SHAKESPEARE

IN TALE AND VERSE


The
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SHAKESPEARE

IN TALE AND VERSE

BY

LOIS GROSVENOR HUFFORD

"I shall tell you a pretty tale; it may be you have heard it." — CORIOLANUS

New York
THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
LONDON: MACMILLAN & CO., LTD.
1902

Norwood Press
J. S. Cushing & Co. — Berwick & Smith
Norwood Mass. U.S.A.

To My Husband

PREFACE

In retelling these tales from Shakespeare, the author's purpose is to introduce Shakespeare to the young, and to such of their elders as find the intricacies of the plots of the dramas somewhat difficult to untangle. For, although in naming the best books of the world, Shakespeare is usually mentioned after the Bible, comparatively few of the great reading public are familiarly acquainted with Shakespeare's plays.

The stories that constitute the main plots are given, and these are interspersed with the dramatic dialogue in such a manner as to make tale and verse interpret each other.

The author has endeavored to tell the stories from Shakespeare's point of view; to interpret sympathetically and truthfully the motives of the dramas and of the characters; to omit unessential details; and to select for quoting passages that are notable for strength and beauty, and those that have especial significance in revealing character.

It is hoped that this work may serve to attract readers of this generation to Shakespeare, as Lamb's charming "Tales" have done for so many years.

The author gratefully acknowledges her indebtedness to Professor Fred N. Scott, of the University of Michigan, for encouragement in the prosecution of this work.

For the most part, Rolfe's text has been followed in the passages quoted. The spelling of the past tense and the past participle of verbs ending in *ed* has been made to conform to modern pronunciation. The spelling of such words as *honor* accords with the custom in America.

The meaning of obsolete and unusual words is given in footnotes at the bottom of the pages on which they occur. Classical, and other literary allusions, are explained in notes at the end of the volume.

L. G. H.

INDIANAPOLIS, November, 1901.

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SHAKESPEARE IN TALE AND VERSE

THE TEMPEST

MANY years ago — so long ago that no one knows how many — a certain king of Naples, Alonso by name, was returning to his own country, after having attended the marriage festivities of his daughter, who had been wedded to the king of Tunis. As the fleet was crossing the great sea, it encountered a violent storm, and the vessel that carried the king and his courtiers was wrecked upon the shores of an island. In the confusion, the king's son, Ferdinand, became separated from his father and friends, who were greatly distressed at his loss, believing that he had been drowned.

The truth was, however, that the storm was the work of a magician, Prospero, the lord of the island. Prospero had raised the tempest for his own purposes, and he had charged his servant, Ariel, a dainty sprite who delighted to do his master's bidding, —

> — be 't to fly,
> To swim, to dive into the fire, to ride
> On the curled clouds, —

to take care that not a single life of those on board the ship should be lost. When his task was performed, Ariel reported to Prospero, who asked him: —

Hast thou, spirit,
Performed to point the tempest that I bade thee?
ARIEL. To every article.
I boarded the king's ship; now on the beak,
Now in the waist, the deck, in every cabin,
I flamed amazement: sometime I'd divide,
And burn in many places; on the topmast,
The yards, and bowsprit, would I flame distinctly,
Then meet and join. Jove's lightnings, the precursors
O' the dreadful thunder-claps, more momentary
And sight-outrunning were not.
PROSPERO. My brave spirit!
Who was so firm, so constant, that this coil[1]
Would not infect his reason?
ARIEL. Not a soul
But felt a fever of the mad, and played
Some tricks of desperation. All but mariners
Plunged in the foaming brine, and quit the vessel,
Then all afire with me: the king's son, Ferdinand,
With hair up-staring, — then like reeds, not hair, —
Was the first man that leaped; cried, "Hell is empty,
And all the devils are here."
PROSPERO. But are they, Ariel, safe?
ARIEL. Not a hair perished;
On their sustaining garments not a blemish,
But fresher than before: and, as thou bad'st me,
In troops I have dispersed them 'bout the isle.
The king's son have I landed by himself;
Whom I left cooling of the air with sighs

[1] tumult.

In an odd angle of the isle, and sitting,
His arms in this sad knot.

PROSPERO. Of the king's ship,
The mariners, say how hast thou disposed,
And all the rest o' the fleet.

ARIEL. Safely in harbor
Is the king's ship; in the deep nook, where once
Thou call'dst me up at midnight to fetch dew
From the still-vexed Bermoothes, there she's hid;
The mariners all under hatches stowed;
Who, with a charm joined to their suffered labor,
I have left asleep: and for the rest o' the fleet
Which I dispersed, they all have met again,
And are upon the Mediterranean flote,[1]
Bound sadly home for Naples,
Supposing that they saw the king's ship wracked[2]
And his great person perish.

PROSPERO. Ariel, thy charge
Exactly is performed; but there's more work.

Miranda, the beautiful daughter of Prospero, standing before her father's rock-cell, their only home, and watching the vessel as it was driven before the tempest, had suffered with those that she saw suffer, and had begged her father, if by his art he had "put the wild waters in this roar, to allay them." Prospero quieted her fears by the assurance that he had so ordered it that no harm had come to any of the inmates of the wrecked vessel.

Ever since she could remember, Miranda had lived alone with her father, who had been her companion and teacher; for, in all these years, she had seen no other

[1] waves. [2] wrecked.

human being, and she knew nothing of her own, or her father's history.

Now, however, Prospero told her that the time had come for her to hear what had caused them to live this lonely life so long. Bidding her be attentive, he asked her:—

Canst thou remember
A time before we came unto this cell?
I do not think thou canst; for then thou wast not
Out[1] three years old.
MIRANDA. Certainly, sir, I can.
PROSPERO. By what? by any other house or person?
Of anything the image tell me that
Hath kept with thy remembrance.
MIRANDA. 'Tis far off,
And rather like a dream than an assurance
That my remembrance warrants. Had I not
Four or five women once that tended me?
PROSPERO. Thou hadst, and more, Miranda. But how is it
That this lives in thy mind? What seest thou else
In the dark backward and abysm of time?
If thou rememberest aught ere thou cam'st here,
How thou cam'st here thou mayst.
MIRANDA. But that I do not.
PROSPERO. Twelve year since, Miranda, twelve year since,
Thy father was the Duke of Milan and
A prince of power.
MIRANDA. O the heavens!
What foul play had we, that we came from thence?
Or blessed was't we did?
PROSPERO. Both, both, my girl:

[1] past.

By foul play, as thou say'st, were we heaved thence;
But blessedly holp[1] hither.
MIRANDA. O, my heart bleeds
To think o' the teen[2] that I have turned you to,
Which is from my remembrance! Please you, farther.

Prospero then told his daughter that he had always been fond of study. So devoted to his books was he that he had found it an annoyance to give attention to the affairs of his dukedom. So he persuaded his brother, Antonio, to manage the government in his stead. Antonio took advantage of his student-brother's neglect to gain the rule of Milan for himself. By pledging himself to pay an annual tribute to the king of Naples, and to acknowledge him as a superior lord, Antonio induced Naples to assist him to seize the throne of Milan, saying that his library was dukedom enough for Prospero.

Prospero went on to describe how his false brother accomplished his wicked design:—

A treacherous army levied, one midnight
Fated to the purpose, did Antonio open
The gates of Milan; and, i' the dead of darkness,
The ministers for th' purpose hurried thence
Me and thy crying self.
MIRANDA. Alack, for pity!
I, not remembering how I cried out then,
Will cry it o'er again. Wherefore did they not
That hour destroy us?
PROSPERO. They durst not,
So dear the love my people bore me; nor set

[1] helped. [2] trouble.

A mark so bloody on the business, but
With colors fairer painted their foul ends.
In few, they hurried us aboard a bark,
Bore us some leagues to sea; where they prepared
A rotten carcass of a boat, not rigged,
Nor tackle, sail, nor mast; the very rats
Instinctively have quit it. There they hoist us,
To cry to th' sea that roared to us; to sigh
To th' winds, whose pity, sighing back again,
Did us but loving wrong.

MIRANDA. Alack, what trouble
Was I then to you!

PROSPERO. O, a cherubin
Thou wast, that did preserve me. Thou didst smile,
Infuséd with a fortitude from heaven,
When I have decked the sea with drops full salt,
Under my burthen groaned.

MIRANDA. How came we ashore?

PROSPERO. By Providence divine.
Some food we had, and some fresh water, that
A noble Neapolitan, Gonzalo,
Out of his charity did give us, with
Rich garments, linens, stuffs, and necessaries,
Which since have steaded much. So, of his gentleness,
Knowing I loved my books, he furnished me,
From mine own library, with volumes that
I prize above my dukedom.

MIRANDA. Would I might
But ever see that man!

PROSPERO. Sit still, and hear the last of our sea-sorrow.
Here in this island we arrived; and here
Have I, thy schoolmaster, made thee more profit
Than other princess can, that have more time
For vainer hours, and tutors not so careful.

MIRANDA. Heavens thank you for't! And now I
pray you, sir,
(For still 'tis beating in my mind,) your reason
For raising this sea-storm?
PROSPERO. Know thus far forth:
By accident most strange, bountiful Fortune
Hath mine enemies brought to this shore.
Here cease more questions:
Thou art inclined to sleep; 'tis a good dulness
And give it way: — I know thou canst not choose.

We shall not wonder that Miranda could not resist this drowsiness, when we know that it was due to a touch from the magic wand of Prospero, who willed that she should not overhear what passed between himself and Ariel. This bright little spirit longed to be free, and Prospero promised to release him in two days' time, if he would perform perfectly every command that his master should lay upon him.

First, he was to make himself a nymph of the sea, but he was to be invisible to every eye but that of Prospero. While in this form, he went to seek Prince Ferdinand, whom he had left sitting upon a bank, weeping for the loss of his father, the king of Naples. In order to arouse him from his sad thoughts, Ariel sang a sweetly plaintive melody: —

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.

Ferdinand followed the sound of the music which he heard in the air above him, until, led by the invisible Ariel, he came within sight of Prospero and Miranda, whom her father had, by this time, purposely awakened. Prospero said to Miranda: —

The fringéd curtains of thine eye advance,
And say what thou seest yond.
MIRANDA. What is't? a spirit?
Lord, how it looks about! Believe me, sir,
It carries a brave[1] form. But 'tis a spirit.
PROSPERO. No, wench; it eats and sleeps and hath such senses
As we have — such. This gallant which thou seest
Was in the wrack; and, but he's something stained
With grief, that's beauty's canker, thou mightst call him
A goodly person. He hath lost his fellows,
And strays about to find 'em.
MIRANDA. I might call him
A thing divine; for nothing natural
I ever saw so noble.

Never having seen any man except her father, Miranda supposed that all men were gray-haired like the aged Prospero. When Ferdinand, who, by this time, had come to believe the island enchanted, saw the fair Miranda, he thought that she must be the presiding goddess of the place. Still, so attracted was he to her, that he ventured to hope that she was human like himself. When Miranda replied in his own language, telling

[1] fine.

him that she was only a simple maid, his astonishment knew no bounds, and he immediately told her that, if he could win her love, he would make her queen of Naples.

Now this was just what Prospero desired, but fearing that "too light winning would make the prize seem light" to Ferdinand, he pretended to suspect that Ferdinand intended to seize the island from him, and make himself the lord of it. So he spoke very harshly to the young man, whereat the gentle Miranda plead with her father, saying that she was sure that "nothing ill could dwell in such a temple," and promising to be surety for her lover's truth.

Ferdinand, angered by the threatening words of Prospero, drew his sword, but Prospero, waving his magic wand, charmed his uplifted hand, and compelled him to obey his will. The bewildered Ferdinand declared: —

> My spirits, as in a dream, are all bound up.
> My father's loss, the weakness which I feel,
> The wrack of all my friends, nor this man's threats
> To whom I am subdued, are but light to me,
> Might I but through my prison once a day
> Behold this maid. All corners else o' th' earth
> Let liberty make use of; space enough
> Have I in such a prison.

In order to test Ferdinand's sincerity, Prospero commanded him to pile up some thousands of logs of wood. Although the prince felt the harsh treatment keenly, yet he willingly submitted for the sake of his love.

Miranda wept at seeing him so heavily tasked, and begged him to rest while she carried some of the logs to the pile for him. But Ferdinand protested: —

No, precious creature;
I'd rather crack my sinews, break my back,
Than you should such dishonor undergo,
While I sit lazy by.

MIRANDA. It would become me
As well as it does you; and I should do it
With much more ease, for my good will is to it,
And yours it is against.

Ferdinand was so touched by Miranda's loving sympathy that he forgot to work. At his request, she artlessly told him her name, the meaning of which was "the wonderful," whereupon he declared that she was rightly named, for, —

— you, O you,
So perfect and so peerless, are created
Of every creature's best!

MIRANDA. I do not know
One of my sex; no woman's face remember,
Save, from my glass, mine own; nor have I seen
More that I may call men than you, good friend,
And my dear father. How features are abroad,
I am skilless of; but, by my modesty,
The jewel in my dower, I would not wish
Any companion in the world but you;
Nor can imagination form a shape,
Besides yourself, to like of. — But I prattle
Something too wildly, and my father's precepts
I therein do forget.

FERDINAND. Hear my soul speak:
The very instant that I saw you, did
My heart fly to your service; there resides,
To make me slave to it; and for your sake
Am I this patient log-man.

MIRANDA. Do you love me?
FERDINAND. O heaven! O earth! bear witness to this sound,
And crown what I profess with kind event,
If I speak true; if hollowly, invert
What best is boded me to mischief! I,
Beyond all limit of what else i' the world,
Do love, prize, honor you.

Never having had any experience in worldly formalities, Miranda was as sincere and open-minded as a child. She therefore responded to Ferdinand's professions of love with honesty and sweet seriousness, saying: —

Hence, bashful cunning!
And prompt me, plain and holy innocence!
I am your wife, if you will marry me.

Prospero, who had been watching the lovers, but unseen by them, was delighted at the turn affairs were taking, saying to himself, "my rejoicing at nothing can be more." He now revealed himself, and said to Ferdinand: —

If I have too austerely punished you,
Your compensation makes amends; for I
Have given you here a thread of mine own life,
Or that for which I live: who once again
I tender to thy hand. All thy vexations
Were but my trials of thy love, and thou
Hast strangely stood the test: here, afore Heaven,
I ratify this my rich gift. O Ferdinand,
Do not smile at me that I boast her off,
For thou shalt find she will outstrip all praise,
And make it halt behind her.

FERDINAND. I do believe it
Against an oracle.

PROSPERO. Then, as my gift and thine own acquisition
Worthily purchased, take my daughter; she is thine own.

Then, telling them that he had business that demanded his attention, Prospero bade them enjoy each other's society until his return. This command they were rejoiced to obey.

Besides Ariel, the delicate spirit of air, Prospero had still another servant, who was of a very different nature. This was a kind of monster, half man, half beast, the offspring of Sycorax, a foul witch, who had been the sole possessor of the island before Prospero's coming.

This monster, Caliban, hated Prospero because his low nature could not appreciate the efforts which Prospero had made to teach him, and because he resented Prospero's taking the island from his mother, Sycorax. So he vented his spite in every possible way; cursing his master, who was, in turn, compelled to use harsh measures in order to subdue the vile creature to his will. When Caliban complained, Prospero told him: —

I pitied thee,
Took pains to make thee speak, taught thee each hour
One thing or other: when thou didst not, savage,
Know thine own meaning, but wouldst gabble like
A thing most brutish, I endowed thy purposes
With words that made them known. But thy vile race,
Though thou didst learn, had that in't which good natures
Could not abide to be with; therefore wast thou
Deservedly confined into this rock,

Who hadst deserved more than a prison.

CALIBAN. You taught me language; and my profit on't
Is, I know how to curse. The red plague rid[1] you
For learning me your language!

PROSPERO. Hag-seed, hence!
Fetch us in fuel; and be quick, thou'rt best.
If thou neglect'st, or dost unwillingly
What I command, I'll rack thee with old cramps,
Fill all thy bones with aches, make thee roar,
That beasts shall tremble at thy din.

Although raging inwardly, Caliban acknowledges that Prospero's art is such that even the god Setebos, whom his witch-mother had worshipped, would be compelled to obey it — much more, he. So he goes to his task of carrying wood. While at this work, he encounters two drunken knaves who have escaped from the wrecked vessel. When these men discover the misshapen monster, they amuse themselves by giving him liquor from a cask which they have found among the ship's wreckage.

The brutish Caliban takes these drunkards to be gods who have been sent by Setebos, the moon-god. So he is ready to worship them; and he hopes, with their help, to revenge himself on Prospero. He tells one of them, Stephano by name, that if he will destroy the cunning sorcerer who has robbed him, Caliban, of his birthright, he will evermore serve Stephano as the lord of the island. Caliban then unfolds his plan:—

As I told thee, 'tis a custom with him (Prospero)
I' th' afternoon to sleep; there thou mayst brain him,
Having first seized his books; or with a log

[1] destroy.

Batter his skull, or paunch him with a stake,
Or cut his wezand with thy knife. Remember
First to possess his books; for without them
He's but a sot, as I am, nor hath not
One spirit to command: they all do hate him
As rootedly as I. Burn but his books.
Within this half hour will he be asleep;
Wilt thou destroy him then?

STEPHANO. Ay, on mine honor.

CALIBAN. Thou mak'st me merry; I am full of pleasure.

In their drunken jollity they begin to sing, whereupon Ariel, who has overheard everything, plays a tune upon a tabor and a pipe in the air above them. This tune, "played by the picture of Nobody," as they say, rouses the superstitious fears of the drunken men, but Caliban tells them: —

Be not afeard; the isle is full of noises,
Sounds and sweet airs, that give delight and hurt not.
Sometimes a thousand twangling instruments
Will hum about mine ears; and sometimes voices
That, if I then had waked after long sleep,
Will make me sleep again: and then, in dreaming,
The clouds methought would open, and show riches
Ready to drop upon me; that, when I waked,
I cried to dream again.

STEPHANO. This will prove a brave kingdom to me, where I shall have my music for nothing.

CALIBAN. When Prospero is destroyed.

The plots of this knot of silly conspirators were all known to Prospero and Ariel, who were prepared to drive them from the cell when they should approach.

As they were coming stealthily forward, under the lead of Caliban, Prospero said sorrowfully of the creature whom he had vainly tried to teach: —

> A devil, a born devil, on whose nature
> Nurture can never stick; on whom my pains,
> Humanely taken, all, all lost, quite lost;
> And as with age his body uglier grows,
> So his mind cankers. I will plague them all,
> Even to roaring.

At the right moment, Prospero set a pack of hunting dogs upon them. As they fled before the dogs, Prospero said to Ariel, —

> Go charge my goblins that they grind their joints
> With dry convulsions, shorten up their sinews
> With aged cramps, and more pinch-spotted make them
> Than pard [1] or cat o' mountain.
> ARIEL. Hark, they roar!
> PROSPERO. Let them be hunted soundly.

Thus the spiteful Caliban, whose brutish nature had resisted all Prospero's efforts to humanize him, was deservedly punished for his wicked attempt on the life of his master.

It is time to inquire what fortunes have befallen the king of Naples and his courtiers, whom we left bewailing the loss of Ferdinand and of their ship.

After a vain search through the mazes of the enchanted island, the king had given up all hope of ever again seeing his lost son. At one time during their

[1] leopard.

wanderings, King Alonso and the faithful Gonzalo, he who had succored Prospero when he was set adrift, were overcome by sleep. Their companions — Antonio, the usurping brother of Prospero, and Sebastian, Alonso's brother — plotted together to kill the sleepers, that Sebastian might make himself king of Naples, and that Antonio, in reward for his part in the conspiracy, might be freed from paying tribute to Naples.

Just as the two plotters had raised their swords to strike, however, Ariel was sent by Prospero to save the man who had taken pity on him in his hour of need. He sang in Gonzalo's ear : —

While you here do snoring lie,
Open-eyed conspiracy
His time doth take.
If of life you keep a care,
Shake off slumber, and beware :
Awake ! Awake !

Starting up suddenly, the king asked of Antonio and Sebastian why they had their swords drawn. The false men pretended that they had heard a roaring like the sound of lions, and had drawn to defend themselves. Affrighted by the tale, the king and Gonzalo led the way to another part of the island. As they started off, Ariel said to himself : —

Prospero, my lord, shall know what I have done :
So, king, go safely on to seek thy son.

A little later, heart-sick and weary, and fainting with hunger, these men were still further tortured by Ariel,

who placed a banquet before their longing eyes, and just as they were about to eat, suddenly appeared in the form of a harpy — a loathsome creature, half bird, half woman — and snatched the food from their outstretched hands.

By this time, the memory of their past misdeeds began to stir their consciences, and now they heard the voice of Ariel telling them of their sins. In stern tones he pronounced judgment, saying: —

> I and my fellows
> Are ministers of Fate. Remember, —
> For that's my business to you, — that you three
> From Milan did supplant good Prospero;
> Exposed unto the sea, which hath requit it,
> Him and his innocent child: for which foul deed
> The powers, delaying, not forgetting, have
> Incensed the seas and shores, yea, all the creatures,
> Against your peace. Thee of thy son, Alonso,
> They have bereft; and do pronounce by me,
> Lingering perdition — worse than any death
> Can be at once — shall step by step attend
> You and your ways; whose wraths to guard you from, —
> Which here, in this most desolate isle, else falls
> Upon your heads, — is nothing but heart's sorrow,
> And a clear life ensuing.

The three guilty men imagine that the very billows, and the winds, and the loud-sounding thunder are accusing spirits, denouncing them for the wrong they had done to Prospero. In their alarm, they rush about like madmen, followed by the good Gonzalo, who fears that, in their desperation, they will do themselves some harm.

But this the watchful Ariel prevents. He drives them into a grove near the cell of Prospero, and there he holds them until the sixth hour of the day, the time appointed by Prospero for his and their release.

Alonso and Antonio, the usurping brother of Prospero, have now become sincerely repentant for the wrong they had done to Prospero, and he, knowing this, commands Ariel to bring them into his presence, saying: —

> Though with their high wrongs I am struck to the quick,
> Yet with my nobler reason 'gainst my fury
> Do I take part. The rarer action is
> In virtue than in vengeance: they being penitent,
> The sole drift of my purpose doth extend
> Not a frown further. Go release them, Ariel:
> My charms I'll break, their senses I'll restore,
> And they shall be themselves.
>
> ARIEL. I'll fetch them, sir.

Drawn by the subtle power of music which Ariel sounds in the air above them, they are led to Prospero, who thus addresses them, as they stand within a charmed circle: —

> There stand,
> For you are spell-stopped. —
> Holy Gonzalo, honorable man,
> Mine eyes, even sociable to the show of thine,
> Fall fellowly drops. — The charm dissolves apace;
> And as the morning steals upon the night,
> Melting the darkness, so their rising senses
> Begin to chase the ignorant fumes that mantle
> Their clearer reason. — O good Gonzalo,

My true preserver, and a loyal sir
To him thou follow'st! I will pay thy graces
Home both in word and deed. Most cruelly
Didst thou, Alonso, use me and my daughter:
Thy brother was a furtherer in the act; —
Thou art pinched for't now, Sebastian.

Then turning to Antonio, Prospero continues: —

Flesh and blood,
You, brother mine, that entertained ambition,
Expelled remorse[1] and nature; who, with Sebastian, —
Whose inward pinches therefore are most strong, —
Would here have killed your king; I do forgive thee,
Unnatural though thou art.

These words of forgiveness were scarcely understood by the bewildered men, who did not recognize the long-unseen Prospero. He therefore retired into his cell, whence he soon emerged again, dressed in the very same garments that he had formerly worn when he was Duke of Milan. He then addressed himself to Alonso, saying: —

Behold, Sir King,
The wrongéd Duke of Milan, Prospero:
For more assurance that a living prince
Does now speak to thee, I embrace thy body;
And to thee and thy company I bid
A hearty welcome.

ALONSO. Whether thou beest he or no,
Or some enchanted trifle to abuse me,
As late I have been, I not know: thy pulse
Beats, as of flesh and blood; and, since I saw thee,
Th' affliction of my mind amends, with which,

[1] pity.

I fear, a madness held me.
Thy dukedom I resign, and do entreat
Thou pardon me my wrongs. — But how should Prospero
Be living and be here?

Turning to Gonzalo, Prospero said: —

First, noble friend,
Let me embrace thine age, whose honor cannot
Be measured or confined.

GONZALO. Whether this be
Or be not, I'll not swear.

PROSPERO. You do yet taste
Some subtleties o' th' isle, that will not let you
Believe things certain. — Welcome, my friends all!
For you, most wicked sir, whom to call brother
Would even infect my mouth, I do forgive
Thy rankest fault, — all of them; and require
My dukedom of thee, which perforce I know
Thou must restore.

ALONSO. If thou beest Prospero,
Give us particulars of thy preservation:
How thou hast met us here, who three hours since
Were wracked upon this shore; where I have lost —
How sharp the point of this remembrance is! —
My dear son Ferdinand.

PROSPERO. Know for certain
That I am Prospero, and that very duke
Which was thrust forth of Milan; who most strangely
Upon this shore, where you were wracked, was landed,
To be the lord on't. No more yet of this;
For 'tis a chronicle of day by day,
Not a relation for a breakfast, nor
Befitting this first meeting. Welcome, sir;
This cell's my court: here have I few attendants,

And subjects none abroad: pray you, look in.
My dukedom since you have given me again,
I will requite you with as good a thing;
At least bring forth a wonder, to content ye
As much as me my dukedom.

So saying, Prospero opened the door of his cell and bade them look within. There, to their utter amazement, they discovered Ferdinand and the beautiful Miranda playing chess. The king, overjoyed at finding the son whom he had mourned as lost, exclaimed:—

Now all the blessings
Of a glad father compass thee about!
Arise, and say how thou cam'st here.
What is this maid with whom thou wast at play?
Your eld'st acquaintance cannot be three hours:
Is she the goddess that hath severed us,
And brought us thus together?
FERDINAND. Sir, she is mortal;
But by immortal Providence she's mine:
I chose her when I could not ask my father
For his advice, nor thought I had one. She
Is daughter to this famous Duke of Milan,
Of whom so often I have heard renown,
But never saw before; of whom I have
Received a second life, and second father
This lady makes him to me.

Alonso is so grateful for his son's restoration, and so attracted to the lovely Miranda, that he gladly consents to their union. The pious Gonzalo gives them his blessing, and thanks the gods that Prospero's wrongs

have been righted, and that Naples is to have so noble a king and queen.

O, rejoice,

he says, —

> Beyond a common joy! and set it down
> With gold on lasting pillars: — In one voyage
> Did Claribel her husband find at Tunis;
> And Ferdinand her brother found a wife,
> Where he himself was lost; Prospero his dukedom,
> In a poor isle; and all of us ourselves,
> When no man was his own. Look down, you gods,
> And on this couple drop a blessed crown!
> For it is you that have chalked forth the way
> Which brought us hither.

Prospero now told Alonso that his ship was safe in a harbor of the island, and that, on the following day, he and his daughter would accompany the party to Naples, where he hoped to witness the celebration of the marriage rites of Ferdinand and Miranda. He promised them "calm seas, auspicious gales," and a speedy voyage.

The execution of this last charge he then committed to Ariel, after which the airy sprite was to be free. Ariel, rejoicing in his long-desired freedom, sings: —

> *Where the bee sucks, there suck I:*
> *In a cowslip's bell I lie;*
> *There I couch when owls do cry.*
> *On the bat's back I do fly*
> *After summer merrily.*
> *Merrily, merrily, shall I live now*
> *Under the blossom that hangs on the bough.*

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

LONG, long ago, a band of warlike maidens, called Amazons, lived in the far East. They were so fond of war and hunting that they even sometimes battled with their neighbors, the Greeks. In one such engagement, Hippolyta, their chief, was captured by the famous Grecian hero Theseus, who took her with him on his return to Greece, and made her his queen.

Their wedding festivities lasted many days, and Theseus tried, in every way, to amuse his bride, so that she might be happy in her new home. He bade his master of revels to —

> Stir up the Athenian youth to merriments;
> Awake the pert and nimble spirit of mirth, —

telling Hippolyta: —

> I wooed thee with my sword,
> And won thy love, doing thee injuries;
> But I will wed thee in another key,
> With pomp, with triumph, and with revelling.

While Theseus was thus planning merry sports, he was interrupted by an aged father, who complained that his daughter Hermia refused to marry the man whom he had selected for her, and insisted upon choosing a husband for herself. So Egeus, the father, begged

Theseus to interfere and compel Hermia to obey his will in the matter.

It may seem strange to you that a father should make such a request of a king; but in the olden times kings often chose husbands for the daughters of their subject lords. Besides, there was a law in Athens requiring young women either to accept the husbands chosen by their fathers, or to remain all their lives unmarried, serving as priestesses in the temple of Diana. In case that a girl was so obstinate as to refuse to do either, then she must die.

Theseus told Hermia that he would give her four days to decide, saying: —

> Upon that day either prepare to die
> For disobedience to your father's will,
> Or else to wed Demetrius, as he would;
> Or on Diana's altar to protest
> For aye austerity and single life.

Hermia and her lover, Lysander, were in despair when they heard this harsh judgment pronounced, until Lysander bethought himself that they might elude the severe Athenian law by going to the house of his aunt, who resided some miles out of Athens, and there be married. To this plan Hermia agreed and they parted, promising to meet on the following night in a wood a short distance from the city.

Now this wood was a favorite haunt of the fairies, and on the very night on which the lovers were to meet there, Oberon and Titania, the king and queen of fairy-

land, with their trains of elves and sprites, were to hold a midsummer revel in the enchanted grove.

Titania and Oberon had quarrelled for a very foolish reason, and their silly quarrel had frighted all fairyland, so that, as the mischief-loving fairy Puck said: —

> Now they never meet in grove or green,
> By fountain clear, or spangled starlight sheen,
> But they do square,[1] that all their elves for fear
> Creep into acorn-cups and hide them there.

So it happened that on this beautiful midsummer night, Oberon crossly greeted Titania, saying: —

> Ill met by moonlight, proud Titania,

and asked her: —

> How long within this wood intend you stay?
> TITANIA. Perchance till after Theseus' wedding-day.
> If you will patiently dance in our round
> And see our moonlight revels, go with us;
> If not, shun me, and I will spare your haunts.

So saying, Titania moved proudly away, followed by her fairy train.

Oberon was determined to be revenged upon his haughty queen, so he called his willing little servant, Puck, and told him to go search for a little flower, once milk-white, but which had been stained purple by the blood that dropped upon it from a wound made by an arrow shot by Cupid, the god of love. This little purple-stained flower we call the pansy; but Oberon called it love-in-idleness.

[1] quarrel.

Said Oberon: —

> Fetch me that flower; the herb I showed thee once:
> The juice of it on sleeping eyelids laid
> Will make or man or woman madly dote
> Upon the next live creature that it sees.
> Fetch me this herb; and be thou here again
> Ere the leviathan can swim a league.
> PUCK. I'll put a girdle round about the earth
> In forty minutes, —

which was Puck's way of saying that a fairy can be here, and there, and everywhere, as quick as one can think.

Puck found the wished-for flower, and speedily returned with it to his jealous master, who then told how he intended to vent his spite upon the fairy queen.

> OBERON. Hast thou the flower there?
> PUCK. Ay, there it is.
> OBERON. I pray thee give it me.
> I know a bank where the wild thyme blows,
> Where oxlips and the nodding violet grows,
> Quite over-canopied with luscious woodbine,
> With sweet musk-roses and with eglantine:
> There sleeps Titania sometimes of the night,
> Lulled in these flowers with dances and delight.
> Having once this juice,
> I'll watch Titania when she is asleep,
> And drop the liquor of it in her eyes.
> The next thing then she waking looks upon,
> Be it on lion, bear, or wolf, or bull,
> On meddling monkey, or on busy ape,
> She shall pursue it with the soul of love.
> And with the juice of this I'll streak her eyes,
> And make her full of hateful fantasies.

Titania, just as Oberon had thought she would, had sought out her favorite flowery bank, and had bade her fairy train: —

> Come, now a roundel and a fairy song;
> Then, for the third part of a minute, hence;
> Some to kill cankers in the musk-rose buds,
> Some war with rere-mice [1] for their leathern wings,
> To make my small elves coats, and some keep back
> The clamorous owl that nightly hoots and wonders
> At our quaint [2] spirits. Sing me now asleep;
> Then to your offices and let me rest.

So the loving fairies sang: —

> *You spotted snakes with double tongue,*
> *Thorny hedgehogs, be not seen;*
> *Newts and blind-worms, do no wrong,*
> *Come not near our fairy queen.*
>
> *Weaving spiders, come not here;*
> *Hence, you long-legged spinners, hence!*
> *Beetles black, approach not near;*
> *Worm nor snail, do no offence.*
> *Never harm,*
> *Nor spell nor charm,*
> *Come our lovely lady nigh;*
> *So, good-night, with lullaby.*

The fairies did not once suspect that Oberon would be the one who would harm Titania; but now he comes, treading very softly, bends over the sleeping queen, and squeezes some of the juice of Cupid's flower on her eye-

[1] bats. [2] pretty.

lids, at the same time repeating these words of an evil charm: —

> What thou seest when thou dost wake,
> Do it for thy true-love take;
> Love and languish for his sake:
> Be it ounce, or cat, or bear,
> Pard,[1] or boar with bristled hair,
> In thy eye that shall appear
> When thou wak'st, it is thy dear:
> Wake when some vile thing is near.

The mischievous little Puck, in wandering through the wood, came upon some rude, clownish fellows who were rehearsing a play which they were planning to give at the wedding-feast of Theseus and Hippolyta. Thinking to play a fine joke upon them, Puck softly dropped over the hairy pate of one of their number an ass's head, which he had found lying upon the ground. His strange transformation so frightened the others that they fled in all directions. But the clown, thinking that one of his companions had put the ass's head on him, declared that no one should make him afraid, and said: —

> I will not stir from this place, do what they can: I will walk up and down here, and I will sing, that they shall hear I am not afraid.

It happened that he was so near Titania's flowery bank that the sound of his harsh voice in singing awaked her, and the charm caused her to fall in love with this foolish clown with the ass's head, since he was the first creature that she saw upon waking. Strangely

[1] leopard.

enough, she thought the ridiculous fellow beautiful, and she thus addressed him: —

> I pray thee, gentle mortal, sing again:
> I am a spirit of no common rate:
> The summer still doth tend upon my state;
> And I do love thee: therefore, go with me.
> I'll give thee fairies to attend on thee,
> And they shall fetch thee jewels from the deep,
> And sing while thou on presséd flowers dost sleep;
> And I will purge thy mortal grossness so,
> That thou shalt like an airy spirit go.

So saying, Titania called her delicate little sprites, Peaseblossom, Cobweb, Moth, and Mustardseed, and bade them —

> Be kind and courteous to this gentleman:
> Hop in his walks, and gambol in his eyes;
> Feed him with apricocks[1] and dewberries,
> With purple grapes, green figs, and mulberries:
> The honey-bags steal from the humble-bees,
> And for night-tapers crop their waxen thighs,
> And light them at the fiery glow-worm's eyes,
> To have my love to bed and to arise;
> And pluck the wings from painted butterflies
> To fan the moonbeams from his sleeping eyes.
> Nod to him, elves, and do him courtesies.

The little fairies, always obedient to their queen, bow before the ridiculous clown, bidding him "Hail!" and lead him to Titania's woodland bower. There Titania, whose eyes have been so blinded by the magic juice of the little purple flower that she loves this clown with the ass's head, begs him: —

[1] apricots.

Come, sit thee down upon this flowery bed,
While I thy amiable cheeks do coy,
And stick musk-roses in thy sleek smooth head,
And kiss thy fair large ears, my gentle joy.

But the clown, who knows that his head is not smooth and sleek, asks the fairies, Peaseblossom and Mustard-seed, to scratch his rough pate, saying: —

I must to the barber's, for methinks I am marvellous hairy about the face.

Titania desires to have him entertained with fairy music, but he would rather listen to the rude sound of the rustic bones to which he is accustomed.

Says Titania, —

Say, sweet love, what thou desirest to eat.

The clown replies that he should much enjoy some hay, or a peck of good dry oats, or a handful or two of dried peas. In vain Titania tells him: —

I have a venturesome fairy that shall seek
The squirrel's hoard, and fetch thee new nuts.

He grows sleepy and does not wish to be disturbed, so Titania winds her fairy arms about the clownish fellow, and they lose themselves in sleep.

By this time Oberon has become ashamed of his foolish anger, and repents of the ill-natured trick which he has played upon his beautiful queen. So while they are yet sleeping, he releases Titania from the charm with which he had bound her eyes, saying: —

Be as thou wast wont to be;
See as thou wast wont to see;
Dian's bud o'er Cupid's flower
Hath such force and blessed power.
Now, my Titania, wake you, my sweet queen.
TITANIA. My Oberon! what visions have I seen!
Methought I was enamored of an ass.
OBERON. There lies your love.
TITANIA. How came these things to pass?
O, how mine eyes do loathe his visage now!

Oberon, to soothe his offended mistress, commanded Puck to remove the ass's head from that of the stupid clown. This command the sly little sprite willingly obeyed, saying: —

Now, when thou wakest, with thine own fool's eyes peep.

In order to celebrate fitly the newly restored peace with his gentle queen, Oberon ordered music to sound, saying to Titania: —

Come, my queen, take hands with me;
Now thou and I are new in amity,
And will to-morrow midnight solemnly
Dance in Duke Theseus' house triumphantly,
And bless it to all fair posterity.
PUCK. Fairy king, attend and mark:
I do hear the morning lark.

This was a warning to the fairy king and queen to leave that part of the earth on which the sun was about to rise, because they were spirits of the night-time.

OBERON. Then, my queen, in silence sad,
Trip we after the night's shade:

We the globe can compass soon,
Swifter than the wandering moon.
TITANIA. Come, my lord, and in our flight
Tell me how it came this night
That I sleeping here was found
With these mortals on the ground.

The trick that Puck played upon Titania was not the only piece of mischief that he did by means of the magic flower. You will remember that the two lovers, Hermia and Lysander, had agreed to meet that night in this same wood. They were followed secretly by Demetrius, the man whom Hermia's father was determined to force her to marry against her wishes; and also by another maiden, named Helena, who was madly in love with Demetrius and exceedingly jealous of Hermia.

Now it happened that, while Puck was away searching for the little purple flower, Oberon overheard Helena vainly beseeching Demetrius to bestow his love upon her. So when Puck returned, he instructed the merry sprite to squeeze some of the magic juice upon the eyes of the disdainful Athenian youth, if he should chance to find him asleep. This Oberon did, thinking to make Helena happy. But Puck, by mistake, gave the charm to Lysander, who awoke just as Helena was passing, and transferred to her all the love that he had felt for Hermia.

Helena, on her part, disdained the love of Lysander as scornfully as Demetrius had done in repulsing her advances to himself. Lysander pursued the fleeing Helena, and Hermia, who now awoke, followed them both.

In their wild chase, all four came within hearing of

Oberon, who thus discovered Puck's mistake, and sharply rebuked him.

> OBERON. This is thy negligence; still thou mistak'st,
> Or else commit'st thy knaveries wilfully.
> PUCK. Believe me, king of shadows, I mistook.
> Did not you tell me I should know the man
> By the Athenian garments he had on?
> And so far blameless proves my enterprise,
> That I have 'nointed an Athenian's eyes;
> And so far am I glad it did so sort,
> As this their jangling I esteem a sport.

Oberon, however, is filled with remorse because of the bitter quarrel among the lovers, for which he feels himself, in a measure, responsible. So he commands Puck to use his arts to separate the young men, who are about to fight for the love of Helena. He bids the mischief-loving sprite to —

> Lead these testy rivals so astray
> As one come not within another's way.
> Like to Lysander sometime frame thy tongue,
> Then stir Demetrius up with bitter wrong;
> And sometime rail thou like Demetrius;
> And from each other look thou lead them thus,
> Till o'er their brows death-counterfeiting sleep
> With leaden legs and batty wings doth creep:
> Then crush this herb into Lysander's eye,
> Whose liquor hath this virtuous property,
> To take from thence all error with his might,
> And make his eyeballs roll with wonted sight.
> When they next wake, all this derision
> Shall seem a dream and fruitless vision,

And back to Athens shall the lovers wend,
With league whose date till death shall never end.
PUCK. My fairy lord, this must be done with haste;
For night's swift dragons cut the clouds full fast,
And yonder shines Aurora's harbinger,
At whose approach, ghosts, wandering here and there,
Troop home to churchyards.
OBERON. But we are spirits of another sort:
I with the morning's love have oft made sport,
And, like a forester, the groves may tread,
Even till the eastern gate, all fiery-red,
Opening to Neptune with fair blessed beams,
Turns into yellow gold his salt green streams.
But, notwithstanding, haste; make no delay:
We may effect this business yet ere day.
PUCK. Up and down, up and down,
I will lead them up and down:
I am feared in field and town:
Goblin, lead them up and down.

So saying, naughty Puck, unseen by the youths and maidens, scatters them in roundabout ways, until, one by one, they all sink exhausted on the ground. Then when they are fast asleep, he undoes the former mischief by squeezing upon the eyelids of Lysander some of the juice of the same flower with which Oberon removed the spell from the eyes of Titania. Bending over Lysander, he chants: —

On the ground,
Sleep sound:
I'll apply
To your eye,
Gentle lover, remedy.

When thou wak'st,
Thou tak'st
True delight
In the sight
Of thy former lady's eye:
And the county proverb known,
That every man should take his own,
In your waking shall be shown:
Jack shall have Jill;
Naught shall go ill;
All shall be well.

Soothed by the magic spell, all four slept so soundly that not even the bright May sunshine awakened them. And there they were found still sleeping peacefully upon the ground when Theseus and his train came to the wood to find amusement in hunting the deer.

Among the courtiers was Egeus, father of Hermia, whose wrath was enkindled at sight of his daughter and Helena asleep in the grove. Theseus, however, fancies that the young people have come out to do honor to the May. Their presence reminds him of the command laid upon Hermia, and he asks Egeus if this is not the day on which Hermia was to make answer as to her choice. Finding that this is the case, he bids the huntsmen blow their horns. At the sound, the sleepers start up broad awake, and with all their spite and jealousy melted away. Demetrius no longer desires to wed Hermia; but his whole heart is now given to Helena, whom he had disliked until the magic juice opened his eyes to her loveliness. Lysander, too, cured of his brief passion for Helena, is again Hermia's, heart and soul.

At the duke's command, Egeus gives his daughter to her chosen one, and Theseus declares that Hermia and Lysander, Helena and Demetrius, shall be wedded in the temple, when his own marriage rites with Hippolyta are solemnized.

Thus, amidst the rejoicings of the entire court, the true lovers are made happy, and the genial fairies shower blessings upon the newly wedded pairs.

PUCK. Not a mouse
Shall disturb this hallowed house :
I am sent with broom before,
To sweep the dust behind the door.
OBERON. Through the house give glimmering light,
By the dead and drowsy fire :
Every elf and fairy sprite
Hop as light as bird from brier ;
And this ditty, after me,
Sing, and dance it trippingly.
TITANIA. First rehearse your song by rote,
To each word a warbling note :
Hand in hand, with fairy grace,
Will we sing, and bless this place.
OBERON. Now, until the break of day,
Through this house each fairy stray.
With this field-dew consecrate,
Every fairy take his gait ;
And each several chamber bless,
Through this palace, with sweet peace ;
And the owner of it blest
Ever shall in safety rest.
Trip away ; make no stay ;
Meet me all by break of day.

ROMEO AND JULIET

ROMEO AND JULIET

It has often happened in the course of the world's history, that silly quarrels between members of different families have resulted in arraying whole houses against each other. These quarrels, or feuds, are inherited from generation to generation, until any chance meeting becomes the signal for open attack.

Such a deep-seated enmity between the family of the Capulets and that of the Montagues had long disturbed the peace of old Verona, and the prince had tried in vain to reconcile these enemies. His patience was exhausted when he found, one day, not only their servants, but also the heads of the two houses engaged in a street brawl. He commanded: —

> Throw your mistempered weapons to the ground,
> And hear the sentence of your movéd prince. —
> Three civil brawls, bred of an airy word,
> By thee, old Capulet, and Montague,
> Have thrice disturbed the quiet of our streets,
> And made Verona's ancient citizens
> Cast by their grave beseeming ornaments,
> To wield old partisans, in hands as old,
> Cankered with peace, to part your cankered hate.
> If ever you disturb our streets again,
> Your lives shall pay the forfeit of the peace.

Soon after this, the Lord and Lady Capulet issued invitations to a masked ball to be given at their family mansion. Among the beauties who were to grace this festival was one Rosaline, niece to Lord Capulet, with whom Romeo, the heir of the house of Montague, imagined himself to be madly in love, but whose advances had been repulsed by the lady.

Benvolio, Romeo's cousin, had no patience with the lovesick folly of his kinsman, and he thought that, if Romeo would make the acquaintance of other maidens, he would be cured of his hopeless passion. So he suggested to Romeo: —

> At this same ancient feast of Capulet's
> Sups the fair Rosaline whom thou so lov'st,
> With all the admiréd beauties of Verona.
> Go thither, and with unattainted eye
> Compare her face with some that I shall show,
> And I will make thee think thy swan a crow.
> ROMEO. I'll go along, no such sight to be shown,
> But to rejoice in splendor of mine own.

Although Romeo scouted the suggestion that there could be any one fairer than Rosaline, yet he ventured to don a mask, and take the risk of being recognized in the house of his hereditary foe.

At this masquerade, Juliet, the sole heir of the house of Capulet, was to make her début; for, although she was but fourteen years of age, her father considered her quite old enough to marry. He favored the suit of the young Count Paris, kinsman of the prince, and he hoped

that, as a result of their meeting at the ball, Juliet would fall in love with Count Paris.

The old saying, "Love goes where it is sent," was, however, to be perfectly fulfilled in this case. The moment Romeo's glance fell upon the fair, sweet Juliet, he lost all thought of his former love, and had eyes for none but her. He exclaimed in ecstasy: —

> O, she doth teach the torches to burn bright!
> Her beauty hangs upon the cheek of night
> Like a rich jewel in an Ethiope's ear;
> Beauty too rich for use, for earth too dear!
> So shows a snowy dove trooping with crows,
> As yonder lady o'er her fellows shows.
> The measure done, I'll watch her place of stand,
> And, touching hers, make blessed my rude hand.
> Did my heart love till now? forswear it, sight!
> For I ne'er saw true beauty till this night.

In speaking aloud, Romeo entirely forgot the danger of self-betrayal, and his voice was recognized by Tybalt, nephew of the Capulets, who happened to overhear him. It angered Tybalt to find that a Montague should presume to attend a feast of the Capulets, and he said to his servant: —

> Fetch me my rapier, boy. — What dares the slave
> Come hither, covered with an antic face,[1]
> To fleer[2] and scorn at our solemnity?
> Now, by the stock and honor of my kin,
> To strike him dead I hold it not a sin.

Hearing Tybalt's wrathful words, Lord Capulet inquired: —

[1] referring to Romeo's mask. [2] sneer.

Why, how now, kinsman! wherefore storm you so?
TYBALT. Uncle, this is a Montague, our foe,
A villain that is hither come in spite,
To scorn at our solemnity this night.
CAPULET. Young Romeo is it?
TYBALT. 'Tis he, that villain Romeo.
CAPULET. Content[1] thee, gentle coz, let him alone:
He bears him like a portly gentleman;
And, to say truth, Verona brags of him
To be a virtuous and well-governed youth.
I would not for the wealth of all the town
Here in my house do him disparagement;
Therefore be patient, take no note of him:
It is my will, the which if thou respect,
Show a fair presence and put off these frowns,
An ill-beseeming semblance for a feast.

Tybalt resented this interference, and withdrew in high dudgeon, uttering threats of vengeance against the upstart Montague, when they should meet elsewhere.

Romeo, entirely unconscious of Tybalt's wrath, made his way to the side of Juliet at the first opportunity. Love made him bold, and when he dared to take a kiss from her lips, she did not repulse him, for she had also fallen in love at first sight. Her mother, who was watching her, knew that it was not Paris to whom Juliet was giving her favors, and she sent to call her daughter from the ardent Romeo.

When he learned that she who had taken his heart captive was the daughter of the house of Capulet, Romeo was in despair. Juliet, on her part, was equally dis-

[1] compose yourself.

tressed when, having sent a servant to ask the name of the gallant youth, she was told: —

His name is Romeo, and a Montague,
The only son of your great enemy.
JULIET. My only love sprung from my only hate!
Too early seen unknown, and known too late!
Prodigious[1] birth of love it is to me,
That I must love a loathéd enemy.

Romeo left the house with his friends, but the violence of his new love made him linger near the home of his beauteous lady. He exclaimed: —

Can I go forward when my heart is here?
Turn back, dull earth, and find thy centre out.

So saying, he leaped over the wall of the Capulets' garden and wandered among the shrubbery until he was rewarded by the sight of Juliet, who leaned out of her moon-lighted window. In a trance of delight, he murmured: —

But, soft! what light through yonder window breaks?
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,

[1] portentous, ominous.

As daylight doth a lamp; her eyes 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!

JULIET. Ay me!

ROMEO. She speaks:

O, speak again, bright angel! for thou art
As glorious to this night, being o'er my head,
As is a wingéd messenger of heaven
Unto the white-upturnéd wondering 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.

JULIET. 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.
'Tis but thy name that is my enemy;
What's Montague? it is nor 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 called,
Retain that dear perfection which he owes[1]
Without that title. — Romeo, doff thy name,
And for that name, which is no part of thee,
Take all myself.

Juliet, who supposed herself alone with the night, was startled at hearing a voice reply: —

[1] possesses.

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

JULIET. What man art thou that thus bescreened in night
So stumblest on my counsel?

ROMEO. 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.

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

ROMEO. Neither, fair maid, if either thee dislike.

JULIET. How cam'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.

ROMEO. 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[1] to me.

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

ROMEO. I have night's cloak to hide me from their eyes;
And but thou love me, let them find me here:
My life were better ended by their hate,
Than death proroguéd, wanting of thy love.

Juliet was too sincere to play the coquette, and too true to have any false modesty. She was perfectly aware that Romeo must have heard what she had said when she thought herself alone; so she confessed artlessly: —

[1] hindrance.

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. 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.
In truth, fair Montague, I am too fond,
And therefore thou mayst think my havior[1] 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 overheard'st, ere I was ware,[2]
My true love's passion; therefore pardon me,
And not impute this yielding to light love,
Which the dark night hath so discoveréd.

Romeo was about to swear eternal constancy, but Juliet interrupted him, for his simple promise, not oaths, was all that she desired. She felt oppressed by the violence and the suddenness of this passion. She knew that they ought to part, so she bade her lover: —

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!
ROMEO. O blessed, blessed night! I am afeard,
Being in night, all this is but a dream,

[1] behavior. [2] aware.

Too flattering-sweet to be substantial.

JULIET. Three words, dear Romeo, and good night indeed.
If that thy bent of love be honorable,
Thy purpose marriage, send me word to-morrow,
By one that I'll procure to come to thee,
Where and what time thou wilt perform the rite;
And all my fortunes at thy foot I'll lay,
And follow thee, my lord, throughout the world.

Young in years though she was, love had, in a flash, as it were, transformed Juliet into a woman. Hence this unreserved surrender of herself. She knew that family pride would forbid an open marriage with one of the hated Montagues; therefore, in order to be true to the holy love which possessed her soul, she felt that she must act for herself, without consulting her parents. The only person whom Juliet could trust with her secret was an old nurse who was wholly devoted to her interest. This was the messenger whom she resolved to send to Romeo in the morning.

Before retiring, however, Juliet went again to the window, hoping for one more word with her lover. She was not disappointed, for Romeo still lingered, longing to hear her sweet voice once again. As she called his name, quickly came the response: —

It is my soul that calls upon my name;
How silver-sweet sound lovers' tongues by night,
Like softest music to attending ears!

JULIET. Romeo, at what o'clock to-morrow
Shall I send to thee?

ROMEO. At the hour of nine.

JULIET. I will not fail; 'tis twenty years till then.

I have forgot why I did call thee back.
ROMEO. Let me stand here till thou remember it.
JULIET. I shall forget, to have thee still stand there,
Remembering how I love thy company.
Good night, good night! parting is such sweet sorrow,
That I shall say good night till it be morrow.
ROMEO. Sleep dwell upon thine eyes, peace in thy breast!

When Romeo left Juliet, he at once repaired to the cell of a certain Friar Laurence, who was father-confessor for both families. It was now early morning, and the good friar was already astir gathering herbs. As he worked, he thus communed with himself:—

O, mickle is the powerful grace that lies
In herbs, plants, stones, and their true qualities!
For naught so vile that on the earth doth live
But to the earth some special good doth give;
Nor aught so good but, strained from that fair use,
Revolts from true birth, stumbling on abuse.
Virtue itself turns vice, being misapplied,
And vice sometime's by action dignified.
Within the infant rind of this weak flower
Poison hath residence, and medicine power;
Two such opposéd kings encamp them still
In man as well as herbs, — grace and rude will.

The friar's reflections were interrupted by Romeo, who sought him for advice and assistance in the matter of his proposed marriage with the daughter of his enemy. Friar Laurence consented to unite the lovers, hoping that their union would result in healing the feud. In the afternoon of that same day, therefore, Romeo and Juliet were wedded with the blessing of the church.

The fiery Tybalt, whom his Uncle Capulet had restrained from summarily chastising Romeo for appearing at the ball, was determined to punish the rash youth at his first opportunity. Late that day, after Romeo's marriage rites had been celebrated, the opportunity came. Benvolio and Mercutio, partisans of the Montagues, were passing along the street, when they encountered Tybalt, who inquired where he could find Romeo. Even as he spoke, Romeo came in sight. Tybalt at once accosted him in a violent manner, saying: —

> Romeo, the hate I bear thee can afford
> No better term than this, — thou art a villain.

Romeo returned a mild answer, for now that Juliet was his wife, he desired to avoid quarrelling with any of the Capulets. Tybalt refused to be pacified, however, and Mercutio took the quarrel upon himself. In the sword-fencing that followed, Mercutio was mortally wounded. This bloody deed Romeo felt that it was his duty to avenge. He argued: —

> This gentleman, the prince's near ally,
> My very friend, hath got his mortal hurt
> In my behalf; my reputation stained
> With Tybalt's slander; — Tybalt, that an hour
> Hath been my cousin! — O sweet Juliet,
> Thy beauty hath made me effeminate,
> And in my temper softened valor's steel!

The sight of Tybalt triumphing over Mercutio slain aroused his fury, and he shouted: —

Now, Tybalt, take the "villain" back again
That late thou gav'st me! for Mercutio's soul
Is but a little way above our heads,
Staying for thine to keep him company;
Either thou, or I, or both, must go with him.
TYBALT. Thou, wretched boy, that didst consort him here,
Shalt with him hence.

This proved a vain boast, for it was Tybalt, not Romeo, who was slain in the duel. Romeo had barely escaped, at the entreaty of his friend Benvolio, when the prince, together with the heads of the two rival houses, appeared upon the scene. Benvolio related truthfully all that had happened, and since, in slaying Tybalt, Romeo had avenged the death of Mercutio, the kinsman of the prince, his punishment was made exile, instead of death. The prince sternly told Capulet and Montague: —

My blood for your rude brawls doth lie a-bleeding;
I will be deaf to pleading and excuses;
Nor tears nor prayers shall purchase out abuses:
Therefore use none; let Romeo hence in haste,
Else, when he's found, that hour is his last.
Bear hence this body, and attend our will;
Mercy but murthers, pardoning those that kill.

Romeo had fled to Friar Laurence for protection, but when that faithful friend brought him word of the prince's sentence, telling him: —

Hence from Verona art thou banishéd;
Be patient, for the world is broad and wide: —

instead of rejoicing that he had not been condemned

to death, Romeo thought of nothing but the separation from his bride. He bitterly bewailed his fate, saying: —

> 'Tis torture, and not mercy: heaven is here,
> Where Juliet lives; and every cat and dog
> And little mouse, every unworthy thing,
> Live here in heaven, and may look on her,
> But Romeo may not; he is banishéd.
> And say'st thou yet that exile is not death?
> Hadst thou no poison mixed, no sharp-ground knife,
> No sudden mean of death, though ne'er so mean,
> But "banishéd" to kill me?
>
> FRIAR LAURENCE. Thou fond mad man, hear me but speak a word.
>
> ROMEO. Thou canst not speak of that thou dost not feel.
> Wert thou as young as I, Juliet thy love,
> An hour but married, Tybalt murthered,
> Doting like me and like me banishéd,
> Then mightst thou speak, then mightst thou tear thy hair,
> And fall upon the ground, as I do now,
> Taking the measure of an unmade grave.

At this moment a knock was heard. The newcomer proved to be Juliet's nurse, whom Juliet had sent to find her husband and to assure him of her undying love. At sight of the nurse, Romeo started up, inquiring in agonized tones what his lady said of him who had taken the life of her kinsman. The nurse replied: —

> O, she says nothing, sir, but weeps and weeps;
> And now falls on her bed; and then starts up,
> And Tybalt calls; and then on Romeo cries,
> And then falls down again.
>
> ROMEO. As if that name,

Shot from the deadly level of a gun,
Did murther her; as that name's cursed hand
Murthered her kinsman. — O, tell me, friar, tell me,
In what vile part of this anatomy
Doth my name lodge? tell me, that I may sack
The hateful mansion.

With that Romeo drew his sword, and in his frenzy he might have taken his own life also, had not the friar interposed: —

Hold thy desperate hand!
Art thou a man? thy form cries out thou art:
Thy tears are womanish; thy wild acts denote
The unreasonable fury of a beast.
Thou hast amazed me; by my holy order,
I thought thy disposition better tempered.
Hast thou slain Tybalt? wilt thou slay thyself?
And slay thy lady too that lives in thee,
By doing damnéd hate upon thyself?
Why rail'st thou on thy birth, the heaven, and earth?
What, rouse thee, man! thy Juliet is alive,
For whose dear sake thou wast but lately dead;
There art thou happy: Tybalt would kill thee,
But thou slew'st Tybalt; there art thou happy too:
The law that threatened death becomes thy friend
And turns it to exile; there art thou happy:
A pack of blessings lights upon thy back;
Happiness courts thee in her best array;
But, like a misbehaved and sullen wench,
Thou pout'st upon thy fortune and thy love.
Take heed, take heed, for such die miserable.

Friar Laurence advised Romeo to take up his residence in Mantua, saying that he would send him

frequent messages concerning the state of affairs in Verona. He promised also to use his utmost influence to reconcile the two hostile families to Romeo's marriage with Juliet, and to persuade the prince to pardon Romeo. Then he bade the nurse go tell her mistress that Romeo was coming to comfort her with a sweet farewell.

> NURSE. O Lord, I could have stayed here all the night
> To hear good counsel; O what learning is! —
> My lord, I'll tell my lady you will come.
> ROMEO. Do so, and bid my sweet prepare to chide.
> NURSE. Here, sir, a ring she bid me give you, sir;
> Hie you, make haste, for it grows very late.
> ROMEO. How well my comfort is revived by this!
> FRIAR LAURENCE. Go hence; good night; and here stands all your state:
> Either be gone before the watch be set,
> Or by the break of day disguised from hence.
> Sojourn in Mantua; I'll find out your man,
> And he shall signify from time to time
> Every good hap to you that chances here.
> Give me thy hand; 'tis late: farewell; good night.

The stolen moments of leave-taking passed all too quickly. As morning dawned, Romeo warned his sweet wife that they must part. Juliet protested: —

> Wilt thou be gone? it is not yet near day:
> It was the nightingale, and not the lark,
> That pierced the fearful hollow of thine ear;
> Nightly she sings on yon pomegranate-tree.
> Believe me, love, it was the nightingale.
> ROMEO. It was the lark, the herald of the morn,

No nightingale; look, love, what envious streaks
Do lace the severing clouds in yonder east.
Night's candles are burnt out, and jocund day
Stands tiptoe on the misty mountain tops.
I must be gone and live, or stay and die.

JULIET. Yon light is not day-light, I know it, I;
It is some meteor that the sun exhales,
To be to thee this night a torch-bearer,
And light thee on thy way to Mantua:
Therefore stay yet, thou need'st not to be gone.

ROMEO. Let me be ta'en, let me put to death.
I am content, so thou wilt have it so.
I'll say yon gray is not the morning's eye,
'Tis but the pale reflex of Cynthia's brow;
Nor that is not the lark, whose notes do beat
The vaulty heaven so high above our heads.
I have more care to stay than will to go;
Come, death, and welcome! Juliet wills it so.
How is't, my soul? let's talk, it is not day.

JULIET. It is, it is; hie hence, be gone, away!
It is the lark that sings so out of tune,
Straining harsh discords and unpleasing sharps.
Some say the lark makes sweet division;
This doth not so, for she divideth us.
O, now be gone; more light and light it grows.

ROMEO. More light and light? — More dark and dark our woes!

As Romeo descended, Juliet besought him: —

Art thou gone so? my lord, my love, my friend!
I must hear from thee every day in the hour,
For in a minute there are many days;
O, by this count I shall be much in years
Ere I again behold my Romeo!

ROMEO. Farewell! I will omit no opportunity
That may convey my greetings, love, to thee.
JULIET. O, think'st thou we shall ever meet again?
ROMEO. I doubt it not; and all these woes shall serve
For sweet discourses in our time to come.

Hardly had Romeo gone, when Juliet was dismayed by receiving an imperative command from her father that she should give her hand in marriage to Count Paris on the following Thursday, only three days later. In vain did the poor girl plead for delay on account of the recent death of their kinsman Tybalt. Equally vain were her prayers to be excused from marrying on account of her extreme youth. Her father was very angry that she should dare to oppose his will, for he was one who regarded himself as the rightful arbiter of his child's destiny. His wrath waxed so furious that he stormed:—

Hang thee, young baggage! disobedient wretch!
I tell thee what: get thee to church o' Thursday,
Or never after look me in the face.
Speak not, reply not, do not answer me.

To Lady Capulet he said:—

It makes me mad: day, night, late, early,
At home, abroad, alone, in company,
Waking, or sleeping, still my care hath been
To have her matched; and having now provided
A gentleman of noble parentage,
Of fair demesnes, youthful, and nobly trained,
Stuffed, as they say, with honorable parts,
Proportioned as one's thoughts would wish a man,—
And then to have a wretched puling fool,

To answer "I'll not wed; I cannot love,
I am too young; I pray you, pardon me." —

Then he threatened Juliet: —

But an[1] you will not wed, I'll pardon you;
Graze where you will, you shall not house with me:
Look to't, think on't, I do not use to jest.
Thursday is near; lay hand on heart, advise.
An you be mine, I'll give you to my friend;
An you be not, hang, beg, starve, die in the streets,
For, by my soul, I'll ne'er acknowledge thee,
Nor what is mine shall never do thee good.
Trust to't, bethink you; I'll not be forsworn.

JULIET. Is there no pity sitting in the clouds,
That sees into the bottom of my grief?
O, sweet my mother, cast me not away!
Delay this marriage, for a month, a week;
Or, if you do not, make the bridal bed
In that dim monument where Tybalt lies.

LADY CAPULET. Talk not to me, for I'll not speak a word;
Do as thou wilt, for I have done with thee.

Even the old nurse, to whom Juliet turned in her distress, advised her to accede to her father's wishes; for the worldly-wise woman argued that Romeo was as good as dead; and probably she was afraid of the consequences to herself, if her part in the secret marriage should become known.

As a last hope, Juliet repaired to the cell of Friar Laurence, to entreat his kind offices in this extremity, saying: —

I'll to the friar, to know his remedy;
If all else fail, myself have power to die.

[1] if.

In her desperation, she threatened to take her own life, unless the good friar could devise some way of escape. Her courage and determination emboldened the priest to say: —

> 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.
>
> JULIET. 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 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,
> To live an unstained wife to my sweet love.

Then Friar Laurence unfolded his plan. On Wednesday night Juliet was to dismiss her nurse, and, when she was alone in her bed, she was to drink a potion which he would give her. Its effect would be that she would fall into a cold sleep, the perfect image of death, a trance of forty-two hours' duration. The friar continued: —

> Now, when the bridegroom in the morning comes
> To rouse thee from thy bed, there art thou dead:
> Then, as the manner of our country is,

In thy best robes uncovered on the bier
Thou shalt be borne to that same ancient vault
Where all the kindred of the Capulets lie.
In the meantime, 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 inconstant toy[1] nor womanish fear
Abate thy valor in the acting it.

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

FRIAR LAURENCE. 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.

JULIET. Love give me strength! and strength shall help afford.
Farewell, dear father!

Juliet's resolution carried her through the dreadful ordeal. The night before she was expected to wed with Paris she calmly swallowed the draught given her by Friar Laurence. And when they came to waken her to go to the church, they found her lying still and cold. Her father, touched by the sorrowful sight, mourned: —

Death lies on her like an untimely frost
Upon the sweetest flower of all the field.
All things that we ordainéd festival,
Turn from their office to black funeral:
Our instruments to melancholy bells,
Our wedding cheer to a sad burial feast,

[1] fickle freak.

Our solemn hymns to sullen dirges change,
Our bridal flowers serve for a buried corse,
And all things change them to the contrary.

Friar Laurence, who had been summoned to officiate at the marriage, uttered a solemn reproof, bidding the friends: —

— every one prepare
To follow this fair corse unto her grave.
The heavens do lower upon you for some ill;
Move them no more by crossing their high will.

The messenger whom Friar Laurence despatched to inform Romeo of Juliet's voluntary putting-on of death's counterfeit through love for him, was unfortunately detained by health officers, who suspected him of having been exposed to the pestilence. Instead, therefore, of learning the truth from the letter of Friar Laurence, Romeo was thrown into despair by the report of Juliet's death brought by his man, who hastened to Mantua to tell his master what had happened. As Balthasar met him, Romeo asked eagerly: —

How doth my lady? Is my father well?
How fares my Juliet? that I ask again;
For nothing can be ill, if she be well.
BALTHASAR. Then she is well, and nothing can be ill;
Her body sleeps in Capel's monument,
And her immortal part with angels lives.
I saw her laid low in her kindred's vault,
And presently took post to tell it you.
O, pardon me for bringing these ill news,
Since you did leave it for my office, sir.
ROMEO. Is it even so? then I defy you, stars! —

Thou know'st my lodging: get me ink and paper
And hire post-horses; I will hence to-night.
BALTHASAR. I do beseech you, sir, have patience;
Your looks are pale and wild, and do import
Some misadventure.
ROMEO. Tush, thou art deceived;
Leave me, and do the thing I bid thee do.

Not for an instant did it occur to Romeo that there could be any mistake. He had but one thought, and that was to lie beside Juliet in the tomb. With this thought came the question of how that could be accomplished. Then he exclaimed: —

O mischief, thou art swift
To enter in the thoughts of desperate men!
I do remember an apothecary, —
And hereabouts he dwells, — which late I noted
In tattered weeds, with overwhelming brows,
Culling of simples; meagre were his looks,
Sharp misery had worn him to the bones:
And in his needy shop a tortoise hung,
An alligator stuffed, and other skins
Of ill-shaped fishes; and about his shelves
A beggarly account of empty boxes,
Green earthen pots, bladders and musty seeds,
Remnants of packthread and old cakes of roses,
Were thinly scattered, to make up a show.
Noting this penury, to myself I said,
An if a man did need a poison now,
Whose sale is present death in Mantua,
Here lives a caitiff wretch would sell it him.
O, this same thought did but forerun my need,
And this same needy man must sell it me!

Just as Romeo had anticipated, the starving apothecary was easily induced to sell him a deadly poison, for, in his wretched plight, he could not resist the offer of gold. Armed with this death potion, therefore, the grief-stricken Romeo set out for Verona.

Now it happened that, on the same night of Romeo's arrival, Paris, who also grieved sorely for the loss of her whom he had hoped to make his bride, went to the churchyard, carrying flowers with which to deck Juliet's bier. As he walked towards the tomb of the Capulets, he lamented: —

> Sweet flower, with flowers thy bridal bed I strew.
> O woe! thy canopy is dust and stones,
> Which with sweet water nightly I will dew,
> Or, wanting that, with tears distilled by moans;
> The obsequies that I for thee will keep
> Nightly shall be to strew thy grave and weep.

At this moment, a page, whom Paris had stationed to keep watch, warned him that some one was approaching; so he concealed himself within the friendly shelter of a yew tree. Being utterly ignorant of Romeo's connection with Juliet, he was astonished to see that young man coming toward the tomb, and he surmised that Romeo, who had slain Tybalt, intended some shameful injury to the dead.

Romeo, on his part, had no suspicion of the presence of other listeners than Balthasar, to whom he gave this charge: —

> Give me that mattock and the wrenching iron.

Hold, take this letter; early in the morning
See thou deliver it to my lord and father.
Give me the light. Upon thy life, I charge thee,
Whate'er thou hear'st or seest, stand all aloof,
And do not interrupt me in my course.
Why I descend into this bed of death
Is partly to behold my lady's face,
But chiefly to take thence from her dead finger
A precious ring, a ring that I must use
In dear employment. Therefore hence, be gone;
But if thou, jealous, dost return to pry
In what I further shall intend to do,
By heaven, I will tear thee joint by joint
And strew this hungry churchyard with thy limbs.
The time and my intents are savage-wild,
More fierce and more inexorable far
Than empty tigers or the roaring sea.
Live and be prosperous; and farewell, good fellow.

Balthasar retired, but only for a short distance, so alarmed was he by Romeo's wild looks and words. Thus it happened that, when Romeo forced open the tomb of the Capulets, there were two witnesses to his violence. Paris rushed forward, exclaiming:—

Stop thy unhallowed toil, vile Montague!
Can vengeance be pursued further than death?
Condemnéd villain, I do apprehend thee:
Obey, and go with me; for thou must die.
ROMEO. I must indeed, and therefore came I hither.
Good gentle youth, tempt not a desperate man;
Fly hence, and leave me: think upon these gone;
Let them affright thee. I beseech thee, youth,
Put not another sin upon my head,

By urging me to fury; O, be gone!
By heaven, I love thee better than myself;
For I come hither armed against myself.
Stay not, be gone; live, and hereafter say,
A madman's mercy bade thee run away.

But Paris would not listen. He forced Romeo into fighting with him — Romeo, who did not even know who his antagonist was. In the struggle, Paris was slain, and as he fell, he prayed: —

If thou be merciful,
Open the tomb, lay me with Juliet.
ROMEO. In faith, I will. — Let me peruse this face.
Mercutio's kinsman, noble County Paris!
What said my man, when my betosséd soul
Did not attend him as we rode? I think
He told me Paris should have married Juliet;
Said he not so? or did I dream it so?
Or am I mad, hearing him talk of Juliet,
To think it was so? — O, give me thy hand,
One writ with me in sour misfortune's book!
I'll bury thee in a triumphant grave, —
A grave? O, no! a lantern, slaughtered youth;
For here lies Juliet, and her beauty makes
This vault a feasting presence full of light.

So saying, Romeo tenderly placed the slain Paris in the tomb.

It was nearing the hour when the power of the draught which Juliet had swallowed should loosen its hold, and life should be restored. As Romeo hung over her in an ecstasy of grief, he felt, but did not understand, the surging of returning life. He cried in agony: —

O my love! my wife!
Death, that hath sucked the honey of thy breath,
Hath had no power yet upon thy beauty:
Thou art not conquered; beauty's ensign yet
Is crimson in thy lips and in thy cheeks,
And death's pale flag is not advancéd there. —
Ah, dear Juliet,
Why art thou yet so fair? shall I believe
That unsubstantial Death is amorous?
For fear of that, I still will stay with thee;
And never from this palace of dim night
Depart again. — Eyes, look your last!
Arms, take your last embrace! and lips, O you
The doors of breath, seal with a righteous kiss
A dateless bargain to engrossing death!
Come, bitter conduct, come unsavory guide!
Thou desperate pilot, now at once run on
The dashing rocks thy sea-sick weary bark!
Here's to my love! — O true apothecary!
Thy drugs are quick. — Thus with a kiss I die.

Alas, that Romeo could not have been delayed a little longer! For even at that moment the steps of one who could have set all right were hastening to the tomb. Friar Laurence had just learned of the failure of his messenger to reach Romeo in time, and he intended to be at Juliet's side when she should awake. His plan was to keep her at the monastery until such time as he could get word to Romeo to come and claim his bride. As the friar entered the churchyard, he was met by Balthasar, who told him that Romeo had been in the tomb full half an hour. At the entrance of the tomb,

he found the blood-stained swords with which the unhappy rivals had fought. Entering, he cried: —

> Romeo! O, pale! — Who else? what, Paris too?
> And steeped in blood? — Ah, what an unkind hour
> Is guilty of this lamentable chance! —
> The lady stirs.
>
> JULIET. O comfortable friar! where is my lord? —
> I do remember well where I should be,
> And there I am. — Where is my Romeo?
>
> FRIAR LAURENCE. I hear some noise. Come, come away.
>
> Thy husband in thy bosom there lies dead;
> And Paris too. Come, I'll dispose of thee
> Among a sisterhood of holy nuns:
> Stay not to question, for the watch is coming;
> Come, go, good Juliet. — I dare no longer stay.
>
> JULIET. Go, get thee hence, for I will not away.

Then, as the friar left her, she looked about, saying: —

> What's here? a cup, closed in my true love's hand?
> Poison, I see, hath been his timeless end. —
> O churl! drunk all, and left no friendly drop
> To help me after? — I will kiss thy lips;
> Haply some poison yet doth hang on them,
> To make me die with a restorative.
> Thy lips are warm.

Hearing the rapidly approaching steps of the guard, Juliet snatched her husband's dagger from his belt, and plunging it into her heart, died upon his breast.

The whole city was soon aroused. The heads of the houses of Capulet and Montague met at the tomb

where lay the flower of both families, sacrificed to their wicked hate. The prince heard the testimony of Friar Laurence, who told the whole story of these unhappy lovers; of Romeo's man, Balthasar; and of the page of Paris. He read the letter which Romeo had intrusted to Balthasar, in which he had confessed to the taking of poison that he might die beside Juliet. Then he cried: —

> Where be these enemies? — Capulet! — Montague!
> See, what a scourge is laid upon your hate,
> That heaven finds means to kill your joys with love!
> And I, for winking at your discords too,
> Have lost a brace of kinsmen; all are punished.

And there, above the dead bodies of their children, Capulet and Montague clasped hands in token of repentance for the wicked feud which had brought such sorrow to their hearts. Montague pledged himself to raise a statue of pure gold to the memory of true and faithful Juliet; and Capulet promised to honor Romeo's memory as richly. Their reconciliation was complete, but too late to save the lives of the ill-starred lovers. As the prince expressed it: —

> A glooming peace this morning with it brings;
> The sun for sorrow will not show his head.
> Go hence, to have more talk of these sad things;
> Some shall be pardoned, and some punishéd:
> For never was a story of more woe
> Than this of Juliet and her Romeo.

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

A FEW centuries ago, the city of Venice in Italy was famed for its great magnificence. It was then the leading commercial port in Europe.

Among its wealthy merchants was one Antonio, who, having no family of his own, had attracted to himself by his free hospitality a group of pleasure-loving young men, who were sincerely attached to the warm-hearted merchant.

One day, however, Antonio found himself suffering from an unaccountable depression of spirits. His friends tried in vain to rally him, so they at last fell in with his sad humor, and sought to explain it to him and themselves. Antonio told them: —

> In sooth,[1] I know not why I am so sad:
> It wearies me, you say it wearies you;
> But how I caught it, found it, or came by it,
> What stuff 'tis made of, whereof it is born,
> I am to learn;
> And such a want-wit sadness makes of me
> That I have much ado to know myself.

Salarino, one of his friends, replied: —

> Your mind is tossing on the ocean;
> There, where your argosies with portly sail,

[1] truth.

Like signiors and rich burghers on the flood,
Or, as it were, the pageants of the sea,
Do overpeer the petty traffickers,
That curtsy to them, do them reverence,
As they fly by them with their woven wings.

Salanio, another of the group, added: —

Believe me, sir, had I such venture forth,
The better part of my affections would
Be with my hopes abroad. I should be still
Plucking the grass, to know where sits the wind,
Peering in maps for ports, and piers, and roads;
And every object that might make me fear
Misfortune to my ventures, out of doubt,
Would make me sad.

SALARINO. My wind, cooling my broth,
Would blow me to an ague, when I thought
What harm a wind too great might do at sea.
I should not see the sandy hour-glass run,
But I should think of shallows and of flats,
And see my wealthy *Andrew*[1] docked in sand,
Vailing her high-top lower than her ribs
To kiss her burial. Should I go to church,
And see the holy edifice of stone,
And not bethink me straight of dangerous rocks,
Which, touching but my gentle vessel's side,
Would scatter all her spices on the stream,
Enrobe the roaring waters with my silks,
And, in a word, but even now worth this,
And now worth nothing? Shall I have the thought
To think on this, and shall I lack the thought
That such a thing bechanced would make me sad?

[1] my richly freighted ship.

But tell not me ; I know, Antonio
Is sad to think upon his merchandise.

ANTONIO. Believe me, no. I thank my fortune for it,
My ventures are not in one bottom trusted,
Nor to one place ; nor is my whole estate
Upon the fortune of this present year :
Therefore my merchandise makes me not sad.

SALARINO. Why, then you are in love.

ANTONIO. Fie, fie !

SALARINO. Not in love neither ? Then let us say you are sad
Because you are not merry ; and 'twere as easy
For you to laugh and leap and say you are merry,
Because you are not sad. Now, by two-headed Janus,
Nature hath framed strange fellows in her time :
Some that will evermore peep through their eyes
And laugh, like parrots, at a bag-piper ;
And other of such vinegar aspect
That they'll not show their teeth in way of smile,
Though Nestor swear the jest be laughable.

At this moment, they were joined by others of this company of friends. Bassanio was known to be especially dear to Antonio, so after a little more bantering of the down-hearted merchant, the rest left those two together.

Thereupon Antonio asked Bassanio to confide to him, as he had promised to do, the secret desire of his heart. Bassanio replied : —

'Tis not unknown to you, Antonio,
How much I have disabled mine estate,
By something showing a more swelling port
Than my faint means would grant continuance :

Nor do I now make moan to be abridged
From such a noble rate; but my chief care
Is to come fairly off from the great debts
Wherein my time, something too prodigal,
Hath left me gaged. To you, Antonio,
I owe the most, in money, and in love;
And from your love I have a warranty
To unburthen all my plots and purposes,
How to get clear of all the debts I owe.

ANTONIO. I pray you, good Bassanio, let me know it;
And if it stand, as you yourself still do,
Within the eye of honor, be assured,
My purse, my person, my extremest means,
Lie all unlocked to your occasions.

With this encouragement, Bassanio continued: —

In my school-days, when I had lost one shaft,
I shot his fellow of the self-same flight
The self-same way, with more advisèd watch,
To find the other forth; and by adventuring both,
I oft found both. I urge this childhood proof,
Because what follows is pure innocence.
I owe you much, and, like a wilful youth,
That which I owe is lost; but if you please
To shoot another arrow that self way
Which you did shoot the first, I do not doubt,
As I will watch the aim, or to find both,
Or bring your latter hazard back again,
And thankfully rest debtor for the first.

Antonio felt hurt that Bassanio should ask in this roundabout way; so he rejoined: —

You know me well, and herein spend but time
To wind about my love with circumstance;

And, out of doubt, you do me now more wrong
In making question of my uttermost,
Than if you had made waste of all I have.
Then do but say to me what I should do,
That in your knowledge may by me be done,
And I am prest[1] unto it; therefore speak.

BASSANIO. 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
Renownéd suitors; and her sunny locks
Hang on her temples like a golden fleece;
Which makes her seat of Belmont Colchos' strand,
And many Jasons come in quest of her.
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[2] be fortunate.

ANTONIO. Thou know'st that all my fortunes are at sea;
Neither have I money nor commodity
To raise a present sum: therefore go forth;
Try what my credit can in Venice do:
That shall be racked, even to the uttermost,
To furnish thee to Belmont, to fair Portia.
Go, presently inquire, and so will I,
Where money is, and I no question make
To have it of my trust, or for my sake.

Pursuant to the permission granted by Antonio, Bas-

[1] ready for. [2] without doubt.

sanio sought Shylock the Jew, a wealthy money-lender, and preferred his request for the loan of three thousand ducats, giving Antonio's name as security. Now there was mutual hatred between Jews and Christians at this period in history, and the feeling was especially bitter between Shylock and Antonio. Still, in the hope of somehow getting Antonio into his power, Shylock was willing to loan this money. He was very deliberate, however, choosing to tantalize the impatient Bassanio. The shrewd old money-lender said meditatively: —

Three thousand ducats, — well.

BASSANIO. Ay, sir, for three months.

SHYLOCK. For three months, — well.

BASSANIO. For the which, as I told you, Antonio shall be bound.

SHYLOCK. Antonio shall become bound, — well.

BASSANIO. May you stead me? Will you pleasure me? Shall I know your answer?

SHYLOCK. Three thousand ducats for three months, and Antonio bound.

BASSANIO. Your answer to that.

SHYLOCK. Antonio is a good man.

BASSANIO. Have you heard any imputation to the contrary?

SHYLOCK. Ho, no, no, no, no; my meaning, in saying he is a good man, is to have you understand me that he is sufficient. Yet his means are in supposition: he hath an argosy bound to Tripolis, another to the Indies; I understand, moreover, upon the Rialto, he hath a third at Mexico, a fourth for England, and other ventures he hath, squandered[1] abroad. But ships are but boards, sailors but men: there be land-rats and water-rats, land-thieves and water-thieves, — I mean pirates; and then there is

[1] scattered.

the peril of waters, winds, and rocks. The man is, notwithstanding, sufficient. Three thousand ducats, — I think I may take his bond.

BASSANIO. Be assured you may.

SHYLOCK. I will be assured I may; and that I may be assured, I will bethink me. May I speak with Antonio?

BASSANIO. If it please you to dine with us.

Now it was an unheard-of thing for a Jew to eat with a Christian. By the Mosaic law the Jews were forbidden to eat pork. Shylock, therefore, took this halfway invitation as an insult, and he burst out indignantly: —

Yes, to smell pork; to eat of the habitation which your prophet, the Nazarite, conjured the devil into. I will buy with you, sell with you, talk with you, walk with you, and so following; but I will not eat with you, drink with you, nor pray with you. Who is he comes here?

It was Antonio approaching. He was also coming to ask Shylock to lend him the money on his bond. At that time the Christian money-lenders were not in the habit of taking interest on their money, and they despised the Jews still more for doing so. Antonio had taken every opportunity of interfering with Shylock's business, so it is not surprising that, at sight of him, Shylock should mutter angrily to himself: —

How like a fawning publican he looks!
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. Cursed be my tribe,
If I forgive him!

Bassanio was growing impatient, and he now demanded: —

Shylock, do you hear?
SHYLOCK. I am debating of my present store;
And, by the near guess of my memory,
I cannot instantly raise up the gross
Of full three thousand ducats. What of that?
Tubal, a wealthy Hebrew of my tribe,
Will furnish me.

The depth of Antonio's friendship for Bassanio may be understood by his being willing to put aside his pride and borrow money on interest. He told Shylock: —

Shylock, albeit I neither lend nor borrow
By taking nor by giving of excess,
Yet, to supply the ripe wants of my friend,
I'll break a custom.
SHYLOCK. Three thousand ducats, — 'tis a good round sum.
Three months from twelve, — then, let me see the rate.
ANTONIO. Well, Shylock, shall we be beholding[1] to you?

At this word the feeling of the injustice of the Christians toward his people, which had so long been smoth-

[1] beholden, under obligation.

ered in his bosom, could no longer be restrained, and Shylock spoke in burning words: —

> Signior Antonio, many a time and oft,
> In the Rialto, you have rated me
> About my moneys and my 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 spet 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 moneys;" you say so,
> You, that did void your rheum upon my beard,
> And foot me as you spurn a stranger cur
> Over your threshold; moneys is your suit.
> What should I say to you? Should I not say,
> "Hath a dog money? Is it possible
> A cur should lend three thousand ducats?" Or
> Shall I bend low, and in a bondman's key,
> With bated breath and whispering humbleness,
> Say this:
> "Fair sir, you spet on me on Wednesday last;
> You spurned me such a day; another time
> You called me dog; and for these courtesies
> I'll lend you thus much moneys?"
>
> ANTONIO. I am as like to call thee so again,
> To spet 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 of barren metal of his friend?
> But lend it rather to thine enemy;

Who, if he break, thou mayst with better face
Exact the penalty.

In response to this scornful outburst, Shylock changed his tone, and craftily pretended to desire to treat Antonio as a friend, not requiring interest for the loan. He rejoined: —

Why, look you, how you storm!
I would be friends with you, and have your love,
Forget the shames that you have stained me with,
Supply your present wants, and take no doit[1]
Of usance for my moneys, and you'll not hear me.
This kindness will I show.
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
Expressed 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.

ANTONIO. Content, i' faith; I'll seal to such a bond,
And say there is much kindness in the Jew.

BASSANIO. You shall not seal to such a bond for me;
I'll rather dwell in my necessity.

ANTONIO. Why, fear not, man; I will not forfeit it:
Within these two months — that's a month before
This bond expires — I do expect return
Of thrice three times the value of this bond.

SHYLOCK. O father Abram! what these Christians are,
Whose own hard dealings teaches them suspect
The thoughts of others! — Pray you, tell me this:

[1] the smallest amount.

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.

ANTONIO. Yes, Shylock, I will seal unto this bond.

SHYLOCK. Then meet me forthwith at the notary's.
Give him direction for this merry bond,
And I will go and purse the ducats straight,[1]
See to my house, left in the fearful guard
Of an unthrifty knave,[2] and presently
I will be with you.

ANTONIO. Hie thee, gentle Jew.—
The Hebrew will turn Christian; he grows kind.

BASSANIO. I like not fair terms and a villain's mind.

ANTONIO. Come on: in this there can be no dismay;
My ships come home a month before the day.

The lady Portia, whose praises Bassanio had sounded so highly, was wearied by the presence of numerous suitors in her mansion of Belmont, for they all fell below her standard of noble manhood. She complained to her maid, Nerissa, who was a trusted friend as well:—

By my troth, Nerissa, my little body is aweary of this great world.

NERISSA. You would be, sweet madam, if your miseries were in the same abundance as your good fortunes are; and yet, for aught I see, they are as sick that surfeit with too much as they that starve with nothing. It is no mean happiness to be seated

[1] immediately. [2] boy.

in the mean: superfluity comes sooner by white hairs, but competency lives longer.

PORTIA. Good sentences, and well pronounced.

NERISSA. They would be better, if well followed.

PORTIA. If to do were as easy as to know what were good to do, chapels had been churches, and poor men's cottages princes' palaces. It is a good divine that follows his own instructions; I can easier teach twenty what were good to be done, than be one of the twenty to follow mine own teaching. The brain may devise laws for the blood, but a hot temper leaps o'er a cold decree: such a hare is madness, the youth, to skip o'er the meshes of good counsel, the cripple. But this reasoning is not in the fashion to choose me a husband. — O me, the word "choose!" I may neither choose whom I would, nor refuse whom I dislike; so is the will of a living daughter curbed by the will of a dead father. Is it not hard, Nerissa, that I cannot choose one, nor refuse none?

Portia's complaint was due to the singular provisions of her father's will. Her father had evidently feared that the large fortune which he had left his daughter would lead mercenary men to seek her hand simply for the sake of obtaining her wealth. For, in those times, whatever property a woman possessed became her husband's at marriage. So the will provided that whoever should seek to marry Portia must choose one of three caskets, the right choice being indicated by the contents of the casket, namely, that containing Portia's picture.

Nerissa had perfect confidence in the wisdom of Portia's father, so she replied: —

Your father was ever virtuous, and holy men at their death have good inspirations; therefore the lottery that he hath de-

vised in these three chests of gold, silver, and lead — whereof who chooses his meaning chooses you — will, no doubt, never be chosen by any rightly but one who you shall rightly love.

Although Portia felt so keenly the hardship imposed upon her by the humiliating conditions of her father's will, she decided to obey, at whatever cost to herself. She rejoiced to hear Nerissa say that the suitors then at Belmont had all signified their intention of leaving without making choice of a casket, as they were not willing to take the oath prescribed by the will.

For, in order to protect his daughter from unscrupulous fortune-hunters, the father had required whoever should choose to take a solemn oath, — first, never, in case he should fail, to seek the hand of another woman in marriage; second, to leave Belmont at once; third, not to reveal which casket he had chosen. Nerissa told Portia: —

You need not fear, lady, the having any of these lords: they have acquainted me with their determinations; which is, indeed, to return to their home, and to trouble you with no more suit, unless you may be won by some other sort than your father's imposition depending on the caskets.

PORTIA. If I live to be as old as Sibylla, I will die as chaste as Diana, unless I be obtained by the manner of my father's will. I am glad this parcel of wooers are so reasonable, for there is not one among them but I dote on his very absence; and I wish them a fair departure.

NERISSA. Do you not remember, lady, in your father's time, a Venetian, a scholar and a soldier, that came hither in company of the Marquis of Montferrat?

PORTIA. Yes, yes, it was Bassanio; as I think, so was he called.

NERISSA. True, madam; he, of all the men that ever my foolish eyes looked upon, was the best deserving a fair lady.

PORTIA. I remember him well, and I remember him worthy of thy praise.

Directly after the departure of these suitors, another was announced, — the Prince of Morocco. He had the dark skin of the African climate, and he feared that Portia would be so prejudiced against him on that account, that he would not be given a fair chance. He was a man of honor and of valor, and he plead his cause with the ardor of a warm temperament: —

MOROCCO. Mislike me not for my complexion,
The shadowed livery of the burnished sun,
To whom I am a neighbor and near bred.
Bring me the fairest creature northward born,
Where Phœbus' fire scarce thaws the icicles,
And let us make incision for your love,
To prove whose blood is reddest, his or mine.
I tell thee, lady, this aspect of mine
Hath feared the valiant; by my love I swear
The best-regarded virgins of our clime
Have loved it too. I would not change this hue,
Except to steal your thoughts, my gentle queen.

PORTIA. In terms of choice I am not solely led
By nice direction of a maiden's eyes;
Besides, the lottery of my destiny
Bars me the right of voluntary choosing;
But if my father had not scanted me,
And hedged me by his wit, to yield myself
His wife who wins me by that means I told you,

Yourself, renownéd prince, then stood as fair
As any comer I have looked on yet,
For my affection.
MOROCCO. Even for that I thank you;
Therefore, I pray you, lead me to the caskets
To try my fortune.

Morocco's love for Portia was true enough to make him willing to take the prescribed oath. After that ceremony had been concluded in the chapel of Belmont, the prince was taken to the room where the caskets stood, hidden by curtains. Portia bade a servant —

Go, draw aside the curtains, and discover
The several caskets to this noble prince. —
Now make your choice.
MOROCCO. The first, of gold, who this inscription bears,
"*Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire.*"
The second silver, which this promise carries,
"*Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves.*"
This third, dull lead, with warning all as blunt,
"*Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath.*"
How shall I know if I do choose the right?
PORTIA. The one of them contains my picture, prince;
If you choose that, then I am yours withal.
MOROCCO. Some God direct my judgment! Let me see;
I will survey the inscriptions back again.
What says this leaden casket?
"*Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath.*"
Must give — for what? For lead? Hazard for lead?
This casket threatens. Men that hazard all
Do it in hope of fair advantages:
A golden mind stoops not to shows of dross;
I'll then nor give nor hazard aught for lead.

What says the silver with her virgin hue?
"*Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves.*"
As much as he deserves? Pause there, Morocco,
And weigh thy value with an even hand:
If thou be'st rated by thy estimation,
Thou dost deserve enough; and yet enough
May not extend so far as to the lady:
And yet to be afeard of my deserving
Were but a weak disabling of myself.
As much as I deserve? Why, that's the lady:
I do in birth deserve her, and in fortunes,
In graces, and in qualities of breeding;
But more than these, in love I do deserve.
What if I strayed no further, but chose here? —
Let's see once more this saying graved in gold;
"*Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire.*"
Why, that's the lady: all the world desires her;
From the four corners of the earth they come,
To kiss this shrine, this mortal-breathing saint.
One of these three contains her heavenly picture.
Is't like[1] that lead contains her? 'Twere damnation
To think so base a thought; it were too gross
To rib her cerecloth in the obscure grave.
Or shall I think in silver she's immured,
Being ten times undervalued to tried gold?
O sinful thought! Never so rich a gem
Was set in worse than gold. — Deliver me the key;
Here do I choose, and thrive I as I may!

On opening the casket, Morocco was shocked to find a skull, in whose empty eye was a scroll, which he found to read: —

All that glisters is not gold;
Often have you heard that told:

[1] probable.

Many a man his life hath sold,
But my outside to behold;
Gilded tombs do worms infold.
Had you been as wise as bold,
Young in limbs, in judgment old,
Your answer had not been inscrolled:
Fare you well; your suit is cold.

Filled with dismay, the disappointed man faltered out: —

Cold indeed; and labor lost:
Then, farewell, heat, and welcome, frost!
Portia, adieu! I have too grieved a heart
To take a tedious leave; thus losers part.

Soon after Morocco's departure, a Spanish lord, the Prince of Arragon, arrived at Belmont. He was a very self-conceited man, and so sure of his own sagacity that he could not think it possible for him to choose wrongly. So he took the oath without any hesitation and then proceeded to make his choice. As he stood before the caskets, he mused: —

I am enjoined by oath to observe three things:
First, never to unfold to any one
Which casket 'twas I chose; next, if I fail
Of the right casket, never in my life
To woo a maid in way of marriage;
Lastly, if I do fail in fortune of my choice,
Immediately to leave you and be gone.
PORTIA. To these injunctions every one doth swear
That comes to hazard for my worthless self.
ARRAGON. And so have I addressed me. Fortune now
To my heart's hope! — Gold, silver, and base lead.
"*Who chooseth me must give and hazard all he hath.*"

You shall look fairer, ere I give or hazard.
What says the golden chest? ha! let me see: —
"*Who chooseth me shall gain what many men desire.*"
What many men desire! that many may be meant
By the fool multitude, that choose by show,
Not learning more than the fond eye doth teach.
I will not choose what many men desire,
Because I will not jump[1] with common spirits
And rank me with the barbarous multitudes.
Why, then to thee, thou silver treasure-house;
Tell me once more what title thou dost bear:
"*Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves:*"
And well said, too; for who shall go about
To cozen fortune and be honorable
Without the stamp of merit? Let none presume
To wear an undeservéd dignity.
O, that estates, degrees, and offices
Were not derived corruptly, and that clear honor
Were purchased by the merit of the wearer!
How many then should cover that stand bare!
How many be commanded that command!
Well, but to my choice:
"*Who chooseth me shall get as much as he deserves.*"
I will assume desert.— Give me the key for this,
And instantly unlock my fortunes here.

Instead of finding Portia's picture, as he expected, in the silver casket, the mortified Prince of Arragon was confronted with a portrait of an idiot holding a schedule. He exclaimed: —

How much unlike art thou to Portia!
How much unlike my hopes and my deservings!

[1] agree.

"*Who chooseth me shall have as much as he deserves.*"
Did I deserve no more than a fool's head?
Is that my prize? are my deserts no better?
PORTIA. To offend and judge are distinct offices,
And of opposéd natures.

In the scroll he found these lines: —

The fire seven times tried this:
Seven times tried that judgment is,
That did never choose amiss.
Some there be that shadows kiss;
Such have but a shadow's bliss.
There be fools alive, I wis[1]
Silvered o'er; and so was this.

Now thoroughly humiliated, Arragon took a hasty leave, telling Portia as he went: —

Still more fool I shall appear
By the time I linger here;
With one fool's head I came to woo,
But I go away with two. —
Sweet, adieu! I'll keep my oath,
Patiently to bear my wroth.

Portia's penetration was well shown in her remark to Nerissa, as the conceited prince departed: —

Thus hath the candle singed the moth.
O, these deliberate fools! when they do choose,
They have the wisdom by their wit to lose.
NERISSA. The ancient saying is no heresy,
Hanging and wiving goes by destiny.

We are now prepared to admire the shrewdness of Portia's father in framing the oracular inscriptions,

[1] am certain.

which are interpreted by each suitor in accordance with his own feelings and his views concerning life.

Nearly three months have elapsed since Bassanio, accompanied by his friend Gratiano, left Venice for Portia's country-seat of Belmont. On parting from Antonio, —

> Bassanio told him he would make some speed
> Of his return: he answered, "Do not so:
> Slubber[1] not business for my sake, Bassanio,
> But stay the very riping of the time;
> And for the Jew's bond which he hath of me,
> Let it not enter in your mind of love.
> Be merry, and employ your chiefest thoughts
> To courtship, and such fair ostents of love
> As shall conveniently become you there."

The weeks have sped rapidly. Absorbed in each other's society, the lovers have taken no account of time. Now, however, Bassanio is desirous of deciding his destiny by making choice of one of the caskets, while Portia's fear lest he shall choose the wrong one causes her to urge delay: —

> PORTIA. I pray you, tarry: pause a day or two
> Before you hazard; for, in choosing wrong,
> I lose your company: therefore forbear awhile.
> There's something tells me, but it is not love,
> I would not lose you; and you know yourself,
> Hate counsels not in such a quality.
> But lest you should not understand me well, —
> And yet a maiden hath no tongue but thought, —
> I would detain you here some month or two,

[1] to do carelessly or imperfectly.

Before you venture for me. I could teach you
How to choose right, but then I am forsworn;
So will I never be: so may you miss me;
But if you do, you'll make me wish a sin,
That I had been forsworn. Beshrew your eyes,
They have o'erlooked me and divided me;
One half of me is yours, the other half yours, —
Mine own, I would say; but if mine, then yours,
And so all yours.
I speak too long; but 'tis to peize[1] the time,
To eke it, and to draw it out in length,
To stay you from election.
BASSANIO. Let me choose;
For as I am, I live upon the rack.

Then ensued a sportive word-play which really covered deep anxiety on the part of both. At length, Portia told her impatient lover, —

Away, then! I am locked in one of them:
If you do love me, you will find me out.
Nerissa and the rest, stand all aloof. —
Let music sound while he doth make his choice.

So while Bassanio was pondering the inscriptions, he was also listening to this song: —

Tell me where is fancy bred,
Or in the heart, or in the head?
How begot, how nourished?
Reply, reply.
It is engendered in the eyes,
With gazing fed; and fancy dies

[1] delay.

In the cradle where it lies.
Let us all ring fancy's knell:
I'll begin it, Ding, dong, bell.

BASSANIO. So may the outward shows be least themselves;
The world is still deceived with ornament.
In law, what plea so tainted and corrupt
But, being seasoned with a gracious voice,
Obscures the show of evil? In religion,
What damnéd error, but some sober brow
Will bless it, and approve it with a text,
Hiding the grossness with fair ornament?
There is no vice so simple but assumes
Some mark of virtue on his outward parts:
How many cowards, whose hearts are all as false
As stairs of sand, wear yet upon their chins
The beards of Hercules and frowning Mars,
Who, inward searched, have livers white as milk?
And these assume but valor's excrement
To render them redoubted! Look on beauty,
And you shall see 'tis purchased by the weight,
Which therein works a miracle in nature,
Making them lightest that wear most of it.
Thus ornament is but the guiléd shore
To a most dangerous sea, the beauteous scarf
Veiling an Indian beauty; — in a word,
The seeming truth which cunning times put on
To entrap the wisest. Therefore, thou gaudy gold,
Hard food for Midas, I will none of thee;
Nor none of thee, thou pale and common drudge
'Tween man and man: but thou, thou meagre lead
Which rather threatenest than dost promise aught,
Thy plainness moves me more than eloquence;
And here choose I. Joy be the consequence!

Upon opening the lead casket, Bassanio exclaimed: —

> What find I here?
> Fair Portia's counterfeit! Move these eyes?
> Or whether, riding on the balls of mine,
> Seem they in motion? Here are severed lips,
> Parted with sugar breath; so sweet a bar
> Should sunder such sweet friends. Here in her hairs
> The painter plays the spider, and hath woven
> A golden mesh to entrap the hearts of men
> Faster than gnats in cobwebs; but her eyes! —
> How could he see to do them? having made one,
> Methinks it should have power to steal both his,
> And leave itself unfurnished.

When Bassanio's rapture at last allowed a pause, he read the scroll which assured him that he had won the lady: —

> *You that choose not by the view,*
> *Chance as fair, and choose as true!*
> *Since this fortune falls to you,*
> *Be content and seek no new.*
> *If you be well pleased with this,*
> *And hold your fortune for your bliss,*
> *Turn you where your lady is,*
> *And claim her with a loving kiss.*

Bassanio, like the true lover that he was, was not satisfied with the words of the scroll alone, but he besought Portia to confirm his happy choice. This she did in the gentle, modest way that was habitual with her. She told him: —

> You see me, lord Bassanio, where I stand,
> Such as I am: though for myself alone

I would not be ambitious in my wish,
To wish myself much better, yet for you
I would be trebled twenty times myself,
A thousand times more fair, ten thousand times more
rich,
That only to stand high in your account,
I might in virtues, beauties, livings, friends,
Exceed account: but the full sum of me
Is an unlessoned girl, unschooled, unpractised:
Happy in this, she is not yet so old
But she may learn; happier than this,
She is not bred so dull but she can learn;
Happiest of all in that her gentle spirit
Commits itself to yours to be directed,
As from her lord, her governor, her king.
Myself and what is mine to you and yours
Is now converted: but now I was the lord
Of this fair mansion, master of my servants,
Queen o'er myself; and even now, but now,
This house, these servants, and this same myself
Are yours, my lord. I give them with this ring;
Which when you part from, lose, or give away,
Let it presage the ruin of your love,
And be my vantage to exclaim on you.

BASSANIO. Madam, you have bereft me of all
words,
Only my blood speaks to you in my veins:
But when this ring
Parts from this finger, then parts life from thence;
O, then be bold to say, Bassanio's dead!

NERISSA. My lord and lady, it is now our time,
That have stood by and seen our wishes prosper,
To cry, good joy; good joy, my lord and lady!

Bassanio and Portia had been so completely absorbed in themselves that they had had no eyes for others. So it was that they were astonished to learn that Gratiano had been wooing the maid, Nerissa, and that she had consented to become his wife, if Bassanio should choose the right casket. When, therefore, Gratiano wished all joy to the happy lovers, he asked Bassanio's permission to be married at the same time with himself and Portia. Bassanio replied, —

With all my heart, so thou canst get a wife.

GRATIANO. I thank your lordship, you have got me one.
My eyes, my lord, can look as swift as yours:
You saw the mistress, I beheld the maid:
You loved, I loved, for intermission
No more pertains to me, my lord, than you.
Your fortune stood upon the caskets there,
And so did mine too, as the matter falls:
For wooing here until I sweat again,
And swearing till my very roof was dry
With oaths of love, at last, if promise last,
I got a promise of this fair one here
To have her love, provided that your fortune
Achieved her mistress.

PORTIA. Is this true, Nerissa?

NERISSA. Madam, it is, so you stand pleased withal.

BASSANIO. Our feast shall be much honored in your marriage.

But now their joy is sadly darkened by the arrival of a messenger bringing a letter from Antonio, who writes: —

Sweet Bassanio, my ships have all miscarried, my creditors grow cruel, my estate is very low, my bond to the Jew is forfeit;

and since, in paying it, it is impossible I should live, all debts are cleared between you and I, if I might see you at my death. Notwithstanding, use your pleasure; if your love do not persuade you to come, let not my letter.

As Bassanio read the letter, Portia observed with alarm that he turned paler and paler. She begged him to tell her what it was that distressed him so. Then Bassanio told her, —

O sweet Portia,
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 engaged myself to a dear friend,
Engaged my friend to his mere[1] 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.

When Portia learns that the amount of Antonio's indebtedness to Shylock is only three thousand ducats, she tells Bassanio to pay the debt many times over, if need be, to satisfy Shylock's greed. She bids Bassanio return to Venice, asking him to delay only long enough

[1] absolute.

to have their marriage rites solemnized in the church at Belmont; for, on no account, would she have such a friend as Antonio "lose a hair through Bassanio's fault."

After Bassanio and Gratiano have gone, Portia decides to take Nerissa and follow them, for her quick wit has devised a plan by which her husband's friend may be saved. She leaves her house in charge of Lorenzo, another friend of Bassanio's, and Jessica, his wife. Jessica is the daughter of Shylock, but she has left her father and married a Christian.

Portia despatches a servant to her kinsman, Doctor Bellario of Padua, a very learned judge of the law, with commands to meet her at the ferry leading to Venice, bringing with him such notes and garments as Doctor Bellario may give him. Then she says to Nerissa: —

> Come on, Nerissa; I have work in hand
> That you yet know not of. We'll see our husbands
> Before they think of us.

The Duke of Venice tried every means at his command to soften Shylock's hard heart, and to prevent his insisting upon carrying out the provisions of his cruel bond. But all was in vain, and Antonio was brought before the high court of justice. His own sufferings had tempered his hatred, and he came to his trial supported by a noble courage. In reply to the duke's expression of pity for him, Antonio answered: —

> I have heard
> Your grace hath ta'en great pains to qualify

His rigorous course; but since he stands obdurate
And that no lawful means can carry me
Out of his envy's reach, I do oppose
My patience to his fury, and am armed
To suffer, with a quietness of spirit,
The very tyranny and rage of his.

As Shylock came into court, the duke made one last appeal, saying: —

Shylock, the world thinks, and I think so too,
That thou but lead'st this fashion of thy malice
To the last hour of act; and then 'tis thought
Thou'lt show thy mercy and remorse[1] more strange
Than is thy strange apparent cruelty;
And where thou now exact'st the penalty,
Which is a pound of this poor merchant's flesh,
Thou wilt not only loose the forfeiture,
But, touched with human gentleness and love,
Forgive a moiety[2] of the principal;
Glancing an eye of pity on his losses,
That have of late so huddled on his back,
Enow[3] to press a royal merchant down;
We all expect a gentle answer, Jew.

SHYLOCK. I have possessed your grace of what I purpose;
And by our holy Sabbath have I sworn
To have the due and forfeit of my bond:
If you deny it, let the danger light
Upon your charter and your city's freedom.
You'll ask me, why I rather choose to have
A weight of carrion flesh than to receive
Three thousand ducats. I'll not answer that;
But say, it is my humor: is it answered?
What if my house be troubled with a rat,

[1] pity. [2] portion. [3] enough.

And I be pleased to give ten thousand ducats
To have it baned? What, are you answered yet?
Some men there are love not a gaping pig;
Some, that are mad if they behold a cat.
Now, for your answer:
As there is no firm reason to be rendered,
Why he cannot abide a gaping pig,
Why he, a harmless necessary cat,
So can I give no reason, nor I will not,
More than a lodged hate and a certain loathing
I bear Antonio, that I follow thus
A losing suit against him. Are you answered?

BASSANIO. This is no answer, thou unfeeling man,
To excuse the current of thy cruelty.

SHYLOCK. I am not bound to please thee with my answer.

BASSANIO. Do all men kill the things they do not love?

SHYLOCK. Hates any man the thing he would not kill?

ANTONIO. I pray you, think you question with the Jew:
You may as well go stand upon the beach
And bid the main flood bate his usual height;
You may as well use question with the wolf
Why he hath made the ewe bleat for the lamb;
You may as well forbid the mountain pines
To wag their high tops and to make no noise,
When they are fretted with the gusts of heaven;
You may as well do anything most hard,
As seek to soften that — than which what's harder? —
His Jewish heart. Therefore, I do beseech you,
Make no more offers, use no further means,
But with all brief and plain conveniency
Let me have judgment, and the Jew his will.

BASSANIO. For thy three thousand ducats here is six.

SHYLOCK. If every ducat in six thousand ducats
Were in six parts, and every part a ducat,

I would not draw them; I would have my bond.

DUKE. How shalt thou hope for mercy, rendering none?

SHYLOCK. What judgment shall I dread, doing no wrong?

The pound of flesh, which I demand of him,
Is dearly bought; 'tis mine, and I will have it.
If you deny me, fie upon your law!
There is no force in the decrees of Venice.
I stand for judgment: answer; shall I have it?

The duke now said that he would dismiss the court until another day, unless the learned Doctor Bellario, whom he had sent for to try the case, should arrive. Even while he was speaking, a messenger from Doctor Bellario came bringing a letter to the duke, which read as follows: —

Your grace shall understand that at the receipt of your letter I am very sick: but in the instant that your messenger came, in loving visitation was with me a young doctor of Rome; his name is Balthasar. I acquainted him with the cause in controversy between the Jew and Antonio the merchant; we turned over many books together: he is furnished with my opinion, which, bettered with his own learning, the greatness whereof I cannot enough commend, comes with him, at my importunity, to fill up your grace's request in my stead. I beseech you, let his lack of years be no impediment to let him lack a reverend estimation; for I never knew so young a body with so old a head. I leave him to your gracious acceptance, whose trial shall better publish his commendation.

The young doctor, as you have probably guessed, was none other than Portia, and her clerk was Nerissa. The duke was very willing to give the conduct of the case

into the hands of the new-comer, whom Bellario recommended so highly. Portia's first question was: —

Which is the merchant here, and which the Jew?
DUKE. Antonio and old Shylock, both stand forth.
PORTIA. Is your name Shylock?
SHYLOCK. Shylock is my name.
PORTIA. Of a strange nature is the suit you follow,
Yet in such rule that the Venetian law
Cannot impugn you as you do proceed —
You stand within his danger, do you not?
ANTONIO. Ay, so he says.
PORTIA. Do you confess the bond?
ANTONIO. I do.
PORTIA. Then must the Jew be merciful.
SHYLOCK. On what compulsion must I? tell me that.
PORTIA. The quality of mercy is not strained,[1]
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath: it is twice blest;
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes.
'Tis mightiest in the mightiest: it becomes
The thronéd monarch better than his crown;
His sceptre shows the force of temporal power,
The attribute to awe and majesty,
Wherein doth sit the dread and fear of kings;
But mercy is above this sceptred sway;
It is enthronéd in the hearts of kings,
It is an attribute of 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,

[1] constrained, forced.

And that same prayer doth teach us all to render
The deeds of mercy. I have spoke 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.
SHYLOCK. My deeds upon my head! I crave the law,
The penalty and forfeit of my bond.

In vain did the young doctor plead with Shylock; in vain did Bassanio offer him twice the amount of the debt; the revengeful creditor would have nothing but his bond.

Bassanio begged the doctor to —

Wrest once the law to your authority;
To do a great right, do a little wrong,
And curb this cruel devil of his will.
PORTIA. 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.
SHYLOCK. A Daniel come to judgment! yea, a Daniel!
O wise young judge, how do I honor thee!
PORTIA. I pray you, let me look upon the bond.
SHYLOCK. Here 'tis, most reverend doctor, here it is.
PORTIA. 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.
SHYLOCK. 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 judgment. By my soul I swear,
There is no power in the tongue of man
To alter me. I stay here on my bond.

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

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

SHYLOCK. O noble judge! O excellent young man!

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

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

PORTIA. Therefore lay bare your bosom.

SHYLOCK. Ay, his breast;
So says the bond — doth it not, noble judge? —
Nearest his heart; those are the very words.

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

SHYLOCK. Is it so nominated in the bond?

PORTIA. It is not so expressed; but what of that?
'Twere good you do so much for charity.

SHYLOCK. I cannot find it; 'tis not in the bond.
We trifle time; I pray thee, pursue sentence.

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

SHYLOCK. Most rightful judge!

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

SHYLOCK. Most learned judge! — A sentence! Come,
prepare!

PORTIA. 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.

SHYLOCK. Is that the law?

PORTIA. Thyself shall see the act;
For, as thou urgest justice, be assured
Thou shalt have justice, more than thou desirest.
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 a just pound, be it but so much
As makes it light or heavy in the substance,
Or the division of the 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.

Realizing that, in his desire for revenge, he had overreached himself, Shylock now said that he would accept Bassanio's offer so far as to take the principal — the three thousand ducats. But Portia would not allow that, since he had refused it in the open court; he should have merely that which he had so rigorously insisted on, — "justice and his bond." And when he would have left the court room, Portia compelled him to stay while she proved to him that, by insisting upon taking the pound of flesh, he had laid himself liable to a severe penalty. She continued: —

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 contrived against the very life
Of the defendant, and thou hast incurred
The danger formerly by me rehearsed.
Down therefore, and beg mercy of the duke.

DUKE. That thou shalt see the difference of our spirits,
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.

SHYLOCK. 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.

PORTIA. What mercy can you render him, Antonio?

Taught by his own suffering, Antonio was ready to show mercy to his enemy. He requested the duke to remit the fine of the half of Shylock's property which the state could legally claim, and asked that the other half might be entrusted to him for the use of Shylock's

daughter and her husband; also that Shylock should be required to make a will bequeathing his entire estate to Jessica and Lorenzo. Finally, he demanded that Shylock should adopt the Christian faith.

To all these conditions the broken-spirited Shylock assented, saying sadly, as he left the court, —

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

The court adjourned amid general rejoicings at Antonio's happy escape. As the duke withdrew, he said to Antonio, —

> Antonio, gratify this gentleman,
> For, in my mind, you are much bound to him.

Bassanio besought the young doctor to take as a fee the three thousand ducats due to Shylock, which Portia, of course, refused to accept, telling Antonio, —

> He is well paid that is well satisfied;
> And I, delivering you, am satisfied,
> And therein do account myself well paid.

Then she said significantly to Bassanio, —

> I pray you, know me when we meet again:
> I wish you well, and so I take my leave.

But they urged her to take, at least, some slight remembrance as a token of their gratitude. She consented, therefore, to take Antonio's gloves, and Bassanio's ring — the very ring which she had given

him with the solemn command that he should never part with it.

In dismay, Bassanio replied: —

> This ring, good sir, — alas! it is a trifle;
> I will not shame myself to give you this.
> PORTIA. I will have nothing else but only this;
> And now methinks I have a mind to it.
> BASSANIO. There's more depends on this than on the value.
> The dearest ring in Venice will I give you,
> And find it out by proclamation;
> Only for this, I pray you, pardon me.
> PORTIA. I see, sir, you are liberal in offers;
> You taught me first to beg, and now methinks
> You teach me how a beggar should be answered.
> BASSANIO. Good sir, this ring was given me by my wife;
> And when she put it on, she made me vow
> That I should neither sell, nor give, nor lose it.
> PORTIA. An if your wife be not a mad woman,
> And know how well I have deserved the ring,
> She would not hold out enemy forever,
> For giving it to me. Well, peace be with you.

So saying, Portia departed with Nerissa. At the urgent entreaty of Antonio, who feared that the young doctor would consider them ungrateful, Bassanio sent Gratiano after them with instructions to give the ring to the doctor. Nerissa took this opportunity of persuading Gratiano to let her have the ring which she had given him. The two ladies now looked forward with merry anticipation to the surprise which they had in store for their husbands on their return.

The evening on which Portia and Nerissa reached Belmont again was one of surpassing beauty. Lorenzo and Jessica were awaiting them in the moonlighted grounds before the mansion. Lorenzo bade the musicians to play, and as they listened to the sweet melody, he said to Jessica: —

> How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank!
> Here will we sit, and let the sounds of music
> Creep in our ears; soft stillness and the night
> Become the touches of sweet harmony.
> Sit, Jessica. Look how the floor of heaven
> Is thick inlaid with patines of bright gold:
> There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st
> But in his motion like an angel sings,
> Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubins;
> Such harmony is in immortal souls,
> But whilst this muddy vesture of decay
> Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it.

In a few moments Portia and Nerissa arrived. As they entered the avenue, Portia exclaimed: —

> That light we see is burning in my hall.
> How far that little candle throws his beams!
> So shines a good deed in a naughty world.
>
> LORENZO. That is the voice,
> Or I am much deceived, of Portia.
>
> PORTIA. He knows me as the blind man knows the cuckoo,
> By the bad voice.
>
> LORENZO. Dear lady, welcome home.
>
> PORTIA. We have been praying for our husbands' welfare,
> Which speed, we hope, the better for our words.
> Are they returned?

LORENZO. Madam, they are not yet;
But there is come a messenger before,
To signify their coming.

Ere many minutes had passed, Bassanio arrived with Antonio and Gratiano. Portia graciously bade Antonio welcome, expressing great joy at his deliverance from the Jew's malice.

Both the ladies, however, quickly discovered that the rings which they had given their husbands at parting were missing from their hands. At first, they pretended to be very angry, and accused Bassanio and Gratiano of being false to their promises; but they allowed themselves to be pacified when Antonio interposed, saying: —

I am the unhappy subject of these quarrels.
PORTIA. Sir, grieve not you; you are welcome notwithstanding.
BASSANIO. Pardon this fault, and by my soul I swear
I never more will break an oath with thee.
ANTONIO. I once did lend my body for his wealth,
Which, but for him that had your husband's ring,
Had quite miscarried; I dare be bound again,
My soul upon the forfeit, that your lord
Will never more break faith advisedly.
PORTIA. Then you shall be his surety. Give him this,
And bid him keep it better than the other.

With this Portia handed Antonio the ring which Bassanio had given her. When Bassanio saw it, he exclaimed in astonishment: —

By heaven, it is the same I gave the doctor!

PORTIA. You are all amazed:
Here is a letter; read it at your leisure;
It comes from Padua, from Bellario:
There you shall find that Portia was the doctor,
Nerissa there her clerk; Lorenzo here
Shall witness I set forth as soon as you,
And even but now returned; I have not yet
Entered my house. — Antonio, you are welcome;
And I have better news in store for you
Than you expect: unseal this letter soon;
There you shall find, three of your argosies
Are richly come to harbor suddenly.
You shall not know by what strange accident
I chanced on this letter. It is almost morning,
And yet I am sure you are not satisfied
Of these events at full. Let us go in;
And charge us there upon inter'gatories,
And we will answer all things faithfully.

AS YOU LIKE IT

AS YOU LIKE IT

It happened one day in the old chivalric times that a famous wrestler came to the court of Duke Frederick of France, and offered to amuse the knights and ladies by feats of strength. So cruel were his blows that he overthrew three brothers who had accepted his challenge, and broke their ribs, thus entirely disabling them.

Now there was a certain young man, Orlando by name, who, not daunted by these crushing defeats, offered to contend with the victorious wrestler, Charles. To the amazement of the entire court, the braggart Charles was quickly thrown down, while Orlando remained unhurt.

In answer to the questions of the astonished duke, Orlando told him that he was the youngest son of Sir Rowland de Boys, a man whom the duke had, during his lifetime, regarded as an enemy; so instead of rewarding Orlando for his skill, the duke turned away, displeased that his favorite wrestler should have been defeated by the son of one whom he hated, saying: —

> Thou shouldst have better pleased me with this deed,
> Hadst thou descended from another house.
> But fare thee well; thou art a gallant youth:
> I would thou hadst told me of another father.

Among the lookers-on at the wrestling match were two fair maidens, — Celia, daughter of Duke Frederick, and Rosalind, her cousin. Rosalind's father was the rightful duke, but he had been ill-treated by Frederick and driven into banishment. Celia's love for her cousin was so strong that she had persuaded her father to permit Rosalind to remain at court as her companion.

These two young girls were filled with admiration of Orlando's courage and skill in wrestling, and Rosalind, to show her esteem, gave him a chain that she had about her neck, saying: —

> Wear this for me, one out of suits with fortune,
> That could give more, but that her hand lacks means.
> Sir, you have wrestled well and overthrown
> More than your enemies.

After this, Duke Frederick became more tyrannical than ever. He commanded Rosalind to leave the court at once, threatening her with death, if, at the end of ten days, she should be found within twenty miles of his court, and giving as the only reason for his cruel order —

> Thou art thy father's daughter; there's enough.

The real reason for this harsh sentence was that Rosalind had endeared herself to the people, and the false duke feared that their pity for the wronged daughter of the banished duke would cause them to rebel against his rule. So he would not relent, even though his own daughter, Celia, pleaded with him for permission to keep Rosalind with her, saying: —

> I cannot live out of her company.

Celia's love for Rosalind was so deep and true, however, that she refused to be parted from her cousin, and herself suggested that they should go together to seek Rosalind's father, who, since his banishment, had been living in the neighboring forest of Arden. With him were some of his faithful friends among the nobles, who preferred to share his exile, rather than attend upon Duke Frederick, whom they hated. There they were said to —

> — live like the old Robin Hood of England : they say many young gentlemen flock to him every day, and fleet the time carelessly, as they did in the golden world.

Rosalind knowing that —

> Beauty provoketh thieves sooner than gold, —

was unwilling to risk travelling so far without some protection, so she proposed to disguise herself as a young man. This she could easily do, because she was taller and stronger than her fair cousin. Rosalind put on, therefore, the clothing of a countryman, while Celia dressed like a country lass, that they might pass for brother and sister. They also persuaded Touchstone, the court jester, who was devotedly attached to Celia, to accompany them. These preparations made, Celia proposed : —

> Let's away,
> And get our jewels and our wealth together,
> Devise the fittest time and safest way
> To hide us from pursuit that will be made
> After my flight. Now go we in content
> To liberty and not to banishment.

Meanwhile, Orlando, after his unkind dismissal by the duke, had met with still greater unkindness from his elder brother, Oliver, who had hoped that Orlando would be worsted in the wrestling match. The secret of this unbrotherly feeling was a bad conscience.

When their father, Sir Rowland de Boys, died, he entrusted the care and education of his two younger sons to the eldest, Oliver. Oliver had obeyed his father's will in the case of the second son, but, for some unaccountable reason, he so disliked Orlando, the youngest, that he neglected to give him the education that was his due, and even shamefully mistreated him.

At the time our story opens, Orlando had determined that he would endure this ill-treatment no longer. So when Oliver called him a villain, or base peasant, he seized his brother by the throat, and compelled him to listen to his demands.

ORLANDO. My father charged you in his will to give me a good education: you have trained me like a peasant, obscuring and hiding from me all gentleman-like qualities. The spirit of my father grows strong in me, and I will no longer endure it: therefore allow me such exercises as may become a gentleman, or give me the poor allottery my father left me by testament; with that I will go buy my fortunes.

OLIVER. And what wilt thou do? beg, when that is spent? Well, sir, get you in: I will not long be troubled with you: you shall have some part of your will: I pray you, leave me.

ORLANDO. I will no further offend you than becomes me for my good.

When Oliver learned that his brother had defeated the duke's wrestler, his rage knew no bounds. His evil

purposes became known to an old family servant, named Adam, who was devoted to Orlando. Adam resolved to save Orlando from injury at the hands of his wicked brother, so he met the youth as he was returning to the house of Oliver, and thus entreated him: —

O my sweet master!
Your praise is come too swiftly home before you.
Come not within these doors; within this roof
The enemy of all your graces lives:
Your brother — no, no brother; yet the son —
Yet not the son, I will not call him son
Of him I was about to call his father —
Hath heard your praises, and this night he means
To burn the lodging where you use to lie
And you within it: if he fail of that,
He will have other means to cut you off.
I overheard him and his practices.
This is no place; this house is but a butchery:
Abhor it, fear it, do not enter it.

ORLANDO. Why, whither, Adam, wouldst thou have me go?

ADAM. No matter whither, so you come not here.

ORLANDO. What, wouldst thou have me go and beg my food?

Or with a base and boisterous sword enforce
A thievish living on the common road?
This I must do, or know not what to do:
Yet this I will not do, do how I can;
I rather will subject me to the malice
Of a diverted blood and bloody brother.

ADAM. But do not so. I have five hundred crowns,
The thrifty hire I saved under your father,
Which I did store to be my foster-nurse

When service should in my old limbs lie lame
And unregarded age in corners thrown:
Take that, and He that doth the ravens feed,
Yea, providently caters for the sparrow,
Be comfort to my age! Here is the gold;
All this I give you. Let me be your servant:
Though I look old, yet I am strong and lusty;
For in my youth I never did apply
Hot and rebellious liquors in my blood,
Nor did not with unbashful forehead woo
The means of weakness and debility;
Therefore my age is as a lusty winter,
Frosty, but kindly: let me go with you;
I'll do the service of a younger man
In all your business and necessities.

ORLANDO. O good old man, how well in thee appears
The constant service of the antique world,
When service sweat for duty, not for meed!
Thou art not for the fashion of these times,
Where none will sweat but for promotion,
And having that, do choke their service up
Even with the having: it is not so with thee.
But come thy ways; we'll go along together,
And ere we have thy youthful wages spent,
We'll light upon some settled low content.

ADAM. Master, go on, and I will follow thee,
To the last gasp, with truth and loyalty.

After many days of wandering, Orlando and his aged servant, almost fainting from hunger, came to the forest of Arden, where, unknown to them, the banished duke and his faithful followers were keeping a kind of rustic state. The famished Orlando, coming unexpectedly upon the exiles as they were about to partake of their

noonday meal, drew his sword in his excitement, and would have compelled them to give him food. But the kind-hearted duke, reading his suffering in his wild manner, spoke gently to him, and made the distressed young man heartily welcome to his table. The grateful Orlando, however, refused to eat, himself, until he could bring his faithful old servant to share the much-needed food, saying, —

> There is an old poor man,
> Who after me hath many a weary step
> Limped in pure love: till he be first sufficed,
> Oppressed with two weak evils, age and hunger,
> I will not touch a bit.
>
> DUKE. Go find him out,
> And we will nothing waste till you return.
>
> ORLANDO. I thank ye; and be blest for your good comfort!

The wronged duke had found life in the free woodland so happy in contrast to the envy and ingratitude of the court, that he said to his companions: —

> Now, my co-mates and brothers in exile,
> Hath not old custom made this life more sweet
> Than that of painted pomp? Are not these woods
> More free from peril than the envious court?
> Sweet are the uses of adversity,
> And this our life exempt from public haunt
> Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
> Sermons in stones, and good in everything.

His feeling was shared by the other lords. One of their number put it into exquisite verse, singing his lines to the birds and trees. The song ran thus: —

Under the greenwood tree
Who loves to lie with me,
And turn his merry note
Unto the sweet bird's throat,
Come hither, come hither, come hither:
Here shall he see
No enemy
But winter and rough weather.

Who doth ambition shun
And loves to live i' the sun,
Seeking the food he eats
And pleased with what he gets,
Come hither, come hither, come hither:
Here shall he see
No enemy
But winter and rough weather.

When Orlando returned carrying the exhausted Adam, the duke bade him —

Welcome. Set down your venerable burden
And let him feed.
ORLANDO. I thank you most for him.
ADAM. So had you need:
I scarce can speak to thank you for myself.
DUKE. Welcome! fall to: I will not trouble you
As yet, to question you about your fortunes.

Then turning to his followers, he said: —

Give us some music; and, good cousin, sing.

In response to this request, the same rhyming lord gave the following song which was suggested by the unkindness from which they had all suffered: —

Blow, blow, thou winter wind,
Thou art not so unkind
As man's ingratitude;
Thy tooth is not so keen,
Because thou art not seen,
Although thy breath be rude.

Freeze, freeze, thou bitter sky,
That dost not bite so nigh
As benefits forgot:
Though thou the waters warp,
Thy sting is not so sharp
As friend remembered not.
Heigh-ho! sing, heigh-ho! unto the green holly:
Most friendship is feigning, most loving mere folly;
Then, heigh-ho, the holly!
This life is most jolly.

After their hunger had been satisfied, Orlando confided to the kind duke who he was, and what cruel treatment had forced him to leave his childhood's home. For the sake of his father, then, whom the duke had dearly loved, Orlando was made doubly welcome, and he soon became a favorite with these lords of the forest.

In the meantime, Rosalind and Celia had found their way to this same forest of Arden, but they had not yet revealed themselves to Rosalind's father, the duke.

Directly after their arrival, they chanced to meet a youthful shepherd, named Corin, of whom, in their hunger and weariness, they asked hospitality. Corin replied that, being in the employ of another, he could not him-

self give them entertainment, but that his master was desirous of selling his flocks and his cottage.

Rosalind at once commissioned Corin to purchase for her the shepherd's flock and simple home, at the same time offering him better wages if he would serve them as shepherd. We must remember that Rosalind still wore her disguise, and that she and Celia passed for brother and sister. Corin gladly accepted the liberal offer, telling Rosalind, —

> — if you like upon report
> The soil, the profit, and this kind of life,
> I will your very faithful feeder be
> And buy it with your gold right suddenly.

Here, therefore, in —

> a sheep-cote fenced about with olive trees,

near the osier-lined bank of a murmuring stream, these two high-born maidens took up their abode.

Orlando, although entirely ignorant of the presence of his beloved Rosalind in this very forest of Arden, was so deeply in love that he was continually writing verses in her praise, and he went about fastening these love-poems upon the tree-trunks. In such fashion as this did he write: —

> Hang there, my verse, in witness of my love:
> And thou, thriced-crownéd queen of night survey
> With thy chaste eye, from thy pale sphere above,
> Thy huntress' name that my full life doth sway.
> O Rosalind! these trees shall be my books
> And in their barks my thoughts I'll character;
> That every tree which in this forest looks

Shall see thy virtue witnessed everywhere.
Run, run, Orlando; carve on every tree
The fair, the chaste, and unexpressive she.

All this may seem very foolish, but —

We that are lovers run into strange capers.

It was not long until Rosalind herself happened upon one of these love-ditties, and she was greatly astonished to find her virtues published thus: —

From the east to western Ind,
No jewel is like Rosalind.
Her worth being mounted on the wind,
Through all the world bears Rosalind.
All the pictures fairest lined
Are but black to Rosalind.
Let no fair be kept in mind
But the fair of Rosalind.

Her cousin Celia not only found other effusions, but she discovered the writer of them, and teased Rosalind wittily about her poetical lover. Since Rosalind was as deeply in love as was Orlando, she soon contrived to meet him, and he, not recognizing her through her disguise, was easily led to talk of himself. Rosalind began: —

There is a man haunts the forest, that abuses our plants with carving "Rosalind" on their barks; hangs odes upon hawthorns and elegies on brambles, all, forsooth, deifying the name of Rosalind: if I could meet that fancy-monger, I would give him some good counsel.

ORLANDO. I swear to thee, youth, by the white hand of Rosalind, I am that he, that unfortunate he.

ROSALIND. But are you so much in love as your rhymes speak?

ORLANDO. Neither rhyme nor reason can express how much.

ROSALIND. Love is merely a madness; yet I profess curing it by counsel.

ORLANDO. I would not be cured, youth.

ROSALIND. I would cure you, if you would but call me Rosalind, and come every day to my cote and woo me.

Thus did Rosalind cunningly manage to lead the unsuspecting Orlando to woo her in her own name, for he was delighted to accede to her request. She, on her part, confessed to her cousin Celia, —

My pretty little coz, that thou didst know how many fathom deep I am in love! But it cannot be sounded.

One day Orlando, who had promised to attend the duke at dinner, on parting from Rosalind, told her that he would return in two hours. She jestingly retorted that, if he should be one minute behind the promised hour, she should lose all faith in his word, saying: —

If you break one jot of your promise, or come one minute behind your hour, I will think you most unworthy of her you call Rosalind.

The two hours passed, but Orlando did not appear. After a long waiting, another man was seen approaching. As he came near he thus addressed them: —

Good morrow, fair ones: pray you, if you know,
Where in the purlieus of this forest stands
A sheep-cote fenced about with olive trees?

CELIA. West of this place, down in the neighbor bottom:
The rank of osiers by the murmuring stream
Left on your right hand brings you to the place.
But at this hour the house doth keep itself;
There's none within.

The new-comer resumed: —

If that an eye may profit by a tongue,
Then should I know you by description;
Such garments and such years: "The boy is fair,
Of female favor,[1] and bestows himself
Like a ripe sister: the woman low
And browner than her brother." Are not you
The owner of the house I did inquire for?
CELIA. It is no boast, being asked, to say we are.

The stranger continued: —

Orlando doth commend him to you both,
And to that youth he calls his Rosalind
He sends this bloody napkin. Are you he?
ROSALIND. I am: what must we understand by this?

In a few words he made them acquainted with what had happened to detain Orlando, and revealed the fact that he was Oliver, the brother who had used Orlando so wickedly: —

OLIVER. When last the young Orlando parted from you,
He left a promise to return again
Within an hour, and pacing through the forest,
Chewing the food of sweet and bitter fancy,
Lo, what befel! he threw his eye aside,
And mark what object did present itself:

[1] countenance.

Under an oak, whose boughs were mossed with age
And high top bald with dry antiquity,
A wretched ragged man, o'ergrown with hair,
Lay sleeping on his back: about his neck
A green and gilded snake had wreathed itself,
Who with her head nimble in threats approached
The opening of his mouth; but suddenly,
Seeing Orlando, it unlinked itself,
And with indented glides did slip away
Into a bush: under which bush's shade
A lioness with udders all drawn dry,
Lay couching, head on ground, with catlike watch,
When that the sleeping man should stir; for 'tis
The royal disposition of that beast
To prey on nothing that doth seem as dead:
This seen, Orlando did approach the man
And found it was his brother, his elder brother.

CELIA. O, I have heard him speak of that same brother;
And he did render him the most unnatural
That livéd amongst men.

OLIVER. And well he might so do,
For well I know he was unnatural.

ROSALIND. But to Orlando: did he leave him there,
Food to the sucked and hungry lioness?

OLIVER. Twice did he turn his back and purposed so;
But kindness, nobler ever than revenge,
And nature, stronger than his just occasion,
Made him give battle to the lioness,
Who quickly fell before him: in which hurtling
From miserable slumber I awaked.

CELIA. Are you his brother?

ROSALIND. Was't you he rescued?

CELIA. Was't you that did so oft contrive to kill him?

OLIVER. 'Twas I; but 'tis not I: I do not shame

To tell you what I was, since my conversion
So sweetly tastes, being the thing I am.

Oliver, now thoroughly repentant, and ashamed of his former ill-treatment of his brother, further related: —

When from the first to last betwixt us two
Tears our recountments had most kindly bathed,
As how I came into that desert place: —
In brief, he led me to the gentle duke,
Who gave me fresh array and entertainment,
Committing me unto my brother's love;
Who led me instantly unto his cave,
There stripped himself, and here upon his arm
The lioness had torn some flesh away,
Which all this while had bled; and now he fainted
And cried, in fainting, upon Rosalind.
Brief, I recovered him, bound up his wound;
And, after some small space, being strong at heart,
He sent me hither, stranger as I am,
To tell this story, that you might excuse
His broken promise, and to give this napkin
Dyed in his blood unto the shepherd youth
That he in sport doth call his Rosalind.

Upon hearing this, and seeing the blood-stained napkin, Rosalind swooned. By so doing, she almost betrayed herself, but she quickly recovered, and insisted that Oliver should return immediately to his wounded brother.

All the time that Oliver had been telling his story, he had been looking with admiring eyes upon the gentle Celia, and very soon thereafter, he found an opportunity

of confessing his love to her, and was made happy by receiving a confession of love in return. Rosalind said afterward, in speaking of it to Orlando: —

There was never anything so sudden: for your brother and my sister no sooner met but they looked, no sooner looked but they loved, no sooner loved but they sighed, no sooner sighed but they asked one another the reason, no sooner knew the reason but they sought the remedy: and in these degrees have they made a pair of stairs to marriage which they will climb; clubs cannot part them.

So it was arranged that Oliver and Celia should be married in the presence of the duke and his rustic court. The sight of their happiness gave a fresh pang to the heart of Orlando. He said to Rosalind: —

O, how bitter a thing it is to look into happiness through another man's eyes! By so much the more shall I to-morrow be at the height of heart-heaviness, by how much I shall think my brother happy in having what he wishes for.

Rosalind then told him for his comfort that, ever since her childhood, she had known many secrets of the magic art, she having been taught by an uncle who was a great magician; and that this art would enable her to produce the real Rosalind, whom he might marry, if he would, at the same time that his brother should be wedded to Celia. She also won a promise from her father, the duke, that, if she should bring his daughter to him, he would give her in marriage to Orlando.

The rest is quickly told. On the following day, Rosalind appeared in her own maidenly apparel, thus gladdening the hearts of her father and her lover. Her

knowledge of magic had enabled her to bring to the wedding Hymen, the goddess of marriage. Hymen, who rejoices in bringing loving hearts together, sang this marriage hymn: —

Then there is mirth in heaven,
When earthly things made even
Atone together.
Good duke, receive thy daughter:
Hymen from heaven brought her,
Yea, brought her hither,
That thou mightst join her hand with his
Whose heart within her bosom is.
Whiles a wedlock hymn we sing,
Feed yourselves with questioning;
That reason wonder may diminish,
How thus we met, and these things finish.

To complete their content, a messenger from the court, who was none other than the brother of Oliver and Orlando, arrived soon after the wedding, bringing word that Duke Frederick had repented of his evil ways. In token of the sincerity of his repentance he was ready to restore the crown to the rightful duke, Rosalind's father, and their lands to the lords who had followed the duke into exile. This news brought great joy to those in the forest. The duke voiced the happiness of all in saying: —

Welcome, young man;
Thou offer'st fairly to thy brothers' wedding,
To one his lands withheld, and to the other
A land itself at large, a potent dukedom.
First, in this forest let us do those ends

That here were well begun and well begot:
And after, every of this happy number
That have endured shrewd[1] days and nights with us
Shall share the good of our returnéd fortune,
According to the measure of their states.
Meantime, forget this new-fallen dignity
And fall into our rustic revelry.
Play, music. And you, brides and bridegrooms all,
With measure heaped in joy, to the measures fall.

[1] hard, bitter.

THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

BAPTISTA, a wealthy gentleman of Padua, had two daughters, for whom he desired to find husbands. The younger daughter, Bianca, was a gentle, yielding creature, and her father's favorite. Katherina, the elder, was a high-spirited girl, whose nature had been soured by her father's outspoken preference for her sister. The mother being dead, there was no one to teach Katherina to curb her ill temper, and she had grown to be so violent in word and deed that she was known in Padua as the "shrew," or scold.

Bianca had many suitors, but the marriageable men were all afraid of the shrew. Baptista, however, declared that Bianca should not marry until a husband were found for Katherina. He told the suitors in the presence of both daughters: —

> Gentlemen, importune me no farther,
> For how I firmly am resolved you know;
> That is, not to bestow my youngest daughter
> Before I have a husband for the elder.
> If either of you both love Katherina,
> Because I know you well, and love you well,
> Leave shall you have to court her at your pleasure.

When one of them replied: —

> To cart her rather: she's too rough for me: —

is it any wonder that Katherina's brow mantled with shame and anger, or that she asked her father indignantly if he wished to make her an object of public scorn?

Now it happened that, just at this time, Petruchio, a young gentleman of Verona, who had recently come into his fortune, arrived in Padua. One of the suitors for the hand of Bianca was an acquaintance of Petruchio's. On meeting Petruchio, this young man, named Hortensio, inquired: —

> What happy gale
> Blows you to Padua here, from old Verona?
> PETRUCHIO. Such wind as scatters young men
> through the world,
> To seek their fortunes farther than at home,
> Where small experience grows. But, in a few,
> Signior Hortensio, thus it stands with me: —
> Antonio, my father, is deceased;
> And I have thrust myself into this maze,
> Haply to wive and thrive as best I may:
> Crowns in my purse I have, and goods at home,
> And so am come abroad to see the world.

Hortensio at once bethought him that, if he could persuade Petruchio to marry Katherina, he might have some prospect of winning Bianca. So he asked: —

> Petruchio, shall I then come roundly to thee,
> And wish thee to a shrewd[1] ill-favored wife?

[1] sharp-tempered.

Thou'dst thank me but a little for my counsel:
And yet I'll promise thee she shall be rich,
And very rich: — but thou'rt too much my friend,
And I'll not wish thee to her.

PETRUCHIO. Signior Hortensio, 'twixt such friends as we
Few words suffice: and, therefore, if thou know
One rich enough to be Petruchio's wife,
I come to wive it wealthily in Padua;
If wealthily, then happily in Padua.

HORTENSIO. Petruchio, since we are steppéd thus far in,
I will continue that I broached in jest.
I can, Petruchio, help thee to a wife
With wealth enough, and young, and beauteous;
Brought up as best becomes a gentlewoman:
Her only fault (and that is faults enough)
Is, — that she is intolerable curst,[1]
And shrewd, and froward, so beyond all measure,
That, were my state far worser than it is,
I would not wed her for a mine of gold.
Her father is Baptista Minola,
An affable and courteous gentleman;
Her name is Katherina Minola,
Renowned in Padua for her scolding tongue.

PETRUCHIO. I know her father, though I know not her;
And he knew my deceaséd father well:
I will not sleep, Hortensio, till I see her.

It might seem from Petruchio's talk that he would be chiefly influenced by wealth in the choice of a wife, but in Europe, it is customary for men of rank and position to expect a woman to have enough money to support a style of living corresponding to that of her

[1] malicious, shrewish.

husband. Petruchio was fond of adventure, and a little opposition pleased him; so he rather liked the thought of showing himself the superior of other men, by being able to tame the proud spirit of the beautiful Katherina. He repaired, therefore, quickly to the house of Baptista, and inquired of that gentleman: —

Pray, have you not a daughter
Called Katherina, fair and virtuous?
BAPTISTA. I have a daughter, sir, called Katherina.
PETRUCHIO. I am a gentleman of Verona, sir,
That, hearing of her beauty, and her wit,
Her affability, and bashful modesty,
Her wondrous qualities, and mild behavior,
Am bold to show myself a forward guest
Within your house, to make mine eye the witness
Of that report which I so oft have heard.
BAPTISTA. You're welcome, sir;
But for my daughter Katherine, this I know,
She is not for your turn, the more my grief.
PETRUCHIO. I see you do not mean to part with her;
Or else you like not of my company.
BAPTISTA. Whence are you, sir? what may I call your name?
PETRUCHIO. Petruchio is my name; Antonio's son,
A man well known throughout all Italy.
BAPTISTA. I know him well: you are welcome for his sake.
PETRUCHIO. Signior Baptista, my business asketh haste,
And every day I cannot come to woo.
You knew my father well; and in him, me,
Left solely heir to all his lands and goods,
Which I have bettered rather than decreased.

Then tell me, — if I get your daughter's love,
What dowry shall I have with her to wife?
BAPTISTA. After my death the one half of my lands:
And, in possession, twenty thousand crowns.
PETRUCHIO. And, for that dowry, I'll assure her of
Her widowhood, — be it that she survive me, —
In all my lands and leases whatsoever:
Let specialties be therefore drawn between us,
That covenants may be kept on either hand.

Baptista did not know what to think of this hasty young wooer, and he warned Petruchio that, before arranging for marriage settlements, he must get Katherina's consent. Petruchio assured him that he made no doubt of winning the lady's favor. He insisted: —

Why, that is nothing; for I tell you, father,
I am as peremptory as she proud-minded;
And where two raging fires meet together,
They do consume the thing that feeds their fury.
Though little fire grows great with little wind,
Yet extreme gusts will blow out fire and all:
So I to her, and so she yields to me;
For I am rough, and woo not like a babe.

These words of Petruchio's give us an idea what plan he intends to pursue with Katherina: that he proposes to disarm her ill nature by meeting her outbursts of temper with words and actions as ugly as her own.

While awaiting her coming — for Baptista had agreed to send her to him — he pondered: —

I'll woo her with some spirit when she comes.
Say that she rail; why, then I'll tell her plain

She sings as sweetly as a nightingale:
Say that she frown; I'll say, she looks as clear
As morning roses newly washed with dew:
Say she be mute, and will not speak a word;
Then I'll commend her volubility,
And say she uttereth piercing eloquence:
If she do bid me pack, I'll give her thanks
As though she bid me stay by her a week;
If she deny to wed, I'll crave the day
When I shall ask the banns, and when be married:—
But here she comes:—
Good morrow, Kate; for that's your name, I hear.
KATHERINA. Well have you heard, but something hard of hearing;
They call me Katherine, that do talk of me.
PETRUCHIO. You lie, in faith; for you are called plain Kate,
And bonny Kate, and sometimes Kate the curst;
But Kate, the prettiest Kate in Christendom,
Kate of Kate-Hall, my super-dainty Kate,
For dainties are all cates; and therefore, Kate,
Take this of me, Kate of my consolation;—
Hearing thy mildness praised in every town,
Thy virtues spoke of, and thy beauty sounded,
Yet not so deeply as to thee belongs,
Myself am moved to woo thee for my wife.

Katherina was sharp enough to see that Petruchio was really admiring her beauty; but that, at the same time, he was expecting her to show the ill temper of which he had evidently heard. This put her on her mettle, and she replied in the same tone. In the word-play that followed, she proved herself a match for the merry Petruchio in witty retort. Finally, Petruchio told her:—

I find you passing gentle.
'Twas told me, you were rough, and coy, and sullen,
And now I find report a very liar;
For thou art pleasant, gamesome, passing courteous,
But slow in speech, yet sweet as spring-time flowers.
Thou canst not frown, thou canst not look askance,
Nor bite the lip, as angry wenches will;
Nor hast thou pleasure to be cross in talk;
But thou with mildness entertain'st thy wooers,
With gentle conference, soft and affable.
Your father hath consented
That you shall be my wife; your dowry 'greed on,
And, will you, nill you, I will marry you.
Now, Kate, I am a husband for your turn;
For, by this light, whereby I see thy beauty,
Thy beauty that doth make me like thee well,
Thou must be married to no man but me;
For I am he am born to tame you, Kate;
And bring you from a wild Kate to a Kate
Conformable, as other household Kates.
Here comes your father; never make denial,
I must and will have Katherine to my wife.

At sight of her father with some of her sister's suitors, all Katherina's ill-nature returned. When Petruchio assured them that he and Katherina had agreed so well that they were to be married upon the following Sunday, Kate made a sharp answer, saying that she would see Petruchio hanged rather than marry him then.

But this made no difference to the determined Petruchio, who said, —

'Tis bargained 'twixt us twain, being alone,
That she shall still be curst in company.

I tell you, 'tis incredible to believe
How much she loves me: O, the kindest Kate!
She hung about my neck; and kiss on kiss
She vied so fast, protesting oath on oath,
That in a twink she won me to her love.
Give me thy hand, Kate: I will unto Venice,
To buy apparel 'gainst the wedding day:
Provide the feast, father, and bid the guests;
I will be sure my Katherine shall be fine.

BAPTISTA. I know not what to say: but give me your hands;
God send you joy, Petruchio! 'tis a match.

PETRUCHIO. Father, and wife, and gentlemen, adieu!
I will to Venice; Sunday comes apace:
We will have rings, and things, and fine array;
And kiss me, Kate; we will be married o' Sunday.

Sunday came, the wedding feast was prepared, and the bridal party were ready to proceed to the church where the marriage ceremony was to be performed. But the bridegroom came not. We cannot blame poor Katherina for feeling keenly the shame of this seeming want of faith on the part of the man who had wooed her so impetuously. She could not restrain her tears, and angrily reproached her father, saying: —

I must, forsooth, be forced
To give my hand, opposed against my heart,
Unto a mad-brain rudesby,[1] full of spleen,
Who wooed in haste, and means to wed at leisure.
I told you, I, he was a frantic fool,
Hiding his bitter jests in blunt behavior:

[1] a turbulent fellow.

And, to be noted for a merry man,
He'll woo a thousand, 'point the day of marriage,
Make friends, invite, yes, and proclaim the banns;
Yet never means to wed where he hath wooed.
Now must the world point at poor Katherine,
And say, — "Lo, there is mad Petruchio's wife,
If it would please him come and marry her."

Thereupon, one of the company who knew Petruchio, spoke a good word for the tardy bridegroom, urging: —

Patience, good Katherine, and Baptista too;
Upon my life, Petruchio means but well,
Whatever fortune stays him from his word:
Though he be blunt, I know him passing wise;
Though he be merry, yet withal he's honest.
KATHERINA. Would Katherine had never seen him, though!
BAPTISTA. Go, girl; I cannot blame thee now to weep;
For such an injury would vex a saint,
Much more a shrew of thy impatient humor.

Just as the wedding guests were about to disperse, word was brought that the bridegroom was approaching, but that, instead of wearing wedding garments, he was dressed in the most outlandish fashion imaginable —

in a new hat and an old jerkin; a pair of old breeches, thrice turned; a pair of old boots that have been candle-cases, one buckled, another laced; an old rusty sword with a broken hilt: his horse hipped with an old mothy saddle, and stirrups of no kindred: and with a half-checked bit, and a head-stall of sheep's leather, which hath been often burst, and now repaired with knots: besides, being possessed with the glanders, swayed in the back, and altogether, a worn-out creature.

Baptista, although scandalized by the ridiculous appearance of his would-be son-in-law, was glad to find that he still intended to marry Katherina, as his greeting proved: —

> PETRUCHIO. Where is Kate? where is my lovely bride?
> How does my father? — Gentles, methinks you frown:
> And wherefore gaze this goodly company?
> As if they saw some wondrous monument,
> Some comet, or unusual prodigy?
> BAPTISTA. Why, sir, you know, this is your wedding-day:
> First were we sad, fearing you would not come;
> Now sadder, that you come so unprovided.
> Fie! doff this habit, shame to your estate,
> An eye-sore to our solemn festival.

Petruchio turned a deaf ear to all appeals that he would not go to the church dressed as he then was; he declared in reply to Baptista's wish that he would not thus marry his daughter: —

> Good sooth, even thus; therefore ha' done with words;
> To me she's married, not unto my clothes.

At the marriage service, Petruchio's behavior was as irreverent as were his clothes. To judge by his actions he was far more shrewish than Katherina had ever been. The trembling bride shook with fear at his mad words and acts; for —

> When the priest
> Should ask — if Katherine should be his wife,
> "Ay, by gogs-wouns," quoth he; and swore so loud
> That, all amazed, the priest let fall the book:

And, as he stooped again to take it up,
The mad-brained bridegroom took him such a cuff,
That down fell priest and book, and book and priest.
But after many ceremonies done,
He calls for wine. — "A health," quoth he, as if
He had been aboard, carousing to his mates
After a storm. — Quaffed off the muscadel,
And threw the sops all in the sexton's face.
This done, he took the bride about the neck,
And kissed her lips with such a clamorous smack,
That, at the parting, all the church did echo.
Such a mad marriage never was before.

As they came from the church, Petruchio still further astonished every one by announcing that his business required such haste that he could not partake of the wedding feast that had been provided, but must leave immediately.

PETRUCHIO. I must away to-day before night come:
Make it no wonder; if you knew my business,
You would entreat me rather go than stay.
And, honest company, I thank you all,
That have beheld me give away myself
To this most patient, sweet, and virtuous wife.
Dine with my father, drink a health to me;
For I must hence, and farewell to you all.

The secret reason of all Petruchio's strange conduct began to appear when he persisted in going in spite of Katherina's entreaties, and not only that, but in exercising his right as a husband to compel her to go with him. Katherina attempted to assert her own will against that of her husband, saying: —

Nay, then,
Do what thou canst, I will not go to-day;
No, nor to-morrow, nor till I please myself.
The door is open, sir, there lies your way.
You may be jogging whiles your boots are green;
For me, I'll not be gone, till I please myself:
'Tis like, you'll prove a jolly surly groom,
That take it on you at the first so roundly.

PETRUCHIO. O Kate, content thee; prithee be not angry.

KATHERINA. I will be angry. What hast thou to do?
Father, be quiet: he shall stay my leisure.
Gentlemen, forward to the bridal dinner:
I see a woman may be made a fool,
If she had not a spirit to resist.

PETRUCHIO. They shall go forward, Kate, at thy command.
Obey the bride, you that attend on her:
Go to the feast, revel and domineer,
Be mad and merry, —
But for my bonny Kate, she must with me.
Nay, look not big, nor stamp, nor stare, nor fret;
I will be master of what is mine own. —
And here she stands, touch her whoever dare;
I'll bring mine action on the proudest he
That stops my way in Padua.
Fear not, sweet wench, they shall not touch thee, Kate;
I'll buckler thee against a million.

And thus, with a strange mingling of tenderness and harsh rudeness did Petruchio so bewilder poor Kate that she began to hate scolding and ill-temper just as Petruchio intended that she should; for his cure for the shrewishness of his pretty wife was to show her how

hateful was such ill-nature as she had been in the habit of indulging.

On their ride home, Petruchio kept up the show of fitful caprice and unreasonableness, mounting Katherina upon a horse as worn-out as the one he rode; cursing the horse because it stumbled in a miry place; and beating the serving boy because of the fall, until Katherina begged him to desist. For the fretful girl, who, until then, had never felt any unselfish sympathy, now learned to feel for those who were unjustly blamed.

On arriving at their country home, they found everything in readiness for their reception, but nothing pleased the cross master. When dinner was served, he refused to eat or to permit the hungry Katherina to taste the food, declaring that everything was burnt, and pretending to be afraid to eat over-done food lest it should make them both more ill-tempered than ever. He told his tearful bride that, on the morrow, all should be set right, but that, for that night, they would fast together. It might seem that Petruchio went to unnecessary extremes in his taming process, but he was resolved to accomplish a speedy and permanent cure. He said to himself: —

> Thus have I politicly begun my reign,
> And 'tis my hope to end successfully.
> She eat no meat to-day, nor none shall eat;
> Last night she slept not, nor to-night she shall not;
> As with the meat, some undeservéd fault
> I'll find about the making of the bed;
> And here I'll fling the pillow, there the bolster,

This way the coverlet, another way the sheets: —
Ay, and amid this hurly, I intend
That all is done in reverend care of her;
And, in conclusion, she shall watch all night:
And, if she chance to nod, I'll rail and brawl,
And with the clamor keep her still awake.
This is a way to kill a wife with kindness;
And thus I'll curb her mad and headstrong humor:
He that knows better how to tame a shrew,
Now let him speak.

By Petruchio's method of treatment, Katherina was soon humbled to that degree that she secretly begged her husband's most trusted servant, Grumio, to manage to get her something to eat without Petruchio's knowledge.

GRUMIO. No, no; forsooth, I dare not, for my life.
KATHERINA. The more my wrong, the more his spite appears:
What, did he marry me to famish me?
Beggars that come unto my father's door,
Upon entreaty, have a present alms;
But I, who never knew how to entreat,
Nor never needed that I should entreat,
Am starved for meat, giddy for lack of sleep;
With oaths kept waking, and with brawling fed:
And that which spites me more than all these wants,
He does it under name of perfect love;
As who should say, if I should sleep, or eat,
'Twere deadly sickness, or else present death.
I prithee go and get me some repast;
I care not what, so it be wholesome food.
GRUMIO. What say you to a neat's foot?

KATHERINA. 'Tis passing good; I prithee let me have it.

But Grumio was a waggish fellow and, besides, he desired to aid his master in carrying out his plan, so he replied: —

I fear it is too choleric[1] a meat:
How say you to a fat tripe, finely broiled?
KATHERINA. I like it well; good Grumio, fetch it me.
GRUMIO. I cannot tell; I fear, 'tis choleric.
What say you to a piece of beef and mustard?
KATHERINA. A dish that I do love to feed upon.
GRUMIO. Ay, but the mustard is too hot a little.
KATHERINA. Why then, the beef, and let the mustard rest.
GRUMIO. Nay, then, I will not; you shall have the mustard,
Or else you get no beef of Grumio.
KATHERINA. Then both, or one, or anything thou wilt.
GRUMIO. Why then, the mustard without the beef.

Katherina's patience was now entirely exhausted, but just then Petruchio entered bringing a dish of meat, which he said he had prepared for her himself. He set the dish on the table, saying: —

Pluck up thy spirits, look cheerfully upon me.
Here, love; thou see'st how diligent I am,
To dress thy meat myself, and bring it thee:
I am sure, sweet Kate, this kindness merits thanks.
What, not a word? Nay, then thou lov'st it not;
And all my pains is sorted to no proof. —
Here, take away this dish.
KATHERINA. I pray you, let it stand.
PETRUCHIO. The poorest service is repaid with thanks;

[1] causing irritation.

And so shall mine, before you touch the meat.

KATHERINA. I thank you, sir.

PETRUCHIO. Much good do it unto thy gentle heart!
Kate, eat apace. — And now, my honey love,
Will we return unto thy father's house;
And revel it as bravely as the best,
With silken coats, and caps, and golden rings,
With ruffs, and cuffs, and farthingales, and things;
With scarfs, and fans, and double change of bravery;[1]
With amber bracelets, beads, and all this knavery.
What, hast thou dined? The tailor stays thy leisure,
To deck thy body with his ruffling treasure.

Without Katherina's knowledge, Petruchio had given orders for the making of some fashionable garments for his bride. When they were brought, Katherina was well pleased with their style, but Petruchio, to carry out his plan of subduing the shrewish girl by imitating her usual habit of fault-finding, would have none of them. When the merchant said that he had brought the cap that was ordered, Petruchio objected: —

Why, this was moulded on a porringer;
Why, 'tis a cockle, or a walnut-shell,
A knack, a toy, a trick, a baby's cap;
Away with it! come, let me have a bigger.

KATHERINA. I'll have no bigger; this doth fit the time,
And gentlewomen wear such caps as these.

PETRUCHIO. When you are gentle, you shall have one too,
And not till then.

KATHERINA. Why, sir, I trust I may have leave to speak;
And speak I will. I am no child, no babe:

[1] gaudy apparel.

Your betters have endured me say my mind;
And if you cannot, best you stop your ears.
My tongue will tell the anger of my heart;
Or else my heart, concealing it, will break;
And rather than it shall, I will be free
Even to the uttermost, as I please, in words.
PETRUCHIO. Why, thou sayest true; it is a paltry cap,
A custard-coffin,[1] a bauble, a silken pie:
I love thee well, in that thou lik'st it not.
KATHERINA. Love, or love me not, I like the cap:
And it I will have, or I will have none.

Petruchio pretended not to hear these words, but at once began to ask the tailor to show the gown that he had brought. He found even more fault with the gown than with the cap, asking: —

What's this? a sleeve? 'tis like a demi-cannon:
What! up and down, carved like an apple tart?
Here's snip, and nip, and cut, and slish, and slash,
Like to a censer in a barber's shop:
Why, what, i' devil's name, tailor, call'st thou this?
TAILOR. You bid me make it orderly and well,
According to the fashion and the time.
PETRUCHIO. Marry, and did; but if you be remembered,
I did not bid you mar it to the time.
Go, hop me over every kennel home,
For you shall hop without my custom, sir:
I'll none of it; hence! make your best of it.
KATHERINA. I never saw a better-fashioned gown,
More quaint, more pleasing, nor more commendable:
Belike, you mean to make a puppet of me.

[1] the raised crust of a pie was called a coffin.

Petruchio pretended to understand her to say that the tailor intended to make a puppet of her, and when the puzzled tailor attempted to explain that Katherina's words referred to him, Petruchio burst out in such a torrent of abuse that the poor workman was fain to defend himself, but to no purpose. Petruchio roared: —

> O monstrous arrogance! Thou liest, thou thread,
> Thou thimble,
> Thou yard, three-quarters, half-yard, quarter, nail!
> Thou flea, thou nit, thou winter cricket thou!
> Braved in mine own house with a skein of thread!
> Away, thou rag, thou quantity, thou remnant;
> Or I shall so be-mete thee with thy yard,
> As thou shalt think on prating whilst thou liv'st!
> I tell thee, I, that thou hast marred her gown.

Having given Kate her lesson in the ugliness of unreasonable scolding, Petruchio sent the tailor away, but not without telling him privately that the work should be paid for. That done, Petruchio addressed his wife in the most pleasant tone, saying: —

> Well, come, my Kate; we will unto your father's,
> Even in these honest mean habiliments.
> Our purses shall be proud, our garments poor,
> For 'tis the mind that makes the body rich;
> And as the sun breaks through the darkest clouds,
> So honor peereth in the meanest habit.
> What, is the jay more precious than the lark,
> Because his feathers are more beautiful?
> Or is the adder better than the eel,
> Because his painted skin contents the eye?
> O, no, good Kate; neither art thou the worse

For this poor furniture and mean array.
If thou account'st it shame, lay it on me:
And therefore frolic; we will hence forthwith,
To feast and sport us at thy father's house.
Let's see; I think 'tis now some seven o'clock,
And well we may come there by dinner-time.
KATHERINA. I dare assure you, sir, 'tis almost two,
And 'twill be supper-time ere you come there.
PETRUCHIO. It shall be seven, ere I go to horse:
Look, what I speak, or do, or think to do,
You are still crossing it. — Sirs, let't alone:
I will not go to-day; and, ere I do,
It shall be what o'clock I say it is.

Petruchio thought rightly that to be as perverse as Katherina had heretofore been was the best way to overcome her peevish manners. When it suited him to start for her father's, they went, and not a moment earlier. On the way he exclaimed, although it was broad daylight: —

How bright and goodly shines the moon!
KATHERINA. The moon! the sun; it is not moonlight now.
PETRUCHIO. I say it is the moon that shines so bright.
KATHERINA. I know it is the sun that shines so bright.
PETRUCHIO. Now, by my mother's son, and that's myself,
It shall be moon, or star, or what I list,
Or ere I journey to your father's house:
Go on, and fetch our horses back again. —
Evermore crossed and crossed: nothing but crossed!
KATHERINA. Forward, I pray, since we have come so far,
And be it moon, or sun, or what you please:
And if you please to call it a rush candle,

Henceforth I vow it shall be so for me.

PETRUCHIO. I say it is the moon.

KATHERINA. I know it is the moon.

PETRUCHIO. Nay, then you lie; it is the blessed sun.

KATHERINA. Then, God be blessed, it is the blessed sun:
But sun it is not, when you say it is not;
And the moon changes, even as your mind.
What you will have it named, even that it is;
And so it shall be so, for Katherine.

Ridiculous as this contention seems, it was no more senseless than many of Katherina's actions had formerly been; and Katherina was quick-witted enough to recognize her own image in this mirror of her own girlish perversity, which her husband thus held up to her gaze. Petruchio felt that he had won, but in order to test Katherina's professions, he made one more merry test of her sincerity. They met an old gentleman on the road, whereupon Petruchio remarked: —

Tell me, sweet Kate, and tell me truly too,
Hast thou beheld a fresher gentlewoman?
Such war of white and red within her cheeks?
What stars do spangle heaven with such beauty,
As those two eyes become that heavenly face?
Fair lovely maid, once more good day to thee:
Sweet Kate, embrace her for her beauty's sake.

This time Katherina fell in with Petruchio's mood and said: —

Young budding virgin, fair, and fresh, and sweet,
Whither away? or where is thy abode?
Happy the parents of so fair a child!

PETRUCHIO. Why, how now, Kate? I hope thou art not mad.
This is a man, old, wrinkled, faded, withered,
And not a maiden, as thou say'st he is.
KATHERINA. Pardon, old father, my mistaking eyes,
That have been so bedazzled with the sun,
That everything I look on seemeth green:
Now I perceive thou art a reverend father;
Pardon, I pray thee, for my mad mistaking.

"Tamed!" thought Petruchio; "I need vex her no more."

When Petruchio and Katherina arrived in Padua, they found a surprise awaiting them, and not them alone, but Father Baptista as well. For while Baptista was considering which one of the suitors for the hand of his younger daughter he should bestow her upon, Bianca had chosen for herself, and had been married to a youth named Lucentio, without her father's knowledge.

Baptista was easily reconciled, however, since Lucentio came of a wealthy family. Katherina and Petruchio joined the others at the wedding feast of Bianca and Lucentio. Hortensio, one of Bianca's discarded suitors, who had quickly solaced himself by marrying a rich widow, was there also with his new wife. After the supper, when the ladies had withdrawn, the other gentlemen began to banter Petruchio concerning his scolding wife, Baptista saying:—

Now, in good sadness, son Petruchio,
I think thou hast the veriest shrew of all.

Petruchio retorted:—

Well, I say — no: and, therefore, for assurance,
Let's each one send unto his wife;
And he whose wife is most obedient
To come at first when he doth send for her,
Shall win the wager which we will propose.

Lucentio began the game, sending word to Bianca that he desired her presence. To the amazement of all, she who had the reputation of being always yielding and gentle, returned answer that she was busy and could not come. When Hortensio's wife was summoned, she bade the servant say that she would not come, but that she commanded her husband to come to her. Now it was Petruchio's turn. He told his servant: —

Sirrah Grumio, go to your mistress;
Say, I command her come to me.
HORTENSIO. I know her answer. — She will not.

The other men could hardly believe their eyes when they saw Katherina coming quietly in, and heard her say: —

What is your will, sir, that you send for me?
LUCENTIO. Here is a wonder, if you talk of a wonder.
HORTENSIO. And so it is; I wonder what it bodes.
PETRUCHIO. Marry, peace it bodes, and love, and quiet life,
And awful rule, and right supremacy;
And, to be short, what not, that's sweet and happy?

Baptista congratulated Petruchio on the change by which the shrew had been transformed into a good-tempered woman, and offered to increase Katherina's dowry by twenty thousand crowns. At the request of Petru-

chio, Katherina, who was now proud of her husband, gave her opinion of wifely duty. She began by reproving the wife of Hortensio for her sour looks, saying: —

> Unknit that threatening unkind brow,
> And dart not scornful glances from those eyes,
> To wound thy lord, thy king, thy governor:
> It blots thy beauty, as frosts do bite the meads;
> A woman moved is like a fountain troubled,
> Muddy, ill-seeming, thick, bereft of beauty.
> Thy husband is thy lord, thy life, thy keeper,
> Thy head, thy sovereign; one that cares for thee,
> And for thy maintenance commits his body
> To painful labor, both by sea and land,
> To watch the night in storms, the day in cold,
> While thou liest warm at home, secure and safe;
> And craves no other tribute at thy hands,
> But love, fair looks, and true obedience, —
> Too little payment for so great a debt.
> Such duty as the subject owes the prince,
> Even such a woman oweth to her husband:
> And when she's froward, peevish, sullen, sour,
> And not obedient to his honest will,
> What is she but a foul contending rebel,
> And graceless traitor to her loving lord?
> I am ashamed that women are so simple
> To offer war, where they should kneel for peace:
> Or seek for rule, supremacy and sway,
> When they are bound to serve, love, and obey.

Hortensio's comment was: —

> Now go thy ways, thou hast tamed a curst shrew; —

and Katherina and Petruchio lived happy ever after.

THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

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In olden times there was great enmity between the Mediterranean cities of Syracuse and Ephesus. At length their quarrels waxed so fierce that neither town would permit any citizen belonging to its rival to come within its gates. In case any man was so reckless as to venture into the hostile city, he was liable to be seized and held as a prisoner. In that event, he must either pay a large sum of money for ransom, or die like a criminal.

On one occasion, Ægeon, an aged merchant of Syracuse, was found in Ephesus and brought before the duke to receive sentence. In pronouncing judgment, the duke told Ægeon that it was useless for him to plead, for he could not show mercy, even if he desired to do so, since the Duke of Syracuse had executed some Ephesian merchants who had been taken in that city. It had been decreed, he said: —

> Both by the Syracusans and ourselves,
> To admit no traffic in our adverse towns:
> Nay, more, if any born at Ephesus,
> Be seen at any Syracusan marts and fairs,
> Again, if any Syracusan born,
> Come to the bay of Ephesus, he dies,

His goods confiscate to the duke's dispose;
Unless a thousand marks be levied,
To quit the penalty, and to ransom him.
Thy substance, valued at the highest rate,
Cannot amount unto a hundred marks;
Therefore, by law thou art condemned to die.

ÆGEON. Yet this my comfort; when your words are done,
My woes end likewise with the setting sun.

DUKE. Well, Syracusan, say, in brief, the cause
Why thou departedst from thy native home;
And for what cause thou cam'st to Ephesus.

Thus entreated, Ægeon told a tale of sad loss. Twenty-five years previous to that time, he, having gone to the city of Epidamnum on a trading journey, was followed by his wife, Æmilia, who, soon after her arrival, became: —

The joyful mother of two goodly sons;
And, which was strange, the one so like the other,
As could not be distinguished but by names.

Strangely enough, another pair of twin boys was born to a poor slave mother, in the same inn, and on the same day. The wealthy merchant, hearing of this, thought that it would be very fine to have each of his sons attended by one of the twin slave boys; so he purchased them for that purpose.

Æmilia soon began to urge her husband to return to their own city of Syracuse, and Ægeon unwillingly consented. They had sailed but a short distance from the port when a violent storm arose, and it appeared that

the vessel must sink. Ægeon did all that was possible to do in the effort to save their lives. He bound two of the babes — one of his own children, and one little slave — to the end of a spare mast. At the other end, he fastened the other pair of infants. Ægeon went on to tell: —

> The children thus disposed, my wife and I,
> Fastened ourselves at either end the mast;
> And floating straight, obedient to the stream,
> Were carried towards Corinth, as we thought.
> At length, the sun, gazing upon the earth,
> Dispersed those vapors that offended us;
> And, by the benefit of his wishéd light,
> The seas waxed calm, and we discoveréd
> Two ships from far making amain to us,
> Of Corinth that, of Epidaurus this:
> But ere they came, — O let me say no more!
> Gather the sequel by that went before.
>
> DUKE. Nay, forward, old man, do not break off so;
> For we may pity, though not pardon thee.

Ægeon continued sadly to tell that, before they could be picked up, the mast struck upon a rock, and was split in two. The wind quickly carried that end of the mast to which the mother was bound with two of the babes, within reach of one ship, while the father and the other boys were saved by the second vessel.

During all the years since that sad day, Ægeon had sought in vain for his lost wife and the little ones who had disappeared with her. When the son whom he had brought up reached the age of eighteen years, he also

set out to search for the lost ones. Ægeon continued: —

> Five summers have I spent in farthest Greece,
> Roaming clean through the bounds of Asia,
> And, coasting homeward, came to Ephesus
> Hopeless to find, yet loth to leave unsought,
> Or that, or any place that harbors men.
> But here must end the story of my life;
> And happy were I in my timely death,
> Could all my travels warrant me they live.

The duke had listened with interest, and his sympathy prompted him to release the poor old father, but he dared not. He told Ægeon, however: —

> Now, trust me, were it not against our laws,
> Against my crown, my oath, my dignity,
> Which princes, would they, may not disannul,
> My soul should sue as advocate for thee.
> But though thou art adjudgéd to the death,
> Yet will I favor thee in what I can:
> Therefore, merchant, I'll limit thee this day,
> To seek thy help by beneficial help;
> Try all the friends thou hast in Ephesus:
> Beg thou, or borrow, to make up the sum,
> And live; if no, then thou art doomed to die.

Although the duke gave the aged merchant this respite because his heart had been touched by his sad story, he could hardly have expected that Ægeon could find any one to become surety for him in the city that had sworn hostility to his nation.

As Ægeon passed out of the judgment hall, he lamented: —

Hopeless and helpless, doth Ægeon wend,
But to procrastinate his liveless end.

Now it happened that, unknown to Ægeon, his son, Antipholus of Syracuse, who, as Ægeon had told the duke, was also searching for his twin brother, had arrived in Ephesus that same morning. But he, being warned by an Ephesian merchant, gave out that his home was Epidamnum, instead of the hostile Syracuse.

In those days there were no banks, so that travellers were obliged to carry their wealth in coin. Antipholus, desiring to take a walk and view the town, directed his servant Dromio to carry his money to an inn: —

ANTIPHOLUS. Go, bear it to the Centaur, where
we host,
And stay there, Dromio, till I come to thee.
Within this hour it will be dinner-time:
Till that, I'll view the manners of the town,
Peruse the traders, gaze upon the buildings,
And then return, and sleep within mine inn;
For with long travel I am stiff and weary.
Get thee away.

In putting all his ready money into the hands of his slave, Antipholus showed that he had perfect confidence in Dromio's honesty. He told the merchant, who very likely looked surprised, that Dromio was —

A trusty villain,[1] sir, that very oft,
When I am dull with care and melancholy,
Lightens my humor with his merry jests.
What, will you walk with me about the town,

[1] boy.

And then go to my inn and dine with me?
MERCHANT. I am invited, sir, to certain merchants,
Of whom I hope to make much benefit;
I crave your pardon. Soon at five o'clock,
Please you, I'll meet with you upon the mart,
And afterward consort you till bedtime;
My present business calls me from you now.
ANTIPHOLUS. Farewell till then: I will go lose myself,
And wander up and down, to view the city.

In saying that he would go lose himself, Antipholus could not foresee how strangely he would be lost in a maze of errors, arising from the fact that the other twins were residents of Ephesus. After the merchant had left him, he said to himself: —

I to the world am like a drop of water,
That in the ocean seeks another drop;
Who, falling there to find his fellow forth,
Unseen, inquisitive, confounds himself:
So I, to find a mother and a brother,
In quest of them, unhappy, lose myself.

As Antipholus was starting upon his walk, he was surprised to meet Dromio, his slave, as he supposed. How he could have done his errand and returned so quickly, Antipholus could not understand.

The truth is that the Dromio whom he met was not his own servant, but the other Dromio, who belonged to his lost brother, Antipholus of Ephesus; for both masters were named Antipholus, and both slaves were called Dromio. This circumstance, added to the fact of an exact resemblance between each pair of brothers,

caused a succession of ridiculous mistakes that day in Ephesus.

They began when Antipholus of Syracuse asked his supposed servant how he could have returned from the inn so soon. The Dromio whom he was addressing had been sent out by his mistress, the lady Adriana, wife of the Ephesian Antipholus, to tell her husband that dinner was waiting, and to urge him to hasten home. Antipholus of Syracuse, not being married, was completely mystified by these words of Dromio: —

> The capon burns, the pig falls from the spit;
> The clock hath strucken twelve upon the bell,
> My mistress made it one upon my cheek:
> She is so hot, because the meat is cold;
> The meat is cold, because you come not home;
> You come not home, because you have no stomach;
> You have no stomach, having broken your fast;
> But we, that know what 'tis to fast and pray,
> Are penitent for your default to-day.
>
> ANTIPHOLUS. Stop in your wind, sir; tell me this, I pray:
> Where have you left the money that I gave you?
>
> DROMIO. O, — sixpence that I had o' Wednesday last,
> To pay the saddler for my mistress' crupper;
> The saddler had it, sir; I kept it not.
>
> ANTIPHOLUS. I am not in a sportive humor now:
> Tell me, and dally not, where is the money?
> We being strangers here, how dar'st thou trust
> So great a charge from thine own custody?
>
> DROMIO. I pray you jest, sir, as you sit at dinner:
> I from my mistress come to you in post;

Methinks your maw,[1] like mine, should be your clock,
And strike you home without a messenger.

ANTIPHOLUS. Come, Dromio, come, these jests are out of season;

Reserve them till a merrier hour than this:
Where is the gold I gave in charge to thee?

DROMIO. To me, sir? why, you gave no gold to me.

Antipholus still thought that Dromio was trying to play a merry joke upon him, but he was in no mood for jesting, so he repeated his demand for a report as to what had become of the thousand marks. Dromio replied: —

I have some marks of yours upon my pate,
Some of my mistress' marks upon my shoulders,
But not a thousand marks between you both.
If I should pay your worship those again,
Perchance you will not bear them patiently.

ANTIPHOLUS. Thy mistress' marks? what mistress, slave, hast thou?

DROMIO. Your worship's wife, my mistress at the Phœnix;

She that doth fast till you come home to dinner,
And prays that you will hie you home to dinner.

Antipholus is so enraged at what he takes to be persistent jesting on Dromio's part, that he strikes the poor fellow. Thereupon, Dromio hastily makes his escape, he being as greatly puzzled as his supposed master. Antipholus, thinking that both he and Dromio are the victims of practical jokers, soliloquizes: —

Upon my life, by some device or other,
The villain is o'er-raught of all my money.

[1] stomach.

They say this town is full of cozenage;
As nimble jugglers that deceive the eye,
Dark-working sorcerers that change the mind,
Soul-killing witches that deform the body;
If it prove so, I will be gone the sooner;
I'll to the Centaur, to go seek this slave;
I greatly fear my money is not safe.

At the Centaur Antipholus found his money safe, and learned that Dromio had wandered out in search of him. But the master still believed that he had been mocked by his own servant; so when he met Dromio, shortly afterward, he spoke angrily to the innocent slave: —

How now, sir? is your merry humor altered?
As you love strokes, so jest with me again.
You know no Centaur? You received no gold?
Your mistress sent to have me home to dinner?
My house was at the Phœnix? Wast thou mad,
That thus so madly thou didst answer me?

This Dromio, who had no idea to what his master referred, asked in astonishment: —

What answer, sir? When spoke I such a word?
ANTIPHOLUS. Even now, even here, not half an hour since.
DROMIO. I did not see you since you sent me hence,
Home to the Centaur, with the gold you gave me.
ANTIPHOLUS. Villain, thou didst deny the gold's receipt,
And told'st me of a mistress, and a dinner;
For which, I hope, thou felt'st I was displeased.
DROMIO. I am glad to see you in this merry vein:
What means this jest? I pray you, master, tell me.

This made Antipholus more angry than before, and thinking that Dromio was taking advantage of his kind familiarity to make a laughing-stock of him, he began to beat the poor fellow. Dromio, while smarting under the blows, begged to know why he was beaten. But as neither knew what had really happened, all that they said only increased their bewilderment. In the midst of their discussion, Adriana, the wife of Antipholus of Ephesus, with her sister Luciana, appeared upon the scene.

Adriana, supposing that the man she addressed was her husband, reproached him for neglect of her, and, in particular, for keeping the dinner waiting so long. By this time, Antipholus hardly knew whether he was himself or somebody else. He said to Adriana: —

> Plead you to me, fair dame? I know you not:
> In Ephesus I am but two hours old,
> As strange unto your town as to your talk;
> Who, every word by all my wit being scanned,
> Want wit in all one word to understand.

Upon this, the sister, Luciana, interposed: —

> Fie, brother! how the world is changed with you!
> When were you wont to use my sister thus?
> She sent for you by Dromio home to dinner.

Dromio exclaims in astonishment: —

> By me?
>
> ADRIANA. By thee; and this thou didst return from him, —
>
> That he did buffet thee, and, in his blows,

Denied my house for his, me for his wife.

ANTIPHOLUS. Did you converse, sir, with this gentlewoman?

DROMIO. I, sir? I never saw her till this time.

ANTIPHOLUS. Villain, thou liest; for even her very words

Didst thou deliver to me on the mart.

DROMIO. I never spake with her in all my life.

ANTIPHOLUS. How can she thus then call us by our names,

Unless it be by inspiration?
What, was I married to her in my dreams?
Or sleep I now, and think I hear all this?
What error drives our eyes and ears amiss?

While Adriana had been scolding Antipholus, like the shrew she was, he had not failed to observe the sweet refined manner of her sister, who seemed to be, in very truth, a gentlewoman. So, in order to see more of Luciana, Antipholus decided to humor Adriana's mistake, and go home with her to dinner. Dromio was bidden to act as porter, and to permit no one to enter while the dinner was in progress. He, poor fellow, concluded that he was, somehow, transformed, so puzzling did he find the situation. He thought: —

This is the fairy land; — O, spite of spites!
We talk with goblins, owls, and elvish sprites;
If we obey them not, this will ensue,
They'll suck our breath, or pinch us black and blue.

By the time dinner was well under way, the tardy husband of Adriana came home, and with him two

guests, business friends of his. His own Dromio followed at his heels, he having found his master at last, and delivered his mistress's message. He had also greatly mystified his master by declaring that he had met him a short time before, and that Antipholus had charged him with having had a thousand marks in gold from him, and had beaten him when he denied the charge.

Both master and man were astonished beyond measure when, on coming to the door of their own house, they were refused admittance by one who replied to the demand of Antipholus that he should tell who he was that was keeping him out of his own house: —

> The porter for this time, sir,
> And my name is Dromio, —

whereupon, the other Dromio protested: —

> O villain, thou hast stolen both mine office and my name;
> The one ne'er got me credit, the other mickle blame.

They made so much disturbance with knocking and calling that Adriana came to see what it was all about. When her husband heard her voice, he expected that she would have the door opened at once, but, to his amazement, she refused to acknowledge his right to enter, saying that Antipholus was within, and that he must be an impostor. Then the true owner was about to beat the door down, but he was dissuaded from that by one of his guests, who urged him: —

> Have patience, sir; O let it not be so.
> Herein you war against your reputation,

And draw within the compass of suspect
The unviolated honor of your wife.
Your long experience of her wisdom,
Her sober virtue, years, and modesty,
Plead on her part some cause to you unknown;
And doubt not, sir, but she will well excuse
Why at this time the doors are made against you.
Be ruled by me; depart in patience,
And let us to the Tiger all to dinner:
And, about evening, come yourself alone,
To know the reason of this strange restraint.
If by strong hand you offer to break in,
Now in the stirring passage of the day,
A vulgar comment will be made of it.

Antipholus acknowledged the wisdom of this advice, but he declared that he would make his wife sorry by giving another woman a gold necklace which he had purchased for her.

The Syracusan Antipholus, although enjoying the dinner, and still more the company of the gentle Luciana, felt that he had, unwittingly, become involved in such a tangle, that he was anxious to extricate himself by leaving the city where everybody seemed to know him, while he knew nobody. So he left as soon as possible after dinner, bidding Dromio go to the harbor, and ascertain whether any ship were to sail that night.

ANTIPHOLUS. Go, hie thee presently —
And if the wind blow any way from shore,
I will not harbor in this town to-night.
If any bark put forth, come to the mart,
Where I will walk till thou return to me.

If every one knows us, and we know none,
'Tis time, I think, to trudge, pack, and be gone.
There's none but witches do inhabit here;
And therefore 'tis high time that I were hence.
She, that doth call me husband, even my soul
Doth for a wife abhor; but her fair sister,
Possessed with such a gentle sovereign grace,
Of such enchanting presence and discourse,
Hath almost made me traitor to myself:
But, lest myself be guilty to self-wrong,
I'll stop mine ears against the mermaid's song.

At this moment, Antipholus was accosted by the goldsmith, of whom his twin brother had ordered the necklace, and who was bringing the chain, as he had been instructed to do. He called: —

Master Antipholus?

ANTIPHOLUS. Ay, that's my name.

GOLDSMITH. I know it well, sir. Lo, here is the chain.

ANTIPHOLUS. What is your will that I shall do with this?

GOLDSMITH. What please yourself, sir; I have made it for you.

ANTIPHOLUS. Made it for me, sir! I bespoke it not.

GOLDSMITH. Not once, or twice, but twenty times you have:
Go home with it, and please your wife withal;
And soon at supper-time I'll visit you,
And then receive my money for the chain.

ANTIPHOLUS. I pray you, sir, receive the money now,
For fear you ne'er see chain nor money more.

GOLDSMITH. You are a merry man, sir; fare you well.

As the goldsmith departs, Antipholus says to himself: —

What I should think of this I cannot tell:
But this I think, there's no man is so vain
That would refuse so fair an offered chain.
I see, a man here needs not live by shifts,
When in the streets he meets such golden gifts.
I'll to the mart, and there for Dromio stay;
If any ship put out, then straight away.

The goldsmith's mistake in giving the chain to the wrong Antipholus cost him much trouble. He had depended upon the money for that chain for means wherewith to discharge a debt of his own. The merchant to whom he was indebted now demanded immediate payment, and threatened the goldsmith with arrest, if the money were not at once forthcoming. While they were discussing the matter, Antipholus of Ephesus came along. Then there were angry words on both sides, the goldsmith appealing to Antipholus to give him the money for the chain, and Antipholus denying that the necklace had been delivered.

Naturally, the goldsmith thought that this denial was a falsehood, since he was sure that he had given Antipholus the chain less than half an hour before. Antipholus, on his part, requested the goldsmith to take the chain to his house, deliver it to his wife, and get the money from her. The goldsmith replied:—

Well, sir, I will: have you the chain about you?
ANTIPHOLUS. An if I have not, sir, I hope you have;
Or else you may return without your money.
GOLDSMITH. Nay, come, I pray you, sir, give me the chain.
ANTIPHOLUS. Why, give it to my wife, and fetch your money.

GOLDSMITH. Come, come, you know I gave it you even now;
Either send the chain, or send me by some token.

ANTIPHOLUS. You gave me none; you wrong me much to say so.

GOLDSMITH. You wrong me more, sir, in denying it.
Either consent to pay this sum for me,
Or I attach you by this officer.

ANTIPHOLUS. Consent to pay thee that I never had!
Arrest me, foolish fellow, if thou dar'st.

The goldsmith, feeling that it was useless to argue longer with one who, as he supposed, denied having received the chain only to avoid paying for it, ordered the arrest of Antipholus. Just as the officer was about to lead him away, however, up came the Dromio who had been sent to engage passage on an outgoing vessel. Thinking that he saw his own master, Dromio reported: —

> Master, there's a bark of Epidamnum,
> That stays but till her owner comes aboard,
> And then, sir, she bears away: our fraughtage,[1] sir,
> I have conveyed aboard; the merry wind
> Blows fair from land: they stay for naught at all,
> But for their owner, master, and yourself.

Antipholus of Ephesus thought that the fellow had lost his mind, to talk about a ship and sailing, when he had not thought of leaving the city. But his first desire, at that moment, was to secure his own release, so he bade Dromio hasten to his house, tell his wife of his arrest, and ask her to send money that she would find in his desk, so that he might give bail for his liberty.

[1] baggage.

The perplexed slave, although very unwilling to return to the house where they had dined, felt that he must obey: —

> Thither I must, although against my will,
> For servants must their masters' minds fulfil.

Adriana, although a shrewish wife, was much distressed to learn that her husband had been arrested, and she gave Dromio the money for his release, telling him: —

> Go, Dromio; there's the money, bear it straight,[1]
> And bring thy master home immediately.

But everything seemed to go criss-cross in Ephesus that day. As he was hastening back with the money, Dromio met his true master, Antipholus of Syracuse, and told him that he had brought the gold as he had directed; but not seeing any police officer, he asked Antipholus how he had rid himself of the man.

Antipholus, who knew of no arrest, or why the gold should have been brought, thought that both Dromio and himself were wandering in illusions. So he was more anxious than before to get away from a place where he was losing himself continually. He said: —

> There's not a man I meet but doth salute me,
> As if I were their well-acquainted friend;
> And every one doth call me by my name.
> Some tender money to me; some invite me;
> Some other give me thanks for kindnesses;
> Some offer me commodities to buy:
> Even now a tailor called me in his shop,

[1] immediately.

And showed me silks that he had bought for me,
And, therewithal, took measure of my body.
Sure, these are but imaginary wiles,
And Lapland sorcerers inhabit here.

Meanwhile, Antipholus of Ephesus was still in the hands of the officer, waiting, not very patiently, you may be sure, for the money that would release him. His own man now appeared with a rope, which he had brought as he had been commanded to do. He did not even know of his master's arrest, and he could not understand why Antipholus should be so angry with him as to begin to beat him unmercifully. While writhing under the blows, he moaned:—

I have served him from the hour of my nativity to this instant, and have nothing at his hands for my service but blows; when I am cold, he heats me with beating; when I am warm, he cools me with beating; I am waked with it when I sleep; raised with it when I sit; driven out of doors with it when I go from home; welcomed home with it when I return; and I think, when he hath lamed me, I shall beg with it from door to door.

And now came the wife of Antipholus of Ephesus, with a quack doctor, who claimed to have the power to drive out evil spirits. Adriana had persuaded herself that her husband's strange actions must be due to his having lost his mind, and in that age, insanity was attributed to the influence of demons. She was confirmed in this opinion when Antipholus stoutly denied that he had dined at home that day, although Adriana and her sister, too, as confidently asserted that he had

done so. Adriana also told Antipholus that she had sent him money by Dromio. The poor trembling slave contradicted the statements of both master and mistress, saying that he had not been sent, and that he had received no gold.

The doctor declared that both man and master were possessed with evil spirits, and should be bound and placed in a dark room. He invoked: —

> Satan, housed within this man,
> To yield possession to my holy prayers,
> And to thy state of darkness hie thee straight;
> I conjure thee by all the saints in heaven.

Antipholus, enraged by such treatment from his wife, threatened to pluck out her false eyes. In terror, Adriana cried to the doctor: —

> O bind him, bind him, let him not come near me.
> Good master doctor, see him safe conveyed
> Home to my house. O most unhappy day!

The goldsmith, failing to receive the money for the chain, was unable to discharge his debt to the merchant. As he was trying to excuse himself to his creditor, on the ground that Antipholus refused to pay for the chain, and denied having received it, along came Antipholus of Syracuse, wearing the chain about his neck. Amazed at the sight, the goldsmith addressed him, saying: —

> Signior Antipholus, I wonder much
> That you would put me to this shame and trouble,
> And not without some scandal to yourself,
> With circumstance and oaths, so to deny

This chain, which now you wear so openly:
This chain you had of me, can you deny it?

ANTIPHOLUS. I think I had; I never did deny it.

MERCHANT. Yes, that you did, sir; and forswore it too.

ANTIPHOLUS. Who heard me to deny it, or forswear it?

MERCHANT. These ears of mine, thou knowest, did hear thee.
Fie on thee, wretch! 'tis pity that thou liv'st
To walk where any honest men resort.

This unjust accusation inflamed Antipholus of Syracuse to that degree, that he drew his sword and attacked the merchant. At that moment Adriana and her sister happened to come along. Seeing the men with their swords drawn, they supposed that the Antipholus who had been bound had escaped. So Adriana cried out to the merchant: —

Hold, hurt him not, for God's sake; he is mad;
Some get within him, take his sword away:
Bind Dromio too, and bear them to my house.

The gate of a neighboring convent happened to be standing open, and the two distracted men rushed into this hospitable shelter. Presently, the abbess, a reverend lady, came out to inquire into the cause of the disturbance. To her Adriana appealed for possession of her husband who, as she thought, had just entered the convent. The abbess was a shrewd reader of character, and she led Adriana on to confess that she had been a jealous woman, and that she had berated her husband day and night. Then the abbess sharply reproved the scolding wife, telling her: —

And therefore came it that the man was mad:
The venom clamors of a jealous woman
Poison more deadly than a mad dog's tooth.
It seems his sleeps were hindered by thy railing:
And therefore comes it that his head is light.
Thou say'st his meat was sauced with thy upbraidings:
Unquiet meals make ill digestions,
Thereof the raging fire of fever bred;
And what's a fever but a fit of madness?
Thou say'st his sports were hindered by thy brawls:
Sweet recreation barred, what doth ensue
But moody and dull melancholy,
Kinsman to grim and comfortless despair?
In food, in sport, and life-preserving rest
To be disturbed, would mad or man, or beast:
The consequence is then, thy jealous fits
Have scared thy husband from the use of wits.

So saying, the abbess retired to nurse the injured man back to health, as she told Adriana.

By this time, it was almost night, and as no one had been found who would pay the ransom for Ægeon, he was being led to execution. The way led past the convent, and as Adriana turned, she beheld the procession coming with the duke at the head. Now the duke had long been a patron of her husband's, and a friend of her own family, so when Adriana saw him, she impulsively threw herself in his path, crying: —

Justice, most sacred duke, against the abbess!
DUKE. She is a virtuous and a reverend lady;
It cannot be that she hath done thee wrong.
ADRIANA. May it please your grace, Antipholus,
my husband, —

Whom I made lord of me and all I had,
At your important[1] letters, — this ill day
A most outrageous fit of madness took him.
Once did I get him bound, and sent him home;
Anon, I wot[2] not by what strong escape,
He broke from those that had the guard of him;
And, with his mad attendant and himself,
Each one with ireful passion, with drawn swords,
Met us again, and, madly bent on us,
Chased us away; till, raising of more aid,
We came again to bind them: then they fled
Into this abbey, whither we pursued them;
And here the abbess shuts the gates on us,
And will not suffer us to fetch him out,
Nor send him forth, that we may bear him hence.
Therefore, most gracious duke, with thy command,
Let him be brought forth, and borne hence for help.

DUKE. Long since, thy husband served me in my wars;
And I to thee engaged a prince's word,
To do him all the grace and good I could.
Go, some of you, knock at the abbey-gate,
And bid the lady abbess come to me;
I will determine this before I stir.

Even while the duke was speaking, a messenger came running to tell Adriana that her husband had freed himself, beaten the servants, and bound the doctor; and that he was now searching for her, vowing to take vengeance upon her for having him confined. Adriana was so certain that she had seen her husband enter the convent that she did not credit

[1] urgent. [2] know.

the servant's story; but the next instant she was astounded to see Antipholus approaching, followed by Dromio.

Antipholus, in his turn, appealed to the duke, saying: —

> Justice, most gracious duke, oh, grant me justice!
> Even for the service that long since I did thee,
> When I bestrid thee in the wars, and took
> Deep scars to save thy life; even for the blood
> That then I lost for thee, now grant me justice!
> Justice, sweet prince, against that woman there.
> She whom thou gav'st to me to be my wife;
> That hath abuséd and dishonored me,
> Even in the strength and height of injury!
> Beyond imagination is the wrong
> That she this day hath shameless thrown on me.

Antipholus went on to tell the duke how Adriana had locked the doors against him at dinner time; how he had been arrested and had sent his slave to Adriana for gold to release him, but that Dromio had returned without any money; how, as he was on his way to the house with an officer —

> We met my wife, her sister, and a rabble more
> Of vile confederates; along with them
> They brought a mountebank,[1]
> A needy, hollow-eyed, sharp-looking wretch,
> A living dead man: this pernicious slave
> Forsooth, took on him as a conjurer,
> And gazing in mine eyes, feeling my pulse,
> Cries out, I was possessed; then all together

[1] quack, impostor.

They fell upon me, bound me, bore me thence:
And in a dark and dankish vault at home
There left me and my man, both bound together;
Till, gnawing with my teeth my bonds in sunder,
I gained my freedom, and immediately
Ran hither to your grace; whom I beseech
To give me ample satisfaction
For these deep shames and great indignities.

While Antipholus had been talking, the aged Ægeon had been an absorbed listener, for he recognized the face of his son, and he felt that his life would now be saved. He supposed that this was the son from whom he had parted at Syracuse seven years before. So, at the first pause, he ventured to say to the duke:—

Most mighty duke, vouchsafe me speak a word;
Haply I see a friend will save my life,
And pay the sum that may deliver me.
DUKE. Speak freely, Syracusan, what thou wilt.

With this permission, Ægeon addressed Antipholus:—

Is not your name, sir, called Antipholus?
And is not that your bondman Dromio?
I am sure you both of you remember me.
ANTIPHOLUS. I never saw you in my life, till now.
ÆGEON. Oh! grief hath changed me since you saw me last;
But tell me yet, dost thou not know my voice?
ANTIPHOLUS. Neither.
ÆGEON. Dromio, nor thou?
DROMIO. No, trust me, sir, nor I.
ÆGEON. Not know my voice! O, time's extremity!

Hast thou so cracked and splitted my poor tongue,
In seven short years, that here my only son
Knows not my feeble key of untuned cares?
Though now this grainéd face of mine be hid
In sap-consuming winter's drizzled snow,
Yet hath my night of life some memory,
My wasting lamps some fading glimmer left,
My dull deaf ears a little use to hear:
All these old witnesses (I cannot err)
Tell me, thou art my son Antipholus.

ANTIPHOLUS. I never saw my father in my life.

ÆGEON. But seven years since, in Syracusa, boy,
Thou know'st we parted: but, perhaps, my son,
Thou sham'st to acknowledge me in misery.

ANTIPHOLUS. The duke, and all that know me in the city,
Can witness with me that it is not so;
I ne'er saw Syracusa in my life.

Just as the poor old father was about to yield to despair, the door of the convent opened, and the abbess came forth, accompanied by the other Antipholus and his Dromio. Then what amazement appeared in the eyes of Adriana, who thought that she saw two husbands, and no less in the eyes of the two doubles, each of whom beheld his own reflection in the face of his counterpart.

It was the abbess who solved the mystery, for she recognized her husband in Ægeon. To him she said: —

Speak, old Ægeon, if thou be'st the man
That hadst a wife once called Æmilia,
That bore thee at a burthen two fair sons:

O, if thou be'st the same Ægeon, speak,
And speak unto the same Æmilia!
ÆGEON. If I dream not, thou art Æmilia:
If thou art she, tell me, where is that son
That floated with thee on the fatal raft?

The fate of Æmilia since their parting had been even more full of sorrow than that of Ægeon, for she had not been permitted to keep the boys that were with her upon the raft. They had been seized by fishermen of Corinth, and she, bereft of husband and children, had entered a convent, and in course of time, had become the head of her house. Her kind reception of the persecuted Antipholus of Syracuse had been the means of reuniting the family so long and so strangely separated.

Then followed mutual explanations, by means of which the various errors that had caused so many painful experiences that day were so pleasantly untangled that they seemed to be only so many chapters in a laughable comedy.

The Duke refused to take the ransom which was offered by Antipholus of Ephesus for the life of his father. Thus the cruel law which had so long bred a deadly hatred between the two cities was disregarded. At the invitation of the abbess, the duke attended the feast that was given in the abbey to celebrate the happy reunion of parents and sons.

Antipholus of Syracuse took this opportunity to win the affection of Luciana, who did not now repulse his suit. The twin slaves shared in the general rejoicing; for as each looked at the other, he saw himself as in a

glass, and discovered to his great satisfaction that he was a "sweet-faced youth." They had their part in the celebration feast, and as they entered the abbey, they settled a playful contention as to who should go first by deciding —

> We came into the world like brother and brother:
> And now let's go hand in hand, not one before another.

TWELFTH NIGHT

TWELFTH NIGHT

ORSINO, duke of the ancient kingdom of Illyria, was madly in love with a lady who disdained his suit. Olivia — that was the lady's name — was a wealthy orphan who, at the time our story opens, had just suffered a fresh affliction in the death of her only brother. In her grief, she vowed to give herself to mourning for the space of seven years, during which time she would not appear in public without being closely veiled: —

> — all this, to season,
> A brother's dead love, which she would keep fresh
> And lasting, in her sad remembrance.

The duke was a very persistent wooer, however, and he continued to send Olivia frequent messages of love, in the belief that she could not hold out against him forever. He thought that so devoted a sister could not fail to make an equally devoted wife, if once her heart were touched: —

> O, she that hath a heart of that fine frame
> To pay this debt of love but to a brother,
> How will she love when the rich golden shaft
> Hath killed the flock of all affections else

That live in her; when liver, brain, and heart,
These sovereign thrones, are all supplied; and filled —
Her sweet perfection — with one self king!

About this time, a new page was received into the duke's household, in the person of a young woman in disguise. It was some sad misfortune, we may be sure, that had caused a refined girl, such as Viola was, to assume the garb of a young man.

She, and her twin brother, Sebastian, were taking a sea-voyage, in the course of which their ship was wrecked upon the coast of Illyria. The brother and sister were separated, and Viola was saved by the captain, who befriended her to the best of his ability. When Viola lamented her brother's loss, the captain tried to give her hope by telling her: —

— after our ship did split,
When you, and those poor number saved with you,
Hung on our driving boat, I saw your brother,
Most provident in peril, bind himself,
Courage and hope both teaching him the practice,
To a strong mast, that lived upon the sea.
VIOLA. Mine own escape unfoldeth to my hope,
Whereto thy speech serves for authority,
The like of him. Know'st thou this country?
CAPTAIN. Ay, madam, well; for I was bred and born
Not three hours' travel from this very place.
VIOLA. Who governs here?
CAPTAIN. A noble duke, in nature as in name.
VIOLA. What is his name?
CAPTAIN. Orsino.

VIOLA. Orsino! I have heard my father name him;
He was a bachelor then.
CAPTAIN. And so is now, or was so very late.

The captain then told Viola of the duke's suit to Olivia, and of her secluding herself from the world on account of the death of her brother. Viola expressed a great desire to enter the service of Olivia, but since that seemed impracticable, she persuaded the kind-hearted captain to purchase a page's suit for her, in which she might apply to be admitted into the duke's household as his servant.

This plan was successful, and Viola, under the assumed name of Cesario, quickly won the favor of the duke, so that he kept her in close attendance upon himself. He was very fond of music and, in his love-lorn state, he took great delight in listening to sweet melodies. Viola had a pleasing voice, and could sing, and "speak to him in many sorts of music." Her gentle arts won the duke's confidence, and he conceived the idea that Cesario might be able to persuade Olivia to look more favorably upon his suit. So he bade the page go to Olivia's house, and remain there until, by some means, he could gain an audience with the lady.

Viola, or Cesario, as we must now call her, inquired:—

Say, I do speak with her, my lord; what then?
DUKE. O, then unfold the passion of my love;
Surprise her with discourse of my dear faith.
It shall become thee well to act my woes;
She will attend it better in thy youth,
Than in a nuncio [1] of more grave aspect.

[1] messenger.

VIOLA. I think not so, my lord.
DUKE. Dear lad, believe it;
For they shall yet belie thy happy years
That say thou art a man: Diana's lip
Is not more smooth and rubious[1]; thy small pipe
Is as the maiden's organ, shrill and sound,
And all is semblative a woman's part.
Prosper well in this,
And thou shalt live as freely as thy lord,
To call his fortunes thine.
VIOLA. I'll do my best
To woo your lady.

It was with a heavy heart that Viola made this promise, for she had already learned to love the noble duke; but she valued honor above happiness, and she was resolved to use her best endeavors in behalf of her kind patron. When she came to the door of Olivia's house, it being known that she was the duke's messenger, she was refused admittance, but nothing daunted, she would take no denial, and declared that she would not go away until she was granted an interview with the lady. Olivia's servant reported to his mistress: —

Madam, yond young fellow swears he will speak with you. I told him you were sick; he takes on him to understand so much, and therefore comes to speak with you. I told him you were asleep; he seems to have a foreknowledge of that too, and therefore comes to speak with you. What is to be said to him, lady? he's fortified against any denial.

OLIVIA. Of what personage and years is he?

SERVANT. Not yet old enough for a man, nor young enough

[1] rosy.

for a boy. He is very well-favored,[1] and he speaks very shrewishly.[2]

OLIVIA. Let him approach.
Give me my veil; come, throw it o'er my face.
We'll once more hear Orsino's embassy.

In the interview that followed, Viola used flattery and every other art of which she was mistress, in order to make a favorable impression, and so to advance the duke's cause. She could not have foreseen what the effect would be — that Olivia would be so attracted by her engaging manners as to fall in love with the fascinating page herself. Upon entering, Viola, not knowing any one present, said: —

The honorable lady of the house, which is she?

OLIVIA. Speak to me; I shall answer for her. Your will?

VIOLA. Most radiant, exquisite, and unmatchable beauty, — I pray you tell me if this be the lady of the house, for I never saw her: I would be loath to cast away my speech; for, besides that it is excellently well penned, I have taken great pains to con it.

OLIVIA. Whence came you, sir?

VIOLA. I can say little more than I have studied, and that question's out of my part. Good gentle one, give me modest assurance if you be the lady of the house, that I may proceed in my speech.

OLIVIA. If I do not usurp myself, I am.

VIOLA. I will on with my speech in your praise, and then show you the heart of my message.

OLIVIA. Come to what is important in't; I forgive you the praise.

VIOLA. Alas, I took great pains to study it, and 'tis poetical.

[1] fine-looking. [2] sharply, pertly.

OLIVIA. It is the more like to be feigned; I pray you, keep it in. If you be not mad, be gone; if you have reason, be brief. Where lies your text?

VIOLA. In Orsino's bosom.

OLIVIA. In Orsino's bosom! In what chapter of his bosom?

VIOLA. To answer by method, in the first of his heart.

OLIVIA. O, I have read it; it is heresy. Have you no more to say?

VIOLA. Good Madam, let me see your face.

By this time, Olivia was so enchanted with the page's quick wit that she willingly consented to remove her veil. The sight of her beauty called forth such lively praise from the duke's messenger that Olivia asked whether he were sent thither to praise her. Viola replied: —

> I see what you are, you are too proud;
> But, if you were the devil, you are fair.
> My lord and master loves you; O, such love
> Could be but recompensed, though you were crowned
> The nonpareil of beauty!
>
> OLIVIA. How does he love me?
>
> VIOLA. With adorations, with fertile tears,
> With groans that thunder love, with sighs of fire.
>
> OLIVIA. Your lord does know my mind; I cannot love him;
> He might have took his answer long ago.
>
> VIOLA. If I did love you in my master's flame,
> With such a suffering, such a deadly life,
> In your denial I would find no sense;
> I would not understand it.
>
> OLIVIA. Why, what would you?
>
> VIOLA. Make me a willow cabin at your gate,

And call upon my soul within the house;
Halloo your name to the reverberate hills,
And make the babbling gossip of the air
Cry out, Olivia! O, you should not rest
Between the elements of air and earth,
But you should pity me.

OLIVIA. You might do much. What is your parentage?

VIOLA. Above my fortunes, yet my state is well:
I am a gentleman.

OLIVIA. Get you to your lord;
I cannot love him: let him send no more;
Unless, perchance, you come to me again,
To tell me how he takes it. Fare you well.

VIOLA. Farewell, fair cruelty.

After the departure of the page, Olivia turned his words about himself over in her mind, dwelling especially upon what he had said about his parentage being above his fortunes. His ardor in pleading his master's cause excited the lady's admiration for himself. She mused: —

Methinks I feel this youth's perfections,
With an invisible and subtle stealth,
To creep in at mine eyes. Well, let it be.

To make sure that the page should have some reason for coming again, Olivia called her servant, and gave him a ring, commanding him to run after the youth, and to say that he had left this ring as a gift from the duke, but that she would not have it, adding: —

Desire him not to flatter with his lord,
Nor hold him up with hopes; I am not for him:

If that the youth will come this way to-morrow,
I'll give him reasons for it.

Olivia's act in thus forcing a valuable ring upon Cesario may seem unmaidenly, but in those days, ladies of rank who loved those beneath them in station were accustomed to do much of the wooing. Viola was quick-witted enough to interpret the gift as Olivia had intended it, and she was dismayed to find that, instead of aiding her master, she had unwittingly become his rival. When the servant offered her the ring, she refused to take it. Whereupon, he threw it upon the ground at her feet, saying: —

If it be worth stooping for, there it lies in your eye; if not, be it his that finds it.

Viola was sadly distressed by the outcome of her well-meant effort in the duke's behalf, and she said to herself: —

I left no ring with her; what means this lady?
Fortune forbid my outside have not charmed her!
She made good view of me; indeed, so much,
That sure methought her eyes had lost her tongue,
For she did speak in starts distractedly.
She loves me, sure; the cunning of her passion
Invites me in this churlish messenger.
None of my lord's ring! why, he sent her none.
I am the man: If it be so (as 'tis),
Poor lady, she were better love a dream.
Disguise, I see thou art a wickedness.
How will this fadge[1]? My master loves her dearly;

[1] prosper.

And I, poor monster, fond as much[1] on him;
And she, mistaken, seems to dote on me.
What will become of this? As I am man,
My state is desperate for my master's love!
As I am woman, — now alas the day! —
What thriftless sighs shall poor Olivia breathe!
O time, thou must untangle this, not I;
It is too hard a knot for me to untie.

The duke's passion was in no wise lessened by the ill success of his page with the fair Olivia. On the contrary, he indulged it still more, almost seeming to luxuriate in sighs and love-music. He daily grew more fond of the page Cesario, whose disguise he never once suspected. Still, he was so impressed by Cesario's tender, sympathetic manner that he asked the youth one day: —

My life upon 't, young though thou art, thine eye
Hath stayed upon some favor that it loves;
Hath it not, boy?
VIOLA. A little, by your favor.
DUKE. What kind of woman is 't?
VIOLA. Of your complexion.
DUKE. She is not worth thee, then. What years, i' faith?
VIOLA. About your years, my lord.
DUKE. Too old, by heaven! Let thy love be younger than thyself,
Or thy affection cannot hold the bent.

The duke then begged the page to go to Olivia once more, and —

Tell her, my love, more noble than the world,
Prizes not quantity of dirty lands;

[1] am as fond of.

The parts that fortune hath bestowed upon her,
Tell her, I hold as giddily as fortune;
But 'tis that miracle and queen of gems,
That nature pranks[1] her in, attracts my soul.

VIOLA. But if she cannot love you, sir?

DUKE. I cannot so be answered.

VIOLA. Sooth, but you must.
Say, that some lady, as perhaps, there is,
Hath for your love as great a pang of heart
As you have for Olivia: you cannot love her;
You tell her so: must she not then be answered?

DUKE. Make no compare
Between that love a woman can bear me,
And that I owe Olivia.

VIOLA. Ay, but I know—

DUKE. What dost thou know?

VIOLA. Too well what love women to men may owe;
In faith, they are as true of heart as we.
My father had a daughter loved a man,
As it might be, perhaps, were I a woman,
I should your lordship.

DUKE. And what's her history?

VIOLA. A blank, my lord. She never told her love,
But let concealment, like a worm i' the bud,
Feed on her damask cheek: she pined in thought;
And with a green and yellow melancholy
She sat, like patience on a monument,
Smiling at grief. Was not this love, indeed?

DUKE. But died thy sister of her love, my boy?

VIOLA. I am all the daughters of my father's house,
And all the brothers too;—and yet I know not.
Sir, shall I to this lady?

DUKE. Ay, that's the theme.

[1] decks, adorns.

To her in haste; give her this jewel; say,
My love can give no place, bide no denay.[1]

It was very stupid in the duke not to read Viola's secret in this virtual confession, but he was so entirely wrapped up in his own feelings that he had neither eyes nor ears for aught else. So Viola went her way to the lady, who welcomed her for her own sake, or rather for the sake of the fine youth which she appeared to be. In reply to Viola's pleading for the duke, saying: —

Madam, I come to whet your gentle thoughts
On his behalf, —

Olivia exclaimed impatiently: —

O, by your leave, I pray you;
I bade you never speak again of him;
But, would you undertake another suit,
I had rather hear you to solicit that
Than music from the spheres.
VIOLA. Dear lady, —
OLIVIA. Give me leave, beseech you. I did send,
After the last enchantment you did here,
A ring in chase of you; so did I abuse
Myself, my servant, and, I fear me, you:
Under your hard construction must I sit,
To force that on you, in a shameful cunning,
Which you knew none of yours; what might you think?
VIOLA. I pity you.
OLIVIA. That's a degree to love.
VIOLA. No, not a grise[2]; for 'tis a vulgar proof,
That very oft we pity enemies.

[1] denial. [2] step.

Grace, and good disposition 'tend your ladyship!
You'll nothing, madam, to my lord by me?
OLIVIA. Stay:
I prithee tell me, what thou think'st of me.
VIOLA. That you do think you are not what you are.
OLIVIA. If I think so, I think the same of you.
VIOLA. Then think you right; I am not what I am.
OLIVIA. I would you were as I would have you be!
Cesario, by the roses of the spring,
By maidhood, honor, truth, and everything,
I love thee so, that, maugre[1] all thy pride,
Nor wit nor reason, can my passion hide.
Love sought is good, but given unsought is better.
VIOLA. By innocence I swear, and by my youth,
I have one heart, one bosom, and one truth,
And that no woman has; nor never none
Shall mistress be of it, save I alone.
And so adieu, good madam; never more
Will I my master's tears to you deplore.
OLIVIA. Yet come again; for thou, perhaps, mayst move
That heart, which now abhors, to like his love.

Viola was finding her disguise a source of increasing annoyance, and it now led to serious difficulty. Olivia's uncle, a foolish old man, had a friend named Sir Andrew Aguecheek, whom he desired his niece to marry. Olivia had shown her warmth of feeling for the young page so plainly that Sir Andrew concluded that it was useless for him to try to win her hand. But the uncle, Sir Toby, would not give up so easily. He insisted that the proper thing for Sir Andrew to do, under the circumstances, was to challenge the page to fight a duel.

[1] in spite of.

So, at the first opportunity, Viola was inveigled into meeting Sir Andrew, who, to tell the truth, was a coward, and was induced to face Viola only on Sir Toby's assuring him that he had talked with the page, and that "he has promised me, as he is a gentleman and a soldier, he will not hurt you." This promise the trembling Viola was very willing to make, as you may well believe.

Just as they had taken their places and drawn their swords, however, they were interrupted by the entrance of a strange man, who said to Sir Andrew: —

> Put up your sword. If this young gentleman
> Have done offence, I take the fault on me;
> If you offend him, I for him defy you.
> SIR TOBY. You, sir! why, what are you?

For reply, the stranger drew his sword, and was about to fight with Sir Toby; but, at that moment, some officers of the law appeared, and arrested the stranger in the duke's name. It seems that he was a sea-captain, who had formerly taken an active part in a war against the duke, and the officers had orders to arrest him, if he should ever be found in Illyria.

As he was about to be led away, the sea-captain, whose name was Antonio, said to Viola: —

> This comes with seeking you:
> But there's no remedy; I shall answer it.
> What will you do, now my necessity
> Makes me to ask you for my purse? It grieves me
> Much more for what I cannot do for you,
> Than what befalls myself. You stand amazed;

But be of comfort.
I must entreat of you some of that money.
VIOLA. What money, sir?
For the fair kindness you have showed me here,
I'll lend you something. My having is not much;
Hold, there is half my coffer.

Antonio appeared to be greatly surprised that Viola did not recognize him, and that she should deny having his purse, which he declared he had given her a short time before. To the officers, who grew impatient, he said: —

This youth that you see here
I snatched one half out of the jaws of death;
Relieved him with such sanctity of love, —
And to his image, which methought did promise
Most venerable worth, did I devotion.
But O how vile an idol proves this god; —
Thou hast, Sebastian, done good feature shame. —
In nature, there's no blemish but the mind;
None can be called deformed but the unkind.

The name Sebastian, by which the captain had called her, gave Viola the key to the meaning of his puzzling words. For Sebastian was the name of her twin brother, who, as you remember, was parted from her at the time of the shipwreck, and whom she had mourned as lost. The captain's words gave her hope that her brother was alive, and that her strong resemblance to him had caused the stranger's mistake.

Such was really the case. Sebastian had been picked up by Antonio, who, in the weeks that had since elapsed, had become very fond of the young man. Antonio was

fully aware that he ran a great risk in entering Orsino's dukedom, and he had not intended to let himself be seen, but the chance encounter with Viola, just as she was attacked by Sir Andrew, made him forget precautions for his own safety. When he and Sebastian had parted after landing, he had given the young man his purse, with instructions to engage lodgings for them both at an inn called the "Elephant." The page's failure to recognize him, and his denial of having received Antonio's purse seemed to the distressed captain nothing but rank ingratitude.

Hardly had Viola disappeared when her brother came sauntering past Olivia's house. Sir Andrew spied him, and taking him for the page Cesario, he struck at him. But he found the stout young fellow more than a match for him. Thereupon, Olivia came running out to part them. She, like the others, took Sebastian to be the young page with whom she had fallen in love, and she thus entreated him: —

> Be not offended, dear Cesario! I prithee, gentle friend,
> Let thy fair wisdom, not thy passion, sway
> In this uncivil and unjust extent[1]
> Against thy peace. Go with me to my house;
> And hear thou there how many fruitless pranks
> This ruffian hath botched up, that thou thereby
> Mayst smile at this: thou shalt not choose but go;
> Nay, come, I prithee: would thou'dst be ruled by me!
> SEBASTIAN. Madam, I will.

Olivia found Sebastian ready to meet her advances halfway, for he was greatly attracted by her beauty and

[1] conduct.

her warmth of manner. But he could not understand her allusions to previous meetings, and when she left him alone for a short time, he began to wonder what was the meaning of all these favors on her part. He felt as if he were in a sort of fairyland, where nothing was exactly as it seemed. He said to himself: —

> This is the air; that is the glorious sun:
> This pearl she gave me, I do feel't and see't:
> And though 'tis wonder that enwraps me thus,
> Yet 'tis not madness. Where's Antonio, then?
> I could not find him at the Elephant:
> Yet there he was; and there I found this credit,
> That he did range the town to seek me out.
> His counsel now might do me golden service:
> For though my soul disputes well with my sense,
> That this may be some error, but no madness,
> Yet doth this accident and flood of fortune
> So far exceed all instance, all discourse,
> That I am ready to distrust mine eyes,
> And wrangle with my reason, that persuades me
> To any other trust, but that I am mad,
> Or else the lady's mad; yet, if 'twere so,
> She could not sway her house, command her followers
> With such a smooth, discreet, and stable bearing,
> As I perceive she does: there's something in't
> That is deceivable.

When you hear what Olivia did next, you will wonder, as did Sebastian, whether she were not mad. The truth is that she was accustomed to having her own way in everything, and thus she had become wilful and impatient of contradiction. But we must do her the justice

to remember that she supposed that it was Cesario whom she had rescued from his assailants, and that he already knew how much she loved him. For, in order to rid herself of Orsino's unwelcome importunities, she proposed to Sebastian that they should be married at once. As was the custom in those days, she had a private chapel on her own estate. She came to Sebastian with the priest, and said: —

> Blame not this haste of mine. If you mean well,
> Now go with me and with this holy man,
> Into the chantry by: there, before him,
> And underneath that consecrated roof,
> Plight me the full assurance of your faith;
> That my most jealous and too doubtful soul
> May live at peace. — What do you say?
> SEBASTIAN. I'll follow this good man, and go with you;
> And, having sworn truth, ever will be true.
> OLIVIA. Then lead the way, good father: — and heavens so shine,
> That they may fairly note this act of mine!

When Viola reported to the duke what had happened — the unprovoked assault upon her, and her equally surprising rescue by the stranger captain — her kind patron offered to go with her to Olivia's, in the hope of unravelling the mystery. As they came to the house, they were met by the officers with Antonio in charge. At sight of Antonio, Viola said to the duke: —

> Here comes the man, sir, that did rescue me.

Orsino remembered Antonio as the man who had defeated his own sailors in battle, and he now railed

at the valiant captain, calling him "pirate" and "salt-water thief." In reply, Antonio thus defended himself for being found in the city of his enemy: —

Orsino, noble sir,
Be pleased that I shake off these names you give me;
Antonio never yet was thief or pirate,
Though, I confess, on base and ground enough,
Orsino's enemy. A witchcraft drew me hither:
That most ingrateful boy there, by your side,
From the rude sea's enraged and foamy mouth
Did I redeem; a wrack past hope he was:
His life I gave him, and did thereto add
My love, without retention or restraint,
All his in dedication: for his sake,
Did I expose myself, pure for his love,
Into the danger of this adverse town;
Drew to defend him when he was beset;
Where being apprehended, his false cunning,
Not meaning to partake with me in danger,
Taught him to face me out of his acquaintance,
And grew a twenty-years-removéd thing,
While one would wink; denied me mine own purse,
Which I had recommended to his use
Not half an hour before.

VIOLA. How can this be?

DUKE. When came he to this town?

ANTONIO. To-day, my lord; and for three months before,
No interim, not a minute's vacancy,
Both day and night did we keep company.

DUKE. Fellow, thy words are madness:
Three months this youth hath tended upon me;
But more of that anon. — Take him aside.

The duke's hasty dismissal of Antonio's plea was due to the fact that Olivia had appeared, and in her presence he had neither eyes nor ears for any one else. But his jealousy was excited when he observed what loving looks she cast upon the page, while she gave him nothing but scornful words. In order to punish Olivia for her disdain, he threatened to wreak vengeance upon the unfortunate Viola, who had, as he thought, taken advantage of his confidence to make love to the lady. He therefore angrily told Viola: —

Come, boy, with me; my thoughts are ripe in mischief:
I'll sacrifice the lamb that I do love,
To spite a raven's heart within a dove.
VIOLA. And I, most jocund, apt, and willingly,
To do you rest,[1] a thousand deaths would die.
OLIVIA. Where goes Cesario?
VIOLA. After him I love
More than I love these eyes, more than my life,
More, by all mores, than e'er I shall love wife.

It was now Olivia's turn to accuse Viola of falseness, she supposing, of course, that the page was the man to whom she had been married in the chapel. So she exclaimed: —

Ay me, detested! how am I beguiled!
VIOLA. Who does beguile you? who does do you wrong?
OLIVIA. Hast thou forgot thyself? Is it so long?
DUKE. Come, away.
OLIVIA. Whither, my lord? Cesario, husband, stay.
DUKE. Husband!

[1] give you ease.

OLIVIA. Ay, husband; can he that deny?
DUKE. Her husband, sirrah!
VIOLA. No, my lord, not I.

Olivia, in her distress, now appealed to the priest, who had just entered, to confirm her statement concerning the marriage. The holy man affirmed that, only two hours before, he had joined in wedlock the youthful page and the fair Olivia.

Overwhelmed by the disclosure of what seemed like most wicked deceit on the part of the page whom he had loved and trusted, the duke could only say: —

> Farewell, and take her; but direct thy feet
> Where thou and I henceforth may never meet.

Nothing but the presence of Sebastian could clear up this painful misunderstanding. Happily, he appeared at this moment, with an apology on his tongue for having hurt Olivia's kinsman, Sir Toby, who, you recollect, had been worsted in an encounter with Sebastian, whom he had mistaken for Cesario. In his astonishment, the duke exclaimed: —

> One face, one voice, one habit, and two persons;
> A natural perspective, that is, and is not.

Sebastian, on his part, was overjoyed to discover the sea-captain among the company, and he hastened to say: —

> Antonio, O my dear Antonio!
> How have the hours racked and tortured me,
> Since I have lost thee!

ANTONIO. How have you made division of yourself? —
An apple, cleft in two, is not more twin
Than these two creatures. Which is Sebastian?
OLIVIA. Most wonderful!
SEBASTIAN. Do I stand there? I never had a brother;
I had a sister,
Whom the blind waves and surges have devoured: —
Of charity, what kin are you to me?
What countryman? what name? what parentage?
Were you a woman, as the rest goes even,
I should my tears let fall upon your cheek,
And say — Thrice welcome, drownéd Viola!

Viola was only too happy to confess her disguise, and to reveal her true self. The duke now understood much that had been dark to him before. So he said to Viola: —

Boy, thou hast said to me a thousand times,
Thou never shouldst love woman like to me.
VIOLA. And all those sayings will I over-swear;
And all those swearings keep as true in soul,
As doth that orbéd continent the fire
That severs day from night.
DUKE. Give me thy hand;
And let me see thee in thy woman's weeds.
Your master quits you; and, for your service done him,
So much against the mettle of your sex,
So far beneath your soft and tender breeding,
And since you called me master for so long,
Here is my hand; you shall from this time be
Your master's mistress.

Olivia cried joyfully: —

A sister! you are she.

And so it came to pass that the gentle page became a duchess, and everything ended happily.

A great while ago the world begun
With hey, ho, the wind and the rain,
But that's all one, our play is done,
And we'll strive to please you every day.

TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA

TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA

In old Verona once lived two young gentlemen between whom so rare a friendship existed that they were generally to be found together. The time came, however, when Valentine, filled with a natural desire to see the great world, resolved to travel and to visit the ducal court at Milan. His friend Proteus would have liked to accompany him had he not fallen so deeply in love with a fair young lady named Julia, that he could not bring himself to go where he could not pursue his courtship.

Proteus tried, in vain, to dissuade Valentine from leaving Verona, for the ambitious young man wisely argued that travel broadens the views and sharpens the wits. He therefore told his friend: —

> Cease to persuade, my loving Proteus;
> Home-keeping youth have ever homely wits;
> Were't not affection chains thy tender days
> To the sweet glances of thy honored love,
> I rather would entreat thy company,
> To see the wonders of the world abroad,
> Than, living dully sluggardized at home,
> Wear out thy youth with shapeless idleness.

But, since thou lov'st, love still, and thrive therein,
Even as I would, when I to love begin.

PROTEUS. Wilt thou be gone? Sweet Valentine, adieu!
Think on thy Proteus, when thou, haply, seest
Some rare note-worthy object in thy travel:
Wish me partaker in thy happiness,
When thou dost meet good hap: and in thy danger,
If ever danger do environ thee,
Commend thy grievance to my holy prayers,
For I will be thy beadsman, Valentine.

VALENTINE. And on a love-book pray for my success?

In Valentine's query we detect the contempt which he, who had never yet been touched by the passion of love, felt for what he regarded as weakness in his friend. He could not forbear expressing his opinion of that folly, as he called it: —

Love is your master, for he masters you:
And writers say, as the most forward bud
Is eaten by the canker ere it blow,
Even so by love the young and tender wit
Is turned to folly; blasting in the bud,
Losing his verdure even in the prime,
And all the fair effects of future hopes.
But wherefore waste I time to counsel thee,
That art a votary to fond desire?
Once more adieu.

PROTEUS. All happiness bechance to thee in Milan!

VALENTINE. As much to you at home! and so, farewell.

Antonio, the father of Proteus, desired that his son should benefit by the experience of travel, and his desire was brought to a determination to send Proteus

away, by hearing what his brother, a man of large experience, thought of the matter. It was told him:—

> He wondered that your lordship
> Would suffer him [Proteus] to spend his youth at home;
> While other men of slender reputation,
> Put forth their sons to seek preferment out:
> Some, to the wars, to try their fortune there;
> Some, to discover islands far away;
> Some, to the studious universities,
> For any, or for all these exercises,
> He said that Proteus, your son, was meet:
> And did request me to importune you,
> To let him spend his time no more at home,
> Which would be great impeachment to his age,
> In having known no travel in his youth.
>
> ANTONIO. Nor need'st thou much importune me to that
> Whereon this month I have been hammering.
> I have considered well his loss of time;
> And how he cannot be a perfect man,
> Not being tried and tutored in the world:
> Experience is by industry achieved,
> And perfected by the swift course of time:
> Then, tell me, whither were I best to send him?

Antonio was reminded of the fact that Valentine was at the royal court in attendance upon the emperor, where he was receiving the training suitable for a gentleman; engaging in tilts and tournaments, conversing with noblemen, and acquiring the various courtly accomplishments. So he decided to send Proteus to Milan, in company with some gentlemen who were about to set out for the emperor's royal seat.

Proteus himself was ignorant of his father's intentions concerning him; and to leave Verona was quite contrary to his inclinations, for, after much coquetting and many rebuffs, the lady Julia was now beginning to smile on him. It happened that, at the very moment when his father was ready to communicate his purpose of sending him to Milan, Proteus was engaged in reading a love-letter from Julia. Up to this time, Proteus had not confided his passion to his father, and when Antonio asked —

What letter are you reading there? —

the surprised young lover faltered out a falsehood, saying: —

May't please your lordship, 'tis a word or two
Of commendation sent from Valentine,
Delivered by a friend that came from him.
ANTONIO. Lend me the letter; let me see what news.
PROTEUS. There is no news, my lord; but that he writes
How happily he lives, how well-beloved,
And daily gracéd by the emperor;
Wishing me with him, partner of his fortune.
ANTONIO. And how stand you affected to his wish?
PROTEUS. As one relying on your lordship's will,
And not depending on his friendly wish.
ANTONIO. My will is something sorted with his wish:
Muse[1] not that I thus suddenly proceed;
For what I will, I will, and there an end.
I am resolved that thou shalt spend some time
With Valentinus in the emperor's court;
What maintenance he from his friends receives
Like exhibition[2] thou shalt have from me.

[1] wonder. [2] allowance.

To-morrow be in readiness to go:
Excuse it not, for I am peremptory.

Vainly did the young man plead with his father to delay a day or two, at least. He was well punished for the cowardice that led him to tell the untruth. When left alone he thus lamented with himself: —

Thus have I shunned the fire for fear of burning;
And drenched me in the sea where I am drowned:
I feared to show my father Julia's letter,
Lest he should take exceptions to my love;
And with the vantage of mine own excuse,
Hath he excepted most against my love.
O, how this spring of love resembleth
The uncertain glory of an April day;
Which now shows all the beauty of the sun,
And by and by a cloud takes all away!

At parting, Proteus and Julia exchanged rings and pledged themselves to mutual fidelity. Proteus' farewell words were: —

Here is my hand for my true constancy;
And when that hour o'erslips me in the day,
Wherein I sigh not, Julia, for thy sake,
The next ensuing hour some foul mischance
Torment me for my love's forgetfulness!
My father stays my coming; answer not;
Julia, farewell. — What! gone without a word?
Ay, so true love should do: it cannot speak;
For truth hath better deeds than words to grace it.

Valentine gained more than he anticipated at the court of Milan. Not only was his mind enlarged by travel,

but his heart found its life's happiness in the love of Silvia, daughter of the duke. Her father did not favor Valentine's suit, however, for he had other plans for his daughter's future. He was very much displeased because Silvia was not willing to accept the husband of his choice, a young courtier named Thurio. But love does not come at the command of another, even though that other be one's own parent, and Silvia, who was a young woman of shrewd perception, discovered that Valentine was far superior in mind and true-heartedness to the gay courtier, Thurio.

One day when both Valentine and Thurio were paying court to the Lady Silvia, the duke announced that another young Veronese had arrived at the palace. He inquired of Valentine if he knew this compatriot of his, the son of Antonio of Verona. Valentine replied: —

> I knew him, as myself; for from our infancy
> We have conversed and spent our hours together:
> And though myself have been an idle truant,
> Omitting the sweet benefit of time
> To clothe mine age with angel-like perfection,
> Yet hath Sir Proteus, for that's his name,
> Made use and fair advantage of his days;
> His years but young, but his experience old;
> His head unmellowed, but his judgment ripe;
> He is complete in feature, and in mind,
> With all good grace to grace a gentleman.
> DUKE. Beshrew me, sir, but if he make this good,
> He is as worthy for an empress' love,
> As meet to be an emperor's counsellor.
> Welcome him then according to his worth.

Such generous words of introduction should have been repaid by truth and honor on the part of Proteus. It is painful to be obliged to relate that his course at Milan was one of base betrayal of friendship and of love. For no sooner did he see the Lady Silvia, than he transferred his affection to her, although Valentine told him that he was her accepted lover, saying: —

> She is mine own;
> And I as rich in having such a jewel
> As twenty seas, if all their sand were pearl,
> The water nectar, and the rocks pure gold.

Valentine may have made a mistake in assuming superiority over Proteus because his lady-love was the daughter of a duke; telling him that Julia —

> — shall be dignified with this high honor, —
> To bear my lady's train; lest the base earth
> Should from her vesture chance to steal a kiss,
> And, of so great a favor growing proud,
> Disdain to root the summer-swelling flower,
> And make rough winter everlastingly.
> PROTEUS. Why, Valentine, what braggardism is this?
> VALENTINE. Pardon me, Proteus: all I can is nothing
> To her whose worth makes other worthies nothing;
> She is alone.

At all events, Proteus, then and there, resolved to win this paragon of a maiden for himself. This he did regardless of every obligation of friendship and of loyalty in love. The fickle fellow said to himself: —

> Even as one heat another heat expels,
> Or as one nail by strength drives out another,

So the remembrance of my former love
Is by a newer object quite forgotten.
Is it her mien, or Valentinus' praise,
Her true perfection, or my false transgression,
That makes me reasonless, to reason thus?
She is fair; and so is Julia, that I love;—
That I did love, for now my love is thawed;
Which, like a waxen image 'gainst a fire,
Bears no impression of the thing it was.
Methinks, my zeal to Valentine is cold;
And that I love him not, as I was wont:
O! but I love his lady too, too much;
And that's the reason I love him so little.
If I can check my erring love, I will;
If not, to compass her I'll use my skill.

Valentine had no suspicion of the mean treachery that was in the mind of Proteus, and he confided to his friend's ear that Silvia's father was opposed to his suit, and favorable to that of Thurio. Furthermore, he unfolded their plans for evading the watchful eye of the duke. He had a ladder made of cords which he was to throw in at Silvia's window after nightfall, by means of which she expected to make her escape and elope with him.

This plan Proteus decided to betray to the duke, in the hope that, after Valentine should be sent away from Milan, he might worm himself into the good graces of Silvia. Proteus did not determine upon this course without some twinges of conscience; for he argued with himself:—

To leave my Julia, shall I be forsworn;
To love fair Silvia, shall I be forsworn;

To wrong my friend, I shall be much forsworn:
And even that power, which gave me first my oath,
Provokes me to this threefold perjury.
Love bade me swear, and love bids me forswear:
At first I did adore a twinkling star,
But now I worship a celestial sun.
Unheedful vows may heedfully be broken;
And he wants wit that wants resolvéd will
To learn his wit to exchange the bad for better.
Julia I lose, and Valentine I lose:
If I keep them, I needs must lose myself;
I to myself am dearer than a friend:
For love is still most precious in itself:
And Silvia, witness Heaven, that made her fair!
Shows Julia but a swarthy Ethiope.
I will forget that Julia is alive,
Remembering that my love to her is dead;
And Valentine I'll hold an enemy,
Aiming at Silvia as a sweeter friend.
I cannot now prove constant to myself,
Without some treachery used to Valentine.

In pursuance of his plan to betray his friend, Proteus sought an audience with the duke. When the duke inquired what he desired, this arch-hypocrite pretended to be very loath to speak, but said that his sense of duty would not permit him to keep silence. He declared: —

My gracious lord, that which I would discover,[1]
The law of friendship bids me to conceal:
But when I call to mind your gracious favors
Done to me, undeserving as I am,

[1] reveal.

My duty pricks me on to utter that
Which else no worldly good should draw from me.
Know, worthy prince, Sir Valentine, my friend,
This night intends to steal away your daughter;
Myself am one made privy to the plot.
I know you have determined to bestow her
On Thurio, whom your gentle daughter hates;
And should she thus be stolen away from you,
It would be much vexation to your age.
Thus, for my duty's sake, I rather chose
To cross my friend in his intended drift,
Than, by concealing it, heap on your head
A pack of sorrows, which would press you down,
Being unprevented, to your timeless grave.

The duke thanked Proteus for advising him of this plan, but said that he had little fear of Valentine's stealing his daughter, because he had been on the alert, and had taken the precaution to have Silvia lodged in an upper tower of which he himself kept the key. Proteus replied: —

Know, noble lord, they have devised a mean
How he her chamber-window will ascend,
And with a corded ladder fetch her down;
For which the youthful lover now is gone,
And this way comes he with it presently;
Where, if it pleases you, you may intercept him.
But, good my lord, do it so cunningly,
That my discovery be not aiméd at;
For love of you, not hate unto my friend,
Hath made me publisher of this pretence.
DUKE. Upon mine honor, he shall never know
That I had any light from thee of this.

Valentine soon appeared, wearing a long cloak under which he had the rope-ladder concealed. The duke delayed him and, by a shrewd pretence, cunningly entrapped the unsuspecting lover. He thus began:—

'Tis not unknown to thee, that I have sought
To match my friend, Sir Thurio, to my daughter.
VALENTINE. I know it well, my lord; and sure, the match
Were rich and honorable; besides, the gentleman
Is full of virtue, bounty, worth, and qualities
Beseeming such a wife as your fair daughter:
Cannot your grace win her to fancy him?
DUKE. No, trust me; she is peevish, sullen, froward,
Proud, disobedient, stubborn, lacking duty;
And, may I say to thee, this pride of hers,
Upon advice, hath drawn my love from her;
And, where I thought the remnant of my age
Should have been cherished by her child-like duty,
I now am full resolved to take a wife,
And turn her out to who will take her in:
Then let her beauty be her wedding-dower;
For me and my possessions she esteems not.
VALENTINE. What would your grace have me to do in this?
DUKE. There is a lady, sir, in Milan, here,
Whom I affect; but she is nice, and coy,
And nought esteems my aged eloquence:
Now, therefore, I would have thee to my tutor,
(For long agone I have forgot to court:
Besides, the fashion of the time is changed;)
How, and which way, I may bestow myself,
To be regarded in her sun-bright eye.

Valentine fell into the trap, advising the duke as to the most likely means to win a lady's favor, and when the duke told him that the lady in question was promised by her friends to another gentleman, and that she was kept a half-prisoner in a room high above the ground, the approach to which was by a shelving roof very dangerous to climb, Valentine suggested that access to this room might be secured by means of a ladder made of cords.

The duke pretended to be greatly pleased with this plan, and desired Valentine to get such a ladder for him, but he wondered how he could convey the ladder to the lady's room without its being seen. Valentine replied:—

It will be light, my lord, that you may bear it
Under a cloak, that is of any length.
DUKE. A cloak as long as thine will serve the turn?
VALENTINE. Ay, my good lord.
DUKE. Then let me see thy cloak:
I'll get me one of such another length.
VALENTINE. Why, any cloak will serve the turn, my lord.

Then, as if desirous of finding out how to manage it, the wily duke insisted upon trying on Valentine's cloak. Of course, no gentleman dares refuse the request of royalty, so poor Valentine was compelled to assist in the discovery of the ladder which he had concealed under the garment, and to stand by while the Duke read a letter addressed "To Silvia," which was in a fold of the cloak. When he came to the words—

Silvia, this night I will enfranchise thee,—

the duke sternly said: —

> 'Tis so: and here's a ladder for the purpose.
> Go, base intruder! overweening slave!
> Bestow thy fawning smiles on equal mates;
> And think my patience, more than thy desert,
> Is privilege for thy departure hence:
> Thank me for this, more than for all the favors
> Which, all too much, I have bestowed on thee.
> But if thou linger in my territories,
> Longer than swiftest expedition
> Will give thee time to leave our royal court,
> By Heaven, my wrath shall far exceed the love
> I ever bore my daughter or thyself.
> Be gone; I will not hear thy vain excuse,
> But, as thou lov'st thy life, make speed from hence.

The news of Valentine's banishment spread quickly. When it came to the ears of Proteus, that two-faced fellow sought his distressed friend, pretending to be all sympathy, but really seeking to hasten his departure. He brought, however, the news, sweet to the ears of Valentine, that Silvia was constant and had pleaded with her father for a reversal of his harsh sentence. He told how —

> She hath offered to the doom
> A sea of melting pearl, which some call tears;
> Those at her father's churlish feet she tendered;
> With them, upon her knees, her humble self;
> Wringing her hands, whose whiteness so became them,
> As if but now they waxéd pale for woe:
> But neither bended knees, pure hands held up,
> Sad sighs, deep groans, nor silver-shedding tears,

Could penetrate her uncompassionate sire;
But Valentine, if he be ta'en, must die.
Besides, her intercession chafed him so,
When she for thy repeal was suppliant,
That to close prison he commanded her,
With many bitter threats of biding there.

When Valentine lamented his own and Silvia's hard fate, Proteus reproved him, saying: —

Cease to lament for that thou canst not help,
And study help for that which thou lament'st,
Time is the nurse and breeder of all good.
Here if thou stay, thou canst not see thy love;
Besides, thy staying will abridge thy life.
Hope is a lover's staff; walk hence with that,
And manage it against despairing thoughts.
Thy letters may be here, though thou art hence:
Which being writ to me, shall be delivered
Even in the milk-white bosom of thy love.
The time now serves not to expostulate:
Come, I'll convey thee through the city gate;
And, ere I part with thee, confer at large
Of all that may concern thy love-affairs:
As thou lov'st Silvia, though not for thyself,
Regard thy danger, and along with me.

The duke little understood the depth and constancy of Silvia's love, or he would have known that to banish Valentine was the very way to prevent the fulfilment of his hope to have Thurio as a son-in-law. Since Proteus had served him so effectually in exposing the plans of Valentine, the duke besought him to use his influence to persuade Silvia to look with favor upon Thurio. Pro-

teus was willing to act as a go-between, because he thought that, by this means, he might have opportunities of pleading for himself. Being so fickle himself, he imagined that Silvia could easily be induced to transfer her affection from Valentine to his friend.

He was, therefore, wholly unprepared for the scorn with which Silvia rejected his protestations of love. He was stung to the heart by her contemptuous words. He was obliged to conclude that: —

> Silvia is too fair, too true, too holy,
> To be corrupted with my worthless gifts.
> When I protest true loyalty to her,
> She twits me with my falsehood to my friend:
> When to her beauty I commend my vows,
> She bids me think how I have been forsworn
> In breaking faith with Julia whom I loved:
> But here comes Thurio: now must we to her window,
> And give some evening music to her ear.

Proteus had advised Thurio to woo the coy Silvia by singing love-songs under her window at night. Thurio therefore employed some skilful musicians to serenade her with this ditty: —

> *Who is Silvia? what is she,*
> *That all our swains commend her?*
> *Holy, fair, and wise is she,*
> *The heaven such grace did lend her,*
> *That she might admirèd be.*
>
> *Is she kind as she is fair?*
> *For beauty lives with kindness:*

Love doth to her eyes repair,
To help him of his blindness;
And, being helped, inhabits there.

Then to Silvia let us sing,
That Silvia is excelling;
She excels each mortal thing,
Upon the dull earth dwelling:
To her let us garlands bring.

When Thurio and the musicians departed, Proteus stayed behind, hoping to see and speak with Silvia. In this hope he was not disappointed, for Silvia soon appeared at the window; but when Proteus addressed her with honeyed words of flattery, she reproached him for his falseness, saying: —

Thou subtle, perjured, false, disloyal man!
Think'st thou I am so shallow, so conceitless,
To be seducéd by thy flattery,
That hast deceived so many with thy vows?
Return, return, and make thy love amends.
For me, — by this pale queen of night I swear,
I am so far from granting thy request,
That I despise thee for thy wrongful suit;
And by and by intend to chide myself,
Even for this time I spend in talking to thee.

There was another listener whose presence neither Silvia nor Proteus suspected — the forsaken Julia who, impatient at the protracted absence of Proteus, had persuaded her maid to disguise her in the garb of a page and accompany her to Milan. She was so confident of her lover's constancy that she thought that he would

pardon her seeming immodesty in the joy of their meeting.

Julia reached Milan on the same evening of the serenade, and on inquiring for Proteus, was conducted to the spot where he was with Thurio and the musicians. So it happened that she became an eavesdropper, and heard his suit to Silvia. Shocked and distressed as she was, she was somewhat comforted by learning from Silvia's scornful reply that his false suit was rejected.

Julia's next move was to apply to Proteus for service with him, under the assumed name of Sebastian. Almost the first service that Proteus required of her was to take to Silvia the very ring which she had given him at parting. In giving her this commission, Proteus told her: —

> Sebastian, I have entertainéd thee,
> Partly, that I have need of such a youth,
> That can with some discretion do my business,
> But chiefly for thy face and thy behavior;
> Which (if my augury deceive me not)
> Witness good bringing up, fortune, and truth.
> Go presently, and take this ring with thee,
> Deliver it to Madam Silvia:
> She loved me well, delivered it to me.
>
> JULIA. It seems you loved her not to leave her token:
> She is dead, belike?
>
> PROTEUS. Not so; I think she lives.
>
> JULIA. Alas!
>
> PROTEUS. Why dost thou cry, alas?
>
> JULIA. I cannot choose but pity her.
>
> PROTEUS. Wherefore shouldst thou pity her?
>
> JULIA. Because, methinks, that she loved you as well

As you do love your lady Silvia:
She dreams on him that has forgot her love;
You dote on her that cares not for your love.
'Tis pity, love should be so contrary;
And thinking on it makes me cry, alas!

PROTEUS. Well, give her that ring, and therewithal
This letter. — Tell my lady,
I claim the promise of her heavenly picture.
Your message done, hie home unto my chamber,
Where thou shalt find me, sad and solitary.

Although Julia's heart was pierced by the knowledge of the falseness of her former lover, yet her own love for him was of that quality that she was willing to further his wishes, even at the cost of her own happiness. As she left him with the ring, — her own love-gift, — she thus argued with herself: —

How many women would do such a message?
Alas, poor fool! why do I pity him
That with his very heart despiseth me?
Because he loves her, he despiseth me;
Because I love him, I must pity him.
This ring I gave him, when he parted from me,
To bind him to remember my good will:
And now am I (unhappy messenger)
To plead for that, which I would not obtain;
To carry that, which I would have refused;
To praise his faith, which I would have dispraised.
I am my master's true confirméd love;
But cannot be true servant to my master,
Unless I prove false traitor to myself.
Yet I will woo for him; but yet so coldly,
As, Heaven it knows, I would not have him speed.

The interview with Silvia proved less painful than Julia had feared; for that lady rejected the ring which she knew had been given Proteus by Julia, of whom he had talked continually when he first came to Milan. She also expressed great pity for her who was being so heartlessly forsaken by the fickle Proteus.

The more efforts were made to draw Silvia's heart from her true lover, the more determined she was to elude those who were watching her and to escape to rejoin Valentine. She persuaded one of the attendants at the court, Eglamour by name, to assist her to carry out her plan. Silvia had learned that her exiled lover had betaken himself to a neighboring forest, and that he had been adopted as leader of a band of outlaws, who, like Robin Hood's merry men, were living by their wits, and by what they could filch from passing travellers. Eglamour was to accompany her in her search for her faithful lover. They were to meet at the cell of a friar where Silvia was accustomed to go for confession.

Eglamour arrived first at the meeting-place near the abbey. Looking about for the lady, he said to himself: —

> The sun begins to gild the western sky:
> And now it is about the very hour
> That Silvia, at Friar Patrick's cell, should meet me.
> She will not fail; for lovers break not hours,
> Unless it be to come before their time;
> So much they spur their expedition.
> See where she comes: Lady, a happy evening!
> SILVIA. Amen, amen! go on, good Eglamour,

Out at the postern by the abbey-wall;
I fear I am attended by some spies.
EGLAMOUR. Fear not; the forest is not three
leagues off:
If we recover that, we are sure enough.

Silvia was not mistaken in thinking that her movements were being watched. She had not been gone long before the duke sought Thurio and Proteus to ask if they had seen either Sir Eglamour or Silvia. Upon receiving a negative reply, he immediately guessed: —

Why, then, she's fled unto that peasant Valentine,
And Eglamour is in her company.
'Tis true; for Friar Lawrence met them both,
As he in penance wandered through the forest:
Him he knew well, and guessed that it was she;
But, being masked, he was not sure of it:
Besides, she did intend confession
At Patrick's cell this even; and there she was not:
These likelihoods confirm her flight from hence.
Therefore, I pray you, stand not to discourse,
But mount you presently; and meet with me
Upon the rising of the mountain-foot
That leads toward Mantua, whither they are fled.
Despatch, sweet gentlemen, and follow me.

As the duke left them to make hasty preparations for following Silvia, the others, each in turn, secretly remarked to themselves: —

THURIO. Why, this it is to be a peevish girl,
That flies her fortune when it follows her:
I'll after; more to be revenged on Eglamour,
Than for the love of reckless Silvia.

PROTEUS. And I will follow, more for Silvia's love,
Than hate of Eglamour that goes with her.
JULIA. And I will follow, more to cross that love,
Than hate for Silvia, that is gone for love.

Meantime, the exiled Valentine was growing so accustomed to the life of an outlaw that he could even take pleasure in its loneliness. He was surprised, as he said, to find: —

How use doth breed a habit in a man!
This shadowy desert, unfrequented woods,
I better brook than flourishing peopled towns:
Here can I sit alone, unseen of any,
And to the nightingale's complaining notes
Tune my distresses, and record my woes.
O thou that dost inhabit in my breast,
Leave not the mansion so long tenantless;
Lest, growing ruinous, the building fall,
And leave no memory of what it was!
Repair me with thy presence, Silvia;
Thou gentle nymph, cherish thy forlorn swain!

Just as he said the last words, he heard the sound of loud shouting. Wondering, he exclaimed: —

What hallooing and what stir, is this to-day?
These are my mates, that make their wills their law,
Have some unhappy passenger in chase:
They love me well; yet I have much to do,
To keep them from uncivil outrages.

Quickly concealing himself behind a tree, Valentine waited to learn what would follow. Imagine his astonishment when he beheld Silvia approaching, accompa-

nied by Proteus and a page. Indignation succeeded astonishment however, when he heard Proteus making love to Silvia, claiming her love as a reward for having rescued her from the outlaws. But Silvia never swerved from her allegiance to Valentine. She replied to Proteus: —

> Had I been seizéd by a hungry lion,
> I would have been a breakfast to the beast,
> Rather than have false Proteus rescue me.
> O, Heaven be judge how I love Valentine,
> Whose life's as tender to me as my soul;
> And full as much (for more there cannot be)
> I do detest false perjured Proteus:
> Therefore be gone, solicit me no more.
> Thou counterfeit to thy true friend!
>
> PROTEUS. In love, who respects friend?
> SILVIA. All men but Proteus.

Valentine could no longer restrain himself. The treachery of the man whom he had trusted as a friend excited his wrath to that degree that he discovered himself, and in stinging words denounced Proteus, saying: —

> Thou common friend, that's without faith or love;
> Thou hast beguiled my hopes; nought but mine eye
> Could have persuaded me: Now I dare not say
> I have one friend alive; thou wouldst disprove me.
> Who should be trusted when one's own right hand
> Is perjured to the bosom? Proteus,
> I am sorry I must never trust thee more,
> But count the world a stranger for thy sake.
> The private wound is deepest: O time most accursed!
> 'Mongst all foes, that a friend should be the worst.

Valentine's reproaches awoke the conscience that had so long slept in Proteus' bosom, and he pleaded: —

> Forgive me, Valentine: if hearty sorrow
> Be a sufficient ransom for offence,
> I tender it here; I do as truly suffer
> As e'er I did commit.

It was not in Valentine's nature to harbor ill-will, and he received his friend's remorseful confession in a spirit of forgiveness, saying: —

> Who by repentance is not satisfied
> Is nor of heaven, nor earth; for these are pleased;
> By penitence the Eternal's wrath's appeased.

Seeing that Proteus seemed sincerely penitent, Julia was emboldened to make herself known to the company. She addressed herself to Proteus: —

> JULIA. Behold her that gave aim to all thy oaths,
> And entertained them deeply in her heart:
> O Proteus, let this habit make thee blush!
> Be thou ashamed, that I have took upon me
> Such an immodest raiment; if shame live
> In a disguise of love:
> It is the lesser blot, modesty finds,
> Women to change their shapes, than men their minds.
> PROTEUS. Than men their minds! 'tis true; O Heaven! were man
> But constant, he were perfect: that one error
> Fills him with faults; makes him run through all th' sins
> Inconstancy falls off ere it begins:
> What is in Silvia's face, but I may spy
> More fresh in Julia's with a constant eye?

Just as their reconciliation was complete, some of the band of outlaws appeared bringing the duke and Thurio as captives. Thurio at once claimed Silvia, but when Valentine threatened him with swift punishment if he dared to touch her against her will, Thurio disclaimed any wish to interfere with their purposes. The duke, who despised cowardice, was so disgusted with this yielding on the part of the man whom he had chosen for a son-in-law that he declared: —

> The more degenerate and base art thou,
> To make such means for her as thou hast done,
> And leave her on such slight conditions. —
> Now, by the honor of my ancestry,
> I do applaud thy spirit, Valentine,
> And think thee worthy of an empress' love!
> Know then, I here forget all former griefs,
> Cancel all grudge, repeal[1] thee home again.—
> Plead a new state in thy unrivalled merit,
> To which I thus subscribe, — Sir Valentine,
> Thou art a gentleman, and well derived;
> Take thou thy Silvia, for thou hast deserved her.

In the joy of his own happiness, Valentine did not neglect those who had been kind to him, — the brave outlaws of the forest, — men who, for light offences, had been banished. He therefore asked this boon of the duke: —

> These banished men, that I have kept withal,
> Are men endued with worthy qualities;
> Forgive them what they have committed here,
> And let them be recalled from their exile:

[1] recall.

They are reformed, civil, full of good,
And fit for great employment, worthy lord.
DUKE. Thou hast prevailed; I pardon them,
and thee;
Dispose of them, as thou know'st their deserts.
Come, let us go; we will include all jars
With triumphs, mirth, and rare solemnity.

Valentine told Proteus that his penance must be to hear a rehearsal of his traitorous falsehoods. That done, he promised: —

Our day of marriage shall be yours;
One feast, one house, one mutual happiness.

HAMLET

HAMLET, PRINCE OF DENMARK

MANY years ago, the University of Wittenberg in Germany, then a famous seat of learning, numbered among its students Hamlet, Prince of Denmark, who was deeply interested in the study of philosophy. Hamlet was a high-minded youth, nobly sincere, and of an affectionate disposition. One day his studies were sadly interrupted by news of the sudden death of his father, King Hamlet, who had died, it was said, from the bite of a poisonous serpent that had stung him as he lay sleeping in the garden of the palace.

Hamlet deeply reverenced his father, who had seemed to him the ideal of manly virtue and kingly majesty. Overwhelmed with a sense of irreparable loss, he said of his father to Horatio, a friend and fellow-student: —

> He was a man, take him for all in all,
> I shall not look upon his like again.

Such being Hamlet's high estimate of his father, we can easily understand how shocked he was, when his mother, Queen Gertrude, married his Uncle Claudius, within two months after the death of her former husband. In so doing, she elevated Claudius to the throne, for she had been joint ruler of Denmark, and in those

days, the king's son was not necessarily the successor to the kingship.

Hamlet had never liked his uncle, and this hasty marriage made him very suspicious of the man who had contrived to put himself in his father's place. Hamlet loved his mother tenderly, and he grieved bitterly over the fickleness that had led her to solace herself so quickly in the love of another husband. And when she even went so far as to reprove him for continuing to mourn, and urged him to look merry and show himself friendly with his uncle-father, he longed to die and leave a world that seemed false and wicked to his grief-stricken soul.

Claudius incensed him still further by telling him that he was rebellious against the will of God in grieving so. He begged Hamlet to remain at court and to accept his love as a father's, saying: —

> 'Tis sweet and commendable in your nature, Hamlet,
> To give these mourning duties to your father:
> But, you must know, your father lost a father;
> That father lost, lost his; but to persever
> In obstinate condolement is a course
> Of impious stubbornness; 'tis unmanly grief;
> It shows a will most incorrect to heaven,
> A heart unfortified, a mind impatient,
> An understanding simple and unschooled.
> We pray you, throw to earth
> This unprevailing woe, and think of us
> As of a father; for let the world take note,
> You are the most immediate to our throne,
> And with no less nobility of love

Than that which dearest father bears his son
Do I impart toward you. For your intent
In going back to school in Wittenberg,
It is most retrograde[1] to our desire;
And we beseech you, bend you to remain
Here, in the cheer and comfort of our eye,
Our chiefest courtier, cousin,[2] and our son.

Although Hamlet felt that his uncle's professions of love were insincere, his sense of filial duty was so true that, when his mother added —

Let not thy mother lose her prayers, Hamlet:
I pray thee, stay with us; go not to Wittenberg, —

he consented to remain. The king chose to regard his consent as an evidence of kind feeling toward himself, and proceeded to celebrate the occasion in accordance with the Danish custom, by a drinking feast.

When Hamlet was left alone, he could no longer restrain his bitter grief, but burst out: —

That it should come to this!
But two months dead! nay, not so much, not two:
So excellent a king; that was, to this,
Hyperion to a satyr; so loving to my mother
That he might not beteem[3] the winds of heaven
Visit her face too roughly. Heaven and earth!
Must I remember? why, she would hang on him,
As if increase of appetite had grown
By what it fed on; and yet, within a month —
Let me not think on't — Frailty, thy name is woman! —
A little month, — why she, even she —
O God! a beast, that wants discourse of reason,

[1] contrary. [2] kinsman. [3] allow.

Would have mourned longer — married with my uncle,
My father's brother, but no more like my father
Than I to Hercules. Within a month?
It is not, nor it cannot come to good; —
But break my heart, for I must hold my tongue.

Immediately upon ascending the throne, Claudius began to make active preparations for war. This gave great offence to some army officers, who could not understand why they should be required to keep as strict watch as if an enemy were already approaching, when they had not heard of any declaration of war.

All sorts of rumors were afloat, the most astonishing of which was that the ghost of the late king had been seen clad in full armor, walking upon the battlements of the royal castle. This was taken to be an evil omen, and the officers who claimed to have seen the ghost, thought it their duty to tell young Hamlet.

Horatio, who had now come to the capital, ventured to broach the matter to Hamlet, telling him that, on two separate occasions, when Marcellus and Bernardo were officers of the watch, just at midnight,—

A figure like your father,
Arméd at point exactly, cap-a-pé,
Appears before them, and with solemn march
Goes slow and stately by them: thrice he walked
By their oppressed and fear-surprisèd eyes,
Within his truncheon's length; whilst they, distilled
Almost to jelly with the act of fear,
Stand dumb, and speak not to him. This to me
In dreadful secrecy impart they did;
And I with them the third night kept the watch:

Where, as they had delivered, both in time,
Form of the thing, each word made true and good,
The apparition comes. I knew your father;
These hands are not more like.

Hamlet charged his friends to keep absolute silence about what they had seen, and made an appointment to watch with them the following night, so that, in case the ghost should again appear, he might learn, if possible, the meaning of these visitations.

In those days, it was believed that the spirits of the dead would return to the earth, if their coming could be the means of causing justice to be done where some great wrong had been committed. Horatio's story made Hamlet still more suspicious, and he said to himself: —

My father's spirit in arms! all is not well;
I doubt[1] some foul play: would the night were come!
Till then sit still, my soul; foul deeds will rise,
Though all the earth o'erwhelm them, to men's eyes.

Midnight found Hamlet, in company with Horatio and Marcellus, on the platform before the castle, where the ghost was reported to walk. As they stood there, the silence of the sharp night air was broken by the report of a cannon, and the sound of trumpets. These were accompaniments of the king's wassail, or drinking feast, with which he had said that he should celebrate Hamlet's consenting to remain at home. Horatio desired to know whether this was customary, and Hamlet told him: —

[1] suspect.

Ay, marry[1] is't;
But to my mind, though I am native here
And to the manner born, it is a custom
More honored in the breach than the observance.

From this reply, we see that Hamlet was more refined in his tastes than the majority of his countrymen. But even as he spoke, Horatio exclaimed: —

Look, my lord, it comes! —

and Hamlet turned to see the figure of his dead father advancing. Almost beside himself with emotion, the prince knew not whether the apparition boded good or ill, but he cried out in tones of agonized entreaty: —

Angels and ministers of grace defend us! —
Be thou a spirit of health or goblin damned,
Bring with thee airs from heaven or blasts from hell,
Be thy intents wicked or charitable,
Thou comest in such a questionable shape
That I will speak to thee: I'll call thee Hamlet,
King, father; royal Dane, O, answer me!
Let me not burst in ignorance; but tell
Why thy canonized bones, hearsed in death,
Have burst their cerements; why the sepulchre,
Wherein we saw thee quietly inurned,
Hath oped his ponderous and marble jaws,
To cast thee up again. What may this mean,
That thou, dead corse, again in complete steel
Revisit'st thus the glimpses of the moon,
Making night hideous.
Say, why is this? wherefore? what should we do?

[1] An old expression, equivalent to "By Mary," but here meaning, *certainly*.

As he spoke the last word, it seemed to Hamlet that the spirit beckoned to him, as if it desired to speak with him alone. Hamlet had no fear for his own safety, but his friends begged him not to follow, lest he might be led into some awful danger. Horatio urged : —

> What if it tempt you toward the flood, my lord,
> Or to the dreadful summit of the cliff
> That beetles o'er his base into the sea,
> And there assume some other horrible form,
> Which might deprive your sovereignty of reason,
> And draw you into madness? think of it;
> The very place puts toys[1] of desperation,
> Without more motive, into every brain
> That looks so many fathoms to the sea
> And hears it roar beneath.

Nothing could deter Hamlet from obeying the evident wish of his father's spirit, and throwing off his friends' detaining hands, he hastened to a remote part of the battlements whither the ghost had preceded him. There a tale of horror was unfolded to Hamlet's listening ear. The spirit entreated him : —

> List, list, O, list!
> If thou didst ever thy dear father love, —
> Revenge his foul and most unnatural murther.
> HAMLET. Murther!
> GHOST. Murther most foul, as in the best it is;
> But this most foul, strange, and unnatural.
> Now, Hamlet, hear:
> 'Tis given out that, sleeping in my orchard,
> A serpent stung me; so the whole ear of Denmark

[1] freaks.

Is by a forgéd process of my death
Rankly abused ; but know, thou noble youth,
The serpent that did sting thy father's life
Now wears his crown.
HAMLET. O my prophetic soul !
My uncle !

The ghost further told Hamlet that Claudius had stolen upon him while he slept, and had poured a deadly poison into his ears — a poison that infused itself into the blood instantly, producing immediate death. Furthermore, this false brother had so fascinated Queen Gertrude by his evil power that she had transferred her affections to him even during his own life. This accounted for her marrying Claudius so soon after the death of King Hamlet. The ghost charged Hamlet, however, not to harm his mother, but to leave her to heaven and the stings of her own conscience. As morning dawned, the spirit vanished, with the parting words: —

Adieu, adieu ! Hamlet, remember me.

The horrible disclosure put Hamlet in a frenzy of passion. Now he knew why his whole soul had risen in rebellion when the new king had called him "son," and had reproached him for continuing to grieve for the loss of his father. He realized that, —

One may smile, and smile, and be a villain.

He felt that he had lived through years of awful experience in a few minutes. The ghost's solemn charge rang in his ears, and he resolved to put aside all plans

for personal happiness, in order to devote himself with a single mind to the sacred duty laid upon him.

In those early days, before courts of law were established, the nearest male relative of a murdered man was bound by custom to avenge the murder. But how could Hamlet prove the truth of his suspicion, which had been so strangely confirmed? His mind acted quickly, and knowing that it was of the first importance to prevent his uncle from guessing that he was under suspicion, Hamlet made his friends take a solemn oath not to reveal by the least hint what had occurred that night, nor to seem to understand the cause of any peculiar actions on his part; and he put their loyalty to a very severe test by refusing to gratify their curiosity to learn what had been divulged in his interview with the ghost.

Highly as he revered true philosophy, Hamlet had now learned that philosophy cannot explain all profound experience. So he told Horatio: —

> There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
> Than are dreamt of in your philosophy; —

and in bitterness of spirit, he murmured: —

> The time is out of joint; — O cursed spite,
> That ever I was born to set it right! —

so unequal did he feel to the task that was laid upon him.

When Hamlet resolved to devote himself to avenging his father, he was perfectly conscious that this resolution involved the renouncing of all thought of marriage with the fair Ophelia, to whom his heart's love was

given. Ophelia was the daughter of Polonius, the aged lord chamberlain, and a sweet, gentle nature was hers. Her father and her brother Laertes — her mother was not living — thought that, since Hamlet's rank was so far above theirs, he could not be sincere in his professions of love for Ophelia. So they told her that the prince was trifling with her affection, and commanded her to repel his attentions.

> POLONIUS. From this time
> Be somewhat scanter of your maiden presence.
> For Lord Hamlet,
> Believe so much in him, that he is young,
> And with a larger tether may he walk
> Than may be given you: in few, Ophelia,
> Do not believe his vows. This is for all;
> I would not, in plain terms, from this time forth,
> Have you so slander[1] any moment's leisure,
> As to give words or talk with the Lord Hamlet:
> Look to't, I charge you; come your ways.
> OPHELIA. I shall obey, my lord.

Hamlet knew nothing of this, and the sudden change in Ophelia's manner toward him confirmed his belief in woman's frailty and fickleness, which had been excited by his mother's inconstancy. He had already decided to adopt the wild manner and strange speech of one whose mind is unbalanced, thinking that, under the mask of insanity, he might find a way of satisfying himself of the king's guilt. For, if Claudius should be led to think that Hamlet's melancholy had developed into madness, he might be thrown off his guard.

[1] disgrace.

When, therefore, Ophelia repulsed him in obedience to her father's command, Hamlet tried to create the impression that her unkindness had caused him to lose his reason. He had always been scrupulously neat in his personal habits; so when he suddenly appeared before her one day with his clothing all disordered, and with a wild look in his eyes, Ophelia hastened to her father to tell him how affrighted she had been by Hamlet's strange conduct. Polonius at once surmised that the prince was losing his mind, and he said to his daughter:—

Mad for thy love?

OPHELIA. My lord, I do not know;
But truly, I do fear it.

POLONIUS. What said he?

OPHELIA. He took me by the wrist and held me hard;
Then goes he to the length of all his arm,
And, with his other hand thus o'er his brow,
He falls to such perusal of my face
As he would draw it. Long stayed he so;
At last, a little shaking of mine arm,
And thrice his head thus waving up and down,
He raised a sigh so piteous and profound
As it did seem to shatter all his bulk
And end his being: that done, he lets me go;
And, with his head over his shoulder turned,
He seemed to find his way without his eyes;
For out o' doors he went without their help,
And, to the last, bended their light on me.

POLONIUS. Come, go with me; I will go seek the king.
This is the very ecstasy of love,
Whose violent property fordoes itself
And leads the will to desperate undertakings,

As oft as any passion under heaven
That does afflict our natures. I am sorry, —
What, have you given him any hard words of late?
OPHELIA. No, my good lord, but, as you did command,
I did repel his letters, and denied
His access to me.
POLONIUS. That hath made him mad.
I am sorry that with better heed and judgment
I had not quoted[1] him. I feared he did but trifle,
And meant to wreck thee.

The king betrayed great eagerness to hear what Polonius had to tell, when he declared that he thought that he had found the cause of Hamlet's lunacy. Polonius was a shrewd courtier, and he took care to impress the king with a deep sense of his own loyalty which, he hinted, had prevented his being over-ambitious for his daughter. When Claudius inquired how Ophelia had received Hamlet's professions of love, he replied: —

What might you,
Or my dear majesty your queen here, think,
If I had played the desk or table-book,
Or given my heart a winking, mute and dumb,
Or looked upon this love with idle sight;
What might you think? No, I went round to work,
And my young mistress thus I did bespeak:
"Lord Hamlet is a prince, out of thy star;
This must not be:" and then I precepts gave her,
That she should lock herself from his resort,
Admit no messengers, receive no tokens.
Which done, she took the fruits of my advice;
And he, repulsed — a short tale to make —

[1] marked, observed.

Fell into a sadness, then into a fast,
Thence to watch, thence into a weakness,
Thence to a lightness, and by this declension
Into the madness wherein now he raves,
And all we mourn for.

This wordy harangue did not convince the king, who had his own reasons for thinking that Hamlet had something else on his mind. He desired to have an opportunity of testing the truth of the old courtier's conclusions. Polonius then proposed to contrive an interview between Hamlet and Ophelia, at which he and Claudius should be present, but concealed behind the tapestry curtains with which the walls of the room were hung.

To this plan the king consented. Ophelia herself had no voice in the matter, but she was led to believe that she might, in this way, be instrumental in discovering the real cause of Hamlet's deep-seated melancholy, and, perhaps, in restoring him to himself. Otherwise, her modesty would have rebelled against so far violating what she had been taught to consider true maidenly reserve, as to seek Hamlet in a part of the castle where he was in the habit of taking exercise.

In order that she might seem to be occupied, Polonius bade her: —

Read on this book;
That show of such an exercise may color
Your loneliness.

Hamlet soon appeared, but so absorbed was he in his own thoughts that he did not, at first, notice the pres-

ence of Ophelia. His soul was so deeply oppressed by the heavy weight of the difficult task, which he had not yet felt himself equal to perform, that he longed to die, and escape the painful duty of avenging the murder of his father. He mused aloud: —

To be, or not to be, — that is the question:
Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
And by opposing end them? To die, — to sleep, —
No more; and by a sleep to say we end
The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks
That flesh is heir to, — 'tis a consummation
Devoutly to be wished. To die, — to sleep, —
To sleep! perchance to dream! ay, there's the rub;
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,
Must give us pause: there's the respect
That makes calamity of so long life;
For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,
The pangs of disprized love, the law's delay,
The insolence of office, and the spurns
That patient merit of the unworthy takes,
When he himself might his quietus make
With a bare bodkin?[1] who would fardels[2] bear,
To grunt and sweat under a weary life
But that the dread of something after death,
The undiscovered country from whose bourn
No traveller returns, puzzles the will,
And makes us rather bear those ills we have
Than fly to others that we know not of?

[1] a small dagger. [2] burdens.

Thus conscience does make cowards of us all;
And thus the native hue of resolution
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,
And enterprises of great pith and moment
With this regard their currents turn awry,
And lose the name of action.

At this moment Hamlet discovered Ophelia. He saluted her gravely and with a tender courtesy, but something in her manner, combined with the surprise of finding her there, led him to suspect that others might be listening to their conversation. This suspicion caused an instantaneous change in his manner, and led him to speak so harshly to her that Ophelia prayed that he whom she loved might be restored to his own gentle self. In her distress she moaned:—

O, what a noble mind is here o'erthrown!
The courtier's, scholar's, soldier's, eye, tongue, sword;
The expectancy and rose of the fair state,
The glass of fashion and the mould of form,
The observed of all observers, quite, quite down!
And I, of ladies most deject and wretched,
That sucked the honey of his music vows,
Now see that noble and most sovereign reason,
Like sweet bells jangled out of tune, and harsh;
That unmatched form and feature of blown youth
Blasted with ecstasy: O woe is me,
To have seen what I have seen, see what I see!

The king, who had listened intently to Hamlet's words, instead of thinking with Polonius that disappointment in love was the cause of Hamlet's lunacy, doubted the fact of his madness. Hamlet's parting words to

Ophelia had alarmed him greatly, for his guilty conscience made him fear lest Hamlet should suspect him. So when he heard Hamlet say:—

> We will have no more marriages: those that are married already, all but one, shall live; the rest shall keep as they are. To a nunnery, go.—

he said to Polonius:—

> Love! his affections do not that way tend;
> Nor what he spake, though it lacked form a little,
> Was not like madness. There's something in his soul
> O'er which his melancholy sits on brood,
> And I do doubt[1] the hatch and the disclose
> Will be some danger; which for to prevent,
> I have in quick determination
> Thus set it down: he shall with speed to England,
> For the demand of our neglected tribute.
> Haply the seas and countries different
> With variable objects shall expel
> This something-settled matter in his heart,
> Whereon his brains still beating puts him thus
> From fashion of himself. What think you on't?

Polonius could not bring himself to admit that he might be mistaken in his opinion, but persisted in maintaining that Hamlet's disturbance of mind was due to neglected love. He desired to have one more attempt made to induce Hamlet to confess what was troubling him; so he proposed that the queen-mother should talk with her son, hoping that he might open his heart to her. But, fearing that the mother might not report all that Hamlet might say, the cunning old lord chamber-

[1] suspect.

lain said that he would again listen behind the tapestry.

Before this, however, the king's anxiety to ferret out the cause of Hamlet's strange behavior — "*transformation*," he called it, — had led him to summon to court two of Hamlet's boyhood companions, Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. At their coming, he told them —

> The need we have to use you did provoke
> Our hasty sending. Something have you heard
> Of Hamlet's transformation ; so I call it,
> Sith[1] nor the exterior nor the inward man
> Resembles that it was. What it should be,
> More than his father's death, that thus hath put him
> So much from the understanding of himself,
> I cannot dream of. I entreat you both,
> That you vouchsafe your rest here in our court
> Some little time ; so by your companies
> To draw him on to pleasures, and to gather,
> So much as from occasion you may glean,
> Whether aught to us unknown afflicts him thus,
> That, opened, lies within our remedy.
>
> GUILDENSTERN. Heavens make our presence and our practices
> Pleasant and helpful to him !

Feeling the necessity of being constantly on his guard, Hamlet grew suspicious of every unusual circumstance, and when he was approached so unexpectedly by these young men, he at once surmised that they had been sent for to spy upon him. But it was his habit to be kind and courteous, and after contriving to get them

[1] since.

to admit that they had been sent for by the king and queen, with a delicate considerateness, he refrained from leading them to betray the confidence of the royal pair, by himself telling them the reason why, saying: —

I have of late lost all my mirth, forgone all custom of exercises; and indeed it goes so heavily with my disposition that this goodly frame, the earth, seems to me a sterile promontory; this most excellent canopy, the air, look you, this brave o'erhanging firmament, this majestical roof fretted with golden fire, — why, it appears no other thing to me than a foul and pestilent congregation of vapors. What a piece of work is man! how noble in reason! how infinite in faculty! in form and moving how express and admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension how like a god! the beauty of the world! the paragon of animals! And yet, to me, what is this quintessence of dust? man delights not me; no, nor woman neither, though by your smiling you seem to say so.

The young men disavowed having any such thought, but told Hamlet that, if he had lost all delight in man, they feared that he would not enjoy the entertainment which was about to be given to the members of the court, by a company of actors whom they had met on the way, and had invited to come thither. Hamlet was fond of the drama, and he welcomed the players in true, gentlemanly fashion when they appeared, as they did soon after.

At Hamlet's request, these players rehearsed before him a scene from a favorite play of his, in which the leading actor portrayed with powerful pathos the grief of Hecuba, queen of Troy, at sight of her husband, King

Priam, hacked to death by the sword of a hostile Greek. Hamlet was deeply moved by the recital, and the thought occurred to him that, if he could have these players enact a play in which there should be a scene corresponding in every detail to the story told by his father's ghost concerning the manner of his own death, Claudius might betray his guilt by some word or uncontrollable agitation. For Hamlet could not bring himself to proceed against his uncle without some other evidence of his guilt than the revelation of a ghost. He was too honorable to seek revenge merely on suspicion. But he reflected: —

> I have heard
> That guilty creatures sitting at a play
> Have by the very cunning of the scene
> Been struck so to the soul that presently
> They have proclaimed their malefactions;
> For murther, though it have no tongue, will speak
> With most miraculous organ. I'll have these players
> Play something like the murther of my father
> Before mine uncle: I'll observe his looks;
> I'll tent[1] him to the quick: if he but blench,
> I know my course. The spirit that I have seen
> May be the devil; and the devil hath power
> To assume a pleasing shape; yea, and perhaps
> Out of my weakness and my melancholy,
> As he is very potent with such spirits,
> Abuses me to damn me. I'll have grounds
> More relative[2] than this; the play's the thing
> Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king.

[1] probe. [2] conclusive.

We see from this self-communing how fearful Hamlet was lest his deep melancholy, together with his hatred of his uncle, should lead him to commit an act of awful injustice. He had already taken Horatio into his confidence, because he knew him to be a man of incorruptible honor, and absolutely disinterested in his friendship for himself. He now went to Horatio to ask him to watch his uncle during the play, and help him to judge whether he was right in his suspicion. He told Horatio: —

> There is a play to-night before the king;
> One scene of it comes near the circumstance
> Which I have told thee of my father's death.
> I prithee, when thou seest that act afoot,
> Even with the very comment of thy soul
> Observe mine uncle; if his occulted guilt
> Do not itself unkennel in one speech,
> It is a damnéd ghost that we have seen,
> And my imaginations are as foul
> As Vulcan's stithy.[1] Give him heedful note;
> For I mine eyes will rivet to his face,
> And after we will both our judgments join
> In censure[2] of his seeming.

Hamlet was happy in having such a friend as Horatio, for a prince cannot always find one who is perfectly sincere and unselfish. In this talk with Horatio, Hamlet told him why he trusted him so completely: —

> HAMLET. Since my dear soul was mistress of her choice,
> And could of men distinguish, her election

[1] forge. [2] judgment.

Hath sealed thee for herself; for thou hast been
As one, in suffering all, that suffers nothing,
A man that fortune's buffets and rewards
Hath ta'en with equal thanks: and blest are those
Whose blood and judgment are so well commingled
That they are not a pipe for Fortune's finger
To sound what stop she please. Give me that man
That is not passion's slave, and I will wear him
In my heart's core, ay, in my heart of heart,
As I do thee.

The name of the play which Hamlet had selected was "The Murther of Gonzago." By inserting a few lines, he had made it agree with the account given by the ghost. It was presented before the entire court, Hamlet reclining at the feet of Ophelia, from which spot he could easily watch the king.

The play opened with mutual protestations of ardent affection between a king and queen who had been married thirty years. The player-king was very poetical, describing their happiness thus: —

Full thirty times hath Phœbus' cart gone round
Neptune's salt wash and Tellus' orbéd ground,
And thirty dozen moons with borrowed sheen
About the world have times twelve thirties been,
Since love our hearts and Hymen did our hands
Unite commutual in most sacred bands.

The player-queen responded with extravagant vows of constancy in life and in death, saying that she could never be induced, under any circumstances, to marry a second time, which declaration caused Queen Gertrude to say: —

The lady protests too much, methinks.

As the play proceeded, Claudius began to show signs of uneasiness, asking Hamlet if he had heard the argument, or plot, of the drama, and if there was anything offensive in it. Hamlet replied with deep meaning, —

No, no, they do but jest, poison in jest; no offence i' the world;

and as the player poured the poison into the ear of the sleeping player-king, he added significantly: —

You shall see anon how the murtherer gets the love of Gonzago's wife.

The guilty king could endure the sight no longer, but rose in great excitement, calling for lights, and hastily left the apartment, followed by all the spectators except Hamlet and Horatio. Thoroughly convinced now of the truth of his suspicion, Hamlet exclaimed: —

O good Horatio, I'll take the ghost's word for a thousand pound. Didst perceive?
HORATIO. Very well, my lord,
HAMLET. Upon the talk of the poisoning?
HORATIO. I did very well note him.

Their conversation was interrupted by the entrance of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, whom the queen had sent to tell Hamlet that she desired to speak with him in her own apartment, for she was amazed at his behavior.

Hamlet had, ere this, discovered that Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, while pretending to be his friends, were trying to worm his secret from him. He now forced a recorder, or flute, into the hand of Guildenstern,

and insisted that he should play upon the instrument. When Guildenstern protested that he did not know how to play, Hamlet urged: —

I do beseech you.

GUILDENSTERN. I know no touch of it, my lord.

HAMLET. 'Tis as easy as lying; govern these ventages with your finger and thumb, give it breath with your mouth, and it will discourse most eloquent music. Look you, these are the stops.

GUILDENSTERN. But these cannot I command to any utterance of harmony; I have not the skill.

Then Hamlet burst out in righteous indignation: —

Why, look you now, how unworthy a thing you make of me! You would play upon me; you would seem to know my stops; you would pluck out the heart of my mystery; you would sound me from my lowest note to the top of my compass: and there is much music, excellent voice in this little organ; yet cannot you make it speak. Do you think I am easier to be played on than a pipe? Call me what instrument you will, though you can fret me, you cannot play upon me.

At this moment Polonius entered to tell Hamlet that his mother desired to speak with him immediately. Hamlet knew that he could play upon Polonius, who still believed him insane. So he questioned the lord chamberlain: —

Do you see yonder cloud that's almost in shape of a camel?

POLONIUS. By the mass, and 'tis like a camel, indeed.

HAMLET. Methinks it is like a weasel.

POLONIUS. It is backed like a weasel.

HAMLET. Or like a whale?

POLONIUS. Very like a whale.

HAMLET. Then will I come to my mother by and by. — I will come by and by.

POLONIUS. I will say so.

HAMLET. By and by is easily said. — Leave me, friends.

Hamlet felt that he must be alone a few minutes in order that he might nerve himself for the painful interview with his mother. He was resolved to compel her to see her wrong, which, so far, she seemed to be unable to do, and he felt that he must set a guard upon himself, lest he should be tempted to use violence. So he charged himself : —

Soft ! now to my mother.
O heart, lose not thy nature ;
Let me be cruel, not unnatural.
I will speak daggers to her, but use none ;
How in my words soever she be shent,[1]
To give them seals never, my soul, consent !

Looking upon the dramatic imitation of his own guilty deed had a two-fold effect upon the king. It showed him that Hamlet suspected him, and that determined him to get Hamlet out of the country as quickly as possible. He summoned Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, and told them : —

I your commission will forthwith despatch,
And he to England shall along with you.
The terms of our estate may not endure
Hazard so near us as doth hourly grow
Out of his lunacies.
Arm you, I pray you, to this speedy voyage ;

[1] shamed, reproached.

For we will fetters put upon this fear,
Which now goes too free-footed.

The sight had also aroused his conscience to remorse. Alone, in his own chamber, he tried to pray, but he knew that he could not make a sincere prayer, as long as he continued to live falsely. He realized that, to obtain forgiveness of Heaven, he must confess openly, and give up the fruits of his crime. In agony of spirit, he moaned: —

O, my offence is rank, it smells to heaven;
It hath the primal eldest curse upon't,
A brother's murther! What if this cursed hand
Were thicker than itself with brother's blood,
Is there not rain enough in the sweet heavens
To wash it white as snow?
But, O, what form of prayer
Can serve my turn? "Forgive me my foul murther?"
That cannot be; since I am still possessed
Of those effects for which I did the murther,
My crown, mine own ambition, and my queen.
May one be pardoned and retain the offence?
In the corrupted currents of this world
Offence's gilded hand may shove by justice,
And oft 'tis seen the wicked prize itself
Buys out the law; but 'tis not so above:
There is no shuffling, there the action lies
In his true nature, and we ourselves compelled
Even to the teeth and forehead of our faults
To give in evidence. What then? what rests?[1]
Try what repentance can: what can it not?
Yet what can it when one cannot repent?

[1] remains.

Falling upon his knees, Claudius endeavored to frame a petition, but he was honest enough to acknowledge that words without heart-repentance are vain, so he arose, unrepentant still, and confessed: —

> My words fly up, my thoughts remain below;
> Words without thoughts never to heaven go.

In the meantime, Hamlet went to his mother. At first, she reproached him for having offended his father, as she called Claudius. But when Hamlet sharply retorted, telling her that she had much offended his own father, and compelled her to be seated while he should show her her real self, the queen was alarmed, and called for help. Whereupon, Polonius, who was listening behind the arras,[1] shouted: —

> What, ho! help, help, help!

Hamlet thought that it was the king calling, and in his rage he thrust his sword through the tapestry, mortally wounding the prying lord chamberlain. The horrified queen exclaimed: —

> O, what a rash and bloody deed is this!
> HAMLET. A bloody deed! almost as bad, good mother,
> As kill a king, and marry with his brother.
> QUEEN. As kill a king!
> HAMLET. Ay, lady, 'twas my word. —
> Leave wringing of your hands: peace! sit you down,
> And let me wring your heart; for so I shall,
> If it be made of penetrable stuff.
> QUEEN. What have I done, that thou darest wag thy tongue
> In noise so rude against me?

[1] tapestry hangings.

HAMLET. Such an act
That blurs the grace and blush of modesty,
Calls virtue hypocrite, takes off the rose
From the fair forehead of an innocent love
And sets a blister there, makes marriage-vows
As false as dicers' oaths.

Then, in order to compel his mother to feel how basely she had stooped through unfaithfulness to her marriage-vows with his father, Hamlet showed her pictures of both her husbands, while with scorching words, he compared the two:—

Look here, upon this picture, and on this,
The counterfeit presentment of two brothers.
See, what a grace was seated on this brow:
Hyperion's curls; the front of Jove himself;
An eye like Mars, to threaten and command;
A station like the herald Mercury
New-lighted on a heaven-kissing hill;
A combination and a form indeed,
Where every god did seem to set his seal,
To give the world assurance of a man.
This was your husband. Look you now, what follows:
Here is your husband; like a mildewed ear,
Blasting his wholesome brother. Have you eyes?
You cannot call it love, for at your age
The hey-day in the blood is tame, it's humble,
And waits upon the judgment; and what judgment
Would step from this to this? Sense, sure, you have,
Else could you not have motion; but sure, that sense
Is apoplexed.
QUEEN. O Hamlet, speak no more;
Thou turn'st mine eyes into my very soul,

And there I see such black and grained spots
As will not leave their tinct.
HAMLET. A murtherer and a villain;
A slave that is not the twentieth part the tithe
Of your precedent lord; a vice of kings;
A cutpurse of the empire and the rule,
That from the shelf the precious diadem stole,
And put it in his pocket!
QUEEN. O, speak to me no more;
These words like daggers enter in mine ears:
No more, sweet Hamlet!

There is no telling how far Hamlet's passion of righteous wrath might have carried him, had he not been arrested at this moment by a vision of his father's spirit, who seemed to chide him for his delay in executing vengeance upon his murderer, and also to remind him of his promise not to lift his hand against his mother.

Queen Gertrude, seeing Hamlet bending his eye upon vacancy, and hearing him speak to some one, while she saw nothing, attributed this strange conduct to madness. She asked Hamlet: —

To whom do you speak?
HAMLET. Do you see nothing there?
QUEEN. Nothing at all; yet all that is I see.
HAMLET. Nor did you nothing hear?
QUEEN. No, nothing but ourselves.
HAMLET. Why, look you there! look, how it steals away!
My father, in his habit as he lived!
Look where he goes, even now, out at the portal!
QUEEN. This is the very coinage of your brain.

This bodiless creation ecstasy[1]
Is very cunning in.

But Hamlet would not allow himself to be diverted from his purpose, that of bringing his mother to see her sin, and to repent of her wrong-doing. He replied:—

It is not madness
That I have uttered; bring me to the test,
And I the matter will re-word, which madness
Would gambol from. Mother, for love of grace,
Lay not that flattering unction to your soul,
That not your trespass but my madness speaks.
It will but skin and film the ulcerous place,
Whilst rank corruption, mining all within.
Infects unseen. Confess yourself to heaven;
Repent what's past, avoid what is to come.
QUEEN. O Hamlet, thou hast cleft my heart in twain.
HAMLET. O, throw away the worser part of it,
And live the purer with the other half.

After charging his mother not to reveal what he had said to her, and telling her that he knew that the king had made arrangements to send him to England, Hamlet expressed his sorrow for the unintentional killing of Polonius, saying:—

For this same lord,
I do repent; but Heaven hath pleased it so,
To punish me with this, and this with me,—

by which he meant that, if he had acted earlier and avenged his father's murder, he should not have stained his hands with the blood of an innocent man.

[1] madness, insanity.

When the queen told Claudius of Hamlet's rash act, he was almost beside himself with fear and perplexity. He feared for the result to himself when the death of Polonius should become known; but he did not dare to accuse Hamlet openly, both because he felt that that might mean danger to himself, and because, as he told Rosencrantz and Guildenstern: —

> He's loved of the distracted multitude,
> Who like not in their judgment, but their eyes;
> And where 'tis so, the offender's scourge is weighed,
> But never the offence.

But he told Hamlet with a pretence of kindness, —

> Hamlet, this deed, for thine especial safety,—
> Must send thee hence
> With fiery quickness; therefore prepare thyself.
> The bark is ready, and the wind at help,
> The associates tend,[1] and everything is bent
> For England.

Knowing how his uncle feared and hated him, Hamlet suspected treachery; and opportunity offering while Rosencrantz and Guildenstern, whom Claudius had commissioned to guard him, were asleep, he broke the seal of their commission, and read therein the confirmation of his suspicions. His false uncle charged the king of England, if he desired to keep the peace between Denmark and England unbroken, to have Hamlet put to death immediately upon his landing in England. England had suffered greatly from the Danish sword,

[1] wait.

and Claudius felt certain of compliance with his demands.

Hamlet did not replace this commission, but substituted another written by himself, in which he put the names of his treacherous companions where his own had been, and charged the king of England: —

> That, on the view and knowing of these contents,
> Without debatement further, more or less,
> He should the bearers put to sudden death.

Thus we see that, by not obeying the command of the ghost and of his own conscience, to punish the wicked deed of Claudius, Hamlet had allowed himself to become entangled in a net of villany.

In those old days, sea-voyaging was a dangerous business on account of pirate vessels that infested the seas. It was the fortune of the ship in which Hamlet sailed to fall in with such a craft, and the prince was taken prisoner and held for ransom. As soon as he landed in Denmark, Hamlet wrote to Horatio, saying: —

Ere we were two days old at sea, a pirate of very warlike appointment gave us chase. Finding ourselves too slow of sail, we put on a compelled valor; in the grapple I boarded them: on the instant they got clear of our ship; so I alone became their prisoner. They have dealt with me like thieves of mercy: but they knew what they did; I am to do a good turn for them. Let the king have the letters I have sent; and repair thou to me with as much speed as thou wouldst fly death. I have words to speak in thine ear will make thee dumb; yet are they much too light for the bore of the matter. Rosencrantz and Guild-

enstern hold their course for England; of them I have much to tell thee. Farewell. He that thou knowest thine, HAMLET.

When Hamlet's letter announcing his unexpected return was put into the hand of the king he was in the midst of a stormy interview with Laertes, son of Polonius, who had returned in hot haste from France to avenge the murder of his father. Claudius had taken counsel of his fears rather than his judgment, and had had Polonius buried without any of the ceremonial rites which were properly due to a high public official. This strange procedure increased the popular dislike and distrust of the king, and caused Laertes to hold Claudius responsible for his father's death. The people were also greatly excited over the sudden sending away of Hamlet, and when Laertes arrived, they broke out into open revolt, crying: —

> Choose we; Laertes shall be king!
> Laertes shall be king, Laertes king!

They followed Laertes even to the door of the king's apartment.

Claudius, knowing that he could prove that he was not the murderer of Polonius, met the wrathful Laertes with calm dignity. He quieted the fears of Gertrude by telling her: —

> There's such divinity doth hedge a king
> That treason can but peep to what it would,
> Acts little of his will.

Then he told Laertes that it was Hamlet, not himself, whom he must hold guilty of his father's murder, and he

declared that Hamlet had sought to take his life also. Laertes, who could not understand why Claudius had not proceeded openly against Hamlet, asked: —

> — but tell me
> Why you proceeded not against these feats,
> So crimeful and so capital in nature,
> As by your safety, wisdom, all things else,
> You mainly were stirred up.
> KING. O, for two special reasons,
> Which may to you perhaps seem much unsinewed,
> But yet to me they are strong. The queen his mother
> Lives almost by his looks; and for myself —
> My virtue or my plague, be it either which —
> She's so conjunctive to my life and soul,
> That, as the star moves not but in his sphere,
> I could not but by her. The other motive,
> Why to a public count I might not go,
> Is the great love the general gender[1] bear him;
> Who, dipping all his faults in their affection,
> Would, like the spring that turneth wood to stone,
> Convert his gyves to graces: so that my arrows
> Would have reverted to my bow again,
> And not where I had aimed them.

When, therefore, Claudius read Hamlet's letter announcing his return to Denmark, he resolved to strike at Hamlet through Laertes. So he proposed to Laertes that he should challenge Hamlet to engage in a fencing match with him in the presence of the entire court. Under the guise of simple sport, however, the wicked king concealed a deadly purpose. He asked Laertes: —

[1] common people.

What would you undertake,
To show yourself your father's son in deed
More than in words.

LAERTES. To cut his throat i' the church.

KING. No place, indeed, should murther sanctuarize;
Revenge should have no bounds. But, good Laertes,
Will you do this, keep close within your chamber.
Hamlet returned shall know you are come home:
We'll put on those shall praise your excellence,
Bring you together, and wager on your heads.
He, being remiss,
Most generous and free from all contriving,
Will not peruse the foils; so that, with ease
Or with a little shuffling, you may choose
A sword unbated,[1] and in a pass of practice
Requite him for your father.

LAERTES. I will do't.

In thus praising Hamlet's generosity and honor, Claudius made his own villany seem darker by contrast. Laertes permitted himself to be drawn into the king's wicked plot, and even added to it by a piece of villany of his own, thus becoming a murderer instead of an avenger.

He told Claudius that he would dip the point of the sword which he would use in a deadly poison, so that the least scratch would produce death. To make the murder trebly sure, the king said that he would have a poisoned cup of wine ready to offer Hamlet when, as was customary, he should drink to refresh himself during a pause in the fencing. And to make the match

[1] The point not covered with a button, as was customary.

seem like ordinary sport, Claudius proposed to wager six Barbary horses on Hamlet's success.

This plotting was interrupted by the sudden entrance of Queen Gertrude, who brought the sad intelligence that Ophelia was drowned. The shock of her father's death, and that by the hand of Hamlet whom she still loved, but whose mysterious actions had grieved her sorely, had completely unbalanced her reason. On this day she had wandered through the grounds, until she came to an old willow, whose boughs she attempted to deck with flowers. The queen told Laertes: —

> There is a willow grows aslant a brook,
> That shows his hoar leaves in the glassy stream.
> There with fantastic garlands did she come
> Of crow-flowers, nettles, daisies, and long purples:
> There, on the pendent boughs her coronet weeds
> Clambering to hang, an envious sliver broke,
> When down her weedy trophies and herself
> Fell in the weeping brook. Her clothes spread wide,
> And, mermaid-like, a while they bore her up;
> Which time she chanted snatches of old tunes,
> As one incapable of her own distress,
> Or like a creature native and indued
> Unto that element: but long it could not be
> Till that her garments, heavy with their drink,
> Pulled the poor wretch from her melodious lay
> To muddy death.

Hamlet returned to court on the very day of Ophelia's burial, and he happened to be passing through the churchyard when the funeral procession entered the grounds. Imagine his grief and consternation when he

heard the queen say, as she strewed flowers upon the open grave: —

> Sweets to the sweet; farewell!
> I hoped thou shouldst have been my Hamlet's wife;
> I thought thy bride-bed to have decked, sweet maid,
> And not t' have strewed thy grave.

Laertes commanded: —

> Lay her i' the earth; —
> And from her fair and unpolluted flesh
> May violets spring!

Then, overcome by the sense of his heavy sorrows — his father murdered, and his beautiful sister crushed under the weight of undeserved suffering — he lost all control of himself, and leaped into the grave, crying: —

> O, treble woe
> Fall ten times treble on that cursed head
> Whose wicked deed thy most ingenious sense
> Deprived thee of! — Hold off the earth awhile,
> Till I have caught her once more in mine arms.
> Now pile your dust upon the quick[1] and dead,
> Till of this flat a mountain you have made
> To o'ertop old Pelion or the skyish head
> Of blue Olympus.

On hearing the outcries of Laertes, Hamlet forgot everything but his own love for Ophelia, and in a frenzy of passion he threw himself upon Laertes, exclaiming: —

> What is he whose grief
> Bears such an emphasis? whose phrase of sorrow

[1] alive.

Conjures the wandering stars, and makes them stand
Like wonder-wounded hearers? This is I,
Hamlet the Dane!
I loved Ophelia; forty thousand brothers
Could not, with all their quantity of love,
Make up my sum — What wilt thou do for her?
Be buried quick with her, and so will I;
And, if thou prate of mountains, let them throw
Millions of acres on us, till our ground,
Singeing his pate against the burning zone,
Make Ossa like a wart!

The two were parted with difficulty. As they left the ground, the king found an opportunity to whisper in the ear of Laertes, begging him to urge forward the encounter with Hamlet which they had planned.

When the king's messenger brought Hamlet the challenge, with the king's request that he would consent to fence with Laertes, he agreed to do so, although he felt some misgiving. To Horatio, who urged him to recall his consent, Hamlet said: —

We defy augury: there's a special providence in the fall of a sparrow. If it be now, 'tis not to come; if it be not to come, it will be now; if it be not now, yet it will come: the readiness is all.

Hamlet's sincerity impelled him to confess to Laertes how deeply he grieved for the unintentional wrong he had done in killing Polonius. So, in presence of the court, which had assembled to witness the fencing-match, he took the hand of Laertes, saying: —

Give me your pardon, sir: I've done you wrong;
But pardon't, as you are a gentleman.
This presence knows,
And you must needs have heard, how I am punished
With sore distraction. What I have done,
That might your nature, honor, and exception
Roughly awake, I here proclaim was madness.
Was't Hamlet wronged Laertes? Never Hamlet:
If Hamlet from himself be ta'en away,
And when he's not himself does wrong Laertes,
Then Hamlet does it not; Hamlet denies it.
Sir, in this audience,
Let my disclaiming from a purposed evil
Free me so far in your most generous thoughts,
That I have shot mine arrow o'er the house,
And hurt my brother.

LAERTES. I am satisfied in nature,
Whose motive, in this case, should stir me most
To my revenge; but in my terms of honor
I stand aloof, and will no reconcilement
Till by some elder masters of known honor
I have a voice and precedent of peace,
To keep my name ungored. But till that time,
I do receive your offered love like love,
And will not wrong it.

HAMLET. I embrace it freely,
And will this brother's wager frankly play. —
Give us the foils. — Come on.

In spite of his professions of friendliness, Laertes chose the weapon with the uncovered point, which had been dipped in the poison. At the end of the second round, the king offered Hamlet the poisoned cup, but he refused it. Then, before Claudius could prevent

her, Queen Gertrude drank the wine which had been intended for her son.

In the third round, Laertes made the fatal thrust, but Hamlet wounded him in turn with the same weapon, which, in the scuffle, he had wrenched from Laertes' hand. The next moment the queen fell, calling out that she was poisoned. Laertes now, when it was too late, repented of his own treachery, and confessed to Hamlet: —

> Hamlet, thou art slain;
> No medicine in the world can do thee good,
> In thee there is not half an hour of life:
> The treacherous instrument is in thy hand,
> Unbated and envenomed. The foul practice
> Hath turned itself on me; lo, here I lie,
> Never to rise again. Thy mother's poisoned;
> I can no more, — the king — the king's to blame.
> HAMLET. The point envenomed too! —
> Then, venom, to thy work!

With these words, Hamlet stabbed the royal villain, thus avenging all the wrongs done to his house by the false Claudius, but too late for his own peace and life.

Hamlet's last words were spoken to the faithful Horatio, whom he besought to report his cause aright to the world. As his voice sank into silence, Horatio said tenderly: —

> Now cracks a noble heart. — Good night, sweet prince,
> And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest!

MACBETH

MACBETH

Among the early kings of Scotland was Duncan, a man so gentle and unwarlike that he was hardly fitted to reign in an age when wars were frequent, and when the kings were expected to lead their armies in battle. King Duncan had a cousin named Macbeth, who possessed all the valor and skill in generalship that were lacking in Duncan. So when a rebellion broke out in the country, Macbeth, together with Banquo, another able general, led the king's forces against the rebels. In a very short time, Macbeth had slain the leader of the rebellious troops, and, in the bloody fashion of those times, had cut off his head and fastened it upon the battlements of a castle.

No sooner had this victory been gained, however, than a second traitor, the Thane of Cawdor, assisted by the king of Norway, attacked Macbeth and Banquo. In the battle which followed, the Scottish generals were again victorious, and the Norwegian king asked for terms of peace. His request was granted, but Duncan ordered that the Thane of Cawdor should be put to death, and that his title should be given to the valorous Macbeth, saying: —

> What he hath lost, noble Macbeth hath won.

On their way to the court, after the close of the war, Macbeth and Banquo had occasion to pass over a dreary heath. Suddenly they discovered three wild-looking women in their path, whereupon Banquo exclaimed: —

> What are these
> So withered, and so wild in their attire,
> That look not like the inhabitants o' the earth,
> And yet are on't? Live you? or are you aught
> That man may question? You seem to understand me,
> By each at once her choppy finger laying
> Upon her skinny lips: you should be women,
> And yet your beards forbid me to interpret
> That you are so.
>
> MACBETH. Speak, if you can: what are you?
>
> FIRST WITCH. All hail, Macbeth! hail to thee, Thane of Glamis!
>
> SECOND WITCH. All hail, Macbeth! hail to thee, Thane of Cawdor!
>
> THIRD WITCH. All hail, Macbeth, that shalt be king hereafter!

The title given him by the first witch Macbeth had already received by inheritance, and he probably expected that the king would reward his conquest of the Thane of Cawdor by giving him the lands and the title of that traitor, but the greeting of the third witch startled him. He was ambitious, and very likely he felt that his strength and valor made him more fit to rule than his unwarlike cousin, and the witch's words awoke strange thoughts in his breast. While he was meditating upon this, Banquo, who wanted the weird

sisters to prophesy some good fortune for him also, said to them: —

> My noble partner
> You greet with present grace and great prediction
> Of noble having and of royal hope,
> That he seems rapt withal: to me you speak not.
> If you can look into the seeds of time,
> And say which grain will grow and which will not,
> Speak then to me, who neither beg nor fear
> Your favors nor your hate.

In response to this request, the sisters told Banquo that, although he should not become king himself, he should be the father of kings.

As the two generals continued their journey, they were met by the messenger whom Duncan had sent to inform Macbeth that he had made him Thane of Cawdor. This speedy confirmation of his own hopes and of the witches' predictions so excited Macbeth that he forgot everything but his own ambition to become king, and he fell into a fit of abstraction, saying to himself: —

> Two truths are told,
> As happy prologues to the swelling act
> Of the imperial theme. — I am Thane of Cawdor:
> . . . Why do I yield to that suggestion
> Whose horrid image doth unfix my hair,
> And make my seated heart knock at my ribs,
> Against the use of nature? Present fears
> Are less than horrible imaginings:
> My thought, whose murder yet is but fantastical,[1]

[1] imaginary.

Shakes so my single state of man, that function
Is smothered in surmise, and nothing is
But what is not.
If chance will have me king, why, chance may crown me,
Without my stir.

Banquo recalls Macbeth to a realization of the presence of others, and they proceed, after agreeing to talk over what has happened at another time.

In those early times, a king was not always succeeded by his son. Sometimes the king himself named his own successor; sometimes the great lords chose the new ruler. It was natural for Macbeth to think that, if he showed his fitness to rule by conquering the enemies of the nation, either Duncan himself, or the lords, would choose him as the next king. But after he arrived at court, and had received the thanks of Duncan for the great service he had done the state in his successful conduct of the war, he was bitterly disappointed in his hopes by hearing the king, in the presence of all the nobles, declare that his oldest son, Malcolm, should be his successor on the throne of Scotland.

DUNCAN. Sons, kinsmen, thanes,
And you whose places are the nearest, know
We will establish our estate upon
Our eldest, Malcolm, whom we name hereafter
The Prince of Cumberland.

This unexpected announcement gave Macbeth such a shock that he said to himself in an undertone: —

The Prince of Cumberland! that is a step
On which I must fall down, or else o'erleap,
For in my way it lies. Stars, hide your fires,
Let not light see my black and deep desires:
The eye wink at the hand; yet let that be,
Which the eye fears, when it is done, to see.

After his meeting with the witches, Macbeth had written a letter to his wife acquainting her with what they had prophesied, and closing with these words:—

This have I thought good to deliver thee, my dearest partner of greatness, that thou mightst not lose the dues of rejoicing, by being ignorant of what greatness is promised thee. Lay it to thy heart, and farewell.

Now Lady Macbeth was also very ambitious, and she longed to see her husband on the throne of Scotland: but she knew him better than he knew himself; she knew that he had no conscientious scruples against using any means to accomplish his end, but that he feared the consequences of detection. She herself was very resolute, and she determined to quench all tender womanly impulses, and to call up an iron resolution in support of her husband's ambition.

While she was still meditating upon her resolve, a messenger arrived, who told her that King Duncan and his train were coming to spend the night at Macbeth's castle. He was followed almost immediately by Macbeth himself, who confirmed the report of Duncan's coming. At once, in the minds of both, guilty thoughts arose—thoughts which they hardly dared to breathe

even to each other. But they greeted the king with smiles and words of welcome, and he, having no suspicion of any evil intended toward himself, admired the beauty of the castle and the surrounding country, and said of Macbeth: —

—we love him highly,
And shall continue our graces towards him.

The ungrateful Macbeth, however, left the king s presence, and fell to musing upon Duncan's goodness and his own evil desire. He tried, in vain, to think of some act of cruelty on the part of Duncan. The fact that the king was his guest made the crime which he was meditating seem still greater; but he refused to obey the voice of his conscience which told him: —

—this Duncan
Hath borne his faculties so meek, hath been
So clear in his great office, that his virtues
Will plead like angels, trumpet-tongued, against
The deep damnation of his taking-off.
I have no spur
To prick the sides of my intent, but only
Vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself
And falls on the other side.

It may be that Macbeth would have given up his wicked purpose, if Lady Macbeth had not entered at that moment. She chided him harshly for what she called his weakness in saying: —

We will proceed no further in this business:
He hath honored me of late; and I have bought
Golden opinions from all sorts of people,

Which would be worn now in their newest gloss,
Not cast aside so soon.

LADY MACBETH. Art thou afeard
To be the same in thine own act and valor
As thou art in desire? Wouldst thou have that
Which thou esteem'st the ornament of life,
And live a coward in thine own esteem,
Letting "I dare not" wait upon "I would,"
Like the poor cat i' the adage?

MACBETH. Prithee, peace:
I dare do all that may become a man;
Who dares do more is none.

LADY MACBETH. What beast was't, then,
That made you break this enterprise to me?
When you durst do it, then you were a man;
And, to be more than what you were, you would
Be so much more the man. Nor time nor place
Did then adhere, and yet you would make both:
They have made themselves, and that their fitness now
Does unmake you.

MACBETH. If we should fail, —

LADY MACBETH. We fail.
But screw your courage to the sticking place,
And we'll not fail.

Thereupon, Lady Macbeth unfolded her plan, which was to wait until Duncan should be asleep, and then to make his attendants drunk, so that, while the king was unguarded, they could do their will upon him; and by smearing the drunken officers with blood, they could make these men appear to be the murderers.

Thus urged on by his wife, Macbeth resolved to carry out his guilty purpose. Night came, and when

all the inmates of the castle were sleeping, Lady Macbeth stole into Duncan's chamber and laid the daggers ready for Macbeth's hand. She would have murdered the king herself, had he not looked so much like her father in his sleep that even her hard heart failed her. She was to ring a bell when all was ready, and while Macbeth waited for the signal, he seemed to see a vision of his coming deed. So horrified was he that he spoke: —

MACBETH. Is this a dagger which I see before me,
The handle toward my hand? Come, let me clutch thee
I have thee not, and yet I see thee still.
Art thou not, fatal vision, sensible
To feeling as to sight? or art thou but
A dagger of the mind, a false creation,
Proceeding from the heat-oppresséd brain?
I see thee yet, in form as palpable
As this which now I draw.
Thou marshall'st me the way that I was going;
And such an instrument I was to use.
Mine eyes are made the fools o' the other senses,
Or else worth all the rest; I see thee still,
And on thy blade and dudgeon[1] gouts of blood,
Which was not so before. There's no such thing:
It is the bloody business which informs
Thus to mine eyes. . . . Thou sure and firm-set earth,
Hear not my steps, which way they walk, for fear
The very stones prate of my whereabout,
And take the present horror from the time,
Which now suits with it. Whiles I threat, he lives:
Words to the heat of deeds too cold breath gives.

[1] handle, hilt.

I go, and it is done: the bell invites me.
Hear it not, Duncan; for it is a knell
That summons thee to heaven or to hell.

The moment the deed was done, Macbeth was overwhelmed with the horror of his guilt, and he hurried to the room where Lady Macbeth was waiting. As he passed the open door of the rooms where some of the royal party were lying, he seemed to hear the cry of "Murder!" and listening, he heard a prayer recited. When the speaker said "God bless us," he longed to say "Amen," but the word stuck in his throat. His wild manner in recounting this so alarmed Lady Macbeth that she told him —

These deeds must not be thought
After these ways; so, it will make us mad.
MACBETH. Methought I heard a voice cry "Sleep no more!
Macbeth does murder sleep," the innocent sleep,
Sleep that knits up the ravelled sleeve of care,
The death of each day's life, sore labor's bath,
Balm of hurt minds, great nature's second course,
Chief nourisher in life's feast, —
LADY MACBETH. What do you mean?
MACBETH. Still it cried "Sleep no more!" to all the house:
"Glamis hath murdered sleep, and therefore Cawdor
Shall sleep no more: Macbeth shall sleep no more."
LADY MACBETH. Who was it that thus cried? Why, worthy thane,
You do unbend your noble strength, to think
So brainsickly of things. Go get some water,
And wash this filthy witness from your hand.

Why did you bring these daggers from the place?
They must lie there: go carry them, and smear
The sleepy grooms with blood.

MACBETH. I'll go no more:
I am afraid to think what I have done;
Look on't again I dare not.

LADY MACBETH. Infirm of purpose!
Give me the daggers: the sleeping and the dead
Are but as pictures: 'tis the eye of childhood
That fears a painted devil. If he do bleed,
I'll gild the faces of the grooms withal,
For it must seem their guilt.

With Lady Macbeth to think was to act. Taking the bloody daggers, she went quickly to the chamber where lay the murdered Duncan, laid the daggers beside the unconscious grooms, after smearing their faces with blood, and as quickly returned to her husband, to whom she scornfully said: —

My hands are of your color; but I scorn
To wear a heart so white. — I hear a knocking
At the south entry: retire we to our chamber:
A little water clears us of this deed:
How easy is it, then!
Hark! more knocking.
Get on your nightgown, lest occasion call us,
And show us to be watchers.

While the two guilty ones were trying to rid themselves of the marks of their murderous deed, morning had come, but not daylight. For a fearful storm which had made the night unruly, blowing down chimneys and screaming, as it were, in the gale, still kept the sun's

rays hid. By the clock 'twas day, but the darkness of night still shrouded the earth.

The knocking which had disturbed the guilty pair announced the arrival of Lennox and Macduff, two powerful nobles who had come to the castle by appointment with the king. Macduff sought Duncan in his chamber, but immediately returned to report his awful discovery.

MACDUFF. O horror, horror, horror! Tongue nor heart
Cannot conceive nor name thee!
Confusion now hath made his masterpiece!
Most sacrilegious murder hath broke ope
The Lord's anointed temple, and stole thence
The life o' the building!
MACBETH. What is't you say? the life?
LENNOX. Mean you his majesty?
MACDUFF. Approach the chamber, and destroy your sight
With a new Gorgon: do not bid me speak;
See, and then speak yourselves.

Macbeth and Lennox hasten to the chamber, where Macbeth, in counterfeited wrath, slays the grooms in order to divert suspicion from himself. The alarum bell is rung to rouse the other inmates of the castle. With horror-stricken faces the nobles present consult as to how the murder of Duncan can be avenged. The two sons of Duncan, Malcolm and Donalbain, alarmed for their own safety, flee from the country. Malcolm feels that there must be treachery somewhere, and says to his brother: —

What will you do? Let's not consort with them:
To show an unfelt sorrow is an office

Which the false man does easy. I'll to England.
DONALBAIN. To Ireland I; our separated fortune
Shall keep us both the safer; where we are,
There's daggers in men's smiles: the near in blood,
The nearer bloody.
MALCOLM. This murderous shaft that's shot
Hath not yet lighted, and our safest way
Is to avoid the aim. Therefore to horse;
And let us not be dainty of leave-taking,
But shift away: there's warrant in that theft
Which steals itself when there's no mercy left.

From this conversation it is easy to see that the sons of the murdered king suspected who had committed the murder. Macbeth, on his part, took advantage of their flight to throw suspicion on them. As there was no one nearer in blood, and as Macbeth was generally regarded as the protector of Scotland, he was crowned king. Thus was the prophecy of the witches concerning Macbeth fulfilled. Since Banquo alone knew of the secret meeting with the weird sisters, is it any wonder that he should begin to query with himself as to whether their prediction might not be accomplished in his own case also? After Macbeth's coronation he thus communed with himself: —

Thou hast it now: king, Cawdor, Glamis, all,
As the weird sisters promised, and, I fear,
Thou play'dst most foully for't: yet it was said
It should not stand in thy posterity,
But that myself should be the root and father
Of many kings. If there come truth from them —
As upon thee, Macbeth, their speeches shine —

Why, by the verities on thee made good,
May they not be my oracles as well,
And set me up in hope? But hush! no more.

For a time, Macbeth ruled wisely and sought to promote the good of the kingdom; but his guilty conscience kept him in constant fear of detection. He became so suspicious that he bribed servants of the great nobles to watch their masters, and to report to him anything that indicated dislike or distrust of himself. Knowing what the witches had prophesied for Banquo, he was apprehensive lest Banquo should plot against him in order to open the way for seating a son of his own upon the throne. In his anxiety, he mused: —

Our fears in Banquo
Stick deep; and in his royalty of nature
Reigns that which would be feared: 'tis much he dares;
And, to that dauntless temper of his mind,
He hath a wisdom that doth guide his valor
To act in safety. There is none but he
Whose being I do fear. He chid the sisters
When first they put the name of king upon me,
And bade them speak to him: then prophet-like
They hailed him father to a line of kings:
Upon my head they placed a fruitless crown,
And put a barren sceptre in my gripe,
Thence to be wrenched with an unlineal hand,
No son of mine succeeding. If't be so,
For Banquo's issue have I filed[1] my mind;
For them the gracious Duncan have I murdered;
To make them kings, the seed of Banquo kings!

[1] defiled.

Having gained the throne by crime, Macbeth did not hesitate to use further violence to make himself, as he thought, secure. In his blindness he believed that: —

> Things bad begun make strong themselves by ill.

In order to rid himself of the fear of Banquo, he hired some desperate men to kill him, having excited their hatred by falsely representing to them that Banquo had done them an injury. After telling them that Banquo was their enemy, he continued: —

> So is he mine; and though I could
> With barefaced power sweep him from my sight
> And bid my will avouch it, yet I must not,
> For certain friends that are both his and mine,
> Whose loves I may not drop, but wail his fall,
> Who I myself struck down: and thence it is,
> That I to your assistance do make love,
> Masking the business from the common eye
> For sundry weighty reasons.

Then Macbeth gives these hired murderers minute instructions how to proceed. They are to attack Banquo and his son after nightfall, as they are coming to the palace to attend a banquet which Macbeth is to give to the Scottish nobles.

Night comes: the guests are assembled, and Lady Macbeth entreats her husband to be gay and jovial; to conceal under smiles the trouble with which his spirits are oppressed. Macbeth makes a great effort to seem cordial and free from care. He tells his guests: —

You know your own degrees; sit down: at first
And last the hearty welcome.
Be large in mirth; anon we'll drink a measure
The table round.

Just as he is about to seat himself at the table, however, he is called out to receive the report of the assassins whom he had employed. They have killed Banquo, but his son Fleance has escaped under cover of the darkness.

Then comes my fit again! —

exclaims Macbeth, whose hope of preventing the fulfilment of the prophecy that sons of Banquo shall rule in Scotland, is baffled by the escape of Fleance.

Macbeth was so unnerved by the disappointing news that, as he moved toward the table, he seemed to himself to see the ghost of the murdered Banquo sitting in the chair which he was intending to occupy. Overcome with horror, he lost all sense of occasion and surroundings, and with wild words, challenged the ghostly visitant: —

Thou canst not say I did it: never shake
Thy gory locks at me.

He is recalled to himself by the sharp rebuke of Lady Macbeth: —

What, quite unmanned in folly?

Conscious that he must have betrayed what he would not that any one should know, he tries to apologize: —

Do not muse[1] at me, my most worthy friends;
I have a strange infirmity, which is nothing
To those that know me. Come, love and health to all;
Then I'll sit down. Give me some wine; fill full.
I drink to the general joy o' the whole table,
And to our dear friend Banquo, whom we miss:
Would he were here! to all and him, we thirst,
And all to all.

As Macbeth uttered the name of Banquo, the ghost of the murdered thane seemed again to rise before his horrified gaze; whereupon he cried: —

Avaunt! and quit my sight! let the earth hide thee!
Thy bones are marrowless, thy blood is cold;
Thou hast no speculation[1] in those eyes
Which thou dost glare with.
Hence, horrible shadow! Unreal mockery, hence!

Realizing that it was useless to attempt to go on with the banquet, Lady Macbeth hurriedly dismissed the guests, saying: —

I pray you, speak not; he grows worse and worse;
Question enrages him. At once, good night:
Stand not upon the order of your going,
But go at once.
LENNOX. Good night; and better health
Attend his majesty!
LADY MACBETH. A kind good night to all!

After this, Macbeth's conscience stung him so that he suspected many of the leading nobles of plotting against

[1] wonder. [2] sight.

him. His fears made him a cruel tyrant. Many were the men whom he put to death simply because he thought them unfriendly to his rule. So wickedly did he oppress the people that one of the lords said of Scotland: —

> Alas, poor country! It cannot
> Be called our mother, but our grave; where nothing,
> But who knows nothing, is once seen to smile;
> Where sighs and groans and shrieks that rend the air,
> Are made, not marked; where violent sorrow seems
> A modern ecstasy: the dead man's knell
> Is there scarce asked for who; and good men's lives
> Expire before the flowers in their caps,
> Dying or ere they sicken.

The man whom Macbeth feared and hated before all others was Macduff, for that noble had openly avowed his hatred of the tyrant. Finally, Macbeth's fears became so great that he resolved to seek the witches once more, to learn from them, if he might, who were his most dangerous enemies, and whether the son of Banquo should ever rule in Scotland.

The night that he chose for this errand was wild and stormy. He found the weird sisters dancing around a huge cauldron in which they were brewing evil charms. Into the horrid mixture they were throwing everything ugly, such as snakes and lizards and bats, teeth of wolves and scales of dragons, the entrails of sea-sharks and tigers, together with poisonous herbs; and all moistened with the blood of a baboon. As they danced, they sang: —

Double, double toil and trouble;
Fire burn, and cauldron bubble.

Unawed by the horrid sight and sounds, Macbeth demanded that the weird women should show him a vision of the future. Then they poured fresh blood into the boiling mixture, and through the steaming vapor Macbeth beheld an armed head rise. To his thought it seemed to say: —

> Macbeth! Macbeth! Macbeth! beware Macduff;
> Beware the thane of Fife.

As the apparition disappeared, Macbeth exclaimed, —

> Whate'er thou art, for thy good caution, thanks:
> Thou hast harped my fear aright.

And now appeared a second apparition, that of a bloody child, who charged Macbeth to —

> Be bloody, bold, and resolute; laugh to scorn
> The power of man, for none of woman born
> Shall harm Macbeth.
>
> MACBETH. Then live, Macduff: what need I fear of thee?
>
> But yet I'll make assurance double sure,
> And take a bond of fate: thou shalt not live;
> That I may tell pale-hearted fear it lies,
> And sleep in spite of thunder.

Even while Macbeth was defying fate, a third spirit in the form of a child carrying a tree in its hand, rose before his startled eyes. The child-king spoke thus: —

> Be lion-mettled, proud, and take no care
> Who chafes, who frets, or where conspirers are:

Macbeth shall never vanquished be until
Great Birnam wood to high Dunsinane hill
Shall come against him.

But still Macbeth was unsatisfied, for he longed to know whether, as had been foretold, the children of Banquo would succeed to the throne of Scotland. For answer to this question, a procession of eight shadow kings seemed to file before Macbeth's vision. Last of all came the ghost of Banquo, who pointed at the shadows, as if to claim them as his, by which sign Macbeth knew that all his crimes had failed to gain the end he sought, namely, to seat his own family securely on the throne.

The effect of these revelations was to cause Macbeth to pursue Macduff with increased hatred, and to rule more tyrannically than ever. His great fear was lest the Scottish people should revolt against him, and attempt to make Malcolm, the son of Duncan, king. It was whispered about among the nobles that —

The son of Duncan
Lives in the English court, and is received
Of the most pious Edward with such grace
That the malevolence of fortune nothing
Takes from his high respect: thither Macduff
Is gone to pray the holy king, upon his aid
To wake Northumberland and warlike Siward:
That, by the help of these — with Him above
To ratify the work — we may again
Give to our tables meat, sleep to our nights,
Free from our feasts and banquets bloody knives,

Do faithful homage and receive free honors:
All which we pine for now.

When the news that Macduff had fled to join Malcolm at the English court came to the ears of Macbeth, he resorted to the most awful means of vengeance. Since he could not lay hands upon Macduff himself, he had that noble's wife and children all put to death in their own castle home. This savage deed raised Macduff's hatred of the tyrant to a pitch of fury, and hastened the march of the army that was already preparing to move against Macbeth. Macduff longed to meet in battle the murderer of his helpless wife and innocent children. He prayed: —

Front to front
Bring thou this fiend of Scotland and myself;
Within my sword's length set him; if he 'scape,
Heaven forgive him too!

Malcolm and Macduff felt that they were instruments of God's justice, appointed to punish the wicked king. They set forth upon their march to Scotland believing that —

Macbeth is ripe for shaking, and the powers above
Put on their instruments.

In the midst of his preparations for war, Macbeth was called to mourn the loss of his broken-hearted wife whose love for him had made her a partner in the great crimes by whose means he had gained the crown. For months, remorse had so preyed upon her mind that she had lost her reason, and she would walk in her sleep,

moaning constantly, and trying to wash from her hands the traces of Duncan's blood, which she fancied were still there. But it was all in vain, and in her despair she cried: —

Here's the smell of the blood still: all the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand.

As vainly too did Macbeth, who was tenderly attached to his faithful wife, beg the doctor to cure her of the fancies that haunted her rest: —

MACBETH. Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased,
Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow,
Raze out the written troubles of the brain,
And with some sweet oblivious antidote
Cleanse the stuffed bosom of that perilous stuff
Which weighs upon the heart?
DOCTOR. Therein the patient
Must minister to himself.
MACBETH. Throw physic to the dogs; I'll none of it.

When, at length, death came to the relief of the frenzied queen, Macbeth was so hard-pressed by his enemies that he could give no time to grief. He could only say: —

Out, out, brief candle!
Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage,
And then is heard no more: it is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing.

To such a base view of life had a career of crime brought the once loved hero of Scotland.

There was no time to be lost, however, for the forces of Malcolm and Macduff were rapidly approaching the castle of Dunsinane wherein Macbeth had fortified himself. Nor could Macbeth count upon the support of the leaders of his own troops, some of whom were only waiting until the English soldiers should arrive to go over to the side of their country's deliverers. Their abhorrence of Macbeth's tyranny, and their eagerness to welcome Malcolm, appear as they talk together before the battle: —

> MENTEITH. The English power is near, led on by Malcolm,
> His uncle Siward and the good Macduff:
> Revenges burn in them; for their dear causes
> Would to the bleeding and the grim alarm
> Excite the mortified[1] man.
> ANGUS. Near Birnam wood
> Shall we well meet them; that way are they coming.
> MENTEITH. What does the tyrant?
> CAITHNESS. Great Dunsinane he strongly fortifies:
> Some say he's mad; others that lesser hate him
> Do call it valiant fury: but, for certain,
> He cannot buckle his distempered cause
> Within the belt of rule.
> ANGUS. Now does he feel
> His secret murders sticking on his hands;
> Now minutely revolts upbraid his faith-breach;
> Those he commands move only in command,
> Nothing in love: now does he feel his title
> Hang loose about him, like a giant's robe
> Upon a dwarfish thief.

[1] dead.

CAITHNESS. Well, march we on,
To give obedience where 'tis truly owed:
Meet we the medicine of the sickly weal,
And with him pour we in our country's purge
Each drop of us.
LENNOX. Or so much as it needs,
To dew the sovereign flower and drown the weeds.
Make we our march towards Birnam.

Although everything seemed to bode defeat to Macbeth, yet he felt that he bore a charmed life, for he still relied on the doubtful predictions of the witches. To those who sought to alarm him by reports of the great numbers of the enemy, he said: —

Bring me no more reports; let them fly all:
Till Birnam wood remove to Dunsinane,
I cannot taint with fear. What's the boy Malcolm?
Was he not born of woman? The spirits that know
All mortal consequences have pronounced me thus:
"Fear not, Macbeth; no man that's born of woman
Shall e'er have power upon thee." Then fly, false thanes,
And mingle with the English epicures:
The mind I sway by, and the heart I bear
Shall never sag with doubt nor shake with fear.

In spite of his bold speeches, however, Macbeth felt in his secret heart that the judgment of God was upon him, and that his was a ruined life. To himself he confessed: —

I have lived long enough: my way of life
Is fallen into the sear, the yellow leaf;
And that which should accompany old age,

As honor, love, obedience, troops of friends,
I must not look to have; but, in their stead,
Curses, not loud but deep, mouth-honor, breath,
Which the poor heart would fain deny, and dare not.

Nevertheless, his valor did not forsake him; he declared: —

I'll fight till from my bones my flesh be hacked.
Give me my armor.
I will not be afraid of death and bane,
Till Birnam forest come to Dunsinane.

The approach to the castle of Dunsinane led through Birnam wood, and, in order to make their numbers seem greater than they really were, Malcolm commanded his soldiers each to hew down a bough and carry it before him. The effect of this was to give the advancing army the appearance of a moving forest. At sight of this singular spectacle, a sentinel hastened to Macbeth and reported breathlessly: —

As I did stand my watch upon the hill,
I looked toward Birnam, and anon, methought,
The wood began to move.
MACBETH. If thou speak'st false,
Upon the next tree shalt thou hang alive,
Till famine cling[1] thee: if thy speech be sooth,[2]
I care not if thou dost for me as much.
I pull in resolution, and begin
To doubt the equivocation of the fiend
That lies like truth: "Fear not, till Birnam wood
Do come to Dunsinane:" and now a wood
Comes toward Dunsinane. Arm, arm, and out!

[1] shrivel. [2] truth.

If this which he avouches does appear,
There is no flying hence nor tarrying here.
I 'gin to be a-weary of the sun,
And wish the estate o' the world were now undone.
Ring the alarum-bell! Blow, wind! come, wrack!
At least we'll die with harness on our back.

Although conscience seemed almost dead in Macbeth, yet he dreaded to face the man who had such reason to desire his death. He said to Macduff who sought him out: —

Of all men else I have avoided thee:
But get thee back; my soul is too much charged
With blood of thine already.
MACDUFF. I have no words:
My voice is in my sword: thou bloodier villain
Than terms can give thee out!

Even yet Macbeth clung to the hope given him by the witches, and he told Macduff: —

Thou losest labor:
As easy mayst thou the intrenchant air
With thy keen sword impress as make me bleed:
Let fall thy blade on vulnerable crests;
I bear a charméd life, which must not yield
To one of woman born.

Macduff's reply took away the last shred of hope in the heart of Macbeth, for he told the wicked tyrant to despair of his charm, since he had been brought into the world by unnatural means. Then Macbeth exclaimed: —

Accursed be that tongue that tells me so,
For it hath cowed my better part of man!

And be these juggling fiends no more believed,
That palter[1] with us in a double sense;
That keep the word of promise to our ear,
And break it to our hope. I'll not fight with thee.

MACDUFF. Then yield thee, coward,
And live to be the show and gaze o' the time:
We'll have thee, as our rarer monsters are,
Painted upon a pole, and underwrit,
"Here you may see the tyrant."

MACBETH. I will not yield,
To kiss the ground before young Malcolm's feet,
And to be bated with the rabble's curse.
Though Birnam wood be come to Dunsinane,
And thou opposed, being of no woman born.
Yet I will try the last. Before my body
I throw my warlike shield. Lay on, Macduff,
And damned be him that first cries, "Hold, enough!"

In the fierce combat that followed, Macbeth was slain, thus paying the just penalty for his awful crimes. The nobility of Scotland, rejoiced at their deliverance from the tyrant's hateful rule, hailed Malcolm as their rightful king, and he was crowned at Scone, to the great joy of the Scottish people.

[1] trifle, play false.

THE WINTER'S TALE

THE WINTER'S TALE

It happened once upon a time that a poor Bohemian shepherd, while engaged in hunting wild animals, found a dear little baby girl lying upon the sea-shore. When the astonished shepherd took up the child, he saw that she was dressed in rich clothing, and that she wore costly jewels fastened about her neck. In the folds of her garments he found also a heavy purse filled with gold, and a paper on which was written, "Her name is Perdita,"—meaning the lost one.

A terrible storm was raging at the time, and the shepherd's son, who came up with his father at this moment, reported breathlessly that he had seen a vessel dashed to pieces upon the rocks, and that all the crew had drowned before he could do anything to save them. One of the ship's passengers had reached the shore, he said, only to be torn in pieces by a bear which the hunters were pursuing.

Shepherd. Would I had been by, to have helped the old man!

Son. I would you had been by the ship side, to have helped her.

Shepherd. Heavy matters! heavy matters! but look thee here, boy. Now bless thyself; thou mettest with things dying, I with things new-born. Here's a sight for thee; look thee

here; take up, take up, boy; open't. So, let's see. It was told me I should be rich by the fairies. What's within, boy?

SON. You're a made old man. Gold! all gold!

SHEPHERD. This is fairy gold, boy, and 'twill prove so; up with it, keep it close: home, home, the next way. We are lucky, boy; and to be so still, requires nothing but secrecy.

There was an old belief that fairies sometimes left one of their own offspring in exchange for a human child that they had stolen. The old shepherd thought that the baby Perdita was such a changeling, and that he should be prospered if he should bring her up as his own child. The two shepherds, father and son, wisely thought that to do a kind deed was a likely way to bring blessings upon themselves; so they tarried long enough to bury what was left of the poor gentleman who had been killed by the bear.

We, who are in the secret, may tell what these simple people could not know, — that the dead gentleman was Antigonus, a Sicilian lord, whose cruel act in exposing the innocent babe to the fury of the storm was done by command of the king of Sicily, father of the little Perdita.

It is hard to understand how a father could give such a wicked order, but it came about in this wise. Leontes, king of Sicily, and his beautiful queen, Hermione, were living happy in the love of their subjects, and rejoicing in the possession of a fine little son, Prince Mamillius, who was a boy of great promise.

In his youth Leontes had become greatly attached to one of his princely mates who had, in his manhood,

ascended the throne of Bohemia. In the many years since they had been separated the two royal friends had lost none of their affection for each other, and had often exchanged gifts in token of their love.

At length, Polixenes, the Bohemian ruler, came to visit Leontes, and he was entertained with a magnificence rare even for a king. So much did Leontes enjoy the society of his friend that when, after a stay of nine months at the Sicilian court, Polixenes announced his intention of returning to his own country, Leontes entreated him to prolong his visit, at least one week more. Polixenes replied: —

> Nine changes of the watery star hath been
> The shepherd's note since we have left our throne
> Without a burthen: time as long again
> Would be filled up, my brother, with our thanks;
> And yet we should, for perpetuity,
> Go hence in debt: and, therefore, like a cipher,
> Yet standing in rich place, I multiply
> With one "We thank you" many thousands more
> That go before it.
>
> LEONTES. Stay your thanks awhile;
> And pay them when you part.[1]
>
> POLIXENES. Sir, that's to-morrow.
> I am questioned by my fears, of what may chance
> Or breed upon our absence. — Besides, I have stayed
> To tire your royalty.
>
> LEONTES. One seven-night longer.
>
> POLIXENES. Press me not, beseech you, so.
> There is no tongue that moves, none, none i' the world
> So soon as yours, could win me; so it should now,

[1] depart.

Were there necessity in your request, although
'Twere needful I denied it. My affairs
Do even drag me homeward. Farewell, our brother.

Seeing that Polixenes was bent upon immediate departure, Leontes asked Queen Hermione to add her entreaties to his. Hermione urged heartily: —

I had thought, sir, to have held my peace until
You had drawn oaths from him not to stay. You, sir,
Charge him too coldly. Tell him, you are sure
All in Bohemia's well; this satisfaction
The bygone day proclaimed.
LEONTES. Well said, Hermione.
HERMIONE. To tell, he longs to see his son, were strong:
But let him say so then, and let him go;
But let him swear so, and he shall not stay,
We'll thwack him hence with distaffs. —
Yet of your royal presence I'll adventure
The borrow of a week. When at Bohemia
You take my lord, I'll give him my commission
To let him there a month behind the gest[1]
Prefixed for's parting. — You'll stay?
POLIXENES. No, madam.
HERMIONE. Nay, but you will?
POLIXENES. I may not, verily.
HERMIONE. Verily,
You shall not go; a lady's "Verily" is
As potent as a lord's. Will you go yet?
Force me to keep you as a prisoner,
Not like a guest. How say you?
My prisoner? or my guest? by your dread "Verily,"
One of them you shall be.

[1] limit.

POLIXENES. Your guest, then, madam:
To be your prisoner should import offending:
Which is for me less easy to commit
Than you to punish.
HERMIONE. Not your gaoler, then,
But your kind hostess. Come, I'll question you
Of my lord's tricks and yours when you were boys;
You were pretty lordings then?
POLIXENES. We were, fair queen,
Two lads that thought there was no more behind
But such a day to-morrow as to-day,
And to be boy eternal.
HERMIONE. Was not my lord
The verier wag o' the two?
POLIXENES. We were as twinned lambs that did frisk i' the sun,
And bleat the one at the other. What we changed
Was innocence for innocence; we knew not
The doctrine of ill-doing, nor dreamed
That any did.
Temptations have since been born to us.
LEONTES. Is he won yet?
HERMIONE. He'll stay, my lord.
LEONTES. At my request he would not.
Hermione, my dearest, thou never spok'st
To better purpose.

As he watched the pleasant by-play between Hermione and Polixenes, a sudden jealous anger smote the heart of Leontes. Because Polixenes had resisted his entreaties, and had consented to prolong his stay at the request of Hermione, Leontes falsely imagined that his friend had won the love of Hermione from himself. In a moment, he became so inflamed with jealousy that all his love

and friendship were turned into hatred. The friendly attention which Hermione bestowed upon Polixenes, because she thought that in so doing she was giving her husband pleasure, Leontes, blinded with jealousy, misinterpreted as tokens of unlawful love.

The jealous king even went so far as to communicate his unjust suspicions to Camillo, one of his trusted attendant lords. Camillo resented the cruel insinuations against the queen's honor, saying: —

> Good my lord, be cured
> Of this diseased opinion, and betimes;
> For 'tis most dangerous.

Nothing that Camillo could say, however, would induce Leontes to put by his evil suspicions. During the visit of Polixenes, Camillo had been his cup-bearer at table, and now Leontes went so far as to hint that it would please him were Camillo to pour some poisonous liquid into the cup when he should next offer it to Polixenes.

> LEONTES. Thou,
> His cup-bearer mightst bespice a cup,
> To give mine enemy a lasting wink;
> Which draught to me were cordial.
> CAMILLO. Sir, my lord,
> I could do this, and that with no rash potion,
> But with a lingering dram that should not work
> Maliciously like poison; but I cannot
> Believe this crack to be in my dread mistress,
> So sovereignly being honorable.
> LEONTES. Dost think I am so muddy, so unsettled,

To appoint myself in this vexation, —
Give scandal to the blood o' the prince my son,
Without ripe moving to't? Would I do this?
CAMILLO. I must believe you, sir:
I do; and will fetch off Bohemia for't:
Provided that, when he's removed, your highness
Will take again your queen as yours at first,
Even for your son's sake.
LEONTES. Thou dost advise me
Even so as I mine own course have set down:
I'll give no blemish to her honor, none.
CAMILLO. My lord,
Go then; and with a countenance as clear
As friendship wears at feasts, keep with Bohemia
And with your queen. I am his cup-bearer;
If from me he have wholesome beverage,
Account me not your servant.

Camillo gave this promise only in order to gain time for devising a plan whereby he might save the life of Polixenes. When Leontes left him, he murmured in his distress of mind: —

O miserable lady! — But, for me,
What case stand I in? I must be the poisoner
Of good Polixenes. — To do this deed,
Promotion follows. If I could find example
Of thousands that had struck anointed kings
And flourished after, I'd not do it; but since
Nor brass nor stone nor parchment bears not one,
Let villany itself forswear it. I must
Forsake the court.

At this moment, Polixenes enters. He is greatly astonished because Leontes, whom he has just met, has

frowned upon him, and refused to answer his words of friendly courtesy. He begs Camillo to tell him what can have caused such a sudden change. Whereupon Camillo replies: —

There is a sickness
Which puts some of us in distemper, but
I cannot name the disease; and it is caught
Of you that are well.

POLIXENES. How! caught of me!
I beseech you,
If you know aught which does behove my knowledge
Thereof to be informed, imprison't not
In ignorant concealment.

CAMILLO. I may not answer.

POLIXENES. A sickness caught of me, and yet I well!
I must be answered. Dost thou hear, Camillo,
I conjure thee, by all the parts of man
Which honor does acknowledge, — that thou declare
What incidency[1] thou dost guess of harm
Is creeping toward me; how far off, how near;
Which way to be prevented, if to be;
If not, how best to bear it.

CAMILLO. I am appointed him to murther you.

POLIXENES. By whom, Camillo?

CAMILLO. By the king.

POLIXENES. For what?

CAMILLO. He thinks, nay with all confidence he swears,
That you have touched his queen forbiddenly.

POLIXENES. How should this grow?

CAMILLO. I know not; but I am sure 'tis safer to
Avoid what's grown than question how 'tis born.

[1] liability to happen.

The good Camillo then unfolded a plan that he had formed, which was that Polixenes should steal away secretly that night. His followers should be quietly informed of the danger, and should be let out of the city by different gates, of which Camillo himself held the keys. To escape the vengeance which Leontes would certainly inflict when he should discover that Camillo had thwarted his wicked design, it was necessary for Camillo to accompany Polixenes to Bohemia. The grateful Polixenes urged him: —

> Give me thy hand;
> Be pilot to me, and thy places shall
> Still neighbor mine. My ships are ready, and
> My people did expect my hence departure
> Two days ago. This jealousy
> Is for a precious creature; as she's rare,
> Must it be great, and as his person's mighty,
> Must it be violent. Fear o'ershades me;
> Good expedition be my friend, and comfort
> The gracious queen, part of his theme, but nothing
> Of his ill-ta'en suspicion! — Come, Camillo;
> I will respect thee as a father, if
> Thou bear'st my life off hence: let us avoid.
> CAMILLO. It is in mine authority to command
> The keys of all the posterns; please your highness
> To take the urgent hour. Come, sir, away.

The flight of Polixenes and Camillo added fuel to the fire of Leontes' jealous rage. He chose to regard this sudden departure as a confession of guilt on the part of Polixenes. Thereupon he publicly accused Hermione

of unfaithfulness, and ordered that she be cast into prison.

The Sicilian lords, one and all, so trusted and honored the wronged queen that they braved the anger of the king by proclaiming their faith in Hermione's purity. Said one: —

> For her, my lord,
> I dare my life lay down, and will do't, sir.
> Please you to accept it, that the queen is spotless
> In this which you accuse her.
> LEONTES. Hold your peace.
> LORD. More it would content me
> To have her honor true than your suspicion,
> Be blamed for't how you might.

In order to satisfy others, as well as himself, Leontes despatched two lords to the shrine of the Grecian Apollo at Delphi, to obtain the judgment of the god concerning the guilt or innocence of the queen. During their absence, Hermione remained shut up in prison, where, one day, a daughter was born to her.

This circumstance still further excited the indignation of the Sicilian lords and ladies, who were devoted to the sweet queen. One of the court ladies, Paulina, the wife of Antigonus, hoping to awaken the pity of the king for his suffering wife, took the baby princess in her arms, and forced her way into the presence of Leontes. Paulina was so indignant at the cruelty of the king that she lost all fear of his majesty and compelled him to listen to her sharp reproaches. She began: —

Good my liege, I come, —
And I beseech you, hear me, who professes
Myself your loyal servant, your physician,
Your most obedient counsellor, — I say, I come
From your good queen.

LEONTES. Good queen!

PAULINA. Good queen, my lord,
Good queen, I say good queen;
And would by combat make her good, so were I
A man, the worst about you.

LEONTES. Force her hence.

PAULINA. Let him that makes but trifles of his eyes
First hand me; on my own accord I'll off,
But first I'll do my errand. — The good queen,
For she is good, hath brought you forth a daughter, —
Here 'tis, — commends it to your blessing.

With that the lady Paulina gently laid the baby princess at the feet of its father, saying: —

Look to your babe, my lord; 'tis yours:
And, might we lay the old proverb to your charge,
So like you, 'tis the worse. — Behold, my lords,
Although the print be little, the whole matter
And copy of the father, eye, nose, lip,
The trick of's frown, his forehead, nay, the valley,
The pretty dimples on his chin and cheek,
His smiles,
The very mould and frame of hand, nail, finger.

Leontes was so incensed by Paulina's act and words that he threatened to have her burnt, and called upon the attendants to thrust her out of his presence. Having accomplished her object, Paulina was willing to

withdraw, but she tarried long enough to tell the king: —

> I'll not call you tyrant;
> But this most cruel usage of your queen
> Not able to produce more accusation
> Than your own weak-hinged fancy, something savors
> Of tyranny, and will ignoble make you,
> Yea, scandalous to the world.

As soon as Paulina left the presence-chamber, Leontes commanded Antigonus, her husband, to take the babe, which he refused to acknowledge as his own, and to carry it to some lonely, desolate place, and there leave it exposed to die by hunger or violence. He asked Antigonus: —

> What will you adventure
> To save this brat's life?
> ANTIGONUS. Anything, my lord,
> That my ability may undergo
> And nobleness impose; at least this much:
> I'll pawn the little blood which I have left
> To save the innocent; — anything possible.
> LEONTES. Swear by this sword
> Thou wilt perform my bidding.
> ANTIGONUS. I will, my lord.
> LEONTES. Mark and perform it. We enjoin thee,
> As thou art liege-man to us, that thou carry
> This female bastard hence, and that thou bear it
> To some remote and desert place quite out
> Of our dominions, and that there thou leave it,
> Without more mercy, to its own protection
> And favor of the climate. Take it up.
> ANTIGONUS. I swear to do this, though a present death

Had been more merciful. — Come on, poor babe;
Some powerful spirit instruct the kites and ravens
To be thy nurses! wolves and bears, they say,
Casting their savageness aside, have done
Like offices of pity.

The ship that conveyed Antigonus was, as we know, wrecked upon the shore of Bohemia. The act of deserting the baby princess greatly troubled the conscience of Antigonus, but he had not sufficient moral courage to dare to disobey his royal master. In leaving the child, he thus lamented: —

Come, poor babe;
I have heard, but not believed, the spirits o' the dead
May walk again; if such thing be, thy mother
Appeared to me last night, for ne'er was dream
So like a waking. To me comes a creature,
Sometimes her head on one side, some another; — in pure white robes,
Like very sanctity, she did approach
My cabin where I lay; thrice bowed before me,
And gasping to begin some speech, her eyes
Became two spouts. The fury spent, anon
Did this break from her: "Good Antigonus,
Since fate, against thy better disposition,
Hath made thy person for the thrower-out
Of my poor babe, according to thine oath,
Places remote enough are in Bohemia,
There weep and leave it crying; and, for the babe
Is counted lost forever, Perdita,[1]
I prithee, call't. For this ungentle business,
Put on thee by my lord, thou ne'er shalt see

[1] the lost one.

Thy wife Paulina more." And so, with shrieks,
She melted into air. — Blossom, speed thee well!
There lie, and there thy character.
The storm begins. — Weep I cannot,
But my heart bleeds; and most accursed am I
To be by oath enjoined to this. — Farewell!
The day frowns more and more; thou'rt like to have
A lullaby too rough: I never saw
The heavens so dim by day. A savage clamor! —
Well may I get aboard! — This is the chase;
I am gone forever.

As Antigonus hastened away, he was attacked and torn to pieces by a wild beast of the forest. Thus was he punished immediately for his cruel deed, but Leontes, whose wicked jealousy had caused all this suffering, had to sorrow for many years in bitter reproach of conscience.

When the messengers who had been sent to obtain the judgment of Apollo returned, the answer of the oracle was opened in presence of the assembled court, and was read by an officer. Its words were: —

Hermione is chaste; Polixenes blameless; Camillo a true subject; Leontes a jealous tyrant; his innocent babe truly begotten; and the king shall live without an heir, if that which is lost be not found.

You would think that this plain answer would have convinced Leontes of his error, but he stubbornly refused to believe the divine message, saying: —

There is no truth at all in the oracle.

Nothing but the bitterest sorrow could restore the mad king to reason. The first blow fell when his idolized boy, the little prince Mamillius, died. He was a very sensitive, affectionate child, and he had grieved himself sick over his father's cruel treatment of his dearly loved mother.

> Conceiving the dishonor of his mother,
> He straight declined, drooped, took it deeply,
> Threw off his spirit, his appetite, his sleep,
> And downright languished.

The report of the death of the young prince was brought while the court was still assembled in the council-chamber where the judgment of the oracle had been read. On hearing the sad news, Leontes at once concluded that his son's death was sent in vengeance for his rejection of the oracular sentence. He declared: —

> Apollo's angry; and the heavens themselves
> Do strike at my injustice.

At this moment, the agonized queen fainted and was carried out in an apparently dying condition.

Then did King Leontes come to himself, and bitterly did he reproach himself for his unfounded jealousy, and for his impiety in disbelieving the Delphian oracle. In his agony of mind, he made public confession, praying: —

> Apollo, pardon
> My great profaneness 'gainst thine oracle!
> I'll reconcile me to Polixenes,

New woo my queen, recall the good Camillo,
Whom I proclaim a man of truth, of mercy;
For, being transported by my jealousies,
To bloody thoughts and to revenge I chose
Camillo for the minister to poison
My friend Polixenes; which had been done,
But that the good mind of Camillo tardied
My swift command, though I with death and with
Reward did threaten and encourage him,
Not doing't and being done. He, most humane,
And filled with honor, to my kingly guest
Unclasped my practice, quit his fortunes here,
Which you knew great, and to the hazard
Of all incertainties himself commended,
No richer than his honor. — How he glisters
Thorough[1] my rust! and how his piety
Does my deeds make the blacker!

The king's repentance came too late. He could not undo with a word the wrongs of which he had been guilty. Even while he was promising himself to atone for his sins, the queen's faithful attendant Paulina broke in upon him with the heart-rending news: —

— the queen, the queen,
The sweetest, dearest creature's dead, and vengeance for't
Not dropped down yet. — But, O thou tyrant!
Do not repent these things, for they are heavier
Than all thy woes can stir; therefore betake thee
To nothing but despair. A thousand knees
Ten thousand years together, naked, fasting,
Upon a barren mountain, and still winter

[1] through.

In storm perpetual, could not move the gods
To look that way thou wert.

LEONTES. Go on, go on!
Thou canst not speak too much; I have deserved
All tongues to talk their bitterest.

PAULINA. Now, good my liege,
Sir, royal sir, forgive a foolish woman;
The love I bore your queen — lo, fool again! —
I'll speak of her no more, nor of your children;
I'll not remember you of my own lord,
Who is lost too; take your patience to you,
And I'll say nothing.

LEONTES. Thou didst speak but well
When most the truth; which I receive much better
Than to be pitied of thee. Prithee, bring me
To the dead bodies of my queen and son:
One grave shall be for both. Once a day I'll visit
The chapel where they lie, and tears shed there
Shall be my recreation; so long as nature
Will bear up with this exercise, so long
I daily vow to use it. Come and lead me
Unto these sorrows.

Sixteen years have passed — sad years for King Leontes who, in his loneliness, has spent the time in mourning over the insane folly which bereft him of wife and children.

And what of the lost babe, — the little Perdita? She has been brought up tenderly, even if poorly, by the kind-hearted shepherd who saved her from a cruel death. Yet, although no one suspects her noble birth, every one who sees her feels that she is more re-

fined than other shepherd lasses. She carries herself with such grace and gentle dignity that it is said of her: —

> This is the prettiest low-born lass that ever
> Ran on the green-sward; nothing she does or seems
> But smacks of something greater than herself,
> Too noble for this place.

It chanced one day that the young prince Florizel, son of the king of Bohemia, in following a pet falcon which had flown into the grounds belonging to the old shepherd, saw the beautiful Perdita, and immediately fell in love with her. After that he came often, and wooed the pretty maiden in honorable, manly fashion, not deceiving her as to his own princely birth, but assuring her that she was, in grace of manner, the equal of any princess, and declaring that, when he should be king, he should be proud to acknowledge her as his queen.

The old shepherd did not suspect that Perdita's lover was the king's son, for if he had knowingly encouraged a prince to woo his adopted daughter, he would have deserved very severe punishment.

The father of Prince Florizel was the same Polixenes who had so narrowly escaped from the jealous rage of Leontes. The lord Camillo, whose warning had saved Polixenes, was beginning to pine for his native land, which he had not seen in all these years. But Polixenes was unwilling to part with Camillo, and he urged him: —

As thou lovest me, Camillo, wipe not out the rest of thy services by leaving me now. The need I have of thee thine

own goodness hath made; better not to have had thee than thus to want thee. Of that fatal country, Sicilia, prithee speak no more; whose very naming punishes me with the remembrance of that penitent, as thou callest him, and reconciled king, my brother; whose loss of his most precious queen and children are even now to be afresh lamented. Say to me, when sawest thou the Prince Florizel, my son?

CAMILLO. Sir, it is three days since I saw the prince. What his happier affairs may be, are to me unknown; but I have missingly noted, he is of late much retired from court, and is less frequent in his princely exercises than formerly he hath appeared.

Florizel's frequent absences had excited the suspicions of his father who, by inquiry, had found out, as he proceeded to tell Camillo: —

He is seldom from the house of a most homely shepherd; a man, they say, that from very nothing, and beyond the imagination of his neighbors, is grown into an unspeakable estate.

It seems that the gold which he had found with Perdita, and which he took to be a gift of the fairies, the shepherd had used in buying land and flocks, so that he was far richer than his neighbors.

In sheep-growing countries, it was formerly the custom to celebrate the close of sheep-shearing with a general feast for the entire country-side. On these festival occasions, the prettiest shepherdess was chosen queen of the festival, and it was her duty to welcome the guests.

The sheep-shearing feast being just at hand, Polixenes and Camillo disguised themselves and went with the

country people to the home of the old shepherd. Prince Florizel, also disguised, was there before them. When he saw Perdita attired as queen of the festival, he told her: —

> These your unusual weeds to each part of you
> Do give a life; no shepherdess, but Flora
> Peering in April's front. This your sheep-shearing
> Is as a meeting of the petty gods,
> And you the queen on't.

The old shepherd, seeing that Perdita's modesty prevents her from taking the lead in the mirth, chides her, saying: —

> Fie, daughter! when my old wife lived, upon
> This day she was both pantler,[1] butler, cook,
> Both dame and servant; welcomed all, served all;
> Would sing her song and dance her turn; now here,
> At upper end o' the table, now i' the middle.
> You are retired,
> As if you were a feasted one, and not
> The hostess of the meeting. Pray you, bid
> These unknown friends to's welcome; for it is
> A way to make us better friends, more known.
> Come, quench your blushes and present yourself
> That which you are, mistress o' the feast; come on,
> And bid us welcome to your sheep-shearing,
> As your good flock shall prosper.
>
> PERDITA. It is my father's will I should take on me
> The hostess-ship o' the day. — You're welcome.
> Give me those flowers there, Dorcas. — Reverend sirs,
> For you there's rosemary and rue; these keep
> Seeming and savor all the winter long:

[1] The one who had charge of the pantry.

Grace and remembrance be to you both,
And welcome to our shearing!

POLIXENES. Shepherdess, —
A fair one are you — well you fit our ages
With flowers of winter.

And now fair Perdita turns to her lover, telling him that only spring-time blossoms befit his youth —

— daffodils,
That come before the swallow dares, and take
The winds of March with beauty; violets dim,
But sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes
Or Cytherea's breath; pale primroses,
That die unmarried, ere they can behold
Bright Phœbus in his strength; bold oxlips and
The crown imperial; lilies of all kinds,
The flower-de-luce being one! O, these I lack,
To make you garlands of.

Florizel, enchanted with her graceful playfulness, exclaims: —

What you do
Still betters what is done. When you speak, sweet,
I'd have you do it ever; when you sing,
I'd have you buy and sell so, so give alms,
Pray so; and, for the ordering of your affairs,
To sing them too: when you do dance, I wish you
A wave o' the sea, that you might ever do
Nothing but that; move still, still so,
And own no other function. Each your doing,
So singular in each particular,
Crowns what you are doing in the present deed,
That all your acts are queens.
But come; our dance, I pray:

Your hand, my Perdita; so turtles pair,
That never mean to part.

After watching the dancers for a time, Polixenes grew impatient, and said to Camillo: —

'Tis time to part them.

Although he was himself charmed with Perdita's beauty and sweet modesty, he was very angry because his son had stooped, as he thought, to make love to a low-born maiden. So he abruptly made himself known to the company, harshly reproved his son, declared that he would have the shepherd hanged as a traitor, and threatened poor Perdita with a cruel death, if she should again receive the prince as her lover.

Even in her distress, Perdita's native dignity and self-respect asserted themselves, for, as the wrathful king was departing, she said: —

I was not much afeard; for once or twice
I was about to speak and tell him plainly,
The selfsame sun that shines upon his court
Hides not his visage from our cottage, but
Looks on all alike.

Then she nobly begs the prince: —

Will't please you, sir, begone?
I told you what would come of this. Beseech you,
Of your own state take care; this dream of mine,
Being now awake, I'll queen it no inch farther,
But milk my ewes and weep.

But Prince Florizel's love was true, and his belief in Perdita's nobility of nature was perfect; therefore he

felt that it would be base in him to renounce his love, even at the command of his father. He assured Perdita of his willingness to give up his expectation of succeeding to the crown, if need be, for the sake of her love.

> FLORIZEL. Why look you so upon me?
> I am sorry, not afeard; delayed,
> But nothing altered. What I was, I am.
> PERDITA. How often have I told you 'twould be thus!
> How often said, my dignity would last
> But till 'twere known!
> FLORIZEL. It cannot fail but by
> The violation of my faith. Lift up thy looks:
> From my succession wipe me, father; I
> Am heir to my affection.

To Camillo, who still remained, he added: —

> Not for Bohemia, nor the pomp that may
> Be thereat gleaned, for all the sun sees or
> The close earth wombs or the profound sea hides
> In unknown fathoms, will I break my oath
> To this my fair beloved: therefore, I pray you,
> As you have ever been my father's honored friend,
> When he shall miss me, — as, in faith, I mean not
> To see him any more, — cast your good counsels
> Upon his passion; let myself and fortune
> Tug for the time to come. This you may know
> And so deliver, — I am put to sea
> With her whom here I cannot hold on shore;
> And most opportune to our need I have
> A vessel rides fast by, but not prepared
> For this design. What course I mean to hold

Shall nothing benefit your knowledge, nor
Concern me the reporting.

Seeing that the prince was determined, Camillo thought that he might aid him and, at the same time, further his own plans. So he suggested that the lovers should go to the Sicilian court and tell King Leontes that the son of Polixenes had come with his bride to visit the friend of his father's boyhood. Camillo also offered to provide everything that was needed to enable them to appear before Leontes in a manner befitting Florizel's princely rank.

In thus abetting the flight of the lovers, Camillo was not so disinterested as he might seem to be. For, as soon as they were well on their way, the crafty courtier told Polixenes of their escape, and whither they were bound. This he did, hoping that his own longing to revisit his native land might be gratified, as he felt certain of being asked to accompany Polixenes in his pursuit of the fugitives.

Fair winds speedily conveyed the lovers to the island of Sicily. They were cordially welcomed by Leontes, who was eager to atone for his former wicked plot against the life of Polixenes by royally entertaining the son of his friend.

Perdita's rare beauty and sweetness won from Sicilian courtiers extravagant praise, they calling her —

The most peerless piece of earth,
That e'er the sun shone bright on.

In looking upon the beautiful pair, Leontes was distracted between admiration for their nobleness and sad

regret for what he himself had lost. Florizel so closely resembled his father as Leontes had known him that he exclaimed: —

> Were I but twenty-one,
> Your father's image is so hit in you,
> His very air, that I should call you brother,
> As I did him. Most dearly welcome!
> And your fair princess, — goddess! — O, alas!
> I lost a couple, that 'twixt heaven and earth
> Might thus have stood begetting wonder as
> You, gracious couple, do; and then I lost —
> All mine own folly — the society,
> Amity too, of your brave father, whom,
> Though bearing misery, I desire my life
> Once more to look on him.
>
> FLORIZEL. By his command
> Have I here touched Sicilia, and from him
> Give you all greetings that a king, at friend,
> Can send his brother: and, but infirmity
> Which waits upon worn times hath something seized
> His wished ability, he had himself
> The lands and waters 'twixt your throne and his
> Measured to look upon you; whom he loves —
> He bade me say so — more than all the sceptres
> And those that bear them living.

Florizel's falsehood could not long remain undiscovered; for Polixenes, accompanied by Camillo, followed close upon the path of the fleeing lovers. As soon as he landed in Sicily, the angry father sent a messenger to tell Leontes: —

> Please you, great sir,
> Bohemia greets you from himself by me;
> Desires you to attach his son, who has —

His dignity and duty both cast off—
Fled from his father, from his hopes, and with
A shepherd's daughter.

LEONTES. Where's Bohemia? speak.

MESSENGER. Here in your city; I now came from him.
I speak amazedly; and it becomes
My marvel and my message. To your court
Whiles he was hastening, in the chase, it seems,
Of this fair couple, meets he on the way
The father of this seeming lady and
Her brother, having both their country quitted
With this young prince.

FLORIZEL. Camillo has betrayed me;
Whose honor and whose honesty till now
Endured all weathers.

MESSENGER. Lay't so to his charge;
He's with the king your father.

LEONTES. Who? Camillo?

MESSENGER. Camillo, sir; I spake with him; who now
Has these poor men in question. Never saw I
Wretches so quake; they kneel, they kiss the earth,
Forswear themselves as often as they speak:
Bohemia stops his ears, and threatens them
With divers deaths in death.

From the account given by the messenger we learn that the poor old shepherd, who had gotten into such sore trouble by pretending to be the father of Perdita, had hidden himself in the vessel which had brought the lovers to Sicily. He was now very desirous of getting an opportunity to tell the truth concerning his finding the babe, the secret of which he had kept for sixteen years. This opportunity was granted by Leontes, who

had discovered that Perdita strongly resembled his lost queen Hermione. Through all the years of his mourning, the repentant king had cherished the hope held out by the oracle that, some day, his lost heir would be found. Therefore he was very anxious to hear the shepherd's tale.

Great was the excitement at the Sicilian court when the story was told. The courtiers who did not happen to be present at the time were eager to get all the particulars from those who had heard the tale. In the square before the king's palace, where a crowd quickly gathered, one gentleman was heard to declare: —

The oracle is fulfilled; the king's daughter is found. Such a deal of wonder is broken out within this hour that ballad-makers cannot be able to express it. Here comes the Lady Paulina's steward; he can deliver more. — How goes it now, sir? this news which is called true is so like an old tale, that the verity of it is in strong suspicion. Has the king found his heir?

STEWARD. Most true; that which you hear you'll swear you see, there is such unity in the proofs. The mantle of Queen Hermione's, her jewel about the neck of it, the letters of Antigonus found with it which they know to be his character, the majesty of the creature in resemblance of the mother, the affection of nobleness which nature shows above her breeding, and many other evidences proclaim her with all certainty to be the king's daughter. Did you see the meeting of the two kings?

GENTLEMAN. No.

STEWARD. Then have you lost a sight which was to be seen, cannot be spoken of. There might you have beheld one joy crown another, so and in such manner that it seemed sorrow wept to take leave of them, for their joy waded in tears. Our

king, being ready to leap out of himself for joy of his found daughter, as if that joy were now become a loss, cries, "O, thy mother, thy mother!" then asks Bohemia forgiveness; then embraces his son-in-law; now he thanks the old shepherd, which stands by like a weather-bitten conduit of many kings' reigns. I never heard of such another encounter, which lames report to follow it and undoes description to do it.

GENTLEMAN. What, pray you, became of Antigonus, that carried hence the child?

STEWARD. Like an old tale still. He was torn in pieces with a bear: this avouches the shepherd's son; who has not only his innocence, which seems much, to justify him, but a handkerchief and rings of his that Paulina knows.

GENTLEMAN. What became of his bark and his followers?

STEWARD. Wracked the same instant of their master's death, and in the view of the shepherd: so that all the instruments that aided to expose the child were even then lost when it was found. But O, the noble combat that 'twixt joy and sorrow was fought in Paulina! She had one eye declined for the loss of her husband, another elevated that the oracle was fulfilled; she lifted the princess from the earth, and so locks her in embracing, as if she would pin her to her heart that she might no more be in danger of losing.

GENTLEMAN. The dignity of this act was worth the audience of kings and princes; for by such was it acted.

Only one thing was lacking to make Perdita's happiness complete; she longed for the dear mother whose face she had never seen. So when the Lady Paulina told her that she had a lifelike statue of Hermione, carved by a famous Italian sculptor, Perdita desired to see it immediately. Leontes, who had not yet been shown the statue, accompanied his newly found daughter,

and with them came Polixenes and Florizel, and the great lords of the Sicilian court.

As they entered the private chapel where, Paulina told them, the statue was kept, Leontes said: —

O Paulina,
We honor you with trouble: but we came
To see the statue of our queen; your gallery
Have we passed through, not without much content
In many singularities, but we saw not
That which my daughter came to look upon,
The statue of her mother.

PAULINA. As she lived peerless,
So her dead likeness, I do well believe,
Excels whatever yet you looked upon
Or hand of man hath done; therefore I keep it
Lonely, apart. But here it is; prepare
To see the life as lively mocked as ever
Still sleep mocked death. Behold, and say 'tis well.

At the first sight of the wonderful image, Leontes, overcome by grief and remorse, was unable to speak; but when Paulina asked him if it were not a true likeness of the queen, he replied: —

Her natural posture! —
Chide me, dear stone, that I may say indeed
Thou art Hermione; or rather, thou art she
In thy not chiding, for she was as tender
As infancy and grace. — But yet, Paulina,
Hermione was not so much wrinkled, nothing
So aged as this seems.

PAULINA. So much the more our carver's excellence;
Which lets go by some sixteen years, and makes her
As she lived now.

LEONTES. As now she might have done,
So much to my good comfort, as it is
Now piercing to my soul. O, thus she stood,
Even with such life of majesty, warm life,
As now it coldly stands, when first I wooed her!
I am ashamed; does not the stone rebuke me
For being more stone than it? — O royal piece!
There's magic in thy majesty.

As Leontes continued to gaze upon the beautiful figure, he was almost persuaded that it had life. Seeing his amazement and longing, Paulina told him that she could make the statue move. Then, at her command, sweet music sounded, and the statue was seen to be descending the steps of the pedestal. In a moment, the bewildered Leontes was clasping to his heart the living Hermione, whom the faithful Paulina had kept in concealment all these years, awaiting the day when the oracle should be fulfilled in the finding of the lost princess.

And now the gentle Perdita kneels to crave a mother's blessing, saying: —

Dear queen, that ended when I but began,
Give me that hand of yours to kiss.
HERMIONE. You gods, look down
And from your sacred vials pour your graces
Upon my daughter's head! — Tell me, mine own,
Where hast thou been preserved? where lived? how found
Thy father's court? for thou shalt hear that I,
Knowing by Paulina that the oracle
Gave hope thou wast in being, have preserved
Myself to see the issue.

PAULINA. There's time enough for that.
LEONTES. Let's from this place. —
What! look upon my brother. — Both your pardons,
That e'er I put between your holy looks
My ill suspicion. This is your son-in-law
And son unto the king, whom heavens directing,
Is troth-plight to your daughter.

And so, at last, it happily came about that the sad errors, caused by the evil suspicions of Leontes, were forgiven and forgotten in the general rejoicings over the wedding festivities of Florizel and his peerless Perdita.

KING LEAR

KING LEAR

In the early days of Britain, a king named Lear ruled the country for many years. In his old age, King Lear grew tired of managing the affairs of his warlike kingdom, so he decided to shift the charge of government upon his three daughters. Goneril, the eldest, was married to the Duke of Albany; the second daughter, Regan, was the wife of the Duke of Cornwall. Cordelia, the youngest, was still unmarried, but there were several suitors for her hand, and Lear thought that, with the third of a kingdom for a dower, a desirable husband could easily be found for her.

The old king assembled his court, in order that there might be a large number of witnesses to his liberality in thus bestowing his lands upon his children while he was yet living. The act by which King Lear deprived himself of all authority and made himself wholly dependent upon his daughters cannot be regarded as wise, and he certainly showed great ignorance of human nature in the course he took. For he thought that the daughter who professed her love the most extravagantly had the truest affection for him, not seeming to understand that he was really offering a bribe when he asked his children to say in public how much they each loved him.

Taking in his hand a map of his kingdom, he told the court: —

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
Unburthened crawl toward death. — Our son of Cornwall, —
And you, our no less loving son of Albany,
We have this hour a constant will to publish
Our daughters' several dowers, that future strife
May be prevented now. The princes, France and Burgundy,
Great rivals in our youngest daughter's love,
Long in our court have made their amorous sojourn,
And here are to be answered. — Tell me, my daughters
Since now we will divest us both of rule,
Interest of territory, cares of state,
Which of you shall we say doth love us most?
That we our largest bounty may extend
Where nature doth with merit challenge. — Goneril,
Our eldest-born, speak first.

GONERIL. Sir, I love you more than word can wield the matter;
Dearer than eyesight, space, and liberty;
Beyond what can be valued, rich or rare;
No less than life, with grace, health, beauty, honor;
A love that makes breath poor, and speech unable;
Beyond all manner of so much I love you.

Lear, who believed that Goneril meant all that she said, was delighted with this extreme expression of love, and pointing to the map, he said: —

Of all these bounds, even from this line to this,
With shadowy forests and with champaigns riched,

With plenteous rivers and wide-skirted meads,
We make thee lady. — What says our second daughter,
Our dearest Regan, wife of Cornwall?

REGAN. I am made of that self 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 professes,
And find I am alone felicitate
In your dear highness' love.

The king was no less pleased with Regan's extravagant words than he had been with her sister's, and he told her: —

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

Lear now turned to his youngest and his favorite daughter, Cordelia, expecting that she would go beyond her sisters in expressing her love for him; but Cordelia although she loved her father tenderly, was too sincere to imitate her sisters' excessive protestations of love. So, when the foolish old king sought to induce her to outdo her sisters, by promising her a third much richer than those he had given the others, Cordelia replied that she loved him as a true daughter should, but certainly not more than she should love her husband, if she should marry. It grieved her to disappoint her father, but she must be true to herself. She said: —

I obey you, love you, and most honor you.
Why have my sisters husbands, if they say
They love you all? Haply when I shall wed,
That lord whose hand must take my plight shall carry
Half my love with him, half my care and duty.
Sure, I shall never marry like my sisters,
To love my father all.

LEAR. But goes thy heart with this?

CORDELIA. Ay, my good lord.

LEAR. So young, and so untender?

CORDELIA. So young, my lord, and true.

The weak old king was so angered by Cordelia's quiet answers that he was blind to the truth that hers was the sincere affection, and that his elder daughters had flattered him for the sake of their own advantage. In his rage, he cast Cordelia off, forever, as he said, and divided the land which he had intended for her between her two sisters, to whom, with their husbands, he gave the rule of the entire kingdom.

He retained the empty title of king for himself, and in order that he might be suitably attended, he declared that he would keep one hundred knights in constant attendance upon his person; these knights, together with himself, to be supported by Goneril and Regan. He added that he would spend a month in turn at the respective homes of his two elder daughters, whom he thus made his hostesses. All this he thus provided: —

I do invest you jointly with my power,
Pre-eminence, and all the large effects
That troop with majesty. Ourself, by monthly course,
With reservation of an hundred knights,

By you to be sustained, shall our abode
Make with you by due turn. Only we shall retain
The name and all the addition of a king;
The sway, revenue, execution of the rest,
Beloved sons, be yours: which to confirm,
This coronet part between you.

At this point Kent, a noble earl, who was deeply attached to his master, and who understood the real truth of Cordelia and the falseness of her sisters, interposed: —

Royal Lear,
Whom I have ever honored as my king,
Loved as my father, as my master followed,
As my great patron thought on in my prayers, —
LEAR. The bow is bent and drawn; make from the shaft.
KENT. What wouldst thou do, old man?
Think'st thou that duty shall have dread to speak
When power to flattery bows? To plainness honor's bound,
When majesty falls to folly. Reserve thy state,
And in thy best consideration check
This hideous rashness. Answer my life my judgment,
Thy youngest daughter does not love thee least;
Nor are those empty-hearted whose low sound
Reverbs no hollowness.
LEAR. Kent, on thy life, no more!
KENT. My life I never held but as a pawn
To wage against thy enemies, nor fear to lose it,
Thy safety being the motive.
LEAR. Out of my sight!

Kent's interference almost maddened the king, and as he still persisted in begging Lear to take back what he had just done, and would not be silent, Lear banished

the faithful Kent, saying that, if at the end of ten days, he was found in the kingdom, he should be put to death. Kent departed from the court with these words of farewell: —

> Fair thee well, king; sith[1] thus thou wilt appear,
> Freedom lives hence, and banishment is here. —

Then, turning to Cordelia: —

> The gods to their dear shelter take thee, maid,
> That justly think'st and hast most rightly said!

Lear now called upon the two suitors for Cordelia's hand, who were waiting at the court, to say whether they were willing to marry a wife who had no dower but truth.

The Duke of Burgundy declined to marry a portionless princess, but the King of France, when appealed to, said that Cordelia was herself a dowry, and that he prized her all the more because of her freedom from all falsity; so he espoused her in these words: —

> Fairest Cordelia, that art most rich being poor,
> Most choice, forsaken, and most loved, despised,
> Thee and thy virtues here I seize upon;
> Thy dowerless daughter, king, thrown to my chance,
> Is queen of us, of ours, and our fair France.
> Not all the dukes of waterish Burgundy
> Can buy this unprized precious maid of me. —
> Bid them farewell, Cordelia, though unkind;
> Thou losest here, a better where to find.

In parting from her sisters, Cordelia told them: —

[1] since.

Ye jewels of our father, with washéd eyes
Cordelia leaves you. I know you what you are,
And, like a sister, am most loath to call
Your faults as they are named. Love well our father.
To your professéd bosoms I commit him;
But yet, alas! stood I within his grace,
I would prefer him to a better place.
Time shall unfold what plighted cunning hides;
Who cover faults, at last shame them derides.
Well may you prosper!

It was not long until Lear, a king now only in name, had bitter cause to regret his mistaken course. Goneril, with whom he took up his abode for the first month, was very impatient with what she chose to consider the disorderly pranks of her father's attendant knights, and she sharply reproached Lear for the misconduct of his followers. She even went so far as to demand that he should discharge half of his attendants, declaring: —

Here do you keep a hundred knights and squires;
Men so disordered, so deboshed[1] 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 desired
By her, that else will take the thing she begs,
A little to disquantity your train;
And the remainder, that shall still depend,
To be such men as may besort your age,
Which know themselves and you.
LEAR. Are you our daughter?
GONERIL. Come, sir,
I would you would make use of that good wisdom

[1] debauched.

Whereof I know you are fraught, and put away
These dispositions which of late transport you
From what you rightly are.

Lear, amazed at Goneril's complaints, begs some one to tell him who he is, whereupon his court jester answers shrewdly, "Lear's shadow." The old king, who now, perforce, sees that there was no truth in Goneril's professions of love for him, sadly laments the blindness that led him to cast off the faithful Cordelia; but he bethinks himself that he has yet another daughter, and he determines to go to Regan immediately. He wails: —

Woe, that too late repents. — Prepare my horses.
Ingratitude, thou marble-hearted fiend,
More hideous when thou show'st thee in a child
Than the sea-monster. — Ha! is it come to this?
Let it be so. I have another daughter,
Who, I am sure, is kind and comfortable.

Lear thinks that, when Regan hears how unkindly Goneril has treated him, she will sympathize with him and share his wrath toward her elder sister. So he leaves Goneril with the wish that she may suffer as she has made him suffer, and that she may learn —

How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is
To have a thankless child.

When Kent left the court under sentence of banishment, he foresaw what griefs were likely to come to Lear through the ingratitude of his daughters; so he decided to disguise himself as a common servant, and

remain where he could assist his old master in case of need.

Lear, not suspecting who he was, took Kent into his service, and it was he who, at Lear's command, went before to inform Regan of her father's intention of visiting her immediately. The wicked Goneril had also sent a messenger, named Oswald, to urge her sister to follow her example in requiring their father to reduce the number of his attendants.

Regan was even more cruel than Goneril, and she, with her husband, the Duke of Cornwall, hastily left their home, so that when her poor distressed father should arrive, he could not find shelter.

They betook themselves to the castle of one of the great nobles, the Earl of Gloster, and there the two messengers, Oswald and Kent, found them. Before either messenger had been admitted, however, the two met outside the castle, and Kent, knowing that Oswald was secretly trying to injure the king, his master, picked a quarrel with Oswald, and was soundly beating him when Cornwall and Regan appeared upon the scene.

Oswald told his story and demanded that Kent should be punished. Regan cared nothing that her father's servant should be unjustly treated, but she was very desirous of pleasing her unfilial sister, so Kent was put in the stocks and made to sit there, unable to move, all day and all night. There he was found by Lear, who had followed Regan and Cornwall, thinking it strange that they should leave home when they knew that he was about to visit them. He was still more amazed to

find that they had dared to put his servant in the stocks. He exclaimed indignantly: —

They durst not do't;
They could not, would not, do't; 'tis worse than murther
To do upon respect such violent outrage.
Resolve me with all modest haste which way
Thou mightst deserve, or they impose, this usage,
Coming from us.
KENT. My lord, when at their home
I did commend your highness' letters to them,
Ere I was risen from the place that showed
My duty kneeling, came there a reeking post,
Stewed in his haste, half breathless, panting forth
From Goneril his mistress salutations;
Delivered letters, spite of intermission,
Which presently they read: on whose contents
They summoned up their meiny,[1] straight took horse,
Commanded me to follow, and attend
The leisure of their answer, gave me cold looks;
And meeting here the other messenger,
Whose welcome I perceived had poisoned mine —
Having more man than wit about me, drew:
He raised the house with loud and coward cries.
Your son and daughter found this trespass worth
The shame which here it suffers.
LEAR. Where is this daughter?
KENT. With the earl, sir, here within.

Lear then demanded to speak with Regan, but she scornfully refused even to see the father who had bestowed half his kingdom upon her. When the Duke of Gloster brought the ungrateful daughter's answer, the

[1] retinue, attendants.

old king could not believe that she would so mistreat him. He said to Gloster:—

> Deny to speak with me? They are sick? they are weary?
> They have travelled all the night?—
> Fetch me a better answer.
> GLOSTER. My dear lord,
> You know the fiery quality of the duke;
> How unremovable and fixed he is
> In his own course.
> LEAR. Vengeance! plague! death! confusion!
> Fiery? what quality? Why, Gloster, Gloster,
> I'd speak with the Duke of Cornwall and his wife.
> GLOSTER. Well, my good lord, I have informed them so.
> LEAR. Informed them? Dost thou understand me, man?
> GLOSTER. Ay, my good lord.
> LEAR. The king would speak with Cornwall; the dear father
> Would with his daughter speak, commands her service.
> Are they informed of this? My breath and blood!
> Fiery? the fiery duke? Tell the hot duke that—
> No, but not yet; may be he is not well.
> Infirmity doth still neglect all office
> Whereto our health is bound; we are not ourselves
> When nature being oppressed commands the mind
> To suffer with the body. I'll forbear;
> Give me my servant forth.
> Go tell the duke and's wife I'd speak with them,
> Now, presently; bid them come forth and hear me,
> Or at their chamber door I'll beat the drum
> Till it cry sleep to death.

In response to this urgent pleading, Regan and Cornwall appeared at length, but only to chide the

king when he complained of Goneril's ill-treatment of him: —

> REGAN. I cannot think my sister in the least
> Would fail her obligation; if, sir, perchance
> She have restrained the riots of your followers,
> 'Tis on such ground and to such wholesome end
> As clears her from all blame.
> LEAR. My curses on her!
> REGAN. O, sir, you are old;
> Nature in you stands on the very verge
> Of her confine: you should be ruled and led
> By some discretion that discerns your state
> Better than you yourself. Therefore I pray you
> That to our sister you do make return;
> Say you have wronged her, sir.
> LEAR. Ask her forgiveness?
> Do you but mark how this becomes the house:
> "Dear daughter, I confess that I am old;
> Age is unnecessary: on my knees I beg
> That you'll vouchsafe me raiment, bed, and food."
> REGAN. Good sir, no more; these are unsightly tricks.
> Return you to my sister.
> LEAR. Never, Regan!
> She hath abated me of half my train,
> Looked black upon me, strook[1] me with her tongue,
> Most serpent-like, upon the very heart.

Crazed with the sense of his cruel wrongs, Lear now invoked the vengeance of Heaven upon the unfilial Goneril; but even while he was cursing her for her ingratitude, Goneril approached, she having come to urge her sister to join her in stripping their father of all kingly dignities.

[1] struck, wounded.

Regan greeted her hard-hearted sister with a show of warm affection, and harshly told her father that, if he would dismiss half his train and return with Goneril, he might come to her at the end of the month. Lear replied that, rather than submit to such conditions, he would beg an asylum with the king of France, who had married the dowerless Cordelia.

When Regan saw that her father was so determined, she not only refused to receive him with his hundred knights, but she went even farther than her unfeeling sister had done, declaring that, before she would receive him, Lear must still further reduce the number of his attendants to twenty-five. Upon this, the poor old father pleaded pathetically: —

> I gave you all —
> REGAN. And in good time you gave it.
> LEAR. Made you my guardians, my depositaries;
> But kept a reservation to be followed
> With such a number. What, must I come to you
> With five and twenty, Regan? said you so?
> REGAN. And speak't again, my lord; no more with me.

Finding that Regan was even harder upon him than her sister, Lear told Goneril that he would go with her. But the selfish, unfilial Goneril wounded him more deeply than ever, by saying: —

> Hear me, my lord;
> What need you five and twenty, ten, or five,
> To follow in a house where twice so many
> Have a command to tend you?
> REGAN. What need one?

LEAR. O, reason not the need; our basest beggars
Are in the poorest thing superfluous.
Allow not nature more than nature needs,
Man's life is cheap as beast's. Thou art a lady;
If only to go warm were gorgeous,
Why, nature needs not what thou gorgeous wear'st,
Which scarcely keeps thee warm. But for true need,—
You heavens, give me that patience, patience I need!
You see me here, you gods, a poor old man,
As full of grief as age; wretched in both.
I have full cause of weeping; but this heart
Shall break into a hundred thousand flaws,
Or ere I'll weep.—O fool, I shall go mad!

With this word Lear, followed by the faithful fool and by Kent, who had been released from the stocks, rushed out into the night. A heavy storm was rising, but wind and rain seemed less cruel to the suffering king than the ingratitude of his heartless daughters. The Earl of Gloster sought in vain to awaken their pity for their father, telling them:—

Alack! the night comes on, and the high winds
Do sorely ruffle; for many miles about
There's scarce a bush.
REGAN. O, sir, to wilful men
The injuries that they themselves procure
Must be their schoolmasters. Shut up your doors.—

and Cornwall added:—

Shut up your doors, my lord; 'tis a wild night:
My Regan counsels well. Come out o' the storm.

It was, indeed, a wild night:—how wild, we learn from these words of Kent's:—

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.

It is little wonder that Lear, when driven out into the fearful tempest, should really lose his reason. His wild cries were pitiful to hear: —

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: then let fall
Your horrible pleasure; here I stand, your slave,
A poor, infirm, weak, and despised old man.
But yet I call you servile ministers,
That will with two pernicious daughters join
Your high-engendered battles 'gainst a head
So old and white as this. O! O! 'tis foul!
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, —
O, that way madness lies! let me shun that;
No more of that! . . . Let the great gods,
That keep this dreadful pudder[1] o'er our heads,
Find out their enemies now. Tremble, thou wretch
That hast within thee undivulgéd crimes,
Unwhipped of justice. I am a man
More sinned against than sinning.

In the course of their wanderings over the heath, they came upon a wretched hovel, in which Kent per-

[1] tumult.

suaded the king to take shelter. Upon entering, they found another there before them. It seemed to be some poor body who had lost his wits. Lear imagined that nothing but the unkindness of daughters could have brought the poor fellow to such a pass. He asked: —

> Didst thou give all to thy daughters? And art thou come to this? Couldst thou save nothing? Wouldst thou give 'em all?

In seeing the misery of this "Poor Tom," as he called himself, and in hearing his wild words, King Lear's pity was awakened, and in sympathy for the sufferings of another, he almost forgot his own — only for a moment, however. To Lear's grief-crazed brain, "Poor Tom" seemed to be a learned judge who was to try his hard-hearted daughters. In plaintive tones he complained of their cruel treatment, until, at last, blessed sleep came to his relief.

Although the kind-hearted Earl of Gloster could not prevent the merciless Regan from turning her old father out into the storm, he resolved to aid the king secretly. So he traced the steps of the party to the miserable hovel, and had them removed to a comfortable farm-house on his own estate. But when he once more begged permission to relieve the king's necessities, Regan and Cornwall took from him the use of his own castle, and charged him "on pain of perpetual displeasure, neither to speak of the king, entreat for him, or any way sustain him."

Soon afterward, having learned that the unnatural daughters were even plotting to put their father to death, Gloster warned the faithful Kent, who was still caring for his suffering master, and together they managed to convey King Lear to the port of Dover, which is just across the channel from France, and in Kent's own earldom. This they did in order to meet Cordelia, who had heard how wickedly her sisters were abusing their father, and was coming with a French army to the aid of the king.

The Earl of Gloster had a son, named Edmund, who was as disloyal to him as were Lear's two elder daughters to their father. Hoping to gain favor for himself, Edmund reported to Cornwall and Regan what Gloster had done to assist the king. For this reason, as soon as Gloster returned, he was cruelly tortured by order of Cornwall, and was made to confess that he had sent Lear to Dover. In reply to Regan's question—"Wherefore to Dover?"—Gloster said:—

> Because I would not see thy cruel nails
> Pluck out his poor old eyes, nor thy fierce sister
> In his anointed flesh stick boorish fangs.
> The sea, with such a storm as his bare head
> In hell-black night endured, would have buoyed up,
> And quenched the stelléd [1] fires;
> Yet, poor old heart, he holp the heavens to rain.
> If wolves had at thy gate howled that stern time
> Thou shouldst have said, "Good porter, turn the key,
> All cruels else subscribe." But I shall see

[1] starry.

The wingéd vengeance overtake such children.
CORNWALL. See't shalt thou never.

Whereupon, in order to make his words good, the fiendish Cornwall tore out both Gloster's eyes; but he was overtaken by swift punishment, being slain by a faithful servant, who attacked him in revenge for his cruel treatment of Gloster.

The Duke of Albany, husband of Goneril, did not join in the unkind usage of King Lear, but yet, when the country was invaded by the French army, he felt it his duty to defend his kingdom. After the death of Cornwall, Regan deputed Edmund, the evil-minded son of Gloster, to lead her division of the British troops to do battle with the French.

This made Goneril jealous, for she also was fond of Edmund. The ambitious Edmund tried to please both sisters, hoping that, through the favor of one of them, he might himself, in time, become ruler of the kingdom.

When Cordelia read a letter which Kent had sent her to inform her of the wrongs inflicted upon her father, she was so deeply moved that:—

Once or twice she heaved the name of father
Pantingly forth, as if it pressed her heart;
Cried "Sisters! sisters! Shame of ladies! sisters!
Kent! father! sisters! What, i' the storm? i' the night?
Let pity not be believed!" There she shook
The holy water from her heavenly eyes,
And, clamor-moistened, then away she started
To deal with grief alone.

As we already know, France immediately despatched an army into Britain to avenge the wrongs done to King Lear. Cordelia could not have consented to invade her native land for any other cause; but she said: —

> O dear father,
> It is thy business that I go about;
> Therefore great France
> My mourning and important[1] tears hath pitied.
> No blown ambition doth our arms incite,
> But love, dear love, and our aged father's right;
> Soon may I see and hear him!

When Cordelia landed at Dover, and learned that her poor crazed father was wandering about, wearing a wreath made of nettles and other weeds of the field, which he had woven into something resembling a crown, she offered the physicians all she had if they could restore his reason.

To heal his wounded mind completely was beyond their power, but by the use of calming potions, they succeeded in soothing him to quiet sleep. While he was asleep, he was clothed in fresh garments, and soft music was played in the hope that it might have restoring influence. Cordelia prayed, as she kissed her father: —

> O my dear father! Restoration hang
> Thy medicine on my lips, and let this kiss
> Repair those violent harms that my two sisters
> Have in thy reverence made!

[1] urgent.

Had you not been their father, these white flakes
Did challenge pity of them. Was this a face
To be opposed against the warring winds?
To stand against the deep, dread-bolted thunder?
In the most terrible and nimble stroke
Of quick, cross lightning? 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,
In short and musty straw? Alack, alack!
'Tis wonder that thy life and wits at once
Had not concluded all.

When Lear opened his eyes, and saw his beloved daughter bending over him, he thought that he was in heaven, and that she was a ministering angel. Then, as Cordelia knelt and implored his blessing, he said: —

Where have I been? Where am I? Fair daylight?
I am mightily abused. I should e'en die with pity
To see another thus. I know not what to say.
I will not swear these are my hands. Let's see;
I feel this pin prick. Would I were assured
Of my condition.
CORDELIA. O, look upon me, sir,
And hold your hands in benediction o'er me.
No, sir, you must not kneel.
LEAR. Pray, do not mock me.
I am a very foolish, fond old man,
Fourscore and upward, not an hour more or 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.

CORDELIA. And so I am, I am.

LEAR. 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.

CORDELIA. No cause, no cause.

LEAR. Am I in France?

CORDELIA. In your own kingdom, sir.
Will't please your highness walk?

LEAR. You must bear with me. Pray you now,
Forget and forgive: I am old and foolish.

In the battle that was fought between the French and British forces, the British were victorious, and both Lear and Cordelia were taken prisoners. The wicked Edmund, without the knowledge of the Duke of Albany, bribed the jailer to put the aged father and his faithful daughter to death in the prison.

But such wickedness as Edmund's could not go unpunished. He was accused of treason by the Duke of Albany, and was slain in a hand-to-hand combat with his own brother, who thus avenged the wrong done to their father, the Earl of Gloster.

When the prison officer attempted to hang Cordelia, in accordance with the instructions of Edmund, Lear,

broken though he was, had strength enough left to strike down the officer, but he was too late to save the life of Cordelia; and, overcome with grief and suffering, the broken-hearted Lear died, holding in his arms the daughter whose truth and faithfulness he, at last, understood.

OTHELLO

OTHELLO

SEVERAL centuries ago, the Republic of Venice was a great power among nations. But Venice had many enemies. The Turks were active rivals, and, on one pretext or another, they would often attack its island dependencies. Under these circumstances, Venice employed many foreign soldiers.

One of the most distinguished of these foreign mercenaries was a Moorish general, named Othello, who, because of his valiant deeds in their service, had become a favorite with the Venetian nobles.

Brabantio, a magnifico of Venice, often invited Othello to be his guest, and encouraged the Moor to relate the stories of his exploits. Brabantio's daughter, Desdemona, was an interested listener to these stories, it never occurring to her father to fear that his daughter, a proud Venetian lady, could stoop to feel any special interest in the dark-skinned narrator. Desdemona, however, who since her mother's death had been in charge of the household, was so enamored of the grave Othello that she would not willingly miss any of his words. As Othello said afterwards, —

> Still the house affairs would draw her thence ;
> Which ever as she could with haste despatch,

She'd come again, and with a greedy ear
Devour up my discourse: which I observing,
Took once a pliant hour, and found good means
To draw from her a prayer of earnest heart
That I would all my pilgrimage dilate,
Whereof by parcels she had something heard,
But not intentively.[1] I did consent,
And often did beguile her of her tears,
When I did speak of some distressful stroke
That my youth suffered. My story being done,
She gave me for my pains a world of sighs:
She swore, in faith, 'twas strange, 'twas passing strange,
'Twas pitiful, 'twas wondrous pitiful;
She wished she had not heard it, yet she wished
That heaven had made her such a man.
Upon this hint I spake: —
She loved me for the dangers I had passed,
And I loved her that she did pity them.

All this was done without the knowledge of Brabantio. Desdemona, on her part, knew very well that her father would not consent to her marrying the Moor. So she resolved to marry without consulting him.

When Brabantio discovered that his trusted daughter had secretly left home and that she was already wedded to Othello, he was beside himself with rage. He believed that the Moor must have won Desdemona's love by the use of some magical arts, such as spells or charmed drugs, called love-potions, and he went to the duke to entreat him to use the law to separate the newly wedded couple.

It chanced, however, that on that very day, news of

[1] attentively.

serious import had reached the government, namely, that a large fleet of Turkish war vessels had been seen making straight for Cyprus, an island belonging to Venice. The duke, in alarm, had called a night session of the magnificoes, and had summoned Othello to appear before them. For all minds turned to the Moor as the only leader able to cope successfully with the Turks.

Just as Brabantio reached the council chamber, the duke was saying to Othello: —

> Valiant Othello, we must straight employ you
> Against the general enemy Ottoman, —

whereupon Brabantio interposed: —

> Good your grace, pardon me;
> Neither my place nor aught I heard of business
> Hath raised me from my bed, nor doth the general care
> Take hold on me, for my particular grief
> Is of so flood-gate and o'erbearing nature
> That it engluts and swallows other sorrows.
> DUKE. Why, what's the matter?
> BRABANTIO. My daughter! O, my daughter!
> DUKE. Dead?
> BRABANTIO. Ay, to me;
> She is abused, stolen from me, and corrupted
> By spells and medicines bought of mountebanks.
> DUKE. Whoe'er he be that in this foul proceeding
> Hath thus beguiled your daughter of herself
> And you of her, the bloody book of law
> You shall yourself read in the bitter letter
> After your own sense.
> BRABANTIO. Humbly I thank your grace.

Here is the man, this Moor, whom now, it seems,
Your special mandate for the state affairs
Had hither brought.

The duke and senators were so shocked by this unexpected answer that they could only beg Othello to explain how far it was true. In reply, he said: —

Most potent, grave, and reverend signiors,
My very noble and approved good masters,
That I have ta'en away this old man's daughter,
It is most true; true, I have married her:
The very head and front of my offending
Hath this extent, no more. Rude am I in my speech,
And little blessed with the soft phrase of peace;
For since these arms of mine had seven years' pith,
Till now some nine moons wasted, they have used
Their dearest[1] action in the tented field;
And little of this great world can I speak,
More than pertains to feats of broil and battle,
And therefore little shall I grace my cause
In speaking for myself. Yet, by your gracious patience,
I will a round unvarnished tale deliver
Of my whole course of love; what drugs, what charms,
What conjuration, and what mighty magic, —
For such proceeding I am charged withal, —
I won his daughter.

BRABANTIO. A maiden never bold;
Of spirit so still and quiet, that her motion
Blushed at herself; and she, in spite of nature,
Of years, of country, credit, everything,
To fall in love with what she feared to look on!
— I therefore vouch again

[1] greatest.

That with some mixtures powerful o'er the blood,
Or with some dram conjured to this effect,
He wrought upon her.

SENATOR. But, Othello, speak:
Did you by indirect and forcéd courses
Subdue and poison this young maid's affections?
Or came it by request, and such fair question
As soul to soul affordeth?

OTHELLO. I do beseech you send for the lady,
And let her speak of me before her father.
If you do find me foul in her report,
The trust, the office I do hold of you,
Not only take away, but let your sentence
Even fall upon my life.

DUKE. Fetch Desdemona hither.

While the messenger went to conduct Desdemona to the ducal presence, Othello, at the request of the duke, told what we already know, how he had been often invited to Brabantio's house, and how he had told the story of his numerous adventures to gratify the curiosity of Brabantio. He told also how deeply interested Desdemona had been until, as we have heard, she led him on to declare his love for her. He concluded: —

This only is the witchcraft I have used. —
Here comes the lady; let her witness it.

BRABANTIO. I pray you, hear her speak;
If she confess that she was half the wooer,
Destruction on my head, if my bad blame
Light on the man! Come hither, gentle mistress;
Do you perceive in all this noble company
Where most you owe obedience?

DESDEMONA. My noble father,
I do perceive here a divided duty:
To you I am bound for life and education;
I am hitherto your daughter; but here's my husband,
And so much duty as my mother showed
To you, preferring you before her father,
So much I challenge that I may profess
Due to the Moor, my lord.

Brabantio, although filled with indignation toward the daughter who had deceived him, was wise enough to realize that, since Desdemona acknowledged that she loved and respected the Moor, it would be foolish —

To mourn a mischief that is past and gone,

so he withdrew his opposition to the marriage. Yet he was so grieved at Desdemona's unfilial conduct that he said: —

I am glad at soul I have no other child.

Then he begged the duke to attend to the pressing state business that had caused him to call this night session of the senate. Thereupon the duke explained the situation and said that, although there was a good officer at Cyprus, yet he would rather trust Othello to command when the place was threatened by so formidable an enemy.

When Desdemona found that her lord must go to Cyprus, she begged to be allowed to accompany him: —

DESDEMONA. Most gracious duke,
To my unfolding lend your prosperous[1] ear;

[1] favoring.

And let me find a charter in your voice,
To assist my simpleness.

DUKE. What would you, Desdemona?

DESDEMONA. That I did love the Moor to live with him,
My downright violence and storm of fortunes
May trumpet to the world: my heart's subdued
Even to the very quality of my lord;
I saw Othello's visage in his mind,
And to his honors and his valiant parts
Did I my soul and fortunes consecrate.
So that, dear lords, if I be left behind,
A moth of peace, and he go to the war,
I a heavy interim shall support
By his dear absence. Let me go with him.

Othello added his entreaties to his wife's request, promising not to let her presence interfere with his faithful discharge of duty. The duke readily consented, but told Othello that he must leave immediately, and suggested that he should give Desdemona into the charge of some officer who should follow the next day. For this service Othello chose his ensign, Iago, a man in whom he had full confidence.

OTHELLO. So please your grace, my ancient;[1]
A man he is of honesty and trust:
To his conveyance I assign my wife,
With what else needful your good grace shall think
To be sent after me.

DUKE. Let it be so. —
Good night to every one. — And, noble signior,
If virtue no delighted beauty lack,
Your son-in-law is far more fair than black.

[1] ensign; flag-bearer.

In saying farewell, Brabantio warned Othello: —

> Look to her, Moor, if thou hast eyes to see;
> She has deceived her father, and may thee.

> My life upon her faith!

returned the trusting Othello. Then, turning to his ensign, he added: —

> Honest Iago,
> My Desdemona must I leave to thee;
> I prithee, let thy wife attend on her
> And bring them after in the best advantage.

From what we have heard we realize that what Iago said of Othello was true: —

> The Moor is of a free and open nature,
> That thinks men honest that but seem to be so.

This was proved in the sequel, to the sad cost of the unsuspecting general. For Iago was far from being the honest man that Othello thought him. He had an evil, revengeful disposition, and, just now, he was very angry because Othello had not given him the position of lieutenant under him, but had promoted one Cassio to that office. Therefore he began to plot a double revenge, which should involve both Othello and Cassio in its snare. But he masked his wicked purpose in smiles and a pretence of ardent devotion to Othello and his bride.

While on their way to Cyprus, the ships were overtaken by a frightful tempest, which separated them, and drove the one which carried Othello so far out of its course

that Desdemona, with Iago, arrived first. The storm proved the truth of the old saying, however, that "it is an ill wind that blows nobody good," for it wrecked a large part of the Turkish fleet, and effectually prevented the attack upon Cyprus. When Desdemona landed, Cassio, whose vessel first reached the port, welcomed her joyfully, saying to the gentlemen who belonged to the garrison: —

> O behold,
> The riches of the ship is come on shore!
> Ye men of Cyprus, let her have your knees. —
> Hail to thee, lady! and the grace of heaven,
> Before, behind thee, and on every hand,
> Enwheel thee round!
> DESDEMONA. I thank you, valiant Cassio.
> What tidings can you tell me of my lord?
> CASSIO. He's not yet arrived; nor know I aught
> But that he's well and will be shortly here.

Even while they were talking, a sail was descried making for the harbor, and the hope that it might belong to the ship that carried her husband made Desdemona happy, and ready to lavish her smiles upon the company. Her lively sallies of wit and Cassio's gallant replies angered the evil heart of Iago, and he said to himself as he watched the innocent gayety of the unsuspecting pair: —

·Ay, smile upon her, do; ay, whisper; with as little a web as this will I ensnare as great a fly as Cassio. If such tricks as these strip you out of your lieutenancy, it had been better you had not kissed your three fingers so oft.

Othello's fears for Desdemona's safety were lost in joy to find her awaiting his arrival. To her greeting, —

My dear Othello !

he replied : —

It gives me wonder great as my content
To see you here before me. O my soul's joy !
If after every tempest come such calms,
May the winds blow till they have wakened death !
And let the laboring bark climb hills of seas
Olympus-high, and duck again as low
As hell's from heaven ! If it were now to die,
'Twere now to be most happy ; for, I fear,
My soul hath her content so absolute
That not another comfort like to this
Succeeds in unknown fate.
DESDEMONA. The heavens forbid
But that our loves and comforts should increase,
Even as our days do grow !
OTHELLO. Amen to that, sweet powers !
I cannot speak enough of this content;
It stops me here ; it is too much of joy.

Iago's hatred grew still more bitter at sight of this loving meeting, and with serpent-like venom he resolved to sting their happiness to death. He muttered to himself : —

O, you are well tuned now !
But I'll set down the pegs that make this music,
As honest as I am.

Among the Venetians who had been suitors for the hand of Desdemona was one whose disappointment at

her marrying Othello was so great that he allowed himself to be persuaded by Iago to enter into the plot against Desdemona's happiness in her husband. This man, Roderigo by name, had followed them to Cyprus. He was no match for the cunning Iago; so he became merely a tool in the hands of the greater villain.

As the first step in this mischief-making, Iago falsely represented to Roderigo that Desdemona was beginning to weary of her husband, who was so much older than herself, and that she was now in love with the gallant young lieutenant, Cassio. Iago asserted of Cassio:—

> He is handsome, young, and hath all those requisites in him that folly and green minds look after, and the woman hath found him already.
>
> RODERIGO. I cannot believe that in her; she's full of most blessed condition.
>
> IAGO. Blessed fig's end! if she had been blessed, she would never have loved the Moor.

Iago went on to unfold his plan, whereby he proposed to embroil Roderigo with Cassio. The lieutenant was to have charge of the watch that night, and Iago desired Roderigo to find some occasion to anger Cassio who, he said, was easily irritated. Iago's hope was that Cassio would strike Roderigo, and that his violence would stir up the soldiers against him. He thought that he could make capital out of their indignation so as to cause the removal of Cassio, and that Othello would then appoint him to the vacant place. That Iago was a cold, calculating villain appears plainly in these words, which he said to himself after Roderigo had left him:—

That Cassio loves her, I do well believe it;
That she loves him, 'tis apt and of great credit.[1]
The Moor, howbeit that I endure him not,
Is of a constant, loving, noble nature,
And I dare think he'll prove to Desdemona
A most dear husband. Now, I do love her too;
And nothing can or shall content my soul
Till that I put the Moor into a jealousy so strong
That judgment cannot cure. Which thing to do,
I'll have our Michael Cassio on the hip,
Abuse him to the Moor in the rank garb —
Make the Moor thank me, love me, and reward me,
For making him egregiously an ass,
And practising upon his peace and quiet
Even to madness. 'Tis here, but yet confused;
Knavery's plain face is never seen till used.

When Iago incited Roderigo to insult Cassio and so provoke the lieutenant to anger, he knew that there would be a good opportunity for carrying out his plan, because Othello had had proclamation made to the garrison and the inhabitants of the island, that they should celebrate their escape from threatened invasion by the destruction of the Turkish fleet. The herald cried: —

It is Othello's pleasure, our noble and valiant general, that, upon certain tidings now arrived, importing the mere perdition[2] of the Turkish fleet, every man put himself into triumph; some to dance, some to make bonfires, each man to what sport and revels his addiction[3] leads him: for, besides these beneficial news, it is the celebration of his nuptial. So much was his

[1] natural and very probable. [2] entire destruction. [3] inclination.

pleasure should be proclaimed. All offices are open, and there is full liberty of feasting from this present hour of five till the bell have told eleven. Heaven bless the isle of Cyprus and our noble general Othello!

That Othello both taught and practised self-control it evident from the directions that he gave Michael Cassio, whom he had appointed to take charge of the festivities. To Cassio he said: —

> Good Michael, look you to the guard to-night;
> Let's teach ourselves that honorable stop,
> Not to outsport discretion.
> CASSIO. Iago hath direction what to do,
> But, notwithstanding with my personal eye
> Will I look to't.
> OTHELLO. Iago is most honest.
> Michael, good night; to-morrow with your earliest
> Let me have speech with you.

To make things turn out as he desired, Iago set himself to getting the watchmen drunk. He began by proposing to Cassio that they should, with some Cyprus officers, drink to the health of "black Othello." Cassio, who knew his own weakness, replied —

Not to-night, good Iago. I have very poor and unhappy brains for drinking; I could well wish courtesy would invent some other custom of entertainment.

IAGO. What, man! 'tis a night of revels; the gallants desire it.

CASSIO. I'll do't; but it dislikes me.

While Cassio was engaged in greeting Montano, the former governor of Cyprus, and his followers,

Iago was congratulating himself upon what he, fiend-like, was pleased to consider his good success, saying of Cassio: —

> If I can fasten but one cup upon him,
> With that which he hath drunk to-night already,
> He'll be as full of quarrel and offence
> As my young mistress' dog. Now, my sick fool Roderigo,
> Whom love hath turned almost the wrong side out,
> To Desdemona hath to-night caroused
> Potations pottle-deep;[1] and he's to watch.
> Three lads of Cyprus, — noble swelling spirits,
> Have I to-night flusteréd with flowing cups,
> And they watch too. Now, 'mongst this flock of drunkards,
> Am I to put our Cassio in some action
> That may offend the isle.

In pursuance of his devilish purpose the honest (?) ancient called for wine and began to sing a carousal song: —

> *And let me the canakin clink, clink!*
> *And let me the canakin clink!*
> *A soldier's a man;*
> *A life's but a span;*
> *Why, then let a soldier drink!*

The whole party now became hilarious and Cassio forgot all his discretion. Roderigo, at a word from Iago, spoke so insultingly to Cassio as to cause the foolish lieutenant to strike him. His blow excited others to interfere, and in the general fight that ensued some wounds were given. Then Iago, pretending that mutiny had arisen, caused the bells of the fort to be rung, in

[1] to the bottom of the tankard or cup.

order that he might bring Othello upon the scene, and cause the lieutenant to be publicly disgraced. When Othello appeared, and demanded in his wrath how the mad riot had begun, Iago was ready with his lying account. Said Othello: —

What! in a town of war,
Yet wild, the people's hearts brimful of fear,
To manage private and domestic quarrel,
In night, and on the court and guard of safety!
'Tis monstrous. — Iago, who began 't?
IAGO. I had rather have this tongue cut from my mouth
Than it should do offence to Michael Cassio;
Yet I persuade myself, to speak the truth
Shall nothing wrong him. — Thus it is, general.
Montano and myself being in speech,
There comes a fellow crying out for help,
And Cassio following him with determined sword,
To execute upon him. Sir, this gentleman
Steps in to Cassio, and entreats his pause;
Myself the crying fellow did pursue,
Lest by his clamor — as it so fell out —
The town might fall in fright; he, swift of foot,
Outran my purpose, and I returned the rather
For that I heard the clink and fall of swords,
And Cassio high in oath, which till to-night
I ne'er might say before. When I came back —
For this was brief — I found them close together,
At blow and thrust, even as again they were
When you yourself did part them.
More of this matter cannot I report:
But men are men; the best sometimes forget.
Though Cassio did some little wrong to him,
Yet surely Cassio, I believe, received

From him that fled some strange indignity,
Which patience could not pass.
OTHELLO. I know, Iago,
Thy honesty and love doth mince this matter,
Making it light to Cassio. — Cassio, I love thee;
But never more be officer of mine.
Iago, look with care about the town,
And silence those whom this vile brawl distracted.

No sooner had Othello withdrawn with the rest of the lookers-on than the hypocritical Iago pretended to sympathize with Cassio, who had now come to a realizing sense of his dishonorable conduct. Iago queried: —

What, are you hurt, lieutenant?

CASSIO. Ay, past all surgery. I have lost my reputation! I have lost the immortal part of myself, and what remains is bestial. My reputation, Iago, my reputation!

IAGO. As I am an honest man, I thought you had received some bodily wound; there is more sense in that than in reputation. Reputation is oft got without merit, and lost without deserving: you have lost no reputation at all, unless you repute yourself such a loser. What, man! there are ways to recover the general again. Sue to him again, and he's yours.

CASSIO. I will rather sue to be despised than to deceive so good a commander with so slight, so drunken, and so indiscreet an officer. Drunk? and speak parrot? and squabble? swagger? swear? — O thou invisible spirit of wine, if thou hast no name to be known by, let us call thee devil!

IAGO. What was he that you followed with your sword? what had he done to you?

CASSIO. I know not. I remember a mass of things, but nothing distinctly; a quarrel, but nothing wherefore. — O God, that men should put an enemy in their mouths to steal away

their brains! that we should with joy, pleasance, revel, and applause, transform ourselves into beasts!

This repentance and lamentation was not what Iago desired. He was, even then, scheming to lead Cassio still further into disgrace, and at the same time, to entangle Desdemona in Cassio's fall. So he suggested that Cassio should apply to Desdemona to plead for him with her lord. This the wily villain did, intending to hint to Othello that Desdemona's interceding for the disgraced lieutenant was for her own selfish purpose — that she was herself secretly in love with Cassio.

Cassio fell into the snare easily, and parted from Iago with the words: —

Betimes in the morning I will beseech the virtuous Desdemona to undertake for me.

Iago, left alone, exulted fiendishly over the success of his evil plot, saying: —

And what's he then that says I play the villain?
When this advice is free I give and honest,
Probal[1] to thinking, and indeed the course
To win the Moor again? For 'tis most easy
The inclining Desdemona to subdue
In any honest suit; she's framed as fruitful[2]
As the free elements. How am I then a villain
To counsel Cassio to this parallel course,
Directly to his good? Divinity of hell!
When devils will the blackest sins put on,
They do suggest at first with heavenly shows,
As I do now: for whiles this honest fool

[1] probable, reasonable. [2] generous.

Plies Desdemona to repair his fortunes,
And she for him pleads strongly to the Moor,
I'll pour this pestilence into his ear, —
That she repeals [1] him for her body's lust;
And by how much she strives to do him good,
She shall undo her credit with the Moor.
So will I turn her virtue into pitch,
And out of her own goodness make the net
That shall enmesh them all.

The following day, when Desdemona gave audience to Cassio, and promised him that she would plead so earnestly for his restoration to the place which he had lost as to give her husband no rest, Iago contrived to come near with Othello just as Cassio was taking leave of Desdemona. Whereupon he started and uttered an exclamation: —

Ha! I like not that!

just loud enough to catch the ear of Othello. It had exactly the effect that the sneaking fellow intended, to arrest the attention of Othello, and excite a sudden suspicion in his mind. So when Othello inquired if that was Cassio who had that moment left his wife, Iago replied: —

Cassio, my lord! No, sure, I cannot think it,
That he would steal away so guilty-like,
Seeing you coming, —

and the mischief was done. The poison of distrust was lodged in the mind of the large-hearted, confiding Moor. And when the false ensign went on to insinuate that

[1] recalls.

it was not to be wondered at that Desdemona, young, ardent, and attractive, should tire of her dark-skinned husband, after the romantic light in which she had viewed her elderly lover's heroic achievements had paled in the daylight of marriage, Othello felt that this was but natural. So, without taking any steps to find out the truth for himself, he allowed himself to believe all the false stories that Iago now poured into his ear.

In listening to the artful hints by which Iago undermined Othello's confidence in his true wife, one feels the same indignant sympathy as when a noble steed is rendered frantic by the stings of some venomous insect. With a pretence of unwillingness to suspect any evil of Cassio and Desdemona, Iago yet insinuated the worst. Although protesting, —

> I think Cassio's an honest man, —

he continued: —

> I do beseech you —
> It were not for your quiet nor your good,
> Nor for my manhood, honesty, or wisdom,
> To let you know my thoughts.
> OTHELLO. What dost thou mean?
> IAGO. Good name in man and woman, dear my lord,
> Is the immediate jewel of their souls.
> Who steals my purse steals trash; 'tis something, nothing;
> 'Twas mine, 'tis his, and has been slave to thousands;
> But he that filches from me my good name
> Robs me of that which not enriches him
> And makes me poor indeed.

Thus while uttering great truths, the contemptible villain gave them a false application, and still further

excited the passion of Othello. Then, adding insult to injury, he mockingly bade his lord: —

Beware of jealousy;
It is the green-eyed monster which doth mock
The meat it feeds on: —
Good heaven, the souls of all my tribe defend
From jealousy!

OTHELLO. Think'st thou I'd make a life of jealousy,
To follow still the changes of the moon
With fresh suspicions? No; to be once in doubt
Is once to be resolved. 'Tis not to make me jealous
To say my wife is fair, feeds well, loves company,
Is free of speech, sings, plays, and dances well;
Where virtue is, these are more virtuous:
Nor from mine own weak merits will I draw
The smallest fear or doubt of her revolt;
For she had eyes, and chose me. No, Iago!
I'll see before I doubt; when I doubt, prove:
And on the proof there is no more but this, —
Away at once with love or jealousy!

IAGO. I speak not yet of proof.
Look to your wife; observe her well with Cassio;
I would not have your free and noble nature
Out of self-bounty be abused; look to't.
She did deceive her father, marrying you;
And when she seemed to shake and fear your looks,
She loved them most.
She that, so young, could give out such a seeming,
To seel[1] her father's eyes up close as oak —
He thought 'twas witchcraft — But I am much to blame;
I humbly do beseech you of your pardon
For too much loving you.

[1] blind; a term in falconry.

And the pity of it was that the deluded Moor believed the false professions of his ancient, and in consequence fatally wronged himself and two innocent souls.

Othello having told Iago that he would not believe that Desdemona was unfaithful without proof, Iago felt that it was necessary for him to offer something that might seem like tangible evidence of the lady's guilt. He happened to know that Othello's first gift to Desdemona was an heirloom in his family, — a curiously embroidered handkerchief which was reputed to have a magic charm about it. So he commanded his wife, Emilia, who was Desdemona's attendant, to steal that handkerchief for him. This Emilia contrived to do even though she knew that, because it was her husband's gift, Desdemona —

> — so loves the token,
> That she reserves it evermore about her
> To kiss and talk to.

Iago's plan was to drop this handkerchief in Cassio's room, and then to have the fact of its being there brought to the ears of Othello. He well knew that this alone would seem to the Moor sufficient proof, for Othello was now so wrought upon that he was not likely to search out the matter, and besides: —

> Trifles light as air
> Are to the jealous confirmations strong
> As proofs of holy writ.

He soon found an opportunity to pour this fresh lie into Othello's ear, but he had not calculated upon the

awfulness of the wronged Moor's wrath. It made him fear for his own safety, and caused him to play his villanous part with even more artful energy than before. So, when Othello in his pain and rage moaned over Desdemona's supposed falseness, and demanded proof of Iago's evil accusations, with the cunning of a serpent, Iago stung him into madness. In an agony of doubt and fear, Othello exclaimed: —

By the world,
I think my wife be honest, and think she is not;
I think that thou art just, and think thou art not.
I'll have some proof. Her name, that was as fresh
As Dian's visage, is now begrimed and black
As mine own face. If there be cords, or knives,
Poison, or fire, or suffocating streams,
I'll not endure it. Would I were satisfied!
IAGO. I see, sir, you are eaten up with passion;
I do repent me that I put it to you.
You would be satisfied?
OTHELLO. Would! nay, I will.
Give me a living reason she's disloyal.
IAGO. I do not like the office;
But sith[1] I am entered in this cause so far,
Pricked to't by foolish honesty and love,
I will go on. I lay with Cassio lately;
And, being troubled with a raging tooth,
I could not sleep.
There are a kind of men so loose of soul,
That in their sleeps will mutter their affairs;
One of this kind is Cassio.
In sleep I heard him say "Sweet Desdemona,

[1] since.

Let us be wary, let us hide our loves."

OTHELLO. O monstrous! monstrous! I'll tear her all to pieces.

IAGO. Nay, but be wise: yet we see nothing done;
She may be honest yet. Tell me but this,
Have you not sometimes seen a handkerchief
Spotted with strawberries in your wife's hand?

OTHELLO. I gave her such a one; 'twas my first gift.

IAGO. I know not that; but such a handkerchief—
I am sure it was your wife's—did I to-day
See Cassio wipe his beard with.
If it be that, or any that was hers,
It speaks against her with the other proofs.

OTHELLO. O, that the slave had forty thousand lives!
One is too poor, too weak for my revenge.
Now I do see 'tis true. Look here, Iago;
All my fond love thus do I blow to heaven.
'Tis gone.
Arise, black vengeance, from the hollow hell!
Yield up, O love, thy crown and hearted throne
To tyrannous hate!

In his towering rage, Othello told Iago that the greatest service he could pay him would be—

Within these three days let me hear thee say
That Cassio's not alive.

For this crime, which Iago vowed to accomplish, Othello, then and there, named him his lieutenant.

Poor Desdemona, innocent at heart, took every opportunity of pleading with her lord in behalf of Cassio, and she could not understand the meaning of the harsh words and still harsher frowns which her persistent

advocacy of the cause of the discharged lieutenant called out. But Othello's dark looks so terrified her that, when he asked for the lost handkerchief, she dared not confess the truth. For when the Moor, pretending to desire to use it, asked her to lend him the handkerchief which he had given her, she faltered: —

I have it not about me.

OTHELLO. That is a fault.

That handkerchief
Did an Egyptian to my mother give;
She was a charmer, and could almost read
The thoughts of people: she told her, while she kept it,
'Twould make her amiable and subdue my father
Entirely to her love, but if she lost it
Or made a gift of it, my father's eye
Should hold her loathéd and his spirits should hunt
After new fancies. She dying gave it me;
And bid me, when my fate would have me wive,
To give it her. I did so: and take heed on't;
Make it a darling in your precious eye:
To lose't or give't away were such perdition
As nothing else could match.

DESDEMONA. Is't possible?

OTHELLO. 'Tis true; there's magic in the web of it.
A sibyl that had numbered in the world
The sun to course two hundred compasses,
In her prophetic fury sewed the work;
The worms were hallowed that did breed the silk;
And it was dyed in mummy which the skilful
Conserved of maiden's hearts. —
Therefore look to't well.

DESDEMONA. Then would to God that I had never seen't!

OTHELLO. Is't lost? is't gone? speak, is it out o' the way?

DESDEMONA. It is not lost; but what an if it were?

OTHELLO. Fetch't, let me see't.

DESDEMONA. Why, so I can, sir, but I will not now.
This is a trick to put me from my suit;
Pray you, let Cassio be received again.

Through fear of Othello, who seemed so wrathful, yet so serious in his anger, Desdemona was betrayed into falsehood; and her ill-timed pleading for Cassio confirmed the evil suspicion sown by Iago in the mind of her husband. That plotting villain missed no opportunity of fomenting Othello's jealousy. Lie after lie was poured into the ear of the Moor, who was so honorable himself that he did not once suspect the honesty of the man who seemed all sympathy for him. The mischief reached its climax when Iago contrived to let Othello hear a conversation between himself and Cassio, in which Cassio spoke lightly of a woman of low character, but which was so distorted by Iago as to cause the listening Othello to understand that the woman in question was Desdemona.

Grief and rage now overmastered the Moor whose love had been so cruelly wronged. Believing the worst of Desdemona, he violently reproached her, and even went so far as to strike her in the presence of others. And when his pure and loyal wife knelt and implored him: —

Upon my knees, what doth your speech import?
I understand a fury in your words,
But not the words: —

he spurned her with the retort: —

> Heaven truly knows that thou art false as hell.
> O thou weed,
> Who art so lovely fair and smell'st so sweet
> That the sense aches at thee, would thou hadst ne'er been born!

Such agony of suffering was in Othello's voice that Desdemona felt that his unkind treatment must be due to some awful misunderstanding, and her own love was so true that her heart forgave his harshness. Her only desire was to win back the love of her husband, and knowing how Othello trusted Iago, she appealed to him to intercede for her. If that false knave's heart had been less than fiendish, it would have melted at her cry: —

> O good Iago,
> What shall I do to win my lord again?
> Good friend, go to him; for, by this light of heaven,
> I know not how I lost him. Here I kneel:
> If e'er my will did trespass 'gainst his love,
> Either in discourse of thought or actual deed,
> Or that mine eyes, mine ears, or any sense,
> Delighted them in any other form,
> Or that I do not yet, and ever did,
> And ever will — though he do shake me off
> To beggarly divorcement — love him dearly,
> Comfort forswear me! Unkindness may do much;
> And his unkindness may defeat my life,
> But never taint my love.
> IAGO. I pray you, be content; 'tis but his humor:
> The business of the state does him offence,
> And he does chide with you.

The sight of the misery he had caused, instead of exciting Iago to pity, spurred him on to complete the ruin of two loving souls. I suppose that he had gone so far in crime that he feared for his own life in the event of discovery of his villany. However that might be, he now had recourse to the lovesick Roderigo once more. Messages had just been brought from the court of Venice recalling Othello and appointing Cassio governor of Cyprus. Iago made Roderigo believe that it would be to his advantage to put Cassio out of the way, and the foolish fellow actually allowed himself to be persuaded into making an attack upon Cassio after nightfall. Iago stationed Roderigo at a point where he knew that Cassio was about to pass, and then, like the coward he was, slunk away, lest his part in the matter should be detected. That he realized on what dangerous ground he stood appears from these his words, which he spoke in the depths of his own heart: —

> Now, whether he kill Cassio,
> Or Cassio him, or each do kill the other,
> Every way makes my game. Live Roderigo,
> He calls me to a restitution large
> Of gold and jewels that I bobbed [1] from him,
> As gifts to Desdemona;
> It must not be. If Cassio do remain,
> He hath a daily beauty in his life
> That makes me ugly; and, besides, the Moor
> May unfold me to him; there stand I in much peril
> No, he must die.

[1] fooled him out of.

Othello meanwhile, with death in his heart, had commanded Desdemona to retire early and to dismiss her attendant. Desdemona, with true wifely loyalty, obeyed, and when Emilia said that she wished her sweet mistress had never seen the Moor, Desdemona replied: —

> So would not I; my love doth so approve him,
> That even his stubbornness, his checks, his frowns,
> Have grace and favor in them.
> My mother had a maid called Barbara;
> She was in love, and he she loved proved mad
> And did forsake her. She had a song of "willow;"
> An old thing 'twas, but it expressed her fortune,
> And she died singing it. That song to-night
> Will not go from my mind; I have much to do
> But to go hang my head all at one side,
> And sing it like poor Barbara.

Her heart was so oppressed with sadness that she was impelled to sing the song of forsaken love: —

> *The poor soul sat sighing by a sycamore tree,*
> *Sing all a green willow;*
> *Her hand on her bosom, her head on her knee,*
> *Sing willow, willow, willow:*
> *The fresh streams ran by her, and murmured her moans;*
> *Sing willow, willow, willow;*
> *Her salt tears fell from her, and softened the stones;*
> *Sing willow, willow, willow;*
> *Sing all a green willow must be my garland.*
> *Let nobody blame him; his scorn I approve,—*
> *Sing willow, willow, willow.*

As the last wail of the mournful song died away, she bade Emilia: —

So, get thee gone; good night. Mine eyes do itch;
Doth that bode weeping? I have heard it said so.

As Othello looked upon the sleeping Desdemona, her chaste beauty almost overcame his purpose. In those days, a husband who had been wronged felt it to be his sacred duty to avenge his stained honor by inflicting death upon his sinning wife. So intense was Othello's gaze that it awakened the sleeper. Alarmed by his wild looks and his stern words, — for Othello bade her pray heaven for forgiveness, — Desdemona entreated to know how she had offended him to whom in her heart she had ever been faithful. Then Othello charged her with having loved Cassio wrongfully, and with having given him the handkerchief, his bridal gift. When Desdemona stoutly denied the charge, and begged him to send for Cassio that he might confirm her truth, Othello warned her: —

Sweet soul, take heed,
Take heed of perjury; thou art on thy deathbed.
DESDEMONA. Then Lord have mercy on me!
OTHELLO. I say, amen.
DESDEMONA. And have you mercy too! I never did
Offend you in my life; never loved Cassio
But with such general warranty of heaven
As I might love; I never gave him token.
OTHELLO. By heaven, I saw my handkerchief in's hand.
O perjured woman! thou dost stone my heart,
And mak'st me call what I intend to do
A murther, which I thought a sacrifice.

Othello was sure that Desdemona was untrue, and his love was so great that he could not bear the thought

of her going to God with a lie upon her lips; so he silenced her pleading with a stifling pressure of the bed-clothes. But even while her breath was still warm, he heard cries without and his name called. It was Emilia crying: —

> O my good lord, yonder's foul murther done!
> Cassio, my lord, hath killed a young Venetian
> Called Roderigo.
> OTHELLO. Roderigo killed!
> And Cassio killed!
> EMILIA. No, Cassio is not killed.

It seems that Iago's scheme had failed as far as Cassio was concerned, and when he found that Cassio had gotten the better of his assailant, Iago stabbed Roderigo himself, to prevent his telling the truth about the matter. But his guilty soul could not longer escape the vengeance of just Heaven. When Emilia learned that her mistress was dead, and heard from Othello why he had taken that sweet life, she was horror-stricken at the discovery of her husband's villany. Then she confessed how she had stolen the handkerchief by command of Iago, and she denounced his false practices. At that moment, officers appeared with the wounded Cassio borne by attendants, and Iago bound as a prisoner.

In searching the pockets of the slain Roderigo, they had found letters which revealed Iago's plots against the life of Cassio. Othello, who now realized that he had been fatally betrayed into crime by the man whom he had trusted as honor and honesty itself, felt that the

only way by which he could make atonement for his blindness and murder was by taking his own life.

His dying wish was that those who heard him would do him justice with the Venetian state. He urged them: —

> I pray you in your letters,
> When you shall these unlucky deeds relate,
> Speak of me as I am; nothing extenuate,
> Nor set down aught in malice; then must you speak
> Of one that loved not wisely but too well;
> Of one not easily jealous, but being wrought,
> Perplexed in the extreme; of one whose hand,
> Like the base Indian, threw a pearl away
> Richer than all his tribe; of one whose subdued eyes,
> Albeit unuséd to the melting mood,
> Drop tears as fast as the Arabian trees
> Their medicinal gum. Set you down this;
> For naught I did in hate, but all in honor.

To Cassio, who now became governor of Cyprus, was intrusted the duty of punishing fitly the base villain whose fiendish hatred had wrought death to the happiness of two noble lives.

CYMBELINE

CYMBELINE

CYMBELINE, king of Britain, was a harsh, despotic ruler, who would punish his subjects on mere suspicion, if he chanced to take a dislike to them. On one occasion he suspected a valiant officer, named Belarius, of treason, and sent him into banishment, without giving him any opportunity of proving his innocence of the crime.

Belarius was so enraged at this injustice that he persuaded the nurse who had the care of the king's two boys, to steal her little charges, and fly with him. Cymbeline was unable to get any trace of the fugitives, and he mourned his sons as dead. The queen-mother had died before the loss of the princes. One child alone, a dear little daughter, named Imogen, remained to cheer her father's heart.

Twenty years passed. Imogen had grown to be a beautiful young woman, whom everybody loved, for she was as good as she was beautiful. She had given her heart to Posthumus, a fine young man, who had been her playfellow in childhood, he having been brought up at the king's court. His father had lost his life fighting in a war with the Romans, and his mother dying also at the birth of her child, Cymbeline had taken the orphan

babe, and educated him. Posthumus proved an apt learner, and his nobleness of disposition made him a general favorite.

Unfortunately for the happiness of Posthumus and Imogen, however, Cymbeline permitted himself to be ruled entirely by his second wife, a woman of a low nature. This queen had set her heart on marrying her son, Cloten, to Imogen, in order that he might be raised to the throne; for since the princes had not been found, Imogen was Cymbeline's heir.

The queen won Cymbeline's consent to her plan. Great was her dismay, then, when she discovered that Imogen, knowing that her father would refuse consent to her union with Posthumus, and feeling that she would rather die than marry Cloten, who was a mean-spirited, stupid creature, had secretly espoused her true lover.

Cymbeline's anger, when the queen reported to him how their plans had been thwarted, caused him to banish Posthumus, and to give Imogen as a prisoner into the hands of her stepmother. The wily queen pretended to pity the husband who was commanded to leave his bride forever, so she permitted him to have a parting interview with Imogen. She told Posthumus:—

> For you, Posthumus,
> So soon as I can win the offended king,
> I will be known your advocate: marry, yet
> The fire of rage is in him, and 'twere good
> You leaned unto his sentence with what patience
> Your wisdom may inform you.

POSTHUMUS. Please your highness,
I will from hence to-day.
QUEEN. You know the peril.
I'll fetch a turn about the garden, pitying
The pangs of barred affections, though the king
Hath charged you should not speak together.

Imogen knew that this was a false pretence, and that the queen would use this meeting to excite her father to still worse anger. As the queen moved away, Imogen exclaimed: —

Dissembling courtesy! How fine this tyrant
Can tickle where she wounds! My dearest husband,
I something fear my father's wrath; but nothing,
Always reserved my holy duty, what
His rage can do on me: you must be gone;
And I shall here abide the hourly shot
Of angry eyes, not comforted to live,
But that there is this jewel in the world
That I may see again.
POSTHUMUS. My queen! my mistress!
O lady, weep no more, lest I give cause
To be suspected of more tenderness
Than doth become a man. I will remain
The loyal'st husband that did e'er plight troth:
My residence in Rome at one Philario's,
Who to my father was a friend, to me
Known but by letter: thither write, my queen,
And with my eyes I'll drink the words you send,
Though ink be made of gall.

At this moment, the false queen returned, and warned them to hasten their leave-taking, lest the king should

interrupt them. This she said, knowing that he was, even then, coming that way, she having suggested to him that it might be well to do so. Posthumus lingered at the request of Imogen, who pleaded: —

> Stay a little:
> Were you but riding forth to air yourself,
> Such parting were too petty. Look here, love,
> This diamond was my mother's: take it, heart;
> But keep it till you woo another wife,
> When Imogen is dead.
>
> POSTHUMUS. How, how! another?
> You gentle gods, give me but this I have,
> And sear up my embracements from a next
> With bonds of death!

Then putting on the ring, he added: —

> Remain, remain thou here,
> While sense can keep it on. And, sweetest, fairest,
> As I my poor self did exchange for you,
> To your so infinite loss, so in our trifles,
> I still win of you.

For his bond of love, he put on her arm a bracelet, saying: —

> For my sake, wear this;
> It is a manacle of love; I'll place it
> Upon this fairest prisoner.
>
> IMOGEN. O the gods!
> When shall we see again?

For reply, Posthumus exclaimed: —

> Alack, the king! —

and there was the enraged Cymbeline, who thundered: —

Thou basest thing, avoid! hence, from my sight!
If after this command thou fraught the court
With thy unworthiness, thou diest: away!
Thou'rt poison to my blood.

POSTHUMUS. The gods protect you!
And bless the good remainders of the court!
I am gone.

IMOGEN. There cannot be a pinch in death
More sharp than this is.

CYMBELINE. O disloyal thing,
That shouldst repair my youth, thou heap'st
A year's age on me.

IMOGEN. I beseech you, sir,
Harm not yourself with your vexation:
I am senseless of your wrath; a touch more rare
Subdues all pangs, all fears.

CYMBELINE. Past grace? obedience?

IMOGEN. Past hope, and in despair: that way, past grace.

CYMBELINE. That mightst have had the sole son of my queen!

IMOGEN. O blest, that I might not! I chose an eagle,
And did avoid a puttock.[1]

CYMBELINE. Thou took'st a beggar; wouldst have made my throne
A seat for baseness.

IMOGEN. No; I rather added
A lustre to it.

CYMBELINE. O thou vile one!

IMOGEN. Sir,
It is your fault that I have loved Posthumus:
You bred him as my playfellow, and he is
A man worth any woman.

[1] a bird of prey.

Imogen's defence of herself angered the unreasonable king still further, so that when the queen appeared, he ordered: —

> Away with her, and pen her up.
> QUEEN. Beseech your patience. Peace,
> Dear lady daughter, peace! Sweet sovereign,
> Leave us to ourselves; and make yourself some comfort
> Out of your best advice.
> CYMBELINE. Nay, let her languish
> A drop of blood a day; and, being aged,
> Die of this folly!

Now that Posthumus was gone, the queen and Cloten set themselves to wean Imogen's affections from her absent lord, and to induce her to look upon Cloten with favor. Instead, they succeeded in causing her to loathe the base fellow, and to cling with her whole heart to her exiled husband. The petty persecution to which she was subjected excited the pity and indignation of the entire court. One of the lords expressed the general feeling thus: —

> Alas, poor princess,
> Thou divine Imogen, what thou endurest,
> Betwixt a father by thy step-dame governed,
> A mother hourly coining plots, a wooer
> More hateful than the foul expulsion is
> Of thy dear husband, than that horrid act
> Of the divorce he'd make! The heavens hold firm
> The walls of thy dear honor, keep unshaked
> That temple, thy fair mind, that thou mayst stand,
> To enjoy thy banished lord and this great land.

Poor Imogen! though suffering keenly, no assaults

upon her constancy could prevail to weaken her devotion to the absent Posthumus.

He, meanwhile, had arrived in Rome. At the house of his father's friend, Philario, he met a number of gay young fellows, who, as the time was, were given to making all sorts of wagers, and to provoking causeless quarrels. One of these idle youths, having heard Posthumus's story, and his high praises of the beauty and nobleness of Imogen, conceived the base notion of seeking to destroy the happiness of both by proving Imogen false to her husband. This man, Iachimo, had been so unfortunate as not to have known any true woman, and he believed that all women were weak and yielding. So he dared Posthumus, who firmly declared his faith in Imogen's honor, to wager the diamond ring that Imogen had given him, against ten thousand ducats, that he could win Imogen from her constancy.

Posthumus foolishly consented to the wager, saying: —

I shall but lend my diamond till your return: let there be covenants drawn between 's: my mistress exceeds in goodness the hugeness of your unworthy thinking: I dare you to this match: here's my ring.

IACHIMO. If I bring you no sufficient testimony, my ten thousand ducats are yours; so is your diamond too: if I come off, and leave her in such honor as you have trust in, she your jewel, this your jewel, and my gold are yours.

POSTHUMUS. I embrace these conditions; let us have articles betwixt us. Only, thus far you shall answer: if you give me directly to understand you have prevailed, I am no further your enemy: if she remain unseduced, for your ill opinion and

the assault you have made to her chastity you shall answer me with your sword.

IACHIMO. Your hand; a covenant: we will have these things set down by lawful counsel, and straight away for Britain: I will fetch my gold and have our two wagers recorded.

Imogen, ignorant of the evil designs against her honor, mourned her sad fate in being thus forcibly separated from her beloved Posthumus, and counted the days until she might hope to hear from him. So when Iachimo appeared, bringing a letter from her banished lord, she welcomed him kindly but with simple dignity, saying: —

> You are as welcome, worthy sir, as I
> Have words to bid you, and shall find it so
> In all that I can do.
>
> IACHIMO. Thanks, fairest lady.

Imogen's beauty and her queenly bearing so far exceeded Iachimo's expectations that he despaired of accomplishing his evil purpose, but he would not forego the attempt. So he began by telling false tales about Posthumus, insinuating that he was engaging in all sorts of merry-makings, forgetful of her lonely waiting at home. In reply to Imogen's anxious inquiries concerning the health of her lord, Iachimo said: —

> None a stranger there
> So merry and so gamesome: he is called
> The Briton reveller.
>
> IMOGEN. When he was here,
> He did incline to sadness, and oft-times
> Not knowing why.
>
> IACHIMO. I never saw him sad.

There is a Frenchman his companion, one
An eminent monsieur, that, it seems, much loves
A Gallian girl at home: he furnaces
The thick sighs from him, whiles the jolly Briton —
Your lord, I mean — laughs from's free lungs, cries "O,
Can my sides hold, to think that man, who knows
By history, report, or his own proof,
What woman is, yea, what she cannot choose
But must be, will his free hours languish for
Assuréd bondage?"

IMOGEN. Will my lord say so?

IACHIMO. Ay, madam, with his eyes in flood with laughter:
It is a recreation to be by
And hear him mock the Frenchman. But, heavens know,
Some men are much to blame.

IMOGEN. Not he, I hope.
My lord, I fear, has forgot Britain.

IACHIMO. And himself. Not I,
Inclined to this intelligence, pronounce
The beggary of his change; but 'tis your graces
That from my mutest conscience to my tongue
Charms this report out.

IMOGEN. Let me hear no more.

The sneaking villain then sought to persuade Imogen that she could revenge herself upon her husband, who, he said, had forgotten his vows of constancy, by proving false in her turn. When he offered to kiss her, she burst out in indignant scorn: —

Away! I do condemn mine ears that have
So long attended thee. If thou wert honorable,
Thou wouldst have told this tale for virtue, not

For such an end thou seek'st, — as base as strange.
Thou wrong'st a gentleman, who is as far
From thy report as thou from honor, and
Solicit'st here a lady that disdains
Thee and the devil alike.
The king my father shall be made acquainted
Of thy assault: if he shall think it fit,
A saucy stranger in his court to expound
His beastly mind to us, he hath a court
He little cares for and a daughter who
He not respects at all.

Iachimo was now as profuse in his apologies as he had been bold in his base attack upon Imogen's honor. He praised Posthumus extravagantly, and told his faithful wife: —

He sits 'mongst men like a descended god:
He hath a kind of honor sets him off,
More than a mortal seeming. Be not angry,
Most mighty princess, that I have adventured
To try your taking of a false report; which hath
Honored with confirmation your great judgment
In the election of a sir so rare,
Which you know cannot err: the love I bear him
Made me to fan you thus, but the gods made you
Unlike all others, chaffless.[1] Pray, your pardon.

Although Iachimo had been baffled by Imogen's purity, he was too base to be touched by her heavenly constancy. So he plotted still further against her innocence. He was resolved not to return to Rome without some apparent evidence that she was false to her hus-

[1] without baseness, true.

band. His plan now was to have himself conveyed to Imogen's room without her knowledge. To accomplish this he told her that: —

> Some dozen Romans of us and your lord —
> The best feather of our wing — have mingled sums
> To buy a present for the emperor;
> Which I, the factor for the rest, have done
> In France: 'tis plate of rare device, and jewels
> Of rich and exquisite form; their values great;
> And I am something curious,[1] being strange,
> To have them in safe stowage: may it please you
> To take them in protection?
>
> IMOGEN. Willingly;
> And pawn mine honor for their safety: since
> My lord hath interest in them, I will keep them
> In my bedchamber.
>
> IACHIMO. They are in a trunk,
> Attended by my men: I will make bold
> To send them to you, only for this night;
> I must aboard to-morrow.
> Therefore I shall beseech you, if you please
> To greet your lord with writing, do't to-night.
>
> IMOGEN. I will write.
> Send your trunk to me; it shall safe be kept,
> And truly yielded you.

Wholly unsuspicious of the trap which the crafty Italian had set to betray her, Imogen prayed as she fell asleep: —

> To your protection I commend me, gods.
> From fairies and the tempters of the night
> Guard me, beseech ye.

[1] anxious.

Then Iachimo crept out of the trunk in which he had concealed himself. He was entranced by the sight of the sleeping loveliness of the fair princess, but no spark of pity moved his cold heart. He stole about stealthily, observing every detail of the furnishings of the room, that he might the better palm off his lying tale upon Posthumus. He said to himself: —

> I will write all down:
> Such and such pictures; there the window; such
> The adornment of her bed; the arras; figures,
> Why, such and such; and the contents o' the story.

Imogen had been reading, and had left the volume open when she fell asleep. Then, bending over her, he continued: —

> Ah, but some natural notes about her body
> Above ten thousand meaner movables
> Would testify to enrich mine inventory.
> O sleep, thou ape of death, lie dull upon her.

So soundly did Imogen sleep that she did not feel his guilty fingers as they took off her bracelet, the parting gift of Posthumus, which she wore night and day. Having secured it, Iachimo murmured triumphantly: —

> 'Tis mine; and this will witness outwardly,
> As strongly as the conscience does within,
> To the madding of her lord. On her left breast
> A mole cinque[1]-spotted, like the crimson drops
> I' the bottom of a cowslip: here's a voucher,
> Stronger than ever law could make. I have enough:

[1] five.

To the trunk again, and shut the spring of it.
Swift, swift, you dragons of the night, that dawning
May bare the raven's eye! I lodge in fear;
Though this a heavenly angel, hell is here.

As if Iachimo's base plotting against her were not enough, Imogen's rest was disturbed by the playing of musicians who had been hired by Cloten, in the vain hope of inducing her to favor his suit. They sang: —

Hark, hark! the lark at heaven's gate sings,
And Phœbus 'gins arise,
His steeds to water at those springs
On chaliced flowers that lies;
And winking Mary-buds begin
To ope their golden eyes:
With everything that pretty is,
My lady sweet, arise:
Arise, arise.

Iachimo made such speed on his return journey to Rome that Posthumus argued rightly that he had been unsuccessful in his dishonorable suit. He was ready with his forged tale, however, beginning with praise of Imogen's beauty.

IACHIMO. Your lady
Is one of the fairest that I have looked upon.
POSTHUMUS. And therewithal the best; or let her beauty
Look through a casement to allure false hearts
And be false with them.
IACHIMO. Had I not brought
The knowledge of your mistress home, I grant
We were to question further: but I now

Profess myself the winner of her honor,
Together with your ring.
POSTHUMUS. If you can make't apparent, my hand
And ring is yours; if not, the foul opinion
You had of her pure honor gains or loses
Your sword or mine, or masterless leaves both
To who shall find them.

While Iachimo was describing minutely the furnishings and decorations of Imogen's chamber, Posthumus listened unbelieving, for he said that Iachimo might have gained that information from another person who was familiar with the place; but when the false villain showed the bracelet which Posthumus had put on his wife's arm at parting, he turned pale and exclaimed: —

Once more let me behold it: is it that
Which I left with her?
IACHIMO. Sir — I thank her — that:
She stripped it from her arm; I see her yet;
Her pretty action did outsell her gift,
And yet enriched it too: she gave it me, and said
She prized it once.

Even then Posthumus could not believe that Imogen was false. He thought that, perhaps, she had sent the bracelet to him; but when Iachimo suggested that, in that case, she would have mentioned it in the letter that he had brought, Posthumus lost faith in her truth, and railed bitterly against womankind, as he handed Iachimo the ring that he had wagered upon his wife's honor, saying: —

Here, take this too;
It is a basilisk unto mine eye,
Kills me to look on't. Let there be no honor
Where there is beauty; truth, where semblance; love,
Where there's another man: the vows of women
Of no more bondage be, to where they are made,
Than they are to their virtues; which is nothing.
O, above measure, false!

When Posthumus went into exile, he left with Imogen one faithful servant, Pisanio by name, on whose single-hearted devotion he knew that they could safely rely. The queen had sought in vain to bribe Pisanio to influence Imogen in favor of her son's suit. No offers of wealth or promotion could induce Pisanio to swerve from his honorable allegiance to his master.

Imagine, then, Pisanio's consternation when he received from Posthumus a letter commanding him to take the life of Imogen because, as he said, she had been false to her wifely honor. Of the truth of this charge Posthumus wrote that he had sufficient proof, but he did not reveal the source of this evil report.

Pisanio, knowing his mistress to be pure as an angel, felt sure that his master had been abused by an enemy. In his distress he moaned: —

O master! what a strange infection
Is fallen into thy ear! What false Italian,
As poisonous-tongued as handed, hath prevailed
On thy too ready hearing? Disloyal! No;
She's punished for her truth, and undergoes,
More goddess-like than wife-like, such assaults

As would take in some virtue. O my master!
Thy mind to her is now as low as were
Thy fortunes. How! that I should murder her,
Upon the love and truth and vows which I
Have made to thy command? — I, her? — her
blood?
If it be so to do good service, never
Let me be counted serviceable. How look I,
That I should seem to lack humanity
So much as this fact comes to?
Lo, here she comes.
I am ignorant in what I am commanded.

Pisanio now gave Imogen a letter which Posthumus had sent to her, in which he told her that his love could no longer content itself without a sight of her dear face; that he had, therefore, risked the danger of being discovered; and that he was, even then, at a place called Milford Haven, on the outskirts of Cymbeline's dominions. He ended his treacherous letter thus: —

What your own love will out of this advise you, follow. So he wishes you all happiness, that remains loyal to his vow, and your, increasing in love, LEONATUS POSTHUMUS.

O for a horse with wings! —

exclaimed the unsuspecting Imogen, in her eagerness to join the beloved husband, who, as she thought, was impatiently awaiting her at Milford Haven. She would not listen to any word of fear as to the outcome of the journey, for which she bade Pisanio prepare at once, but replied to his entreaty that she would consider the danger: —

I see before me, man: nor here, nor here,
Nor what ensues, but have a fog in them,
That I cannot look through. Away, I prithee;
Do as I bid thee: there's no more to say;
Accessible is none but Milford way.

Not until they reached their destination did the faithful servant give his mistress a hint of the woful secret. Then, for reply to Imogen's exclamations of disappointment at not finding her husband there, he handed her Posthumus's letter wherein he had instructed Pisanio to slay her at Milford Haven. She turned so pale on reading the awful missive, that Pisanio thought that she would die of horror at the cruel charge. Utterly bewildered, the wronged wife wailed:—

False to his bed! What is it to be false?
To lie in watch there and to think on him?
To weep 'twixt clock and clock? if sleep charge nature,
To break it with a fearful dream of him,
And cry myself awake? that's false to's bed, is it?
PISANIO. Alas, good lady!
IMOGEN. I false! Thy conscience witness. Iachimo,
Thou didst accuse him of incontinency;
Thou then look'dst like a villain; now methinks
Thy favor's[1] good enough. Some jay of Italy,
Whose mother was her painting, hath betrayed him:
Poor I am stale, a garment out of fashion; O,
Men's vows are women's traitors!
PISANIO. Good madam, hear me.
IMOGEN. Come, fellow, be thou honest;
Do thou thy master's bidding: when thou see'st him,
A little witness my obedience: look!

[1] countenance, expression.

I draw the sword myself: take it, and hit
The innocent mansion of my love, my heart:
Fear not; 'tis empty of all things but grief:
Thy master is not there, who was indeed
The riches of it: do his bidding; strike.

PISANIO. Hence, vile instrument!

IMOGEN. Why, I must die;
And if I do not by thy hand, thou art
No servant of thy master's. Prithee, despatch:
The lamb entreats the butcher: where's thy knife?
Thou art too slow to do thy master's bidding,
When I desire it too.

PISANIO. O gracious lady,
Since I received command to do this business,
I have not slept one wink.

IMOGEN. Wherefore then
Didst undertake it? Why hast thou abused
So many miles with a pretence? this place?
Mine action and thine own? the perturbéd court
For my being absent? whereunto I never
Purpose return. Why hast thou gone so far,
To be unbent when thou hast ta'en thy stand,
The elected deer before thee?

PISANIO. But to win time
To lose so bad employment; in the which
I have considered of a course. Good lady,
Hear me with patience.

Pisanio then unfolded the plan which he had formed for Imogen's further action. His love for both his sweet mistress and for his master, who, he was convinced, had been foully deceived, determined him to save Imogen's life, in the hope that the truth would, in some way, be made known.

Just at this time, an ambassador from the Roman emperor, Augustus, was at the court of Cymbeline, threatening him with speedy war, unless Britain should pay the tribute which had been promised to Rome, and which was long past due. This ambassador, Caius Lucius, would come to Milford Haven on his return, and Pisanio suggested that Imogen should don a page's suit which he had provided for this emergency, and seek to enter the service of the Roman. Pisanio hoped that, if Imogen should go to Italy, she might chance to meet her husband, in which case he felt sure that Posthumus would learn that she had always been true to him.

The plan seemed good to the unhappy Imogen, and she quickly transformed herself into the guise of a boy. The change of dress was the more necessary as Pisanio was about to return to the court, lest he might be suspected of having spirited Imogen away. Before starting, however, he gave his mistress a box of cordial which he had received from the queen, and which she had told him would cure any distemper.

For two days Imogen wandered in search of the Roman, but without finding him; and two nights the tenderly nurtured princess made the ground her bed. On the third day, faint with hunger, she happened upon a cave, wherein, to her great joy, she found plenty of food. She was so intent upon satisfying her hunger that she did not hear the approach of the owners of the cave, who had been hunting in the forest.

The elder man discovered Imogen as he was about to

enter, and he whispered to his companions, two noble youths: —

> Stay: come not in.
> But that it eats our victuals, I should think
> Here were a fairy.
>
> What's the matter, sir?

asked Guiderius, one of the young men. Belarius, the elder man, replied: —

> By Jupiter, an angel! or, if not,
> An earthly paragon! Behold divineness
> No elder than a boy!

Startled by their voices, Imogen came forward, saying: —

> Good masters, harm me not:
> Before I entered here, I called; and thought
> To have begged or bought what I have took: good troth,
> I have stolen naught, nor would not, though I had found
> Gold strewed i' the floor. Here's money for my meat:
> I would have left it on the board so soon
> As I had made my meal, and parted[1]
> With prayers for the provider.
>
> BELARIUS. Prithee, fair youth,
> Think us no churls, nor measure our good minds
> By this rude place we live in. Well encountered!
> 'Tis almost night: you shall have better cheer
> Ere you depart; and thanks to stay and eat it.
> Boys, bid him welcome.

The brothers needed no urging, for they were charmed with the newcomer's beauty and graceful manner.

[1] departed.

When they desired to know her name, Imogen's quick wit invented one that had a meaning expressive of her faith and constancy. *Fidele*, she called herself to these new friends. In return for their hospitality, Imogen took upon herself the duties of a housewife, for, in the old days, princesses were carefully instructed in the arts of home-making. Her skill called forth high praise from Belarius, who said: —

> This youth, howe'er distressed, appears he hath had
> Good ancestors.
>
> GUIDERIUS. His neat cookery! he cut our roots in characters
> And sauced our broths, as Juno had been sick,
> And he her dieter.

When they were ready to hunt again, Imogen excused herself from accompanying her hosts on the plea of illness, and when she was left alone she took the drug that Pisanio had given her, hoping by this means to find relief from the dreadful heart-sickness that oppressed her. The effect of this drug was to induce a death-like trance.

Arviragus, the younger brother, found Imogen in this condition when he returned, and taking the beautiful body in his arms, he bore it into the open air, telling the others: —

> The bird is dead
> That we have made so much on. I had rather
> Have skipped from sixteen years of age to sixty
> Than have seen this.
>
> BELARIUS. Thou blessed thing!
> Jove knows what man thou mightst have made; but I,

Thou diedst, a most rare boy, of melancholy.
How found you him?

ARVIRAGUS. Stark, as you see:
Thus smiling, as some fly had tickled slumber,
Not as death's dart, being laughed at; his right cheek
Reposing on a cushion.

GUIDERIUS. Where?

ARVIRAGUS. O' the floor;
His arms thus leagued: I thought he slept, and put
My clouted brogues from off my feet, whose rudeness
Answered my steps too loud. With fairest flowers
Whilst summer lasts and I live here, Fidele,
I'll sweeten thy sad grave: thou shalt not lack
The flower that's like thy face, pale primrose, nor
The azured harebell, like thy veins, no, nor
The leaf of eglantine, whom not to slander,
Out-sweetened not thy breath: the ruddock[1] would,
With charitable bill, bring thee all this;
Yea, and furred moss besides, when flowers are none,
To winter-ground thy corse.

Then the brothers laid the body of Imogen tenderly on the ground, beside the grave of their mother, strewing it with flowers, and singing the while: —

Fear no more the heat o' the sun,
Nor the furious winter's rages;
Thou thy worldly task hast done,
Home art gone and ta'en thy wages:
Golden lads and girls all must,
As chimney-sweepers, come to dust.

Fear no wore the frown o' the great;
Thou art past the tyrant's stroke;

[1] robin.

Care no more to clothe and eat;
To thee the reed is as the oak:
The sceptre, learning, physic, must
All follow this, and come to dust.

Fear no more the lightning-flash,
Nor the all-dreaded thunder-stone;
Fear not slander, censure rash;
Thou hast finished joy and moan:
All lovers young, all lovers must
Consign to thee, and come to dust.

No exorciser harm thee!
Nor no witchcraft charm thee!
Ghost unlaid forbear thee!
Nothing ill come near thee!
Quiet consummation have!
And renownéd be thy grave!

When Imogen's absence became known at court, Cloten, fearing lest she should escape him altogether, decided to follow, and find her if possible. This he did in the hope of revenging himself upon her who had treated him with contempt, telling him that she valued her husband's cast-off clothing more highly than his princely person. He demanded of Pisanio, who had now returned to court: —

Where is thy lady? Close villain,
I'll have this secret from thy heart, or rip
Thy heart to find it. Is she with Posthumus?
PISANIO. Alas, my lord,
How can she be with him? When was she missed?
He is in Rome.
CLOTEN. Where is she, sir? Come nearer;

No further halting: satisfy me home
What is become of her?

PISANIO. O, my all-worthy lord!

CLOTEN. All-worthy villain,
Discover where thy mistress is at once,
At the next word: no more of "worthy lord"!
Speak, or thy silence on the instant is
Thy condemnation and thy death.

Thus adjured, Pisanio showed Cloten Posthumus's letter in which he said that he would come to Milford Haven. In doing this, Pisanio felt sure that no harm could come thereby either to his master or his mistress, for he supposed that they were both out of England then.

At Cloten's demand, Pisanio brought him a suit of his master's, by means of which Cloten intended to lead Imogen to mistake him for her husband. He commanded Pisanio: —

Bring this apparel to my chamber; that is the second thing that I have commanded thee: the third is, that thou wilt be a voluntary mute to my design. Be but duteous, and true preferment shall tender itself to thee. My revenge is now at Milford: would I had wings to follow it! Come, and be true.

As Pisanio watched the retreating form of Cloten, he said to himself: —

Thou bid'st me to thy loss: for true to thee
Were to prove false, which I will never be,
To him that is most true. To Milford go,
And find not her whom thou pursuest. Flow, flow,
You heavenly blessings, on her! This fool's speed
Be crossed with slowness; labor be his meed!

It seems surprising that a prince should trust himself on any expedition without attendants; but Cloten was bent upon imposing upon Imogen as her banished husband — the stupid fellow thinking that, if he wore the same clothes, he could deceive the anxious wife.

On the very day that Imogen was found in that deathlike trance, Cloten encountered Belarius and the two brothers, and the others avoiding him, he called to Guiderius: —

Soft! What are you
That fly me thus? some villain mountaineers?
I have heard of such. What slave art thou?
GUIDERIUS. A thing
More slavish did I ne'er than answering
A slave without a knock.
CLOTEN. Thou art a robber,
A law-breaker, a villain; yield thee, thief.
GUIDERIUS. To who? to thee? What art thou? Have not I
An arm as big as thine? a heart as big?
Thy words, I grant, are bigger, for I wear not
My dagger in my mouth. Say what thou art,
Why I should yield to thee?
CLOTEN. Thou villain base,
Know'st me not by my clothes?
GUIDERIUS. No, nor thy tailor, rascal,
Who is thy grandfather: he made those clothes,
Which, as it seems, make thee.
CLOTEN. Thou injurious thief,
Hear but my name, and tremble.
GUIDERIUS. What's thy name?
CLOTEN. Cloten, thou villain.
GUIDERIUS. Cloten, thou double villain, be thy name,

I cannot tremble at it: were it Toad, or Adder, Spider,
'Twould move me sooner.

CLOTEN. To thy further fear,
Nay, to thy mere confusion, thou shalt know
I am son to the queen.

GUIDERIUS. I am sorry for't; not seeming
So worthy as thy birth.

CLOTEN. Art not afeard?

GUIDERIUS. Those that I reverence those I fear, the wise:
At fools I laugh, not fear them.

CLOTEN. Die the death:
When I have slain thee with my proper[1] hand,
I'll follow those that even now fled hence,
And on the gates of Lud's[2] town set your heads:
Yield, rustic mountaineer.

In the fight that ensued Guiderius easily overcame the bragging prince. After killing him, he, in accordance with the custom of those old crude times, cut off the head of his slain enemy.

When Belarius learned what the rash young man had done, he was greatly alarmed, for he realized what vengeance was likely to fall upon one who had killed a member of the royal family. Belarius, you will remember, was the name of the king's officer who, when he was unjustly accused of treason, had stolen the sons of Cymbeline. They had grown up in the mountains, all unaware of their princely birth, and loving Belarius as their father. Now that they were grown, however, they showed the noble qualities and

[1] own. [2] the old name for London.

the heroic valor that we like to think of as belonging naturally to princes. Belarius recognized this fact, and he felt that this deed of the elder son might have grave consequences. He said to himself: —

> O thou goddess,
> Thou divine Nature, how thyself thou blazon'st
> In these two princely boys! They are as gentle
> As zephyrs blowing below the violet,
> Not wagging his sweet head; and yet as rough,
> Their royal blood enchafed, as the rudest wind,
> That by the top doth take the mountain pine,
> And make him stoop to the vale. 'Tis wonder
> That an invisible instinct should frame them
> To royalty unlearned, honor untaught,
> Civility not seen from other, valor
> That wildly grows in them, but yields a crop
> As if it had been sowed. Yet still it's strange
> What Cloten's being here to us portends,
> Or what his death will bring us.

After some time, the effect of the drug passed off, and Imogen slowly awoke to find herself lying upon the ground, and covered with flowers. She was bewildered, however, and had no clear recollection of what had happened before she had fallen asleep. As she rose to her feet, she was horrified to see beside her the headless body of a man dressed in the well-known clothes of Posthumus. Almost crazed with grief, she inferred that Pisanio had plotted with Cloten to put her husband to death, and to stupefy her with the drug. In utter despair, she threw herself upon the body of her supposed lord.

There she was found by the Roman ambassador, Lucius, and some other officers of the Roman army which had just landed in Britain for the purpose of compelling Cymbeline to pay the neglected tribute. On seeing the strange spectacle, Lucius exclaimed: —

Soft, ho! what trunk is here
Without his top? The ruin speaks that sometime
It was a worthy building. How! a page!
Or dead, or sleeping on him? But dead rather;
For nature doth abhor to make his bed
With the defunct, or sleep upon the dead.
Let's see the boy's face.

CAPTAIN. He's alive, my lord.

LUCIUS. He'll then instruct us of this body. Young one,
Inform us of thy fortunes, for it seems
They crave to be demanded. Who is this
Thou makest thy bloody pillow? Or who was he
That, otherwise than noble nature did,
Hath altered that good picture? What's thy interest
In this sad wreck? How came it? Who is it?
What art thou?

IMOGEN. I am nothing: or if not,
Nothing to be were better. This was my master,
A very valiant Briton and a good,
That here by mountaineers lies slain. Alas!
There is no more such masters: I may wander
From east to occident, cry out for service,
Try many, all good, serve truly, never
Find such another master.

LUCIUS. Alack, good youth!
Thou movest no less with thy complaining than
Thy master in bleeding. Thy name?

IMOGEN. Fidele, sir.

LUCIUS. Thou dost approve thyself the very same:
Thy name well fits thy faith, thy faith, thy name.
Wilt take thy chance with me? I will not say
Thou shalt be so well mastered, but, be sure,
No less beloved. The Roman emperor's letters,
Sent by a consul to me, should not sooner
Than thine own worth prefer thee: go with me.

Thus was Pisanio's advice that Imogen should seek service with the Roman ambassador strangely accomplished. But Pisanio himself, no more than other members of the court, knew what had happened to Imogen or Cloten.

The queen, whose plottings had all come to naught, was lying dangerously ill, and the weak king, who had so long acted only under the advice of the queen, was perplexed in the extreme. Still, he was ready to meet the Romans, saying: —

We fear not
What can from Italy annoy us; but
We grieve at chances here.

Pisanio did not dare let any one know the special cause of his anxiety, but he thought: —

I heard no letter from my master since
I wrote him Imogen was slain: 'tis strange:
Nor hear I from my mistress, who did promise
To yield me often tidings; neither know I
What is betid to Cloten; but remain
Perplexed in all. The heavens still must work.
Wherein I am false I am honest; not true, to be true.
These present wars shall find I love my country,
Even to the note o' the king, or I'll fall in them.

All other doubts, by time let them be cleared:
Fortune brings in some boats that are not steered.

When Posthumus received Pisanio's letter containing the false report of Imogen's death, the Roman army was about to embark for Britain. Having lost, as he thought, all that made life of any worth, he decided to join the Roman troops. But once upon British soil, he could not bring himself to fight against his country, so he dressed himself in the clothing of a peasant, and quietly entered the ranks of the British. In his distress of mind, he even blamed Pisanio for having obeyed his commands too exactly. His love and grief forced him to lament:—

O Pisanio!
Every good servant does not all commands:
No bond but to do just ones. Gods! if you
Should have ta'en vengeance on my faults, I never
Had lived to put on this: so had you saved
The noble Imogen to repent, and struck
Me, wretch more worth your vengeance. But, alack,
You snatch some hence for little faults: you some permit
To second ills with ills, each elder worse,
And make them dread it, to the doers' thrift.
But Imogen is your own: do your best wills,
And make me blest to obey! I am brought hither
Among the Italian gentry, and to fight
Against my lady's kingdom: 'tis enough
That, Britain, I have killed thy mistress; peace!
I'll give no wound to thee. Therefore, good heavens,
Hear patiently my purpose: I'll disrobe me
Of these Italian weeds and suit myself

As does a Briton peasant: so I'll fight
Against the part I come with; so I'll die
For thee, O Imogen, even for whom my life
Is every breath a death; and thus, unknown,
Pitied nor hated, to the face of peril
Myself I'll dedicate. Let me make men know
More valor in me than my habits[1] show.

With the Roman army came also the false Iachimo, whose conscience had given him no rest since he had so wickedly betrayed both Imogen and Posthumus. In the battle that followed, Iachimo was disarmed by Posthumus, whom he did not recognize in his peasant's garb. Iachimo attributed his defeat to his own guilty heart, saying: —

The heaviness and guilt within my bosom
Takes off my manhood: I have belied a lady,
The princess of this country, and the air on't
Revengingly enfeebles me.

At one time during the battle, it seemed that the Romans would carry off the palm of victory; but just as Cymbeline was seized by the enemy, the brave mountaineers, near whose cave the engagement took place, rushed to the rescue of the king, rallied the Britons, and saved the day. Lucius was captured, together with his page. Posthumus, since he could not find the death he coveted in the battle, gave himself up, hoping that, when Cymbeline should discover him, he would suffer the death which had been threatened if he should return from exile.

[1] garments.

And now, unknown to one another, were assembled in the presence of the king all the persons with whom this story has to do. In accordance with the cruel customs of warfare in those days, Lucius expected that death would be his fate. With manly courage he faced the British king, saying: —

> Consider, sir, the chance of war: the day
> Was yours by accident; had it gone with us,
> We should not, when the blood was cool, have threatened
> Our prisoners with the sword. But since the gods
> Will have it thus, that nothing but our lives
> May be called ransom, let it come: sufficeth
> A Roman with a Roman's heart can suffer:
> Augustus lives to think on't: and so much
> For my peculiar care. This one thing only
> I will entreat; my boy, a Briton born,
> Let him be ransomed: never master had
> A page so kind, so duteous, diligent,
> So feat,[1] so nurse-like: let his virtue join
> With my request, which I'll make bold your highness
> Cannot deny; he hath done no Briton harm,
> Though he have served a Roman: save him, sir,
> And spare no blood beside.

Cymbeline was, though why he could not tell, moved by the winning grace of the page, who was, as we know, his daughter in disguise. He not only granted the page his life, but said that he would grant any favor that the boy might ask. Lucius expected that the page, grateful for his intercession, would ask that his life be spared, but Imogen had spied Iachimo among the prisoners,

[1] graceful.

and she saw the ring that she had given Posthumus on his finger. She felt that life and all depended upon her learning how he had obtained that ring. So she said: —

> My boon is, that this gentleman may render
> Of whom he had this ring.
> CYMBELINE. That diamond upon your finger, say
> How came it yours?
> IACHIMO. I am glad to be constrained to utter that
> Which torments me to conceal. By villany
> I got this ring.

Then Iachimo made a clean breast of the whole story of his treachery. When he came to tell how he had lied to Posthumus, the wronged husband could restrain himself no longer, but proclaimed himself, and confessed that he, deceived by Iachimo's false story, had ordered Pisanio to kill his mistress. In his bitter grief and rage, he now called for torturers to punish the villain, and again he accused himself as a murderer. He cried aloud: —

> The temple of virtue was she. O Imogen!
> My queen, my life, my wife! O Imogen,
> Imogen, Imogen!

His feelings were so wrought upon that he could not brook the slightest word from any one, and when Imogen herself said: —

> Peace, my lord; hear, hear —

Posthumus struck her down, exclaiming: —

> Shall's have a play of this? Thou scornful page,
> There lie thy part.

This was more than Pisanio could bear, and he rushed to the aid of his mistress, calling out, as he did so: —

O, gentlemen, help!
Mine and your mistress! O my lord Posthumus!
You ne'er killed Imogen till now. Help, help!
Mine honored lady!
CYMBELINE. Does the world go round?
If this be so, the gods do mean to strike me
To death with mortal joy.

Imogen soon revived, and in the joy of being reunited to the wife whom he had so wrongfully suspected, Posthumus forgave the now repentant Iachimo, who knelt and implored him: —

Take that life, beseech you,
Which I so often owe: but your ring first;
And here the bracelet of the truest princess
That ever swore her faith.
POSTHUMUS. Kneel not to me:
The power that I have on you is to spare you;
The malice towards you to forgive you: live,
And deal with others better.
CYMBELINE. Nobly doomed![1]
We'll learn our freeness of a son-in-law:
Pardon's the word to all.

It was now Belarius's turn to confess the wrong of which he had been guilty in robbing the king of his sons in their childhood. Coming forward, he said to Cymbeline: —

Thou hadst, great king, a subject who
Was called Belarius.

[1] judged, sentenced.

CYMBELINE. What of him? he is
A banished traitor.
BELARIUS. Indeed a banished man;
I know not how a traitor.
CYMBELINE. Take him hence:
The whole world shall not save him.
BELARIUS. Not too hot:
First pay me for the nursing of thy sons.
CYMBELINE. Nursing of my sons!
BELARIUS. I am too blunt and saucy: here's my knee:
Ere I arise, I will prefer my sons;
Then spare not the old father. Mighty sir,
These two young gentlemen, that call me father,
And think they are my sons, are none of mine;
They are the issue of your loins, my liege,
And blood of your begetting. I
Am that Belarius whom you sometime[1] banished:
Your pleasure was my mere offence, my punishment
Itself, and all my treason; that I suffered
Was all the harm I did. These gentle princes —
For such and so they are — these twenty years
Have I trained up. Their nurse, Euriphile,
Whom for the theft I wedded, stole these children
Upon my banishment: I moved her to't,
Having received the punishment before,
For that which I did then: beaten for loyalty
Excited me to treason. But gracious sir,
Here are your sons again; and I must lose
Two of the sweet'st companions in the world.
The benediction of these covering heavens
Fall on their heads like dew! for they are worthy
To inlay heaven with stars.
CYMBELINE. Thou weep'st, and speak'st.

[1] formerly.

The service that you three have done is more
Unlike than this thou tell'st. I lost my children:
If these be they, I know not how to wish
A pair of worthier sons. O Imogen,
Thou hast lost by this a kingdom.

IMOGEN. No, my lord;
I have got two worlds by it. O my gentle brothers,
Have we thus met? O, never say hereafter
But I am truest speaker: you called me brother,
When I was but your sister; I, you, brothers,
When ye were so indeed.

So great was Cymbeline's happiness in recovering all of his children, that he spared the lives of all the Roman prisoners, and promised to pay the tribute which he had refused by the advice of his wicked queen, news of whose death had just been received.

In token of the happy ending of all their sad errors, Cymbeline proclaimed:—

Publish we this peace
To all our subjects. Set we forward: let
A Roman and a British ensign wave
Friendly together: so through Lud's town march:
And in the temple of great Jupiter
Our peace we'll ratify; seal it with feasts.
Set on there! Never was a war did cease,
Ere bloody hands were washed, with such a peace.

ALLUSIONS EXPLAINED

THE TEMPEST

PAGE 4. *Jove's lightnings, the precursors*
O' th' dreadful thunder-claps.

Jove, or Jupiter, king of gods, according to Greek mythology, holds the thunderbolts in his hand, ready to hurl them against those who offend him.

P. 5. *The still-vexed Bermoothes:* the ever-disturbed Bermudas. These islands are surrounded by rugged rocks, over which the waves dash continually.

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM

P. 28. *On Dian's altar to protest*
For aye austerity and single life.

Diana, the virgin goddess of the moon, was the special guardian of maidens. Hence, she who dedicated her life to Diana must remain unmarried.

P. 30. *Ere the leviathan can swim a league:* the leviathan is mentioned in the Bible as the largest of sea animals; therefore it would be able to swim a long distance in a very short space of time.

P. 35. *Dian's bud o'er Cupid's flower*
Hath such force and blessed power.

Since Diana is the chaste virgin goddess, the juice of the flower sacred to her would be thought able to undo the mischief done by the charm of Cupid, the little god of love.

P. 38. *Night's swift dragons:* the chariot of Night was fabled to be drawn by dragons.

Aurora's harbinger: Aurora was the goddess of the dawn; her harbinger is the morning star which heralds the dawn.

Neptune: the god of the sea.

ROMEO AND JULIET

P. 58. *The pale reflex of Cynthia's brow:* Cynthia is another name for Diana, the moon-goddess. It is derived from Mount Cynthus in Delos, fabled to be her birthplace.

THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

P. 74. *My wealthy Andrew* (Italian *Andrea*): the name is supposed to have been given to large vessels because of the honor in which Andrea Doria, a famous Genoese admiral, was held.

P. 75. *By two-headed Janus:* Janus, in Roman mythology god of the sun's rising and setting, was represented with two faces, one looking to the east, the other to the west. One face was merry, the other, grave.

Nestor: the oldest of the Greek heroes who engaged in the siege of Troy, famed for his wisdom and gravity.

P. 77. *Cato's daughter, Brutus' Portia:* Portia, wife of Brutus, one of the leaders in the conspiracy against the life of Julius Caesar, was distinguished for her virtues and her noble constancy.

Her sunny locks
Hang on her temples like a golden fleece.
Which makes her seat of Belmont Colchos strand,
And many Jasons come in quest of her.

The suitors for Portia's hand are here likened to Jason, who led the Argonautic expedition in search of the Golden Fleece, renowned in legend. By the aid of Medea, daughter of the king of Colchis, in whose dominions the Golden Fleece was kept, Jason succeeded in carrying off the treasure.

P. 78. *The Rialto:* the chief of the islands on which Venice was built was called *Isola di Rialto*, the Island of the Deep Stream. The name Rialto came also to be applied to the Exchange, which was on that island. It is the Exchange which is here meant — "a most stately building . . . where the Venetian gentlemen and the merchants doe meet twice

a day, betwixt eleven and twelve of the clocke in the morning, and betwixt five and six of the clocke in the afternoon." — ROLFE'S *Notes.*

P. 79. *To eat of the habitation which your prophet, the Nazarite, conjured the devil into.* The Mosaic law forbade the Jews to eat pork. The allusion refers to the act of Jesus in permitting the evil spirits, which he had expelled from two men, to enter a herd of swine. See Matt. viii. 32.

P. 85. *If I live to be as old as Sibylla:* an allusion to the Cumæan sibyl, who obtained from Apollo a promise that her years should be as many as the grains of sand she was holding in her hand.

P. 86. *Phœbus' fire:* the heat of the sun. Phœbus is the same as Apollo, the god of the sun.

P. 94. *The beards of Hercules and frowning Mars:* Hercules, renowned in Greek mythology for his twelve labors, symbolizes strength; Mars, the god of war, stands for valor.

Livers white as milk: courage was anciently believed to be seated in the liver. Since fear blanches the face, cowardice was attributed to a white liver.

Hard food for Midas: an allusion to the story of Midas, king of Phrygia, who obtained from a god the power to change whatever he touched to gold; but when he found his food turned to gold, he entreated the god to take his gift back again.

P. 110. *There's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st*
But in his motion like an angel sings.

The ancients had a beautiful belief that the planets in their motion gave out musical sounds; this idea is known as the "music of the spheres."

Such harmony is in immortal souls: "Besides the music of the spheres, which no mortal ear ever caught a note of, there was by some philosophers supposed to be a harmony in the human soul." — ROLFE.

AS YOU LIKE IT

P. 117. *Robin Hood:* a traditionary English outlaw, who lived a wild and merry life in a wood, together with his followers. Sherwood Forest was one of his favorite haunts.

THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

P. 144. *By gogs-wouns:* a corruption of *by God's wounds;* other forms are *'swounds* and *zounds.*

HAMLET

P. 245. *Hyperion to a satyr:* Hyperion is, as here, often identified with Apollo, the ideal of manly beauty; used here in antithesis to a satyr — a monstrosity, part man and part goat.

P. 262. *Vulcan's stithy:* Vulcan was the god of fire and the forge. Several volcanoes, notably that of Etna, were thought to be his workshops.

P. 263. *Full thirty times hath Phœbus' cart gone round,* etc. The meaning of this passage of six lines is, in prose, "We have been married thirty years."

P. 269. *Hyperion's curls,* etc. Hamlet describes his father as possessing every kind of beauty — the glory of Apollo, the valor of Mars, the grace of Mercury.

P. 278. *Old Pelion or the skyish head*
Of blue Olympus.

Pelion and Olympus were mountains in Thessaly; Olympus was regarded as the home of the great gods.

P. 279. *Ossa:* another mountain in Thessaly near Pelion and Olympus.

MACBETH

P. 288. *The Prince of Cumberland:* "The crown of Scotland was not, at this time, strictly hereditary, and when the successor to the reigning king was named, he was made Prince of Cumberland." — WHITE.

P. 291. *Like the poor cat i' the adage:* "Given thus in Heywood's proverbs, 1562: 'The cat would eat fysche, and would not wet her feete.'" — CLARK AND WRIGHT.

P. 295. *Destroy your sight with a new Gorgon:* the head of Medusa, one of the Gorgons, was so fearful to look upon that whoever beheld it was turned to stone.

P. 303. *The most pious Edward:* Edward the Confessor.

THE WINTER'S TALE

P. 315. *Nine changes of the watery star hath been*
The shepherd's note.

Nine months have passed; the *watery star* is the moon, which in early days marked the passage of time for shepherds as they kept their flocks by night.

P. 332. *Flora peering in April's front:* Flora was the goddess of flowers. Florizel compares Perdita decked with flowers to the goddess of flowers appearing in early April.

P. 333. *Juno's eyes:* Juno was the wife of Jupiter and queen of the gods.

Cytherea's breath: Cytherea was a surname sometimes given to Venus, the goddess of love.

CYMBELINE

P. 427. *Quiet consummation have:* an allusion to a prayer in the burial service of the Church of England: "that we, with all those that are departed in the true faith of thy holy Name, may have our perfect consummation and bliss, both in body and soul, in thy eternal and everlasting glory."