A Midsummer-Night's Dream

By

William Shakespeare

WITH AN INTRODUCTION AND NOTES BY

K. Deighton

AND AN APPENDIX BY

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MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED
ST. MARTIN'S STREET, LONDON
1913

First Edition 1891
Reprinted 1893, 1895, 1902
Re issue with Appendix 1906
Reprinted 1906, 1908, 1912, 1918.

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INTRODUCTION.

Date of Play.

THOUGH *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* was first printed in 1600, it is mentioned two years earlier in Meres' *Palladis Tamia*, and was probably written some time between 1592 and 1594. Titania's description of the disturbed weather, caused by Oberon's quarrel with her and the consequent neglect of the fairy rites, has been conjectured to be an allusion to the tempests and heavy rains with which England was visited during the latter of these two dates. But the circumstances related do not tally so closely with the actual events as to make the conjecture at all certain. That the play belonged to the earlier period of Shakespeare's dramatic career would be evident though we had no mention of its first publication, and the precise date of composition is not a matter of any real importance. In regard to the purpose of the play, it has been supposed to have been intended as a masque to be performed at the marriage of some noble person, possibly that of Southampton with Elizabeth Vernon, or that of Essex with Lady Sidney. Of course, if either marriage could be proved to be the occasion of the play, we should have a fixed date for its composition; but here again we have nothing more trustworthy than inferences capable of diverse application.

Outline of the Play.

In the opening scene preparations are being made for the marriage of Theseus, Duke of Athens, with the Amazonian Queen, Hippolyta. Egeus, an Athenian citizen, entering to make a complaint against his daughter, Hermia, who had been betrothed to Demetrius, but whose heart has been won by Lysander, asks of Theseus that the law of Athens, giving to parents the disposal of their daughters in marriage or permission to put them to death in case of disobedience, may be enforced in his behalf. Hermia, being told by Theseus that, should she refuse to marry Demetrius, the only alternatives are death or seclusion in a nunnery, prefers the latter alternative to marriage with any but Lysander. Lysander, however, on their being left alone, persuades her to another course, that of escaping with him to a place "remote seven leagues" from Athens, where they would be beyond the reach of the law and might be safely married. This plan of theirs Hermia confides to her bosom friend, Helena, who in her turn reveals it to Demetrius, with the result of his following the pair; while she, whose love Demetrius had formerly sought and won, determines upon following him. Their flight takes them through a wood in the neighbourhood of Athens where certain "rude mechanicals" have met together to rehearse a play to be acted before Theseus and Hippolyta on their wedding night. This wood happens to be one of the haunts of Oberon and Titania, king and queen of the fairies. At the present moment their elfin majesties have fallen out about a "little changeling boy" in Titania's train whom she refuses to give to Oberon. Determined to carry his point, Oberon resorts to a stratagem, and commissions

Puck, a mischievous sprite in his service, to smear the eyes of the sleeping Titania with the juice of a certain flower which will compel her to fall in love with "the next thing then she waking looks upon," and so counteract her affection for the "little changeling boy." While Puck is away seeking for this potent flower, Helena and Demetrius come to the spot; and Oberon, overhearing his churlish rejection of her love, determines to use the juice for the further purpose of compelling the "disdainful youth" to return to his allegiance to the "sweet Athenian lady." On the return of his sprite, Oberon squeezes the flower on Titania's eyelids, and Puck goes off on the same errand to Demetrius. Meanwhile, however, Hermia and Lysander come upon the scene; and, weary with wandering about the wood, lay themselves down to sleep upon the grass. Puck entering and seeing the pair, supposes Lysander to be the Athenian of whom Oberon had spoken, and promptly anoints his eyes. A moment or two later Demetrius and Helena reappear, and Lysander, awaking, pours forth protestations of love for Helena, abandoning for her sake the sleeping Hermia. At this point we come upon the Athenian artizans rehearsing their play of Pyramus and Thisbe. Puck, angry at their daring to intrude upon the fairy haunts, by his magic power fastens the head of an ass upon the shoulders of Bottom, the principal actor, and with him Titania, as she wakes up, immediately falls in love. The rest of the actors, frightened by Bottom's transformation, scatter in all directions; and he, left alone with Titania, is being wooed by her when Oberon re-enters and is told by Puck of the

success of his stratagem. While they are in conversation, Hermia and Demetrius appear, the former accusing the latter with having slain his rival Lysander, who, as we have seen, had left her sleeping in order to follow Helena. Oberon now discovers that Puck has mistaken the one Athenian for the other, sends him to bring Helena to the spot, and smears the eyes of Demetrius with the love-juice in preparation for her coming. On her appearance with Lysander, Demetrius awakes and bursts out with vows of passionate love for her. Helena, bewildered by his protests, as she had been awhile before by those of Lysander, imagines that he, Lysander, and Hermia have all entered into a plot to mock her. A bitter quarrel with Hermia is the result, Demetrius and Lysander at the same time asserting their claim to Helena's love, and challenging each other to mortal combat. To prevent mischief, Oberon directs Puck to overcast the night, and by assuming in turn the forms of Lysander and Demetrius to lead each far away from the other. This done, he is ordered by means of another herb to remove the charm from Lysander's eyes, so that, on awakening, he may forget his sudden passion for Helena and renew his vows to Hermia. Puck carries out his instructions regarding the rivals, who wander about the wood till from weariness they, as well as Hermia and Helena, lie down and fall asleep, and then anoints Lysander's eyes with the counter-charm. While they are thus asleep, Titania, still engrossed by her love for Bottom, reappears; and shortly afterwards Oberon, having obtained the "changeling child," proceeds to remove the spell he had laid upon her senses. This being done,

and the fairies disappearing, Theseus, accompanied by Hippolyta and Egeus, comes in the early morning to hunt in the wood. At the sound of the huntsmen's horns, Lysander, Demetrius, Hermia and Helena awake from their slumber; Demetrius relates to Theseus the occurrences of the night and resigns all claim to Hermia. Egeus, enraged by the flight of his daughter, claims enforcement of the law, but is overruled by Theseus, who sanctions the marriage of Hermia with Lysander and of Helena with Demetrius at the same time that he makes Hippolyta his wife. The triple wedding having been solemnized in the temple, the play ends with the ludicrous performance of Pyramus and Thisbe by the Athenian handicraftsmen.

Knight justly remarks that "to offer an analysis of this subtle and ethereal drama would, we believe, be as unsatisfactory as the attempts to associate it with the realities of the stage. With scarcely an exception, the proper understanding of the other plays of Shakspere, may be assisted by connecting the apparently separate parts of the action, and by developing and reconciling what seems obscure and anomalous in the features of the characters. But to follow out the caprices and allusions of the loves of Demetrius and Lysander,—of Helena and Hermia;—to reduce to prosaic description the consequence of the jealousies of Oberon and Titania;—to trace the Fairy Queen under the most fantastic of deceptions, where grace and vulgarity blend together like the Cupids and Chimeras of Raphael's Arabesques; and, finally, to go along with the scene till the allusions disappear—till the lovers are happy, and 'sweet bully Bottom' is reduced to an ass of human dimensions;—

such an attempt as this would be worse even than unreverential criticism. No,—the Midsummer-Night's Dream must be left to its own influences." The characterization, Theseus and Bottom excepted, is of the slightest, and the individuality of the principal performers hardly discernible. Of Theseus, Dowden remarks,* "There is no figure in the early drama of Shakspere so magnificent. His are the large hands that have helped to shape the world. His utterance is the rich-toned speech of one who is master of events—who has never known a shrill or eager feeling. His nuptial day is at hand; and while the other lovers are agitated, bewildered, incensed, Theseus, who does not think of himself as a lover but rather as a beneficent conqueror, remains in calm possession of his joy. Theseus, a grand ideal figure, is to be studied as Shakspere's conception of the heroic man of action in his hour of enjoyment and of leisure. With a splendid capacity for enjoyment, gracious to all, ennobled by the glory, implied rather than explicit, of great foregone achievement, he stands as centre of the poem, giving their true proportions to the fairy tribe upon the one hand, and upon the other to the 'human mortals.'" Bottom, on his part, is a creation of splendid absurdity, such as could acknowledge no other creator than Shakespeare. In his supreme self-assurance there is nothing that he will not greatly dare. That blessed gift has already marked him out for the admiring respect of his fellow "mechanicals," and to him as by acclaim they assign the chief part in their revels. But, though willing to play the lover, and boastful of the pathetic effect which in that character he is certain to produce upon the

*Shakspere: His Mind and Art, p. 68.

audience, he confides to his fellows that his "chief humour is for a tyrant"; he "could play Ercles rarely, or a part to tear a cat in, to make all split." As the assignment of the parts proceeds and Flute is told off for the heroine, Bottom, assured that he would excel in the *métier* of the 'first lady,' gives a specimen of the "monstrous little voice" in which he would so gracefully mince his words. But the Lion's part has to be appropriated, and for that too, in his all accomplished versatility, Bottom feels that he has a special vocation; "Let me play the lion too: I will roar, that I will do any man's heart good to hear me; I will roar, that I will make the duke say, 'Let him roar again, let him roar again.'" To Quince's remark that he might frighten the ladies, he is ready with the answer, "I will aggravate my voice so, that I will roar you as gently as any sucking dove; I will roar you an 'twere any nightingale." When at last he has graciously contented himself with a single part, he still must patronizingly shape out the management of the play, and drill the players in propriety of action. At the rehearsal, his impersonation of Pyramus is interrupted by the appearance of Puck, who fastens an ass-head upon his shoulders. Of this, however, he is as sublimely unconscious as of his having been an ass before he was decorated with that outward and visible symbol of his inward and spiritual doltship. His fellow-actors, frightened by his transformation, speedily decamp; but Bottom, though left alone, is exuberantly courageous, and in order to prove to others (and to himself) that he is not afraid, he will sing. Nor is he a whit disconcerted by the appearance of the Fairy Queen. On the contrary, he is as ready to talk with her as with an ordinary mortal, and shows

himself perfectly affable to the elfin attendants placed at his disposal by Titania. When, later on, he has got rid of his encumbrance, and is rejoined by his fellow-actors, he is careful to impress his final directions upon them; at the presentation of the play, not content with declaiming his part, he kindly sets Theseus right when making a comment on the action, and when all is over, though lying dead, cannot resist starting up to contradict Demetrius. "Sweet bully Bottom," happy in thy sublime faith, even though that faith be in an ass-head of thine own! Of the four lovers little more can be said than that they are two pairs of lovers, of whom Demetrius is of a somewhat haughtier nature than Lysander; while for distinctive marks between the heroines, Hermia is a *mignonne* brunette with a quick temper, Helen a taller blonde, more timid and yielding in character.

The Fairy Mythology of the Play.

For a further history of the subject, students may consult Keightley's *Fairy Mythology*, pp. 280-349, from which source the following particulars are derived. "Shakespeare," says Keightley, "having the Faerie Queene before his eyes, seems to have attempted a blending of the Elves of the village with the Fays of Romance. His fairies agree with the former in their diminutive stature,—diminished, indeed, to dimensions inappreciable by village gossips,—in their fondness for dancing, their love of cleanliness, and their child-abstracting propensities. Like the Fays, they form a community ruled over by the princely Oberon and the fair Titania. There is a court and chivalry: Oberon would have the queen's sweet changeling to be a 'Knight of his train to trace the forest wild.' Like earthly monarchs, he has his jester, 'the shrewd and knavish

sprite, called Robin Goodfellow'... The haunts of the Fairies are the most rural and romantic that can be selected. They meet

> 'On hill, in dale, forest or mead,
> By paved fountain, or by rushy brook,
> Or on the beached margent of the sea,
> To dance their ringlets to the whistling wind.'

And the place of Titania's repose is

> 'A bank whereon the wild thyme blows,
> Where oxlips and the nodding violet grows,
> Quite over-canopied with lush woodbine,
> With sweet musk-roses, and with eglantine.'

The powers of the poet are exerted to the utmost to convey an idea of their minute dimensions; and time, with them, moves on lazy pinions. 'Come,' cries the queen,

> 'Come now, a roundel and a fairy song,
> Then for the third part of a moment hence;
> Some to kill cankers in the musk-rose buds;
> Some war with rere-mice for their leathern wings,
> To make my small elves coats.'

Puck goes 'swifter than arrow from the Tartar's bow'; he says, 'he'll put a girdle round about the earth in forty minutes'; and 'We,' says Oberon,—

> 'We the globe can compass soon
> Swifter than the wandering moon.'

They are either not mortal, or their date of life is indeterminately long; they are of a nature superior to man; and speak with contempt of human follies. By night they revel beneath the light of the moon and stars, retiring at the approach of 'Aurora's harbinger,' but

not compulsively like ghosts and 'damned spirits.'" "Puck," the same writer says, "is evidently the same with the old word *Pouke*, the original meaning of which would seem to be devil, demon or evil spirit ... the Icelandic Puki is an evil spirit ... in Friesland the Kobold is called Puk, and in old German we meet with Putz or Butz as the name of a being not unlike the original English Puck. The Devonshire fairies are called Pixies, and the Irish have their Pooka, and the Welsh their Pwcca, both derived from Pouke or Puck ... 'The peasantry,' says Mr. Allies, 'of Alfrick and those parts of Worcestershire, say that they are sometimes what they call *Pouke-ledden*, that is, that they are occasionally waylaid in the night by a mischievous sprite whom they call Poake, who leads them into ditches, bogs, pools, and other such scrapes, and then sets up a loud laugh and leaves them quite bewildered in the lurch.' This is what in Devon is called being *Pixy-led*." "Robin Goodfellow," with whom Shakespeare identifies Puck, "is," says Keightley, "evidently a domestic spirit, answering in name and character to ... the Knecht Ruprecht, *i.e.* Robin of Germany." From a little work published in Elizabeth's reign and entitled "The mad Pranks and merry Jests of Robin Goodfellow," Keightley thinks that Shakespeare in a good measure derived his Puck. This work relates many stories of Robin's mischievous tricks in all of which he goes off laughing, "Ho, ho, hoh," as in our play, iii. 2. 421. From Reginald Scott's *Discoverie of Witchcraft*, iv. 10, Keightley quotes, "Indeed your grandams' maids were wont to set a bowl of milk before him (Incubus) and his cousin Robin Goodfellow, for grinding of malt or mustard, and sweeping the house

at midnight; and you have also heard that he would chafe exceedingly if the maid or good-wife of the house, having compassion of his nakedness, laid any clothes for him beside his mess of white bread and milk, which was his standing fee; for in that case he saith,

> "What have we here? Hemten, hamten,
> Here will I never more tread or stampen."

"Burton," continues Keightley, "after noticing from Paracelsus those which in Germany 'do usually walk in little coats, some two foot long,' says, 'A bigger kind there is of them called with us Hobgoblins and Robin Goodfellows, that would, in those superstitious times, grind corn for a mess of milk, cut wood, or do any kind of drudgery work.' And again: 'Some put our Fairies into this rank (that of terrestrial devils), which have been in former times adored with much superstition, with sweeping their houses, and setting of a pail of clean water, good victuals, and the like, and then they should not be pinched, but find money in their shoes, and be fortunate in their enterprises.' In another place (p. 30), he says, 'And so those which Miyaldus calls *Ambulones*, that walk about midnight, on heaths and desert places, which (saith Lavater) draw men out of the way and lead them all night a by-way, or quite barre them of their way; these have several names, in several places; we commonly call them Pucks.' Harsenet thus speaks of them in his Declaration: 'And if that the *bowl* of curds and *cream* were not *duly set* out for Robin Goodfellow, the *friar*, and Sisse the dairy-maid, why then, either the pottage was burned the next day in the pot, or the cheeses would not curdle, or the

butter would not come, or the ale in the fat [*i.e.* vat] never would have good head'.... Nash thus describes them: 'Then ground they malt, and had hempen shirts for their labours; daunced in rounds in green meadows pincht maids in their sleep that swept not their houses clean, and led poor travellers out of their way.'"

Rites and customs referred to in the Play: May-Day.

"The festival of May [referred to in i. 1. 167, iv. 1. 138] has," says Dyer, *Folk-Lore of Shakespeare*, pp. 287-9, "from the earliest times been most popular in this country, on account of its association with the joyous season of spring. It was formerly celebrated with far greater enthusiasm than now-a-days, for Bourne tells us how the young people were in the habit of rising a little after midnight and walking to some neighbouring wood, accompanied with music and the blowing of horns, where they broke down branches from the trees, which, decorated with nosegays and garlands of flowers, were brought home soon after sunrise, and placed at their doors and windows. Shakespeare, alluding to this practice, informs us, H. VIII. v. 4. 12-5, how eagerly it was looked forward to, and that it was impossible to make the people sleep on May morning;

> 'Pray, sir, be patient: 'tis as much impossible—
> Unless we sweep 'em from the door with cannons—
> To scatter 'em, as 'tis to make 'em sleep
> On May-day morning.'

... In Chaucer's 'Court of Love,' we read that early on May-day 'Fourth goth al the Court, both most and lest, to fetche the flow'rs fresh and blome.' In the reign of Henry the Eighth, it is on record that the heads of the Corporation of London went out into the high grounds

of Kent to gather the May, and were met on Shooter's Hill by the king and his queen, Catherine of Arragon, as they were coming from the palace of Greenwich. Until within a comparatively recent period this custom still lingered in some of the counties. Thus, at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, the following doggerel was sung:

'Rise up, maidens, fie for shame!
For I've been four long miles from hame,
I've been gathering my garlands gay,
Rise up, fair maidens, and take in your May.'

Many of the ballads sung now-a-days in country places by the village children on May morning, as they carry their garlands from door to door, undoubtedly refer to the old practice of going a-Maying, although fallen into disuse.

"In olden times nearly every village had its May-pole, around which, decorated with wreaths of flowers, ribbons, and flags, our merry ancestors danced from morning till night ... London ... had several may-poles, one of which stood in Basing Lane, near St. Paul's Cathedral. It was a large fir pole, forty feet high and fifteen inches in diameter, and fabled to be the justing staff of Gerard the Giant. Only a few, however, of the old may-poles remain scattered here and there throughout the country. One still supports a weather-cock in the churchyard at Pendleton, Manchester; and in Derbyshire, a few years ago, several were to be seen standing on some of the village greens. The rhymes made use of as the people danced round the may-pole varied according to the locality, and oftentimes combined a curious mixture of the jocose and sacred."

Saint Valentine.

On the feast of Saint Valentine, referred to in iv. 1. 144, 5, birds, according to an old tradition, chose their mates for the year. "From this notion," says Dyer, p. 280, "it has been suggested, arose the once popular practice of choosing valentines, and also the common belief that the first two single persons who meet in the morning of St. Valentine's day have a great chance of becoming married to each other. This superstition is alluded to in Ophelia's song in "Hamlet," iv. 5. 49-51,

> 'To-morrow is Saint Valentine's day,
> All in the morning betime,
> And I a maid at your window
> To be your Valentine.'"

Douce traces the custom of choosing lovers on this day to the *Lupercalia* of Rome, a festival held about the same date, and during which a similar custom prevailed.

Oberon's Vision.

To this vision Warburton was the first to give an allegorical meaning. According to his interpretation the "fair vestal" was Elizabeth, and this no doubt is true; "the mermaid" was Mary Queen of Scots; "the dolphin," an allusion to her marriage with the Dauphin of France; "the rude sea," Scotland, encircled by the ocean, which rose up against the Regent, while Mary was in France, and was quieted by her return home; the "certain stars," the English nobles who fell in her cause. Boaden, accepting the idea of an allegory, discovered in Oberon's first speech an intimation of the time and place of the action; and, in the second, an account of the action itself and the persons engaged in it. The scene was Kenilworth Castle; the time, the season of its "Princely Pleasures"; and the action, the double court-

ship of Leicester with the Queen and his secret paramour. Finally, Halpin further developed Boaden's view in this wise. "It was during her Majesty's summer progress of 1575 and her residence in Kenilworth Castle, that the Earl of Leicester, under circumstances of peculiar perfidy, made, if not his last, his most elaborate attack on the hand of his royal mistress. Here is an event worthy of prodigies in the waters, in the air, and on the earth; nor can we imagine portents more poetically fit for such an occasion than those striking omens which the Poet has seized upon as at once foreshadowing the events and fixing the period of their occurrence. But, whilst we should look in vain for such natural prodigies at that time, we shall have no difficulty in finding them among the artificial wonders raised for Elizabeth's amusement during the magnificent festivities of Kenilworth. The language employed by our Poet here, as in many other places, is the language of Pageantry, then popular and well understood; and it describes, with sufficient accuracy—with the accuracy of one describing from memory, after the lapse of a few years—some of the most striking and beautiful of the pageants exhibited on the occasion." In detail, then, the "promontory" is the rising ground, by the side of a piece of water, from which the festivities were beheld; the "mermaid" and "dolphin" belong to the pageants exhibited in the water; the "certain stars," the fireworks accompanying the pageants; the "cold moon," Elizabeth; the "Earth," Lady Sheffield, to whom Leicester had been secretly married; "Cupid," Leicester; the "love-shaft loosed madly from his bow," Leicester's wild attempt to win Elizabeth's love; the "little western flower," Lettice, wife of the Earl of Essex, with whom Leicester was at

the time carrying on an intrigue; "before milk-white," indicating her original purity, her being "purple with Love's wound," the result of her criminal passion. Halpin's theory is accepted by Gervinus, and it is no doubt worked out with extreme precision and ingenuity. Apart, however, from the forcible objection pointed out by Wright, that the "little western flower" would in the first instance be used in an allegorical sense and immediately afterwards in a literal sense, the solution is not to me at all convincing. I do not believe that such realistic treatment of a poetical fancy was in Shakespeare's way, any more than I believe in the Mediterranean island which commentators have discovered as Prospero's place of exile.

Title of the Play.

As the beginning of May,—the month in which according to Chaucer, whose authority is followed in the *Two Noble Kinsmen*, the marriage of Theseus and Hippolyta took place,—is more than seven weeks from midsummer, it is probable that the play derives its name from the fact of its having been first performed at that season; unless, as Dowden suggests, a night in early May may be considered a night in the spring of midsummer.

A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

THESEUS, Duke of Athens.

EGEUS, father to Hermia.

LYSANDER, DEMETRIUS, } in love with Hermia.

PHILOSTRATE, master of the revels to Theseus.

QUINCE, a carpenter.

SNUG, a joiner.

BOTTOM, a weaver.

FLUTE, a bellows-mender.

SNOUT, a tinker.

STARVELING, a tailor.

HIPPOLYTA, queen of the Amazons, betrothed to Theseus.

HERMIA, daughter to Egeus, in love with Lysander.

HELENA, in love with Demetrius.

OBERON, king of the fairies.

TITANIA, queen of the fairies.

PUCK, or Robin Goodfellow.

PEASEBLOSSOM, COBWEB, MOTH, MUSTARDSEED, } fairies.

Other fairies attending their King and Queen.

Attendants on Theseus and Hippolyta.

SCENE: *Athens, and a wood near it.*

A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM.

ACT I.

SCENE I. *Athens. The palace of* THESEUS.

Enter THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, PHILOSTRATE, *and* Attendants.

The. Now, fair Hippolyta, our nuptial hour
Draws on apace; four happy days bring in
Another moon: but, O, methinks, how slow
This old moon wanes! she lingers my desires,
Like to a step-dame or a dowager
Long withering out a young man's revenue.
Hip. Four days will quickly steep themselves in night;
Four nights will quickly dream away the time;
And then the moon, like to a silver bow
New-bent in heaven, shall behold the night
Of our solemnities.
The. Go, Philostrate,
Stir up the Athenian youth to merriments;
Awake the pert and nimble spirit of mirth:
Turn melancholy forth to funerals;
The pale companion is not for our pomp. [*Exit Philostrate.*
Hippolyta, I woo'd 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.

Enter EGEUS, HERMIA, LYSANDER, *and* DEMETRIUS.

Ege. Happy be Theseus, our renowned duke!
The. Thanks, good Egeus: what 's the news with thee?
Ege. Full of vexation come I, with complaint
Against my child, my daughter Hermia.
Stand forth, Demetrius. My noble lord,
This man hath my consent to marry her.
Stand forth, Lysander: and, my gracious duke,
This hath bewitch'd the bosom of my child.
Thou, thou, Lysander, thou hast given her rhymes,
And interchanged love-tokens with my child:
Thou hast by moonlight at her window sung
With feigning voice verses of feigning love,
And stolen the impression of her fantasy
With bracelets of thy hair, rings, gawds, conceits,
Knacks, trifles, nosegays, sweetmeats, messengers
Of strong prevailment in unharden'd youth:
With cunning hast thou filch'd my daughter's heart,
Turn'd her obedience, which is due to me,
To stubborn harshness: and, my gracious duke,
Be it so she will not here before your grace
Consent to marry with Demetrius,
I beg the ancient privilege of Athens,
As she is mine, I may dispose of her:
Which shall be either to this gentleman
Or to her death, according to our law
Immediately provided in that case.
The. What say you, Hermia? be advised, fair maid:
To you your father should be as a god;
One that composed your beauties, yea, and one
To whom you are but as a form in wax
By him imprinted and within his power
To leave the figure or disfigure it.
Demetrius is a worthy gentleman.
Her. So is Lysander.

The. In himself he is;
But in this kind, wanting your father's voice,
The other must be held the worthier.
Her. I would my father look'd but with my eyes.
The. Rather your eyes must with his judgment look.
Her. I do entreat your grace to pardon me.
I know not by what power I am made bold,
Nor how it may concern my modesty,
In such a presence here to plead my thoughts;
But I beseech your grace that I may know
The worst that may befall me in this case,
If I refuse to wed Demetrius.
The. Either to die the death or to abjure
For ever the society of men.
Therefore, fair Hermia, question your desires;
Know of your youth, examine well your blood,
Whether if you yield not to your father's choice,
You can endure the livery of a nun,
For aye to be in shady cloister mew'd,
To live a barren sister all your life,
Chanting faint hymns to the cold fruitless moon.
Thrice-blessed they that master so their blood,
To undergo such maiden pilgrimage;
But earthlier happy is the rose distill'd,
Than that which withering on the virgin thorn
Grows, lives and dies in single blessedness.
Her. So will I grow, so live, so die, my lord,
Ere I will yield my virgin patent up
Unto his lordship, whose unwished yoke
My soul consents not to give sovereignty.
The. Take time to pause; and, by the next new moon—
The sealing-day betwixt my love and me
For everlasting bond of fellowship—
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.
Dem. Relent, sweet Hermia: and, Lysander, yield
Thy crazed title to my certain right.
Lys. You have her father's love, Demetrius;
Let me have Hermia's: do you marry him.
Ege. Scornful Lysander! true, he hath my love,
And what is mine my love shall render him.
And she is mine, and all my right of her
I do estate unto Demetrius.
Lys. I am, my lord, as well derived as he,
As well-possess'd; my love is more than his;
My fortunes every way as fairly rank'd,
If not with vantage, as Demetrius';
And, which is more than all these boasts can be,
I am beloved of beauteous Hermia:
Why should not I then prosecute my right?
Demetrius, I'll avouch it to his head,
Made love to Nedar's daughter, Helena,
And won her soul; and she, sweet lady, dotes,
Devoutly dotes, dotes in idolatry,
Upon this spotted and inconstant man.
The. I must confess that I have heard so much,
And with Demetrius thought to have spoke thereof;
But, being over-full of self-affairs,
My mind did lose it. But, Demetrius, come;
And come, Egeus; you shall go with me,
I have some private schooling for you both.
For you, fair Hermia, look you arm yourself
To fit your fancies to your father's will;
Or else the law of Athens yields you up—
Which by no means we may extenuate—
To death, or to a vow of single life.
Come, my Hippolyta: what cheer, my love?
Demetrius and Egeus, go along:
I must employ you in some business

Against our nuptial and confer with you
Of something nearly that concerns yourselves.
Ege. With duty and desire we follow you.
[*Exeunt all but Lysander and Hermia.*
Lys. How now, my love! why is your cheek so pale?
How chance the roses there do fade so fast?
Her. Belike for want of rain, which I could well
Beteem them from the tempest of my eyes.
Lys. Ay me! for aught that I could ever read,
Could ever hear by tale or history,
The course of true love never did run smooth;
But, either it was different in blood,—
Her. O cross! too high to be enthrall'd to low.
Lys. Or else misgraffed in respect of years,—
Her. O spite! too old to be engaged to young.
Lys. Or else it stood upon the choice of friends,—
Her. O hell! to choose love by another's eyes.
Lys. Or, if there were a sympathy in choice,
War, death, or sickness did lay siege to it,
Making it momentany as a sound,
Swift as a shadow, short as any dream;
Brief as the lightning in the collied night,
That, in a spleen, unfolds both heaven and earth,
And ere a man hath power to say 'Behold!'
The jaws of darkness do devour it up:
So quick bright things come to confusion.
Her. If then true lovers have been ever cross'd,
It stands as an edict in destiny:
Then let us teach our trial patience,
Because it is a customary cross,
As due to love as thoughts and dreams and sighs,
Wishes and tears, poor fancy's followers.
Lys. A good persuasion: therefore, hear me, Hermia.
I have a widow aunt, a dowager
Of great revenue, and she hath no child:
From Athens is her house remote seven leagues;

And she respects me as her only son.
There, gentle Hermia, may I marry thee;
And to that place the sharp Athenian law
Cannot pursue us. If thou lovest me then,
Steal forth thy father's house to-morrow night;
And in the wood, a league without the town,
Where I did meet thee once with Helena,
To do observance to a morn of May,
There will I stay for thee.

Her. My good Lysander!
I swear to thee, by Cupid's strongest bow,
By his best arrow with the golden head,
By the simplicity of Venus' doves,
By that which knitteth souls and prospers loves,
And by that fire which burn'd the Carthage queen,
When the false Troyan under sail was seen,
By all the vows that ever men have broke,
In number more than ever women spoke,
In that same place thou hast appointed me,
To-morrow truly will I meet with thee.

Lys. Keep promise, love. Look, here comes Helena.

Enter HELENA.

Her. God speed fair Helena! whither away?

Hel. Call you me fair? that fair again unsay.
Demetrius loves your fair: O happy fair!
Your eyes are lode-stars; and your tongue's sweet air
More tuneable than lark to shepherd's ear,
When wheat is green, when hawthorn buds appear.
Sickness is catching: O, were favour so,
Yours would I catch, fair Hermia, ere I go;
My ear should catch your voice, my eye your eye,
My tongue should catch your tongue's sweet melody.
Were the world mine, Demetrius being bated,
The rest I 'ld give to be to you translated.
O, teach me how you look, and with what art

You sway the motion of Demetrius' heart.
Her. I frown upon him, yet he loves me still.
Hel. O that your frowns would teach my smiles such skill!
Her. I give him curses, yet he gives me love.
Hel. O that my prayers could such affection move!
Her. The more I hate, the more he follows me.
Hel. The more I love, the more he hateth me.
Her. His folly, Helena, is no fault of mine.
Hel. None, but your beauty: would that fault were mine!
Her. Take comfort: he no more shall see my face;
Lysander and myself will fly this place.
Before the time I did Lysander see,
Seem'd Athens as a paradise to me:
O, then, what graces in my love do dwell,
That he hath turn'd a heaven unto a hell!
Lys. Helen, to you our minds we will unfold:
To-morrow night, when Phœbe doth behold
Her silver visage in the watery glass,
Decking with liquid pearl the bladed grass,
A time that lovers' flights doth still conceal,
Through Athens' gates have we devised to steal.
Her. And in the wood, where often you and I
Upon faint primrose-beds were wont to lie,
Emptying our bosoms of their counsel sweet,
There my Lysander and myself shall meet;
And thence from Athens turn away our eyes,
To seek new friends and stranger companies.
Farewell, sweet playfellow: pray thou for us;
And good luck grant thee thy Demetrius!
Keep word, Lysander: we must starve our sight
From lovers' food till morrow deep midnight.
Lys. I will, my Hermia. [*Exit Herm.*
Helena, adieu:
As you on him, Demetrius dote on you! [*Exit.*
Hel. How happy some o'er other some can be!
Through Athens I am thought as fair as she.

But what of that? Demetrius thinks not so;
He will not know what all but he do know:
And as he errs, doting on Hermia's eyes,
So I, admiring of his qualities:
Things base and vile, holding no quantity,
Love can transpose to form and dignity:
Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind;
And therefore is wing'd Cupid painted blind:
Nor hath Love's mind of any judgement taste;
Wings and no eyes figure unheedy haste:
And therefore is love said to be a child,
Because in choice he is so oft beguiled.
As waggish boys in game themselves forswear,
So the boy Love is perjured everywhere:
For ere Demetrius look'd on Hermia's eyne,
He hail'd down oaths that he was only mine;
And when this hail some heat from Hermia felt,
So he dissolved, and showers of oaths did melt.
I will go tell him of fair Hermia's flight:
Then to the wood will he to-morrow night
Pursue her; and for this intelligence
If I have thanks, it is a dear expense:
But herein mean I to enrich my pain,
To have his sight thither and back again. [*Exit.*

SCENE II. *Athens.* QUINCE'S *house.*

Enter QUINCE, SNUG, BOTTOM, FLUTE, SNOUT, *and* STARVELING.

Quin. Is all our company here?

Bot. You were best to call them generally, man by man, according to the scrip.

Quin. Here is the scroll of every man's name, which is thought fit, through all Athens, to play in our interlude before the duke and the duchess, on his wedding-day at night.

Bot. First, good Peter Quince, say what the play treats on, then read the names of the actors, and so grow to a point.

Quin. Marry, our play is, The most lamentable comedy, and most cruel death of Pyramus and Thisby.

Bot. A very good piece of work, I assure you, and a merry. Now, good Peter Quince, call forth your actors by the scroll. Masters, spread yourselves.

Quin. Answer as I call you. Nick Bottom, the weaver.

Bot. Ready. Name what part I am for, and proceed.

Quin. You, Nick Bottom, are set down for Pyramus.

Bot. What is Pyramus? a lover, or a tyrant?

Quin. A lover, that kills himself most gallant for love.

Bot. That will ask some tears in the true performing of it: if I do it, let the audience look to their eyes; I will move storms, I will condole in some measure. To the rest: yet my chief humour is for a tyrant: I could play Ercles rarely, or a part to tear a cat in, to make all split.

> The raging rocks
> And shivering shocks
> Shall break the locks
> Of prison gates;
> And Phibbus' car
> Shall shine from far
> And make and mar
> The foolish Fates.

This was lofty! Now name the rest of the players. This is Ercles' vein, a tyrant's vein; a lover is more condoling.

Quin. Francis Flute, the bellows-mender.

Flu. Here, Peter Quince.

Quin. Flute, you must take Thisby on you.

Flu. What is Thisby? a wandering knight?

Quin. It is the lady that Pyramus must love.

Flu. Nay, faith, let not me play a woman; I have a beard coming.

Quin. That's all one: you shall play it in a mask, and you may speak as small as you will.

Bot. An I may hide my face, let me play Thisby too, I'll speak in a monstrous little voice, 'Thisne, Thisne;' 'Ah Pyramus, my lover dear! thy Thisby dear, and lady dear!'

Quin. No, no; you must play Pyramus: and, Flute, you Thisby.

Bot. Well, proceed.

Quin. Robin Starveling, the tailor.

Star. Here, Peter Quince.

Quin. Robin Starveling, you must play Thisby's mother. Tom Snout, the tinker.

Snout. Here, Peter Quince.

Quin. You, Pyramus' father: myself, Thisby's father. Snug, the joiner; you, the lion's part: and, I hope, here is a play fitted.

Snug. Have you the lion's part written? pray you, if it be, give it me, for I am slow of study.

Quin. You may do it extempore, for it is nothing but roaring.

Bot. Let me play the lion too I will roar, that I will do any man's heart good to hear me; I will roar, that I will make the duke say 'Let him roar again, let him roar again.'

Quin. An you should do it too terribly, you would fright the duchess and the ladies, that they would shriek; and that were enough to hang us all.

All. That would hang us, every mother's son.

Bot. I grant you, friends, if that you should fright the ladies out of their wits, they would have no more discretion but to hang us: but I will aggravate my voice so that I will roar you as gently as any sucking dove; I will roar you an 'twere any nightingale.

Quin. You can play no part but Pyramus; for Pyramus is a sweet-faced man; a proper man, as one shall see in a summer's day; a most lovely gentleman-like man: therefore you must needs play Pyramus.

Bot. Well, I will undertake it. What beard were I best to play it in?

Quin. Why, what you will.

Bot. I will discharge it in either your straw-colour beard, your orange-tawny beard, your purple-in-grain beard, or your French-crown-colour beard, your perfect yellow.

Quin. Some of your French crowns have no hair at all, and then you will play barefaced. But, masters, here are your parts: and I am to entreat you, request you and desire you, to con them by to-morrow night; and meet me in the palace wood, a mile without the town, by moonlight; there will we rehearse, for if we meet in the city, we shall be dogged with company, and our devices known In the meantime I will draw a bill of properties, such as our play wants. I pray you, fail me not.

Bot. We will meet; and there we may rehearse most obscenely and courageously. Take pains; be perfect: adieu.

Quin. At the duke's oak we meet.

Bot. Enough; hold or cut bow-strings. [*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I. *A wood near Athens.*

Enter, from opposite sides, a Fairy, *and* PUCK.

Puck. How now, spirit! whither wander you?

Fai. Over hill, over dale,
Thorough bush, thorough brier,
Over park, over pale,
Thorough flood, thorough fire,
I do wander every where,
Swifter than the moon's sphere;
And I serve the fairy queen,
To dew her orbs upon the green.
The cowslips tall her pensioners be

In their gold coats spots you see ;
Those be rubies, fairy favours,
In those freckles live their savours :
I must go seek some dewdrops here
And hang a pearl in every cowslip's ear.
Farewell, thou lob of spirits ; I 'll be gone :
Our queen and all her elves come here anon.

Puck. The king doth keep his revels here to-night:
Take heed the queen come not within his sight;
For Oberon is passing fell and wrath,
Because that she as her attendant hath
A lovely boy, stolen from an Indian king ;
She never had so sweet a changeling ;
And jealous Oberon would have the child
Knight of his train, to trace the forests wild ;
But she perforce withholds the loved boy,
Crowns him with flowers and makes him all her joy :
And now they never meet in grove or green,
By fountain clear, or spangled starlight sheen,
But they do square, that all their elves for fear
Creep into acorn-cups and hide them there.

Fai. Either I mistake your shape and making quite,
Or else you are that shrewd and knavish sprite
Call'd Robin Goodfellow : are not you he
That frights the maidens of the villagery ;
Skim milk, and sometimes labour in the quern
And bootless make the breathless housewife churn ;
And sometime make the drink to bear no barm ;
Mislead night-wanderers, laughing at their harm ?
Those that Hobgoblin call you and sweet Puck,
You do their work, and they shall have good luck :
Are not you he ?

Puck. Thou speak'st aright ;
I am that merry wanderer of the night.
I jest to Oberon and make him smile
When I a fat and bean-fed horse beguile,

Neighing in likeness of a filly foal:
And sometime lurk I in a gossip's bowl,
In very likeness of a roasted crab,
And when she drinks, against her lips I bob
And on her wither'd dewlap pour the ale.
The wisest aunt, telling the saddest tale,
Sometime for three-foot stool mistaketh me;
Then slip I from beneath, down topples she,
And 'tailor' cries, and falls into a cough;
And then the whole quire hold their hips and laugh,
And waxen in their mirth and neeze and swear
A merrier hour was never wasted there.
But, room now, fairy! here comes Oberon.

Fai. And here my mistress. Would that he were gone!

Enter, from one side, OBERON, *with his train; from the other,* TITANIA, *with hers.*

Obe. Ill met by moonlight, proud Titania.

Tita. What, jealous Oberon! Fairies, skip hence:
I have forsworn his bed and company.

Obe. Tarry, rash wanton: am not I thy lord?

Tita. Then I must be thy lady: but I know
When thou hast stolen away from fairy land,
And in the shape of Corin sat all day,
Playing on pipes of corn and versing love
To amorous Phillida. Why art thou here,
Come from the farthest steppe of India?
But that, forsooth, the bouncing Amazon,
Your buskin'd mistress and your warrior love,
To Theseus must be wedded, and you come
To give their bed joy and prosperity.

Obe. How canst thou thus for shame, Titania,
Glance at my credit with Hippolyta,
Knowing I know thy love to Theseus?
Didst thou not lead him through the glimmering night
From Perigenia, whom he ravished?

And make him with fair Ægle break his faith,
With Ariadne and Antiopa?

Tita. These are the forgeries of jealousy:
And never, since the middle summer's spring,
Met we on hill, in dale, forest or mead,
By paved fountain or by rushy brook,
Or in the beached margent of the sea,
To dance our ringlets to the whistling wind,
But with thy brawls thou hast disturb'd our sport.
Therefore the winds, piping to us in vain,
As in revenge, have suck'd up from the sea
Contagious fogs; which falling in the land
Have every pelting river made so proud
That they have overborne their continents:
The ox hath therefore stretch'd his yoke in vain,
The ploughman lost his sweat, and the green corn
Hath rotted ere his youth attain'd a beard;
The fold stands empty in the drowned field,
And crows are fatted with the murrion flock;
The nine men's morris is fill'd up with mud,
And the quaint mazes in the wanton green
For lack of tread are undistinguishable:
The human mortals want their winter cheer;
No night is now with hymn or carol blest:
Therefore the moon, the governess of floods,
Pale in her anger, washes all the air,
That rheumatic diseases do abound:
And thorough this distemperature we see
The seasons alter: hoary-headed frosts
Fall in the fresh lap of the crimson rose,
And on old Hiems' thin and icy crown
An odorous chaplet of sweet summer buds
Is, as in mockery, set: the spring, the summer,
The childing autumn, angry winter, change
Their wonted liveries, and the mazed world,
By their increase, now knows not which is which:

And this same progeny of evils comes
From our debate, from our dissension;
We are their parents and original.
Obe. Do you amend it then; it lies in you:
Why should Titania cross her Oberon?
I do but beg a little changeling boy,
To be my henchman.
Tita. Set your heart at rest:
The fairy land buys not the child of me.
His mother was a votaress of my order:
And, in the spiced Indian air, by night,
Full often hath she gossip'd by my side,
And sat with me on Neptune's yellow sands,
Marking the embarked traders on the flood,
When we have laugh'd to see the sails conceive
And grow big-bellied with the wanton wind;
Which she, with pretty and with swimming gait
Following,—her womb then rich with my young squire,—
Would imitate, and sail upon the land,
To fetch me trifles, and return again,
As from a voyage, rich with merchandise.
But she, being mortal, of that boy did die;
And for her sake do I rear up her boy,
And for her sake I will not part with him.
Obe. How long within this wood intend you stay?
Tita. 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.
Obe. Give me that boy, and I will go with thee.
Tita. Not for thy fairy kingdom. Fairies, away!
We shall chide downright, if I longer stay.
[*Exit Titania with her train.*
Obe. Well, go thy way: thou shalt not from this grove
Till I torment thee for this injury.
My gentle Puck, come hither. Thou rememberest

Since once I sat upon a promontory,
And heard a mermaid on a dolphin's back
Uttering such dulcet and harmonious breath
That the rude sea grew civil at her song
And certain stars shot madly from their spheres,
To hear the sea-maid's music.
Puck. I remember.
Obe. That very time I saw, but thou couldst not,
Flying between the cold moon and the earth,
Cupid all arm'd: a certain aim he took
At a fair vestal throned by the west,
And loosed his love-shaft smartly from his bow,
As it should pierce a hundred thousand hearts;
But I might see young Cupid's fiery shaft
Quench'd in the chaste beams of the watery moon,
And the imperial votaress passed on,
In maiden meditation, fancy-free.
Yet mark'd I where the bolt of Cupid fell:
It fell upon a little western flower,
Before milk-white, now purple with love's wound,
And maidens call it love-in-idleness.
Fetch me that flower; the herb I shew'd thee once:
The juice of it on sleeping eye-lids 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. [*Exit.*
Obe. 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 ere I take this charm from off her sight,
As I can take it with another herb,
I'll make her render up her page to me.
But who comes here? I am invisible;
And I will overhear their conference.

Enter DEMETRIUS, HELENA *following him.*

Dem. I love thee not, therefore pursue me not.
Where is Lysander and fair Hermia?
The one I'll slay, the other slayeth me.
Thou told'st me they were stolen unto this wood;
And here am I, and wode within this wood,
Because I cannot meet my Hermia.
Hence, get thee gone, and follow me no more.
Hel. You draw me, you hard-hearted adamant;
But yet you draw not iron, for my heart
Is true as steel: leave you your power to draw,
And I shall have no power to follow you.
Dem. Do I entice you? do I speak you fair?
Or, rather, do I not in plainest truth
Tell you, I do not, nor I cannot love you?
Hel. And even for that do I love you the more.
I am your spaniel; and, Demetrius,
The more you beat me, I will fawn on you:
Use me but as your spaniel, spurn me, strike me,
Neglect me, lose me; only give me leave,
Unworthy as I am, to follow you.
What worser place can I beg in your love,—
And yet a place of high respect with me,—
Than to be used as you use your dog?
Dem. Tempt not too much the hatred of my spirit,
For I am sick when I do look on thee.
Hel. And I am sick when I look not on you.
Dem. You do impeach your modesty too much,
To leave the city and commit yourself
Into the hands of one that loves you not;

To trust the opportunity of night
And the ill counsel of a desert place
With the rich worth of your virginity.
Hel. Your virtue is my privilege for that.
It is not night when I do see your face,
Therefore I think I am not in the night;
Nor doth this wood lack worlds of company,
For you in my respect are all the world:
Then how can it be said I am alone,
When all the world is here to look on me?
Dem. I'll run from thee and hide me in the brakes,
And leave thee to the mercy of wild beasts.
Hel. The wildest hath not such a heart as you.
Run when you will, the story shall be changed:
Apollo flies, and Daphne holds the chase;
The dove pursues the griffin; the mild hind
Makes speed to catch the tiger; bootless speed,
When cowardice pursues and valour flies.
Dem. I will not stay thy questions; let me go:
Or, if thou follow me, do not believe
But I shall do thee mischief in the wood.
Hel. Ay, in the temple, in the town, the field,
You do me mischief. Fie, Demetrius!
Your wrongs do set a scandal on my sex:
We cannot fight for love, as men may do;
We should be woo'd and were not made to woo. [*Exit Dem.*
I'll follow thee and make a heaven of hell,
To die upon the hand I love so well. [*Exit.*
Obe. Fare thee well, nymph: ere he do leave this grove,
Thou shalt fly him and he shall seek thy love.

Re-enter PUCK.

Hast thou the flower there? Welcome, wanderer.
Puck. Ay, there it is.
Obe. 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 sometime of the night,
Lull'd in these flowers with dances and delight;
And there the snake throws her enamell'd skin,
Weed wide enough to wrap a fairy in:
And with the juice of this I'll streak her eyes,
And make her full of hateful fantasies.
Take thou some of it, and seek through this grove:
A sweet Athenian lady is in love
With a disdainful youth: anoint his eyes;
But do it when the next thing he espies
May be the lady: thou shalt know the man
By the Athenian garments he hath on.
Effect it with some care that he may prove
More fond on her than she upon her love:
And look thou meet me ere the first cock crow.

Puck. Fear not, my lord, your servant shall do so. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. *Another part of the wood.*

Enter TITANIA, *with her train.*

Tita. 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 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 spirits. Sing me now asleep;
Then to your offices and let me rest.

FAIRIES' SONG.

I.

First Fairy. You spotted snakes with double tongue,
Thorny hedgehogs, be not seen;

Newts and blind-worms, do no wrong,
Come not near our fairy queen.

CHORUS.

Philomel, with melody
Sing in our sweet lullaby;
Lulla, lulla, lullaby, lulla, lulla, lullaby:
Never harm,
Nor spell nor charm,
Come our lovely lady nigh;
So, good night, with lullaby.

II.

Sec. Fairy. Weaving spiders, come not here;
Hence, you long-legg'd spinners, hence!
Beetles black, approach not near:
Worm nor snail, do no offence.
Philomel, with melody, &c.

A Fairy. Hence, away! now all is well:
One aloof stand sentinel.
[*Exeunt Fairies. Titania sleeps.*

Enter OBERON, *and squeezes the flower on Titania's eyelids.*

Obe. 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, or boar with bristled hair,
In thy eye that shall appear
When thou wakest, it is thy dear:
Wake when some vile thing is near. [*Exit.*

Enter LYSANDER *and* HERMIA.

Lys. Fair love, you faint with wandering in the wood;
And to speak troth, I have forgot our way:
We'll rest us, Hermia, if you think it good,
And tarry for the comfort of the day.
Her. Be it so, Lysander: find you out a bed;

For I upon this bank will rest my head.
Lys. One turf shall serve as pillow for us both :
One heart, one bed, two bosoms and one troth.
Her. Nay, good Lysander ; for my sake, my dear,
Lie further off yet, do not lie so near.
Lys. O, take the sense, sweet, of my innocence !
Love takes the meaning in love's conference.
I mean, that my heart unto yours is knit
So that but one heart we can make of it ;
Two bosoms interchained with an oath ;
So then two bosoms and a single troth.
Then by your side no bed-room me deny ;
For lying so, Hermia, I do not lie.
Her. Lysander riddles very prettily :
Now much beshrew my manners and my pride,
If Hermia meant to say Lysander lied.
But, gentle friend, for love and courtesy
Lie further off ; in human modesty,
Such separation as may well be said
Becomes a virtuous bachelor and a maid,
So far be distant ; and, good night, sweet friend :
Thy love ne'er alter till thy sweet life end !
Lys. Amen, amen, to that fair prayer, say I ;
And then end life when I end loyalty !
Here is my bed : sleep give thee all his rest !
Her. With half that wish the wisher's eyes be press'd !
[*They sleep.*

Enter PUCK.

Puck Through the forest have I gone,
But Athenian found I none,
On whose eyes I might approve
This flower's force in stirring love.
Night and silence.—Who is here ?
Weeds of Athens he doth wear :
This is he, my master said,
Despised the Athenian maid ;

And here the maiden, sleeping sound,
On the dank and dirty ground.
Pretty soul! she durst not lie
Near this lack-love, this kill-courtesy.
Churl, upon thy eyes I throw
All the power this charm doth owe.
When thou wakest, let love forbid
Sleep his seat on thy eyelid:
So wake when I am gone;
For I must now to Oberon. [*Exit.*

Enter DEMETRIUS *and* HELENA *running.*

Hel. Stay, though thou kill me, sweet Demetrius.
Dem. I charge thee, hence, and do not haunt me thus.
Hel. O, wilt thou darkling leave me? do not so.
Dem. Stay, on thy peril: I alone will go. [*Exit.*
Hel. O, I am out of breath in this fond chase!
The more my prayer, the lesser is my grace.
Happy is Hermia, wheresoe'er she lies;
For she hath blessèd and attractive eyes.
How came her eyes so bright? Not with salt tears:
If so, my eyes are oftener wash'd than hers.
No, no, I am as ugly as a bear;
For beasts that meet me run away for fear:
Therefore no marvel though Demetrius
Do, as a monster, fly my presence thus.
What wicked and dissembling glass of mine
Made me compare with Hermia's sphery eyne?
But who is here? Lysander! on the ground!
Dead? or asleep? I see no blood, no wound.
Lysander, if you live, good sir, awake.
Lys. [*Awaking*] And run through fire I will for thy sweet sake.
Transparent Helena! Nature here shows art,
That through thy bosom makes me see thy heart.
Where is Demetrius? O, how fit a word

Is that vile name to perish on my sword!
Hel. Do not say so, Lysander; say not so.
What though he love your Hermia? Lord, what though?
Yet Hermia still loves you: then be content.
Lys. Content with Hermia! No; I do repent
The tedious minutes I with her have spent.
Not Hermia but Helena I love:
Who will not change a raven for a dove?
The will of man is by his reason sway'd;
And reason says you are the worthier maid.
Things growing are not ripe until their season:
So I, being young, till now ripe not to reason;
And touching now the point of human skill,
Reason becomes the marshal to my will
And leads me to your eyes, where I o'erlook
Love's stories written in love's richest book.
Hel. Wherefore was I to this keen mockery born?
When at your hands did I deserve this scorn?
Is 't not enough, is 't not enough, young man,
That I did never, no, nor never can,
Deserve a sweet look from Demetrius' eye,
But you must flout my insufficiency?
Good troth, you do me wrong, good sooth, you do,
In such disdainful manner me to woo.
But fare you well: perforce I must confess
I thought you lord of more true gentleness.
O, that a lady, of one man refused,
Should of another therefore be abused! [*Exit.*
Lys. She sees not Hermia. Hermia, sleep thou there:
And never mayst thou come Lysander near!
For as a surfeit of the sweetest things
The deepest loathing to the stomach brings,
Or as the heresies that men do leave
Are hated most of those they did deceive,
So thou, my surfeit and my heresy,
Of all be hated, but the most of me!

And, all my powers, address your love and might
To honour Helen and to be her knight! [*Exit.*
Her. [*Awaking*] Help me, Lysander, help me! do thy best
To pluck this crawling serpent from my breast!
Ay me, for pity! what a dream was here!
Lysander, look how I do quake with fear:
Methought a serpent eat my heart away,
And you sat smiling at his cruel prey.
Lysander! what, removed? Lysander! lord!
What, out of hearing? gone? no sound, no word?
Alack, where are you? speak, an if you hear;
Speak, of all loves! I swoon almost with fear.
No? then I well perceive you are not nigh.
Either death or you I'll find immediately. [*Exit.*

ACT III.

SCENE I. *The wood. Titania lying asleep.*

Enter QUINCE, SNUG, BOTTOM, FLUTE, SNOUT, *and* STARVELING

Bot. Are we all met?

Quin. Pat, pat; and here's a marvellous convenient place for our rehearsal. This green plot shall be our stage, this hawthorn-brake our tiring-house; and we will do it in action as we will do it before the duke.

Bot. Peter Quince,—

Quin. What sayest thou, bully Bottom?

Bot. There are things in this comedy of Pyramus and Thisby that will never please. First, Pyramus must draw a sword to kill himself; which the ladies cannot abide. How answer you that?

Snout. By 'r lakin, a parlous fear.

Star. I believe we must leave the killing out, when all is done.

Bot. Not a whit: I have a device to make all well. Write

me a prologue ; and let the prologue seem to say, we will do no harm with our swords and that Pyramus is not killed indeed ; and, for the more better assurance, tell them that I Pyramus am not Pyramus, but Bottom the weaver : this will put them out of fear.

Quin. Well, we will have such a prologue ; and it shall be written in eight and six.

Bot. No, make it two more ; let it be written in eight and eight.

Snout. Will not the ladies be afeard of the lion ?

Star. I fear it, I promise you.

Bot. Masters, you ought to consider with yourselves : to bring in—God shield us !—a lion among ladies, is a most dreadful thing ; for there is not a more fearful wild-fowl than your lion living ; and we ought to look to 't.

Snout. Therefore another prologue must tell he is not a lion.

Bot. Nay, you must name his name, and half his face must be seen through the lion's neck : and he himself must speak through, saying thus, or to the same defect,—'Ladies,'—or 'Fair ladies,—I would wish you,'- or 'I would request you,' —or 'I would entreat you, -not to fear, not to tremble : my life for yours If you think I come hither as a lion, it were pity of my life : no, I am no such thing ; I am a man as other men are ;' and there indeed let him name his name, and tell them plainly he is Snug the joiner.

Quin. Well, it shall be so. But there is two hard things ; that is, to bring the moonlight into a chamber ; for, you know, Pyramus and Thisby meet by moonlight.

Snout. Doth the moon shine that night we play our play ?

Bot. A calendar, a calendar ! look in the almanac ; find out moonshine, find out moonshine.

Quin. Yes, it doth shine that night.

Bot. Why, then may you leave a casement of the great chamber window, where we play, open, and the moon may shine in at the casement.

Quin. Ay ; or else one must come in with a bush of thorns and a lanthorn, and say he comes to disfigure, or to present, the person of Moonshine. Then, there is another thing : we must have a wall in the great chamber ; for Pyramus and Thisby, says the story, did talk through the chink of a wall.

Snout. You can never bring in a wall. What say you, Bottom ?

Bot. Some man or other must present Wall : and let him have some plaster, or some loam, or some rough-cast about him, to signify wall ; or let him hold his fingers thus, and through that cranny shall Pyramus and Thisby whisper.

Quin. If that may be, then all is well. Come, sit down, every mother's son, and rehearse your parts. Pyramus, you begin : when you have spoken your speech, enter into that brake : and so every one according to his cue.

Enter PUCK *behind.*

Puck. What hempen home-spuns have we swaggering here,
So near the cradle of the fairy queen ?
What, a play toward ! I'll be an auditor ;
An actor too perhaps, if I see cause.

Quin. Speak, Pyramus. Thisby, stand forth.

Bot. Thisby, the flowers of odious savours sweet,—

Quin. Odours, odours.

Bot. —— odours savours sweet :
So hath thy breath, my dearest Thisby dear.
But hark, a voice ! stay thou but here a while,
And by and by I will to thee appear. [*Exit.*

Puck. A stranger Pyramus than e'er played here. [*Exit.*

Flu. Must I speak now ?

Quin. Ay, marry, must you ; for you must understand he goes but to see a noise that he heard, and is to come again.

Flu. Most radiant Pyramus, most lily-white of hue,
Of colour like the red rose on triumphant brier,
Most brisky juvenal and eke most lovely Jew,

As true as truest horse that yet would never tire,
I'll meet thee, Pyramus, at Ninny's tomb.

Quin. 'Ninus' tomb,' man: why, you must not speak that yet; that you answer to Pyramus: you speak all your part at once, cues and all. Pyramus enter. your cue is past, it is, 'never tire.'

Flu. O,—As true as truest horse, that yet would never tire.

Re-enter PUCK, *and* BOTTOM *with an ass's head.*

Bot. If I were fair, Thisby, I were only thine.

Quin. O monstrous! O strange! we are haunted. Pray, masters! fly, masters! Help!

[*Exeunt Quince, Snug, Flute, Snout, and Starveling.*

Puck. I'll follow you, I'll lead you about a round,
Through bog, through bush, through brake, through brier.
Sometime a horse I'll be, sometime a hound,
A hog, a headless bear, sometime a fire;
And neigh, and bark, and grunt, and roar, and burn,
Like horse, hound, hog, bear, fire, at every turn. [*Exit.*

Bot. Why do they run away? this is a knavery of them to make me afeard.

Re-enter SNOUT.

Snout. O Bottom, thou art changed! what do I see on thee?

Bot. What do you see? you see an ass-head of your own, do you? [*Exit Snout.*

Re-enter QUINCE.

Quin. Bless thee, Bottom! bless thee! thou art translated. [*Exit.*

Bot. I see their knavery: this is to make an ass of me; to fright me, if they could. But 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. [*Sings.*

The ousel cock so black of hue,
With orange-tawny bill,
The throstle with his note so true,
The wren with little quill,—

Tita. [*Awaking*] What angel wakes me from my flowery bed?

Bot. [*Sings*] The finch, the sparrow and the lark,
The plain-song cuckoo gray,
Whose note full many a man doth mark,
And dares not answer nay;—

for, indeed, who would set his wit to so foolish a bird? who would give a bird the lie, though he cry 'cuckoo' never so?

Tita. I pray thee, gentle mortal, sing again:
Mine ear is much enamour'd of thy note;
So is mine eye enthralled to thy shape;
And thy fair virtue's force perforce doth move me
On the first view to say, to swear, I love thee.

Bot. Methinks, mistress, you should have little reason for that: and yet, to say the truth, reason and love keep little company together now-a-days; the more the pity that some honest neighbours will not make them friends. Nay, I can gleek upon occasion.

Tita. Thou art as wise as thou art beautiful.

Bot. Not so, neither: but if I had wit enough to get out of this wood, I have enough to serve mine own turn.

Tita. Out of this wood do not desire to go:
Thou shalt remain here, whether thou wilt or no.
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 pressed flowers dost sleep:
And I will purge thy mortal grossness so
That thou shalt like an airy spirit go.
Peaseblossom! Cobweb! Moth! and Mustardseed!

Enter PEASEBLOSSOM, COBWEB, MOTH, *and* MUSTARDSEED.

Peas. Ready.
Cob. And I.
Moth. And I.
Mus. And I.
All. Where shall we go? 150

Tita. Be kind and courteous to this gentleman;
Hop in his walks and gambol in his eyes;
Feed him with apricocks 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: 160
Nod to him, elves, and do him courtesies.

Peas. Hail, mortal!
Cob. Hail!
Moth. Hail!
Mus. Hail!

Bot. I cry your worships mercy, heartily: I beseech your worship's name
Cob. Cobweb.
Bot. I shall desire you of more acquaintance, good Master Cobweb: if I cut my finger, I shall make bold with you. Your name, honest gentleman? 171
Peas. Peaseblossom.
Bot. I pray you, commend me to Mistress Squash, your mother, and to Master Peascod, your father. Good Master Peaseblossom, I shall desire you of more acquaintance too. Your name, I beseech you, sir?
Mus. Mustardseed.
Bot. Good Master Mustardseed, I know your patience well: that same cowardly, giant-like ox-beef hath devoured many

a gentleman of your house: I promise you your kindred hath made my eyes water ere now. I desire your more acquaintance, good Master Mustardseed.

Tita. Come, wait upon him; lead him to my bower.
The moon methinks looks with a watery eye;
And when she weeps, weeps every little flower,
Lamenting some enforced chastity.
Tie up my love's tongue, bring him silently. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II. *Another part of the wood.*

Enter OBERON

Obe. I wonder if Titania be awaked;
Then, what it was that next came in her eye,
Which she must dote on in extremity.

Enter PUCK.

Here comes my messenger.
How now, mad spirit!
What night-rule now about this haunted grove?

Puck. My mistress with a monster is in love.
Near to her close and consecrated bower,
While she was in her dull and sleeping hour,
A crew of patches, rude mechanicals,
That work for bread upon Athenian stalls,
Were met together to rehearse a play
Intended for great Theseus' nuptial-day.
The shallowest thick-skin of that barren sort,
Who Pyramus presented, in their sport
Forsook his scene and enter'd in a brake:
When I did him at this advantage take,
An ass's nole I fixed on his head:
Anon his Thisbe must be answered,
And forth my mimic comes. When they him spy,
As wild geese that the creeping fowler eye,

Or russet-pated choughs, many in sort,
Rising and cawing at the gun's report,
Sever themselves and madly sweep the sky,
So, at his sight, away his fellows fly;
And, at our stamp, here o'er and o'er one falls;
He murder cries and help from Athens calls.
Their sense thus weak, lost with their fears thus strong,
Made senseless things begin to do them wrong;
For briers and thorns at their apparel snatch;
Some, sleeves; some, hats; from yielders all things catch.
I led them on in this distracted fear,
And left sweet Pyramus translated there:
When in that moment, so it came to pass,
Titania waked and straightway loved an ass.

Obe. This falls out better than I could devise.
But hast thou yet latch'd the Athenian's eyes
With the love-juice, as I did bid thee do?

Puck. I took him sleeping,—that is finish'd too,—
And the Athenian woman by his side;
That, when he waked, of force she must be eyed.

Enter HERMIA *and* DEMETRIUS.

Obe. Stand close: this is the same Athenian.

Puck. This is the woman, but not this the man.

Dem. O, why rebuke you him that loves you so?
Lay breath so bitter on your bitter foe.

Her. Now I but chide; but I should use thee worse,
For thou, I fear, hast given me cause to curse.
If thou hast slain Lysander in his sleep,
Being o'er shoes in blood, plunge in the deep,
And kill me too.
The sun was not so true unto the day
As he to me: would he have stolen away
From sleeping Hermia? I'll believe as soon
This whole earth may be bored and that the moon

May through the centre creep and so displease
Her brother's noontide with the Antipodes.
It cannot be but thou hast murder'd him;
So should a murderer look, so dead, so grim.
Dem. So should the murder'd look, and so should I,
Pierced through the heart with your stern cruelty:
Yet you, the murderer, look as bright, as clear,
As yonder Venus in her glimmering sphere.
Her. What's this to my Lysander? where is he?
Ah, good Demetrius, wilt thou give him me?
Dem. I had rather give his carcass to my hounds.
Her. Out, dog! out, cur! thou driv'st me past the bounds
Of maiden's patience. Hast thou slain him, then?
Henceforth be never number'd among men!
O, once tell true, tell true, even for my sake!
Durst thou have look'd upon him being awake,
And hast thou kill'd him sleeping? O brave touch!
Could not a worm, an adder, do so much?
An adder did it; for with doubler tongue
Than thine, thou serpent, never adder stung.
Dem. You spend your passion on a misprised mood:
I am not guilty of Lysander's blood;
Nor is he dead, for aught that I can tell.
Her. I pray thee, tell me then that he is well.
Dem. An if I could, what should I get therefore?
Her. A privilege never to see me more.
And from thy hated presence part I so:
See me no more, whether he be dead or no. [*Exit.*
Dem. There is no following her in this fierce vein:
Here therefore for a while I will remain.
So sorrow's heaviness doth heavier grow
For debt that bankrupt sleep doth sorrow owe;
Which now in some slight measure it will pay,
If for his tender here I make some stay.
[*Lies down and sleeps.*
Obe. What hast thou done? thou hast mistaken quite

And laid the love-juice on some true-love's sight:
Of thy misprision must perforce ensue
Some true love turn'd and not a false turn'd true.

Puck. Then fate o'er-rules, that, one man holding troth,
A million fail, confounding oath on oath.

Obe. About the wood go swifter than the wind,
And Helena of Athens look thou find:
All fancy-sick she is and pale of cheer,
With sighs of love, that costs the fresh blood dear:
By some illusion see thou bring her here:
I 'll charm his eyes against she do appear.

Puck. I go, I go; look how I go,
Swifter than arrow from the Tartar's bow. [*Exit.*

Obe. Flower of this purple dye,
Hit with Cupid's archery,
Sink in apple of his eye.
When his love he doth espy,
Let her shine as gloriously
As the Venus of the sky.
When thou wak'st, if she be by,
Beg of her for remedy.

Re-enter PUCK.

Puck. Captain of our fairy band,
Helena is here at hand;
And the youth, mistook by me,
Pleading for a lover's fee.
Shall we their fond pageant see?
Lord, what fools these mortals be!

Obe. Stand aside: the noise they make
Will cause Demetrius to awake.

Puck. Then will two at once woo one;
That must needs be sport alone;
And those things do best please me
That befall preposterously.

Enter LYSANDER *and* HELENA.

Lys. Why should you think that I should woo in scorn?
Scorn and derision never come in tears:
Look, when I vow, I weep; and vows so born,
In their nativity all truth appears.
How can these things in me seem scorn to you,
Bearing the badge of faith, to prove them true?
Hel. You do advance your cunning more and more.
When truth kills truth, O devilish-holy fray!
These vows are Hermia's: will you give her o'er?
Weigh oath with oath, and you will nothing weigh:
Your vows to her and me, put in two scales,
Will even weigh, and both as light as tales.
Lys. I had no judgement when to her I swore.
Hel. Nor none, in my mind, now you give her o'er.
Lys. Demetrius loves her, and he loves not you.
Dem. [*Awaking*] O Helen, goddess, nymph, perfect, divine!
To what, my love, shall I compare thine eyne?
Crystal is muddy. O, how ripe in show
Thy lips, those kissing cherries, tempting grow!
That pure congealed white, high Taurus' snow,
Fann'd with the eastern wind, turns to a crow
When thou hold'st up thy hand: O, let me kiss
This princess of pure white, this seal of bliss!
Hel. O spite! O hell! I see you all are bent
To set against me for your merriment:
If you were civil and knew courtesy,
You would not do me thus much injury.
Can you not hate me, as I know you do,
But you must join in souls to mock me too?
If you were men, as men you are in show,
You would not use a gentle lady so;
To vow, and swear, and superpraise my parts,
When I am sure you hate me with your hearts.
You both are rivals, and love Hermia;

And now both rivals, to mock Helena:
A trim exploit, a manly enterprise,
To conjure tears up in a poor maid's eyes
With your derision! none of noble sort
Would so offend a virgin and extort
A poor soul's patience, all to make you sport.
Lys. You are unkind, Demetrius; be not so;
For you love Hermia; this you know I know:
And here, with all good will, with all my heart,
In Hermia's love I yield you up my part;
And yours of Helena to me bequeath,
Whom I do love and will do till my death.
Hel. Never did mockers waste more idle breath.
Dem. Lysander, keep thy Hermia; I will none:
If e'er I loved her, all that love is gone.
My heart to her but as guest-wise sojourn'd,
And now to Helen is it home return'd,
There to remain.
Lys. Helen, it is not so.
Dem. Disparage not the faith thou dost not know,
Lest, to thy peril, thou aby it dear.
Look, where thy love comes; yonder is thy dear.

Re-enter HERMIA.

Her. Dark night, that from the eye his function takes,
The ear more quick of apprehension makes;
Wherein it doth impair the seeing sense,
It pays the hearing double recompense.
Thou art not by mine eye, Lysander, found;
Mine ear, I thank it, brought me to thy sound.
But why unkindly didst thou leave me so?
Lys. Why should he stay, whom love doth press to go?
Her. What love could press Lysander from my side?
Lys. Lysander's love, that would not let him bide,
Fair Helena, who more engilds the night
Than all yon fiery oes and eyes of light.

Why seek'st thou me? could not this make thee know,
The hate I bear thee made me leave thee so?
Her. You speak not as you think: it cannot be.
Hel. Lo, she is one of this confederacy!
Now I perceive they have conjoin'd all three
To fashion this false sport, in spite of me.
Injurious Hermia! most ungrateful maid!
Have you conspired, have you with these contrived
To bait me with this foul derision?
Is all the counsel that we two have shared,
The sisters' vows, the hours that we have spent,
When we have chid the hasty-footed time
For parting us,—O, is it all forgot?
All school-days' friendship, childhood innocence?
We, Hermia, like two artificial gods,
Have with our needles created both one flower,
Both on one sampler, sitting on one cushion,
Both warbling of one song, both in one key,
As if our hands, our sides, voices and minds,
Had been incorporate. So we grew together,
Like to a double cherry, seeming parted,
But yet an union in partition;
Two lovely berries moulded on one stem;
So, with two seeming bodies, but one heart;
Two of the first, like coats in heraldry,
Due but to one and crowned with one crest.
And will you rent our ancient love asunder,
To join with men in scorning your poor friend?
It is not friendly, 'tis not maidenly:
Our sex, as well as I, may chide you for it,
Though I alone do feel the injury.
Her. I am amazed at your passionate words.
I scorn you not: it seems that you scorn me.
Hel. Have you not set Lysander, as in scorn,
To follow me and praise my eyes and face?
And made your other love, Demetrius,

Who even but now did spurn me with his foot,
To call me goddess, nymph, divine and rare,
Precious, celestial? Wherefore speaks he this
To her he hates? and wherefore doth Lysander
Deny your love, so rich within his soul,
And tender me, forsooth, affection,
But by your setting on, by your consent?
What though I be not so in grace as you,
So hung upon with love, so fortunate,
But miserable most, to love unloved?
This you should pity rather than despise.

Her. I understand not what you mean by this.

Hel. Ay, do, persever, counterfeit sad looks,
Make mouths upon me when I turn my back;
Wink each at other; hold the sweet jest up:
This sport, well carried, shall be chronicled.
If you have any pity, grace, or manners,
You would not make me such an argument.
But fare ye well: 'tis partly my own fault;
Which death or absence soon shall remedy.

Lys. Stay, gentle Helena; hear my excuse:
My love, my life, my soul, fair Helena!

Hel. O excellent!

Her. Sweet, do not scorn her so.

Dem. If she cannot entreat, I can compel.

Lys. Thou canst compel no more than she entreat:
Thy threats have no more strength than her weak prayers.
Helen, I love thee; by my life, I do:
I swear by that which I will lose for thee,
To prove him false that says I love thee not.

Dem. I say I love thee more than he can do.

Lys. If thou say so, withdraw, and prove it too.

Dem. Quick, come!

Her. Lysander, whereto tends all this?

Lys. Away, you Ethiope!

Dem. No, no; he 'll—

Seem to break loose; take on as you would follow,
But yet come not: you are a tame man, go!
Lys. Hang off, thou cat, thou burr! vile thing, let loose,
Or I will shake thee from me like a serpent!
Her. Why are you grown so rude? what change is this?
Sweet love,—
Lys. Thy love! out, tawny Tartar, out!
Out, loathed medicine! hated potion, hence!
Her. Do you not jest?
Hel. Yes, sooth; and so do you.
Lys. Demetrius, I will keep my word with thee.
Dem. I would I had your bond, for I perceive
A weak bond holds you: I'll not trust your word.
Lys. What, should I hurt her, strike her, kill her dead?
Although I hate her, I'll not harm her so.
Her. What, can you do me greater harm than hate?
Hate me! wherefore? O me! what news, my love!
Am not I Hermia? are not you Lysander?
I am as fair now as I was erewhile.
Since night you loved me; yet since night you left me:
Why, then you left me O, the gods forbid!—
In earnest, shall I say?
Lys. Ay, by my life;
And never did desire to see thee more.
Therefore be out of hope, of question, doubt;
Be certain, nothing truer; 'tis no jest
That I do hate thee and love Helena.
Her. O me! you juggler! you canker-blossom!
You thief of love! what, have you come by night
And stolen my love's heart from him?
Hel. Fine, i' faith!
Have you no modesty, no maiden shame,
No touch of bashfulness? What, will you tear
Impatient answers from my gentle tongue?
Fie, fie! you counterfeit, you puppet, you!
Her. Puppet? why so? ay, that way goes the game.

Now I perceive that she hath made compare
Between our statures; she hath urged her height;
And with her personage, her tall personage,
Her height, forsooth, she hath prevail'd with him.
And are you grown so high in his esteem,
Because I am so dwarfish and so low?
How low am I, thou painted maypole? speak;
How low am I? I am not yet so low
But that my nails can reach unto thine eyes.
Hel. I pray you, though you mock me, gentlemen,
Let her not hurt me: I was never curst;
I have no gift at all in shrewishness;
I am a right maid for my cowardice:
Let her not strike me. You perhaps may think,
Because she is something lower than myself,
That I can match her.
Her. Lower! hark, again.
Hel. Good Hermia, do not be so bitter with me.
I evermore did love you, Hermia,
Did ever keep your counsels, never wrong'd you;
Save that, in love unto Demetrius,
I told him of your stealth unto this wood.
He follow'd you; for love I follow'd him;
But he hath chid me hence and threaten'd me
To strike me, spurn me, nay, to kill me too:
And now, so you will let me quiet go,
To Athens will I bear my folly back
And follow you no further: let me go:
You see how simple and how fond I am.
Her. Why, get you gone: who is't that hinders you?
Hel. A foolish heart, that I leave here behind.
Her. What, with Lysander?
Hel. With Demetrius.
Lys. Be not afraid; she shall not harm thee, Helena.
Dem. No, sir, she shall not, though you take her part.
Hel. O, when she's angry, she is keen and shrewd!

She was a vixen when she went to school;
And though she be but little, she is fierce.
Her. 'Little' again! nothing but 'low' and 'little'!
Why will you suffer her to flout me thus?
Let me come to her.
Lys. Get you gone, you dwarf;
You minimus, of hindering knot-grass made;
You bead, you acorn.
Dem. You are too officious
In her behalf that scorns your services.
Let her alone: speak not of Helena;
Take not her part; for, if thou dost intend
Never so little show of love to her,
Thou shalt aby it.
Lys. Now she holds me not;
Now follow, if thou darest, to try whose right,
Of thine or mine, is most in Helena.
Dem. Follow! nay, I 'll go with thee, cheek by jole.
[*Exeunt Lysander and Demetrius.*
Her. You, mistress, all this coil is 'long of you.
Nay, go not back.
Hel. I will not trust you, I,
Nor longer stay in your curst company.
Your hands than mine are quicker for a fray,
My legs are longer though, to run away. [*Exit.*
Her. I am amazed, and know not what to say. [*Exit.*
Obe. This is thy negligence: still thou mistakest,
Or else committ'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 so did sort
As this their jangling I esteem a sport.
Obe. Thou see'st these lovers seek a place to fight:

Hie therefore, Robin, overcast the night;
The starry welkin cover thou anon
With drooping fog as black as Acheron,
And 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.
Whiles I in this affair do thee employ,
I'll to my queen and beg her Indian boy;
And then I will her charmed eye release
From monster's view, and all things shall be peace.

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: damned spirits all,
That in crossways and floods have burial,
Already to their wormy beds are gone;
For fear lest day should look their shames upon,
They wilfully themselves exile from light
And must for aye consort with black-brow'd night.

Obe. 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 on 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. [*Exit.*

Puck. Up and down, up and down,
I will lead them up and down:
I am fear'd in field and town:
Goblin, lead them up and down.
Here comes one.

Re-enter LYSANDER.

Lys. Where art thou, proud Demetrius? speak thou now.
Puck. Here, villain; drawn and ready. Where art thou?
Lys. I will be with thee straight.
Puck. Follow me, then,
To plainer ground. [*Exit Lysander, as following the voice.*

Re-enter DEMETRIUS.

Dem. Lysander! speak again:
Thou runaway, thou coward, art thou fled?
Speak! In some bush? Where dost thou hide thy head?
Puck. Thou coward, art thou bragging to the stars,
Telling the bushes that thou look'st for wars,
And wilt not come? Come, recreant; come, thou child;
I'll whip thee with a rod: he is defiled
That draws a sword on thee.
Dem. Yea, art thou there?
Puck. Follow my voice: we'll try no manhood here.
[*Exeunt.*

Re-enter LYSANDER.

Lys. He goes before me and still dares me on:
When I come where he calls, then he is gone.
The villain is much lighter-heel'd than I:
I follow'd fast, but faster he did fly;

That fallen am I in dark uneven way,
And here will rest me. [*Lies down.*] Come, thou gentle day!
For if but once thou show me thy grey light,
I'll find Demetrius and revenge this spite. [*Sleeps.*

Re-enter PUCK *and* DEMETRIUS.

Puck. Ho, ho, ho! Coward, why comest thou not? 421
Dem. Abide me, if thou darest; for well I wot
Thou runn'st before me, shifting every place,
And darest not stand, nor look me in the face.
Where art thou now?
Puck. Come hither: I am here.
Dem. Nay, then, thou mock'st me. Thou shalt buy this dear,
If ever I thy face by daylight see:
Now, go thy way. Faintness constraineth me
To measure out my length on this cold bed.
By day's approach look to be visited. [*Lies down and sleeps.*

Re-enter HELENA.

Hel. O weary night, O long and tedious night, 431
Abate thy hours! Shine comforts from the east,
That I may back to Athens by daylight,
From these that my poor company detest:
And sleep, that sometimes shuts up sorrow's eye,
Steal me awhile from mine own company.
[*Lies down and sleeps.*

Puck. Yet but three? Come one more;
Two of both kinds makes up four.
Here she comes, curst and sad:
Cupid is a knavish lad, 440
Thus to make poor females mad.

Re-enter HERMIA.

Her. Never so weary, never so in woe,
Bedabbled with the dew and torn with briars,

I can no further crawl, no further go;
My legs can keep no pace with my desires.
Here will I rest me till the break of day.
Heavens shield Lysander, if they mean a fray!

[*Lies down and sleeps.*

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

[*Squeezing the juice on Lysander's eyes.*

When thou wakest,
Thou takest
True delight
In the sight
Of thy former lady's eye:
And the country proverb known,
That every man should take his own,
In your waking shall be shown:
Jack shall have Jill;
Nought shall go ill;
The man shall have his mare again, and all shall be well.

[*Exit.*

ACT IV.

SCENE I. *The same.* LYSANDER, DEMETRIUS, HELENA, *and* HERMIA, *lying asleep.*

Enter TITANIA *and* BOTTOM; PEASEBLOSSOM, COBWEB, MOTH, MUSTARDSEED, *and other Fairies attending;* OBERON *behind unseen.*

Tita. 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.

Bot. Where's Peaseblossom?

Peas. Ready.

Bot. Scratch my head, Peaseblossom. Where's Mounsieur Cobweb?

Cob. Ready.

Bot. Mounsieur Cobweb, good mounsieur, get you your weapons in your hand, and kill me a red-hipped humble-bee on the top of a thistle; and, good mounsieur, bring me the honey-bag. Do not fret yourself too much in the action, mounsieur; and, good mounsieur, have a care the honey-bag break not; I would be loath to have you overflown with a honey-bag, signior. Where's Mounsieur Mustardseed?

Mus. Ready.

Bot. Give me your neaf, Mounsieur Mustardseed. Pray you, leave your courtesy, good mounsieur.

Mus. What's your will? 20

Bot. Nothing, good monsieur, but to help Cavalery Cobweb to scratch. I must to the barber's, mounsieur; for methinks I am marvellous hairy about the face; and I am such a tender ass, if my hair do but tickle me, I must scratch.

Tita. What, wilt thou hear some music, my sweet love?

Bot. I have a reasonable good ear in music. Let's have the tongs and the bones.

Tita. Or say, sweet love, what thou desirest to eat.

Bot. Truly, a peck of provender: I could munch your good dry oats. Methinks I have a great desire to a bottle of hay: good hay, sweet hay, hath no fellow. 31

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

Bot. I had rather have a handful or two of dried peas. But, I pray you, let none of your people stir me: I have an exposition of sleep come upon me.

Tita. Sleep thou, and I will wind thee in my arms.
Fairies, be gone, and be all ways away. [*Exeunt fairies.*
So doth the woodbine the sweet honeysuckle
Gently entwist; the female ivy so 40

Enrings the barky fingers of the elm.
O, how I love thee! how I dote on thee! [*They sleep.*

Enter PUCK.

Obe. [*Advancing.*] Welcome, good Robin. See'st thou this sweet sight?
Her dotage now I do begin to pity:
For, meeting her of late behind the wood,
Seeking sweet favours for this hateful fool,
I did upbraid her and fall out with her;
For she his hairy temples then had rounded
With coronet of fresh and fragrant flowers;
And that same dew, which sometime on the buds
Was wont to swell like round and orient pearls,
Stood now within the pretty flowerets' eyes
Like tears that did their own disgrace bewail.
When I had at my pleasure taunted her
And she in mild terms begg'd my patience,
I then did ask of her her changeling child;
Which straight she gave me, and her fairy sent
To bear him to my bower in fairy land.
And now I have the boy, I will undo
This hateful imperfection of her eyes:
And, gentle Puck, take this transformed scalp
From off the head of this Athenian swain;
That, he awaking when the other do,
May all to Athens back again repair
And think no more of this night's accidents
But as the fierce vexation of a dream.
But first I will release the fairy queen.
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.
Tita. My Oberon! what visions have I seen!

Methought I was enamour'd of an ass.

Obe. There lies your love.

Tita. How came these things to pass?
O, how mine eyes do loathe his visage now!

Obe. Silence awhile. Robin, take off this head.
Titania, music call; and strike more dead
Than common sleep of all these five the sense.

Tita. Music, ho! music, such as charmeth sleep! [*Music, still.*

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

Obe. Sound, music! Come, my queen, take hands with me,
And rock the ground whereon these sleepers be.
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 prosperity:
There shall the pairs of faithful lovers be
Wedded, with Theseus, all in jollity.

Puck. Fairy king, attend, and mark:
I do hear the morning lark.

Obe. Then, my queen, in silence sad,
Trip we after night's shade:
We the globe can compass soon,
Swifter than the wandering moon.

Tita. 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. [*Exeunt.*

[*Horns winded within.*

Enter THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, EGEUS, *and train.*

The. Go, one of you, find out the forester;
For now our observation is perform'd;
And since we have the vaward of the day,

My love shall hear the music of my hounds.
Uncouple in the western valley; let them go:
Dispatch, I say, and find the forester. [*Exit an Attendant.*
We will, fair queen, up to the mountain's top
And mark the musical confusion
Of hounds and echo in conjunction.

Hip. I was with Hercules and Cadmus once,
When in a wood of Crete they bay'd the bear
With hounds of Sparta: never did I hear
Such gallant chiding; for, besides the groves,
The skies, the fountains, every region near
Seem'd all one mutual cry: I never heard
So musical a discord, such sweet thunder.

The. My hounds are bred out of the Spartan kind,
So flew'd, so sanded, and their heads are hung
With ears that sweep away the morning dew;
Crook-knee'd, and dew-lapp'd like Thessalian bulls;
Slow in pursuit, but match'd in mouth like bells,
Each under each. A cry more tuneable
Was never holla'd to, nor cheer'd with horn,
In Crete, in Sparta, nor in Thessaly:
Judge when you hear. But, soft! what nymphs are these?

Ege. My lord, this is my daughter here asleep;
And this, Lysander; this Demetrius is;
This Helena, old Nedar's Helena:
I wonder of their being here together.

The. No doubt they rose up early to observe
The rite of May, and, hearing our intent,
Came here in grace of our solemnity.
But speak, Egeus; is not this the day
That Hermia should give answer of her choice?

Ege. It is, my lord.

The. Go, bid the huntsmen wake them with their horns.
[*Horns and shout within. Lys., Dem., Hel., and Her., wake and start up.*
Good morrow, friends. Saint Valentine is past:

Begin these wood-birds but to couple now?

Lys. Pardon, my lord.

The. I pray you all, stand up.

I know you two are rival enemies:

How comes this gentle concord in the world,

That hatred is so far from jealousy,

To sleep by hate, and fear no enmity?

Lys. My lord, I shall reply amazedly,

Half sleep, half waking: but as yet, I swear,

I cannot truly say how I came here;

But, as I think,—for truly would I speak,

And now I do bethink me, so it is,—

I came with Hermia hither: our intent

Was to be gone from Athens, where we might,

Without the peril of th' Athenian law.

Ege. Enough, enough, my lord; you have enough:

I beg the law, the law, upon his head.

They would have stolen away; they would, Demetrius,

Thereby to have defeated you and me,

You of your wife and me of my consent,

Of my consent that she should be your wife.

Dem. My lord, fair Helen told me of their stealth,

Of this their purpose hither to this wood;

And I in fury hither follow'd them,

Fair Helena in fancy following me.

But, my good lord, I wot not by what power,—

But by some power it is,—my love to Hermia,

Melted as melts the snow, seems to me now

As the remembrance of an idle gawd

Which in my childhood I did dote upon;

And all the faith, the virtue of my heart,

The object and the pleasure of mine eye,

Is only Helena. To her, my lord,

Was I betroth'd ere I saw Hermia:

But, like in sickness, did I loathe this food;

But, as in health, come to my natural taste,

Now I do wish it, love it, long for it,
And will for evermore be true to it.

The. Fair lovers, you are fortunately met:
Of this discourse we more will hear anon.
Egeus, I will overbear your will;
For in the temple, by and by, with us
These couples shall eternally be knit:
And, for the morning now is something worn,
Our purposed hunting shall be set aside.
Away with us to Athens; three and three,
We 'll hold a feast in great solemnity.
Come, my Hippolyta.

[*Exeunt The., Hip., Ege., and train.*

Dem. These things seem small and undistinguishable,
Like far-off mountains turned into clouds.

Her. Methinks I see these things with parted eye,
When every thing seems double.

Hel. So methinks:
And I have found Demetrius like a jewel,
Mine own, and not mine own.

Dem. Are you sure
That we are awake? It seems to me
That yet we sleep, we dream. Do not you think
The duke was here, and bid us follow him?

Her. Yea; and my father.

Hel. And Hippolyta.

Lys. And he did bid us follow to the temple.

Dem. Why, then, we are awake: let 's follow him;
And by the way let us recount our dreams. [*Exeunt.*

Bot. [*Awaking*] When my cue comes, call me, and I will answer: my next is, 'Most fair Pyramus.' Heigh-ho! Peter Quince! Flute, the bellows-mender! Snout, the tinker! Starveling! God's my life, stolen hence, and left me asleep! I have had a most rare vision. I have had a dream, past the wit of man to say what dream it was: man is but an ass, if he go about to expound this dream. Me-

thought I was—there is no man can tell what. Methought I was,—and methought I had,—but man is but a patched fool, if he will offer to say what methought I had. The eye of man hath not heard, the ear of man hath not seen, man's hand is not able to taste, his tongue to conceive, nor his heart to report, what my dream was. I will get Peter Quince to write a ballad of this dream: it shall be called Bottom's Dream, because it hath no bottom; and I will sing it in the latter end of our play, before the duke: peradventure, to make it the more gracious, I shall sing it at her death.

[*Exit.*

SCENE II. *Athens.* QUINCE'S *house.*

Enter QUINCE, FLUTE, SNOUT, *and* STARVELING.

Quin. Have you sent to Bottom's house? is he come home yet?

Star. He cannot be heard of. Out of doubt he is transported.

Flu. If he come not, then the play is marred: it goes not forward, doth it?

Quin. It is not possible: you have not a man in all Athens able to discharge Pyramus but he.

Flu. No, he hath simply the best wit of any handicraft man in Athens.

Quin. Yea, and the best person too; and he is a very paramour for a sweet voice.

Flu. You must say 'paragon:' a paramour is, God bless us, a thing of naught.

Enter SNUG.

Snug. Masters, the duke is coming from the temple, and there is two or three lords and ladies more married: if our sport had gone forward, we had all been made men.

Flu. O sweet bully Bottom! Thus hath he lost sixpence a day during his life; he could not have 'scaped sixpence a

day: an the duke had not given him sixpence a day for playing Pyramus, I'll be hanged; he would have deserved it: sixpence a day in Pyramus, or nothing.

Enter BOTTOM.

Bot. Where are these lads? where are these hearts?

Quin. Bottom! O most courageous day! O most happy hour!

Bot. Masters, I am to discourse wonders: but ask me not what; for if I tell you, I am no true Athenian. I will tell you every thing, right as it fell out.

Quin. Let us hear, sweet Bottom.

Bot. Not a word of me. All that I will tell you is, that the duke hath dined. Get your apparel together, good strings to your beards, new ribbons to your pumps; meet presently at the palace; every man look o'er his part; for the short and the long is, our play is preferred. In any case, let Thisby have clean linen; and let not him that plays the lion pare his nails, for they shall hang out for the lion's claws. And, most dear actors, eat no onions nor garlic, for we are to utter sweet breath; and I do not doubt but to hear them say, it is a sweet comedy. No more words: away! go, away! [*Exeunt.*

ACT V.

SCENE I. *Athens. The palace of* THESEUS.

Enter THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, PHILOSTRATE, Lords, *and* Attendants.

Hip. 'Tis strange, my Theseus, that these lovers speak of.

The. More strange than true: I never may believe
These antique fables, nor these fairy toys.
Lovers and madmen have such seething brains,
Such shaping fantasies, that apprehend
More than cool reason ever comprehends.

The lunatic, the lover and the poet
Are of imagination all compact:
One sees more devils than vast hell can hold,
That is, the madman: the lover, all as frantic,
Sees Helen's beauty in a brow of Egypt:
The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,
Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven;
And as imagination bodies forth
The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
Turns them to shapes and gives to airy nothing
A local habitation and a name.
Such tricks hath strong imagination,
That, if it would but apprehend some joy,
It comprehends some bringer of that joy;
Or in the night, imagining some fear,
How easy is a bush supposed a bear!

Hip. But all the story of the night told over,
And all their minds transfigured so together,
More witnesseth than fancy's images
And grows to something of great constancy;
But, howsoever, strange and admirable.

The. Here come the lovers, full of joy and mirth.

Enter LYSANDER, DEMETRIUS, HERMIA, *and* HELENA.

Joy, gentle friends! joy and fresh days of love
Accompany your hearts!

Lys. More than to us
Wait in your royal walks, your board, your bed!

The. Come now; what masques, what dances shall we have,
To wear away this long age of three hours
Between our after-supper and bed-time?
Where is our usual manager of mirth?
What revels are in hand? Is there no play,
To ease the anguish of a torturing hour?
Call Philostrate.

Phil. 'Here, mighty Theseus.

The. Say, what abridgement have you for this evening?
What masque? what music? How shall we beguile
The lazy time, if not with some delight?

Phil. There is a brief how many sports are ripe:
Make choice of which your highness will see first.
[*Giving a paper.*

The. [*Reads*] 'The battle with the Centaurs, to be sung
By an Athenian eunuch to the harp.'
We'll none of that: that have I told my love,
In glory of my kinsman Hercules.
[*Reads*] 'The riot of the tipsy Bacchanals,
Tearing the Thracian singer in their rage.'
That is an old device; and it was play'd
When I from Thebes came last a conqueror.
[*Reads*] 'The thrice three Muses mourning for the death
Of Learning, late deceased in beggary.'
That is some satire, keen and critical,
Not sorting with a nuptial ceremony.
[*Reads*] 'A tedious brief scene of young Pyramus
And his love Thisbe; very tragical mirth.'
Merry and tragical! tedious and brief!
That is, hot ice and wondrous strange snow.
How shall we find the concord of this discord?

Phil. A play there is, my lord, some ten words long,
Which is as brief as I have known a play;
But by ten words, my lord, it is too long,
Which makes it tedious; for in all the play
There is not one word apt, one player fitted:
And tragical, my noble lord, it is;
For Pyramus therein doth kill himself.
Which, when I saw rehearsed, I must confess,
Made mine eyes water; but more merry tears
The passion of loud laughter never shed.

The. What are they that do play it?

Phil. Hard-handed men that work in Athens here,

Which never labour'd in their minds till now,
And now have toil'd their unbreathed memories
With this same play, against your nuptial.
The. And we will hear it.
Phil. No, my noble lord;
It is not for you: I have heard it over,
And it is nothing, nothing in the world;
Unless you can find sport in their intents,
Extremely stretch'd and conn'd with cruel pain,
To do you service.
The. I will hear that play;
For never anything can be amiss,
When simpleness and duty tender it.
Go, bring them in: and take your places, ladies.
[*Exit Philostrate.*
Hip. I love not to see wretchedness o'ercharged
And duty in his service perishing.
The. Why, gentle sweet, you shall see no such thing.
Hip. He says they can do nothing in this kind.
The. The kinder we, to give them thanks for nothing.
Our sport shall be to take what they mistake:
And what poor duty cannot do, noble respect
Takes it in might, not merit.
Where I have come, great clerks have purposed
To greet me with premeditated welcomes;
Where I have seen them shiver and look pale,
Make periods in the midst of sentences,
Throttle their practised accent in their fears
And in conclusion dumbly have broke off,
Not paying me a welcome. Trust me, sweet,
Out of this silence yet I pick'd a welcome;
And in the modesty of fearful duty
I read as much as from the rattling tongue
Of saucy and audacious eloquence.
Love, therefore, and tongue-tied simplicity
In least speak most, to my capacity.

Re-enter PHILOSTRATE.

Phil. So please your grace, the Prologue is address'd.
The. Let him approach. [*Flourish of trumpets.*

Enter QUINCE *for the* Prologue.

Pro. If we offend, it is with our good will.
That you should think, we come not to offend,
But with good will. To show our simple skill,
That is the true beginning of our end.
Consider then we come but in despite.
We do not come as minding to content you,
Our true intent is. All for your delight
We are not here. That you should here repent you,
The actors are at hand and by their show
You shall know all that you are like to know.
The. This fellow doth not stand upon points.
Lys. He hath rid his prologue like a rough colt; he knows not the stop. A good moral, my lord: it is not enough to speak, but to speak true.
Hip. Indeed he hath played on his prologue like a child on a recorder; a sound, but not in government.
The. His speech was like a tangled chain; nothing impaired, but all disordered. Who is next?

Enter PYRAMUS *and* THISBE, WALL, MOONSHINE, *and* LION.

Pro. Gentles, perchance you wonder at this show;
But wonder on, till truth make all things plain.
This man is Pyramus, if you would know;
This beauteous lady Thisby is certain.
This man, with lime and rough-cast, doth present
Wall, that vile Wall which did these lovers sunder;
And through Wall's chink, poor souls, they are content
To whisper. At the which let no man wonder.
This man, with lanthorn, dog, and bush of thorn,

Presenteth Moonshine ; for, if you will know,
By moonshine did these lovers think no scorn
To meet at Ninus' tomb, there, there to woo.
This grisly beast, which Lion hight by name,
The trusty Thisby, coming first by night,
Did scare away, or rather did affright ;
And, as she fled, her mantle she did fall,
Which Lion vile with bloody mouth did stain.
Anon comes Pyramus, sweet youth and tall,
And finds his trusty Thisby's mantle slain :
Whereat, with blade, with bloody blameful blade,
He bravely broach'd his boiling bloody breast ;
And Thisby, tarrying in mulberry shade,
His dagger drew, and died. For all the rest,
Let Lion, Moonshine, Wall, and lovers twain
At large discourse, while here they do remain.

[*Exeunt Prologue, Pyramus, Thisbe, Lion, and Moonshine.*

The. I wonder if the lion be to speak.

Dem. No wonder, my lord : one lion may, when many asses do.

Wall. In this same interlude it doth befall
That I, one Snout by name, present a wall ;
And such a wall, as I would have you think,
That had in it a crannied hole or chink,
Through which the lovers, Pyramus and Thisby,
Did whisper often very secretly.
This loam, this rough-cast and this stone doth show
That I am that same wall ; the truth is so :
And this the cranny is, right and sinister,
Through which the fearful lovers are to whisper.

The. Would you desire lime and hair to speak better ?

Dem. It is the wittiest partition that ever I heard discourse, my lord.

Re-enter PYRAMUS.

The. Pyramus draws near the wall : silence !

Pyr. O grim-look'd night! O night with hue so black!
O night, which ever art when day is not!
O night, O night! alack, alack, alack,
I fear my Thisby's promise is forgot!
And thou, O wall, O sweet, O lovely wall,
That stand'st between her father's ground and mine!
Thou wall, O wall, O sweet and lovely wall,
Show me thy chink, to blink through with mine eyne!
[*Wall holds up his fingers.*
Thanks, courteous wall: Jove shield thee well for this!
But what see I? No Thisby do I see.
O wicked wall, through whom I see no bliss!
Cursed be thy stones for thus deceiving me!

The. The wall, methinks, being sensible, should curse again.

Pyr. No, in truth, sir, he should not. 'Deceiving me' is Thisby's cue: she is to enter now, and I am to spy her through the wall. You shall see, it will fall pat as I told you. Yonder she comes.

Re-enter THISBE.

This. O wall, full often hast thou heard my moans,
For parting my fair Pyramus and me!
My cherry lips have often kiss'd thy stones,
Thy stones with lime and hair knit up in thee.

Pyr. I see a voice: now will I to the chink,
To spy an I can hear my Thisby's face.
Thisby!

This. My love thou art, my love I think.

Pyr. Think what thou wilt, I am thy lover's grace;
And, like Limander, am I trusty still.

This. And I like Helen, till the Fates me kill.

Pyr. Not Shafalus to Procrus was so true.

This. As Shafalus to Procrus, I to you.

Pyr. O, kiss me through the hole of this vile wall!

This. I kiss the wall's hole, not your lips at all.

Pyr. Wilt thou at Ninny's tomb meet me straightway?

This. 'Tide life, 'tide death, I come without delay.
[*Exeunt Pyramus and Thisbe.*

Wall. Thus have I, Wall, my part discharged so;
And, being done, thus Wall away doth go. [*Exit.*

The. Now is the mural down between the two neighbours.

Dem. No remedy, my lord, when walls are so wilful to hear without warning.

Hip. This is the silliest stuff that ever I heard.

The. The best in this kind are but shadows; and the worst are no worse, if imagination amend them.

Hip. It must be your imagination then, and not theirs.

The. If we imagine no worse of them than they of themselves, they may pass for excellent men. Here come two noble beasts in a man and a lion.

Re-enter LION *and* MOONSHINE.

Lion. You, ladies, you, whose gentle hearts do fear
The smallest monstrous mouse that creeps on floor,
May now perchance both quake and tremble here,
When lion rough in wildest rage doth roar.
Then know that I, one Snug the joiner, am
A lion fell, nor else no lion's dam;
For, if I should as lion come in strife
Into this place, 'twere pity on my life.

The. A very gentle beast, and of a good conscience.

Dem. The very best at a beast, my lord, that e'er I saw.

Lys. This lion is a very fox for his valour.

The. True; and a goose for his discretion.

Dem. Not so, my lord; for his valour cannot carry his discretion; and the fox carries the goose.

The. His discretion, I am sure, cannot carry his valour; for the goose carries not the fox. It is well: leave it to his discretion, and let us listen to the moon.

Moon. This lanthorn doth the horned moon present;—

Dem. He should have worn the horns on his head.

The. He is no crescent, and his horns are invisible within the circumference.

Moon. This lanthorn doth the horned moon present;
Myself the man i' the moon do seem to be.

The. This is the greatest error of all the rest: the man should be put into the lanthorn. How is it else the man i' the moon?

Dem. He dares not come there for the candle; for, you see, it is already in snuff.

Hip. I am aweary of this moon: would he would change!

The. It appears, by his small light of discretion, that he is in the wane; but yet, in courtesy, in all reason, we must stay the time.

Lys. Proceed, Moon.

Moon. All that I have to say, is, to tell you that the lanthorn is the moon; I, the man in the moon; this thorn-bush, my thorn-bush; and this dog, my dog.

Dem. Why, all these should be in the lanthorn; for all these are in the moon. But, silence! here comes Thisbe.

Re-enter THISBE.

This. This is old Ninny's tomb. Where is my love?

Lion. [*Roaring*] Oh—— [*Thisbe runs off.*

Dem. Well roared, Lion.

The. Well run, Thisbe.

Hip. Well shone, Moon. Truly, the moon shines with a good grace. [*The Lion shakes Thisbe's mantle, and exit.*

The. Well moused, Lion.

Lys. And so the lion vanished.

Dem. And then came Pyramus.

Re-enter PYRAMUS.

Pyr. Sweet Moon, I thank thee for thy sunny beams;
I thank thee, Moon, for shining now so bright;
For, by thy gracious, golden, glittering gleams,
I trust to take of truest Thisby sight.
But stay, O spite!

But mark, poor knight,
What dreadful dole is here!
Eyes, do you see?
How can it be?
O dainty duck! O dear!
Thy mantle good,
What, stain'd with blood!
Approach, ye Furies fell!
O Fates, come, come,
Cut thread and thrum;
Quail, crush, conclude, and quell!

The. This passion, and the death of a dear friend, would go near to make a man look sad.

Hip. Beshrew my heart, but I pity the man.

Pyr. O wherefore, Nature, didst thou lions frame?
Since lion vile hath here deflower'd my dear:
Which is—no, no—which was the fairest dame
That lived, that loved, that liked, that look'd with cheer.
Come, tears, confound;
Out, sword, and wound
The pap of Pyramus;
Ay, that left pap,
Where heart doth hop: [*Stabs himself.*
Thus die I, thus, thus, thus.
Now am I dead,
Now am I fled;
My soul is in the sky:
Tongue, lose thy light;
Moon, take thy flight: [*Exit Moonshine.*
Now die, die, die, die, die. [*Dies.*

Dem. No die, but an ace, for him; for he is but one.

Lys. Less than ace, man; for he is dead; he is nothing.

The. With the help of a surgeon he might yet recover, and prove an ass.

Hip. How chance Moonshine is gone before Thisbe comes back and finds her lover?

The. She will find him by starlight. Here she comes; and her passion ends the play.

Re-enter THISBE.

Hip. Methinks she should not use a long one for such a Pyramus: I hope she will be brief.

Dem. A mote will turn the balance, which Pyramus, which Thisbe, is the better; he for a man, God warrant us; she for a woman, God bless us.

Lys. She hath spied him already with those sweet eyes.

Dem. And thus she means, videlicet:—

This. Asleep, my love?
What, dead, my dove?
O Pyramus, arise!
Speak, speak. Quite dumb?
Dead, dead? A tomb
Must cover thy sweet eyes.
These lily lips,
This cherry nose,
These yellow cowslip cheeks,
Are gone, are gone:
Lovers, make moan:
His eyes were green as leeks.
O Sisters Three,
Come, come to me,
With hands as pale as milk;
Lay them in gore,
Since you have shore
With shears his thread of silk.
Tongue, not a word:
Come, trusty sword;
Come, blade, my breast imbrue: [*Stabs herself.*
And, farewell, friends;
Thus Thisby ends:
Adieu, adieu, adieu. [*Dies.*

The. Moonshine and Lion are left to bury the dead.

Dem. Ay, and Wall too.

Bot. [*Starting up*] No, I assure you; the wall is down that parted their fathers. Will it please you to see the epilogue, or to hear a Bergomask dance between two of our company?

The. No epilogue, I pray you; for your play needs no excuse. Never excuse; for when the players are all dead, there need none to be blamed. Marry, if he that writ it had played Pyramus and hanged himself in Thisbe's garter, it would have been a fine tragedy: and so it is, truly; and very notably discharged. But, come, your Bergomask: let your epilogue alone. [*A dance.*

The iron tongue of midnight hath told twelve:
Lovers, to bed; 'tis almost fairy time.
I fear we shall out-sleep the coming morn
As much as we this night have overwatch'd.
This palpable-gross play hath well beguiled
The heavy gait of night. Sweet friends, to bed.
A fortnight hold we this solemnity,
In nightly revels and new jollity. [*Exeunt.*

Enter PUCK.

Puck. Now the hungry lion roars,
And the wolf behowls the moon;
Whilst the heavy ploughman snores,
All with weary task fordone.
Now the wasted brands do glow,
Whilst the screech-owl, screeching loud,
Puts the wretch that lies in woe
In remembrance of a shroud.
Now it is the time of night
That the graves all gaping wide,
Every one lets forth his sprite,
In the church-way paths to glide:
And we fairies, that do run
By the triple Hecate's team,

From the presence of the sun,
Following darkness like a dream,
Now are frolic: not a mouse
Shall disturb this hallow'd house:
I am sent with broom before,
To sweep the dust behind the door.

Enter OBERON *and* TITANIA *with their train.*

Obe. 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.

Tita. 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. [*Song and dance.*

Obe. Now, until the break of day,
Through this house each fairy stray.
To the best bride-bed will we,
Which by us shall blessed be;
And the issue there create
Ever shall be fortunate.
So shall all the couples three
Ever true in loving be;
And the blots of Nature's hand
Shall not in their issue stand;
Never mole, hare-lip, nor scar,
Nor mark prodigious, such as are
Despised in nativity,
Shall upon their children be.
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.

[*Exeunt Oberon, Titania, and train.*

Puck. If we shadows have offended,
Think but this, and all is mended,
That you have but slumber'd here
While these visions did appear.
And this weak and idle theme,
No more yielding but a dream,
Gentles, do not reprehend :
If you pardon, we will mend :
And, as I am an honest Puck,
If we have unearned luck
Now to 'scape the serpent's tongue,
We will make amends ere long ;
Else the Puck a liar call :
So, good night unto you all.
Give me your hands, if we be friends,
And Robin shall restore amends. [*Exit.*

NOTES.

Act I. Scene I.

Stage Direction. **Theseus**, the great legendary hero of Attica, was the son of Ægeus, king of Athens Among his many exploits was the war he waged against the Amazons, whose queen, Antiope, he, according to one tradition, carried off. According to another, the Amazons, led by Hippolyte, in their turn invaded Attica to avenge the capture of Antiope, when Theseus, having vanquished them, married Hippolyte.

2. **apace**, swiftly; "at an earlier period the word was written as two words, *a pas* .. It is also to be remarked that the phrase has widely changed its meaning. In Chaucer ... it means 'a foot-pace,' and was originally used of horses when proceeding *slowly*, or at a walk. The phrase is compounded of the English indefinite article, *a*, and the M. E. *pas*, modern E. *pace*, a word of French origin" (Skeat, *Ety. Dict.*).

3. **methinks**, it seems to me; *me*, the dative, and the A. S. *thyncan*, to seem, which is quite distinct from the A. S. *thencan*, to think; **slow**, used adverbially.

4. **lingers my desires**, delays the realization of my desires; for **lingers**, used transitively, cp. *R. II.* ii. 2. 72, "Who gently would dissolve the bands of life, Which fond hope *lingers* in extremity."

5, 6. **Like ... revenue.** The picture here is of a widow who for long years keeps the heir out of possession of that portion of his father's property to a life interest in which she is entitled as her dower, and which will be his at her death; **dowager** is a coined word from another coined word, *dowage*, endowment, ultimately from the Lat. *dotare*, to endow, and is equally appropriate to mother and step-mother, though **step-dame** is here used with especial reference to the proverbial harshness of step-mothers to step-children; *step-*, in composition, is the A. S. *steop*, meaning "'orphaned,' or 'deprived of its parent'; so that it was

first used in the compounds, *stepchild*, *stepbairn*, *stepson*, *stepdaughter*, and afterwards extended, naturally enough, so as to form the compounds *stepfather*, *stepmother*, to denote the father or mother of the child who had lost one of its first parents" (Skeat, *Ety. Dict.*). For **withering out**, Steevens compares Chapman's translation of Homer, bk. iv., "there the goodly plant lies *withering out* his grace."

7. **steep themselves in night**, plunge themselves in the gloom of night; with an allusion to the sun dipping below the horizon and so bringing on the night. For **steep**, in this figurative sense, cp. *Oth.* iv. 2. 50, "*Steep'd* me in poverty to the very lips"; *A. C.* ii. 7. 113, "Till that the conquering wine hath *steep'd* our sense In soft and delicate Lethe."

8. **Four nights ... time**; four nights will quickly pass away in dreams.

10. **New-bent**, Rowe's correction of '*Now*-bent.'

11. **solemnities**, marriage festivities; as below, iv. 1. 131, 182.

12. **merriments**, displays of mirth; diversions.

13. **pert**, lively, brisk; now used only in a disagreeable sense, = forward, saucy. According to Skeat, the M. E. *pert* has two meanings and two sources. In some instances it is certainly a corruption of *apert*, F. *apert*, open, and *pertly* means 'openly,' evidently; in others it is from Welsh *pert*, smart, spruce, as here.

14. **Turn .. funerals**, turn melancholy out of doors, and let it go as an accompaniment to funerals.

15. **The pale .. pomp**, such a pale-faced attendant is not a fitting one for the festivity of our marriage; **companion**, as frequently in Shakespeare, used in a contemptuous sense

16, 17. See note on stage direction above.

18. **in another key**, to another tune; in a very different way: cp. *T. C.* i. 3. 53, "An accent tuned in the self-same *key*."

19. **triumph**, stately pageant; public festivity; cp. *R. II.* v. 2. 66, "For gay apparel for the *triumph* day."

20. **duke**, from Lat. *dux*, leader, chief, is in Elizabethan literature a title frequently given to Grecian chiefs, and Chaucer speaks of '*Duke* Theseus.'

21. **Egeus**, a trisyllable, as throughout the play: **what's ... thee**, what is it you have to tell us about yourself?

22. **vexation**, trouble; the word was formerly used in a more forcible sense than it now has.

27. **This hath** is the reading of the later folios, and it seems likely that in the reading of the quartos and first folio, 'This man hath,' 'man' was repeated from l. 25: for **bewitch'd**, Theo-

bald, retaining 'man,' reads 'witch'd': **the bosom**, the heart within the bosom.

28. **given her rhymes**, addressed her in verse; as though the rhymes were a love-potion.

29. **interchanged love-tokens**, given to her and received from her presents in pledge of love.

31. **feigning voice**, voice which pretended to be deeply moved by love.

32. **stolen ... fantasy**, fraudulently made yourself master of the impression upon her fancy, *i.e.* by impressing his own image upon it. The figure is that of surreptitiously obtaining the impression of a seal to be used in giving validity to a document of possession; **fantasy**, the older form of 'fancy,' *i.e.* love, or rather an inclination to love.

33. **gawds**, ornaments, toys; literally things which please the fancy, from Lat. *gaudium*, gladness, joy; cp. below, iv. 1. 164, and *T. C.* iii. 3. 176, "That all with one consent praise new-born *gauds*": **conceits**, "presents fancifully devised" (Schmidt).

34. **Knacks**, Skeat gives as the senses of the word (1) a snap, crack, (2) a snap with the finger or nail, (3) a jester's trick, piece of dexterity, (4) a joke, trifle, toy; the two latter words being the sense here; cp. *W. T.* iv. 4. 360, "To load my she with *knacks*"; *T. S.* iv. 3. 67, "A *knack*, a toy, a trick, a baby's cap." The more modern form is the reduplicated 'knick-knacks' = trifles, toys, which is found in Beaumont and Fletcher's *Loyal Subject*, ii. 1. 126, in the sense of deception, "But if ye use these *knick-knacks*."

34, 5. **messengers ... youth**, which are most persuasive envoys to those like my daughter whose tender age is easily impressed.

38. **stubborn harshness**, sullen obstinacy against my will; **harshness** is more generally used of the rough treatment of a superior, as in *Temp.* iii. 1. 9, "O, she is Ten times more gentle than her father's crabbed, And he's composed of *harshness*."

39. **Be it so**, if it should prove that.

41. **the ancient ... Athens**, the time-honoured custom which the citizens of Athens enjoy.

42. **As she ... her**, that, as she belongs to me, I may do as I please with her.

43-5. **Which shall ... case**, and this disposal of her shall be either marriage with this gentleman, or death in accordance with that law which is expressly applicable to a case of such disobedience. Warburton points out that by a law of Solon's, which Shakespeare may have assumed to be in force even in Theseus' day, parents in Athens had absolute power of life and death over their children; but he also, and more probably,

suggests that Shakespeare perhaps neither thought nor knew anything of the matter; **Immediately**, with direct reference to. Steevens points out that the line "has an undoubted smack of legal commonplace."

46. **be advised**, listen to reason; suffer yourself to be prevailed upon by advice; cp. *Oth.* i. 2. 55, "General, *be advised;* He comes to bad intent"; but the phrase is frequent in Shakespeare.

48. **One that ... beauties**, one to whom you owe your personal beauty; so 'composition' is used for 'frame, 'constitution,' *K. J.* i. 1. 88, "In the large *composition* of this man."

50, 1. **and within ... it**, and within whose power it lies to leave the figure (of your beauty) as it is, or to destroy it; *i.e.* who has power of life and death over you. For the ellipsis of 'it is,' see Abb. § 403.

54, 5. **But in ... worthier**, but in this particular respect, since he lacks your father's approval, he must be held to be less worthy than Lysander who has that approval. For **kind**, cp. *M. A.* ii. 1. 70, "if the prince do solicit you in that *kind*, you know your answer"; for **voice** = approval, suffrage, cp. *R. III.* iii. 4. 20, "And in the duke's behalf I'll give my *voice*"; *J. C.* iii. 1. 177, "Your *voice* shall be as strong as any man's In the disposing of new dignities."

56. **look'd but with my eyes**, saw matters only as I see them.

57. **with his judgment**, as his discernment shows them.

59. **by what ... bold**, what inward strength emboldens me.

60. **Nor how ... modesty**, nor how far it may beseem me as a modest maiden; for **concern**, = affect, cp. below, i. 1. 126, "Of something nearly that *concerns* yourselves."

61. **In such a presence**, in the presence of one so exalted as my sovereign: **to plead my thoughts**, to give expression to my thoughts in pleading my cause before you; for **plead**, with a cognate accusative, cp. i. *H. VI.* ii. 4. 29, "If he suppose that I have *pleaded* truth."

63. **may befall**, can possibly befall; for this, the original, sense of **may**, see Abb. § 307.

63, 4. **in this case ... Demetrius**, in case I should refuse, etc.

65. **the death**, the well-known sentence of death passed upon disobedience; for **the**, expressing notoriety, see Abb. § 92.

68. **Know of your youth**, interrogate the warm feelings of youth and find out: **your blood**, the impulses of nature.

69. **Whether**, here, as frequently in Shakespeare, metrically a monosyllable.

70. **the livery of a nun**, not merely the dress worn by a nun, but all that is involved in the wearing of that dress; cp. *R. J.*

ii. 2. 8, "Her vestal *livery* is but sick and green"; *Per.* ii. 5. 10, "One twelve moons more she 'll wear Diana's *livery*." Of course the mention of nuns in Theseus' time is an anachronism.

71. **For aye**, for ever; **cloister**, more commonly used for the partially enclosed walk beneath the upper storey of monasteries, convents, colleges, etc., but also for the buildings themselves, or any place of religious seclusion; from Lat. *claustrum*, an enclosure: **mew'd**, confined; a 'mew,' from which the verb comes, was originally a cage for hawks, etc. Cp. *R. III.* i. 1. 132, "More pity that the eagle should be *mew'd*, While kites and buzzards prey at liberty."

72. **To live a barren sister**, to spend your days as one of the sisterhood (of nuns) without any children of your own to gladden your life.

73. **Chanting .. moon**, with languid monotony offering up hymns of praise to that chaste-cold divinity, the moon. The **faint hymns** are in contrast with the fervid devotion offered to divinities from whom some warm return of favour might be expected; the moon (personified as Diana, the goddess of chastity) making no return of love to her devotees. For **fruitless** in this sense, and for an illustration of the passage generally, cp. *V. A.* 751-5, "Therefore, despite of *fruitless* chastity, Love-lacking vestals and self-loving nuns, That on the earth would breed a scarcity And barren dearth of daughters and of sons, Be prodigal."

74. **that master ... blood**, who attain such a mastery over their natural inclinations.

75. **To undergo ... pilgrimage**, as to submit themselves to a pilgrimage through life uncheered by the joys of love. For **undergo**, cp. *W. T.* iv. 4. 554, "if you will not change your purpose But *undergo* this flight"; for **pilgrimage**, as applied to the weary journey through life, cp. *R. II.* ii. 1. 154, "His time is spent, our *pilgrimage* must be"; *Genesis*, xlvii. 9, "The days of the years of my *pilgrimage* are an hundred and thirty years"; *Hebrews*, xi. 13, "strangers and *pilgrims* on the earth."

76-8. **But earthlier ... blessedness**, but as regards *earthly* happiness, better is the lot of the rose whose sweetness is distilled from it than that of the rose which, unplucked, lives a lonely existence, and at length withers away upon its bush; *i.e.* putting aside the figure, happier, as far as earthly joys are concerned, is the maiden who marries than she who dies unwedded. For **earthlier happy** Capell would read 'earthly happier,' thus sacrificing the far more poetic reading of the text which emphasizes the earthly character of the happiness to be enjoyed; **virgin** belongs to **rose** rather than to **thorn**; Malone compares *Sonn.* v. 13, "Flowers *distilled*, though they with winter meet, Leese but

their show; their substance still lives sweet"; for **thorn**, =a tree or shrub armed with thorns, cp. i. *H. IV.* i. 3. 176, "To put down Richard, that sweet lovely rose, And plant this *thorn*, this canker, Bolingbroke."

80. **my virgin patent**, the privilege of remaining unmarried, which belongs to me.

81, 2. **Unto ... sovereignty**, to the sway of him to whose unpalatable yoke my soul utterly refuses submission; for **lordship**, as applied to a husband, cp. *A. H.* v. 3. 156, "I wonder, sir, sith wives are monsters to you, And that you fly them as you swear them *lordship*, Yet you desire to marry:" **My soul**, emphatic; I from the bottom of my soul. For the ellipsis of 'to' before **whose**, see Abb. § 201.

83. **Take ... pause**, take time to reflect on the matter.

84, 5. **The sealing-day ... fellowship**, the day on which Hippolyta and I are to ratify by marriage a bond of everlasting partnership in love; cp. *T. N.* v. 1. 164, "And all the ceremony of this compact, *Seal'd* in my function, by my testimony."

87. **For disobedience**, as a punishment for disobedience.

88. **as he would**, as he (*sc.* your father) desires that it should be.

89. **to protest**, to make solemn profession of; cp. *T. G.* iv. 2. 7, "When I *protest* true loyalty to her."

90. **austerity .. life**, a hendiadys for 'the austerity of a life of singleness,' such as was led by those who devoted themselves to religious seclusion.

92. **Thy crazed ... right**, the utterly invalid title you set up to the right which is assuredly mine; the original sense of 'craze' is 'break,' 'weaken.'

95. **he hath my love**, I have given him my affection.

96. **my love**, the affection I bear to him: **render**, give; as often in Shakespeare without any idea of giving in return, or giving back.

97. **my right of her**, the right in her which as a parent I possess.

98. **estate unto**, devolve upon, as an estate is devolved; elsewhere Shakespeare uses 'estate on,' or 'upon,' as in *Temp.* iv. 1. 85, "And some donation freely to *estate On* the blest lovers"; *A. Y. L.* v. 2. 13, "all the revenue that was old Sir Rowland's will I *estate upon* you."

99. **as well derived**, of as noble descent; as frequently in Shakespeare, *e.g. J. C.* ii. 1. 322, "Brave son, *derived* from honourable loins."

100. **As well possess'd**, as richly endowed in point of wealth.

101, 2. **My fortunes .. Demetrius**, in that which I owe to fortune, I am in all respects the equal, if not the superior, of Demetrius; his love is the gift of Nature, his prosperity of Fortune.

103. **which is ... be**, a matter of greater importance than all these other advantages which I boast; for **which** used in this parenthetical way, see Abb. § 271.

104. **of**, by; see Abb. § 171.

105. **prosecute my right**, follow up the right I have to Hermia.

106. **avouch it to his head**, boldly assert it to him face to face; **avouch**, formed from *a* (Lat. *ad*, to,) and *vouch*, to warrant, affirm strongly.

108. **her soul**, her deepest love; **soul**, emphatic, as in l. 82.

109. **dotes in idolatry**, worships him with foolishly passionate love; to 'dote' is to betray foolishness in whatever way; so we speak of a person being in his dotage when (especially from age) he has lost the power of reasoning.

110. **spotted**, polluted by perjury; cp. *R. II.* iii. 2. 134, "Terrible hell make war Upon their *spotted* souls for this offence."

111. **so much** as you tell me, *i.e.* I have heard of his inconstancy.

112. **thought**, intended: **spoke**, for the curtailed form of the participle, see Abb. § 353.

113. **over-full of**, too much occupied: **self-affairs**, personal affairs; for similar compounds of 'self,' cp. *T. C.* ii. 3. 182, "*self*-breath"; *Cymb.* iii. 4. 149, "*self*-danger."

114. **did lose it**, forgot all about it; it completely passed out of my mind.

116. **some private schooling**, some words of reprimand to be said in private; cp. i. *H. IV.* iii. 1. 190, "Well, I am *school'd*."

117. **For you**, as regards you; **look ... yourself**, take care to discipline yourself, prepare yourself; cp. *M. V.* iv. 1. 264, "I am *arm'd* and well prepared."

118. **To fit ... will**, to accommodate your fanciful desires to your father's determination in the matter.

119. **yields you up**, necessarily gives you up.

120. **Which**, and this law: **extenuate**, weaken the force of; in *Oth.* v. 2. 342, "nothing *extenuate*, Nor set down aught in malice," the word means to 'palliate'; Bacon, in his *Colours of Good and Evil*, 7, uses it as here for to 'weaken'; *Adv. Learn.* i. 2. 3, and *Letter of Advice to Essex*, as = to 'depreciate.'

122. **what cheer, my love?** how is it with you? how do you

look upon things? **cheer**, look, countenance; from O. F. *chere*, *chiere*, the face, look; so we say, 'he put a good face upon the matter.'

123. **go along**, come with us; see Abb. § 30; **along**, from "A. S. prefix *and-*, ... over against, close to, and A. S. adjective *lang*, long. The sense is over against in length" (Skeat, *Ety. Dict.*).

124. **I must employ you**, I have employment for you.

125. **Against**, in preparation for; to be ready by the time of; cp. below, iii. 2. 99, "I'll charm his eyes *against* she do appear": **nuptial**, frequently used by Shakespeare in the singular, as conversely he uses 'funerals' where we should say 'funeral.'

126. **nearly** ... **yourselves**, that closely concerns yourselves; for similar transpositions of the adverb, see Abb. § 421.

127. **With duty and desire**, with dutiful eagerness.

129. **How chance** ... **fast**? We should now say either 'How does it chance that the roses there do fade,' etc., or, 'How do the roses there chance to fade,' etc. Cp. below, v. 1. 300, "*How chance* Moonshine is gone before Thisbe comes back and finds her lover?", and see Abb. § 37.

130. **Belike**, probably; literally by like, *i.e.* likelihood.

131. **Beteem**, allow, permit; literally make or consider as fitting. Skeat (*Ety. Dict. s.v.* 'teem') shows that 'teem' is related to the A. S. suffix *-téme*, *tyme*, with the notion of 'fitting' or 'suitable.' "In Golding's translation of Ovid's Metamorphoses, A.D. 1587, we have 'could he not *beteeme*' = he did not think fit, would not deign; the Latin text has *dignatus*, Metam. x. 157. Spenser uses it still more loosely: 'So woulde I ... *Beteeme* you to this sword' = permit, grant, allow you the use of this sword; F. Q. ii. 8. 19." ... Probably, as the Cl. Pr. Edd. point out, both here and in *Haml.* i. 2. 141, "so loving to my mother That he might not *beteem* the winds of heaven Visit her face too roughly," Shakespeare had in his mind a reference to the word *teem* in the sense of 'empty,' 'pour out,' from Icel. *tœma*, to empty: **the tempest of my eyes**, the torrent of tears which is ready to pour from my eyes.

132. **Ay me**! alas for me! **for aught** ... **read**, for anything to the contrary that I have ever met with in my reading; so far as my reading goes.

133. **by**, in the way of; by means of.

134-40. **The course** ... **eyes**. Malone thinks that Milton imitated this passage in *P. L.* x. 896-906.

135. **it was** ... **blood**, there was inequality in the matter of birth.

136. **O cross**! ... **low**! O, what a trial that one of higher rank

should be the slave of love to one beneath him! **cross**, cp. *R. II.* iv. 1. 241, "yet you Pilates Have here delivered me to my sour *cross*," where, as here, there is an allusion to the figurative phrase of 'bearing one's cross,' *i.e.* trials, which originated in Christ's being made literally to bear to the place of execution the cross on which He was crucified. So, *Galatians*, v. 24, "And they that are Christ's have *crucified* the flesh with the affections and lusts." Malone compares *V. A.* 1136, "Sorrow on love hereafter shall attend ... Ne'er settled equally, but high or low," though he misquotes the end of the latter line.

137. **Or else ... years**,—or else there was disparity of age; the pair linked together were not suitable to each other in point of years; to 'graft,' the modern form, is due to 'graffed,' the p.p. of 'graff,' written 'graft,' being mistaken for an infinitive. Shakespeare uses the correct form, as here, *R. III.* iii. 7. 127, *A. Y. L.* iii. 2. 124, and also the corrupt form, *Macb.* iv. 3. 51.

138. **O spite! ... young.** O sad misfortune that age and youth should be bound by contract to another! Cp. *The Passionate Pilgrim*, xii. 157, etc., "Crabbed age and youth cannot live together," etc.

139. **Or else .. friends**,—or else it depended upon, was due to, the choice made by friends; the union had been a matter of negotiation between the friends, or relatives, not a matter of love between the principal parties.

140. **O hell! ... eyes.** O misery that choice in a matter of love should be made by others than those immediately concerned! **to choose love** is elliptical for 'to make choice of the object of love.'

141. **sympathy**, correspondency, equality, in birth, years, etc.; cp. *R. II.* iv. 1. 33, "If that thy valour stand on *sympathy*," *i.e.* if you are unwilling to meet in combat one who is not your equal in rank; *Oth.* ii. 1. 222, "*sympathy* in years, manners, and beauties."

142. **it**, *sc.* love.

143. **momentany**, from Lat. *momentaneus*, as the more modern form 'momentary' is from the Lat. *momentarius*.

144. **Swift as a shadow**, *sc.* in passing away.

145. **Collied**, darkened; literally covered with coal-smuts, as 'collier' is from the M. E. *col*, coal, with the suffix *-er*, and the insertion of *i* for convenience in pronunciation.

146. **in a spleen**, in a fit of passion; as though the lightning were endowed with the same feelings as a man; cp. *K. J.* ii. 1. 448, "With swifter *spleen* than powder (*i.e.* gunpowder) can enforce:" **unfolds**, *i.e.* from the mantle of darkness in which they were enveloped.

147, 8. **And ere ... up**, and before a man can so much as say 'Behold!' it is again swallowed up by darkness; cp. *R. J.* ii. 2. 119, 20, "like the lightning, which doth cease to be, Ere one can say 'It lightens.'"

149. **confusion**, ruin; as frequently in Shakespeare.

150. **ever**, constantly: **cross'd**, thwarted by circumstances.

151. **It stands .. destiny**, it (*sc.* that they should be thwarted) is a decree firmly established by destiny; **edict**, with the accent on the former syllable, as often in Shakespeare.

152. **teach .. patience**, teach ourselves, thus tried, to endure with calmness.

154. **As due to love**, as much a part of, as much belonging to, love.

155. **poor fancy's followers**, the constant attendants on poor love.

156. **A good persuasion**, a good belief, doctrine, to hold; cp. *Cymb.* i. 4. 125, "You are a great deal abused in too bold a *persuasion*"; *M. M.* iv. 1. 47, "whose *persuasion* is I come about my brother."

157. **a widow aunt**, an aunt who is a widow; **widow**, used as an adjective.

157, 8. **a dowager . revenue**, one endowed with a rich jointure; see note on l. 5.

159. **remote**, removed, distant; cp. *L. L. L.* v. 2. 806, "some forlorn and naked hermitage *Remote* from all the pleasures of the world."

160. **respects**, regards; cp. i. *H. IV.* v. 4. 20, "I do *respect* thee as my soul."

161. **may**, shall be able; on the original sense of **may**, see Abb § 307.

162. **sharp**, cruel.

163. **If ... then**, therefore if.

164. **forth**, out from; on **forth**, used as a proposition, see Abb. § 55.

165. **without**, outside.

167. **To do observance ... May.** See Introduction.

170. **By his ... head.** Cupid is by Ovid (*Metam.* i. 469-71) spoken of as armed with two arrows, one of gold, the other of lead; the former exciting, the latter repelling, love; cp. *T. N.* i. 1. 35, "How will she love, when *the rich golden shaft* Hath kill'd the flock of all affections else That live in her."

171. **simplicity**, innocence: **Venus' doves**, or pigeons, are men-

tioned again in *M. V.* ii. 6. 5; and among other birds supposed to draw her chariot were sparrows, swans, and swallows.

172. **knitteth**, binds together; **prospers**, for this transitive use of the verb, cp. *Lear*, iii. 2. 92, "Kind gods, forgive me that, and *prosper* him."

173, 4. **the Carthage queen**, Dido, who burned with love for Æneas, **the false Troyan**; for the noun put for the adjective, cp. "Corioli walls," *Cor.* i. 1. 8; "Philippi fields," *J. C.* v. 5. 19; "the Cyprus wars," *Oth.* i. 1. 151. "Steevens pointed out the anachronism of making Dido and Æneas earlier in point of time than Theseus. But Shakespeare's Hermia lived in the latter part of the sixteenth century and was contemporary with Nick Bottom the weaver" (Wright).

174. **under sail was seen**, was seen by her sailing away from her shores. The story of Dido falling in love with Æneas is told in Vergil's *Æneid*, Bk. i.; at his departure for Latium Dido destroyed herself.

176. **In number more**, *i.e.* which are more in number; for the curtailed participles **broke** and **spoke**, see Abb. § 343.

177. **same place**, very place: **hast appointed me**, have appointed for me.

180. **God . Helena**! may heaven favour Helena wherever she is going! The radical sense of 'speed' is 'success.'

181. **that fair**, that title of 'fair' which you give me.

182. **your fair**, your beauty; the substantival use of the word is frequent in Shakespeare: **O happy fair**! O beauty fortunate in attracting the love of Demetrius!

183. **lode-stars**, lode-star is literally "'way-star,' *i.e.* the star that shows the way ... Compounded of *lode*, a way, and star" (Skeat, *Ety. Dict.*): **your tongue's sweet air**, the sweet sound of your voice.

184. **tuneable**, melodious; cp. iv. 1. 121, "A cry more *tuneable*": for the omission of the article before **lark**, see Abb. § 83.

185. **When wheat .. appear**, *i.e.* in early summer.

186. **favour**, looks, appearance; "'In beauty,' says Bacon in his 43rd Essay, 'that of favour is more than that of colour; and that of decent and gracious motion more than that of favour.' The word is now lost to us in that sense; but we still use *favoured* with *well*, *ill*, and perhaps other qualifying terms, for featured or looking; as in *Genesis* xli. 4:—'The ill-favoured and lean-flesh'd kine did eat up the seven well-favoured and fat kine'" (Craik, *English of Shakespeare*, § 54).

188. **My ear should catch your voice.** Lettsom points out the inconsistency here by which Helena is made to wish her ear may

resemble the **voice** of Hermia; and would read 'My *hair* should catch your *hair*,' since **catch** in all three clauses is evidently used in the technical sense of contracting some affection from another person. If any change were allowable, I should be inclined to read, 'My *fair* should catch your *fair*,' *i.e.* the personal beauty you have ascribed to me should catch your personal beauty; my eye should catch the fascination of your eye; my tongue, etc., **fair** being the general term including the particulars, **eye** and **tongue**. **Voice** seems clearly wrong, since the next line deals with that particular; and with my conjecture we have in these two lines a complete correspondency with ll. 182, 3. For **catch**, used in a good sense, cp. ii. *H. IV.* v. 1. 85, "It is certain that either *wise bearing* or ignorant carriage is *caught*, as men take diseases, one of another." Abbott (§ 237) points out that *mine* is almost always found before 'eye,' 'ear,' etc., where no emphasis is intended. But where there is an antithesis, as here, we have *my, thy*.

190. **bated**, excepted, left out; cp. *Temp.* ii. 1. 100, "*Bate*, I beseech you, widow Dido"; *Haml.* v. 2. 23, "no leisure *bated*."

191. **translated**, transformed; cp. below, iii. 1. 109, "Bless thee, Bottom! bless thee! thou art *translated*"; *Haml.* iii. 1. 113, "the power of beauty will sooner transform honesty from what it is .. than the force of honesty can *translate* beauty into his likeness."

193. **sway the motion .. heart**, make his heart move in whatever direction you please.

194. **still**, nevertheless; in spite of my frowning.

195, 7. **O that .. move**! Would that my warmest welcome and my most earnest prayers could effect that which is the prompt result of your disdain and maledictions!

200. **is no fault of mine**, is not a thing for which I am to be blamed, since I do everything in my power to cure him of it.

201. **None, ... beauty**, I grant that all you can be blamed for is your beauty.

203. **will fly**, am determined to quit with all speed.

206, 7. **O, then ... hell**! How powerful must be the graces of my beloved one, seeing that they have made Athens a place of torture to me; *i.e.* since so long as she remained in it she could not marry Lysander. As Johnson points out, Hermia is endeavouring to comfort Helena by showing that personal beauty, such as Helena covets, does not necessarily bring happiness with it. Johnson, however, seems to take **my love** as = the love which I feel.

209. **Phœbe**, the moon, sister of Phœbus, the sun.

210. **in the watery glass**, mirrored in the water.

211. **liquid pearl**, dew-drops; **pearl**, used generically, as in *H. V.* iv. 1. 279, "The intertissued robe of gold and *pearl*"; *Mach.* v 8. 56, "I see thee compass'd with thy kingdom's *pearl*."

212. **doth still conceal**, is ever wont to conceal.

213. **devised**, planned.

215. **faint primrose-beds**, beds of pale primroses, as they are called in *W. T.* iv. 4. 122, "*pale primroses* That die unmarried"; *Cymb.* iv. 2. 221, "The flower that 's like thy face, *pale primrose*." Delius regards the epithet here as applying to those who lie upon the primroses, beds for those who were faint, weary; and Schmidt and Wright follow him. But the picture of Helena and Hermia lying out in the meadow is one that does not at all necessarily infer weariness, and the interpretation seems a very forced one.

216. **Emptying ... sweet**, unreservedly exchanging confidence with each other; the words **counsel sweet** are from *Psalms*, lv. 15, "We took *sweet counsel* together." Cp. below, iii. 2. 198, "In all the *counsel* that we two have shared."

217. **shall meet**, have determined to meet.

219. **stranger companies**, the society of strangers; **stranger**, the substantive used as an adjective; cp. *K. J.* v. 1. 11, "Swearing allegiance and the love of soul To *stranger* blood"; for **companies**, cp. *Cymb.* iv. 2. 69, "search What *companies* are near."

222. **Keep word**, keep your promise of meeting me; apostrophizing Lysander in his absence; we still use the phrase 'keep my, your, his, etc. word,' in this sense.

223. **From lovers' food**, *i.e.* the sight of one another: **till ... midnight**, till the dead of to-morrow's night; cp. *Haml.* i. 2. 198, "In the *dead* vast and *middle of the night*"; ii. *H. VI.* i. 4. 19, "*Deep night*, dark night, the silent of the night." Blackstone points out that to-morrow night would be within three nights of the new moon, when there would be no moonshine at all.

225. **dote**, see note on l. 109; and for the subjunctive used optatively, Abb. § 365.

226. **other some**, certain others; cp. *M. M.* iii 2. 94, "Some say he is with the Emperor of Russia; *other some*, he is in Rome."

227. **Through**, throughout.

228. **But what of that?** but that is of no avail; more commonly in the sense of 'that does not matter,' 'is of no consequence.'

229. **will not know**, obstinately refuses to know.

231. **So I**, *sc.* err: **admiring of**, on **of**, following a verbal noun, see Abb. § 178.

232. **holding no quantity**, "bearing no proportion to what they are estimated at by love" (Schmidt); cp. *Haml.* iii. 2. 177, "For women's fear and love *holds quantity*."

233. **Love ... dignity**, love's alchemy can transmute into that which is shapely and dignified; cp. *Sonn.* cxiv. 3-6, "And whether shall I say .. that your love taught it this alchemy, To make of monsters and things indigest Such cherubins as your sweet self resemble."

236. **Nor hath . taste**, nor has Love's mind the smallest flavour of the critical faculty; cp. *T. C.* v. 2. 127, "Why, my negation hath no *taste* of madness."

237. **Wings ... haste**, in painting, statuary, etc., Cupid is represented with wings and without sight; **figure**, symbolize.

238. **therefore**, for this reason that in making his choice as to whom he should wound with his arrows, he is often led astray.

240. **in game**, in sport; for mere fun.

242. **eyne**, *i.e. eyen*, the archaic plural; sometimes, as here, for the sake of the rhyme, sometimes without any such constraint.

243. **hail'd down**, uttered with the rapidity and frequency of falling hail; cp. *M. W.* v. 5. 21-3, "let it thunder to the tune of Green Sleeves, *hail* kissing-comfits and snow eringoes"; *Macb.* i. 3. 97, "As thick as *hail* Came post with post."

244, 5. **And when ... melt**, and when the love kindled by the sight of Hermia began to glow in his heart, his love for me melted away; for **so**, as the correlative of **when**, see Abb. § 66.

246. **go tell**, for the omission of 'to' before **tell**, see Abb. § 349.

248. **this intelligence**, this information which I shall communicate to him.

249. **If I ... expense**, if I so much as obtain his thanks (which is doubtful), I shall have paid a high price for them (*sc.* in the pain it will cost me to give him the opportunity of meeting Hermia). Steevens explains, "It will cost him much (be a severe constraint on his feelings) to make even so slight a return for my communication,"—an explanation which the next line seems to disprove.

250, 1. **But herein .. again**, but in this manner I mean to requite the pain I shall thus give myself, to wit, by enjoying the sight of him on the way there and back.

SCENE II.

2. **You were best,** for this ungrammatical remnant of ancient usage, see Abb. § 230: **generally,** Bottom's blunder for 'individually.'

3. **the scrip,** the list in which their names are written down; the same word as 'script,' from O. F. *escript*, a writing, Lat. *scriptum*, pp. of *scribere*, to write.

4. **which,** though frequently used as less definite than 'who,' and indicating 'a kind of person,' is here perhaps intended as a note of Bottom's speech, just as we have in l. 6 **his** applied to the duke and duchess, and the phrase **wedding-day at night,**—a phrase with which Wright compares the words of the not much more highly educated nurse in *R. J.* i. 3. 21, "On Lammas-eve at night shall she be fourteen"; though for both there is this much excuse that 'wedding-day' and 'Lammas-eve' may not improperly be taken for the whole twelve hours.

9. **on,** of.

9, 10. **grow to a point,** come to a conclusion; cp. *M. V.* iii. 1. 17, "Come, *the full stop,*" said by Salarino to the prolix Solanio.

11. **comedy,** Bottom's blunder for 'tragedy.'

12. **Pyramus and Thisby.** Thisbe, a beautiful Babylonian maiden, was beloved by Pyramus. Their parents objecting to a marriage, the lovers were obliged to meet by stealth, and agreed on a certain day to a rendezvous at Ninus' tomb. Thisbe, arriving first, perceived a lioness which had just torn to pieces an ox, and therefore took to flight. While running away she dropped one of her garments, which the lion seized and stained with blood. Pyramus, on finding it, supposed Thisbe to be slain, and so put an end to himself. Thisbe presently returning to the spot and finding Pyramus' dead body, also slew herself.

13. **A very ... merry.** "This," says Steevens, "is designed as a ridicule on the titles of our ancient moralities and interludes. Thus Skelton's *Magnificence* is called 'a goodly interlude and a merry.'"

14. **the scroll,** the list of names.

15. **spread yourselves,** do not crowd all together.

18. **are set down for Pyramus,** have had the part of Pyramus assigned to you.

20. **gallant,** gallantly.

21. **That will ... of it,** that if well performed will make a great demand upon the audience for tears; cp. *T. S.* ii. 1. 115, "my business *asketh* haste"; *R. II.* ii. 1. 159, "And for these great affairs do *ask* some charge."

22. **let the audience ... eyes**, *i.e.* or else they will weep their very eyes out.

22, 3. **I will .. measure**, probably means 'I will make a fine story of grief'; though **condole** is probably intended for a blunder, the word in Shakespeare and his contemporaries was used as a neuter and as a transitive verb, and not merely as now with the preposition 'with,' in the sense of sympathizing. Thus, Marston, ii. *Antonio and Mellida*, v. 2. 81, we have the stage direction "Piero seems to *condole* his son," who is dead; and Heywood, *Fortune by Land and Sea*, uses the word absolutely, "My heart begins to *condole*." Bunyan, *Pilgrim's Progress*, has the phrase "To *condole* his own misery."

23. **To the rest** seems to me nothing more than a stage direction that has crept into the text. Bottom having made his former remarks to Quince, the stage-manager, in particular, now turns to his fellow-actors in general, and tells them that though he is ready to play Pyramus, the part of a tyrant is the one he especially fancies.

24. **Ercles**, Hercules; a character often exhibited in the bombastic dramas of the time. Delius quotes Greene's *Groatsworth of Wit*, "The twelve labours of Hercules have I terribly thundered on the stage."

25. **or a part .. in**, or a part in which some doughty deed was to be done, such as rending a cat. Steeven quotes Histriomastix, "Sirrah, this is you that would rend and *tear a cat* upon a stage": **to make all split**, a phrase like the last expressive of violent action, and of nautical origin. Rolfe quotes Taylor, the Water Poet, "Some ships have so great a sayle, that they heave their masts by the boord and make *all split* againe."

30. **Phibbus' car**, the chariot of the sun-god, Phœbus, which he daily drove round the earth. The lines seem to be rather a burlesque of, than a quotation from, some old play.

34. **This was lofty**! That is the kind of noble verse that I should enjoy having to recite! **name ... players**, call out the name of each and tell them what parts are assigned to them.

34, 5. **This is Ercles' vein**, such language as that would Hercules use: **condoling**, pathetic.

38. **must take ... you**, must undertake the part of Thisbe; probably with an allusion to taking somebody on one's back.

39. **a wandering knight**, a knight in quest of adventures, a 'knight errant.'

40. **must love**, has to make love to in the play.

41. **let not me ... woman**, the parts of women were in those days played by boys or young men, and actresses were not regularly employed till the revival of the drama in the time of Charles the

Second. Cp. *A. C.* v. 2. 220, where Cleopatra is anticipating her story being represented on the stage; "I shall see Some squeaking Cleopatra *boy* my greatness."

43. **That 's all one,** that does not matter in the least: **in a mask,** as was often the case when no actor sufficiently youthful could be found for the part.

44. **may speak ... will,** may mince your words and speak with a voice as much like a woman's as you can; cp. *M. W.* i. 1. 49, "She has brown hair and *speaks small* like a woman"; and such phrases as to 'speak big,' to 'speak thick.'

45. **An,** see Abb. § 101.

46. **monstrous little,** wonderfully small: '**Thisne, Thisne,**' expressing the manner in which he will mince his words, if allowed to play Thisbe.

48, 9. **you Thisby,** you must play Thisbe.

53. **you must ... mother.** Theobald points out that the father and mother of Thisbe, and the father of Pyramus, here mentioned, do not appear at all in the interlude.

57, 8. **and, I hope ... fitted,** I flatter myself that the cast of the play is now complete.

60. **study** was and still is the technical term for getting up a part; cp. *Haml.* ii. 2. 566, "You could, for a need, *study* a speech of some dozen or sixteen lines."

63, 4. **that I will ... hear me,** so that every one will be delighted to hear me.

64, 5. **that I will ... say,** in such a perfect way that the duke will be unable to refrain from saying, etc.

65. **Let him ... again,** "Not only does Bottom propose to play every part himself, but he anticipates the applause, and encores his own roar" (C. Clarke).

67. **that they would shriek,** so that they could not help shrieking.

69. **every mother's son,** every one of us.

71. **no more discretion but,** no other choice than.

72. **aggravate,** Bottom's blunder for 'moderate,' as in ii. *H. IV.* ii. 4. 176, the Hostess says, "I beseek you now, *aggravate* your choler."

73. **roar you,** for *me, you, him,* etc., representing the old dative and giving liveliness to the narration, see Abb. § 220.

73, 4. **I will roar .. nightingale,** Abbott (§ 104) thinks an ellipsis is probably to be understood here, 'I will roar you, *and* if it were a nightingale (I would still roar better),' which is perhaps to pay a too high compliment to Bottom's English.

Wright compares *T. C.* i. 2. 189, "He will weep you, *an 'twere* a man born in April." **sucking dove**, Bottom's blunder for 'sucking lamb.'

76. **sweet-faced**, comely looking: **proper**, handsome; the literal sense is 'own,' thence 'what becomes a man, is appropriate to him,' and so 'well-looking,' 'handsome.'

76, 7. **in a summer's day**, *i.e.* in a long day; cp. *H. V.* iii. 6. 67, "I 'll assure you, a' uttered as brave words at the bridge as you shall see *in a summer's day*"; and iv. 8. 23, "a most contagious treason come to light, look you, as you shall desire *in a summer's day*."

78. **needs**, of need; necessarily; the old genitive used adverbially, as 'whiles,' 'twice' (twies), etc.

79. **were I best**, see note on l. 2, above.

81. **what you will**, any you like.

82. **discharge**, perform, enact; a theatrical technicality; cp. below, iv. 2. 8, v. 1. 201, 346: **your straw-colour**, the straw colour you know so well; **your**, used generically.

83. **orange-tawny**, a colour midway between orange and tawny; 'tawny' is merely another spelling of 'tanny,' resembling that which is tanned or browned by the sun: **purple-in-grain**, in this phrase **grain** is cochineal, a dye obtained from the dried bodies of insects of the species *Coccus cacti*, but supposed by the ancients to be made from a *berry*, the meaning of the word *coccus*.

84. **French-crown-colour**, the colour of the gold *écu*, or crown, formerly current in France.

85, 6. **crowns**, heads: **barefaced**, probably with a play upon its literal and its figurative sense: **masters**, a term frequently used without any acknowledgment of inferiority; my friends, my good fellows.

87. **I am to entreat you**, I have to entreat you.

88, **con**, get by heart; literally to try to know; "a secondary verb, formed from A. S. *cunnan*, to know" (Skeat, *Ety. Dict.*).

88, 9. **palace wood**, the wood in which the palace stands: **without**, outside: **a mile**, Wright points out that in i. 1. 165 it is a league.

90. **rehearse**, repeat; from "O. F. *rehercer*, 'to harrow over again,' Cotgrave. ... From the sense of harrowing again we easily pass to the sense of 'going again over the same ground,' and hence to that of repetition. Cp. the phrase 'to *rake* up an old story.'—F. *re-* (Lat. *re-*), again; and *hercer*, to harrow ... from *herce*, a harrow" ... (Skeat, *Ety. Dict.*): **dogged**, followed closely; tracked as by dogs.

91. **Devices**, plans for playing.

92. **draw a bill**, make out a list: **properties**, stage necessaries; everything required for the performance of a play, except dresses and scenery.

95. **obscenely**, Bottom's blunder probably for 'seemly,' as in *L. L. L.* iv. 1. 145, "When it comes so smoothly off, so *obscenely*, as it were, so fit," used by the clown, Costard: **courageously**, without fear of interruption.

97. **hold or cut bow-strings**. Capell's explanation, which is generally accepted, seems hardly satisfactory. He says, "When a party was made at butts, assurance of meeting was given in the words of that phrase; the sense of the person using them being that he would 'hold' or keep promise, or they might 'cut his bowstrings,' 'demolish him for an archer.'" The meaning of the phrase clearly is 'in any case,' 'whatever happens'; and the construction of the sentence apparently is 'whether bowstrings hold or break,' both **hold** and **cut** being subjunctives, and **cut** being used in a neuter sense, as Warburton suggests. Moreover it is not certain that **bowstrings** do not mean the strings of the bows of musical instruments, such as violins, etc.

ACT II. SCENE I.

STAGE DIRECTION. **Puck**, "a goblin, mischievous sprite ... Of Celtic origin.—Irish *puca*, an elf, sprite, hobgoblin". (Skeat, *Ety. Dict.*). See Introduction.

1. **How now ... you**? *i.e.* what are you about? what brings you here, and whither are you bound?

3. **Thorough**, the lengthened form of 'through,' for the metre's sake.

4. **pale**, enclosure; literally a stake used for enclosing ground.

7. **the moon's sphere**. Furnivall (*Proceedings of the New Shakspere Society* for 1877-9, pp. 31, etc.) gives a full account of the Ptolemaic system of spheres, of which there were nine, all circling round the earth, the nearest sphere being that of the moon; then came those of Mercury, Venus, The Sun, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, The Fixed Stars, The Primum Mobile. In or on each of the seven lower spheres was a planet fixed, and this was whirled by that sphere right round the earth in twenty-four hours, the driving power being the Primum Mobile. Reference to these spheres is frequent in Shakespeare.

9. **her orbs**, the fairy-rings, as they are commonly called, the "green-sour ringlets" of *Temp.* v. 1. 37, circular patches in meadows, the ring being of a brighter and lighter green than the grass around it. Of old supposed to be caused by the nightly

dances of the fairies, but now said to result from the outspreading propagation of a particular mushroom, the fairy-ringed **fungus**, by which the ground is manured for a richer following **vegetation.** For the infinitive **To dew** used indefinitely, and here = by dewing, see Abb. § 356.

10. **pensioners**, an allusion, says Warton, to Queen Elizabeth's "establishment of a band of military courtiers, by the name of *pensioners*. They were some of the handsomest and *tallest* young men, of the best families and fortunes, that could be found": **cowslips** are mentioned, *Temp.* v. 1. 89, in connection with the fairy Ariel, "In the *cowslip's* bell I lie."

11. **gold coats**, yellow blossoms; with an allusion to the handsome uniforms of the gentlemen pensioners: the **spots** are what in l. 13 are called **freckles**, a word now used only of tan-spots in the face.

12. **fairy favours**, tokens of the love in which cowslips are held by the fairies.

13 **savours**, sweet odours.

14. **go seek**, for the omission of 'to,' see Abb. § 349.

15. **a pearl**, *i.e.* a dew-drop; with an allusion to pearl earrings, common then as in more modern days.

16. **thou lob of spirits**, you lubberly spirit; Puck being of a less ethereal nature than the fairies; **lob**, literally dolt, blockhead, and etymologically connected with 'lubber.'

17. **anon**, immediately; A. S. *on* = on or in, and *ān*, old form of one; literally in one (moment).

18. **doth keep**, has determined to hold.

19. **come**, for the conjunctive after verbs of command, see Abb. § 369.

20. **passing . wrath**, surpassingly, exceedingly, angry; **wrath**, the A. S. adjective *wrāð*, wroth: **fell**, bitter-tempered; A. S. *fel*, cruel.

21. **Because that**, for the conjunctional affix, see Abb. § 287.

23. **changeling**, here and in *W. T.* iii 3. 122, a child whom the fairies had carried off; but more usually the child left in the place of the one carried off, fairies being supposed to be addicted to stealing the most beautiful children they could find, leaving in their place those that were ugly and misshapen. Cp. Spenser, *F. Q.* i. 10. 65, "From thence a Faerie thee unweeting reft, There as thou slepst in tender swadling band, And her base elfin brood there for thee left. Such men do *chaungelings* call, so chaunged by Faeries theft."

24. **would have**, desires to have.

25. **Knight of his train**, as leader of his retinue of attendants:

trace, wander about in; cp. *M. A.* iii. 1. 16, "As we do *trace* this alley up and down."

27. **makes ... joy**, makes him the sole object of her delight.

28. **they**, Titania and Oberon.

29. **spangled**, the stars in heaven resembling the spangles (small disks of bright metal) worn as ornaments on dresses, bridles, etc. Spenser, *F. Q.* iv. 11. 45, has the form 'spangs' in the same metaphor, "With glittering *spangs* that did like starres appear." Cp. also Bacon, *Essay of Masques and Triumphs*, "And Oes, or *Spangs*, as they are of no great cost, so they are of most Glory": **sheen**, brightness.

30. **but they do square**, without their squaring, *i.e.* quarrelling; cp. *T. A.* ii. 1. 100, "are you such fools To *square* for this?" *A. C.* ii. 1. 45, "'Twere pregnant they should *square* between themselves"; also the substantive, *M. A.* i. 1. 82, "Is there no young *squarer* now that will make a voyage with him to the devil?" The verb is still used for preparing for a fight with fist by squaring the arms across the chest: **for fear**, out of fear.

31. **them**, themselves.

32. **Either**, like 'whether,' 'further,' 'neither,' etc., metrically a monosyllable; see Abb. § 466.

33. **shrewd**, mischievous; literally 'accursed'; pp. of M. E. *shrewen*, to curse.

34. **Robin Goodfellow**, under this euphemistic title Puck is identified with a domestic spirit who at one time would help the servants of the house in their work, and at another would play mischievous tricks. See Introduction, and cp. Ben Jonson, *Masque of Love Restored*, "*Robin Goodfellow*, he that sweeps the hearth and the house clean, riddles [*i.e.* passes the embers through a sieve] for the country maids, and does all their other drudgery, while they are at hot-cockles." **he**, the person.

35. **villagery**, according to Johnson, a collection of villages, but the form seems rather to indicate a collection of villagers, as Wright explains. Cp. *stitchery*, *Cor.* i. 1. 75, the work on which a stitcher is engaged.

36. **Skim**, properly speaking we should have 'skims,' 'labours,' 'makes' as well as **frights**; but Shakespeare seems to have begun the construction grammatically and then to have changed it as though he had written 'is it not you' instead of **are not you he**: **skim milk**, skim the cream from the milk and drink it up: **labour in the quern**, grind corn in the hand-mill when it is not wanted; **quern**, from "A. S. *cweorn*, *cwyrn*, ... originally 'that which grinds'" (Skeat, *Ety. Dict.*). Wright understands the fairy to be enumerating all Robin Goodfellow's pranks, good

and bad, and quotes Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*, in which he is made to say of himself when in good humour, "I grind at mill Their malt up still."

37. **bootless**, without boot, profit; A. S. *bót*, profit, advantage, and the suffix *-less*, from M. E. *lans*, loose; **breathless**, *i.e.* with their vain exertion.

38. **And sometime ... barm**, and sometimes prevent the beer from producing any yeast; **barm**, the froth of malt liquor in fermentation used for leavening dough; **sometime** and 'sometimes,' in their various senses, are used convertibly by Shakespeare.

39. **their harm**, the injuries done to them by you; **their**, objectively.

40, 1. **Those that ... luck**, those who compliment you with the titles of Hobgoblin and sweet Puck, have their work done by you, and are certain of good luck. Cp. Milton, *L'Allegro*, ll. 105-14.

42. **Thou speak'st aright**, for examples of lines with four accents only, where there is an interruption in the line, see Abb. § 506. Collier and Dyce insert 'Fairy' before **Thou**, and in rhyming lines the omission of a word of two accents is less likely than in blank verse. Johnson remarks, "It seems that in the fairy mythology, Puck, or Hobgoblin, was the trusty servant of Oberon, and always employed to watch or detect the intrigues of Queen Mab, called by Shakespeare, Titania. For in Drayton's Nymphidia, the same fairies are engaged in the same business."...

43. **am**, emphatic.

44. **I jest to Oberon**, I act as jester to Oberon, make jokes to amuse him, like the Court jesters.

45. **bean-fed**, fed on beans, and so lusty and frolicsome; cp. the slang expression of the present day, 'full of beans,' in the same sense.

46. **Neighing ... foal**, assuming the form of a young filly and neighing like it.

47. **gossip's bowl**, the christening bowl round which old women sat drinking; 'gossip,' from 'God' and 'sib'=akin, was formerly used for a sponsor at baptism, those who stood in this relation to a child being considered as 'akin in God.' 'Gossips,' then, says Trench, *Eng. Past and Present*, p. 297, 9th ed., "are first the sponsors, brought by the act of a common sponsorship into affinity and near familiarity with one another; secondly, these sponsors, who being thus brought together, allow themselves with one another in familiar, and then in trivial and idle, talk; thirdly, they are any who allow themselves in this trivial and idle talk".

48. **In very ... crab**, taking the exact form of a roasted wild

apple; such as was commonly put into bowls of warm, spiced, ale, a favourite drink in former days; cp. *L. L. L.* v. 2. 935, "When *roasted crabs* hiss in the bowl."

49. **bob**, jump up; thus spilling the ale as she is about to drink it.

50. **dewlap**, properly the loose flesh hanging from the throats of cattle, and so called from its lapping up the dew as they graze; here the breast made flaccid by age.

51. **wisest aunt**, the old crony, "full of strange saws and modern instances" (*A. Y. L.* ii. 7. 156), who from her great age sets up for an authority among her companions. Grant White says that in New England villages good-natured old people are still called 'aunt' and 'uncle' by the whole community: **saddest tale**, most doleful tales of ghosts or bygone calamities, such as gossips round a fire were fond of. Cp. *R. II.* v. 1. 40-2, "In winter's tedious nights sit by the fire With good old folks and let them tell thee tales Of woeful ages long ago betid"; *W. T.* ii. 1. 25, 6, "A *sad* tale 's best for winter: I have one of sprites and goblins."

52. **Sometime**, see note on l. 36 above: **three-foot stool**, stool with three legs, such as were common in cottages.

53. **topples**, tumbles over; properly tumbles headlong from being top-heavy.

54. **And 'tailor' cries.** Johnson says, "The custom of crying *tailor* at a sudden fall backwards, I think I remember to have observed. He that slips beside his chair, falls as a tailor squats upon his board." This explanation, the only one suggested, seems hardly satisfactory; for the expression, in that case a derisive one, would hardly be applied to herself by the old woman as she fell. More probably it would be used in an angry tone to the person who had been clumsy enough to upset her, as we still say 'a regular tailor' of a bungling fellow; and 'cobbler' and 'botcher' of a clumsy workman; but I believe the true reading is 'faitor,' *i.e.* traitor, as in ii. *Henry IV.* ii. 4. 173: **falls into a cough**, is seized with a fit of coughing.

55. **quire**, assembly; another spelling of 'choir,' properly a band of singers, from Lat. *chorus*, a band of singers, which again is from the Gk. χορός, a dance in a ring, a band of dancers and singers: **hold their hips**, in the paroxysm of laughter which seizes them; more commonly, to 'hold the sides'; cp. Milton, *L'Allegro*, l. 32, "And Laughter holding both her sides."

56. **waxen in their mirth**, wax merrier and merrier, become uproarious in their merriment: Farmer conjectured *yexen*, *i.e.* hiccup, and Singer so reads: **neeze**, sneeze (of which the word is a parallel form); or, as we might say, puff and blow in the

violence of their mirth. For old forms of the third person plural, indicative mood, see Abb. § 332

57. **wasted**, spent (without any idea of loss of time); a sense frequent in Shakespeare.

58. **now**. I have followed Dyce in inserting this word; to scan **fairy** as a trisyllable being, as he says, "too ridiculous."

STAGE DIRECTION. **Oberon**, "the 'dwarfe king of fayryes' is introduced into the popular romance of Huon de Bordeaux, translated by Lord Berners, probably earlier than 1598. The older part of Huon de Bordeaux, Mr. Keightley has shown to have been taken from the story of Otnit in the Heldenbuch, where the dwarf king Elberich performs nearly the same services to Otnit that Oberon does to Huon. The name of Oberon, in fact, according to Grimm, is only Elberich slightly altered. From the usual change of *l* into *u* .. in the French language, Elberich or Albrich .. becomes Auberich; and *ich* not being a French termination, the dominative *on* was substituted, and thus the name Auberon, or Oberon" (Staunton). **Titania**, Shakespeare seems to have taken this name from Ovid, who uses it as an appellation of Diana.

60. **Ill met**, instead of being pleased to encounter her at the usual time for the meeting of fairies, Oberon is now vexed, and reverses the ordinary salutation, 'well met!' **proud**, in reference to her obstinate refusal to give up the "little changeling boy" he desired to have in his train.

61. **What, jealous Oberon**! What, is that you, jealous Oberon? pretending to be surprised at meeting him: **skip hence**, *i.e.* let us be off and leave him to himself.

62. **forsworn**, sworn utterly to avoid; cp. *Temp.* iv. 1. 91, "Her and her blind boy's scandall'd company I have *forsworn*"; *for-*, as a prefix to verbs, has usually an intensive sense, as in *forswear*, meaning to swear falsely (Lat. *per-jurare*, to swear out and out, and hence to swear falsely), *forlo*, *forbid*, etc., or, as here preserves the sense of 'from,' *i.e.* *abjure*, Lat. *ab-jurare*.

63. **wanton**, alluding to her love of Theseus.

64. **Then I must** ... **lady**, if, as you say, you are my lord, I ought to be your lady, but that I cannot be since you have been vowing love to Phillida, and therefore you cannot be my lord.

64, 5. **but I know** ... **land**, but I am well acquainted with the occasions on which you have secretly left the fairy land, your proper domain.

66. **in the shape of Corin**, taking the form of a human rustic; Corin and Phillis are names of shepherds and shepherdesses in classical pastoral poetry.

68. **Phillida**, properly the Greek accusative of 'Phillis.'

68-70. **Why art ... that**, what brings you here all the way from the plains of India, except that, etc., *i.e.* your only reason for having taken this long journey is your desire to be present at the marriage of your mistress, Hippolyta. The first quarto gives **steppe**, the second and the folios 'steep,' a reading adopted by many editors because there is no proof of **steppe** being known in Shakespeare's day, and also because it was the mountains, rather than the plains, of India which had impressed the minds of travellers. In support of 'steep' commentators quote *Comus*, l. 139, "The nice morn on the Indian *steep* From her cabin'd loop-hole peep"; but there the word is especially appropriate in a description of the sun just making itself visible over the lofty mountains of the extreme East. Here there is no reason why Oberon should prefer the mountains to the plains.

70. **forsooth**, in truth; said with scorn: **bouncing**, large and plump; 'stalwart' would be the corresponding epithet for a man, though in bouncing there is also the radical idea of activity.

71. **Your buskin'd mistress**, that mistress of yours always so ready to don the buskin; 'buskin,' Gk. *κόθορνος*, Lat. *cothurnus*, was a boot reaching to the middle of the leg. It was worn in war, the chase, etc., and by tragic actors in heroic characters, with very high heels serving to add stateliness to the figure: **your warrior love**, that warrior maiden with whom you are in love.

72. **must be**, is to be; for **must**, meaning no more than definite futurity, see Abb. § 314.

73. **To give ... prosperity**. The presence of benevolent fairies at births, christenings, weddings, was supposed to bring good fortune, as that of malevolent ones to bring misfortunes.

74. **How canst ... shame**, how can you without being ashamed, etc.; *i.e.* if you had any sense of shame, you would not, etc. For **for** = for want of, cp. *H. V.* i. 2. 114, "cold *for* action"; *Macb.* i. 5. 37, "dead *for* breath"; *A. W.* i. 2. 17, "sick *for* breathing"; *T. S.* iv. 3. 9, "starved *for* meat."

75. **Glance at my credit with**, hint at the favour with which I am regarded by; cp. *J. C.* i. 2. 324, "wherein obscurely Cæsar's ambition shall be *glanced at*"; and, without the preposition, *C. E.* v. 1. 66, "In company I often *glanced* it."

76. **Knowing I know**, when you well know that I am aware of.

77. **the glimmering night**, the night faintly illuminated by the light of the stars; cp. *Macb.* iii. 3. 5, "The west yet *glimmers* with some streaks of day."

78. **Perigenia**, called *Perigouna* by Plutarch, her real name being *Perigune*.

79. **Ægle**, a nymph beloved by Theseus, for whom he forsook

Ariadne, daughter of Minos and Pasiphae, **Ægle** in her turn being forsaken for another.

80. **Antiopa**, see note on stage direction at the beginning of the play.

81. **These are ... jealousy**, all these stories about my intercourse with Theseus are mere calumnious inventions due to jealousy.

82. **the middle summer's spring**, the commencement of midsummer; "When trees put forth their second, or as they are frequently called, their *midsummer shoots*. Thus Evelyn in his *Sylva:* 'Where the rows and the brush lie longer than *midsummer*, unbound, or made up, you endanger the loss of the *second spring*'" (Henley). Steevens compares ii. *H. IV.* iv. 4. 35, "As flaws congealed in the *spring* of day"; and *Luke*, i. 78, "whereby the day-*spring* from on high hath visited us."

83. **Met we**, for the simple past incorrectly combined with the complete present, see Abb. § 347.

84. **paved fountain**, probably, as Henley takes it, fountains whose bottoms were covered with pebbles as with a pavement, in opposition to those of the rushy brooks which are oozy. He compares an expression in Sylvester, "By some cleare river's lilie-*paved* side."

85. **beached margent**, the beach which fringes the sea; **margent**, the form of 'margin' always used by Shakespeare, and frequently found in other Elizabethan writers: **in** for 'on.'

86. **To dance our ringlets**, to form our fairy-rings by dancing; see note on l. 9 above: **to**, in harmony with, to the accompaniment of.

87. **But with ... sport**, without your disturbing our sport with your exhibition of quarrelsome humours; **brawls**, from W. *brawl*, a boast.

88. **piping to us in vain**, *i.e.* since we refused to dance when they piped to us.

90. **Contagious fogs**, fogs bringing disease with them; the adjective is used of clouds, *H. V.* iii. 3. 31; of the night, *K. J.* v. 4. 33; of darkness, ii. *H. VI.* iv. 1. 7. For the pestilential nature of fogs, cp. *Cymb.* ii. 3. 136, "The south-*fog* rot him"; *Lear*, i. 4. 321, "Blasts and *fogs* upon thee!"

91. **pelting**, paltry, petty; used literally *R. II.* ii. 1. 60, "Like to a tenement or a *pelting* farm"; *Lear*, ii. 3. 18, "Poor *pelting* villages"; and figuratively *M. M.* ii. 2. 112, "For every *pelting*, petty officer"; *T. C.* iv. 5. 267, "We have had *pelting* wars." Probably connected with *peltry*, vile trash, and *paltry*, formed of rags, hence vile, worthless.

92. **have**, for **every** with a plural verb, cp. *Lear*, ii. 2. 82, "Smooth *every* passion That in the natures of their lords rebel": **continents**, confining banks; cp. i. *H. IV.* iii. 1. 110, "Gelding the opposed *continent* as much As on the other side it takes from you."

93. **stretch'd his yoke**, laboured in dragging the plough; the **yoke** was the curved piece of wood put upon the neck of oxen and attached by traces to the plough.

95. **ere his youth ... beard**, before it has grown old enough to get a beard,—the word applied to the prickly spines on ears of corn, from their likeness to hair-bristles on the human face; cp. *Sonn.* xii. 8, "And summer's green all girded up in sheaves Born on the bier with white and bristly *beard*": **his**, its.

96. **fold**, sheep or cattle fold, the enclosure in the fields in which they were penned: **drowned**, flooded with rain to such an extent that cattle could not be put into it.

97. **the murrion flock**, the flock of sheep among which the murrain had spread owing to the great damp; **murrion**, here used in an adjectival sense, is another form of 'murrain,' an infectious disease among cattle, ultimately from Lat. *mori*, to die.

98. **The nine men's morris**, "A game played by two persons, with nine men or pieces each. It was played indoors with a board; out of doors, on a square of turf, with lines marked and holes cut, which in rainy weather would become 'filled up with mud.' The game was originally French, under the name of '*merelles*,' counters; and was first called in England 'merrils,' afterwards corrupted into 'morris'" (C. Clarke).

99. **quaint mazes.** "This alludes," says Steevens, "to a sport still followed by boys; *i.e.* what is now called *running the figure of eight.*" "But," adds Wright, "I have seen very much more complicated figures upon village greens, and such as might strictly be called mazes or labyrinths. On St. Catherine's Hill, Winchester, 'near the top of it, on the north-east side, is the form of a labyrinth, impressed upon the turf, which is always kept entire by the coursing of the sportive youth through its meanderings'... (Milner, *History of Winchester*, ii. 155)": **wanton**, playful; a transferred epithet properly applicable to those who by their playing formed the mazes.

100. **For lack of tread**, owing to their not being trodden.

101. **human mortals**, though Titania and her elves were immortal, some fairies were mortal, and the expression is probably meant to contrast human beings who were mortal with fairies that were so too: **want their winter cheer**, are unable to enjoy their usual winter amusements; **cheer is Hanmer's emendation** for 'heere' of the earlier quartos and folios.

102. **hymn or carol**, the Christmas hymns or carols still sung at night and early morning in villages, though the custom has well nigh died out in towns.

103. **the governess of floods**, who controls the ebb and flow of the tides; Wright compares *Hamlet*. i. 1. 119, "The moist star Upon whose influence Neptune's empire stands."

104. **Pale in her anger**, *sc.* at the neglect of our rites: **washes all the air**, deluges the air with watery vapour.

105. **rheumatic diseases.** Malone shows that in Shakespeare's time this term signified not what we call 'rheumatism,' but, more in accordance with the derivation of 'rheumatic,' distillations from the head, catarrhs, etc.

106. **thorough**, the lengthened form of 'through,' as in ll. 3 and 5: **distemperature.** Malone, whom Wright follows, explains this as the perturbed state in which the king and queen had lived for some time; and Steevens supports the explanation by quoting *R. J.* ii. 3. 40, "Therefore thy earliness doth me assure Thou art uproused by some *distemperature*." Schmidt gives "disorder of the weather," in which sense the word is used in i. *H. IV.* iii. 1. 34, v. 1. 3.

108. **fresh lap**, the blooming calix, or cup. Cp. ii. *H. IV.* iv. 4. 123.

109. **thin**, thinly covered; cp. *R. II.* iii 2. 112, "White-beards have armed their *thin* and hairless scalps."

112. **childing**, fruit-bearing; literally, bringing forth children. Holt White says that this is an old term in botany when a small flower grows out of a large one.

113. **Their wonted liveries**, their usual dress; **mazed**, bewildered, in a maze of doubt. The only form now in use is 'amazed,' from *a* = in, and 'maze,' a labyrinth.

114. **By their increase**, by the fruits they produce; cp. *Sonn.* xcvii. 6, "The teeming autumn, big with rich *increase*": **which is which**, which of them is of which character.

116. **debate**, quarrel, contest; used in a much stronger sense than at present, and more in accordance with the literal meaning of the verb, *sc.* to beat down; cp. *L. L. L.* i. 1. 174, "From tawny Spain lost in the world's *debate*"; ii. *H. IV.* iv. 4. 2, "this *debate* that bleedeth at our doors."

117. **original**, first cause.

118. **it**, the present state of things between us: **lies in you**, is in your power to do so.

119. **Why should . Oberon?** what reason is there (*i.e.* there is no reason) that compels Titania to thwart him she once loved so fondly? said coaxingly.

121. **henchman**, attendant, page. Of disputed origin, but, according to Skeat, probably from M. E. *hengest*, a horse, and E. *man*: **Set your heart at rest**, said sarcastically; do not for a moment allow yourself to be agitated by any hope on the subject; make up your mind that such a thing is quite out of the question.

122. **The fairy .. me**, the whole fairyland is an insufficient bribe to tempt me to give up the boy.

123. **a votaress of my order**, one enrolled as a devotee of mine; **order**, in the sense of a religious sisterhood; cp. *C. E.* v. 1. 107, "It is a branch and parcel of my oath, A charitable duty of my *order*," said by the Abbess.

124. **spiced**, scented with spices.

125. **gossip'd**, spent the time in familiar talk; see note on ii. 1. 47.

127. **embarked traders**, the merchant vessels pursuing their course on the ocean; cp. *M. V.* i. 1. 9-13, "where your argosies with portly sail ... Do overpeer the petty traffickers, That curtsy to them, do them reverence, As they fly by them with their woven wings." For the transposition, see Abb. § 419 *a*.

130, 1. **with pretty .. Following**, copying with her pretty undulating motion; her graceful motion resembling that of vessels as they rise and fall with the swell of the waves; cp. *Oth.* iii. 3. 178, "To *follow* still the changes of the moon"; and for the idea, the word 'curtsy' in the above quotation from *M. V.*

134. **voyage**, dissyllable.

138. **intend you stay**, for the omission of 'to' before **stay**, see Abb. § 349.

140. **patiently**, without displaying ill humour such as you have of late so often displayed: **round**, dance in a circle; cp. *Macb.* iv. 1. 130, "While you perform your antic *round*."

142. **spare your haunts**, treat you with the same avoidance; not attempt to follow you about; **haunts**, places you frequent.

145. **chide downright**, have a regular quarrel.

146. **thy way**, the way you choose to take: **shalt not**, *i.e.* go; for the ellipsis, see Abb. § 405.

147. **injury**, slight, contemptuous treatment; so iii. *H. VI.* iv. 1. 107, "But what said Warwick to these *injuries*?", where *injuries* means taunting language.

148, 9. **Thou rememberest since**, you remember the time past when, etc.; cp. *W. T.* vi. 1. 219, "*Remember since* you owed no more to time Than I do now."

150. **mermaid**. Warburton refers to the vulgar opinion that

mermaids by their songs allured men to destruction, and compares *C. E.* iii. 2. 45, "O, train me not, sweet *mermaid, with thy* note, To *drown* me in thy sister's flood of tears:" **on a dolphin's back**, an allusion to Arion who for the love of his music was saved by the dolphins when, in order to escape being murdered by the sailors on his voyage from Sicily to Corinth, he threw himself into the sea; cp. *T. N.* i. 2. 15-7, "Where, like Arion *on the dolphin's back*, I saw him hold acquaintance with the waves So long as I could see."

151. **breath**, musical voice: used of singing, *T. N.* ii. 3. 21, "so sweet a *breath* to sing"; and of the sound of a trumpet, *Mach.* v. 6. 9, "Make all our trumpets speak; give them all *breath*."

152. **rude**, rough: **civil**, quiet, in antithesis with **rude**: **at**, on hearing.

153. **spheres**, see note on l. 7 above.

157. **all arm'd**, fully equipped with bow and arrows; **all**, adverbial: **certain**, which would not miss his mark.

158. **At a ... west**, a compliment to Queen Elizabeth's maiden life, England being to the west of the rising sun.

159. **loosed**, let go; a technical term in archery, as is also the substantive 'loose': **smartly**, with a smart twang of the bow-string as the arrow left it; indicating the determination with which he shot his bolt.

160. **As it should pierce.** "'As,' like 'an,' appears to be (though it is not) used by Shakespeare for 'as if' ... the 'if' is implied in the subjunctive" (Abb. § 107); as it would be loosed should it pierce, *i.e.* in a case in which it would, etc.

161. **might see**, was able to see; for **might**, the past tense of 'may,' originally used in the sense of 'was able,' 'could,' see Abb. § 312.

162. **watery moon**, cp. "moist star," *Haml.* i. 1. 118.

163. **votaress**, *sc.* of chastity; vowed to a maiden life.

164. **fancy-free**, untouched by thoughts of love.

166. **western**, English.

168. **love-in-idleness**, one of the names given by rustics to the pansy (F. *pensée*, thought) or heart's-ease; cp. *T. S.* i. 1. 156, "I found the effect of love in idleness," where the expression = idle love. For the allegorical interpretations given to this passage, see Introduction.

169. **the herb**, *sc.* which bears the flower.

171. **or man or woman**, any one of whichever sex; **or**, a contraction of *other*, i.e. *either*: **dote**, see note on i. 1. 109.

172. **it**, the being, whether man or woman.

173. **be thou here again**, take care to return.

174. **leviathan**, in Shakespeare meaning a huge whale; cp. *H. V.* iii. 3. 26, "As send precepts to the *leviathan* To come ashore"; from "Heb. *livyáthán*, an aquatic animal, dragon, serpent; so called from its trailing itself in curves.—Heb. root *laváh*, to cleave; Arab. root *lawa'*, to bend" ... (Skeat, *Ety. Dict.*).

175. **I'll put round**, I will circle the earth; probably, as Steevens says, a proverbial expression for circumnavigating the globe. He quotes Chapman's *Busy d'Ambois*, i. 1. 23, "To *put a girdle round about the world.*"

179. **The next .. upon**, for the omission of the relative, see Abb. § 244.

180. **Be it on lion**, whether it be a lion on which she looks.

181. **meddling**, mischievous: **busy**, *sc.* in ways that he should not be busy; so we speak of a 'busybody,' meaning one who interferes where he is not wanted.

182. **the soul of love**, the deepest love; cp. above, i. 1. 82.

184. **As I can take it**, for so I can do.

186. **I am invisible**. "It is probable that here Oberon put on a garment such as is mentioned in Henslowe's 'Diary,' which speaks of stage properties, and among them 'a robe for to go invisible.' When this was assumed, the audience were to understand that the wearer was supposed to be unseen by the other personages on the stage" (C. Clarke).

189. **Where is**, for the inflexion in *-s* preceding two singular substantives, see Abb. § 336.

190. **slayeth**, kills me by refusing her love.

192. **wode**, mad; from A.S. *wód*, mad; cp. i. *H. VI.* iv. 7. 35, "How the young whelp of Talbot's, raging-*wood*, Did flesh his puny sword in Frenchmen's blood."

193. **my Hermia**, Hermia whom I love with all my soul.

194. **get thee gone**. "An idiom; that is to say, a peculiar form of expression the principle of which cannot be carried out beyond the particular instance. Thus we cannot say either *Make thee gone*, or *He got him* (or *himself*) *gone*. Phraseologies, on the contrary, which are not idiomatic are paradigmatic, or may serve as models or moulds for others to any extent. All expression is divided into these two kinds" ... (*Craik*, on *J. C.* ii. 4. 2).

195. **you hard-hearted adamant**, you whose heart is as hard as adamant; **adamant**, from "Gr. *ἀδάμας*, *ἀδάμαντ-α*, originally an adjective = invincible ... afterwards a name of the hardest metal, probably *steel* ... The early medical Lat. writers apparently

explaining the word from *adama-re* 'to take a liking to, have an attraction for,' took the *lapidem adamantem* for the *loadstone* or *magnet* ... ; and with this confusion the word passed into the modern languages" ... (Murray, *English Dict.*).

196, 7. **But yet ... steel**, if the reading is right, the meaning probably is, 'Though you draw my heart it is not a substance like iron, famed for its hardness, but a substance like steel famed for its truth.' Lettsom suggests 'though' for **for**, which gets rid of all difficulty. There seems, however, the possibility that Shakespeare sometimes used 'though' and 'for' convertibly; cp. *Oth.* iii. 3. 145, "I do beseech you– *Though* I perchance am vicious in my guess," where we should have expected "*For* I perchance," etc.

197, 8. **leave you . . shall**, if you will abandon your power to draw, I shall, etc.

199. **Do I . . fair?** questions of appeal equivalent to 'You well know that I do not,' etc. **speak you fair**, make you fair speeches, pay you compliments.

201. **nor I cannot**, the emphatic double negative; see Abb. § 406.

203. **your spaniel**, an illusion to the proverb, "A *spaniel*, a woman, a walnut-tree, The more you beat them, the truer they be"; for **the**, as the ablative of the demonstrative, see Abb. § 94.

204. **I will fawn**, *i.e. the more* I will fawn.

205. **but as**, *i.e.* no better.

206. **lose me**, cast me off and have nothing to do with me.

207. **Unworthy as I am**, though utterly unworthy, as I confess myself to be.

208. **worser**, for the double comparative, see Abb. § 11.

209. **And yet ... with me**, and yet even that I look upon as a place of honour.

214. **impeach**, expose to slander; cp. *R. II.* i. 1. 189, "Shall I seem crest-fall'n in my father's sight? Or with pale beggar-fear *impeach* my height Before this out-dared dastard?"; properly to hinder, from F. *empêcher*, thence to arraign before a tribunal, the first step towards that end being to hinder the escape of the person charged.

215. **To leave**, by leaving; on the infinitive used indefinitely, see Abb. § 356.

217. **the opportunity of night**, the opportunity which the night-time affords; the subjective genitive.

218. **the ill ... place**, the suggestions to evil which a place so lonely as this offers.

220. **Your virtue ... that,** it is your well-known virtue which gives me the privilege of acting as I have acted; knowing how virtuous you are, I have ventured to trust myself alone with you at such a time as this. The quartos and folios all put a colon at **privilege,** beginning a new clause with **for that** = because. I have followed Malone, Dyce, and Delius in accepting Tyrwhitt's punctuation.

223. **worlds of company,** abundance of company.

224. **in my respect,** as I regard you; cp. *Cymb.* ii. 3. 140, "His meanest garment, ... is dearer *In my respect* than all the hairs above thee."

227. **me,** myself: **brakes,** bushes, thickets.

229. **The wildest,** *i.e.* of wild beasts.

230. **Run when you will,** whenever you choose to run: **the story,** *i.e.* of ancient mythology in which Daphne, daughter of the river-god Ladon, being pursued by Apollo was, in answer to her prayers, changed into a laurel tree, which became in consequence Apollo's favourite tree: **changed,** reversed.

231. **holds the chase,** maintains the pursuit, is the pursuer.

232. **the griffin,** a fabulous animal, frequently represented in heraldry; "a better spelling is *griffon* ...—F. *griffon*,—Gk. γρύψ ... a fabulous creature named from its hooked beak.—Gk. γρυπός, curved"... (Skeat, *Ety. Dict.*).

233. **bootless,** vain; see note on l. 37.

235. **thy questions,** your reproachful speeches; cp. *M. V.* iv. 1. 346, "I 'll stay no longer *question*."

237. **But I shall,** anything except that I shall: **mischief,** personal injury; cp. *Lear*, i. 2. 178, "which (*sc.* his displeasure) at this instant so rageth in him, that with the *mischief* of your person it would scarcely allay."

238. **the temple,** the most sacred of places: **the town,** the most frequented of places: **the field,** the most open of places.

240. **Your wrongs,** your cruelty to me; **your,** used subjectively.

242. **should be,** ought to be; see Abb. § 323.

243. **make ... hell,** find the happiness of heaven in enduring the tortures to which you condemn me.

244. **To die,** by dying; the indefinite infinitive: **upon the hand,** falling upon and dying by the hand; cp. *T. G.* ii. 4. 114, "I'll *die on* him that says so but yourself"; referring to Demetrius' words in l. 237, above.

245. **Fare thee well,** go, and good fortune go with you.

247. **wanderer,** you who wander by night; cp. above, ll. 39, 43.

248. **there,** said as he produces it.

249. **where**, Pope reads 'whereon,' and is followed by some editors. If the reading is right, the word must be pronounced as a dissyllable: **wild thyme**, a plant of which bees are especially fond; there is also a variety grown in gardens and used for seasoning dishes: **blows**, blossoms.

250. **oxlips**, "the 'bold ox lip' [*W. T.* iv. 3. 125] is so like both the Primrose and Cowslip that it has been by many supposed to be a hybrid between the two ... It is a handsome plant, and is a great favourite in cottage gardens" (Ellacombe, *Plant Lore of Shakespeare*): **grows**, the verb for the rhyme's sake being made to agree with the singular noun only.

251. **over-canopied**, covered over as with a canopy. The word 'canopy' has a strange origin, it being from "the Greek κωνωπειών, κωνωπεῖον, an Egyptian bed with mosquito curtains.— Gr. κωνωπ,—stem of κώνωψ, a gnat, mosquito; literally 'cone-faced,' or an animal with a cone-shaped head, from some fancied resemblance to a cone.— Gk. κῶνος, a cone; and ὤψ, a face, appearance".. (Skeat, *Ety. Dict.*): **luscious**, sweet-scented; Steevens for the sake of the metre reads 'lush': **woodbine**, the great convolvulus, or bindweed, so called from its twining about other plants; cp. *M. A.* iii. 1. 30, "who even now Is couched in the *woodbine coverture.*"

252. **musk-roses**, a species of rose prized more for its sweet scent than for its beauty: **eglantine**, more commonly called sweet-briar; literally, the prickly-one, from its sharp thorns. Cp. *Cymb.* iv. 2. 223, "The leaf of *eglantine*, whom not to slander, Out-sweeten'd not thy breath."

253. **of the night**, during the night; for the preposition with this sense, see Abb. § 176: for **sometime** see note on ii. 1. 38, above.

255. **throws**, casts; the word more commonly used: **enamell'd**, glittering like enamel, a glass-like substance made of glass and metals fused together.

256. **Weed**, covering; from A.S. *wǽd*, and *wœde*, a garment, in which sense it is frequent in Shakespeare. So we still speak of 'widows' weeds,' meaning the head-dress worn by widows.

257. **streak**, smear, as with a painter's brush.

258. **fantasies**, fancies, especially love-fancies.

261. **disdainful**, *sc.* of her love.

262, 3. **But do it ... lady**, but take care to do it at such a time that the next thing she espies is sure to be the lady.

266. **More fond on**, more in love with; **on**, of: **her love**, him whom now she loves so distractedly.

267. **look thou meet**, take care to meet; see note on l. 19: **the first cock crow**, when the cock crows for the first time; in *Haml.*

i. 1. 147, the cock is spoken of as crowing not long after midnight; in *R. J.* iv. 4. 3, "the second cock" crows at three o'clock in the morning.

268. **shall**, denoting inevitable futurity without reference to 'will' (desire); see Abb. § 315.

SCENE II.

1. **a roundel**, a round dance; but used also for a song beginning and ending with the same words.

2. **hence**, go hence; the verb of motion omitted, as frequently.

3. **cankers**, small worms that prey upon blossoms; cp. *Haml.* i. 3. 89, "The *canker* galls the infants of the spring."

4. **rere-mice**, bats; the word is still used in the west of England; A.S. *hrére-mus:* **for**, in order to obtain.

7. **At our quaint spirits**, at our delicately-formed spirits; Titania speaks as a queen; **quaint**, from "O. F. *coint*, 'quaint, neat, fine,'... Cotgrave .. Certainly derived from Lat. *cognitus*, known, .. though confused .. with Lat. *comptus*, neat, adorned." (Skeat, *Ety. Dict.*).

8. **your offices**, the different duties assigned to each.

9. **double**, forked; cp. *Temp.* ii. 2. 13, "All wound with adders who with cloven tongues Do hiss me into madness"; and iii. 2. 72, below.

10. **Thorny**, with spines which they erect at will; cp. *Haml.* i. 5. 20, "Like *quills* upon the fretful *porpentine.*"

11. **Newts**, a kind of lizard; properly *an ewt*, the initial *n* being borrowed from the indefinite article. Similarly formed words are *nick-name* for an eke-name, *nugget* formerly niggot = ningot for an ingot. Conversely *an adder* is properly a nædder, *an auger*, a nauger, *an orange*, a norange: **blind-worms**, so called from the smallness of their eyes, known also as 'slow-worms'; both again mentioned in *Macb.* iv. 1. 14, 16.

13. **Philomel**, the nightingale; in ancient mythology the daughter of King Pandion of Attica, who was metamorphosed into a nightingale.

14. **Sing in ... lullaby**, take part in singing our lullaby; **lullaby**, a song sung to soothe to rest, from the verb 'lull,' to sing to rest.

16 8. **Never ... Come**, may it never come; let it never come.

19. **So ... lullaby**, so may you sleep sweetly, accompanied by your lullaby.

21. **long-legg'd spinners**, since in each line of the stanza different insects are mentioned, the long-legged spinner here (and in *R. J.* i. 4. 59) seems to be the variety of spider known to children as 'daddy-long-legs.'

26. **One . sentinel**, let one of our number stand apart as sentinel; **aloof**, "perhaps immediately from Du. *loef*, in *te loef*, to windward . From the idea of keeping a ship's head to the wind, and thus *clear of* the lee-shore or quarter to which she might drift, came the general sense of 'steering clear of,' or 'giving a wide berth to' anything with which one might otherwise come into contact with" (Murray, *Engl. Dict.*).

29. **languish**, pine, grow weak.

30. **ounce**, a kind of lynx: **cat**, wild cat.

31. **Pard**, panther.

33. **it is thy dear**, it is the object with which you shall fall in love.

34. **Wake**, may you wake.

35. **you faint**, you have become faint; for **with**, used to express the juxtaposition of cause and effect, see Abb. § 193.

36. **troth**, a doublet of 'truth'; **forgot**, for the curtailed form of past participles, see Abb. § 343.

38. **tarry day**, wait for the comfort which daylight will bring with it.

39. **a bed**, *sc.* for yourself.

42. **One heart . troth**, since there is but one heart between us (*i.e.* as we are one in heart), one bed will serve for us to lie upon; though there are two bosoms, there is but one faith between us (*i.e.* that which we have pledged to each other).

45. **O, take innocence**! "Understand the meaning of my innocence, or my innocent meaning. Let no suspicion of ill enter thy mind" (Johnson); **take**, apprehend; cp. v. 1. 90, below.

46. **Love . conference**, in talk between those who love, love catches the meaning intended by love; where two mutually love, each readily understands the thoughts of the other without the need of gloss or commentary on the words used.

47. **knit**, for the omission of *-ed* in the participle of verbs ending in *-te*, *-t*, and *-d*, see Abb. § 342.

48. **So that .. it**, so that, as I said (l. 43), we can make but one heart out of the two; **it**, used indefinitely, the circumstance, the fact.

49. **interchained**, linked each to the other.

52. **For lying ... lie**, for in lying by your side, I am guilty of no treachery; with a pun on the two senses of **lie**.

54, 5. **Now much ... lied**, a mischief upon my bad manners and my pride if in the words I used I meant to imply that Lysander was false; *i.e.* I am not so ill-mannered and arrogant

as to mean by what I said that Lysander was false; **beshrew**, literally 'curse,' used as a gentle, sometimes very gentle, imprecation; *e.g. M. V.* iii. 2. 14, "*Beshrew* your eyes, They have o'erlook'd and divided me"; said by Portia in loving reproach to Bassanio.

56. **for**, for the sake of; out of.

57-60. **in human** ... **distant**, for the sake of that modesty which men and women should observe, remain at such a distance from me as may justly be said to be suitable to a virtuous bachelor and a maid. There seems to be a confusion of constructions between 'let there be such a distance between us as may be justly said is becoming between a virtuous,' etc., and 'be so far distant from me as it may be justly said is becoming between,' etc. Delius takes **in human modesty** with **as may well be said**.

62. **Amen**, so be it; commonly placed at the end of a prayer.

63. **end life**, may life end.

64. **all his rest**, all the peace he has in his gift.

65. **With half** .. **press'd**! Nay, answers Hermia, may half of his peace be yours!

68. **approve**, make trial of; prove; as frequently in Shakespeare.

69. **stirring**, exciting.

71. **Weeds**, see note on ii. 1. 256.

73. **Despised**, who despised; for the omission of the relative, see Abb. § 244.

74. **sound**, soundly.

75. **dank**, damp; Skeat (*Ety. Dict.*) remarks, "It is commonly assumed that *dank* is another form of *damp*, but, being of Scandinavian origin, it is rather to be associated with Swed. *dagg*, dew ... and indeed it seems to be nothing else than a nasalized form of the prov. Eng. *dag*, dew."

76. **durst**, preterite of *dare* which, in the sense of challenge, forms another preterite *dared*.

77. **this lack-love**, this churlish fellow so wanting in love towards her who loves him; accent on the first syllable: **this kill-courtesy**, this boor who murders courtesy, is utterly without good manners. To mend the metre, Walker would read 'nearer' for **Near**, making the line one of ten syllables; Theobald gives "Near to this kill-courtesy."

78. **Churl**, literally 'a countryman,' and hence one with rustic, rough, manners.

79. **owe**, possess; the final *-n* of *owen* being dropped.

80, 1. **let love** ... **eyelid**, may love banish sleep from your eyes;

cp. *Macb.* i. 3. 19, 20, "Sleep shall neither night nor day Hang upon his pent-house lid."

82. **So wake ... gone**, I leave you to wake after I have gone with this result (*i.e.* of your not being able to find sleep again).

86. **darkling**, in the dark; cp. *Lear*, i. 4. 237, "So, out went the candle, and we were left *darkling*." "There were some adverbs in O. E., originally dative feminine singular, ending in *-inga*, *-unga*, *-linga*, *-lunga*. A few of these, without the dative suffix, exist under the form *-ling* or *-long*, as *headlong* (O. E. *heedlinge*), *sideling*, *sidelong*, *darkling* (*darklong*), *flatling*, and *flatlong*" (Morris, *Hist. Outl.* p. 194).

87. **on thy peril**, *at* thy peril, as we should now say; *i.e.* at the risk, if you follow me, of being ill-used by me: **I alone will go**, I am determined to go unaccompanied by you.

88. **fond**, foolish; the radical sense of the word.

89. **the lesser ... grace**, the less is the favour, kindness, I meet with at your hands; **the**, the ablative of the demonstrative.

91. **blessed and attractive**, happy in being able to attract to her those she wishes to attract.

92. **How came ... bright**? What is it that has made her eyes, etc.

93. **If so ... hers**, for, in that case, mine would be brighter than hers, seeing that they are oftener washed with such tears.

96. **no marvel**, it is no wonder.

97. **Do**, subjunctive: **as a monster**, as that of a monster.

98, 9. **What wicked ... eyne**? how could any mirror be so wickedly treacherous as to make me think my eyes rivalled the star-like orbs of Hermia? **compare with**, make comparison between her eyes and mine, and assume an equality in brightness; for this intransitive use, cp. *Haml.* v. 2. 146, "I dare not confess that, lest I should *compare* with him in excellence"; for **eyne**, see note on i. 1. 242.

103. **And run**, I do so and will run.

104. **Transparent**, though indicating also the brilliancy of her beauty, refers especially to the transparency of her nature which enables him to see her heart through her bosom; Nature and Art are usually contrasted, but here Nature employs Art. With Dyce, Delius, etc., I have followed the later folios in reading **Nature** *here* **shows**, the quartos giving 'Nature shewes.'

106, 7. **O, how ... sword**! *i.e.* how well does the bearer of that vile name deserve to perish at my hands! Cp. above, ii. 1. 190.

109. **What though**, even though he loves your Hermia, that does not matter; that is not sufficient reason for you to wish to kill him.

110. **be content**, be calm, do not be in such a passion; a frequent use of the expression in Shakespeare.

111. **Content with Hermia**! Lysander takes Helena's **content** in the sense of 'satisfied with.'

112. **tedious minutes**, minutes which once seemed to fly so swiftly because delightful, but which now seem a mere tedious waste of time.

118. **So I ... reason**, so I, being but young when I loved Hermia, only now ripen to reason, only now have acquired mature reason; for **ripe**, as a verb, cp. *A. Y. L.* ii. 7. 26, "And so from hour to hour we *ripe* and *ripe*."

119, 20. **And touching ... will**, and reason having now attained its highest point of sagacity, having reached its fullest maturity, guides my will in the way it should go; for **skill**, = sagacity, mental power, cp. *M. M.* iv. 2. 164, "if I read it not truly, my ancient *skill* beguiles me"; for **marshal**, cp. *Haml.* iii. 4. 205, "they must sweep my way And *marshal* me to knavery."

121. **o'erlook**, read over, peruse; cp. *Lear*, v. 1. 50, "I will *o'erlook* thy paper."

122. **love's richest book**, *sc.* her eyes; cp. *R. J.* i. 4. 85, 6, "And what obscured in this *fair volume* lies Find *written* in the margent of his *eyes*."

123. **Wherefore . . born**? Why should I have been born to endure such bitter irony? *i.e.* I have done nothing myself to deserve it.

124. **at your hands**, from you.

127. **Deserve**, win by any attractions of mine; be thought really worthy of.

128. **But you ... insufficiency**, but that you should think it necessary, without your thinking it necessary, to jeer at my want of power to win such a favour.

129. **Good troth ... good sooth**, in very truth.

130. **In such . . woo**, to make a mock of seeking my love in these ironical terms of praise.

131. **perforce**, of necessity.

132. **lord of**, master of, possessed of; **gentleness**, gentlemanly feeling, manly kindness.

134. **therefore be abused**, on that account be insulted.

139. **do leave**, abjure.

140. **of those**, by those: **deceive**, lead astray.

141. **my surfeit ... heresy**, of whose love I have tasted to excess; and belief in whose excellence I now cast away.

142. **be**, subjunctive used optatively; **the most of me**, by me more than any one.

143. **And, all** ... **might**, and let all the faculties I possess bend their most loving and mightiest efforts: **address**, make ready; ultimately from Lat. *directus*, straight.

144. **be her knight**, swear yourself to her service and honour; as knights swore themselves to the service and honour of their lady-loves.

147. **Ay me**, alas for me! **for pity**, how piteous is my case!

149. **Methought**, for the abundance of impersonal verbs in Early and Elizabethan English, see Abb. § 297: **away**, completely; used as an intensive.

150. **his cruel prey**, the cruel prey he was making of me; his cruelty in preying upon me; **prey**, the act, not the object; cp. *H. V.* i. 2. 169, "For once the eagle England being in *prey*."

151. **removed**? have you moved away?

152. **out of hearing**? have you gone so far from me that you cannot hear my cries?

153. **Alack**, probably, according to Skeat, a corruption of M. E. *Ah! lák*, *i.e.* ah, a loss! **an if**, for this reduplication, see Abb. § 103.

154. **of all loves**, in the name of everything that has to do with love: for this adjuration, cp. *M. W.* ii. 2. 119, "Mistress Page would desire you to send her your little page, *of all loves*."

156. **Either**, metrically a monosyllable.

ACT III. SCENE I.

2. **Pat, pat**, in the very nick of time; cp. *Haml.* iii. 3. 73, "Now might I do it *pat*." Skeat says, "This can hardly be other than the same word as *pat*, a tap... But the sense is clearly due to an extraordinary confusion with Du. *pas*, pat, fit, convenient in time"...: **marvellous**, used adverbially; see Abb. § 1.

4. **hawthorn-brake**, thicket formed of hawthorn bushes: **tiring house**, house for attiring ourselves, dressing-room: to 'tire,' an abbreviation of 'attire,' is used specially of dressing the head; **do it in action**, act it.

7. **bully**, properly a blustering fellow, but frequently used by Shakespeare in a familiarly patronizing sense.

10. **abide**, endure; more properly 'aby,' as in iii. 2. 175, the word in this sense being from the A.S. *ábicgan*, to pay for, while in the sense of 'wait for' it is from the A.S. *ábídan*, to expect.

10, 1. **How answer you that**? What answer will you make to that? How will you meet that objection?

12. **By'r lakin**, by our little lady, *i.e.* the Virgin Mary, used in an affectionate sense; cp. *Temp.* iii. 3. 1: **parlous**, a contraction of 'perilous'; always used by Shakespeare with a certain comic sense.

13, 4. **when all is done**, after all; more commonly in modern speech 'when all is said and done.'

15. **Not a whit**, not in the least; by no means; **whit**, "a thing, a particle, a bit. The *h* is in the wrong place; *whit* stands for *wiht* = *wight*, and is the same word as *wight* a person" .. (Skeat, *Ety. Dict.*): **to make all well**, to set everything straight; to obviate the difficulties you fear.

16. **seem to say**, merely Bottomese for 'say.' Wright compares Launcelot's language, *M. V.* ii. 4. 11, "An it shall please you to break up this, it shall *seem to signify*."

18. **more better**, for the double comparative, see Abb. §11.

22. **written in eight and six**, in verses alternately of eight and six syllables.

25. **afeard**, afraid; though in **affeard** *a-* represents a corruption of the A.S. intensive *of*, the E. E. form of the verb being *offeren*, while 'afraid' is the participle of *affray*, to frighten.

26. **I fear ... you**, I fear they will be afraid, I can assure you.

27. **consider with yourselves**, ponder the matter among you.

28. **God shield us**! God protect us! Bottom is horrified at the very idea. Malone compares a real occurrence at the Scottish Court in the year 1594, at the christening of Prince Henry, when a triumphal chariot was drawn in by a blackamoor because it was feared that the lion by which it was intended to be drawn might frighten the spectators, or the lighted torches drive the lion to fury.

29. **wild-fowl**, of course for 'wild-beast:' **living** goes with **wild-fowl**, not with **lion**.

30. **ought to look to 't**, ought to be careful what we are doing.

35. **defect**, effect.

37, 8. **my life for yours**, I stake my life for yours; I pledge you by my life that there is no reason for you to fear.

38, 9. **it were ... life**, it would be a thing I should regret most bitterly; or perhaps **of my life** = I swear on my life; the phrase with 'of,' as here, or 'on,' is frequent in Shakespeare; *e.g. M. M.* ii. 1. 77, *T. N.* ii. 5. 14; for **of** = as regards, see Abb. §174.

40. **there**, at that point in his speech. Malone thinks there is here an allusion to a contemporary incident. "There was a spectacle presented to Queen Elizabeth upon the water, and among others *Harry Goldingham* was to represent *Arion* upon the

dolphin's backe; but finding his voice to be verye hoarse and unpleasant, when he came to perform it, he tears off his disguise, and *swears he was none of Arion, not he, but even honest Harry Goldingham;* which blunt discoverie pleased the queene better than if he had gone through in the right way" . . (*Merry Passages and Jeasts, M.S. Harl.* 6395).

41. **joiner**, carpenter.

42. **there is**, for the inflection in *-s* preceding a plural subject, see Abb. §335, though here probably we have an intentional vulgarism.

46. **calendar**, almanac; from "Lat. *calendarium*, an account book of interest kept by money-changers, so called because interest became due on the *calends* (or first day) of each month; in later times a calendar" ... (Skeat, *Ety. Dict.*).

49. **casement**, window; properly the frame forming a window, or part of a window, which opened on hinges attached to the upright side of the frame in which it was fixed.

53. **disfigure**, figure, personate.

56. **did talk ... wall**, in the story, Pyramus and Thisbe, living in adjoining houses, made a hole in the partition wall through which to carry on their love-making.

60. **rough-cast**, plaster mixed with small pebbles.

61. **or** is altered by Collier's M.S. Corrector into *and*, a reading which Dyce, Delius and the Camb. Edd. adopt, but which does not seem to be necessary. Bottom mentions two alternative ways in which the wall may be symbolized; first, by the actor appearing daubed with marks of his occupation; secondly, as the story was so well known, by his holding his hand out with the first and second fingers separated from the third and fourth to signify a chink in the wall. It is true that in the representation both means are adopted, but it does not follow that this was the original intention.

64. **every mother's son**, every one of you.

66. **brake**, the thicket at the side represents the 'wings' of the stage behind which the actors retire when they have played their parts: **cue**, according to some, from F. *queue*, a tail; according to others from Q, a note of entrance for actors, because it was the first letter of the Latin word *quando*, when, showing when to enter and speak.

67. **What hempen ... here**, what rude rustics do I find ranting and strutting about here? 'Homespun' is literally coarse cloth spun at home, and 'hemp' is one of the materials used in the manufacture.

68. **So near ... queen?** Puck resents their daring to approach so near the resting place of his sovereign.

69. **toward**, in preparation; cp. *Haml.* v. 2. 376, "What feast is *toward* in thine eternal cell?"

72. **savours**, though there are many instances in Shakespeare of the third person plural in *-s*, Bottom's illiterate speech is probably indicated here.

76. **a while**, for a time, for a minute or two.

77. **by and by**, almost directly; cp. *Oth.* ii. 3. 309, 10, "To be now (*i.e.* at one moment) a sensible man, *by and by* (*i.e.* a short time afterwards) a fool, and *presently* (*i.e.* almost immediately after that) a beast!"

78. **here**, Steevens supposes a reference to the theatre in which the piece was being acted; **played**, acted, represented.

80. **marry**, a corruption of 'Mary,' *i.e.* the Virgin Mary, the Mother of Christ; a petty adjuration.

81. **goes but . heard**, Quince means that Bottom has gone to find out how the noise he heard had been caused, but of course the absurdity of seeing a noise is intentional; cp. below, iv. 1. 206, 7; v. 1. 338, 9: **is to come**, will come, may be certainly expected to come.

82, 3. **Most .. brier**, whose complexion combines the delicate white of the lily and the brilliant red of the rose; cp. Constance's poetical description of Arthur's beauty, *K. J.* iii. 1. 53, 4, "Of Nature's gifts thou may'st with lilies boast And with the half-blown rose": **triumphant**, rearing itself aloft.

84. **juvenal**, youth; an imitation of euphuistic language, as in *L. L. L.* i. 2. 8, "my tender *juvenal*": **eke**, also, from the verb *eke*, to augment: **Jew**, for the sake of the alliteration with **juvenal**, though in *L. L. L.* iii. 1. 136, Costard addresses Moth as "my incony (*i.e.* delicate) *Jew*," as though in compliment.

85. **yet**, *i.e.* however far he might go.

89. **cues and all**, including the cues.

89, 90. **it is ... tire**, *i.e.* you should enter to speak your speech directly Flute has uttered the words '**never tire.**'

93. **If I were fair**, Malone thinks we ought perhaps to punctuate **If I were, fair Thisby**, *i.e.* if I were as true, etc.: **I were only thine**, I would dedicate myself wholly to your love.

96. **I 'll lead ... round**, I will lead you a pretty dance; **about**, adverb.

97. **Through bog ... brier**, to complete the metre, Johnson, would insert 'through mire,' after **bog**, Ritson 'through burn, Lettsom 'through brook.'

102, 3. **this is ... afeard**, this is one of their knavish tricks played in order to make me afraid; for **afeard**, see note on l. 25, above.

106. **you see ... do you**? do you see as great a fool as yourself? Bottom is as yet unconscious of Puck's transformation of him by the ass' head on his shoulders.

108. **translated**, transformed.

112. **do what they can**, whatever they may do to frighten me.

113. **that**, so that: **shall**, the future where we should use the subjunctive; see Abb. 348.

114. **ousel cock**, the male blackbird, whose bill is of a bright orange colour.

116. **throstle**, the song-thrush, which, like the blackbird, has a very sweet note; the word is "a variant of *throshel* [a form not found], a diminutive of *thrush*" ... (Skeat, *Ety. Dict.*).

117. **quill**, pipe, *i.e.* throat-pipe.

121. **plain-song cuckoo**, the cuckoo whose note is without variation; **plain-song**, "the uniform modulation or simplicity of the *chaunt* was anciently distinguished, in opposition to *prick-song* or variegated music sung by note" (Warton).

122. **Whose note ... mark**, the cry of the bird, 'cuckoo!' was of old supposed to be connected etymologically with the word 'cuckold,' a man whose wife has been unfaithful to him, and, when uttered, to point at some man thus situated.

123. **dares not utter nay**, is unable to repel the charge.

124. **set his wit ... bird**, oppose his wit to, challenge, the cuckoo by denying its slanderous accusation; cp. *T. C.* ii. 1. 94, "Will you *set your wit* to a fool's?"

125. **give a bird the lie**, tell a bird that it is lying: **though so**, however often it might cry 'cuckoo!'

127. **of**, with.

128. **enthralled to thy shape**, led captive by the beauty of your form.

129. **thy fair ... me**, the overpowering modesty which restrains you from urging your love, compels me, etc.

130. **On the first view**, hers is love at first sight, as we say: **to swear**, not merely to say, but even to swear.

132, 3. **reason ... now-a-days**, are not often found together in these times.

133. **the more the pity**, all the greater pity is it.

134. **will not ... friends**, will not do their best to bring them more together.

135. **gleek**, jeer, joke in a satirical way; cp. *H. V.* v. 1. 78, "I have seen you *gleeking* and galling at this gentleman twice or thrice." Staunton remarks, "The all-accomplished Bottom is boasting of his versatility. He has shown, by his last profound

observation on the disunion of love and reason, that he possesses a pretty turn for the didactic and sententious; but he wishes Titania to understand that, upon a fitting occasion, he can be as waggish as he has just been grave"; 'gleek,' "*sc. glaiks*, reflection of the rays of light from a lucid body in motion; *glaik*, a deception, trick; to *glaik*, to trifle; *glaiking*, folly, wantonness; O. N. *leika*, to play; O. E. to *lake*, to play; *lakin*, plaything" (Wedgwood, *Dict.*): **upon occasion**, when the occasion calls for a joke.

137. **wit**, wisdom.

138. **to serve mine own turn**, to suit my purpose.

141. **rate**, estimate; cp. *Temp.* i. 2. 92, "With that which ... O'erprized all popular *rate*."

142. **The summer .. state**, the very summer is my slave and follows me wherever I go; **still**, ever; **state**, regal greatness, majesty; cp. *Temp.* iv. 1. 101, "High'st queen of *state*."

145. **jewels from the deep**, Steevens compares *R. III.* i. 4. 31, "reflecting *gems* That woo'd the shiny bottom of the *deep*."

146. **pressed flowers**, flowers strewed as a bed for you.

148. **go**, move about: here, fly as spirits do.

150. **Where shall we go?** on what errand do you wish to send us?

152. **Hop .. eyes**, dance before him as he walks, and display your gambols to amuse him.

153. **apricocks**, from "F. *abricot*, ... from Port. *albricoque*, an apricot .. These words are traced, in Webster and Littré, back to the Arabic *al-barqûq* .. where *al* is the Arabic definite article, and the word *barqûq* is no true Arabic word, but a corruption of the Mid. Gr. πραικόκιον, pl. πραικόκια; borrowed from the Lat. *præcoqua*, apricots, neuter plural of *præcoquus*, another form of *præcox*, lit. precocious, early-ripe" .. (Skeat, *Ety. Dict.*). **dewberries**, a fruit very like the blackberry, but coming at an earlier season.

154. **mulberries**, a garden fruit, resembling blackberries, though a good deal larger in size.

155. **honey-bags**, the small cysts in which the honey is carried: **humble-bees**, humming bees; to 'humble' is to hum, from M. E. *humbelen;* also called '*bumble*-bees,' from O. Du. *bommelen*, to buzz.

156. **And for ... thighs**, and crop their thighs of the wax with which they are laden, to serve as tapers; the pollen which is borne home by the bees on the outside of their legs being apparently taken by Shakespeare for wax: and **waxen thighs** not meaning literally made of wax, but laden with wax; cp. Beaumont and Fletcher, *The Maid in the Mill*, iii. 1, "You shall have crowns of roses, daisies, Buds where the honey-maker grazes; You shall task *the golden thighs*, Such as in wax-chamber lies."

157. **at the ... eyes**, as the light of the glow-worm is in its tail, Johnson thought he had here caught Shakespeare napping, but, as Mason points out, 'eye' is here used poetically for the luminous point.

158. **To have ... arise**, to conduct my love to his bed, and to wait on him when he gets up; cp. *C. E.* ii. 2. 10, "Your mistress sent to *have me home* to dinner."

159. **painted**, gaudily decorated.

160. **to fan .. from**, to keep off from, using the wings as fans, shades.

161. **Nod**, bow.

162. **Hail**, health to you; A.S. *hæl*, health.

166. **I cry ... heartily**, from the bottom of my heart I beg your pardon; an expression of deprecatory politeness frequent in Shakespeare.

169. **I shall desire ... acquaintance**, I shall hope to become better acquainted with you; literally, I shall make a request to you as regards more acquaintance; for **of**, in this sense, see Abb. § 174.

170. **I shall ... you**, I shall venture to make use of your services; the cobweb film being sometimes applied to a cut by way of plaster.

173. **commend me**, make my respectful compliments to, and so ensure me a welcome by, etc.: a 'squash' is an unripe peascod; cp. *T. N.* i. 5. 166, "Not yet old enough for a man, nor young enough for a boy; as a *squash* is before 'tis a peascod, or a codling when 'tis almost an apple."

178. **I know ... well**, I know how much you have to endure.

179. **that same ... oxbeef**, that oxbeef which you and I know so well.

179, 80. **hath devoured ... house**, mustard being taken as a relish to beef, that meat is spoken of as devouring, etc.; **house**, family.

180, 1. **I promise ... now**, I can assure you that the members of your family have often brought tears into my eyes; as though the pungency of mustard which causes the eyes to water, had made him weep for its family misfortunes.

183. **bower** properly means a chamber, thence used generally of a shady recess formed by trees and shrubs.

184. **with a watery eye**, the watery look of the moon, caused by vapours hanging round it, indicates rainy weather.

185. **weeps ... flower**, their tears being the dew.

186. **enforced chastity**, violence done to some chaste maiden.

SCENE II.

2. **Then, what**, then, if she has awaked, what, etc.

3. **Which she . extremity**, which, from the potency of the drug, she will be compelled to love with ridiculous passion.

4. **How now**, what is 'up' now? as we say colloquially.

5. **night rule**, night-work; practice common to the night. Some editors take **-rule** here as another spelling of 'revel,' and cite the title 'Lord of Mis-rule' given to the conductor of revels; but 'Mis-rule' in that phrase means licensed disorder: **haunted**, Oberon applies to the presence of human beings the term which they would use of the presence of fairies, spirits, etc., though the sense in which the word is so used is a secondary one, the original meaning nothing more than to 'frequent.'

7. **close**, secret, carefully hidden.

8. **her dull hour**, that period of time during which her senses are dulled by sleep.

9. **patches**, fools; the word in this sense is probably due to the patched, parti-coloured, dresses worn by fools, jesters; **mechanicals**, artizans; cp. ii. *II. VI.* i. 3. 196, "Base dunghill villain and *mechanical.*"

10. **That work stalls**, that get their livelihood by such occupations as weaving, etc.

13. **The shallowest .. sort**, the most empty-brained blockhead of that dull lot (Poor Bottom! that he should be so little appreciated); for **thick-skin**, a term now used of those who are wanting in proper sensitiveness, cp. *M. W.* iv. 5. 2, "What wouldst thou have, boor? what, *thick-skin?*"; for **barren**, cp. *T. N.* i. 5. 90, "I marvel your ladyship takes delight in such a *barren* fool"; for **sort**, *R. II.* iv. 1. 246, "a *sort* of traitors"; *R. III.* v. 3. 316, "A *sort* of vagabonds."

14. **presented**, acted the part of.

15. **Forsook his scene**, left the stage on which he was acting; for **in**, = into, see Abb. § 159.

16. **When I did ... take**, when I caught him thus alone.

17. **nole**, a comical word for 'head,' more commonly spelt 'nowl.' Douce quotes a receipt from Albertus Magnus *de Secretis Naturæ* for effecting this transformation; and Steevens refers to "a similar trick played by Dr. Faustus."

18. **Anon ... answered**, a moment later the time comes for him to re-appear on the stage and reply to the speech of him who acted Thisbe.

19. **And forth comes**, and so this precious fellow who is to act the part of Pyramus makes his appearance; **my**, said contemptuously; Malone quotes Dekker and Jonson as using **mimic** for actor.

20. **creeping**, *sc.* in order to snare them: **fowler**, bird-catcher.

21. **russet-pated choughs**, Marshall has shown in *Notes and Queries*, sixth series, vol. ix., Nos. 227, 233, that the bird here meant is the jackdaw, not the Cornish chough, and that **russet** is used in the sense of dark grey: **many in sort**, many all together.

23. **Sever themselves**, quickly disperse: **madly sweep the sky**, in wildest terror dash hither and thither across the sky.

25. **at our stamp .. falls**, at each stamp of ours, one after another falls to the ground.

26. **He**, another.

27, 8. **Their sense ... wrong**, their senses being thus weakened and bewildered by overpowering fear, even inanimate objects find courage to plague them.

30. **Some sleeves . catch**, some of the briers and thorns strip them of their sleeves; some strip them of their hats; some strip of every article of dress those who are so ready to yield them.

31. **I led fear**, they being in this state of distraction, I led them hither and thither in all directions; cp. Ariel's description of the way in which he led Caliban, Stephano and Trinculo "through Tooth'd briers, sharp furzes, pricking goss and thorns," *Temp.* iv. 1. 180.

32. **Sweet Pyramus**, said ironically, that Bottom of whose good looks they were so proud; see above i. 2. 75, "for Pyramus is a *sweet-faced man*." **translated**, see note on iii. 1. 109.

33. **When in ... pass**, and at that very moment it so happened that Titania, etc.; **so**, here used almost as a correlative to **when**.

35. **better than I could devise**, even better than I hoped when I planned my stratagem.

36. **latch'd**, is used twice elsewhere by Shakespeare, *Sonn.* cxiii. 6, "For it no form delivers to the heart Of bird, of flower, or shape, which it doth *latch*"; *Mach.* iv. 3. 195, "But I have words That would be howl'd out in the desert air Where hearing should not *latch* them"; the meaning in both passages being to catch and retain. In the present passage Hanmer interprets the word as 'lick over,' 'anoint,' from F. *lecher*, to lick, and many editors accept his explanation, though no instance has been discovered of the word in that sense. Possibly the meaning may be nothing more than 'closed,' *i.e.* in such a way that the juice might work the required effect when the eyes were opened, though Oberon speaks of performing the operation upon those

already asleep. But I believe we should read 'hatch'd,' a word originally meaning to engrave (from F. *hacher*, to engrave), but not seldom used in the sense of staining, smearing. Thus in Beaumont and Fletcher's *Custom of the Country*, v. 5. 108, "When thine own bloody sword cried against thee, *Hatch'd* in the life of him," *i.e.* smeared with his life-blood; *The Humorous Lieutenant*, i. 1. 172, "His weapon *hatch'd* in blood"; and *Valentinian*, ii. 3. 81. In *T. C.* i. 3. 65, "As venerable Nestor *hatch'd* in silver," the meaning is streaked with silvery hairs resembling the lines made in engraving; while in *T. N.* iii 4. 257, the old reading "*unhatch'd* rapier" probably = unstained rapier, as in *The Knight of Malta*, ii. 5. The sense of stained, smeared, well agrees with ii. 1. 257, "And with the juice of this I'll *streak* her eyes."

38. **took**, caught; cp. *Haml.* iii. 3. 80, "He *took* my father grossly, full of bread."

40. **That** ... **eyed**, so that whenever he should awake he could not help seeing her.

41. **close**, so as not to be seen; cp *T. N.* ii. 5. 17, "*Close*, in the name of jesting!" **same Athenian**, the one I meant.

42. **the man**, *sc.* whose eyes I smeared with the juice.

44. **Lay breath** ... **foe**, keep such bitter words for one who deserves them.

45. **Now I but chide**, so far I only use reproach: **should**, ought to.

48. **Being o'er shoes** . **deep**, having gone so far in guilt, go further still; make your guilt complete; cp. *Macb.* iii. 4. 136-8, "I am in blood Stepp'd in so far that, should I wade no more, Returning were as tedious as go o'er"; *T. G.* i. 1. 24, "For he was more than *over shoes* in love."

50. **true unto the day**, *sc.* in regulating the time. Wright compares *T. C.* iii. 2. 185, "As true as steel, as plantage to the moon, As sun to day, as turtle to her mate."

53. **bored**, pierced right through from surface to surface.

54, 5. **displease** .. **Antipodes**, by her sudden presence annoy her brother then holding noontide with the Antipodes, then at his zenith in the Antipodes.

57. **So should** ... **look**, so might a murderer be expected to look; **dead**, deadly looking; cp. *K. J.* v. 7. 65, "You breathe these *dead* news in as dead an ear."

61. **glimmering**, glittering; properly shining faintly; for **sphere**, see note on ii. 1. 9.

62. **What 's this** ... **Lysander?** what has all this to do with my Lysander? All this foolish talk of yours is beside the matter, and is employed merely in order to shirk the question of his whereabouts.

65, 6. **thou drivest ... patience**, you enrage me beyond what it is possible for a maiden to endure with calmness: **then**, since you say that you would rather give his dead body to your hounds to be torn to pieces in the way that hounds are allowed to tear their prey.

67. **Henceforth ... men**! henceforth be accounted a devil rather than a man!

68. **once**, for once in a way; cp. *L. L. L.* iv. 3. 361, "Let us *once* lose our oaths to find ourselves": **tell true**, speak the truth: **even for my sake**, even when entreated by one you hate so bitterly.

69, 70. **Durst thou .. sleeping**? Have you, who would not for a moment have dared to face him when awake, killed him in his sleep? **Durst thou have look'd**, *i.e.* you know well you would not have dared: **O brave touch**! O valiant deed! Schmidt takes **touch** as = 'test or proof of bravery,' comparing *Cor.* iv. 1. 49, "My friends of noblest *touch*," *i.e.* of tried nobleness.

71. **worm**, snake; as frequently in Shakespeare.

72. **doubler**, used to indicate the figurative idea of duplicity, treachery, as well as the literal idea of being forked.

74. **You spend .. mood**, you waste your indignation by indulging in a mistaken humour, *i.e.* the indignation in which you indulge has no real foundation; **passion**, used by Shakespeare of any strong emotion

76. **for aught ... tell**, so far as I know.

78. **therefore**, as a return for telling you, etc.

79. **A privilege**, *sc.* since to you, who so detest me, never to see me again must be a boon.

81. **whether**, metrically a monosyllable.

82. **in this fierce vein**, while she is in this angry mood.

84, 5. **So sorrow's . owe**, as I am, in my present condition, the grief with which I am burdened becomes more burdensome in consequence of the debt that sleep owes to sorrow not being paid; in *Mach.* ii. 2. 37, 9, we have, "Sleep that knits up the ravelled sleave of care ... Balm of hurt minds," and here sleep is spoken of as something properly due to those in trouble. **So** seems out of place here, it not being correlative to anything; possibly it is a mistake for *since*, the *so-* of **sorrow** being caught by the transcriber's eye.

86, 7. **Which now ... stay**, which debt it will pay in part (as a bankrupt pays so-much in the pound) if I wait here to receive its offer of such part; cp. *Cymb.* v. 4. 18-21, where Posthumus, addressing the gods and offering his life in payment of his offence, says, "I know you are more clement than vile men,

Who of their broken debtors take a third, A sixth, a tenth, letting them thrive again On their abatement."

88. **hast mistaken quite**, have made a complete mistake in what you have done.

89. **some true-love's sight**, the eyes of some constant lover.

90, 1. **Of thy .. true**, the result of your mistake must be that some constant lover will have turned inconstant, instead of an inconstant lover becoming constant, as I intended; for **misprision**, cp. above l. 74, and. i. *H. IV.* i. 3. 27, "Either envy, therefore, or *misprision* Is guilty of this fault and not my son."

92, 3. **Then fate ... oath**. Puck's excuse for his carelessness does not seem to be very logical. Possibly the meaning is, Then, if that happens, the fault is fate's, who so often is too strong for men's intentions that, for one man who keeps faith, a million, whatever their intentions, give way and break oath after oath, *i.e.* any number of oaths.

94. **About the wood go**, search the wood in every direction.

95. **look thou find**, take care to find; for the subjunctive after verbs of command, see Abb. § 369.

96. **All fancy-sick**, utterly love-sick: **pale of cheer**, pale in countenance, see note on i. l. 122, above.

97. **that costs ... dear**, that make a terrible drain on the resources of the blood; **costs**, on the relative with a singular verb, though the antecedent be plural, see Abb. § 247; for the supposed effect of sighs, cp. ii. *H. VI.* iii. 2. 63, "I would be blind with weeping, sick with groans, Look *pale* as primrose with *blood-drinking sighs*."

99. **I 'll charm ... appear**, I will lay the spell upon his eyes in anticipation of her coming, so that he may be ready to look upon her with love when she comes; **against she do appear**, elliptically for 'against the time when,' etc.; cp. *T. S.* iv. 4. 104, "bid the priest be ready to come *against you come*"; **do**, subjunctive.

101. **the Tartar's bow**, the nomad hordes of Tartary were famous for their archery. The spelling of the word, which should be 'Tatar,' is due to a false etymology, the Tartars, from their cruelty, being supposed to have proceeded out of Tartarus, or hell.

103. **Hit .. archery**, see above, ii. 1. 165-7.

104. **apple**, the ball of the eye, so called from being round. For the omission of the article, see Abb. § 89.

107. **the Venus of the sky**, the bright planet Venus.

108. **by, near at hand.**

109. **Beg** ... **remedy**, ask her to cure you by granting you her love.

112. **mistook**, for the curtailed form of participles, see Abb. § 343.

113. **a lover's fee**, according to Halliwell, this was a reward of three kisses. He quotes an old ballad, "How many (*i.e.* kisses) says Batt; why, three, says Matt, For that's a maiden's fee."

114. **their fond pageant**, their display of foolish love.

119. **needs**, necessarily; the old genitive used adverbially: **alone**, beyond everything else, unique; cp. *T. G.* ii. 4. 167, "To her whose worth makes other worthies nothing; She is *alone*."

121. **befall**, the original meaning of *be-*, as a prefix, was 'about'; with verbs it frequently becomes merely intensive, as '*be*-muddle,' '*be*-grudge,' or gives a figurative sense as in 'befall,' to fall as an accident: **preposterously**, used by Shakespeare more in accordance with its literal sense than is commonly the case now, 'preposterous' meaning 'having that first which ought to be last,' hence 'perverted,' 'absurd'; cp. *H. V.* ii. 2. 112, "That wrought upon thee so *preposterously*," *i.e.* in a manner so unnatural.

122. **should woo**, was likely to woo.

123. **never come**, never show themselves in the guise of, etc.

124. **vows so born**, vows being so born; when vows have such a birth.

125. **In their** ... **appears**, perfect truth manifests itself in their nativity, is a necessary accompaniment to their birth.

127. **Bearing** ... **true**, when they bear the outward symbol of good faith in proof of their sincerity; 'badges' of silver, etc., with the arms of the family engraved on them, were in Shakespeare's time worn by liveried servants; for the word in this figurative sense, cp. *Sonn.* xliv. 14, "heavy tears, *badges* of either's woe."

128. **You do** .. **more**, you make your cunning more and more conspicuous by the language you use; in **advance** the figure is that of bringing a standard more to the front; cp. *M. W.* iii. 4. 85, "I must *advance* the colours of my love"; *M. A.* iii. 1. 10, "like favourites ... that *advance* their pride Against the power that bred it."

129. **When truth** ... **fray**! "If Lysander's present protestations are true, they destroy the truth of his former vows to Hermia, and the contest between these two truths, which in themselves are holy, must in the issue be devilish and end in the destruction of both" (Wright).

130. **give her o'er**, abandon your interest in her; throw her over, as we say colloquially.

131. **Weigh ... weigh**, if you weigh the worth of your oath to her with the worth of your oath to me, you will find that you are weighing nothing at all; each of the oaths, as she goes on to say, being equally worthless.

133. **tales**, mere empty stories; cp. *A. C.* ii. 3. 136, "Truths would be *tales*, When now half tales be truths."

134. **swore**, *sc.* my oaths of loyalty.

135. **mind**, opinion, judgment.

138. **eyne**, see note on i. 1. 142, above.

139. **Crystal is muddy**, *i.e.* in comparison with your bright eyes.

139, 40. **O, how ripe ... grow**! O, how ripe your lips show, growing like two cherries resting against each other, and tempting one to pluck them; **ripe** and **tempting** used adverbially.

141. **Taurus**, a chain of mountains running through Asia from W. to E., forming the southern margin of the great tableland of Central Asia; the word **Taurus** means a high mountain.

142. **Fann'd .. wind**, which the east wind winnows of all stains upon its whiteness; Wright compares *W. T.* iv. 4. 375, "I take thy hand, this hand, As soft as dove's down and as white as it, Or Ethiopian's tooth, or the fann'd snow that's bolted By the northern blasts twice over"; for **with** = by, see Abb. § 193: **turns to a crow**, appears as black as a crow.

144. **This princess ... white**, this hand so peerless in its whiteness; for **princess**, in the sense of supreme impersonation of a thing, Malone compares *W. T.* iv. 4. 161, "she is The *queen* of curds and cream." Staunton adopts Collier's conjecture 'impress,' quoting in its support Virolet's apostrophe to Juliana's hand in Beaumont and Fletcher's *Double Marriage*, iv. 3, "White seal of virtue"; but though a hand may be said to be a **seal of bliss**, we could scarcely talk of an 'impress of pure white,' whether 'impress' means an impression or a device.

145. **spite**, misfortune, misery: **bent**, determined.

146. **To set against me**, to make a set against me; to unite in flouting me; the figure here, as in iii. 1. 137, is probably from card-playing, in which a sum is set, staked, by one party against a sum staked by another party.

147. **civil**, well-bred: **knew**, were practically acquainted with.

148. **injury**, wrong in the shape of insult; see note on ii. 1. 147.

150. **But you must join**, without your joining; **in souls**, soul

with soul, as we talk of 'joining hand in hand,' in heartily doing something together.

51. **in show**, in appearance, outwardly.

152. **gentle**, tenderly nurtured.

153. **To vow**, by vowing; the indefinite infinitive; **superpraise**, praise in exaggerated and insincere terms.

156. **And now ... mock**, and now rival one another in mocking; the substantive verb 'are' being supplied from the former line.

157. **A trim exploit**, a pretty piece of bravery, a fine exhibition of your courage; for **trim**, in this ironical sense, cp. *T. C.* iv. 5. 33, "O, this is *trim!*"; *T. A.* v. 1. 96 "and 'twas *Trim* sport for them that had the doing of it."

159. **sort**, nature, condition.

160. **offend**, affront.

160, 1. **and extort ... patience**, exhaust the power of endurance of one so forlorn as myself; literally, twist it out of me: **all ... sport**, wholly and solely to amuse yourselves.

164. **with all good will**, most willingly and sincerely.

166. **And yours .. bequeath**, and do you, on your part, leave me all your share in Helena's love; **bequeath**, generally used of devising property by will; though there is nothing in the derivation so to limit the sense, the word being from the A.S. *becweðan*, to say, declare.

169. **I will none**, I will none of her, *i.e.* I do not want to have anything to do with her, to have any part in her love; cp., for this adverbial use of **none**, *T. N.* i. 3. 113, "it's four to one *she'll none of me*"; ii. 2. 13, "She took the ring of me; *I'll none of it.*'

171. **but as .. sojourn'd**, stayed for a short visit as a guest does with his host; **as guest-wise** is redundant; **guest-wise** by itself meaning 'in the way of a guest'; for the sentiment, cp. Tennyson, *The Gardener's Daughter*, 14-7, "she To me myself, for some three careless moons, The summer pilot of an empty heart Unto the shores of nothing!" **to**, some editors adopt Johnson's conjecture 'with'; but probably, as Delius points out, **to** belongs to **guest-wise**, *i.e.* as a guest to her. Malone quotes *Sonn.* cix. 5, 6, "This is my home of love: if I have ranged, Like him that travels I return again."

175. **to thy peril**, here **to** expresses the consequence: **aby it dear**, pay dearly for it; see notes on iii. 1. 12, above, and l. 426, below.

177. **his function**, its office; *sc.* of seeing.

178. **quick**, lively.

179, 80. **Wherein ... recompense**, by that same act (*i.e.* of darkening the earth) by which it weakens the sense of sight, it makes a double recompense in giving greater acuteness to the sense of hearing; **impair**, through F. *empeirer*, from Low Lat. *impeiorare*, to make worse.

182. **thy sound**, the sound made by you, *i.e.* your voice.

184. **press**, ply hard, constrain; probably in this and the next line used in the sense of 'pressing' for service; the word in that sense being a corruption of *prest*, ready, *prest-money*, ready money advanced when a man was hired for service.

186. **bide**, stay, remain.

188. **oes and eyes of light**, stars; **oes**, for round objects, leads to the pun upon the letters O and I. For **oes**, cp. *H. V.* Prol. i. 13, "Within this wooden *O*," *i.e.* the circular building of the Globe Theatre; *A. C.* v. 2. 81, "The little *O*, the earth"; *L. L. L.* v. 2. 45, "O, that your face were not so full of *O's*" (*i.e.* marks of small-pox); also quotation from Bacon's *Essays* on ii. 1. 29.

189, 90. **could not ... so?** could not the fact of my leaving you teach you that I did so because of the hatred I feel towards you?

191. **it cannot be**, *sc.* that you hate me, as you say.

192. **she is ... confederacy**, she has banded herself together with Lysander and Demetrius.

194. **fashion**, shape, concoct: **false**, treacherous, cowardly: **in spite of me**, out of malice towards me; not 'without regard to me,' 'caring nothing for me,' as the words would mean in modern use.

195. **Injurious**, insulting.

196. **contrived**, plotted; cp. *Haml.* iv. 7. 136, "Most generous and free from all *contriving*."

197. **bait**, worry; as dogs worry a bear; to 'bait' is properly to cause to bite.

198. **counsel**, mutual confidences; as above, i. 1. 216.

199. **The sisters' vows**, the vows of sisterly love; protestations such as two sisters would make to each other: **spent**, wearily passed.

200. **chid**, for the curtailed form of the participle, see Abb. § 343: **hasty-footed**, so quickly slipping away.

201. **O, is it all forgot?** Various suggestions have been made to complete the metre, but the pause probably accounts for the syllable wanting.

202. **Childhood innocence**, the innocence of children; cp. *M. V.* i. 1. 144, "I urge this *childhood* proof"; and for substantives used as adjectives, see Abb. § 3.

203. **artificial**, creative; now used chiefly in opposition to what is natural and especially of what is an imitation of what is genuine.

204. **needles**, metrically a monosyllable; many editors give the contracted form *neelds*, which is common in E. E.: **created both one flower**, both worked at the same flower in our embroidery, *i.e.* each doing a part of it.

205. **sampler**, literally, a pattern; used here and commonly for a piece of work given to children to do as a sample of their capacity.

206. **warbling of**, for 'of,' following a verbal noun, see Abb. § 178: **in one key**, in unison of note.

209. **a double cherry**, a twin cherry originating out of a single blossom: **seeming**, seemingly, apparently.

210. **But yet** ... **partition**, but yet really united in spite of the line of seeming partition; what the Siamese Twins were in human physiology.

211. **lovely**, according to Dyce = loving, and so Delius: **moulded**, shaped by Nature.

212-4. **with two** ... **crest.** Douce explains, "Helen says, 'we had two seeming bodies but only one heart.' She then exemplifies her position by a simile—'we had two of the first, *i.e.* bodies, like double coats in heraldry that belong to man and wife as one person, but which, like our single heart, have but one crest.'" Wright makes this more clear by adding that in "the language of heraldry ... when a tincture has been once mentioned in the description of a coat of arms, it is always afterwards referred to according to the order in which it occurs in the description; and a charge is accordingly said to be 'of the first,' 'of the second,' etc., if its tincture be the same as that of the field which is always mentioned first, or as that of the second or any other that has been specified."

215. **rent**, tear; an older form of 'rend' frequent in Shakespeare.

218, 9. **Our sex** .. **injury**, though I alone suffer from your behaviour, our whole sex is dishonoured by it.

220. **amazed**, utterly bewildered; see note on ii. 1. 113.

225. **even but now**, only a moment ago; **even but is redundant.**

229. **Deny your love**, deny all love for you; **your**, objectively.

231. **But by** ... **on**, unless it be that you have incited him to do so.

232. **What though**, even if; supposing it to be the case: **so in grace**, looked upon with such favour.

233. **So hung upon with love**, so lovingly clung to; the idea being that of arms thrown round a person in loving embrace; cp. *M. A.* i. 1. 86, "O Lord, he will *hang upon* him like a disease."

234. **But miserable . . unloved**, but suffering from that worst of miseries, the misery of loving without being loved in return.

237. **persever**, with the accent on the penultimate, as always in Shakespeare.

238. **mouths**, grimaces; cp. *Lear*, iii. 2. 36, "For there was never yet fair woman but she *made mouths* in a glass."

239. **hold ... up**, encourage each other in keeping up the fine joke you have between you.

240. **well carried**, if well managed; cp. *M. A.* iv. 1 212, "Marry, this *well carried* shall on her behalf Change slander to remorse": **shall be chronicled**, will be thought worthy of being recorded as a good story.

241. **grace**, good feeling.

242. **would not**, for this irregular sequence of tenses, see Abb. § 370: **argument**, subject of your merriment; cp. *M. A.* i. 1. 258, "Thou wilt prove a notable *argument*."

247. **O excellent**! Capital! Well done!

248. **cannot entreat**, cannot effect anything by her entreaties: **I can compel**, I can force Lysander to desist from mocking Helena.

252. **lose**, readily sacrifice; *sc.* his life.

255. **withdraw ... too**, walk aside with me and prove it in mortal combat.

256. **whereto tends all this**? what object have you in view in acting thus?

257. **Ethiope**, dark as an Ethiopian. **No, no; he 'll ...**, the first quarto reads 'No, no; heele seeme,' etc.; the second, 'No, no, he'el seeme,' etc.; the folios, 'No, no, sir, seem,' etc. The Camb. Edd. mark a lacuna, but possibly nothing more is intended than a change of thought which causes Demetrius suddenly to break off in addressing Hermia and turn tauntingly to Lysander.

258. **take on . . follow**, behave in a furious manner as though you intended to follow me: for **take on**, in this sense, cp. *M. W.* iii. 5. 40, "she does so *take on* with her men"; iii. *H. VI.* ii. 5. 104, "How will my mother for a father's death *Take on* with me and ne'er be satisfied!"

259. **a tame man**, a coward, poltroon; cp. ii. *H. IV.* ii. 4. 105, "He 's no swaggerer, hostess; a *tame* cheater, i' faith."

260. **Hang off . . cat** ! cease to claw me as a cat does its prey ; said to Hermia as she throws her arms around him to prevent his following Demetrius : for **cat**, used in a contemptuous sense, cp. *A. W.* iv. 3. 295, "he 's more and more *a cat*" : **burr**, the prickly case of the seeds of certain plants, *e.g.* the burdock, which clings to anything it touches.

264. **loathed medicine**, as nauseous to me as medicine.

265. **Do you not jest** ? Surely you must be jesting.

267, 8. **I would ... you** : I wish I had something more than your word,—your bond ; for I see (alluding to Hermia's throwing her arms round Lysander and so detaining him) you are easily held by a bond.

269. **What, should dead** ? What, does your taunt mean that you expect me to be so inhuman as to prevent her from clinging to me by striking her dead ?

271. **what, ... hate** ? *i.e.* you need not be scrupulous about striking me, for no personal injury you can do me will be worse than your hatred.

272. **what news**, that is a strange story to tell me (*sc.* that you hate me).

274. **erewhile**, only a short time ago (when you swore you loved me) ; literally, before (the present) time ; in *Temp.* iii 2. 117, we have *while-ere*, = during (the time), before, *while* being there used adverbially.

275. **Since night .. me**, no longer ago than last night you, etc. ; it is but the time since night that you, etc.

276, 7. **Why, then ... say** ? Am I then to say, to believe, that you were in earnest in leaving me, that you really meant to have nothing more to do with me ? May the gods forbid such a thing !

279. **Therefore ... doubt**, cease therefore to retain any hope, cease to question me on the subject, or to buoy yourself up with the possibility that you are mistaken. I have followed Pope in omitting 'of' before doubt. Lettsom compares ii. 1. 237, "Ay, in the temple, in the town, the field."

280. **nothing truer**, *i.e.* that nothing is more certain.

282. **juggler**, cheat : **canker-blossom**, you who have destroyed the love which was blossoming between Lysander and myself just as the canker destroys the blossoms of flowers ; cp. above, ii. 2. 3, and, for the figurative use of the word, *Temp.* i. 2. 415, "grief that 's beauty's *canker*" ; i. *H. IV.* iv. 2. 32, "the *cankers* of a calm world and a long peace." The word is a doublet of 'cancer,' from Lat. *cancer*, a crab, the tumour being so named from its eating into the flesh.

284. **Fine, I' faith**, truly a fine apostrophe that!

285. **maiden**, maidenly.

286. **touch**, spice, smack; cp. *T. N.* ii. 1. 13, "But I perceive in you such an excellent *touch* of modesty"; *H. V.* iv. *Chor.* 47, "Behold, as may unworthiness define, A little *touch* of Harry in the night."

286, 7. **What ... tongue?** What, are you determined by your abuse to compel impatient answers from one so gentle of speech as you know me to be?

288. **you counterfeit**, you pretended friend of mine: **you puppet**, you doll, who in the hands of others are made to play any part they like.

289. **why so? ... game**, what makes you call me a puppet? what is the point of your calling me puppet? Then, discovering, as she thinks, Helena's meaning, she adds, ah, now I see the game you are playing.

290, 1. **Now I perceive ... statures**, now I see that she has been drawing an invidious comparison between herself and me as regards her superior height; **compare**, comparison, as frequently in Shakespeare.

292. **her tall personage**, her stately figure; cp. *T. N.* i. 5. 164, "Of what *personage* and years is he?"

293. **prevail'd with him**, won him over to admire her more than me.

294. **grown so high**, reached such a height; with a pun on the word **high** in its literal and figurative senses.

296. **thou painted maypole**, a reference to the old custom, observed on the first of May, when villagers bedecked with ribbons and finery, assembled to dance and sing round a May-pole diagonally painted in various colours, and festooned with sprigs of May-blossom, ribbons, etc. The custom is now dying out, though it was pretty widely observed some thirty years ago. In **painted** Hermia hints that Helena owes her complexion to art.

299. **though you mock me**, even though you think proper to, etc.

300. **curst**, shrewish, spiteful; cp. *T. S.* i. 2. 70, "*curst* and shrewd"; i. 2. 128, "Katherine the *curst*."

201. **I have no ... shrewishness**, I am not in the least endowed with shrewishness; shrewishness is no part of my nature; for **have no gift**, cp. *T. C.* iv. 2. 75, "the secrets of nature Have not more *gift in taciturnity*."

302. **a right maid**, a thorough girl, one thoroughly deserving in point of timidity the name of, etc.; cp. *A. C.* iv. 12. 28,

"Like a *right* gipsy"; ii. *H. IV.* ii. 1. 206, "This is the *right* fencing grace"; **for**, as regards, in the matter of.

304. **something**, somewhat.

305. **That I can match her**, that I am her match, her equal in a quarrel.

308. **counsels**, secrets entrusted to me; cp. above, i. 1. 216.

310. **your stealth**, your having stolen away, secretly gone; cp. *Macb.* ii. 3. 152, "there's warrant in that theft Which steals itself, when there's no mercy left," said by Malcolm to Donalbain as they are preparing to steal away from Macbeth's castle.

311. **for love**, out of love.

314. **so**, provided that.

315. **bear my folly back**, rid you of my foolish self, and bear alone the burden of my folly.

317. **simple**, silly: **fond**, foolish.

318. **get you gone**, see note on ii. 1. 194.

319. **A foolish behind**, my heart is with Demetrius here, and drags me back though wishing to go.

322. **though .. part**, even though you espouse her cause (*sc.* Helena's) and are thus guilty of an officious piece of interference. As below, 330-3, Demetrius resents even an act of kindness towards one whom he considers to belong entirely to himself, and whose cause he claims to uphold alone.

323. **shrewd**, bitter-tongued; see note on ii. 1. 33, above.

324 **a vixen**, a sharp-tempered hussy; properly, a she-fox; "by the ordinary laws of vowel-change, the feminine form is *fyx-en*, made by changing the vowel from *o* to *y*, and adding the feminine suffix *-en* .. The use of *vox* for *fox* is common ...; so also *vane* for *fane*, and *vat* for *fat*"... (Skeat, *Ety. Dict.*).

327. **flout**, jeer at.

329. **minimus**, an atom; literally, smallest one: **of hindering ... made**, Steevens points out that **knot-grass** was anciently supposed to prevent the growth of animals and children, and compares Beaumont and Fletcher's *Coxcomb*, ii. 2, "We want a boy extremely for this function, Kept under for a year with milk and *knot-grass*."

330. **bead**, no bigger than a bead or drop; a name given to a fairy in *M. W.* v. 5. 53.

330, 1. **You are ... services**, you put yourself forward a great deal too much in offering to help one who scorns both you and your offers of help; for **her**, as the antecedent of a relative, see Abb. § 218.

333, 4. **if thou dost** .. **her**, if you venture to make the least display of love to her; for **intend** = put forward, direct, cp. *M. W.* ii. 1. 188, "If he should *intend* this voyage towards my wife": **Never so little**, however small; literally, a show of love so little as has never been shown.

335. **aby**, pay dearly for; see note on l. 175, above: **holds me not**, no longer clings to me and prevents my following you, as you just now (l. 268) taunted me with not doing.

336, 7. **to try** ... **Helena**, to put to the test of combat the question which of us has the better claim to Helena: a confusion of two constructions (1) to try whose right, yours or mine, is most, etc. (2) to try which, of you or me (*i.e.* us), has most, etc. Cp. *Temp.* ii. 1. 28, 9, "*Which of he or Adrian*, for a good wager, first begins to crow."

338. **cheek by jole**, with the utmost closeness; literally, as near as cheek is to cheek; **jole**, an old spelling of *jowl*, and "a corruption of *chole*, *chowl*, or *chaul* ... Again, *chaul* is a corruption of *chauel* = *chavel* ...—A.S. *ceafle*, the jaw"... (Skeat, *Ety. Dict.*).

339. **coil**, trouble, disturbance; cp. *K. J.* ii. 1. 165, "I am not worth this *coil*": **long of you**, of your doing; literally, in close connection with you, and so due to you; now used provincially only.

342. **for a fray**, when a quarrel has to be decided.

343. **to run away**, for running away; when the question comes of running away.

345. **still**, constantly.

347. **shadows**, shadowy beings, the fairies; cp. below, v. 1. 408, "If we *shadows* have offended."

352, 3. **And so far** ... **sport**, and my gladness that matters turned out as they did is proportionate to the amusement their quarrelling affords me; **so** and **As** are correlative; **sort**, turn out, from Lat. *sors*, lot, destiny; cp. *M. A.* v. 4. 7, "I am glad that all things *sort* so well."

355. **overcast the night**, envelope the night in a mantle of darkness.

356. **welkin**, sky; A.S. *wolcnu*, plural of *wolcen*, a cloud.

357. **Acheron**, the name of several classical rivers, and one of the five rivers of the lower world; also used in late classical writers for the whole of the lower world. Shakespeare seems to have taken it for a burning lake.

358. **testy**, quarrelsome; literally, heady; from O. F. *teste*, M. F. *tête*, the head.

359. **As**, as that, so that.

360. **Like to ... tongue**, at one time attune your voice to that of Lysander.

361. **wrong**, insults.

363. **from**, away from.

364. **death-counterfeiting**, cp. *Mach.* ii. 3. 81, "Shake off this downy sleep, *death's counterfeit*"; *Cymb.* ii. 2. 31, "O sleep, thou *ape of death*."

365. **batty wings**, wings like those of bats, who fly abroad in the night-time only; hence slumberous.

367. **This virtuous property**, this efficacy belonging to it; 'virtue' in this sense is very frequent in Shakespeare; cp. ii. *H. IV.* iv. 5. 76, "Culling from every flower the *virtuous* sweets."

368. **all error**, all delusions; **his**, its; see Abb. §228: **might**, power.

369. **wonted sight**, usual vision.

370. **this derision**, this deception of which they have been made the fools.

371. **fruitless**, empty.

372. **wend**, go, take their way; from "A.S. *wendan*, (1) transitive, to turn; (2) intransitive, to turn oneself, proceed; its past tense, *went*, is now used as the past tense of *go*" (Skeat, *Ety. Dict.*).

373. **league**, *sc.* of friendship.

374. **Whiles**, the old genitive used adverbially.

375. **I 'll to**, the verb of motion being omitted, as frequently.

377. **From monster's view**, from the sight of the monster with whom she is in love; for the omission of the article, see Abb. § 89.

379. **night's swift dragons**, cp. *Cymb.* ii. 2. 48, "Swift, swift, you *dragons of the night*, that dawning May bare the raven's eye!" and *Il Penseroso*, 59, "While Cynthea checks her *dragon* yokes:" **dragons**, because of their supposed wakefulness: **full fast**, with all possible speed.

380. **Aurora's harbinger**, the forerunner of the goddess of the dawn, *i.e.* the day-star; **harbinger**, forerunner; properly an officer in the royal household, whose duty it was to allot and mark the lodgings of the king's attendants in a royal progress.

382. **Troop ... churchyards**, hurry back in troops to their graves in the churchyard: cp. *Haml.* i. 1. 150-6.

383. **in crossways**, suicides were formerly buried in crossways so that their graves instead of being kept sacred as in churchyards might be trodden by every wayfarer; a stake was also driven

through their hearts to **mark** their burial: **floods**, according to Steevens, the ghosts of those who were drowned were condemned, in consequence of their not having received the rites of burial to wander for a hundred years. He quotes Milton's *Ode on the Death of an Infant*, "Or that thy beauties lie in *wormy bed*."

387. **consort**, have their lot with; for this word and for **sort** in the next line, see note on l. 352, above.

389. **the morning's love**, "by the *morning's love* I apprehend Cephalus, the mighty hunter and paramour of Aurora, is intended" (Holt White).

391, 2. **Even till . beams**, even till the sun, issuing forth from the eastern gate, lights up the sea, etc. The gate of the east is an idea derived from ancient mythology in which the sun is a deity.

399. **Goblin**, a mischievous sprite; from "O. F. *gobelin*, ... — Low Lat. *gobelinus*, an extension of Low Lat. *cobalus*, a goblin, demon. — Gk. κόβαλος, an impudent rogue, a sprite, goblin." (Skeat, *Ety. Dict.*)

402. **drawn**, with my sword drawn; cp. *H. V.* ii. 1. 39, "O well a day, Lady, if he be not *drawn* now"; *R. J.* i. 1. 73, "What, art thou *drawn* among these heartless hinds?" *Cymb.* iii. 4. 111, "Why hast thou gone so far To be *unbent* when thou hast ta'en thy stand, The elected deer before thee?"

403. **straight**, straightway, immediately.

404. **plainer**, more level, and so more suitable for their combat.

408. **look'st for wars**, are in eager expectation of a combat.

409. **recreant**, coward; from F. *recroire*, "to believe again, or alter one's faith .. also used in the phrase *se recredere*, to own oneself beaten in a duel or judicial combat" .. (Skeat, *Ety. Dict.*).

410. **whip thee with a rod**, *i.e.* treat you as an insolent child deserves to be treated: **he**, any one; see Abb. § 224.

412. **we 'll try .. here**, we will not make trial of one another's courage and skill here.

413. **dares me on**, challenges me to come on.

414. **then he is gone**, then I find him gone.

415. **lighter-heel'd**, nimbler in running; cp. i. *H. IV.* ii. 4. 53, "show it *a fair pair of heels* and run from it."

419. **grey**, as the light is before the sun is above the horizon.

420. **revenge this spite**, revenge the insult he has put upon me.

422. **Abide me**, wait till I come up with you: **wot**, know.

423. **shifting every place**, changing your place every moment.

426. **then**, *i.e.* it is plain: **buy this dear**, pay for this dearly;

'buy' and 'aby' are both from the A.S. *bicgan*, to buy; cp. above, iii. 2. 175. "Lest, to thy peril, thou *aby it dear.*"

428. **Faintness**, weariness.

429. **To measure** ... **length**, cp. *Lear*, i. 4. 100, "If you will *measure your lubber's length* again, tarry," *i.e.* if you wish to be knocked down again.

430. **look to be visited**, expect to be met and punished by me.

432. **Abate thy hours**, shorten your duration: **Shine comforts**, let comforts shine; the imperative used optatively.

435. **sleep, that** ... **eye**, see note on iii. 2. 85, above.

436. **steal**, gently remove.

437. **Yet but three?** are there only three here as yet? **Come one more**, let one more come.

439. **curst**, see note on l. 300.

442. **Never**, on this word where we more commonly use 'ever,' see Abb. § 52.

443. **Bedabbled**, wetted thoroughly, see note on l. 121.

444. **go**, walk.

447. **mean a fray**, intend to fight.

458. **And the** ... **known**, and the proverb so well known to rustics.

460. **In your** .. **shown**, shall be exemplified in your case when you awake.

461. **Jack shall have Jill**, every lad shall have his lass; **Jack** and **Jill**, names common among rustics; cp. *L. L. L.* v. 2. 885, "Our wooing doth not end like an old play; *Jack* hath no *Jill.*"

ACT IV. SCENE I.

2. **amiable**, lovely; the word is now applied only to the disposition of persons: **coy**, stroke softly; ultimately from Lat. *quietus*, quiet, still. Cp. *The Maid in the Mill*, iii. 3, "And there have *coy'd* her."

4. **my gentle joy**, you gentle one in whom I take such delight.

7. **Mounsieur**, so the quartos and folios throughout Bottom's speeches,—a spelling probably intended to represent his pronunciation, though the Camb. Edd. point out that the word was generally so spelt. Compare Pistol's French in *H. V.*

11. **red-hipped**, Marshall points out that many of the humble-bees have the lower half of the abdomen bright coloured, and one

of the commonest species (*Bombus lapidarius*) has the last three abdominal segments bright red.

13. **Do not ... action,** don't fatigue yourself too much in doing it.

15. **to have you overflown,** that you should be smothered by the honey flowing out of the honey-bag.

18. **neaf,** or 'neif,' fist; from "Icel. *hnefi*, the fist." .. (Skeat, *Ety. Dict.*). Cp. ii. *H. IV.* ii. 4. 200, "I kiss thy *neaf*," Pistol's speech.

19. **leave your courtesy,** do not trouble yourself to be so ceremonious; cp. *L. L. L.* iv. 2. 147, "Stay not to compliment; I forgive thy duty."

20. **What 's your will?** What do you desire of me? said as though he were addressing some great personage.

21. **Cavalery,** Bottom's version of 'Caballero,' Spanish for cavalier, chevalier, literally a horseman; cp. *M. W.* ii. 3. 77, "Cavaleiro Slender," the Hostess' speech; **Cobweb,** either a misprint for "Peaseblossom," or Bottom's forgetfulness, Cobweb having already been despatched on his mission for the honey-bag.

22. **must to,** must go to, pay a visit to.

23. **marvellous,** used adverbially.

23, 4. **I am such ... scratch.** Bottom compliments himself on his delicate sensitiveness, as he has before done on his various accomplishments, and does immediately afterwards on his good ear for music.

26. **I have ... music,** Bottom was a weaver, and weavers in Shakespeare's day were famed for their singing; cp. *T. N.* ii. 3. 61, "shall we rouse the night-owl in a catch that will draw three souls out of one weaver?"

26, 7. **the tongs,** a pair of tongs struck with a key or a piece of iron, something after the way of the modern 'triangle,' were used by rustics in place of better music. **the bones,** flat pieces of bone held between alternate fingers and clacked together as by 'nigger' minstrels in the present day.

29. **provender,** dry food for beasts, hay, corn; from "F. *provende* ... Lat. *præbenda*, a payment; in late Lat. a daily allowance of provisions" ... (Skeat, *Ety. Dict.*): **your,** that you and everybody know so well; see Abb. § 221.

30. **a desire to,** a longing for: **bottle,** bundle; O. F. *botel*, a diminutive of *botte*, a bundle of hay, etc.

31. **fellow,** equal.

32. **venturous,** the exploit of stealing his nuts from a creature so formidable (to fairies) as a squirrel being a dangerous one.

33. **thence** is Hanmer's insertion for the sake of the metre:

Steevens' remedy of treating **hoard** as a dissyllable involves an undue emphasis on **thee**. I should prefer the insertion of 'in.'

35, 6. **an exposition of sleep**, a disposition to sleep.

38. **be all ways away**, disperse yourselves in every direction to your several duties; **be**, perhaps indicating the instantaneous movements of fairies.

39. **woodbine**, the greater convolvulus; cp. above, ii. 1. 251.

40. **entwist**, wind its tendrils about: **female ivy**, as needing the masculine support of some stronger tree; generally in poetry represented as married to the elm. In *C. E.* ii. 2. 176-8, it is the vine that is so represented, "Thou art an elm, my husband, I a vine, Whose weakness married to thy stronger state Makes me with thy strength to communicate."

41. **Enrings**, Henley sees here and in **fingers** an allusion to the ring of the marriage rite; **the barky fingers**, the sprays covered with rough bark; for adjectives formed from substantives by the suffix *-y*, see Abb. § 450.

46. **sweet favours** ... **fool**, sweet-scented flowers to decorate this odious fool; we still use the word 'wedding-*favours*' in the sense of knots of ribbon with which the wedding-guests are decorated. The second quarto and the three first folios read 'savours,' which some editors adopt.

47. **upbraid**, reproach; Skeat says that the original sense of the word was probably to lay hands upon, lay hold of, hence to attack, lay to one's charge, it being derived from A.S. *upp*, up, and *bregdan*, *bredan*, to braid, weave, also to lay hold of, pull, draw.

48. **rounded**, encircled; cp. *R. II.* iii. 2. 161, "the hollow crown That *rounds* the mortal temples of a king."

50. **that same dew**, the very dew: **sometime**, once upon a time; see note on ii. 1. 38.

51. **orient**, bright; the East being the source of light; applied to a tear, *V. A.* 981, "an *orient* drop."

52. **eyes**, the centre of a flower was called the 'eye.'

53. **that did** ... **bewail**, *sc.* being used for such a purpose.

54. **at my pleasure**, as long as I pleased, with no one to stop me.

55. **begg'd my patience**, begged me not to be angry with her.

57. **straight**, immediately: **her fairy**, her personal attendant.

59, 60. **And now I have**, and now that I have: **I will** ... **eyes**, I will take off from her eyes this deception which prevents her from seeing things as they really are.

61. **this transformed scalp**, this transforming head, this head

with which he has been transformed; **scalp** is properly the skin of the head on which the hair grows.

63, 4. **That, he ... repair,** equivalent to 'That they all awaking together, may,' etc.; for **other**, used as a plural, see Abb. § 12; **repair**, in this sense from Lat. *repatriare*, to return to one's country.

65. **accidents**, incidents; cp. *Temp.* v. 1. 305, "the story of my life And the particular *accidents* gone by Since I came to this isle."

66. **But as ... dream**, than as the fancies by which one is tortured in a dream.

70. **Dian's bud**, Steevens says this is the bud of the *Agnus Castus*, or *Chaste Tree;* and quotes Macer's *Herball*, "The vertue of this herbe is, that he wyll kepe man and woman *chaste.*" Halpin, in his explanation of Oberon's vision, sees here an allusion to Elizabeth's maiden purity; she being symbolized under the title of Diana.

75. **your love**, he whom you loved.

77. **Silence**, possibly a reference to the necessity of silence while a spell was being allowed to work; cp. *Temp.* iv. 1. 59, 127, *Epilogue*, 10.

78. **music call**, summon your fairies to play to you.

78, 9. **and strike ... sense**, and overpower, more completely than ordinary sleep would do, the sense of these five, viz., Hermia, Helena, Lysander, Demetrius, Bottom.

80. **such as ... sleep!** *i.e.* soft music, which acts as a charm in producing sleep.

STAGE DIRECTION. *Music, still.* According to Dyce, with whom Delius and Staunton agree, these words mean *still* or *soft* music; and in opposition to Collier, who thinks that the music was to be heard for a while, and to cease before Puck spoke, Dyce contends that the music was not intended to begin at all till Oberon had exclaimed "Sound music," l. 82. "The stage direction," he says, "(as is often the case with stage directions in old plays) was placed thus early to warn the musicians to be in readiness."

81. **with thine ... peep**, see things with your own foolish eyes, as you have been wont to do, and not with the eyes of an ass with which you have lately seen things.

82. **take hands**, join hands; Dyce points out that here "some sort of a *pas de deux* is danced by the fairy king and queen."

83. **rock the ground**, "like a cradle" (Wright).

84. **are new in amity**, are newly made friends again.

86. **triumphantly**, festively, with all signs of joy and gladness.

87. **And bless ... prosperity**, and shower our blessings upon it with the result of its being ever prosperous.

89. **with**, at the same time with.

91. **the ... lark**, cp. *R. J.* iii. 5. 6, "It was the *lark*, the herald of *the morn*."

92. **sad**, sober; as frequently in Shakespeare.

93. **Trip we ... shade**, let us lightly follow the darkness of the night to that part of the globe which it will be shadowing.

95. **Swifter**, see note on "moon's sphere," ii. 1. 7, above.

100. **the forester**, the huntsman who was to bring the hounds for the chase.

101. **our ... perform'd**, our rites to the May morning have been duly observed; cp. above i. 1. 167.

102. **vaward**, forepart; another spelling of 'vanward' (or 'vanguard'), from O. F. *avant* before and 'ward' (or 'guard'). For the word used in a figurative sense, cp. ii. *H. IV.* i. 2. 199, "and we that are in the *vaward* of our youth, I must confess, are wags too."

103. **My love**, *sc.* Hippolyta: **music**, tuneful voices.

104. **Uncouple**, let the dogs out of the slips. For the sake of the metre, Pope omits the words **let them**, and Dyce follows him.

105. **Dispatch**, make haste.

106. **We will ... up**, the verb of motion omitted.

107. **the musical confusion**, the harmonious blending of the baying of dogs and the echo of that baying.

110. **bay'd the bear**, brought the bear to a stand-still; "*bay* —F. *abois*, *abbois*. Cotgrave says—'a stag is said *rendre les abbois*, when, weary of running, he turns upon the hounds, and holds them at or puts them to a bay' ... The original sense of *aboi* is the bark of a dog" ... (Skeat, *Ety. Dict.*): **bear** was altered by Hanmer to 'boar,' but bear-hunting is frequently mentioned in old English literature, and bear-baiting was a pastime common in Shakespeare's day.

111. **hounds of Sparta**, the Spartan hounds were from early days a famous breed.

112. **chiding**, noise made by the hounds giving tongue; used of the wind in *A. Y. L.* ii. 1. 7, of the sea in *H. VIII.* iii. 2. 197, of the tempest in *T. C.* i. 3. 54.

113. **fountains** has been objected to on the ground that water could not give an echo (though Virgil, quoted by Malone, has the same thought) and 'mountains' proposed in its place; but Shakespeare in speaking of the whole landscape is not careful

whether each item in his catalogue of particulars would really give an echo.

114. **seem'd .. cry**, seemed all to share and re-echo the cry to each other.

115. **So musical a discord**, properly so harmonious a want of harmony; a want of concord which at the same time was so harmonious. 116. **kind**, breed.

117. **So flew'd**, with flews like those of the Spartan breed; 'flews' are the large chaps of a hound; cp. *V. A.* 920, "Another *flap-mouth'd* mourner," said of a hound: **so sanded**, of the same sandy colour, a colour "which is one of the true denotements of a bloodhound" (Steevens).

118. **With ears ... dew**, *i.e.* so long that they almost touch the ground.

119. **dew-lapp'd .. bulls**, with dewlaps as broad as those of, etc.; cp. *Temp.* iii. 3. 45, "*Dew-lapp'd like bulls*"; and see note on ii. 1. 50.

120, 1. **match'd .. each.** A writer in the *Edinburgh Review* for October, 1872, points out that in Shakespeare's day the greatest attention was paid to the musical quality of the cry of a pack of hounds; and quotes extracts from a contemporary of Shakespeare's to show by what admixture of breeds 'sweetnesse of cry,' 'lowdnesse of cry,' and 'deepnesse of cry,' were severally obtained; for **mouth**, = voice, cp. *H. V.* ii. 4. 70, "for coward dogs Most spend their *mouths* when what they seem to threaten Runs far before them."

121. **cry**, pack: **tuneable**, tuneful; see Abb. § 3.

122. **Was never holla'd to**, was never answered by the huntsman encouraging his hounds.

128. **wonder of**, wonder regarding, *i.e.* wonder at.

130. **The rite of May**, see Introduction.

131. **in grace of**, to grace: **solemnity**, marriage ceremony.

133. **That Hermia ... choice**, on which Hermia is bound to tell us which of her two lovers she accepts; for **That**, = when, see Abb. § 284.

136. **Saint Valentine is past**, on Valentine's day, the fourteenth of February, birds were supposed to pair for the season. See Introduction.

137. **Begin .. now?** are these wood-birds so late in pledging their faith? **wood-birds**, because they had been found in the wood; the figure being kept up in **couple**.

138. **Pardon, my lord**, said as he makes obeisance to **Theseus**.

139. **rival enemies**, rivals and so enemies.

140-2 **How comes ... enmity?** How does such gentle concord prevail in the world that hatred is so completely a stranger to suspicion as to sleep side by side with hatred without fearing any injury? *i.e.* how is it that you and Demetrius, who are known to hate each other so bitterly, should be found lying close to one another, each without any fear of injury from the other? for **jealousy**, = suspicion, cp. *H. V.* ii. 2. 126, "O, how hast thou with *jealousy* infected The sweetness of affiance!" for **so ... that**, see Abb. § 281.

143, 4. **I shall ... waking**, my answer must be made in a bewildered way as by one half asleep, half waking; there seems to be a confusion of constructions between 'I shall reply half asleep, half waking,' and 'my reply shall be half sleep, half waking.' Delius and Staunton read ''sleep,' *i.e.* asleep: for **shall**, = must, see Abb. § 318.

146. **for truly ... speak**, for I should wish to speak the truth.

147. **so it is**, this is the state of matters.

149, 50. **Was to be ... law**, was to escape from Athens to some place or other beyond the reach of the Athenian law. If the reading is right, the construction seems to be 'Was to be gone without the peril of the Athenian law by going from Athens where we might.' Fisher's quarto puts a dash after **law**, to signify that the speech is incomplete; Hanmer gives "Be without peril of th' Athenian law"; for **without**, used locally = outside, see Abb. § 197.

151. **you have enough**, enough has been admitted by Lysander to prove their guilt.

152. **I beg the law**, *i.e.* the application of the law; cp. *M. V.* iv. 1. 141, "I stand here for *law*."

154. **Thereby ... me**, so that they might in that way disappoint both of us; cp. *H. V.* iv. 1. 175, "Now, if these men have *defeated* the law and outrun native punishment"; *Sonn.* xx. 11, "Till Nature ... fell a-doting And by addition me of thee *defeated*."

157. **their stealth**, their stealing away.

158. **Of this ... wood**, of this intention of theirs to make for this wood.

160. **in fancy**, out of love for me.

163. **Melted**, being melted. I have followed Dyce in inserting **melts** before **snow**; other conjectures are, "Melteth as does," etc.; "All melted as," etc.

164. **gawd**, toy, bauble; see above, i. 1. 33.

166-8. **And all ... Helena**, all the firm loyalty of my heart has Helena for its mark, she is the sole object of delight to my eye.

170-2. **But wish it**, but, just as one in sickness loathes the most pleasant food, so did I loathe Helena; yet again, just as one in health desires pleasant food, so I, having now recovered my natural taste, desire Helena; **But** and **But**, if the reading is correct, may be used as correlatives = as, so.

175. **this discourse**, this narrative.

176. **overbear**, bear down by my command, over-rule.

177. **by and by**, in a short time; see note on iii. 1. 77.

179. **for**, since: **is something worn**, has partly gone by.

181. **three and three**, each of us three with the object of our love.

184. **These things ... undistinguishable**, these matters to which I attached so much importance, now that I am awake and in my right mind, seem so trifling as to be scarcely perceptible.

185. **turned into clouds**, which to the physical eye look no more substantial than clouds.

186. **with parted eye**, as one would if one's eyes were not in focus with each other.

188, 9. **And I . own**, and as when a man finds a jewel and does not know whether he may call it his own, or whether he will have to give it up to some one claiming it, so I, in finding Demetrius, feel the same uncertainty as to his really belonging to me.

190. **That we are awake?** Capell and Lettsom both conjecture 'well' before **awake**; Malone would insert 'now.'

196. **by the way**, as we go along.

198. **next**, *sc.* cue.

200. **God 's my life**, *i.e.* by God who is my life, or as God is my life.

202. **past the wit . was**, which it is beyond the wisdom of man to say what its nature was.

203. **go about**, endeavour.

205. **a patched fool**, no better than a fool dressed in motley.

206. **offer**, attempt.

206-9. **The eye ... was.** Bottom is clumsily parodying Scripture; see i. *Corinthians*, ii. 9.

210. **of this dream**, on the subject of this dream.

212. **our** is Walker's conjecture for 'a.'

213. **gracious**, pleasing: **her death**, if the true reading, can refer to Thisbe only; Theobald conjectured '**after**' for **at her**, *i.e.* **after he has slain himself in the character of Pyramus.**

SCENE II.

3. **transported**, made away with, carried off by some agency; it seems hardly necessary to take the word as an euphemism for 'murdered,' as Schmidt does.

8. **discharge**, play; see note on i. 2. 84.

9, 10. **the best . man**, a confusion of constructions between 'a better wit than any handicraft man,' and 'the best wit of all handicraft men'; **handicraft**, from "A.S. *handcræft*, a trade, the insertion of *i* being due to an imitation of the form of *handi-work*, in which *i* is a real part of the word ... from A.S. *hand* and *gewcorc*, another form of *weorc*, work"... (Skeat, *Ety. Dict.*).

13. **paragon**, "a model of excellence ... F. *paragon*, 'a paragon, or peerlesse one'; Cot —Span. *paragon*, a model, paragon. A singular word owing its origin to two prepositions united in a phrase. —Span. *para con* ... —Span. *para*, for .. which is itself a compound preposition, answering O. Span. *pora*, from Lat. *pro ad* . and *con* from Lat. *cum*. Thus it is really equivalent to the three Lat. prepositions *pro, ad, cum*" (Skeat, *Ety. Dict.*).

14. **a thing of naught**, a worthless thing; *naught*, from which our word *naughty*, being the A.S. *nawhit*, no thing.

15. **from the temple**, *i.e.* after his marriage there.

17. **had gone forward**, had been carried out; if our play had been acted: **we had . men**, our fortunes would have been made; cp. *T. N.* ii. 5. 168, "Go to, thou art *made*, if thou desirest to be so."

18. **bully**, see note on iii. 1. 7.

19. **'scaped**, missed getting; Flute employs for missing a piece of good fortune a word more properly used of getting out of a difficulty, scrape.

20, 1. **an the duke .. hanged**, I'll be hanged if the duke would not have given, etc., *i.e.* assuredly the duke would have given.

22. **sixpence ... nothing**, if he were rewarded at all, as he was sure to have been, the reward for his playing Pyramus could not have been less than sixpence a day for life: **in Pyramus**, in his character as Pyramus. Steevens thinks there may here be an allusion to a pension of twenty pounds a year bestowed on one Thomas Preston for his acting before Elizabeth at Cambridge in 1564.

23. **hearts**, brave fellows, *sc.* his comrades; cp. *Temp.* i. 1. 7, "cheerly, cheerly, my *hearts!*"

24. **courageous**, possibly Bottom means 'auspicious.'

26. **I am to**, I have to; it is what I am bound to do; cp. *Tim.* i. 2. 155, "*I am to* thank you for it"; and see Abb. § 405.

31, 2. **good strings to your beards**, *i.e.* so that they may not fall off in the acting: **pumps**, court shoes, thin-soled shoes. "So called ... because worn for 'pomp' or ornament, by persons in full dress.—'F. *pompe*, pomp, state .. *a pied de plombe et de pompe*, with a slow and stately gate [gait]: Cot.'" (Skeat, *Ety. Dict.*).

34. **the short and the long**, the fact; the whole story; more commonly 'the long and the short of the matter': **preferred**, is generally explained as 'offered for acceptance'; but Bottom seems certain that the play has been accepted, and probably the word means has 'received the honour of being accepted.'

36. **shall hang**, are bound to hang, must hang.

38. **we are to utter**, it is our duty to breathe.

ACT V. SCENE I.

1. **that**, for the omission of the relative where the antecedent clause is emphatic, see Abb. § 244.

2. **may**, can; the original sense of 'may'; see Abb. § 307, 310.

3. **antique**, literally ancient, and so grotesque: **toys**, absurdities.

4. **seething**, boiling; cp. *W. T.* iii. 3. 64, "Would any but these *boiled* brains of nineteen and two-and-twenty hunt this weather?"

5. **Such shaping fantasies**, fancies capable of giving form and shape to things that have no existence: **apprehend**, seize hold of; perceive the existence of.

6. **comprehends**, takes hold of and assimilates to itself. The hasty clutching at an idea by fancy is contrasted with the deliberate manner in which reason examines an idea before accepting and making it a part of herself.

8. **compact**, made up of; put together with; cp. *V. A.* 149, "Love is a spirit all *compact* of fire"; *A. Y. L.* ii. 7. 5, "If he, *compact* of jars, grow musical."

10. **all**, wholly.

11. **in a brow of Egypt**, in the face of a gipsy; the fair complexion of Helen is contrasted with the swarthiness of a gipsy.

12. **in a fine frenzy rolling**, rolling in the ecstasy of inspiration; cp. *K. J.* iv. 2. 192, "With wrinkled brows, with nods, with *rolling* eyes"; and for the transitive use, *Lucr.* 368, "*Rolling* his greedy eyeballs in his head."

14. **bodies forth**, presents as something concrete.

18. **tricks**, feats of conjuring.

19, 20. **That, if ... that joy**, that if its intention is merely to conceive some joy, it necessarily conceives also, etc. In the language of logicians, the idea denoting some joy is connoted by the idea of some cause of that joy.

21. **imagining**, if one imagines; by a person imagining; for the participle without a noun subject, see Abb. § 378: **fear**, object of fear; cp. i. *H. IV.* i. 3. 87, "Shall we buy treason? and indent with *fears*, When they have lost and forfeited themselves?"

22. **easy**, easily.

23-7. **But all ... admirable**, but the narration in all its particulars of what happened to them in the night, with the fact of their minds being all at one time affected by a similar transformation, gives proof of something more than fanciful imagination, and taken together has the appearance of real consistency; but this in any case, be that as it may (*i.e.* consistent or not), is worthy of wonder; **witnesseth**, the singular as though we had 'with' instead of **and**; **constancy**, cp. the adjective in *T. N.* iv. 2. 53, "I am no more mad than you are: make trial of it in any *constant* question"; for **howsoever**, cp. *T. C.* iii. 3. 297, "*howsoever*, he shall pay for me ere he has me"; *Cymb.* iv. 2. 146, "*howsoe'er*, My brother hath done well."

29. **Joy**, *i.e.* be to you: **fresh days of love**, days in which love will have lost none of its first freshness.

30. **More**, *sc.* joy.

31. **Wait ... bed**, be with you ever and everywhere.

33. **this long ... hours**, the three hours that will otherwise seem an age.

34. **after-supper**, the rear supper, as it was also called, refreshments taken after supper and answering to the dessert after dinner; cp. *R. III.* iv. 3. 31, "Come to me, Tyrrel, soon at *after supper*."

35. **our manager of mirth**, the master of our revels, provider of entertainments.

36. **in hand**, preparing.

39. **abridgement**, amusement to make the time pass quickly; in *Haml.* ii. 2. 439, "my *abridgement*" means he who by his appearance cuts short my speech.

41. **The lazy time**, the time which passes so slowly when unoccupied.

42. **brief**, short statement; cp. *A. C.* v. 2. 138, "This is the *brief* of money, plate, and jewels I am possess'd of:" **ripe**, *sc.* for performance, ready.

43. **of**, redundant; see Abb. § 179.

44. **Centaurs**, *i.e.* the Bull-killers, an ancient mythological race, inhabiting Mt. Pelion in Thessaly. They are particularly celebrated in ancient story for their fight with the Lapithæ, which arose at the marriage-feast of Pirithous. This fight is sometimes placed in connection with a combat of Hercules with the Centaurs.

45. **to the harp**, with the music of the harp as an accompaniment.

47. **my kinsman**, according to Plutarch, "they were near kinsmen, being cousins removed by the mother's side" (*Shakespeare's Plutarch*, ed. Skeat, p. 178).

48. **Bacchanals**, the frenzied devotees of the god Dionysus (Bacchus, in Roman mythology), who in their orgies tore to pieces the poet Orpheus for the contempt he had shown them by secluding himself from all female society after the loss of his wife, Eurydice.

51. **from Thebes**, where, aiding Adrastus in recovering the dead bodies of those slain in the war of the "Seven against Thebes," he captured the city.

52, 3. **The thrice ... beggary.** By Warton and others this is supposed to allude to Spenser's poem *The Tears of the Muses*, which, however, could only be called a satire in the sense that the decay of poetry was in it held up to scorn. Knight thinks that the allusion is to a satire of Harvey's upon Robert Greene, lately dead, who as a Master of Arts in both Universities might have been ironically personified as **Learning**.

55. **sorting**, agreeing with, being appropriate to.

56. **tedious brief**, not necessarily a contradiction of terms, as Philostrate afterwards explains, though here so taken by Theseus.

59. **wondrous strange**, if the true reading, will mean as strange in nature as **hot ice**; for **wondrous**, as a trisyllable, see Abb. § 477. Various conjectures have been made in place of **strange**, *e.g.* 'scorching,' 'seething,' 'swarthy,' 'staining,' etc.

60. **How shall .. discord?** how can things so completely opposed to each other go harmoniously together?

61. **some**, about; see Abb. § 21.

65. **fitted**, given a part suitable to his capacity.

68. **Which ... rehearsed**, and this when I saw it rehearsed.

70. **passion**, strong feeling; see note on iii. 2. 74.

71. **What**, of what kind; less definite than 'who.'

72. **Hard-handed**, whose hands have been hardened by toil; cp. *J. C.* iv. 4. 74, "to wring From the *hard hands* of peasants their vile trash"; Tennyson, *Princess*, ii. 143, "horn-handed breakers of the glebe."

74, 5. **And now ... nuptial**, and now have exercised their hitherto unpractised memories in studying this play I have mentioned in preparation for your wedding feast; for **toil'd**, transitive, cp. *Haml.* i. 1. 72, "Why this same strict and most observant watch So nightly *toils* the subject of the land"; in **unbreathed** the figure is from exercising horses and so getting them into good wind; cp. *A. Y. L.* i. 2. 230, "Yes, I beseech your grace: I am not yet well *breathed*"; *T. S. Ind.* ii. 50, "as swift As *breathed* stags"; for **against your nuptial**, see note on i. 1. 125.

77. **not for you**, not fitted for one of your greatness.

79, 80. **Unless ... pain**, unless the fact that they have desired to please you, and with that desire have laboured to the utmost in getting up their parts, will afford you amusement in spite of their shortcomings; properly speaking, it is not the **intents** that are **Extremely stretch'd**, but their labour due to those **intents**; **conn'd**, see note on i. 2. 102.

83. **When simpleness .. it**, when offered out of simple-minded loyalty; Steevens compares Ben Jonson, *Cynthia's Revels*, "Nothing which duty and desire to please Bears written on the forehead, comes amiss."

85, 6. **I love not ... perishing**, it is no pleasant sight to me to see poor wretches labouring under a task too heavy for them, and those who from a feeling of duty offer their services failing in their attempt to acquit themselves well; Hippolyta is unwilling that the poor rustics should be allowed to play before her and break down in the attempt; **his**, its; for **perishing**, in this sense, cp. *M. M.* v. 1. 458, "an intent That *perish'd* by the way."

88. **kind**, way, *i.e.* of acting.

89. **The kinder ... nothing**, if so, answers Theseus playing upon the word **kind**, our gracious thanks will be all the more gracious as being given for what does not in itself deserve them.

90. **Our sport ... mistake**, our amusement shall consist in accepting, as something worthily offered, their shortcomings, whatever they may be.

91, 2. **And what ... merit**, and in a case where poor creatures, anxious to show their duty, fail in their efforts, a generous mind accepts those efforts, taking into consideration their capacity as performers rather than the merit of their performance. Seymour would insert 'aright,' Coleridge, 'yet would' after **do**, putting **noble respect** into the latter of the two lines.

93. **great clerks**, deeply learned men; "learning," as Wright points out, "having been at one time almost confined to the clergy." He compares *Per.* v. *Prol.* 5, "Deep clerks she dumbs," *i.e.* 'she puts to silence profound scholars.'

95. **Where**, and in such cases.

96. **Make periods**, come to a stand-still.

97. **Throttle** ... **fears**, in their nervous excitement choke the utterance of those sentences which they had spent so much pains in committing to memory.

98, 9. **And in conclusion** ... **welcome**, and have ended in breaking off short in their address without giving me the welcome they had intended. For the ellipsis of the nominative, see Abb. § 399.

100. **Out of** ... **welcome**, yet from this very silence of theirs I gathered a welcome; cp. *M. V.* ii. 9. 48, "how much honour *Pick'd* from the chaff and ruin of the times."

101-3. **And in** ... **eloquence**, and in the nervous bashfulness which these loyal creatures have betrayed, I have discovered as much real welcome as in the glib, fluent speech of those who were hindered by no scruples of diffidence.

104, 5. **Love, therefore** ... **capacity**, to my judgment, therefore, love and hesitating simplicity are most eloquent, though they can find but few words to express their feelings; **Love** and **simplicity**, loving and simple-minded creatures, the abstract for the concrete; for **capacity**, cp. *T. N.* ii. 5. 128, "this is evident to any formal *capacity*."

106. **So please your grace**, if your grace is willing to hear it; **address'd**, prepared, ready; see note on ii. 2. 143.

STAGE DIRECTION. *Flourish of trumpets.* Steevens shows that the Prologue was anciently ushered in by trumpets.

108-17. **If we** ... **know**. In Udall's *Ralph Roister Doister*, iii. 4. 34-68, there is a metrical epistle in which the stops are as carefully misplaced as in Quince's Prologue. The lines should be stopped as follows:—

> If we offend, it is with our good will
> That you should think we come not to offend;
> But with good will to show our simple skill:
> That is the true beginning of our end.
> Consider then; we come; but in despite
> We do not come: as minding to content you,
> Our true intent is all for your delight;
> We are not here that you should here repent you.
> The actors are at hand; and by their show
> You shall know all that you are like to know.

118, 9. **It is** ... **offend**, we sincerely hope that you will believe that we do not come with the intention of offending.

110. **But with** ... **skill**, but we come with the desire to show, etc.

111. **That is ... end**, that is the object we really have in view.

112, 3. **but in ... come**, but we do not come with a bad purpose.

113, 4. **as minding ... delight**, desiring to satisfy you, our real intention is wholly to give you pleasure.

115. **We are not ... you**, we are not present here in order that you should regret wasting your time upon us.

117. **like**, likely.

118. **doth not ... points**, has no respect for stops.

119, 20. **He hath ... stop**, his prologue goes with the paces of an unbroken colt that pays no regard to the check of its rider.

123. **recorder**, a sort of flute or flageolet with six stops; **a sound ... government**, producing a sound, it is true, but not a musical one; not one over which he has proper control; cp. *Haml.* iii. 2. 372-6, where Hamlet is addressing the player who enters with a recorder.

124, 5. **nothing ... disordered**, in no way injured, but thrown into complete confusion.

126. **Gentles**, gentlemen; 'gentle and simple' was a common phrase for 'well-born and lowly-born': **show**, dumb show, no speech being so far given to the actors.

128. **would know**, desire to know.

129. **certain**, "A burlesque was here intended on the frequent recurrence of 'certain' as a bungling rhyme in poetry more ancient than the age of Shakespeare" (Steevens), who quotes several instances.

132. **are content**, have to put up with.

135. **if you will know**, if you desire to hear the story.

136. **did ... think no scorn**, were not ashamed.

138. **grisly**, grim, horrible; **hight**, is called; an archaism, and "the sole instance in Eng. of a passive verb" (Skeat, *Ety. Dict.*).

139. **trusty**, faithful in keeping her promise to meet Pyramus.

141. **fall**, transitive, let fall; as frequently in Shakespeare.

143. **Anon**, a minute later; see note on ii. 1. 17: **tall**, brave.

144. **And finds ... slain**, and finds the mantle of his faithful Thisbe who had been slain by the lion, as he fancied.

145, 6. **Whereat ... breast**, ridiculing the love of alliteration common in Shakespeare's day: **broach'd**, tapped; as a cask is tapped to draw the liquor; cp. *Tim.* ii. 2. 186, "If I would *broach* the vessels of my love."

147, 8. **And Thisby ... died**, and Thisbe, who was hiding herself, for fear of the lion, in the shelter of the mulberry trees, coming out drew the dagger from his wound and killed herself with it: **For all the rest**, as for the rest of the story.

150. **At large**, at length, in full detail.

151. **be to speak**, has to make a speech.

152. **No wonder**, it would be nothing wonderful if he had to, etc.

154. **interlude**, properly something played in the intervals of a festivity.

157. **crannied hole**, a crevice cut in the wall.

162. **right and sinister**, going right and left; **sinister**, an affectation partly for the sake of a rough rhyme with **whisper**.

164. **Would you ... better**? Could any one expect lime and hair to speak more eloquently? **hair**, an admixture with **lime** to give it greater consistency; cp. below, l. 193.

165. **partition**, Fanner proposed "This is the wittiest partition that ever I heard in discourse," with an allusion to the many absurd partitions in the argumentative writings of the time.

168. **grim-look'd**, for the termination *-ed* loosely employed for *-ful*, *-ing*, see Abb. § 374.

175. **blink**, peep through.

176. **shield**, guard, protect from storms.

180. **sensible**, endowed with sense; the wall being represented by a man: **should**, ought, might be expected to: **curse again**, return curse for curse.

181. **he should not**, Bottom, taking Theseus' words seriously, replies, 'No, that is not in his part.'

183. **pat**, exactly; see above, iii. l. 2.

186. **For parting**, on account of your separating.

188. **hair ... thee**, see note on l. 164 above.

189. **see a voice**, see above, iii. l. 82.

192. **thy lover's grace**, your graceful lover.

193. **Limander**, for Leander, as **Helen** is for Hero, **Shafalus** for Cephalus, and **Procrus** for Procris. Everyone knows the story of Hero and Leander; **Cephalus**, son of Hermes and Herse, was loved by Aurora, but out of loyalty to his wife Procris, rejected the offers of the goddess.

200. **'Tide life, 'tide death**, whether life or death happen to me; **'tide**, for 'betide.'

201. **discharged**, enacted; cp. above, i. 2. 82.

202. **being done**, the part being played.

203. **mural**, if the right reading, = wall; Theseus probably

imitating the affectation of the actor's language by coining a word from the Lat. adjective *muralis*, from *murus*, a wall. Collier conjectures 'wall.'

204, 5. **No remedy ... warning**, nothing else could be done than to throw walls down when they take to overhearing in this clandestine way, without giving any warning of their presence as an honourable person would do rather than overhear a secret conversation; an allusion to the proverb "Walls have ears," *i.e.* it is not safe to tell a secret when some one may be concealed behind a wall and overhear it.

207. **in this kind**, *i.e.* in dramatic representations.

208. **no worse ... them**, nothing worse than shadows, if the faults in their acting be pieced out by imagining what good acting of the parts would be.

209. **It must ... theirs**, it must be your imagination then, for they are quite without that faculty.

211. **pass for**, pass current as; be accepted generally.

212. **in a man and a lion**, in the persons of a, etc.

214. **smallest monstrous**, an intentional contradiction of terms.

218. **A lion fell ... dam**, neither a cruel lion, nor a lioness; editors read either 'No lion fell,' 'A lion's fell,' or 'A lion-fell,' 'fell' in the two latter readings = skin. But probably Snug is here made to misplace his negatives, making up for the omission at the beginning of the line by an excess in the latter part, for it is unlikely that a lion's skin would be contrasted with a lion's dam: for a similar omission of the former of two negatives, cp. *M. M.* iii. 2. 86, "*Pomp.* You will not bail me, then, sir? *Lucio.* Then, Pompey, nor now": **dam**, a mere variation of *dame*, used for the mother of animals, or of human beings when likened to animals, though occasionally without any contemptuous sense, *e.g.* *W. T.* iii. 2. 199, "his gracious *dam*," said by Paulina of her loved mistress Hermione.

220. **'twere pity on my life**, see note on iii. 1. 38, 9.

221. **of a good conscience**, *i.e.* as shown by his letting the spectators know that they need not be afraid of him.

222. **at a beast**, for a beast, in playing the part of a wild beast; cp. *L. L. L.* i. 2. 42, "I am ill *at* reckoning"; *Haml.* ii. 2. 120, "I am ill *at* these numbers," *i.e.* a bad hand at writing verses.

223. **a very ... valour**, a true fox as regards valour, *i.e.* not valorous at all, the fox always securing its prey by cunning.

224. **a goose ... discretion**, with no more discretion than a goose. Delius refers to the antithesis between valour and discretion in i. *H. IV.* v. 4. 121, "The better part of *valour* is *discretion*."

225, 6. **Not so ... goose**, that simile will not hold, for if he were like a fox in point of valour, and a goose in point of discretion, his valour ought to be able to carry his discretion, as the fox carries the goose; **carry** in the former case being used in the sense of 'be equal to the burden of,' in the latter of 'bear away his prey.'

227, 8. **His discretion ... fox**, if his discretion, as you say, is too much for his valour (*i.e.* if his discretion prevents him from exhibiting his valour), I am sure on the other hand that his valour is too much for his discretion (*i.e.* will not allow his discretion to show itself), for, as we all know, it is not the goose that carries the fox.

228, 29. **leave it to his discretion**, leave him to manage matters as he thinks fit.

230. **the horned moon**, the crescent moon; cp. *Cor.* i. 1. 217, "As they would hang them on the *horns o' the moon.*"

231. **He should ... head**, to show that he is a cuckold; an allusion to the old belief that when a man's wife was unfaithful to him, horns sprouted from his forehead

232, 3. **He is no crescent ... circumference**, if he represented the crescent moon, his horns would show; but he represents the full moon, and therefore his horns are hidden like those of the moon when at the full.

235. **do seem to be**, represent.

236, 7. **This is ... lanthorn**, if, as he says, the lanthorn represents the moon, then he, in not being inside the lanthorn, is guilty of a greater blunder in acting than any of the others; **the greatest ... rest**, an imitation of a Greek idiom in which two constructions are confused, (1) the greatest error of all, (2) a greater error than all the rest; cp. above iv. 2. 9, and Milton, *P. L.* iv. 323, 4, "Adam the goodliest man of men since born His sons, the fairest of her daughters Eve."

237, 8. **How is ... moón?** a question of appeal equivalent to 'in no other way can he be the man in the moon.'

239. **for the candle**, because of the candle; for fear of being burnt by the candle; see Abb. § 150.

240. **in snuff**, a pun upon the phrase to take something in snuff, *i.e.* to be offended at something as shown by snuffing up the nose, and secondly upon the word 'snuff'=the burnt-out part of the wick of a candle; cp. i. *H. IV.* i. 3. 41, "A pouncet-box, which ever and anon He gave his nose and took 't away again; Who therewith angry, when it next came there, *Took it in snuff.*"

241. **aweary**, the prefix *a-* here represents the A.S. intensive *of.*

242, 3. **It appears ... wane**, it appears, so far as we can judge by the small amount of sense in his words, that he will soon be no longer visible, *i.e.* that he will soon leave the stage; we should now say '*on* the wane.'

244. **the time**, *i.e.* the time fixed for his disappearance from the scene.

249, 50. **for all .. moon**, for we see all these in the moon; the mountains in the moon having been likened to these objects.

257. **moused**, to 'mouse' is to tear as a cat tears a mouse; cp. *K. J.* ii. 1. 354, "*mousing* the flesh of men," said of Death.

258. **And so ... vanished**, and at the point, *i.e.* after mousing the garment. I follow Spedding in transposing this and the next line, as, in the story of Pyramus and Thisbe, Pyramus came to the place after the lion had torn Thisbe's garment.

262. **gleams**, Knight's conjecture for 'streams' or 'beams' of the old copies, and evidently required for alliteration.

263. **take**, for 'catch,' for the sake of the alliteration.

264. **spite**! misfortune! woe is me!

265. **poor knight**, apostrophizing himself.

266. **dole**, grief; cp. *Haml.* i. 2. 13, "In equal scale weighing delight and *dole*."

269. **O dainty duck**! apostrophizing Thisbe; **duck** being a common term of endearment.

270. **good**, fine; for the sake of the rhyme.

274. **Cut thread and thrum**, "Thrum is the end or extremity of a weaver's warp; it is popularly used for very coarse yarn. The maids now call a mop of yarn a *thrum mop*" (Warner).

275. **Quail**, crush, destroy; transitive as in *A. C.* v. 2. 85, "But when he meant to *quail* and shake the orb"; but here used for the sake of the assonance with **crush**, etc.; **quell**, kill; A.S. *cwellan*, to kill.

276, 7. **This passion ... sad**, a grim joke of Theseus', as though the death of a dear friend were not sufficient without such pathos as that of Pyramus to make a man look sad; for **passion**, see note on iii. 2. 74.

278. **Beshrew ... man**, bad luck to me if I do not pity the man; for **Beshrew**, see note on ii. 2. 54.

280. **deflower'd**, here misused by Bottom in the sense of cutting off a flower in its bloom.

281. **no, no—**, *i.e.* I must not say **is** but **was**.

282. **look'd with cheer**, looked bright and cheerful; for the derivation of the word, see note on iii. 2. 96.

283. **confound**, throw me into a state of distraction; if, indeed, Bottom is to be flattered by supposing him to have a definite meaning.

292, 3. **Tongue ... flight**, Halliwell would read 'Sun' for **Tongue**, but surely the nonsense is intentional, and Pyramus, if made to talk sense, would have said, 'Breath, take thy flight; Moon, lose thy light.'

295. **No die ... him**, a die is a cube (generally of ivory) used in gaming, and on its six sides are marked the numbers (ace) one to (seize) six; so Theseus says the word is not applicable to Pyramus seeing that he is but one.

299. **How chance ... Thisbe**, how does it chance that, etc.; see note on i. 1. 129.

302. **passion**, passionate lament.

305, 6. **A mote .. better**, the very smallest atom will be enough to turn the balance between them, they being so evenly matched, and show which of the two is the better actor; **mote**, a particle of dust, a speck, spot; **which Pyramus ... better**, apparently a confusion between (1) which of the two, Pyramus and Thisbe, is the better, and (2) whether Pyramus or Thisbe is the better of the two.

306, 7. **he for ... bless us**, he in his capacity as a man, if we may be forgiven for dignifying him with such a title; she in her capacity as a woman, if in so dignifying her we may hope for God's blessing; cp. *A. Y. L.* iii. 3. 5, "Your features! Lord *warrant us!* what features?"

309. **and thus she means**, and this is what she means to say; **videlicet**, to wit, namely; Lat. for *videre licet*, it is allowable to see, it is easy to see, hence 'plainly,' 'to wit.'

316-8. **These lily ... cheeks**, the epithets in these lines are of course intentionally absurd.

321. **leeks**, onions.

322. **Sisters Three**, the Fates; Clotho, who held the distaff; Lachesis, who spun the thread of life; Atropos, who cut it.

326, 7. **shore .. silk**, *i.e.* put an end to his beautiful life; for the curtailed participle, see Abb. § 343.

330. **imbrue**, drench in blood.

337, 8. **the wall ... fathers**, *i.e.* and therefore cannot assist in burying the dead. The irrepressible Bottom, who has been ready throughout to set everybody right, though he ought to be lying dead, cannot resist this last opportunity of showing his wisdom.

338. **a Bergomask dance**, a burlesque dance such as was common at Bergamo in Italy. Though, according to Marshall, the

people of the place seem to have been sometimes called 'Bergamaschi,' the word is probably here spelt **Bergomask** from Bottom's belief that it had something to do with a mask: **see** and **hear**, intentionally transposed.

341, 2. **needs no excuse**, *sc.* such as was commonly made in epilogues.

343. **there need** .. **blamed**, none can come in for blame.

346. **very notably discharged**, very finely acted: **come, your Bergomask**, come, let us have the dance you offered just now.

348. **told**, counted, numbered.

349. **almost fairy time**, time for the fairies to be at their sports.

351. **As much** . . **overwatch'd**, by as long a time as we have kept awake beyond night-fall.

352. **palpable-gross play**, play whose dulness is so palpable.

353. **heavy gait of night**, slowly passing hours of night; **gait**, "manner of walking ... A particular use of the M. E. *gate*, a way ... popularly connected with the verb *to go*; at the same time, the word is not really *derived* from that verb, but from the verb *to get*" (Skeat, *Ety. Dict.*).

354. **hold we**, we intend to hold.

355. **new jollity**, some fresh diversion each succeeding night.

357. **behowls**, howls at; see Abb. § 438.

359. **fordone**, exhausted; **for-**, intensive.

360. **wasted brands**, logs which have long been burning brightly, and so are partly burnt out.

361. **screech-owl**, cp. *Macb.* ii. 2. 3, 4, "It was the owl that shriek'd, the fatal bellman, which gives the stern'st good-night."

362, 3. **Puts** ... **shroud**, leads the poor wretch who lies on a bed of sickness to think of his death; **shroud**, the garment in which the dead are dressed; "closely allied to *shred* .. the original sense was a shred or piece of cloth or stuff, a sense nearly retained in that of winding-sheet" (Skeat, *Ety. Dict.*).

364, 5. **Now it is** ... **wide**, cp. *Haml.* iii. 2. 406, 7, "'Tis now the very witching time of night, When churchyards yawn."

367. **church-way paths**, the paths in the churchyard leading to the church.

369. **By the triple Hecate's beam**, by the side of the chariot of Hecate known under three forms; the *diva triformis* of classical writers; Luna, in heaven; Diana, on earth; Hecate or Proserpina, in the infernal regions; **Hecate**, always a dissyllable in Shakespeare, except in *i. H. VI.* iii. 2. 64.

371. **like a dream**, as the events of the day follow a man in sleep.

372. **frolic**, frolicsome, merry.

375. **To sweep** ... **door**, where it would gather if the door was left open long.

376, 7. **Through** .. **fire**, now that the fires in the house have been allowed to go out, in their stead light up the rooms with your fairy light.

380. **ditty**, literally a thing dictated (Lat. *dictatum*), then a song, and more usually a plaintive one.

381. **dance it trippingly**, trip lightly in your dance; cp. *Temp.* i. 2. 380, "*Foot it featly* here and there"; and for this indefinite use of **it**, see Abb. § 226.

382. **by rote**, repeating the words from memory; **rote**, from "O. F. *rote* ... Mod. F. *route*, a road, way, beaten track... Hence *by rote* = along a beaten track, or with constant repetition"... (Skeat, *Ety. Dict.*).

383. **To each** ... **note**, accompanying each word by a musical note.

387. **each fairy stray**, *let* each fairy stray.

388. **To the** ... **we**, we, *i.e.* Titania and himself, as king and queen of the fairies, will make our way to the chief bed of the house occupied by Hippolyta and Theseus. Douce shows that it was customary to bless the bed at all marriages, and quotes a form of blessing from the Manual for the use of Salisbury.

390. **create**, created; for the omission of *-ed* in the participle of verbs ending in *-t*, *-te*, and *-d*, see Abb. § 342.

394. **blots**, such as those mentioned in l. 396.

395. **shall not** ... **stand**, shall never be found among their children.

396. **hare-lip**, lip divided in the middle, and thought to resemble the lip of a hare; cp. *Lear*, iii. 4. 123, "This is the foul fiend Flibbertigibbet: he... gives the web and pin, squints the eye, and makes the *hare-lip*." Steevens says that this defect in children was much dreaded, and numerous charms were applied for its prevention.

397. **mark prodigious**, ill-omened mark.

398. **Despised in nativity**, looked upon with horror, regarded as hateful, in a new-born child.

400. **consecrate**, see note on l. 390, above.

401. **take his gait**, take his way; see note on l. 353, above.

402. **several**, separate, individual.

404, 5. **And the owner ... rest,** I have followed Staunton in transposing these lines, though sense might be made of them as they stood in the old copies, by construing 'Ever shall the owner of it rest in safety and blest.' Dyce, retaining the old order, reads 'Ever shall *'t*,' etc.

407. **by break of day,** as soon as the day breaks.

408. **we shadows,** we shadowy beings ; as in iii. 2. 347.

409-11. **Think but ... appear,** all you have to do is to imagine that you were asleep when these visions appeared to you, and then everything will be well.

412-4. **And this .. reprehend,** and do not blame this slight subject of our merriment, the outcome of which has been nothing more than a dream.

415. **mend,** intransitive, improve in our behaviour.

416-9. **And, as I am .. long,** and on my word as an honest fairy, if we are so fortunate, though we do not deserve it, as to escape being hissed, we will shortly present you with something better worthy of your attention ; **serpent's tongue,** Steevens quotes Markham's *English Arcadia*, 1607, "But the nymph, after the custom of distrest tragedians, whose first act is entertained with *a snaky salutation*," etc.

420. **Else,** if I do not keep my promise : **the Puck,** the hobgoblin you now know so well.

422. **Give me your hands,** applaud us by clapping your hands ; cp. *Temp. Epil.* 20, "But release me from my bands With the help of *your good hands*."

423. **restore amends,** in return show you marks of our friendship.

APPENDIX.

I. Life of Shakespeare.

William Shakespeare was born in 1564 at Stratford-on-Avon, in Warwickshire. As he was baptised on April 26th, it is not improbable that the tradition which assigns his birth to April 23rd, the feast-day of St. George, the patron saint of England, is correct.

During Shakespeare's early youth his father, a glover by trade, occupied an honourable and prosperous position in Stratford, and discharged the duties of a number of public offices in the town. On his mother's side, the young Shakespeare was descended from a good Warwickshire stock, the Ardens. Of the actual events of Shakespeare's life, we know but little from contemporary records; though, as has been pointed out by one of his latest biographers, our knowledge of his life is greater than of the lives of the other dramatists of his time. At the Free Grammar School of his native town, Shakespeare received his early education and acquired that "small Latin and less Greek" of which his friend and fellow-playwright Ben Jonson somewhat disparagingly speaks. His studies, however, were interrupted by a fall in the fortunes of his father of which evidences exist in records of mortgages upon property and distraints for debt. Probably on this account, Shakespeare left school at the age of thirteen. Many conjectures have been made as to his employment for the next few years. From the familiarity with legal phraseology which Shakespeare shows in some of his plays, it has been conjectured that he was employed in an attorney's office, while there are traditions that he was for a time a schoolmaster and that he served a term as apprentice to a butcher.

It is probable that during this period of his youth he may have witnessed some of those dramatic performances known as *Moralities* (see p. 157), of which the neighbouring town of Coventry was a great centre, and that his youthful genius may already have taken a bent in the direction of dramatic represen-

tation from witnessing the performances of those bands of strolling players of whose visits to Stratford we have evidence in the town records. *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* is held by some to contain an autobiographical hint in Act II. Sc. 1. 148-168.

Obe. Thou rememberest
Since once I sat upon a promontory,
And heard a mermaid on a dolphin's back
Uttering such dulcet and harmonious breath
That the rude sea grew civil at her song
And certain stars shot madly from their spheres,
To hear the sea-maid's music.
Puck. I remember.
Obe. That very time I saw, but thou couldst not,
Flying between the cold moon and the earth,
Cupid all arm'd: a certain aim he took
At a fair vestal throned by the west,
And loosed his love-shaft smartly from his bow,
As it should pierce a hundred thousand hearts;
But I might see young Cupid's fiery shaft
Quench'd in the chaste beams of the watery moon,
And the imperial votaress passed on,
In maiden meditation, fancy-free.
Yet mark'd I where the bolt of Cupid fell:
It fell upon a little western flower,
Before milk-white, now purple with love's wound,
And maidens call it love-in-idleness.

These lines appear to be descriptive of some of the shows at Kenilworth Castle in 1575 on the occasion of the famous visit of Queen Elizabeth to the Earl of Leicester. As Kenilworth is at no great distance from Stratford, it is probable that the boy Shakespeare was a spectator of the shows with which the Queen was entertained.

In 1582, at the age of eighteen, Shakespeare married Anne Hathaway, of Shottery, a hamlet hard by Stratford. For some years he continued to live in his native town and there his three children were born. Anne Hathaway was eight years older than her husband, and by some it has been conjectured that the marriage was unhappy. Among other evidence in support of the conjecture, a passage in *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* has been cited, where among the causes why "the course of true love never did run smooth," the fact that it is sometimes "misgraffed in respect of years" (I. 1. 137) is mentioned.

Possibly about 1587,—the exact date is unknown,—Shakespeare left Stratford for London. Rowe, his earliest biographer, says that his flight was necessary to escape the anger of Sir Thomas Lucy, of Charlcote, whose deer Shakespeare had poached. The story gains much support from a passage in *The Merry Wives of*

Windsor in which Sir Thomas Lucy is satirised. But though this cause may have influenced Shakespeare, it is probable that the consciousness of his own powers and the desire to find for them a wider sphere than his native town afforded may have induced him to make the change. In London he appears early to have become connected with the theatre,—according to tradition at first in very humble capacities. In 1592, however, his name is mentioned as a successful actor and author. In addition to acting, Shakespeare was, in these early years of dramatic work, employed in altering and adapting old plays and afterwards in original work. We have records of Shakespeare as an actor playing the part of Adam in *As You Like It*, and of the Ghost in *Hamlet*.

About this time he secured the patronage of the young Earl of Southampton, to whom, as "the first heire of my invention," he dedicated in 1593 his poem of *Venus and Adonis*. To the same nobleman was dedicated the poem *Lucrece*, which appeared in 1594. In the same year, his appearance before Queen Elizabeth as an actor is recorded, and he was now rapidly producing his earlier dramatic efforts—historical plays and comedies—and laying the foundations of considerable worldly prosperity. He became one of the principal proprietors of the Globe Theatre, which was built in 1599, and he was by this time steadily investing money in property at Stratford-on-Avon.

In his plays Shakespeare reveals himself, and the development of his mind, not by autobiographical details, which would be out of place in dramas dealing with the fortunes and expressing the thoughts of other personages, but by the general character and tendency of the dramas themselves.

The plays of what may be called Shakespeare's first period, from about 1588 to about 1594, represent the time of his apprenticeship to the art of the dramatist. They are, as a whole, marked by exuberant fancy, but do not show the fulness of knowledge of life or the complete mastery of the resources of blank verse that he afterwards attained. To this period are assigned *Titus Andronicus* and *The First Part of Henry VI.*, which were probably only adapted by Shakespeare; the *Second and Third Parts of Henry VI.*, and *Richard III.*; the comedies *Love's Labour's Lost*, the *Comedy of Errors*, *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, and *Midsummer-Night's Dream*. Possibly the tragedy of *Romeo and Juliet* also belongs to this period.

The second period, from about 1594 to the close of the sixteenth century, shows in general a great advance in power of characterisation and in the command of poetic resources. The dramas are stronger, deeper and more powerful in character. They are still either historical in subject like *Richard II.*, *King John*, the *First and Second Parts of Henry IV.*, and *Henry V.*; or comedies such as the *Merchant of Venice*, the *Taming of the*

Shrew, the *Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *As You Like It*, and *Twelfth Night*.

The third period extends from the opening of the seventeenth century to about 1608. It includes the great series of tragedies *Julius Caesar*, *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *Lear*, *Macbeth*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Coriolanus*, and *Timon of Athens*, and the comedies *All's Well that Ends Well*, *Measure for Measure*, and *Troilus and Cressida*. From the general character of these plays, their occupation with the dark side and the gloomy passions of human life and character, it has been generally surmised that they are the outcome of a period of gloom and sorrow in the poet's life.

To the fourth and last period belong the beautiful romantic plays *Pericles*, *Cymbeline*, the *Tempest*, and the *Winter's Tale*.

With the exception of the plays of *The Two Noble Kinsmen* and *Henry VIII.*—which are only partly by Shakespeare—these romantic plays mark the close of Shakespeare's dramatic work.

Somewhere about 1610, Shakespeare left London and retired to the property which he had bought in his native town. He was, however, to enjoy his leisure for but a few years, for on April 23rd, 1616, probably the anniversary of his birthday, he died. His body lies in the parish church of Stratford-on-Avon.

II. The Development of the Elizabethan Drama.

It is usual to regard the Elizabethan drama as, in some degree, a development of the early religious plays which, under the name of *Miracle* and *Mystery Plays*, were performed in the churches and elsewhere during the Middle Ages, in order to instruct the populace in the chief facts of the Scriptures or in the events of the lives of the Saints. It may well be that Shakespeare in his youth witnessed the performance of Mystery Plays, for they were acted in the neighbouring town of Coventry as late as 1580. Out of the Mystery Play arose the *Morality*, which first appears in the reign of Henry VI. and of which some of the best examples belong to the time of Henry VIII. In these plays various virtues and vices were personified, and the plays were frequently made vehicles for satirising abuses and enforcing opinions. Another form of dramatic entertainment which became very popular during the Tudor period was the *Masque*. The Masques were, perhaps, derived from our own English masks and mummings, which were acted in dumb show, but they gradually assumed the character of light, fanciful plays in which music and dances were introduced. To these characteristics of the Masque, *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* approaches the most closely of all Shakespeare's plays. Masques continued popular down to the time of the Great Rebellion. They were

written by Ben Jonson and by many of the Elizabethan dramatists, and Milton's beautiful Masque, *Comus*, was represented in 1634.

In the midst of these Morality Plays and Masques short humorous plays or *Interludes* came to be interpolated, much as the interlude of *Pyramus and Thisbe* is interpolated in the main action of *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*. But a further development in the direction of the true drama took place when the Interlude was separated from the Morality and represented separately, its characters being drawn from real life but not working out a complete dramatic story. In Henry VIII.'s reign the chief writer of interludes was John Heywood.

From such origins and by such developments arose the true drama in England; the first English comedy, *Ralph Roister Doister*, written by Nicholas Udall, being acted about the middle of the sixteenth century, and the first tragedy, *Gorboduc* or *Ferrex and Porrex*, written by Sackville and Norton, in 1562.

To some extent, the development of the English drama was no doubt influenced and hastened by the Revival of Learning and the consequent study of the classical dramas of Greece and Rome. From 1560 onwards till about 1580, a period in which the English drama was in its childhood, some fifty dramas are known to have been presented.

Until 1576, however, there was no regular theatre in England. In the earliest days the Miracle and Mystery plays had been acted—generally by the clergy—in the churches, and later the Morality plays were sometimes enacted by the trade-guilds of the town; a fact that Shakespeare probably had in his mind when he makes the "hard-handed men that work in Athens here" undertake the interlude of *Pyramus and Thisbe*. With the growing popularity of the drama, however, there arose regular bands of professional actors, generally under the patronage of some powerful noble, and thence known as the "Earl of Leicester's servants," or the "Lord Chamberlain's servants" as the case might be. At first their performances were given in the courtyards of inns.

The first regular theatre was the "Blackfriars Theatre" built in 1576, and in the same year, in the fields outside the city, "The Theatre" and "The Curtain" were built. "The Globe Theatre, with which Shakespeare was especially associated, was built in 1599 on the Bankside, that is, the south side of the Thames, near London Bridge.

The exterior of the theatre of Shakespeare's time was hexagonal, the interior circular or oval. Shakespeare describes the interior of the Globe Theatre as "this wooden O," in *Henry V.* The poorer patrons stood upon the rush-covered ground, and in baloonies running around the building sat the wealthier members of the audience. The young gallants sat upon benches upon the

stage itself. There was scarcely any scenery, the scene of the action being indicated rather than represented. Thus the dramatist depended largely upon the imagination and the quickness of apprehension of his auditors. Theseus points to this fact in *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, v. 1. 206-7, when he insists on the necessity of imagination to supply the inadequacy of stage representation, and no small part of the humour of the play presented by Bottom and his companions lies in their determination to leave nothing to the imagination of their audience, so that Wall must carry loam and rough-cast, Moon a lanthorn and thorn-bush, while the Lion must explain that he is no lion but only Snug the joiner.

In the Shakespearian theatre, women's parts were enacted by boys whose voices had not yet broken; thus Shakespeare makes Hamlet, speaking to a boy who played women's parts, say:

"What, my young lady and mistress! By 'r lady, your ladyship is nearer to heaven than when I saw you last, by the altitude of a chopine. *Pray God that your voice, like a piece of uncurrent gold, be not cracked.*"—*Hamlet*, Act II. 2.

Again, in *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* (I. 2. 41-44), we have the passage:

"*Flu.* Nay, faith, let not me play a woman; I have a beard coming.

Quin. That's all one: you shall play it in a mask, and you may speak as small as you will."

During the first part of Shakespeare's career as a writer the chief dramatic output includes the work of Peele, Greene, Marlowe and the early work of Shakespeare himself. Kit, or Christopher, Marlowe was by far the most important of these early contemporaries of Shakespeare. He made blank verse the recognised vehicle of English drama, and though his dramas are extravagant and exaggerated, he showed great powers of characterisation and a high poetic faculty. His fame rests upon the plays *Tamburlaine*, *The Jew of Malta*, *Faustus*, and *Edward II.* Of the contemporaries of Shakespeare's prime, and of his immediate successors, the most important are Ben Jonson, the author of *Volpone the Fox*, *Every Man in his Humour*, and the *Silent Woman*; Fletcher, who collaborated with Shakespeare in *Henry VIII.*, and with Beaumont in a series of plays; Massinger, of whose plays *A New Way to Pay Old Debts* is the most widely known; Ford, Webster, Dekker, and Chapman.

The Introduction to this volume gives an analysis of the play and sketches of the chief characters. The attention of the student is directed to those points.

III. Date of Composition of the Play.

The register of the Stationers' Company shows that *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* was entered on October 8th, 1600, and in the same year two quarto editions of the play were published. The actual date of composition, however, cannot be fixed definitely, and has been the subject of much discussion. The chief arguments bearing upon the probable date are as follow:

1. It is mentioned in the list of Shakespeare's comedies given by Francis Meres in his *Palladis Tamia*, published in 1598. Hence it must have been played in or before that year.

2. Titania's speech, Act II. Sc. 1. 88-114, describing the disastrous interchange of weather between the seasons, has been held by some to be an allusion to the bad weather experienced during the summer of 1594, of which we have a record in Stowe's Chronicle and other sources. Thus Dr. Forman, writing at the time, says of 1594: "The months of June and July were very wet and wonderful cold, like winter, that the tenth day of July many sat by the fire, it was so cold; and so it was in May and June; and scarce two fair days together all that time, but it rained every day more or less."

Again, a poet of the time, Churchyard, writes:

> "A colder time in world was never seene;
> The skies do loure, the sun and moone wax dim;
> Summer scarce known, but that the leaves are greene,
> The winter's waste drives water o'er the brim."

If Titania's speech be indeed an allusion to the weather of 1594, the date of the play is fixed between 1594 and 1598, and the most probable date is 1594 or 1595, when the allusion would be the more forcible because the memory of the events of 1594 would be fresher. Evidently, however, the conjecture is not conclusive.

3. A further allusion has been thought by some to be contained in the lines v. 1. 52:

> "The thrice-three muses mourning for the death
> Of Learning, late deceas'd in beggary."

This has been variously supposed to refer to (*a*) Spenser's *The Teares of the Muses*, which appeared in 1591; (*b*) The death of the author Greene in 1592; (*c*) The death of Spenser in 1599. But the reference in *Palladis Tamia* makes the last assumption impossible, and there are serious objections to the others.

4. For further evidence as to date we have to fall back upon the play itself. Here we may consider (i.) the general character of the play itself and the language employed; (ii.) verse-tests.

(i.) Under this head we have the gradual gain in dramatic and poetic power, and in knowledge of character and breadth of

outlook that Shakespeare's works manifest. Again, the earliest plays contain many puns and exaggerated similes, the number of which gradually decreased as Shakespeare's powers and poetic taste matured.

Authorities are generally agreed that these considerations point to the conclusion that *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* was written towards the end of Shakespeare's first period, *i.e.* about 1594 or 1595.

(ii.) The verse-tests include (*a*) the use of rhyme—other than in songs; (*b*) the character of the blank verse.

(*a*) Shakespeare used rhymed lines less and less as time went on. In *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, however, this test is not of great weight, since from the romantic, imaginative and unreal character of the play, rhyme is peculiarly appropriate.

(*b*) In the earlier plays of Shakespeare there is nearly always a natural pause at the end of each line, while in later plays the proportionate number of lines in which the sense is carried on from one line to the next gradually increases. Again, the blank verse of the earlier plays is generally *regular* (*v.* Section on Metre), while irregularities in the metre become increasingly numerous in the later plays. Evidences from these considerations also favour the conclusion that the play was written about the close of Shakespeare's first period.

To sum up, the general conclusion of authorities is that *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* was written in 1594 or 1595, and it certainly cannot have been written later than 1598.

IV. Sources of the Material of the Play.

For the material of his plays Shakespeare frequently drew largely from such sources as were available to him, transforming and vitalising by his genius the matter so obtained. Thus passages in the English historical plays are metrical paraphrases of Holinshed's *Chronicle*, and the matter for plays dealing with Roman history is drawn from Plutarch's *Lives*.

In *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, however, Shakespeare was but little indebted to outside sources for his material. Indeed, the indebtedness amounts to little more than the provision of a few names of characters, a few allusions to events in their lives, and a few turns of expression.

Shakespeare's knowledge of Theseus was, no doubt, drawn from North's translation of Plutarch's *Lives*, published in 1579. In this work two legends are given regarding the marriage of Theseus; according to one Theseus made an expedition against the Amazons, and having taken Antiopa prisoner (v. 2. 1. 80) married her; according to the other the Amazons invaded the territory of Athens and were defeated by Theseus, who afterwards married their queen, Hippolyta.

It also appears that Shakespeare was acquainted with the *Knight's Tale* in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*. The "Duc Theseus" of Chaucer suggests the "Duke Theseus" of Shakespeare; in both Hippolyta is his bride, and in both the name Philostrate occurs. Again the return of Theseus from Thebes as given in the *Knight's Tale*:

"hoom to Atthenes his citee
With alle blisse and greet solempnitee"

may have suggested *M.-N.D.* v. 1. 51.

"When I from Thebes came last a conqueror."

And Chaucer's line:

"And for to doon his observaunce to May"

seems to be echoed in *M.-N.D.* I. 1. 167:

"To do observance to a morn of May."

The story of Pyramus and Thisbe is derived from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, and Shakespeare in telling it evidently followed Golding's translation, which appeared in 1565. Shakespeare appears to have taken the name Titania also from the *Metamorphoses*, where it is used as a name for Diana. Its application to the Queen of the Fairies—instead of the name Queen Mab as in *Romeo and Juliet*—is due to Shakespeare. *Oberon* as King of the Fairies appears in Spenser and Greene, and is derived from Auberon, a character in a French romance of the thirteenth century, *Huon of Bordeaux*, in which Auberon is king of the realm of the fairies. Lord Berners in translating the romance in the sixteenth century Anglicised the name "Auberon" to "Oberon."

In essentials, however, the play is entirely the product of Shakespeare's genius. To him it owes its poetical and imaginative beauty, its skilful construction and its humour. The fairy portion of the play and the plot of the whole is entirely his.

V. The Title of the Play.

While the title of the play is *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, the action of the play takes place, not at Midsummer Day (June 24th), but during the last two days of April and the first of May.

This is apparent from the play itself:

"*Ege.* My lord, this is my daughter here asleep;
And this, Lysander; . . .
The. No doubt *they rose up early to observe*
The rite of May." Act IV. Sc. 1.

And the speech of Hippolyta shows that four days inclusive are occupied by the events in the play:

"*Hip.* Four days will quickly steep themselves in night;
Four nights will quickly dream away the time;
And then the moon, like to a silver bow
New-bent in heaven, shall behold the night
Of our solemnities." Act I. Sc. 1. 7-11.

The question therefore arises why a play dealing with May Day should receive its name from Midsummer Day.

The reason may possibly be found in the superstitions which centred around St. John's Day—June 24th. *Chambers' Book of Days*, under this date, says:

"Some of the superstitious notions connected with St. John's Eve are of a highly fanciful nature. In England, and perhaps in other countries also, it was believed that, if any one sat up fasting all night in the church porch he would see the spirits of those who were to die in the parish during the ensuing twelve months. . . . A circumstance mentioned by Grose supports our conjecture—that to sleep on St. John's Eve was thought to ensure a wandering of the spirit, while watching was regarded as conferring the power of seeing the vagrant spirits of those who slept. . . . It was customary on this eve to gather certain plants which were supposed to have a supernatural character. The fern is one of those herbs which have their seed on the back of the leaf, so small as to escape the sight. It was concluded that to possess this seed, not easily visible, was a means of rendering one's self invisible.[1] . . . The people also gathered on this night the rose, St. John's wort, vervain, trefoil, and rue, all of which were thought to have magical properties."

If the knowledge of such superstitions was general in Shakespeare's time, the title *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* would not be regarded as inappropriate to a play depending very largely upon the part taken in it by the beings of another world, and in which the intricacies of the plot depend upon the magical properties of herbs.

Other explanations of the title have been advanced. Professor Dowden (*v.* introduction to this edition) suggests that a night in early May may be considered a night in the spring of midsummer. Many editors consider that the title, like that of *Twelfth Night*, refers to the period at which it was to be acted. In support of this view it is pointed out that St. John's Day was a day of rejoicing and merry-making, and that a fairy play by Ben Jonson is expressly stated to have been written for performance on Midsummer Day.

[1] *Vide I. Henry IV.*, II. 1. 96. "We have the receipt of fern-seed, we walk invisible."

VI. Characteristics of "A Midsummer-Night's Dream."

Fanciful and Romantic Character. The especial characteristic of *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* is its fanciful, imaginative and romantic nature. In such a play the portrayal of character is not to be expected to be a main concern of the author. Hence the characterisation is, in general, slight, and of the human dramatis personae, only Theseus and Bottom are drawn firmly and with individuality.

Resemblance to a Masque. In many features the play approaches closely to the Masque in its fanciful story, in the introduction of supernatural beings, in the use of music and the dance, and in the interpolation of an interlude corresponding to the "anti-masque" frequently introduced into the Masque proper.

The Play "a Dream." The essentially fanciful, dream-like character of the play is insisted upon not only in the title but in the words of Puck:

> "If we shadows have offended,
> Think but this, and all is mended,
> That you have but slumber'd here
> While these visions did appear." v. 1. 408-411.

Essentially English in Character. In such a play, which was to be judged according to its beauty as a fanciful dream, there was no occasion to maintain entire consistency. Therefore it matters little that while the scene is supposed to be Athens and "a wood near Athens," the setting of the play is unmistakably English. The "wood near Athens" is an English woodland, with its banks of "wild thyme," its "oxlips and violets," its "luscious woodbine," its "sweet musk-roses and its eglantine." So, too, though Theseus and Hippolyta and the other personages of rank are Greek in name, they are really Elizabethan nobles in character, and the "hard-handed men that work in Athens here" bear English names, and are drawn with humorous exaggeration from the "mechanicals" whom Shakespeare had observed at Stratford, and in their booths by Cheapside. Numerous English sports and games—the May Day festivals, Saint Valentine, carols and nine men's morris—are alluded to, and Puck or Robin Goodfellow is a spirit of the English country side.

The Spirit-World of "Midsummer-Night's Dream" and of the "Tempest." It is natural to compare the fairy machinery of *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* with that of the *Tempest*. In both plays, the fates of mortals are influenced by a marvellous spirit-world. But the two chief spirits, Puck of the *Midsummer-Night's Dream* and Ariel of the *Tempest*, in spite of some points of resemblance, are essentially different. On this point Hazlitt

says: "Puck . . . is the Ariel of the *Midsummer-Night's Dream*, and yet as unlike as can be to the Ariel in the *Tempest*. No other poet could have made two such different characters out of the same fanciful materials and situations. Ariel is a minister of retribution, who is touched with the sense of pity at the woes he inflicts. Puck is a madcap sprite, full of wantonness and mischief, who laughs at those he misleads—'Lord, what fools these mortals be!' Ariel cleaves the air and executes his mission with the zeal of a winged messenger; Puck is borne along on his fairy wand like the light and glittering gossamer before the breeze. . . . Prospero and his world are a set of moralists; but with Oberon and his fairies we are launched at once into the empire of the butterflies."

Possible representation at Marriage Festivities. From the general character of the play, the conjecture has been made that it was intended for representation at a marriage, and some have supposed, as mentioned in the Introduction to this volume, that its occasion was the marriage of the Earl of Essex, while others believe the occasion to be the marriage of Shakespeare's patron, the Earl of Southampton. But if we accept the conclusion that the play was produced in 1594 or 1595, it cannot have been written in honour of either of these marriages, for Essex was married in 1590, and Southampton in 1598. The further suggestions that it was written for the marriage of the Earl of Derby in 1595, or of the Earl of Bedford in 1594, are, while possible, conjectures and nothing more.

The different elements of the Plot. A remarkable feature of *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* is the marvellous skill with which several distinct elements of interest are interwoven in the plot by the most ingenious links of common interest into a coherent whole. These elements of interest are (1) the fortunes of the lovers, (2) the rehearsal and performance of the "Interlude," (3) the quarrel of Oberon and Titania, and, (4) the marriage of Theseus and Hippolyta. On this point Hallam remarks:

"The structure of the fable, consisting as it does of three if not four actions, very distinct in their subjects and personages, yet wrought into each other without effort or confusion, displays the skill, or rather instinctive felicity, of Shakespeare, as much as any play he has written."

Possibly acted before Queen Elizabeth. Shakespeare is known to have acted frequently before Queen Elizabeth, and it is plausibly conjectured that *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* was intended to be played before her, as there are some passages which appear to refer to her, or to be designed especially to please her. The most important of these are:

(1) The reference to "a fair vestal throned by the west," against whom Cupid discharges his shafts in vain, so that "the

imperial votaress passed on, in maiden meditation, fancy-free." This appears certainly to refer to Elizabeth. II. 1. 158-163.

(2) An elaborate allegory has been read into the passage (Act II. 1. 148-168) in which the above lines occur, according to which other allusions are made; the "mermaid" being Mary Queen of Scots, the "dolphin" the Dauphin of France, the "certain stars" the nobles who espoused Mary's cause, and so on. It is, however, much more probable that the passage alludes to the shows with which the Earl of Leicester entertained Queen Elizabeth at Kenilworth in 1575.

(3) The praise of the unmarried state in I. 1. 74-78 may have been introduced to please the Virgin Queen:

> "Thrice-blessed they that master so their blood,
> To undergo such maiden pilgrimage;
> But earthlier happy is the rose distill'd,
> Than that which withering on the virgin thorn
> Grows, lives and dies in single blessedness."

Anachronisms, etc. Shakespeare, writing rapidly for the theatre, was not greatly careful about slight matters of detail. Hence in his plays, anachronisms, *i.e.* references to things or to events inconsistent with the supposed time of action of the play, are frequent. In the purely fanciful play *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* they are especially numerous; *e.g.* the reference to Troy and to the Carthage queen (Dido), I. 1. 173, 174, is an anachronism, since Theseus lived long before the siege of Troy and the time of Queen Dido. The references to May-day, St. Valentine, nine-men morris, etc., are also anachronisms. Indeed the whole play, purporting to deal with Athens in the time of Theseus, but really dealing with England in the time of Elizabeth, is an anachronism. But these and such other blemishes as the confusion between new moon (I. 1. 3) and full moon (III. 1. 45-48) are of the most trivial importance in comparison with the poetic beauty and delicate fancy of the play.

VII. Criticisms on the Play.

The following criticisms on the play by Shakespearian authorities are worthy of the careful consideration of the student:

"It is not in its dramatic elements that we recognise the master-hand, but rather in the rich and incomparable lyric poetry with which Shakespeare embroiders a thin dramatic canvas. His first masterpiece is a masterpiece of grace, both lyrical and comic. . . . It is idle to dwell upon the slightness of the characterisation, for the poet's effort was not after characterisation; and the poem as a whole is one of the tenderest, most original, and most perfect Shakespeare ever produced. It

is Spenser's fairy-poetry developed and condensed, it is Shelley's spirit-poetry anticipated by more than two centuries. And the airy dream is shot with whimsical parody. The frontiers of Elf-land and Clown-land meet and mingle." BRANDES.

"The *Midsummer-Night's Dream* is, I believe, altogether original in one of the most beautiful conceptions that ever visited the mind of a poet, the fairy machinery. A few before him had dealt in a vulgar and clumsy manner with popular superstition; but the sportive, beneficent, invisible population of the air and earth, long since established in the creed of childhood and of those simple as children, had never for a moment been blended with 'human mortals' among the personages of the drama. . . . The language of *Midsummer-Night's Dream* is equally novel with the machinery. It sparkles in perpetual brightness with all the hues of the rainbow, yet there is nothing overcharged or affectedly ornamented. Perhaps no play of Shakespeare has fewer blemishes, or is from beginning to end in so perfect keeping; none in which so few lines could be erased, or so few expressions blamed. His own peculiar idiom, the dress of his mind, which began to be discernible in the *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, is more frequently manifested in this play. The expression is seldom obscure; but it is never in poetry, and hardly in prose, the expression of other dramatists, and far less of the people." HALLAM.

"*A Midsummer-Night's Dream* is a strange and beautiful web, woven delicately by a youthful poet's fancy. What is perhaps most remarkable about the play is the harmonious blending in it of widely different elements. It is as if threads of silken splendour were run together in its texture with a yarn of hempen homespun, and both these with lines of dewy gossamer and filaments drawn from the moonbeams. . . . Taking a little from this quarter and a little from that, Shakespeare created out of such slight materials his marvellous Dream. The marriage of Duke Theseus and Hippolyta—who are classical in name only, being in reality romantic mediæval figures—surrounds the whole, as it were, with a magnificent frame. Theseus is Shakespeare's early ideal of a heroic warrior and man of action. His life is one of splendid achievement and of joy; his love is a kind of happy victory, his marriage a triumph. Even early morning, when his hounds—themselves heroic creatures—fill the valley with their 'musical confusion,' until midnight, when the Athenian clowns end their 'very tragical mirth' with a Bergomask dance, Theseus displays his joyous energy and the graciousness of power. In contrast with him and his warrior bride, the figures of the young lovers look slight and graceful, and their love-perplexities and errors are seen to be among the

minor and remediable afflictions of the world. Shakespeare was not interested in making much distinction of character between Demetrius and Lysander; they are little more than a first lover and a second lover. Nor is Helena distinguishable from Hermia by much else than that in person she is the taller of the two and the gentler in disposition. . . . As the two extremes of exquisite delicacy, of dainty elegance, and, on the other hand, of thick-witted grossness and clumsiness, stand the fairy tribe and the group of Athenian handicraftsmen. The world of the poet's dream includes the two—a Titania, and a Bottom the weaver—and can bring them into grotesque conjunction. No such fairy poetry existed anywhere in English literature before Shakespeare. The tiny elves, to whom a cowslip is tall, for whom the third part of a minute is an important division of time, have a miniature perfection which is charming. They delight in all beautiful and dainty things, and war with things that creep and things that fly, if they be uncomely; their lives are gay with fine frolic and delicate revelry. Puck, the jester of Fairyland, stands apart from the rest, the recognisable 'lob of spirits.' . . .

"Bottom, in his broad-blown self-importance, his all but impenetrable self-satisfaction, stands a head and shoulders higher in absurdity than any other comic personage in Shakespeare's early plays. He is the admitted king of his company, the cock of his walk—and he has a consciousness that his gifts are more than equal to his opportunities. When the ass's head is on his shoulders it seems hardly a disguise, so naturally does the human-asinine seem to come to Bottom; he might have been for twelve months Titania's long-eared love, so easily do his new honours sit upon him; nor is he more embarrassed in offering to Duke Theseus his explanations of the play."

DOWDEN.

"In the *Midsummer-Night's Dream* again there flows a luxuriant vein of the boldest and most fantastical invention; the most extraordinary combination of the most dissimilar ingredients seems to have arisen without effort by some ingenious and lucky accident, and the colours are of such clear transparency that we think the whole of the variegated fabric may be blown away with a breath. The fairy world here described resembles those elegant pieces of arabesque where little genii, with butterfly wings, rise, half embodied, above the flower-cups. Twilight, moonlight, dew, and spring-perfumes are the elements of these tender spirits; they assist nature in embroidering her carpet with green leaves, many-coloured flowers, and dazzling insects; in the human world they merely sport in a childish and wayward manner with their beneficent or noxious influences. Their most violent rage dissolves in good-natured raillery; their

passions, stripped of all earthly matter, are merely an ideal dream. To correspond with this, the loves of mortals are painted as a poetical enchantment, which, by a contrary enchantment, may be immediately suspended and renewed again. The different parts of the plot—the wedding of Theseus, the disagreement of Oberon and Titania, the flight of the two pairs of lovers, and the theatrical operations of the mechanics—are so lightly and happily interwoven that they seem necessary to each other for the formation of a whole."

SCHLEGEL (Black's Translation).

"To the winter season of 1595 probably belongs *Midsummer-Night's Dream*. The comedy may well have been written to celebrate a marriage—perhaps the marriage of the universal patroness of poets, Lucy Harrington, to Edward Russell, third Earl of Bedford, on December 12, 1594, or that of William Stanley, Earl of Derby, at Greenwich, on January 24, 1594-5. The elaborate compliment to the Queen, 'a fair vestal throned by the west,' was at once an acknowledgment of past marks of royal favour and an invitation for their extension to the future. . . . The whole play is in the airiest and most graceful vein of comedy. Hints for the story can be traced to a variety of sources—to Chaucer's *Knight's Tale*, to Plutarch's *Life of Theseus*, to Ovid's *Metamorphoses* (bk. IV.), and to the story of Oberon, the fairy-king, in the French medieval romance of *Huon of Bordeaux*, of which an English translation by Lord Berners was first printed in 1534. The influence of John Lyly is perceptible in the raillery in which both mortals and immortals indulge. . . . But the final scheme of the *Midsummer-Night's Dream* is of the author's freshest invention, and by endowing—practically for the first time in literature—the phantoms of the fairy world with a genuine and a sustained interest, Shakespeare may be said to have conquered a new realm for art."

S. LEE.

VIII. Shakespeare's English.

In the works of Shakespeare the English language rises to its highest power and its widest compass. Other writers have a recognisable and individual *style*, but the completeness of Shakespeare's mastery over the resources of the English language made him a master of all styles, so that in his hands his mother tongue was capable of expressing the whole range of feeling. A part of Shakespeare's mastery of the English language lay in the wide range of his vocabulary. In his works, he uses over twenty thousand different words—a vocabulary very much more extensive than that of any other writer.

The works of Shakespeare fall within the earlier part of that period of the development of the English language generally

known as *Modern English* (from about 1558 to the present time). At his time, though the language in the main had taken on its present grammatical forms and vocabulary, there were nevertheless important differences in both these respects from the English of to-day.

As regards vocabulary, a living language is in a condition of continual change. Some words tend to change in meaning; some rising as it were, in the literary world, while others sink; some words become archaic or old-fashioned while others fall out of use or become obsolete. During the three centuries that have elapsed since the time of Shakespeare, many of the words which he used have been affected in one or other of these ways. The following are some examples from *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*:

i. Words changed in meaning.

Pert = lively, alert; an example of a word which has deteriorated in meaning to its modern sense of impudent:

"Awake the *pert* and nimble spirit of mirth." I. 1. 14.

Compare: "the pert fairies and the dapper elves."—Milton.

Favour = face, appearance:

"Sickness is catching: O, were *favour* so,
Yours would I catch, fair Hermia, ere I go." I. 1. 186-7.

Shrewd = mischievous; a word that has risen in meaning:

"Or else you are that *shrewd* and knavish sprite
Call'd Robin Goodfellow." II. 1. 33-4.

Fond = foolish; an example of a rise to a more favourable meaning:

"O, I am out of breath in this *fond* chase." II. 2. 88.

Bully = a term of affection or admiration; an example of deterioration in meaning:

"What sayest thou, *bully* Bottom?" III. 1. 8.

Injurious = insulting (French *injurieux*):

"*Injurious* Hermia! most ungrateful maid." III. 2. 195.

Argument = subject (here, of merriment):

"You would not make me such an *argument*." III. 2. 242.

Admirable = worthy of wonder:

"Strange and *admirable*." V. 1. 27.

ii. Archaic Words.

A number of the words in this list are now seldom used except in poetry.

Eyne = eyes, old plural form:

"Ere Demetrius look'd on Hermia's *eyne*." I. 1. 242.

Weed = dress; now only used in this sense poetically, and in the expression "a widow's weeds":

"And there the snake throws her enamell'd skin,
Weed wide enough to wrap a fairy in." II. 1. 255-6.

Troth = truth:

"And to speak *troth*, I have forgot our way." II. 2. 36.

Darkling = in the dark:

"O, wilt thou *darkling* leave me?" II. 2. 86.

Welkin = the sky:

"The starry *welkin* cover thou anon." III. 2. 256.

Wot = part of the verb *wit* = to know.

"Well I *wot*
Thou runn'st before me." III. 2. 422-3.

Vaward = forepart; vanward or vanguard:

"And since we have the *vaward* of the day." IV. 1. 103.

Hight = is called:

"This grisly beast, which Lion *hight* by name." V. 1. 138.

Fordone = tired out:

"All with weary task *fordone*." V. 1. 359.

iii. Obsolete Words.

Crazed = damaged, impaired, defective; note the survival of the word in *crazy*:

"Thy *crazed* title to my certain right." I. 1. 92.

Beteem = allow, grant:

"Which I could well
Beteem them from the tempest of my eyes." I. 1. 130-1.

Momentany = momentary; an example of an introduction from the Latin, under the influence of the Revival of Learning, which has failed to keep its place in the language:

"Making it *momentany* as a sound." I. 1. 143.

Lob = clown:

"Farewell, thou *lob* of spirits." II. 1. 16.

Gleek = jest, scoff:

"Nay, I can *gleek* upon occasion." III. 1. 135.

Latch = moisten:

"But hast thou yet *latch'd* the Athenian's eyes." III. 2. 36.

Patch = clown :

"A crew of *patches*, rude mechanicals." III. 2 9.

Aby = pay for, suffer for :

"Lest, to thy peril, thou *aby* it dear." III. 2. 176.

Grammatical Differences.

The differences between the grammar of Shakespeare's English and of the English of the present day are due mainly to the following facts: (1) the process by which English has changed from a highly inflected language to one with but few inflections, had not gone quite so far in Shakespeare's time as it has at present; (2) grammatical rules had not been fixed with their present rigidity, and constructions now considered ungrammatical were at that time perfectly allowable, and used by the best writers, *e.g.* the use of the double superlative and double comparative; (3) Shakespeare's plays represent *spoken* English, and an apparent grammatical error may, in reality, be due to this fact and be intended to convey the abrupt transitions which occur in actual speech.

Thus in the passage :

"Those that Hobgoblin call you and sweet Puck,
You do their bidding." II. 1. 40-1.

No predicate is supplied for *those*, and the construction is abruptly changed in the second line.

Hence divergences in Shakespeare from the grammatical usages of the present time are to be accounted old-fashioned grammar and not necessarily grammatical errors.

Four striking features of Shakespearian grammar are :

(1) The frequent *ellipses* or omissions of part of sentences. This is especially frequent in the case of the relative pronoun, as in the following examples :

"This is he, my master said,
(*Who*) Despised the Athenian maid." II. 2. 72-3.

"Wherefore speaks he this
To her (*whom*) he hates?" III. 2. 227-8.

Another common ellipsis is the omission of the verb of motion, especially when an adverb or preposition implying motion is contained in the sentence, *e.g.* :

"Fairies, (*come*) away." II. 1. 144.

"Thou shalt not (*go*) from this grove." II. 1. 146.

"That I may (*go*) back to Athens by daylight."
III. 2. 433.

(2) Shakespeare very frequently interchanges parts of speech, using a noun or an adjective as a verb, an adverb as a noun or a

verb, and so on. On this point, Dr. Abbott in his *Shakespearian Grammar* says: "Almost any part of speech can be used as any other part of speech. An adverb can be used as a verb, 'They *askance* their eyes'; as a noun, 'the *backward* and abysm of time'; or as an adjective, 'a *seldom* pleasure.' Any noun, adjective, or neuter verb can be used as an active verb. You can 'happy' your friend, 'malice' or 'foot' your enemy, or 'fall' an axe on his neck. An adjective can be used as an adverb; and you can speak and act 'easy,' 'free,' 'excellent'; or as a noun, and you can talk of 'fair' instead of 'beauty,' and 'a pale' instead of 'a paleness.' Even the pronouns are not exempt from these metamorphoses. A 'he' is used for a man, and a lady is described by a gentleman as 'the fairest *she* he has yet beheld.'"

Numerous instances of these interchanges between the parts of speech will be found in the detailed list of grammatical peculiarities exemplified in *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* given below.

(3) The frequent used of emphatic forms. The double negative was thus used by Shakespeare and other Elizabethan writers:

"Do I not in plainest truth
Tell you, I do not, *nor* I cannot love you?" II. 1. 201.

"*Nor none*, in my mind, now you give her o'er." III. 2. 135.

"A cry more tuneable
Was *never* holla'd to, *nor* cheer'd with horn." III. 2. 122.

(4) Shakespeare employs very many compound words. This, like his frequent ellipses, tends to brevity of style without any sacrifice of clearness. Many examples will be found in *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, as, for example:

"In maiden meditation *fancy-free*." II. 1. 164.
"Quite *over-canopied* with luscious woodbine." II. 1. 251.
"Near this *lack-love*, this *kill-courtesy*." II. 2. 77.
"*Death-counterfeiting* sleep." III. 2. 364.

Some Features of Shakespearian Grammar as Exemplified in "A Midsummer-Night's Dream."

THE NOUN.

(1) *Used as a verb* (and with participial forms).

"And she is mine, and all my right of her
I do *estate* unto Demetrius." I. 1. 97-8.

"Your *buskin'd* mistress." II. 1. 71.

(2) *Used as an adjective.*

"And by that fire which burned the *Carthage* queen." I. 1. 173.

"Your *warrior* love." II. 1. 71.

"And Thisby, tarrying in *mulberry* shade." V. 1. 147.

(3) *Used as an adverb.*

"The morning now is *something* worn." IV. 1. 179.

(4) *The singular form used instead of the plural.*

"I must employ you in some business
Against our *nuptial*." I. 1. 124-5.

THE ADJECTIVE.

(1) *Used as noun.*

"Call you me fair? that *fair* again unsay,
Demetrius loves your *fair*: O happy *fair*!" I. 1. 182.

"Now is the *mural* down between the two neighbours." V. 1. 203.

(2) *Used as verb.*

"Things growing are not ripe until their season,
So I, being young, till now *ripe* not to reason." II. 2. 118.

(3) *Used as adverb.*

"Here's a *marvellous* convenient place for our rehearsal." III. 1. 2.

"Or in the night, imagining some fear,
How *easy* is a bush supposed a bear." V. 1. 22.

(4) *Double comparative* (allowable in Elizabethan English for the purpose of emphasis).

"What *worser* place can I beg in your love?" II. 1. 208.

"For the *more better* assurance, tell them that I Pyramus am not Pyramus." III. 1. 18.

(5) In *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* the article is very often omitted. The reason for the omission is however probably metrical rather than grammatical.

"More tuneable than lark to shepherd's ears." I. 1. 184.

"Flower of this purple dye,
. . . .
Sink in apple of his eye." III. 2. 104.

The Pronoun.

(1) *His* used for the modern *its*. The latter is a modern form which was only just coming into use in Shakespeare's time. *His* is the old possessive case of the neuter pronoun *hit* (it).

"The green corn
Hath rotted ere *his* youth attain'd a beard." II. 1. 94-5.

"Dark night, that from the eye *his* function takes,
The ear more quick of apprehension makes." III. 2. 176-7.

"Then crush this herb into Lysander's eye;
Whose liquor hath this virtuous property,
To take from thence all error with *his* might." III. 2. 366-8.

(2) *Omission of the relative.* See examples under ellipses (p. 172) above.

(3) *Which* is used for persons when in modern English we should put *who*.

"Hard-handed men that work in Athens here,
Which never laboured in their minds till now." V. 1. 72-3.

(4) *The use of the dative of interest.*

"I will roar *you* (*i.e.* for you) as gently as any sucking dove." I. 2. 73.

The Verb.

(1) *Verb used as noun.*

"Now I perceive that she hath made *compare*
Between our statures." III. 2. 290.

(2) *Intransitive verbs are often used transitively.*

"This old moon wanes! she *lingers* my desires,
Like to a step-dame." I. 1. 4.

"Therefore no marvel though Demetrius
Do, as a monster, *fly* my presence thus." II. 2. 76-7.

(3) *Agreement between nominative and verb often apparently incorrect.*

"I know a bank where the wild thyme blows,
Where oxlips and the nodding violet *grows*."
I. 1. 249-250.

"All fancy-sick she is and pale of cheer,
With sighs of love that *costs* the fresh blood dear."
III. 2. 96-7.

By some, such apparent *singular* verbs with *plural* subjects are explained by regarding them as representing the Northern

dialect of Old English in which *-es* was a *plural* inflection. If this view be justified then *grows* and *costs* are plurals, and the grammar is archaic but not incorrect. Similarly *witnesseth* in the example below is explained as due to the influence of an old termination in the Southern dialect.

"And all their minds transfigured so together,
More *witnesseth* than fancy's images." v. 1. 24-5.

(4) The Subjunctive Mood is more freely employed than at present. Since the Elizabethan time there has arisen a tendency towards the disuse of the subjunctive mood. Shakespeare frequently uses it *optatively* to express a wish, *e.g.*:

"Happy *be* Theseus, our renowned duke!" i. 1. 20.

"Joy gentle friends! joy and fresh days of love
Accompany your hearts!" v. 1. 28-9.

(5) In the transitional stage from the old inflections at the time when Shakespeare wrote, the participial forms were not finally fixed. Hence many usages differing from the present forms are found:

"By all the vows that men have ever *broke*." i. 1. 175.

"And to speak troth, I have *forgot* our way." ii. 2. 36.

"And the youth, *mistook* by me." iii. 2. 112.

(6) "Shall" and "will" are used interchangeably. Thus i. 1. 203, "Lysander and myself *will* fly this place," and i. 1. 217, "There my Lysander and myself *shall* meet."

Similarly "may" is used for can:

"We *cannot* fight for love as men *may* do." ii. 1. 241.

(7) Archaic use of *be*:

"Lord, what fools these mortals *be*." iii. 2. 115.

The *be* in this and some other passages in the play is an old third person, plural, indicative.

The Conjunction.

(1) The conjunction *an* = *if* is used.

"*An* 'twere any nightingale." i. 2. 74.

The *an* is sometimes redundant.

"*An if* I could, what should I get therefore?" iii. 2. 78.

(2) "*Or* . . . *or*" used for "*either* . . . *or*." Shakespeare uses both forms.

"Will make *or* man *or* woman madly dote." ii. 1. 171.

THE PREPOSITION.

Prepositions are frequently used with meanings other than their present ones.

"More fond *on* (=of) her." II. 1. 266.

"Forsook his scene and enter'd *in* (=into) a brake." III. 2. 15.

IX. The Metre of "A Midsummer-Night's Dream."

Blank Verse. The metre of the classical English drama is blank verse. In its simplest or regular form, blank verse consists of unrhymed lines, each line containing five *feet* and each *foot* consisting of two syllables, of which the second bears a strong accent or stress, *e.g.*

"Four dáys | will quíck | ly steép | themsélves | in níght." I. 1. 7.

"The cour'se | of trúe | love név | er díd | run smóoth." I. 1. 134.

"My ton'gue | should cátch | your ton'gue's | sweet mél | ódy." I. 1. 189.

It will be seen that in these lines the verse naturally resolves itself into five measures or feet, and that the accents regularly follow one another: weak, strong; weak, strong; and so on throughout the line. Borrowing the language of classical prosody, a line of five feet is sometimes called a *pentameter*, and a foot of two syllables with the second strongly accented an *iambus*. A line in blank verse is hence sometimes called an *iambic pentameter*, but the English term *blank verse* is preferable. Blank verse was first introduced into English literature by the Earl of Surrey, who translated two books of Virgil's *Æneid* into this metre in the time of Henry VIII. The metre was also adopted by many of the early dramatists, but in their hands blank verse had none of the power and especial appropriateness to dramatic writing which it acquired in the hands of Shakespeare. This arose from too close an adherence to the absolutely regular type and to the fact that all or nearly all the lines were *end-stopt*, that is concluded with a natural pause. The consequence of the absolutely regular recurrence of stresses and pauses was that the metre was very monotonous in effect and too obviously artificial to represent, even poetically, the spoken language of the drama.

To Christopher Marlowe, the greatest of Shakespeare's predecessors, belongs the merit of having introduced such variations from the strictly regular type as to relieve it of its monotonous effect and fit it to be the medium of the poetic drama. Shakespeare still further developed the resources of the metre, so

that it may be said that Marlowe established and Shakespeare perfected blank verse as the standard dramatic metre.

Much the greater number of Shakespeare's lines are perfectly regular, and this is especially the case in his earlier dramas; the proportionate number of *run-on* (*i.e.* not *end-stopt*) lines and of irregularities in the metre becoming greater and greater as the series of his plays advanced. As *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* is one of his earlier plays, the deviations from the regular type of blank verse are therefore less in number than in the later plays.

Examples of some of the chief variations from the regular type in *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* are as follow:

(1) A foot frequently has the strong accent on the *first* syllable instead of on the second. (Such a foot is sometimes called a *trochee*.) This inversion of the accent most frequently occurs in the first foot of a line, *e.g.*

"Eíther | to díe | the deáth | or to | abjúre." I. 1. 65.

"Máking | it mó | mentá | ny ás | a soúnd,
Swíft as | a shá | dow, shórt | as á | ny dréam,
Bríef as | the lig'ht | ning in' | the cól | lied nig'ht."
I. 1. 143-5.

"Knight of | his tráin | to tráce | the fór | ests wíld." II. 1. 25.

"Neíghing | in liké | ness óf | a fíl | ly fóal." II. 1. 46.

"Glan'ce at | my eréd | it with | Hippól | ytá
Knówing | I knów | thy lóve | to Thé | seús." II. 1. 75-6.

When it occurs in a foot other than the first, the inverted accent generally follows a pause.

"God speéd | fair Hél | ená! | Whíther | awáy." I. 1. 180.

"What rév | els ar'e | in han'd? | Is' there | no pláy." V. 1. 36.

(2) An extra syllable (unaccented) after the fifth foot is sometimes added. This extra syllable is sometimes called a *hypermetric* syllable.

"To hér | he hatés | and whére | fore dóth | Lysán | der."
III. 2. 22.

"'Líttle' | agáin! | Nóthing | but 'lów' | and 'lít | tle.'"
III. 2. 324.

"Her dó | tage nów | I dó | begin' | to pít | y." IV. 1. 44.

"Sees Hél | en's beáu | ty in | a brów | of E' | gypt." V. 1. 11.

(3) A syllable in excess of the ten of the regular blank verse is often to be slurred or omitted.

"To amorous Phillida. Why art thou here,"

becomes

"To ám | 'rous Phíl | lidá. | Why' art | thou hére." II. 1. 68.

Again,

"Uncouple in the western valley: let them go,"

becomes

"Uncóup'l | i' the wést | ern vál | ley: lét | them gó." IV. 1. 104.

And

"Be it so, Lysander; find you out a bed,"

becomes

"Be't so, | Lysán | der; fin'd | you oút | a béd." II. 2. 39.

(4) The use of Alexandrines, *i.e.* of lines each consisting of *six* iambic feet. The occurrence of Alexandrines is a disputed point, some authorities reducing apparent cases to five feet, with or without an extra syllable, by slurring syllables as in (3) above, *e.g.*:

"Be nót | afráid; | she shall | not hárm | thee, Hél | en'a"

is here scanned as an Alexandrine. Others, however, would scan it as blank verse with an extra syllable, thus:

"Be nót | afráid; | she shall | not hárm | thee, Hél | 'na."

Use of Rhyme in "A Midsummer-Night's Dream."

In this play rhymed lines are very numerous. This arises from (1) the position of the play in the series of Shakespeare's dramas, the early plays having very many rhymed lines, while the number becomes successively smaller and smaller in the later plays; (2) the fanciful nature of the play, which renders the use of rhyme especially appropriate.

The rhymed lines are generally in couplets, and the rhymes in this play are often continued throughout the whole of a speech or several successive speeches. Thus, for example, the whole of the latter part of Act I. Sc. 1. from line 171 to the end, is in rhymed couplets with the exception of line 179. Again, the opening speeches of Act II. Sc. 1. to line 59; Act II. Sc. 2. lines 84-156; a great part of Act III. Sc. 2, and other long passages are in rhyme. Such rhymed lines, each line being of five feet, are sometimes called *heroic verse*.

Some examples of alternately rhymed lines or quatrains, *i.e.* the first line rhymed with the third and the second with the fourth, occur, *e.g.*:

"Fair love, you faint with wandering in the wood
And to speak troth I have forgot our way,
We'll rest us, Hermia, if you think it good,
And tarry for the comfort of the day." II. 2. 35-8.

Rhyme is also naturally employed in the songs introduced into the play.

Use of Prose in "A Midsummer-Night's Dream."

Shakespeare habitually uses prose (1) where the characters are of lowly position, and (2) in parts which sink below a high poetic or dramatic level. Hence in *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* prose is used when Bottom and his fellow-mechanicals are discussing the arrangements for their play; and in the conversational remarks of Theseus and his courtiers during the performance of the interlude.

X. Figures of Rhetoric or Figures of Speech.

Figures of Rhetoric are *ornaments* of style used for the purpose of heightening the effect of the words employed by increasing their force or suggestiveness. They may be classified according as their effect is obtained, (1) by the use of the words in other than their strictly literal meaning; (2) by some special arrangement of the words. The following are examples of some of the more important figures found in *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*:

i. Figures in which the words are used in other than the literal meaning.

(These figures are sometimes called *Tropes*, *i.e.* "turns" of expression.)

1. *Simile* (L. *similis*, like) is employed to express a resemblance between two things of different kind. It is one of the most frequently employed figures in poetry, and is introduced by the words *as*, *like*, or *as . . . so*.

"The moon, *like to a silver bow*." I. 1. 9.

"*As the heresies that men do leave*
Are hated most of those they did deceive,
So thou, my surfeit and my heresy,
Of all be hated, but the most of me!" II. 2. 139-42.

"Most brisky juvenal and eke most lovely Jew,
As true *as truest horse* that yet would never tire."
III. 1. 84-5.

"Yet you, the murderer, look as bright, as clear,
As yonder Venus in her glimmering sphere." III. 2. 60-1.

2. *Metaphor* (Gr. *meta*, change; *phero*, I bear) is a bolder figure, in which the name of one thing is transferred to another to which it bears some resemblance. It is a very common figure in poetry.

"Your eyes are *lode-stars*." I. 1. 183.

"To-morrow night, when Phoebe doth behold
Her *silver visage* in the *watery glass*,
Decking with *liquid pearl* the bladed grass."
I. 1. 209-11.

3. *Personification*; a figure in which life, or the attributes of life, are ascribed to inanimate things.

"When *Phoebe* doth *behold*
Her silver visage." I. 1. 209-10.

"Cowardice *pursues* and valour *flies*." II. 1. 23-4.

"And *reason says* you are the worthier maid." II. 2. 116.

"Till o'er their brows death-counterfeiting sleep
With leaden legs and batty wings doth creep."
III. 2. 364-5.

4. *Metonymy* (Gr. *meta*, change; *onoma*, name); a figure in which the name of a thing, closely connected with the thing really meant, is substituted for the latter.

"The ploughman lost his *sweat*" (*i.e.* labour). II. 1. 94.

"O, how fit a *word* (*i.e.* man)
Is that vile *name* to perish on my sword." II. 2. 106-7.

5. *Synecdoche* (Gr.); the use of the name of a part for the name of a whole.

"Withering on the virgin *thorn*" (*i.e.* rose-tree). I. 1. 77.

"Where are these lads? where are these *hearts*?"
IV. 2. 23.

"Sees Helen's beauty in a *brow* of Egypt." V. 1. 11.

6. *Irony* (Gr. *eironeia* = dissembling); a figure in which the literal meaning of the words is the reverse of the meaning intended to be conveyed.

"Hast thou killed him sleeping? O *brave* touch."
III. 2. 70.

"Make mouths upon me when I turn my back;
Wink each at other; hold the *sweet* jest up."
III. 2. 239.

7. *Hyperbole* (Gr. *hyper*, beyond; *ballo*, I throw); a figure in which emphasis is obtained by an exaggerated statement.

"Nor doth this wood lack *worlds of company*,
For you in my respect are *all the world*." II. 1. 223-4.

"And when she weeps, *weeps every little flower*."
III. 1. 184.

"O Helen, goddess, nymph, *perfect, divine*!
To what, my love, shall I compare thine eyne?
Crystal is muddy. . . .
. . . . . .
That pure congealed white, high Taurus' snow,
Fann'd with the eastern wind, *turns to a crow*
When thou hold'st up thy hand." III. 2. 137 *et seq.*

8. *Apostrophe* (Gr. *apo*, away from; *strophe*, a turning); a figure in which a person not present or an inanimate thing is addressed. It frequently, therefore, involves personification.

"O weary night, O long and tedious night,
Abate thy hours." III. 2. 432-3.

"O grim look'd night! O night with hue so black."
V. 1. 168.

"Approach, ye Furies fell!
O Fates, come, come." V. 1. 272-3.

(This figure is frequently used with a ludicrous effect in the Interlude in Act v.)

9. *Hypallage* (Gr. *hypo*, under; *allage*, change); the transfer of an attributive word or phrase from one noun to another.

"Four nights will quickly *dream* away the time." I. 1. 8.
(*dreaming* transferred from the sleeper to *night*.)

"And the quaint mazes in the *wanton* green
For lack of tread are undistinguishable." II. 1. 99.
(*wanton* transferred from *dancers* to *green*.)

10. *Oxymoron* (Gr. *oxus*, sharp; *moros*, foolish); the use of two opposed attributive words or statements concerning the same thing.

"A *tedious brief* scene of young Pyramus
And his love Thisbe; very *tragical mirth*.
Merry and *tragical! tedious* and *brief!*
That is, *hot ice* and wondrous strange *snow*." V. 1. 56-9.

ii. Figures depending upon arrangement.

1. *Antithesis* (Gr. *anti*, against; *thesis*, placing); the placing of two words, phrases, or clauses in contrast one with the other.

"I *frown upon him*, yet he *loves me still*." I. 1. 194.

"I *give him curses*, yet he *gives me love*." I. 1. 196.

"*The more I love*, the *more he hateth me*." I. 1. 199.

"The *wisest* aunt, telling the *saddest* tale." II. 1. 52.

2. *Climax* (Gr. a ladder); the arrangement of words, phrases, or clauses in an ascending order of force or importance.

"And she, sweet lady, *dotes*,
Devoutly dotes, dotes in idolatry
Upon this spotted and inconstant man." I. 1. 108-10.

"My *love*, my *life*, my *soul*." III. 2. 246.

"But he hath chid me hence and threatened me
To strike me, *spurn* me, nay, to *kill* me too."
III. 2. 312-13.

3. *Anticlimax* or *Bathos* is a descent from "the sublime to the ridiculous," from the important to the trivial, or from the poetical to the commonplace. It is used designedly for its ludicrous effect in the following:

> "O grim-look'd night! O night with hues so black!
> O night, *which ever art when day is not!*" v. 1. 168-9.

4. *Interrogation* or *Rhetorical Question* is the statement of strong feeling in the form of a question. It must not be confused with an actual question, from which it differs in the fact that no answer is expected by the speaker.

> "And hast thou kill'd him sleeping? O, brave touch!
> Could not a worm, an adder, do so much?" III. 2. 70-1.
>
> (The first sentence is an actual question, the second a rhetorical question.)

Sometimes classed with the figures of speech are these turns of expression which depend upon *sound* for their effect. The chief of these are:

(1) *Alliteration* (L. *ad*, to; *litera*, letter), the recurrence of the same consonantal sound in a passage.

> "And now they never meet by *g*rove or *g*reen
> By fountain clear, or *s*pangled *s*tarlight *s*heen."
> II. 1. 28-9.
>
> "That the rude *s*ea grew civil at her *s*ong
> And certain *s*tars *s*hot madly from their *s*pheres,
> To hear the *s*ea-maid's music." II. 1. 152-4.
>
> "I *f*ollowed *f*ast but *f*aster he did *f*ly." III. 2. 417.

An exaggerated use of alliteration produces a ludicrous, bombastic effect. This is done designedly by Shakespeare in the Interlude in Act v., *e.g.*:

> "Whereat, with *bl*ade, with *bl*oody, *bl*ameful *bl*ade,
> He *br*avely *br*oach'd his *b*oiling *bl*oody *br*east."
> V. 1. 145-6.

(2) *Puns* or *Plays upon words*, depending upon the double meanings of words. They are very numerous in Shakespeare's early plays, but become fewer in the later ones. Many examples are to be found in *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*.

> "For *lying* so, Hermia, I *do not lie*." II. 2. 52.
>
> "I would I had your *bond*, for I perceive
> A weak *bond* holds you." III. 2. 267-8.
>
> "I am aweary of this moon: would he would *change*!
> It appears by *his small light* of discretion, that he is in the wane." V. 1. 241-3.

GLOSSARY.

Derivations based principally upon Skeat's *Etymological Dictionary*.

(A.S. = Anglo-Saxon; F. = French; G. = German; Gr. = Greek; Icel. = Icelandic; It. = Italian; L. = Latin; L.L. = Late Latin; M.E. = Middle English; O.F. = Old French; Sc. = Scandinavian; Sp. = Spanish; Sw. = Swedish.)

Aby (III. 2. 176, 335); M.E. *abyen*, to pay for; A.S. *a*, an intensive, and *bycgan*, to buy.

Adamant (II. 1. 195); Gr. *adamas*, invincible; here the loadstone; properly a very hard stone; *diamond* is a corruption of this word through the O.F. *diamant*.

Adder (III. 2. 71); A.S. *nædre*. The expression *a nadder* has become *an adder*.

Address'd (V. 1. 106), ready; O.F. *adressier*.

Admirable (V. 1. 27), worthy of wonder; L. *admirari*, to wonder.

Almanac (III. 1. 46); F. *almanach*; L.L. *almanachus*; ultimate origin unknown.

An, a weakened form of A.S. *and*. According to Skeat *and* acquired the meaning *if* through Scandinavian influence.

Antipodes (III. 2. 55); Gr. *anti*, opposite to; *pous*, a foot; literally, those whose feet are opposite to ours; hence those who dwell on the opposite side of the globe.

Antique (V. 3); *antique*, old, and *antic*, odd, are doublets, both being derived from L. *antiquus*.

Apricocks (III. 1. 153); Portuguese, *albricoque*, whence F. *abricot*, apricot.

Argument (III. 2. 242), used, as in Milton, in the literal sense of L. *argumentum*, subject of a discourse.

Aught (I. 1. 132); A.S. *a*, ever; *wiht* (wight), creature or thing.

Ballad (IV. 1. 211); F. *ballade*; It. *ballata*, originally a song sung to accompany a dance; L.L. *ballare*, to dance.

Bankrupt (III. 2. 85); F. *banqueroute*, from It. *banca rotta*, broken bench, in allusion to the breaking of a money changer's bench upon his failure.

Batty (III. 2. 365), bat-like; M.E. and Sc. *bakke*, a bat.

Bay (IV. 1. 110); a shortened form of *abay*; O.F. *abaier*, to bark or yelp at.

Bergomask (V. 1. 339, 346), a clownish country dance; It. *bergomasco*, an adj. formed from the name of the town Bergamo in the Venetian territory.

Beteem (I. 1. 131), permit, allow, grant; *be*, intensive prefix, *teem*, to think fit.

Bottle (IV. 1. 30), a bundle of hay; O.F. *botel*, diminutive of *botte*, a bundle.

Bully (III. 1. 7); originally a term of endearment or admiration. Origin doubtful, possibly related to Dutch, *boel*, G. *buhle*, lover.

Calendar (III. 1. 46), almanac; L. *calendarium* from *calendae*, first day of the month.

Canker (II. 2. 3); O.F. *cancre*; L. *cancer*, a crab.

Carol (II. 1. 102); O.F. *carole*, a dance, song.

Cavalery (IV. 1. 21); F. *cavalier*; It. *cavallo*, a horse; L. *caballus*.

Chaplet (II. 1. 110), garland; O.F. *chapelet*, diminutive from L.L. *capa*, a cape, cloak.

Cheer (III. 2. 96), countenance; cf. "to be of good cheer"; L.L. *cara*, the face; Gr. *kārā*, the head.

Churl (II. 2. 78); A.S. *ceorl*, a peasant, countryman.

Coil (III. 2. 339); Keltic in origin, Irish *goil*, rage.

Collied (I. 1. 145), darkened, coal-black; M.E. *col*, coal; cf. *collier*.

Con (I. 2. 88); A.S. *cunnan*, to know.

Craze (I. 1. 92); F. *écraser*; Swedish, *krasa*, to break to pieces.

Coy (IV. 1. 2); O.F. *coi*, coy; L. *quietus*, quiet.

Cue (III. 1. 88), origin doubtful. According to some it is derived from F. *queue*, from L. *cauda*, tail. Another suggestion is that cue = Q, the initial letter of *quando*, 'when'; the cue indicating the time *when* the actor was to speak.

Cunning (I. 1. 36); A.S. *cunnan*, to know (see *con* above). Originally *cunning* was used in a good sense, meaning "having knowledge."

Darkling (II. 2. 86); in the dark; an adverb formed from an old dative termination, the suffix *-ling* is the same as *-long* in *headlong*.

Dowager (I. 1. 5), one having a *dowage*; formed by noun suffix *-age*, from F. *douer*, to endow.

Dulcet (II. 1. 151); O.F. *dolcet*, diminutive from L. *dulcis*, sweet.

Eke (III. 1. 84), also; A.S. *eac*, also.

Eyne (I. 1. 242, v. 1. 175), an old plural of eye; A.S. *eagan*, plural of *eage*, eye.

Fantasy (I. 1. 32, etc.), a doublet of 'fancy'; Gr. *phantasia*.

Fond (II. 2. 88), foolish; M.E. *fonnen*, to act foolishly.

Fordone (v. 1. 359), tired out; *for*, intensive prefix, and *done*, participle of do. In M.E. *fordo* = to destroy.

Forsooth (III. 2. 293), truly; often used in an ironic sense; A.S. *for*, intensive prefix, *sooth*, truth.

Gawd (I. 1. 33), ornament, toy; L. *gaudium*, gladness, joy.

Gleek (III. 1. 135), jeer, scoff; A.S. *gelac*, play.

Goblin (III. 2. 399); O.F. *gobelin*; L.L. *gobelinus*.

Gossip (II. 1. 47), an example of deterioration in meaning; originally meaning, "akin in God," and applied to a sponsor in baptism; A.S. *god*, God, and *sib*, related.

Grain (I. 2. 83), dye; O.F. *graine*; L.L. *granum*, scarlet dye made from the cochineal insect.

Grisly (v. 1. 138), grim, horrible; A.S. *grislic*, horrible.

Handicraft (IV. 2. 10); A.S. *handcræft*, trade. The *i* is inserted by false analogy with *handiwork* where the *i* represents the *ge* of A.S. *handgeweorc*.

Harbinger (III. 2. 380), forerunner; M.E. *herbergeour*; one who found lodging for a man of rank; Icel. *herbergi*, a harbour.

Henchman (II. 1. 121), attendant; probably a softened form of *hengstman*, *i.e.* horseman, from A.S. *hengest*, horse.

Hie (III. 2. 355); A.S. *higian*, to hasten.

Hight (v. 1. 140), part of A.S. verb, *hatan*, to be called.

Impeach (II. 1. 214), original meaning 'to hinder,' from O.F. *empescher*.

Injury (II. 1. 147); **injurious** (III. 2. 195); used with original sense of insult, abuse; insulting, abusive; F. *injurieux*.

Jole or **jowl** (III. 2. 368), jaw or cheek; corruption of M.E. *chol*; A.S. *ceaft*, jaw, cheek.

Juvenal (III. 1. 84); L. *juvenilis*, youthful.

Knacks (I. 1. 34); 'knack' meant originally a snap, a snap with the fingers. In this sense it is an imitative word, like the Gael. *cnac*; W. *cnec*. Later it came to mean 'a trifle, a toy.'

Knavery, knavish (III. 1. 102, II. 1. 33); formed from *knave*, a rascal; A.S. *cnafa*, *cnapa*, a boy, servant. An example of deterioration in meaning.

Lady (II. 1. 64); "Lit. 'loaf-kneader'; A.S. *hlaf*, a loaf, and (probably) *dǽgee*, a kneader" (Skeat).

Lakin (III. 1. 12), an abbreviation of lady-kin, a diminutive of lady.

Lob (II. 1. 16); lob=*lubbar* or *lubber*, of Keltic origin.

Lodestar (I. 1. 183), pole-star, literally 'way-star,' *i.e.* guiding-star, from A.S. *lád*, way.

Lord (II. 1. 63); "Lit. 'loaf-keeper'; A.S. *hláford*; (probably) for *hlaf-weard*, a loaf-ward" (Skeat).

Lull (II. 1. 254); **lullaby** (II. 2. 14); M.E. *lullen*; Swed. *lulla*, to hum, lull.

Margent (II. 1. 85)=margin; L. *margo*, *margin-*, border, brink.

Marry (I. 2. 11, etc.), abbreviation of an oath 'by Mary,' *i.e.* the Virgin Mary.

Mew (I. 1. 71), originally a cage for hawks when moulting; O.F. *mue*, a moulting, whence the meaning 'to shut up, confine.'

Methinks (I. 1. 3, etc.); A.S. from the dative *me* and the impers. verb *thyncan*, to seem (M.E. *thinken*). Hence the meaning is 'it seems to me,' and the verb is quite distinct in origin from the ordinary verb 'to think,' which comes from M.E. *thenken*; A.S. *thencan*.

Misprise (III. 2. 74); **misprision** (III. 2. 90); O.F. *mesprendre*, from L. prefix *mis* and *prehendre*, to take.

Morris (II. 1. 98), Moorish (on account of supposed origin, as in Morris-dance), from Sp. *Morisco*, Moorish.

Murrion (or **Murrain**) (II. 1. 97), a cattle disease, from L.L. *morino*, ultimately from L. *mori*, to die.

Naught (IV. 1. 14), negative of *aught*, q.v.

Neaf (IV. 1. 18), fist; Icel. *hnefi*, the fist.

Needs (I. 11. 78, etc.); old Genitive case of A.S. noun *néd*.

Newt (I. 1. 125); *a newt* was originally *an ewt* (v. *adder* for reverse process); A.S. *efeta*, lizard.

Nole or **nowl** (III. 2. 17), head; A.S. *hnol*.

Orient (IV. 1. 51), bright, lustrous; strictly eastern, belonging to the region of the rising sun, from L. *oriens*, rising.

Ounce (II. 2. 30), lynx; F. *once*.

Ousel (III. 1. 114), a kind of thrush; M.E. *osel*; A.S. *ósle*.

Owe (II. 2. 79, III. 2. 85), used with obsolete meaning 'to possess'; M.E. *owen*; A.S. *agan*, to have, possess.

Pageant (III. 2. 114), "Orig. the moveable scaffold on which the old 'mysteries' were acted. M.E. *pagent*, formed from Low L. *pagina*, a scaffold, stage for shews, made of wooden planks" (Skeat).

Paragon (IV. 2. 13); Sp. *paragon*, a standard of excellence. The word is remarkable as a combination of prepositions, being originally formed from the three L. prepositions *pro*, *ad*, *cum*.

Pard (II. 2. 31), leopard; L. *pardus*.

Parlous (III. 1. 12), doublet of perilous; F. *peril*; L. *periculum*, danger.

Patch (III. 2. 9), fool, simpleton. Possibly one who wears parti-coloured clothes, *i.e.* a fool's dress, from Low G. *plakke*, a spot.

Pelting (II. 1. 91), paltry; akin to 'paltry' in origin; Sw. *paltor*, rags, rubbish.

Pensioner (II. 1. 10), here=attendant; literally a pensioner is one who receives payment; L. *pensio*, *pension-*, payment.

Pert (I. 1. 13), lively, brisk, alert; an example of deterioration in meaning to the modern sense of saucy, impudent; M.E. *pert*; W. *perc*, compact, trim.

Quern (II. 1. 36), 'a handmill for grinding corn'; A.S. *cweorn*.

Rehearse (I. 2. 90); O.F. *rehercer*, to harrow over again, hence metaphorically to repeat, go over again.

Rere-mouse (II. 2. 4); A.S. *hrére-mus*, a bat, from *hréran*, to agitate, move, and *mus*, a mouse.

Rote (V. 1. 382); another form of *route*=way, so that 'by rote' is literally 'in the (beaten) track or way,' then 'by heart'; O.F. *rote*; F. *route*; originally from L. *rupta*, broken, a way cut through a forest.

Roundel (II. 2. 1), a ballad; O.F. *rondel*; F. *rondeau*, a poem in which a line is repeated or comes *round* again; ultimately from L. *rota*, a wheel.

Russet (III. 2. 21); O.F. *rousset*, dim. of *roux*; L. *russus*.

Sampler (III. 2. 205); L. *exemplar*, a model, pattern.

Shrewd (II. 1. 33), mischievous; M.E. pp. of *schrewen*, to curse, from adj. *schrewe*, malicious.

Simplicity (I. 1. 171); F. *simplicité*; L. *simplicitas*, from L. adj. *simplex*, literally "having only one fold"; prefix *sim* and *plicare*, to fold.

Testy (III. 2. 358), originally *head*strong; O.F. *teste*; F. *tête*, the head.

Thrum (v. 1. 274); *v.* note; of Scandinavian origin; M.E. *thrum*; Icel. *thromr*, edge.

Tiring-house (III. 1. 4); 'tiring,' in this sense, is a contraction of attiring; part. of vb. to attire; O.F. *atirier*, to adorn.

Twain (v. 1. 149)); A.S. *twégen*, two.

Vaward (IV. 1. 102)=vanward; a hybrid word; F. *avant*, before, and A.S. *weard*, guard.

Vixen (III. 2. 324), literally a female fox. The -en is the only surviving example of the common Old English fem. termination -en; A.S. *fyxen*.

Weed (II. 1. 256), dress; A.S. *wæd*, garment. Now almost entirely restricted in use to the expression, "widow's weeds."

Welkin (III. 2. 356), the sky; A.S. *wolcnu*, clouds.

Wode (II. 1. 192), (in some editions spelt *wood*,) frantic, furious; A.S. *wód*, as in *Wodin*, the furious god.

Wot (III. 2. 422); A.S. *witan*, to know.

TYPICAL QUESTIONS.

1. What evidence is there for the conclusion that *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* belongs to the earlier period of Shakespeare's dramatic authorship?

2. "*A Midsummer-Night's Dream* is not remarkable for its dramatic characterisation." Discuss this statement.

3. Which of the personages of the drama appear to you to be most firmly drawn? Write short sketches of the characters of these personages as portrayed by Shakespeare.

4. From what source did Shakespeare derive the material for the interlude of *Pyramus and Thisbe*? Give the substance of the story.

5. Mention any allusions, or supposed allusions, to actual events that occur in *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*.

6. Discuss the evidence as to the date at which *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* was written.

7. Explain, with examples from the play, the terms, *simile*, *metaphor*, *alliteration*, and *hyperbole*.

8. Explain the term "Interlude."

9. What was a Masque? Has *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* any resemblance to a Masque?

10. Discuss the statement that *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* is essentially English although the scene is laid at Athens.

11. Write some account of Shakespeare's use of rhyme,—(1) in general; (2) in *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*.

12. Give instances of Shakespeare's use of (*a*) archaic words, (*b*) obsolete words, (*c*) words used with meanings other than the modern ones.

13. Describe the fairy-world of *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*. How does Puck differ from the other fairies?

14. Estimate the character of Bottom the weaver.

15. From what sources did Shakespeare probably obtain the names Theseus, Hippolyta, Oberon, Titania and Philostrate?

16. Describe the part played by the 'love-juice' in the development of the plot.

17. What is blank verse? Give, and scan, examples of regular blank verse from *A Midsummer-Night's Dream.*

18. Describe some of the artifices by which the representation of *Pyramus and Thisbe* by Bottom and his fellows is made ludicrous.

19. Give some account of the Elizabethan theatre, and mention, if you can, any passage in *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* bearing upon the subject.

20. Discuss the title of *A Midsummer-Night's Dream.*

21. Write notes upon any references to English customs or observances that occur in the play.

22. Give examples of passages or lines in the play which are frequently quoted.

23. What are the chief Shakespearian variations from strictly regular blank verse? How do these variations affect blank verse as a dramatic medium?

24. Write notes on any grammatical peculiarities in the passages:

(*a*) "Dark night that from the eye his function takes."

(*b*) "Where oxlips and the nodding violet grows."

(*c*) "The more better assurance."

(*d*) "I will not stay thy questions."

(*e*) "This is he, my master said,
Despised the Athenian maid."

(*f*) "Thou shalt not from this grove."

25. In what senses are the following words used in *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*: lob, lakin, injurious, bully, Bergomask, collied, batty, tiring-house?

26. Write notes on the words *methinks, beteem, hight, wot.*

27. Mention, with illustrative quotations, some of the chief peculiarities of Shakespearian grammar.

28. "In the early plays Shakespeare introduces many puns or plays upon words." Illustrate this statement by examples from *A Midsummer-Night's Dream.*

29. What different elements of interest or stories are united in *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*? How are they interwoven by the dramatist?

30. What figures of speech are illustrated in the lines?—

"I do wish it, love it, long for it."

"When we have chid the hasty-footed time."

"So we grew together
Like to a double cherry."

"Thy lips, those kissing cherries, tempting grow!"

"The iron tongue of midnight hath told twelve."

"So musical a discord."

"And, gentle Puck, take this transformed scalp
From off the head of this Athenian swain."

31. Write notes on the following words: marry, rere-mouse, lull, morris, paragon, nole, neaf, pard, pelting.

32. Paraphrase II. 1. 81-92; II. 1. 249-256; III. 1. 141-148; V. 1. 7-22.

33. Explain the following passages:

(*a*) "We, Hermia, like two artificial gods,
Have with our needles created both one flower."

(*b*) "The lunatic, the lover and the poet
Are of imagination all compact."

(*c*) "Nay, I can gleek upon occasion."

(*d*) "You minimus, of hindering knot-grass made."

(*e*) "What hempen home-spuns have we swaggering here."

(*f*) "I could play Ercles rarely, or a part to tear a cat in, to make all split."

34. Write notes on the expressions: "the rite of May," "nine men's morris," "fairy-rings," "this hawthorn-brake our tiring-house," "it shall be written in eight and six," "most brisky juvenal and eke most lovely Jew," "all yon fiery oes and eyes of light."

35. Give the substance of the lines which are by some authorities believed to refer to the weather of 1594.

36. What persons, has it been supposed, are alluded to in the following lines?—

"And heard a mermaid on a dolphin's back."

"A fair vestal throned by the west."

"And the imperial votaress passed on
In maiden meditation, fancy free."

"The thrice-three Muses mourning for the death
Of Learning, late deceased in beggary."

37. Explain the following proper names which occur in *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*: Ariadne, Cadmus, Helen, Phibbus, Phœbe, Amazon, Hiems, Cupid.

38. Mention any passages or allusions in *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* which illustrate popular superstitions of Shakespeare's time.

39. What were Morality plays? Are there any possible allusions to such plays and their players in *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*?

40. *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* has been called Shakespeare's "first masterpiece." Comment upon this judgment.

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