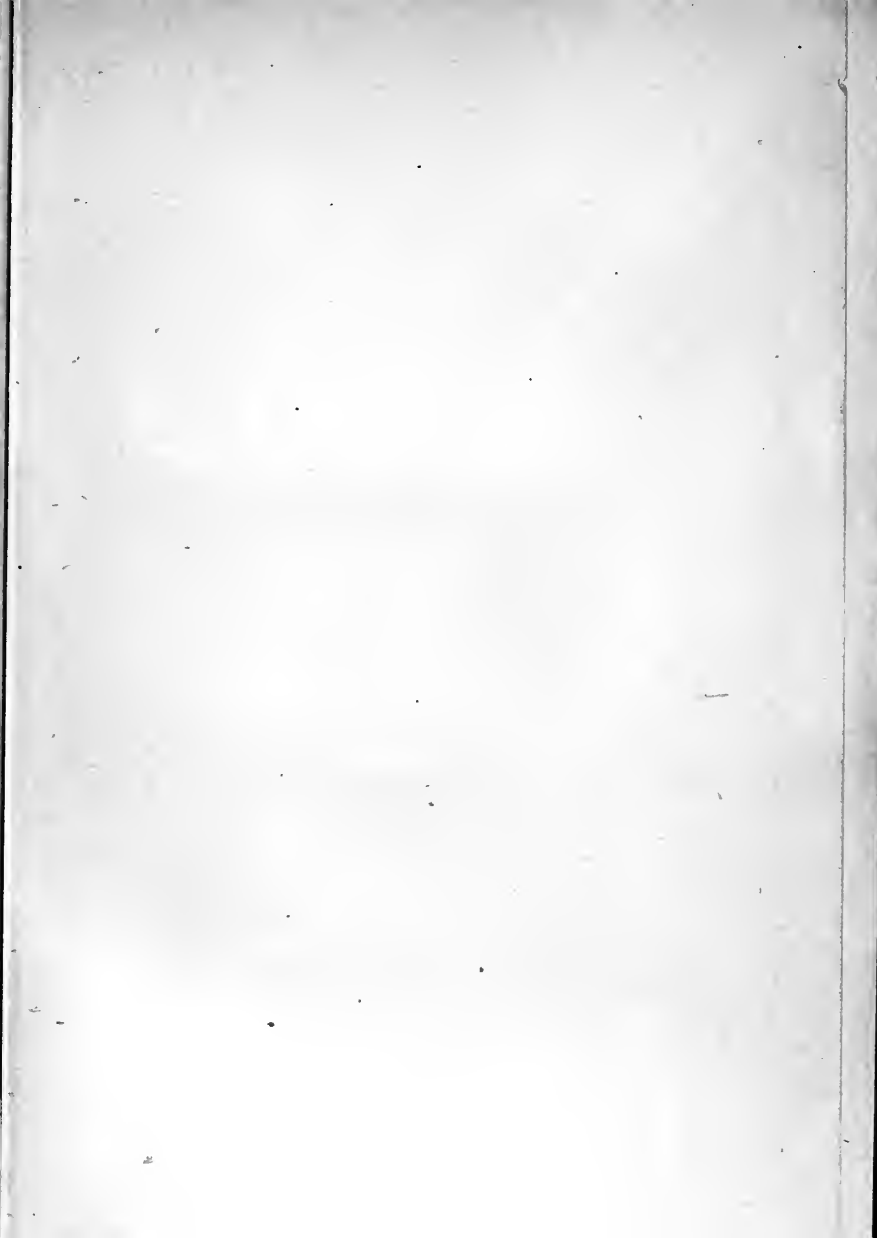
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