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The "Teaching of English" Series

General Editor—SIR HENRY NEWBOLT

SHAKESPEARE'S
A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

No. 32



PUCK

“What fools these mortals be!”

*From a pen-drawing by
E. Heber Thompson*

SHAKESPEARE'S COMEDY
OF
A Midsummer-Night's
Dream

Edited by
EVELYN SMITH, B.A.

*"The reader acts the play
himself in the theatre of
his own mind"*

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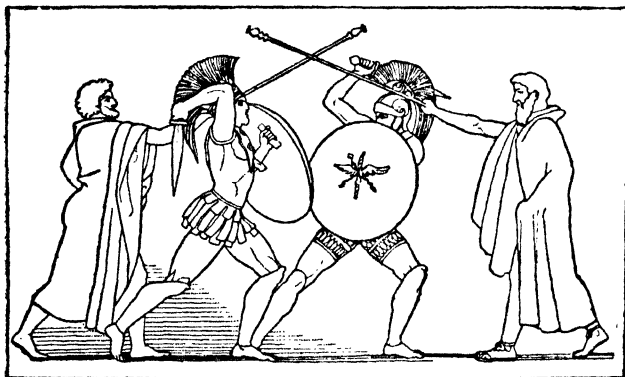
GENERAL EDITOR'S PREFACE

THIS series is planned with one simple aim in view—to make the reading of Shakespeare's plays as easy and straightforward as possible.

Notes are reduced to the smallest compass. First, in order that the reader's imagination may have definite material to work with, the list of the *dramatis personæ* is followed by a suggestion of their dress and appearance; and when practicable, illustrations are given. Second, the text, which is presented without any further preliminary, is accompanied by footnotes which form a Glossary of obsolete or misleading words.

The play may therefore be read at first sight without let or hindrance—without even the delay and distraction which would be caused by turning to a later page for such merely necessary explanations. But there will be many for whom, if not at a first reading yet perhaps at a second, something further may be desirable—a bit of historical information, a paraphrase of a difficult passage, or the clearing up of a confused metaphor. To supply these, and to supply them at the right time, is the object of the brief notes placed immediately after the text.

Fourth, and last, comes a causerie in several divisions: offering, for any who are studiously inclined, a short commentary; marking the place of this particular drama in Shakespeare's career; tracing its importance in his poetic development; estimating its artistic value, and suggesting a number of other questions on which an intelligent student might reflect with pleasure.



A Flaxman drawing showing Hector and Ajax separated by the heralds, and exhibiting costume of Greek warriors.

CONTENTS

THE PERSONS OF THE PLAY	9
INTRODUCTION—	
Notes on the Characters	11
The Opening of the Play	17
A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM	19
HELPS TO FURTHER STUDY—	
I. The Early Life of Shakespeare	92
II. The Elizabethan Theatre	96
III. <i>A Midsummer-Night's Dream</i> on the Stage	99
IV. Editions of Shakespeare	102
V. Sources and Date of the Play	104
VI. Classic Myth in <i>A Midsummer-Night's Dream</i>	105
APPENDIX—	
A. The Text of the Play.	111
B. Accompaniments of the Play: Staging, Music, Illustration	113
C. The Acting of the Play in School	114
D. Lectures to be given in Senior Forms	115
ON THINKING IT OVER—	
I. For Younger Boys and Girls	118
II. For Older Pupils	120

“But it is not our province, who onely gather his works, and give them you, to praise him. It is yours that reade him. And there we hope, to your divers capacities, you will finde enough, both to draw, and hold you : for his wit can no more lie hid, than it could be lost. Reade him therefore ; and againe, and againe : And if then you doe not like him, surely you are in some manifest danger, not to understand him. And so we leave you to other of his Friends, whom if you need, can bee your guides : if you neede them not, you can leade your selves, and others. And such Readers we wish him ”

JOHN HEMINGE.

HENRIE CONDELL.

(*Preface to the First Folio edition of
Shakespeare's Works*).

THE PERSONS OF THE PLAY

THESEUS, *Duke of Athens.*

HIPPOLYTA, *Queen of the Amazons, betrothed to THESEUS.*

PHILOSTRICH, *Master of the revels to THESEUS.*

LYSANDER, *in love with HERMIA.*

DEMETRIUS, *in love with HERMIA, having forsaken HELENA.*

EGEUS, *Father of HERMIA.*

HERMIA, *in love with LYSANDER.*

HELENA, *in love with DEMETRIUS.*

PLATER QUINCE, *a carpenter,*

NICK BOTTOM, *a weaver,*

FRANCIS FLUTE, *a bellows-
mender,*

TOM SNOOT, *a tinker,*

SNUG, *a joiner,*

ROBIN STAVELING, *a tailor,*

} *playing*
} *in the*
} *Interlude*
} *the parts*
} *of*

{ PROLOGUE.

{ PYRAMUS.

{ THISBE.

{ THE WALL.

{ THE LION.

{ MOONSHINE.

OBERON, *King of the Fairies.*

TITANIA, *Queen of the Fairies.*

PUCK, or ROBIN GOODFELLOW, *attendant on OBERON.*

PEASEBLOSSOM,

COBWEB,

MOTH,

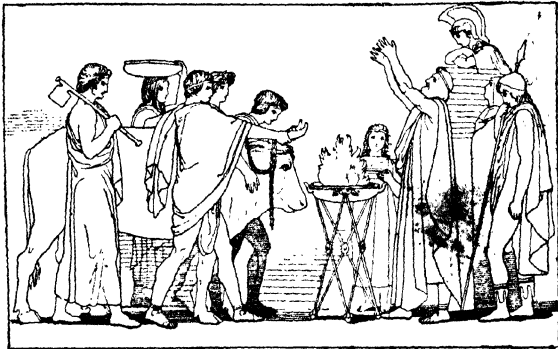
MUSTARDSEED,

A FAIRY,

A CHANGELING CHILD.

} *attendants on TITANIA.*

Attendants on THESEUS and HIPPOLYTA, and other
fairies in attendance on OBERON and TITANIA.



A Flaxman drawing of a Greek sacrifice, exhibiting costume of older and younger men.

INTRODUCTION

NOTES ON THE CHARACTERS

THE characters of Theseus and Hippolyta occur in Greek legend. Theseus, the ruler of Athens, is the hero who, among other exploits, makes war against the Amazons and carries off their queen, whom one writer calls Antiope, another Hippolyta. These Amazons are described as a race of women who devoted themselves to pursuits generally followed by men. Their male children were brought up by the fathers, of a neighbouring tribe, the female were taught by their mothers to fight, hunt, and till the fields. Shakespeare would have read of the "duke" and his bride in Chaucer's *Knight's Tale*, which speaks of the "wisdom and chivalry" of Theseus, and of the glory with which he wedded Hippolyta, the "faire, hardy queen of Scithia," and in North's translation of Plutarch's *Lives*, from which he took the names "Lysander" and "Demetrius" for his young lovers.

Greek art has represented the warrior Theseus, different types of Amazon, and the battle between Theseus and the Amazons. From Greek sculpture we know the appearance of the typical Athenian youth and maiden, of a Lysander and a Hermia, as the modern stage shows them. There are various forms of Greek dress, all simple in themselves and depending on their draping for their beautiful effect. A most characteristic garment is the *chiton*: a tunic made by "sewing together at the sides two pieces of linen, or a double piece folded together, leaving open the top

INTRODUCTION

for the arms and neck, and fastening the top edges together over the shoulders and upper arm with buttons and brooches." This garment might be long and trailing, or looped up with a girdle. As worn by the Amazons, it was short and light.

The *chlamys* is a short draped cloak, often bordered with bright colour. A larger enveloping garment is the *himation*, a square of woollen stuff, laid on the back, passed over the left shoulder and secured under the left arm, then brought over the right side of the body and slung across the left shoulder. Sometimes the right arm is covered, sometimes free. The draping of the *himation* varied greatly when worn by women, sometimes being drawn right over the head.

The hair of the young men of Greek sculpture is short and curling, that of the women twisted into a loose knot. Fillets, diadems, or garlands were worn by both sexes on festal occasions. The feet were covered with sandals, or the *cothurnus*, or buskin (page 33), was worn when protection was needed—as, for instance, when hunting.

Of course it must be remembered that Greek fashions varied, and that Theseus and Hippolyta belong to the misty period of Greek legend. Scholars say that, if a stage director aims at "correctness" of design, he should examine the very oldest Greek vase-paintings for the costumes of the Athenians; and, for the hall of Theseus, picture architecture like that of Solomon's house and temple described in I. Kings and II. Chronicles. Such minute attention to detail in the realms of "fine fabling" seems a little absurd, as did a production of *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* in which the fairies were represented as elves of eastern myth, because Titania says they have come from the "farthest steep of India."

How far Shakespeare visualized his Athenian characters in classic garb is uncertain. The costumes worn



THE CAPITOLINE AMAZON

INTRODUCTION

on the Elizabethan stage were magnificent, but the idea of fidelity to the fashion of the period of the play is a comparatively modern one. A Roman general would be resplendent in velvet cloak, doublet, and hose on the early seventeenth-century stage; in the eighteenth century Macbeth appeared in peruke and laced coat. Occasionally there were touches of realism. Titania calls Hippolyta a "buskin'd bride," and Oberon tells Puck that he'll know Demetrius by the Athenian garments he has on; but all evidence goes to prove that the general appearance of the characters on the Elizabethan stage was distinctly that of the men and women of the Elizabethan period. There is a record of the representation of Amazons in a sixteenth-century masque carrying shields and javelins, and wearing armour over kirtles of crimson cloth of gold, "with tassels of gold laid under below instead of petticoats," and "buskins of orange-coloured velvet," and the design of Inigo Jones in the next century for a queen of the Amazons shows her wearing a plumed helmet, and a full double skirt reaching nearly to her ankles. Ben Jonson, who wrote the masques for which Inigo Jones designed dresses and setting, in describing the costume for another of these little plays on a classical subject, says "that of the lords had part of it, for the fashion, taken from the antique Greek statue, mixed with some modern additions, which made it both graceful and strange." The "modern additions," we may be pretty sure, were noticeable in all Elizabethan and Jacobean stage costumes. Nowadays we generally like to see the characters of a classical story in entirely classical garb.

The fairy characters have been very diversely represented on the stage, as no one has any evidence of what a fairy really looks like! A book Shakespeare knew, Scot's *Discovery of Witchcraft*, says that fairies "make strange apparitions on the earth, in meadows



A Flaxman drawing of Mercury and Calypso, exhibiting costume of Greek woman.



A Flaxman drawing of Ulysses weeping at the song of Demodocus, and exhibiting costume of Greek men.

INTRODUCTION

or on mountains, like men and women, soldiers, kings, and ladies, children, and horsemen, clothed in green." We do not know if Shakespeare's fairies are to be green-clad (the latest stage representation of the play in London dresses them in blue). Certainly he intended the subjects of Oberon and Titania to be very small, and perhaps they were represented by children—which is likely, if the play was written, as has been suggested, for performance at Court. In Ben Jonson's *Masque of Oberon*, there is a dance of "lesser fays" performed by "little ladies" round the "little duke." In fairy folk-lore Robin Goodfellow, or Puck, is a rough little creature, and Shakespeare calls him the "lob of spirits," which seems to show that he saw him as Milton did the "lubber fiend" who, in *L'Allegro* "basks at the fire his hairy strength," and yet he gives him movement as swift as that of the fairies. In the French romance, *Huon of Bordeaux* (see page 104), Oberon is called a king of fairies, and is described as three feet high, and crooked-shouldered, but with an "angelic visage," so that every one seeing him took pleasure in beholding his face. One cannot imagine Shakespeare's Oberon in any way deformed. His name, Oberon, or Auberon, is derived from the French word for "dawn," and, though "king of shadows," he has power to walk the groves until the sun has risen, instead of "following darkness like a dream," as the other fairies must. Titania is associated with Diana, the moon goddess. (The Roman poet Ovid calls Diana "Titania," the Titan-born; for, according to the legend, her mother, Latona, was daughter of a Titan. Scot, in the book already mentioned, speaks of the queen of the fairies as Diana, and it is easy to see how the name would pass from the goddess of the moon to the fairy queen who held her revels by moonlight.) But all these elves of folk-lore were re-created by Shakespeare, and, since he wrote *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, the fairies of English belief have been

INTRODUCTION

the fairies of his imagination. As you read the play, you realize how the "poet's pen" has turned "airy nothing" into "shapes," and see these shapes in your fancy.

Shakespeare may have dreamed of fairies in the Warwickshire woods; he certainly met Peter Quince and his friends in the streets of Stratford. Their unconsciousness of the limitation of their powers is that of the plain man of the country town, who has the little knowledge that is said to be dangerous. They are by no means ignorant! They have seen and heard something: Quince can write a play of sorts, and a ballad; Bottom has a very definite notion of the difference between Hercules' vein and that of a lover, and the comic results of a smattering of a knowledge of stage plays and a very vague notion of the cultured taste of the time appear in their interlude, with its classical allusions, all complete. On the modern stage they are generally represented as Athenians, in tunics of coarse stuff, brown or grey. On the Elizabethan stage they would probably have appeared as fairly well-to-do sixteenth-century working men, dressed in jerkin and hose, and flat broad-toed shoes.

THE OPENING OF THE PLAY

The Athenians and the Amazonian women have been at war, but peace has just been made, and the lord of Athens, Theseus, is betrothed to the queen of the Amazons, Hippolyta. As Theseus thinks of the pomp, triumph, and revelry that are to celebrate this great marriage, one of his subjects comes to him for judgment upon a disobedient daughter. Judgment is given, but the maiden and her lover plan to evade it. The next scene introduces a group of workmen arranging an entertainment which they mean to pre-

INTRODUCTION

sent to Theseus on his wedding night : the beginning of the second act shows the quarrel between the fairy king and queen. What comes of the plan of the lovers, the rehearsing of the play in an enchanted wood, and the fairy king's vow of vengeance upon his queen, is the story of *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*.

THE Text of this play is based on that of the First Folio and the First Quarto, emendations being made where necessary from the Second Quarto and the eighteenth-century editions of Shakespeare. Variant readings have not been given in full, as the school student of Shakespeare derives little benefit from a complete knowledge of them, but a simple account of the original text of Shakespeare's plays will be found on page 102, and on page 112 some of the most interesting emendations are given for discussion.

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
10 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 :

13. *Pert*, Brisk, lively.

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 and his daughter HERMIA, LYSANDER,
and DEMETRIUS.]

20 *Ege.* Happy be Theseus, our renownèd 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 man hath bewitch'd the bosom of my child :
Thou, thou, Lysander, thou hast given her rhymes
And interchanged love-tokens with my child :
30 Thou hast by moonlight at her window sung
With faining voice verses of feigning love,
And stolen the impression of her fantasy
With bracelets of thy hair, rings, gauds, conceits,
Knacks, trifles, nosegays, sweetmeats, messengers
Of strong prevailment in unharden'd youth :
With cunning hast thou filch'd my daughter's heart,
Turned her obedience, which is due to me,
To stubborn harshness : and, my gracious duke,
Be it so, she will not here before your grace
40 Consent to marry with Demetrius,

15. *Companion*, Fellow, used in a contemptuous sense.

19. *Truump*, Pageant.

31. *Faining*, Loving, longing.

32. *Fantasy*, The imagination of love. "He has fixed himself in her imagination," is the usual explanation of the line. See page 112 for further discussion of the point.

33. *Gauds*, Pieces of finery, or showy ceremonies ; *Conceits*, Charming fantastic ideas or devices.

36. *Filch'd*, Stolen.

NIGHT'S DREAM

[ACT I, SCENE

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
 50 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,
 60 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,
 70 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 ;

41. *Privilege of Athens.* By a law of Solon, parents had power of life
 or death over their children. 54. *Voice, Vote or approval.*

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,
80 Ere I will yield my virgin patent up
Unto his lordship, whose unwishèd 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
90 For aye austerity and single life.

Dem. Relent, sweet Hermia : and, Lysander, yield
Thy crazèd 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,
100 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,
110 Upon this spotted and inconstant man.

80. *Patent*, Privilege.

92. *Crazèd*, With a crack or flaw in it.

102. *Vantage*, Superiority.

NIGHT'S DREAM

[ACT I, SCENE I

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—
 120 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 check so pale ?
 How chance the roses there do fade so fast ?

130 *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 enthral'd to low !

Lys. Or else misgraffed in respect of years,— ¹³¹

Her. O spite ! too old to be engaged to young !

Lys. Or else it stood upon the choice of friends,—

140 *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 momentary as a sound,

120. *Extenuate*, Weaken, lessen the force of.

131. *Beteem*, Allow, grant.

137. *Misgraffed*, Grafted on a wrong stock. Metaphors from the gardener's art of grafting are constantly used by Shakespeare.

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. *men*

150 *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 revénue, and she hath no child :

From Athens is her house remote seven leagues ;
 160 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 lov'st 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,
 170 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,

145. *Collied*, Darkened, blackened.

146. *Spleen*. This gland was supposed formerly to be the seat of anger and sudden passion, hence the word is used to denote these qualities.

155. *Fancy*, Love.

156. *Persuasion*, Convincing argument.

160. *Respects*, Regards.

169. *Cupid—Venus—the Troyan*. See pages 106–108, in note on classical allusion.

NIGHT'S DREAM

[ACT I, SCENE I

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.*]

180 *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.

190 Were the world nine, 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.

200 *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 :

186. *Favour*, Appearance.

187. *Ere*, Before.

190. *Bated*, Excepted.

191. *Translated*, Transformed.

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

210 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.

Hcr. 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.

220 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 HERMIA.

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 :

230 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 judgment 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.

240 As waggish boys in game themselves forswear,

209. *Phœbe*, Diana. See page 106. 232. *Quantity*, Virtue, strength.

240. *Themselves forswear*, Swear falsely.

NIGHT'S DREAM

[ACT I, SCENE ii

So the boy Love is perjured every where :
 For ere Demetrius look'd on Hermia's eyne,^{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 :
 250 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 the Carpenter, SNUG the Joiner,
 BOTTOM the Weaver, FLUTE the Bellows-Mender,
 SNOOT the Tinker, and STARVELING the Tailor.]

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.

11 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

3. *Scrip*, Script, the " scroll " referred to in the next line.

5. *Interlude*, A short play ; in its literal sense a play given between the courses of a banquet or two other items of an entertainment.

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.

20 *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 Eracles rarely, or a part to tear a cat in, to make all split.

30

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.

2 | This was lofty ! Now name the rest of the players.
This is Eracles' vein, a tyrant's vein ; a lover is more
condoling. *in sympathy or distress.*

41 *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.

27. *Humour*, Inclination.

28. *Eracles*, *Phibbus*, Hercules, Phœbus. See pages 106, 107.

37. *Fates*. See page 106.

NIGHT'S DREAM

[ACT I, SCENE II

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

50 *Bot.* And 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.

61 *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.

69 *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. And 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 and 'twere any nightingale.

Quin. You can play no part but Pyramus : for

50. *And, An, which means " if. "*

67. *Extempore, Without preparation.*

73. *And, If.*

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.

90 *Bot.* I will discharge it in either your straw-colour
beard, your orange-tawny beard, your purple-in-grain ^d
beard, or your French-crown-colour beard, your perfect
yellow. ^{- Golden}

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
100 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. ^{See l. 97}

Quin. At the duke's oak we meet.

Bot. Enough : hold or cut bow-strings. [Exeunt.]

84. *Proper*, Handsome.

87. *Beard*. At this time there were many fashions in the trimming and colour of beards.

108. *Hold, or cut bow-strings*, Keep your promise ; or let the worst befall you. An archer would be lost if his bowstring snapped.

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,

10 *p.c.* (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, *94*
In those freckles live their savours : *small*

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 : *dumy*

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 ;

7. *Moon's*, "es" is the Middle English genitive or possessive case ending, now represented by 's; *Sphere*, The old system of astronomy, formulated by Ptolemy, taught that the moon and the planets were set in crystal spheres that revolved about the earth.

16. *Lob*, Clown.

17. *Anon*, Immediately. *LL.F.G.*

20 For Oberon is passing fell and wrath, *fierce*
 Because that she as her attendant hath
 A lovely boy, stolen from an Indian king ;
 She never had so sweet a changeling ; *Handmill*
 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,
 30 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 ?
 40 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 sometimes lurk I in a gossip's bowl,
 In very likeness of a roasted crab,
 And when she drinks, against her lips I bob,
 50 And on her withered dewlap pour the ale.
 The wisest aunt, telling the saddest tale,
 Sometime for three-foot stool mistaketh me ;
 Then slip I from her, and down topples she,

20. *Fell*, Fierce.30. *Square*, Spar, quarrel.33. *Shrewd*, Malicious.36. *Quern*, Handmill for grinding corn.37. *Bootless*, Without use or advantage.

NIGHT'S DREAM

[ACT II, SCENE i

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 make room, 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.*]

60 *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 steep of India ?

70 *Obe.* 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,
 And make him with fair *Æglé* break his faith,

54. *Tailor.* Dr. Johnson says that he has observed the custom of crying "Tailor" at a sudden fall. "He that slips beside his chair, falls as a tailor squats upon his board."

66-68. *Corin and Phyllida* are favourite names for characters in pastoral poetry.

71. *Buskin'd.* A buskin is a thick-soled half-boot, such as was worn by Greek actors in tragedy. The adjective often means "tragic," "dignified," but here it signifies that the Amazon wears the buskin, while hunting or fighting.

78. *Æglé—Ariadne—Antiope,* Ladies whom Theseus had loved.
 (2,535)

With Ariadne and Antiopa ?

- 80 *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 pavèd fountain or by rushy brook,
 Or in the beachèd 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,
 90 Hath 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 drownèd 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 :
 100 The human mortals want their winter here ;
 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 rhéumatic 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

90. *Pelting*, Paltry. 91. *Continents*, The banks which contain them.

96. *Murrion*, or murrain ; what we call "foot-and-mouth disease."

97. *Nine men's morris*, A game played on a diagram of squares marked on a table ; or, as here, cut out in turf. Each player had pegs or stones as "men."

98. *Quaint*, Ingenious, artful. On certain greens it was customary for boys to keep the criss-cross paths clearly marked by running along them.

98. *Wanton*, Unrestrained, growing without hindrance.

105. *Thorough*, A form of through. 108. *Hiems*, Winter.

An odorous chaplet of sweet summer buds
 110 Is, as in mockery, set : the spring, the summer,
 The chiding autumn, angry winter, change
 Their wonted liveries, and the mazèd 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.

120 *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 picèd 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.
 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.

130 *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.

Quarrel [Exit TITANIA with her train.

Obe. Well, go thy way : thou shalt not from this
 grove ~~be~~ ^{be}

Till I torment thee for this injury.

40 My (gentle Puck,) come hither. Thou rememberest
 Since once I sat upon a promontory,
 And heard a mermaid on a dolphin's back

ACT II, SCENE I]

A MIDSUMMER-

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

150 (At a fair vestal thronè by the west,) *Elizabeth*

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,

160 (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,

170 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,

150. *A fair vestal*, A fair virgin. The priestesses of the goddess of the hearth, *Vesta*, were vowed to perpetual maidenhood.

There is an allusion here to Queen Elizabeth, who was wooed, but not won.

156. *Fancy-free*, Free from love. 160. *Love-in-idleness*, The pansy.

166. *Leviathan*, Any huge sea-monster.

shattered or home or lit. 36

NIGHT'S DREAM

[ACT II, SCENE i

(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, *And I will*I'll make her render up her page to me. *Ref of comp.*

But who comes here? I am invisible;

And I will overhear their conference.

[Enter DEMETRIUS, HELENA following him.]

180 *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 wood 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,

190 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.

200 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,184. *Wood, Mad.*187. *Adamant*, A very hard stone, here used to mean the load-stone or magnet.206. *Impeach*, Call in question.

ACT II, SCENE i]

A MIDSUMMER-

To leave the city and commit yourself
Into the hands of one that loves you not. ✕

Hel. Your virtue is my privilege : for that
210 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 *Q.*
Run when you will, the story shall be changed :
220 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, *ins. un. d.*
You do me mischief.) Fie, Demetrius !
Your wrongs do set a scandal on my sex :

230 We cannot fight for love, as men may do ;

We should be woo'd and were not made to woo.

[Exit DEMETRIUS.]

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 PÜCK.]

Hast thou the flower there ? Welcome, wanderer.

Puck. Ay, there it is.

Obe.

I pray thee, give it me.

220. Apollo. See page 106.

behind the abortive. T. ik 38

NIGHT'S DREAM

[ACT II, SCENE II

I know a bank where the wild thyme blows,
 Where oxlips and the nodding violet grows,
 240 Quite over-canopied with luscious woodbine,
 With sweet musk-roses and with eglantine :
 There sleeps Titania some time 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 :) *U f v f*
 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
 250 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

245. *Weed*, Garment. 1. *Roundel*, A dance in a ring.

4. *Rere-mice*, Bats.

At our quaint spirits. Sing me now asleep ;
Then to your offices and let me rest.

SONG

10 *1st 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.

20 *1st Fairy.* Weaving spiders, come not here ;
Away Hence, you long-legg'd spinners, hence !
Beetles black, approach not near ;
Worm nor snail, do no offence.

Chorus. Philomel, with melody, &c.

2nd 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 : *prince*

7. *Quaint, Dainty and fine.*
13. *Philomel, The nightingale.* See page 109.

NIGHT'S DREAM

[ACT II, SCENE II]

30 Be it ounce, or cat, or bear,
 Pard, or boar with bristled hair,
 In thy eye that shall appear
 When thou wak'st, it is thy dear :
 Wake when some vile thing is near. [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 ;
 40 For I upon this bank will rest my head.

(Such separation as may well be said
 Becomes a virtuous bachelor and a maid,) *Life.*
 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 wishers' eyes be
 press'd ! [They sleep.]

[Enter PUCK.]

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

30. Ounce, A wild animal somewhat resembling the *para*, or leopard.

51. Approve, Prove, test.

80 *con. nee* Pretty soul! she durst not lie
 Near this lack-love, this kill-courtesy. *mirks*
con. nee Churl, upon thy eyes I throw
 All the power this charm doth owe.
 When thou wak'st, let love forbid
 Sleep his seat on thy eyelid :
 So awake when I am gone ;
 For I must now to Oberon. [Exit.]

[Enter DEMETRIUS and HELENA, running.]

Hcl. Stay, though thou kill me, sweet Demetrius.

Dem. I charge thee, hence, and do not haunt me thus.

Hcl. O, wilt thou darkling leave me? do not so. *in dark*

70 *Dem.* Stay, on thy peril : I alone will go. [Exit.]

Hcl. O, I am out of breath in this fond chase! *foolish*
 The more my prayer, the lesser is my grace.

(Happy is Hermia, wheresoe'er she lies ;) *dravy*
 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

80 Do, as a monster, fly my presence thus.

What wicked and dissembling glass of mine

Made me compare with Hermia's spherèd 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 Helen! Nature here shows art,

That through thy bosom makes me see thy heart.

Where is Demetrius? O, how fit a word

90 Is that vile name to perish on my sword!

NIGHT'S DREAM

[ACT II, SCENE II

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 swayed ;

And reason says you are the worthier maid.

100 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,

110 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 !

120 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,

102. *The point of human skill*, The highest point of human skill or
understanding.

ACT II, SCENE ii]

A MIDSUMMER-

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 !

130 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 Thisbe 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.

2. *Pat*, Exactly at the right moment.

4. *Tiring-house*, Green-room, actors' attiring-room.

8. *Bully*, Fine fellow ; used as a term of endearment.

13. *By'r lakin*, By our ladykin, an oath, like "marry" by the Virgin Mary ; *Parlous*, Perilous, dreadful.

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 ²⁰ 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 afeared 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 ⁴⁰ 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 ⁵⁰ by moonlight.

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

24. *Eight and six*, The "common metre," the favourite measure of the old popular ballads.

NIGHT'S DREAM

[ACT III, SCENE I

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
60 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.

Snug. 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 ; and let him
70 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,) *cause, make people*

So near the cradle of the fairy queen ?

What, a play toward ! I'll be an auditor ;

(80 An actor too perhaps, if I see cause. >

Quin. Speak, Pyramus. Thisby, stand forth.

Bot. (as Pyr.) Thisby, the flowers of odious savours sweet,—

Quin. Odours, odours.

Pyr. —odours savours sweet :

So hath thy breath, my dearest Thisby dear.

ACT III, SCENE I]

A MIDSUMMER-

But hark, a voice! stay thou but here awhile,
And by and by I will to thee appear. *[Exit.]*

Puck. A stranger Pyramus than e'er played here.
[Aside, and exit.]

Flu. Must I speak now?

90 *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. (as This.) Most radiant Pyramus, most lily-white of hue,

Of colour like the red rose on triumphant brier,
Most briskly 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
100 speak all your part at once, cues and all. Pyramus, enter: your cue is past; it is, "never tire."

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

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

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

Quin. O monstrous! O strange! we are haunted *lf*
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,) *U*
110 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.

NIGHT'S DREAM

[ACT III, SCENE I

[Re-enter SNOUT.] *by the way*

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.) *cl.* [Sings.]

The ousel cock so black of hue,

With orange-tawny bill,

The throstle with his note so true, *thrust*

The wren with little quill,—

130 *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:) *Love*
Mine ear is much enamour'd of thy note;

140 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

132. *Plain-song*, Simple chant, as compared with the elaborate prick-song, which has many variations.

ACT III, SCENE I]

A MIDSUMMER-

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 glee upon
occasion.

Tita. Thou art as wise as thou art beautiful.

Bot. Not so, neither : but if I had wit enough to
150 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 pressèd flowers dost sleep :
160 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 ?

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
170 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

147. *Glee*, Gibe or sneer. Bottom prides himself on having made
a witty and satirical remark.

NIGHT'S DREAM

[ACT III, SCENE I

To fan the moonbeams from his sleeping eyes ·
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
180 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 ?

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 ?

190 *Mus.* Mustardseed.

Bot. Good Master Mustardseed, I know your pa-
tience 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,

200 Lamenting some enforced chastity.

Tie up my love's tongue, bring him silently.

[*Exeunt.*

179. *I cry your mercy*, I ask your pardon.

186. *Commend me to*, Another polite phrase, meaning "remember
me to ;" *Squash*, An unripe peascod.

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.
Here comes my messenger.

[*Enter PUCK.*]

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,
10 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 nolle I fixèd on his head :
Anon his Thisbe must be answerèd,
And forth my mimic comes. When they him spy,
20 As wild geese that the creeping fowler eye,

3. *In extremity*, Extremely, excessively.

9. *Patches*, Fools. Properly the word was used of a jester, so called from the "patched" look of his motley dress; *Rude*, Rough.

10. *Stalls*, Benches.

13. *Sort*, Company, used contemptuously, as the modern "lot."

17. *Nolle*, Head.

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 briars and thorns at their apparel snatch ;
 30 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 ;

40 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.

21. *Russet-pated choughs*, Grey-headed jackdaws. The word "russet" is sometimes used to mean "grey"—more usually a reddish-brown. The jackdaw's neck is grey.

32. *Translated*, Transformed.

36. *Latch'd*, Generally explained as "moistened," but better understood, I think, as closed and controlled with the spell of the love juice.

50 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 :
 60 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,
 70 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 therefor ?

Her. A privilege, never to see me more.

80 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,

NIGHT'S DREAM

[ACT III, SCENE II]

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 :
90 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.

100 *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,
[Squeezes the flower-juice on DEMETRIUS'
eyelids.]

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 wakest, if she be by,
Beg of her for remedy.

[Re-enter PUCK.]

110 *Puck.* Captain of our fairy band,
Helena is here at hand ;
And the youth, mistook by me,
Pleading for a lover's fee.

96. *Fancy-sick*, Love-sick ; *Cheer*, Countenance.

97. *Sighs*, It used to be thought that every sigh consumed a drop
of blood.

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 ,
120 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 !

130 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 judgment 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

140 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 :

114. *Fond*, Foolish.

121. *Preposterously*, In a contrary way.

NIGHT'S DREAM

[ACT III, SCENE ii]

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,
 150 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
 160 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 :
 170 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 ;

175. *Aby*, Pay for.

Wherein it doth impair the seeing sense,

180 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,

2 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

190 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,

200 When we have chid the hasty-footed time

For parting us,—O, is all forgot ?

All school-days' friendship, childhood innocence ?

We, Hermia, like two artificial gods,

Have with our needs 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,

210 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 crownèd 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.

220 *Her.* I am amazèd 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 e'en 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,

230 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, perséver, counterfeit sad looks,
 Make mouths upon me when I turn my back ;
 Wink each at other ; hold the sweet jest up :
 240 This sport, well carried, shall be chronicled.
 If you have any pity, grace, or manners,

213. *Of the first.* In heraldry, this phrase signifies the repetition of the same quarterings more than once on a shield, or two objects of the first colour mentioned in the description of the shield. Helena means that the two girls were distinct and yet alike—their bodies being separate, their interests alike, joined by the united heart that swayed them. But, though the general sense is clear, the exact meaning of the passage is puzzling. Douce explains it—"We had two of the first, i.e., *bodies*, like the double coats in heraldry, that belong to man and wife as *one person*, but which, like our *single heart*, have but one *crest*."

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 :

250 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 ; sir, he'll
 Seem to break loose ; take on as you would follow,
 But yet come not : you are a tame man, go !

260 *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, loathèd medicine ! O hated potion, hence !

Hel. Do you not jest ?

Her. 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.

242. *Argument*, Subject, here of the jest or " sport."

265. *Sooth*, In truth.

NIGHT'S DREAM

[ACT III, SCENE II

Lys. What, should I hurt her, strike her, kill her dead ?

270 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 :

280 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.
290 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,
300 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 :

300. *Curst*, Bad-tempered.

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,
810 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 ?

820 *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.

830 *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

329. *Minimus*, Tiniest of creatures.

NIGHT'S DREAM

[ACT III, SCENE II

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 :
340 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 amaz'd, and know not what to say. [*Exit.*]

Obe. This is thy negligence : still thou mistak'st,
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 ?
350 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.
360 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 :

338. *Jole*, Jowl.352. *Sort*, Turn out, happen.357. *Acheron*—*Aurora*.339. *Coil*, Quarrel.356. *Welkin*, Sky.

See pages 106, 107.

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.

370 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 charmèd 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,
 380 And yonder shines Aurora's harbinger ;
 At whose approach, ghosts, wandering here and
 there,

Troop home to churchyards : damnèd 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,
 390 And, like a forester, the groves may range,
 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.

400 Here comes one.

380. *Harbinger*, Forerunner ; the morning star is harbinger of dawn.

392. *Neptune*. See page 106.

[*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;

410 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 gray light,

420 I'll find Demetrius and revenge this spite. [*Sleeps.*]

[*Re-enter* PUCK and DEMETRIUS.]

Puck. Ho, ho, ho, ho ! Coward, why com'st thou not ?

Dem. Abide me, if thou dar'st ; for well I wot
Thou runn'st before me, shifting every place,
And dar'st 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.

430 By day's approach look to be visited.

[*Lies down and sleeps.*]

[*Re-enter* HELENA.]

Hel. O weary night, O long and tedious night,
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 to four.
Here she comes, curst and sad :

440 \ Cupid is a knavish lad,
Thus to make poor females mad.

[*Re-enter* HERMIA.]

Her. Never so weary, never so in woe,
Bedabbled with the dew, and torn with briers,
I can no further crawl, no further go ;
My legs can keep no pace with my desires.

NIGHT'S DREAM

[ACT III, SCENE II]

Here will I rest me till the break of day.

Heaven shield Lysander, if they mean a fray.

[Lies down and sleeps.]

Puck. On the ground

Sleep sound :

450

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,

460

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 at-*
tending; 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.

10 *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 moun-
sieur, bring me the honey-bag. Do not fret yourself
too much in the action, mounsieur; and, good moun-
sieur, have a care the honey-bag break not; I would
be loth to have you overflown with a honey-bag,
signior. Where's Mounsieur Mustardseed?

Mus. Ready.

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

2. *Coy*, Stroke.

19. *Neaf*, Fist.

NIGHT'S DREAM

[ACT IV, SCENE I

Mus. What's your will ?

Bot. Nothing, good mounsieur, 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. [*Rough music.*

³⁰ *Tita.* Or say, sweet love, what thou desir'st 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.

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.

⁴⁰ *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

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,

29. *Tongs*, Played on with a key to produce "music."

33. *Bottle*, Bundle.

42. *Woodbine*, Generally denotes honeysuckle, but is sometimes applied to other creepers, including the bindweed, or great convolvulus, which Shakespeare probably has in his mind here.

Seeking sweet favours for this hateful fool,
 60 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 ;
 60 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 transformèd 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.

70 But first I will release the fairy queen.

Be as thou wast wont to be ;

[*Touching her eyes with an herb.*

See as thou wast wont to see :

Dian's bud o'er Cupid's flower

Hath such force and blessèd 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 !

80 *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 !

NIGHT'S DREAM

[ACT IV, SCENE I

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

[*PUCK takes off the ass's head from BOTTOM.*

Obe. Sound, music! [*Soft 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,

90 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.

100 *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 valley ; let them go :

Dispatch, I say, and find the forester.

[*Exit an Attendant.*

We will, fair queen, up to the mountain's top,

95. *Sad*, Serious, grave.

96. *Night's*, The old inflected genitive or possessive form. See Act II. Scene i. l. 7.

104. *Observation*, Observance of the "rite of May."

105. *Vaward*, Front part—*i.e.*, early morning.

110 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 mountains, 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,
120 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 ;
130 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.* LYSANDER, DEMETRIUS,
HELENA, and HERMIA wake and start up.]

Good morrow, friends. Saint Valentine is past :

112. *Hercules and Cadmus.* See page 108.

120. *Flew'd,* With the hanging chaps characteristic of the hound ;
Sanded, Refers to the marking of the hound.

NIGHT'S DREAM

[ACT IV, SCENE I

140 Begin these wood-birds but to couple now ?

Lys. Pardon, my lord. [*He and the rest kneel.**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,

160 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 the 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.

160 *Dem.* My lord, fair *Helen* told me of their stealth,
 Of this their purpose hither to this wood ;
 And I in fury hither followed 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,
 170 The object and the pleasure of mine eye,
 Is only *Helena*. To her, my lord,

140. *Wood-birds.* The old belief that birds mated on St. Valentine's Day (February 14), is the subject of one of Chaucer's most charming poems, the *Parlement of Foules*.

144. *Jealousy*, Suspicion.

153. *Without*, Beyond.

164. *Wot*, Know.

167. *Gawd*, Toy, trifle.

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 ;
 180 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, Hippolyta.

[*Exeunt* THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, EGEUS, and *train.*

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

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

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

Dem. But are you sure
 That we are well 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.*

200 *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

185. *In great solemnity, with high ceremony.*

NIGHT'S DREAM

[ACT IV, SCENE II

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. Methought I was— there is no man can tell what. Methought I was,— and methought I had,—but man is but a patched fool, ²¹⁰if 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 the play, before the duke : peradventure, to make it the more gracious, I shall sing it at her death. [Exit.

SCENE II

Athens. A room in QUINCE'S house.

[Enter QUINCE, FLUTE, SNOOT, 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 handi-
¹⁰craft man in Athens.

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

[Enter SNUG.]

Snug. Masters, the duke is coming from the temple,

^{209.} *Patched fool.* See Act III. Sc. ii. l. 9.

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 : and the duke had not given
20 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 everything, right as it fell out.

Quin. Let us hear, sweet Bottom.

30 *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
40 hear them say, it is a sweet comedy. No more words : away ! go, away ! [Exeunt.]

33. *Presently*, Without delay.

35. *Preferred*, Proffered, given in. Philostrate has a list of the various entertainments prepared for Theseus. See Act V. Scene i.

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,
10 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

3. *Antique*, Strange, fantastic.

5. *Fantasy*, Imagination.

11. *Helen*. See page 108.

14-17. *And as imagination. . . . name*. These lines are written in
gold round the base of the interior of the domed roof of the
Memorial Theatre at Stratford.

A local habitation and a name.

Such tricks hath strong imagination,

That, if it would but apprehend some joy,

20 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 !

30 *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 even-
ing ?

40 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.*]

27. *Howsoever*, At all events ; *Admirable*, Wonderful.

39. *Abridgement*, Something that will make the time short, a play.

42. *Brief*, A short statement. For subjects of the entertainments
set down in this brief, see page 79.

NIGHT'S DREAM

[ACT V, SCENE I

The. [Reads] "The battle with the Centaurs, to be sung

By an Athenian singer 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."

50 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.

60 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

70 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.

49. The Thracian singer : see page 107.

54. *Critical*, Censorious, finding fault, as satire does.

74. *Unbreathed*, Unpractised.

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,

80 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.

90 Our sport shall be to take what they mistake :

And what poor duty would, but 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.

100 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,

110 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
120 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.

130 This man, with lime and rough-cast, doth present

Wall, that vile Wall which did these lovers
sunder ;

118. *Stand upon points*, In two senses—mind his stops, and trouble about small politenesses of behaviour.

123. *Recorder*, A kind of flute.

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,

140 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

150 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.

138. *Hight*, is called.

160

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 !

170

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 !

180

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.

162. *Sinister, Left.*

[*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.

190 *Pyr.* I see a voice : now will I to the chink,
 To spy and 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 ~~w~~ wall !

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

200 *Pyr.* Wilt thou at Ninny's tomb meet me straight-
 way ?

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 neigh-
 bours.

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.

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

The. If we imagine no worse of them than they of

191. *And I can hear*, If I can hear.

194. *Limander.* For this and the following attempts at classical
 allusion, see pages 108, 109.

NIGHT'S DREAM

[ACT V, SCENE I

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 ;

220 For, if I should as lion come in strife

Into this place, 't were 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 :
230 leave it to his discretion, and let us listen to the moon.

Moon. This lanthorn doth the hornèd 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 hornèd 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 ?

219. *A lion fell.* Rowe suggested changing this to "no lion fell," but it is quite in character for one of these actors to say the opposite of what he means. *Fell*, Pierce. Another editor would understand "fell" as the skin of a lion, and necessarily, I think.

240 *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
250 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.*]

260 *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 !

270 Eyes, do you see ?

How can it be ?

241. *In snuff, In a temper.*

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,
 280 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 ;

290

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 an ace, man ; for he is dead ; he is
 300 nothing.

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

275. *Furies, fates.* See pages 106-7.

277. *Thrum.* The end of the weaver's thread, left after tying.

278. *Quell.* Kill.

281. *Beshrew.* Literally to call evil upon, but it has lost its full
 force in such expressions as that which Hippolyta uses here.

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, 310 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

320

Must cover thy sweet eyes.

These lily lips,

This cherry nose,

These yellow cowslip cheeks,

Arc 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 ;

330

Lay them in gore,

Since you have shore

With shears his thread of silk.

Tongue, not a word :

Come, trusty sword ;

306. *Passion*, Grief, suffering.

314. *Mamma*, Complains ; *Videlicet* (*Videre licet*, one can see), lit., it is allowed, it is lawful to see (usually shortened to *vis.*).

NIGHT'S DREAM

[ACT V, SCENE I

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.340 *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 :
850 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.]

860 *Puck.* Now the hungry lion roars,

And the wolf behowls the moon ;

Whilst the heavy ploughman snores,

All with weary task foredone.

337. *Thus Thisby ends.* How Flute does this is shown by the following allusion in a seventeenth-century play: "Faith, like Thisbe in the play, a has almost kil'd himselfe with the scabbard."343. *Bergomask dance,* A rustic dance, such as those of the peasants of Bergamo, a province in the state of Venice.363. *Foredone,* Tired out.

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,
 370 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.*]

880 *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,
 We will sing, and bless this place.

[*Song and dance.*]

890 *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 ;
 So shall all the couples three
 Ever true in loving be ;
 And the blots of Nature's hand
 Shall not in their issue stand ;

373. *The triple Hecate.* See page 106.

400 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*.]

410 *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
 420 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*.]

399. *Prodigious*, Monstrous, of ill omen.

420. *The serpent's tongue*, The hissing of a bad play.

424. *Your hands*, Applause with your hands, clapping.

HELPS TO FURTHER STUDY

I. THE EARLY LIFE OF SHAKESPEARE

OF the actual facts of Shakespeare's life not very much is known. From parish registers and other documents there is evidence that a baby called William Shakespeare, first son and third child of John Shakespeare and Mary Arden, was baptized at Stratford parish church on the 26th of April 1564; that his father, a substantial burgess, trading in all kinds of agricultural produce, enjoyed certain civic dignities and suffered certain periods of ill-luck; that two husbandmen of Stratford stood surety for the validity of the marriage in question between William Shakespeare and Ann Hathaway; that their children, Susanna, and the twins Judith and Hamnet, were baptized at Stratford; that Shakespeare was a member of the Lord Chamberlain's company of actors; that he wrote certain poems and plays. But if we do not know much of what actually happened to him, we know what his surroundings must have been like. Stratford-on-Avon has grown since his time; the country round it is less thickly wooded, and parts of it have changed with the growth of big towns, and "facilities for tourists." Still there are old Elizabethan houses in Stratford, and still, as in the sweet and peaceful river meadows about Charlecote and Hampton Lucy, there are stretches of Warwickshire countryside little changed from that where the boy

HELPS TO FURTHER STUDY

Shakespeare hunted for nests, went coursing and hawking, and, while on his boyish exploits, saw and heard a hundred things to which his mind returned again and again, in flower song and bird song, in descriptions of sheep-shearing and rites of May. Those who know the "pastoral heart of England"—not through a motor tour, but through quiet weeks or months or years spent in some Warwickshire village, and know Shakespeare's plays, may out of love and the curiosity of love pass much time examining documents and hunting up records; they may see new facts written down, but they gain or need little more than they already possess to recapture the atmosphere of the days of his childhood and young manhood.

A visitor to Stratford in Shakespeare's time, after crossing the fourteen-arched stone bridge which still spans the gentle, willow-edged Avon, would have come to a cobbled street of timbered, gabled houses, some of them shops, some private residences. Noticeable then, as now, would be the spire of Holy Trinity Church, the square tower of the Guildhall, the almshouses and the grammar school which, though of older foundation, was proudly known by the town-folk who had bought it back from the Crown in the reign of Edward VI., as the King's New School of Stratford-upon-Avon. One of the finest dwellings in the little town was the Great House belonging to Sir Hugh Clopton, and, when prosperity came to Shakespeare in London, he bought this property with its barns and gardens and orchards, and called it New Place. The so-called birthplace in Henley Street may have looked rather as it does now; for, in the mid-nineteenth century, care was taken to restore it to its probable original appearance. It certainly belonged to John Shakespeare, and was a "good" house, well built with oak planks and beams from the great forest in the neighbourhood, the Forest of Arden. A walnut

A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

tree shaded the entrance ; there was a pool of water across the road, and at the back of the house were a garden and out-buildings. Luxurious furnishings such as Shakespeare loved were gradually becoming general ; but his childhood would probably have been spent in a somewhat sparsely furnished house. There would have been beds, a joined or trestled table, joint-stools, presses, benches, and a settle of plain wood. The floors would not be carpeted, but strewn with rushes. Perhaps, as Shakespeare's father was a man of some importance, the walls of the living room might be hung with tapestry, or " painted cloth."

As the eldest son of a prosperous citizen, it is most likely that Shakespeare went to the King's New School. You can picture the small, brown-eyed boy, with a brow both high and broad, but with interest in many things beyond books, joining the little groups that " creep like snail unwillingly to school." He is dressed like a merchant's son, in doublet and hose of russet or blue, with a leather belt from which hangs a pouch, broad-toed shoes, and a flat cap like that of a beefeater at the Tower. In school he will be kept hard at work. He is past the " infant " stage : no boy may enter Stratford Grammar School until he has mastered his " absey " (A B C) book. He will be taught the old mediæval studies of logic and rhetoric, but most of his time will be spent tussling with Lily's Latin Grammar, and translating various Roman authors from Latin into English. Many a tag from that grammar book is quoted in the plays ; but, if we are to believe the scoff of Ben Jonson that Shakespeare knew small Latin and less Greek, this boy does not go far beyond its precepts.

Out of school, he sees all there is to see in the lanes and woods and fields about his town. He recognizes the points of a good horse and a good hound ; he watches, with the curious sympathy of many sportsmen, the stag dying by the brook under the oak tree,

HELPS TO FURTHER STUDY

and the hare doubling back on his tracks ; he listens to the abuse and praise of hounds by their names, Silver, Bellman, Echo, Merriman, and Fury. He has an intimate knowledge of hawking, that sport which the Elizabethans loved, and which is now practised by only a few enthusiasts. Occasionally he sees entertainments in the town—morris dancers, London players acting in the Guildhall, or local talent exercising itself. One year there are revels at Kenilworth to entertain the queen, and he hears stories of, or sees for himself, the wonderful masque of the “mermaid on the dolphin’s back.”

His boyhood ends abruptly with his hasty marriage, at the age of nineteen, to Anne Hathaway. A few years afterwards he leaves Stratford for London, perhaps as a result of a poaching episode in Charlecote Park, the estate of the Sir Thomas Lucy whom he satirizes as Justice Shallow, more likely because his natural bent would be towards the town where he could become permanently associated with the players and the theatre.

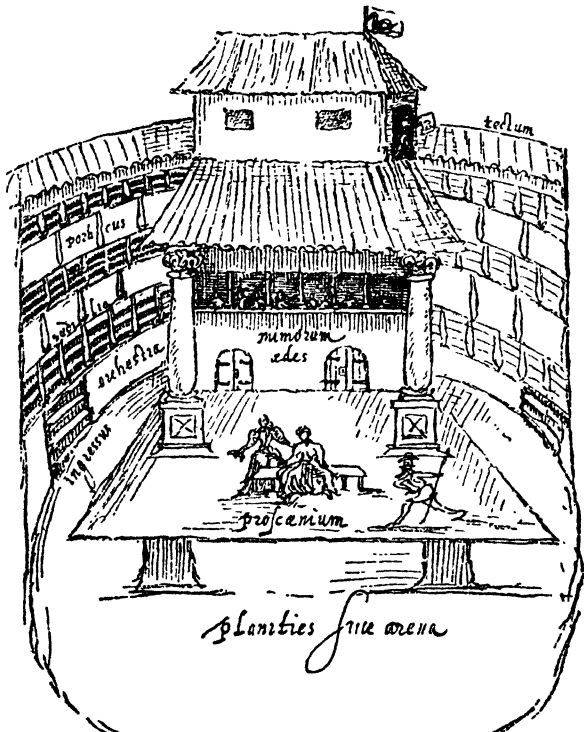
The chief life of “merry London,” as Spenser calls it, was about the river, the “sweet Thames,” which was then gay with state barges, sailing ships, and the boats of the watermen. The young countryman from Stratford, wandering by this great and beautiful waterway, would have admired London Bridge with its many narrow arches, the square tower of St. Paul’s, the fastness of the Tower, the grace of the Abbey. He would have seen the palaces and mansions of the noble, with gardens sloping down to the river, and boats lying moored at the foot of flights of steps. He would have seen the *Golden Hind* in which Drake sailed round the world ; he would have gazed at the shows of monsters in Fleet Street, the strawberries at Ely Place, the bushels of roses in Temple Gardens. In his mind there can have been no doubt as to his destination. The *Theatre* belonged to James Bur-

A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

bage, a Warwickshire man, and for its stage Shakespeare did the first of his work. A bare and uncomfortable building it would seem to modern playgoers, only partially roofed and seated, the stage without scenery, but a contemporary writer speaks of it as "the gorgeous playing-place." As an actor Shakespeare is said to have been "excellent," but he never appears to have had first-rate parts. Almost at once he would begin to work as a playwright. He revised older plays; but not only did he revise, he re-created. The compliment of jealousy was immediately paid him. The dramatist Greene wrote venomously of "an upstart crow, beautified with our feathers, that, with his tiger's heart wrapt in a player's hide, supposes he is as well able to bombast out a blank verse as the best of you, and being an absolute *Johannes factotum*, is, in his own conceit, the only Shake-scene in the country." The publisher of the pamphlet in which this contemptuous comment appeared at once apologized, but Shakespeare was unharmed by mockery. Fame did not come slowly to him. In 1598 a certain Francis Meres brought out a book called *Palladis Tamia* (Treasury of Wit) in which he spoke of Shakespeare as the best writer of both tragedy and comedy, and praised his poems and sonnets. When *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* was first acted, he was a man of some standing, with a wealthy and noble patron—the Earl of Southampton, to whom his two poems are dedicated—an assured profession, and the reputation won for him by eight or nine plays that seem to have been immediately enjoyed and admired.

II. THE ELIZABETHAN THEATRE

The first playhouse in London, built by Burbage in 1576, was the *Theatre* in Shoreditch, and, a little later in the same year, the *Curtain* was put up near it.



quintum sed de pace et concordia, huiusmodi romulei
 omni destinatum, in quo multi regi Tarci et Augusti
 innumerosi sancti, divitiis caute et fortis abstruitur; qui

THE SWAN THEATRE
 (From an old drawing)

A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

The architecture of the Elizabethan theatres shows the influence of the inn-yards where the plays had formerly been acted. Burbage's idea was, it has been said, to erect "what was practically an inn-yard without an inn." The shape of his theatre, however, like that of the bear-baiting ring on Bankside, was circular, not rectangular, as the inn-yard was. Galleries were built round the walls of the interior, and the best places, now known as boxes, were called "rooms." In the "yard" (the modern pit) stood the poorer spectators, exposed to the weather, as the theatre was only partially roofed.

The stage, or "scaffold" as it was then called, was not like our "picture stage," but projected into the "yard," and was surrounded on three sides by spectators. There was no back-cloth painted to suggest scenery, and no curtain. (The land on which the second playhouse was built was known as "The Curtene," hence its name.) At the back of the stage was an upper gallery, which served as a tower, the walls of a city, a "window above," Juliet's balcony, and many other purposes, according to the requirement of the scene, while the space below it might be a cave, a tomb, a bed, and so on. Scenery, as we understand it, was unknown, but many stage properties were used, and no cost was spared on the costumes of the actors. There were no actresses in the public theatres (ladies took part in court masques) before the Restoration, all women's parts being played by boys.

Each company of actors was licensed by some nobleman, whose name it bore. Shakespeare was always associated with the same company, Lord Strange's, afterwards known as the Lord Chamberlain's, and, in the reign of James I., as the King's men.

The drawing of the interior of the Swan Theatre (see page 97), which was built in 1595, gives a general idea of the construction of the Elizabethan play-

HELPS TO FURTHER STUDY

house, and the respects in which it differs from our own, but there is no proof as to its entire accuracy. The exact architecture of the Elizabethan stage is a point on which there is much controversy. The last great authoritative work on the subject is *The Elizabethan Stage*, by Dr. E. K. Chalmers (1924), in four volumes. Students still at school who are interested in Shakespeare's Theatre should read Chapters xxiv. and xxv. of *Shakespeare's England*, Vol. II., which they will be able to obtain in any good reference library.

III. "A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM" ON THE STAGE *

The play was first acted before 1598, perhaps to do honour to a noble marriage. Mention is made of it during the first part of the seventeenth century as if it were well known and popular, and, when the Puritans came into power and the London theatres were closed, the story of *Bottom the Weaver* was among the plays which were converted into "drolls" and acted privately. "When the publique Theatres were shut up, and the Actors forbidden to present us with any of their Tragedies . . . and Comedies . . . then all that we could divert ourselves with were these humours and pieces of Plays, which passing under the name of a merry conceited fellow, called *Bottom the Weaver* . . . or some such title, were only allowed us, and that but by stealth too, and under pretence of Rope-dancing, or the like," says a writer after the return of Charles II. to power, and the re-opening of the theatres. That the play should have been acted, even in part, attests its popularity, which, strangely, it did not regain from the Restoration until the nineteenth century.

Like most of Shakespeare's plays, it was "put on"

* For reading by older students.

A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

after 1660, but, like many of them, was to be almost completely transformed. In Shakespeare's time, and after, the masque, a slight play most beautifully set, appealing to eye and ear with its magnificent or fantastic scenery and "dressing," its grotesque or graceful dancing, and its music, had an extraordinary vogue at court. It was bound to influence the popular theatre. A masque-like element appears in some of Shakespeare's plays, and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* gives opportunity for elaborate setting and much music. It certainly had not such a setting in Burbage's * theatre—all the magical enchantment of the wood was suggested by the spoken poetry of Shakespeare, and the music broke in softly where he asks for it in the text or the stage directions. But the stage managers of the late seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries produced it as an opera. Two years after the Restoration of Charles II. the diarist Pepys saw it in more or less its original form, and vowed he would never do so again, "for it is the most insipid, ridiculous play I ever saw in my life." Perhaps the majority of the audience shared his opinion, for the next production was quite in keeping with the taste of the time. Purcell wrote the charming music for a play called *The Fairy Queen*, an almost unrecognizable version of *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, with much singing and dancing and many strange effects—swans turning into fairies to dance until scared away by "furies," a sort of transformation scene disclosing a Chinese garden, where monkeys dance while a Chinese man and woman sing a duet, and so on. In the next century it was produced as an operetta at Lincoln's Inn Fields, dressed out in "recitative and airs after the present Italian mode." Another version, for

* There is a theory that it was not written for the public theatre, but for performance at court. However, it was not until the reign of James I. that exquisite scenery for court masques and masque-like entertainments was set up.

HELPS TO FURTHER STUDY

which Garrick wrote a prologue, appeared at Drury Lane under the title of *The Fairies*, altogether omitting the "droll" that the seventeenth century had so jealously kept when deprived of its stage plays, and containing twenty-seven new songs. It ran for nine nights. Another version tried to please the public by cutting out "Theseus and all the serious characters." At last, in the nineteenth century, it was revived as Shakespeare wrote it. A notable production by Charles Kean is described by Ellen Terry in the early part of *The Story of My Life*. A little girl of ten, she played Puck. A contemporary critic (the German novelist and man of letters, Fontane) describes her in her "dark brownish-red garment, trimmed with blood-red moss and lichens," a crown of moss on her untidy little fair head, her thin arms bare. "A downright intolerable, precocious, genuine English ill-bred, unchildlike child," he thought her, and yet confessed that she had made so deep an impression on him that he could not imagine the part of Puck played by a grown-up person.

The comedy has recently been acted at the "Old Vic," where all Shakespeare's plays have been produced by Miss Lilian Baylis, and at the Kingsway, with Miss Athene Seyler as Titania, Mr. Baliol Holloway and Mr. Frank Collier as Bottom and Quince.

Note.—Hazlitt says: "The *Midsummer-Night's Dream*, when acted, is converted from a delightful fiction into a dull pantomime. All that is finest in the play is lost in the representation. . . . *Poetry and the stage do not agree well together.* . . . Bottom's head in the play is a fantastic illusion, produced by magic spells: on the stage it is an ass's head, and nothing more; certainly a very strange costume for a gentleman to appear in. Fancy cannot be embodied any more than a simile can be painted; and it is as idle to attempt it as to personate Wall or Moonshine. Fairies are not incredible, but fairies six feet high are so."

A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

IV. EDITIONS OF SHAKESPEARE *

Nowadays dramatists publish their plays, often with elaborate prefaces and stage directions. No edition of his plays was issued by Shakespeare. Sir Henry Irving thought that there were sound business reasons for this, for publication would have "enabled other companies, in which he was not interested, to act them without his deriving any profit," and suggested that, had Shakespeare lived longer after his retirement from London to Stratford, he might have brought out a carefully revised complete edition of his plays. But in the Elizabethan age, and later, it was not usual for a dramatist to publish, and Ben Jonson, who did bring out a collected edition of his plays in 1616, the year of Shakespeare's death, was ridiculed for his vanity in doing so, though he set a fashion which was followed.

Although Shakespeare himself took no measures to publish his plays, sixteen at least of them were, during his lifetime, printed in small single editions since known as the "quartos," from the size of the paper employed. It is said that these copies were obtained by the publisher-bookseller or his apprentice actually taking down the words of the plays as they were spoken in the theatre; but, before the days of skilled shorthand, such a method cannot have been a very satisfactory one, and it is likely that actors gave some help to the piratical publishers. These quartos were sold in St. Paul's Churchyard, then famous for its book-shops, at sixpence each. Some of the originals have been preserved, and may be seen at Shakespeare's house and the Memorial Library at Stratford, the Bodleian at Oxford, and the British Museum Library.

* For older students.

HELPS TO FURTHER STUDY

Seven years after Shakespeare's death two of his fellow-actors issued a complete edition of his plays, with a portrait, and this edition is called, again from the size of the paper used, the First Folio. One of the original First Folios is in the British Museum, and every big provincial library has a replica of it. Three other folio editions were published during the seventeenth century.

The plays as they appear in the quartos and folios differ in some respects from those with which modern students are familiar. There is no indication, except in the text itself, as to the place of scenes. No lists of characters are given. Nicholas Rowe, an eighteenth-century playwright, published an edition giving division into scenes and lists of characters. Stage directions appear in quartos and folios, but Rowe supplemented these, and changed certain of them. Some of the original ones are of interest—for instance, in Act II. of *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* the directions "Enter a Fairy at one doore and Robin Goodfellow at another," and "Enter the King of Fairies at one doore with his traine, and the Queene at another with hers" indicate the construction of the Elizabethan stage.

Other editors have modified Rowe's arrangements. Pope and Dr. Johnson both published editions of Shakespeare in the eighteenth century, but neither did as well as their contemporary Theobald, who worked from the First Folio, and went on the excellent principle of never deviating from the text except where the sense really demanded it. Editorial work of this kind has been necessary, because certain (though not very many) phrases and words are obviously mistakes. Mis-spellings and misprints occur, such as the "woesel cock so black of hue," "bankrout sleep," "maidens of the villagree," and so on.

The Cambridge Variorum edition of Shakespeare

A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM ·

shows all these, and gives all the alternatives that have been suggested by editors and critics.

For some of the emendations made in the text of *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, see page 112.

V. SOURCES AND DATE OF THE PLAY *

In writing *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, Shakespeare may have worked upon an old play concerning the King of the Fairies, which is known to have been in existence, though no copy of it is extant. Chaucer's *Knights Tale* describes the marriage of Theseus, and Shakespeare would have read the life of this hero in North's translation of Plutarch's *Lives*, a book he knew well. Touches of fairy-lore are reminiscent of details given in Scot's *Discovery of Witchcraft*, and Oberon is the fairy king in the French romance of *Huon of Bordeaux*, translated into English during the sixteenth century by Lord Berners. All this material put together is slight, and does not repay study except by the very eager scholar, who is referred to the full account of all supposed sources of the plot in Professor Ward's *History of Dramatic Literature*, Vol. II.

As for the date of the play, all that we know definitely is that it was acted before 1598, when Meres mentions it in his *Palladis Tamia* (see page 96). Advanced students who may do so with profit should examine the chief theories as to the date of actual composition put forward in Professor Ward's authoritative work, referred to above. The construction of the verse proves the *Dream* an early play. Comparison of Shakespeare's earlier and later blank verse should be of interest to students in the Fifth and Sixth forms. Illustrative passages will be found on pages 122, 123.

* For older students.

HELPS TO FURTHER STUDY

VI. CLASSIC MYTH IN "A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM"

Admiration of the thought and achievements of "the noble Grecians and Romans" is one of the characteristics of Elizabethan culture. At no other period has there been so widespread a pleasure in and knowledge of the beautiful and stirring tales of classic myth, and the personages, human and divine, who figure in them. They are used as subjects of plays and masques; they appear in long poem and tiny lyric; allusions to them come naturally and easily in writing and in talk. Sometimes, of course, the allusions are dully and absurdly made, by pedants, mere followers of fashion, and simple bewildered folk like the mechanics of this play, but generally they have a fresh and delightful beauty, and some of the loveliest imagery of Shakespeare, Marlowe, and Spenser is drawn from these myths.

These classical legends should be read for their own sakes—no short note or "explanation" can suggest the pleasure of them. You may read them in adaptation or translation. A list of books is given on pages 109, 110.

The stories to which allusion is made in *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* are as follows:—

GODS AND GODDESSES

To the Greek imagination the various powerful and lovely manifestations of nature suggested divine or semi-divine beings. Sun, moon, night, stars, wind, sea, dawn, flowers, harvest: all appear as gods or goddesses; every tree has its dryad, naiads haunt the streams, nereids the sea. Human joys, as youth, love, and beauty, human aspiration and graces, as music, sculpture, painting, and poetry, human

A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

sufferings, as death and strife, are conceived as symbolic figures.

Elizabethan poets loved the Greek idea of the sun as Phœbus Apollo, the god with bright hair, who every day drove his fiery-wheeled chariot from east to west of the heavens. When Bottom recites what he imagines to be fine poetry, he works in an allusion to "Phibbus' car." It was Apollo who loved Daphne, one of the nymphs of Diana, who, fleeing in fear from him, prayed her father the river-god to save her, and was transformed into a laurel tree. Helena thinks of this when she sadly reminds Demetrius that, in their own love story, things are not as they should be, for "Apollo flees, and Daphne holds the chase." Diana, twin sister of Apollo, is the virgin goddess of hunting and the moon. If Hermia refuses to obey her father, it is on "Diana's altar" that she must "protest single life." The flower with which Oberon takes the love-spell from Titania's eyes is "Diana's bud." Lysander calls the goddess by another of her names when he says that he and Hermia will meet in the wood "when Phœbe doth behold her silvery visage in the watery glass." Sometimes Diana was associated with Hecate, the goddess of the evil and terrible things of darkness. Puck speaks of the "triple Hecate" — "triple" because she is goddess of the moon in the sky, of hunting on earth, and of darkness and bewitchment in the underworld.

Neptune is the god of the sea ; Aurora of the dawn. Venus is goddess of love, and the dove one of the birds sacred to her. Her son, the little love-god, "winged Cupid painted blind," had arrows tipped with gold and with lead. A wound with one would kindle love, with the other hate ; so when Hermia promises not to fail Lysander, she swears by Cupid's "best arrow with the golden head."

The Fates are the "three grey sisters," one of

HELPS TO FURTHER STUDY

whom span the thread of human destiny, one wove it into fabric, and one cut it off when death should come to a man. Bottom alludes to them in his recitation at the planning of the interlude; and they are invoked with great effect in the dying speeches of Pyramus and Thisbe. The "Furies fell" spoken of on the same tragic occasion are snaky-haired divinities of the underworld, who tormented evil-doers with the stings and lashings of remorse. Puck leading the lovers astray, overcasts the sky with fog as "black as Acheron," the dark river of woe which bounded this underworld.

Orpheus, the musician, is a demi-god, son of Apollo. He was torn to pieces by the Bacchantes, the wild vine-garlanded followers of Bacchus, the god of wine, who were angered to frenzy by his indifference to them. Their "riot," as a descriptive dance, is one of the devices prepared to entertain Theseus on his wedding night. Another is the lament of the Muses for "the death of Learning." These Muses are nine goddesses, each of whom presided over one branch of learning or art.

HEROES

Theseus himself is one of the heroes of ancient Greece. It was he who slew the minotaur, the dreadful monster that demanded tribute of youths and maidens from Athens, and the giant Procrustes, who tortured men by lashing them to his iron bed, and stretching their limbs until they fitted it. Many other feats did he perform, recalling the labours of the strong Hercules, the greatest of the heroes. Another diversion prepared for Theseus is a song of the battle of Hercules with the centaurs, creatures half-horse, half-man in shape, who attacked him in anger when one of their number, Pholus, entertaining him, offered him their choicest wine. Hip-

A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

polyta tells Theseus that she has hunted with Hercules and Cadmus, another great hero. His chief exploit was the slaying of a monstrous dragon, from whose teeth, sown in the earth, armed men arose, and fought with one another until all were slain but five, who helped him to build the city of Thebes. Æneas is the Trojan hero, who, according to one legend, founded Rome. When Hermia swears

“By that fire which burn'd the Carthage queen
When the false Troyan under sail was seen”—

she alludes to the story of his desertion of Dido. During the period when, having escaped from the ruins of burning Troy, he wandered about the world seeking a place where he might found a new city, Æneas came to Carthage, and was royally entertained by the queen, Dido, who loved him. Fearing lest he should be restrained from his great purpose, he left her secretly. She caused a pyre to be made, on which she placed herself, and the flame that lighted his ships from the harbour burned her to death.

OTHER LEGENDS

The Helen of whose beauty Theseus speaks is Helen of Troy, the wife of the Greek king Menelaus, whom Paris, son of the king of Troy, loved and stole from her husband, thus, according to legend, occasioning the outbreak of the long war between the Greeks and the Trojans.

The story of Pyramus and Thisbe is, like that of Romeo and Juliet, a tragedy of forbidden love. These two would converse secretly through a hole in the wall which divided their houses. They arranged to meet outside their city at the Tomb of Ninus, below a white mulberry tree by a spring. Thisbe, coming first to the trysting-place, fled at the sight of a lioness stained with blood, which came

HELPS TO FURTHER STUDY

to drink at the spring. She dropped her veil, which the fierce beast tore to pieces. Finding it rent and covered with blood, Pyramus thought his lady had been killed, and slew himself. Returning, she found him dead, and plunged his sword into her breast.

The nightingale is spoken of as "Philomel." One legend tells that the king Tereus wedded Procne, tired of her, cut out her tongue, and, pretending she was dead, took her sister Philomela as his wife. But Procne wove the story of her wrongs into a web of tapestry, which she sent to Philomela. The vengeance of the sisters was a horrible one, and the gods, in anger, transformed Tereus into a cruel hawk, Procne into a swallow, ever restless, and Philomela into a nightingale, remembering the pain of her story in her wild sad song.

When the actors in the interlude speak of "Limander and Helen," and "Shafalus and Procris" they probably mean Leander and Hero, Cephalus and Procris. Leander swam the Hellespont by night to visit his lady Hero, who dwelt in a tower by the sea-shore, but one night a storm arose, and he was overcome by the waves, and sank. In despair, she flung herself into the sea, and perished.

Cephalus was a young huntsman whom Aurora, the dawn-goddess, loved, but he was indifferent to her, caring only for the maiden Procris, whom, by mischance, he slew with a javelin.

BOOKS ABOUT THE LEGENDS OF GREECE AND ROME

FOR YOUNGER BOYS AND GIRLS

Hyde, *Favourite Greek Myths.*

Kingsley, *The Heroes.*

Hawthorne, *Tanglewood Tales.*

Lang, *Tales of Troy and Greece.*

A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

FOR OLDER STUDENTS

Classic Myths (Gayley). This is an excellent book of reference, well illustrated.

Verse translations of Homer (the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*) were made by Chapman in the sixteenth and Pope in the eighteenth century, of Virgil (the *Æneid*) by Dryden in the seventeenth century. Modern free translations of the *Æneid* and the *Odyssey* have been made by William Morris, who has also retold many of the classical legends in other poems. Chapman's Homer, both as poem and as translation, is the greatest of these works. Those who wish to add an English verse translation of a classical poem to their own private library are advised to borrow and read before buying, and discover if the style of the translator appeals to them.

APPENDIX

(Sections marked * should be considered by older students only.)

A. THE TEXT OF THE PLAY

1. IF the history of language is studied, as it should be, a glossary of a Shakespearean play should certainly be made. Students should make their own small dictionaries, doing co-operative work. The meaning of words is given in footnotes to this play; a good modern *etymological* dictionary, which every student of English should possess, will supply derivations, to be discussed and recorded by those who know something of the language to which they belong. The following should be noted :—

(a) Words which have fallen into disuse in ordinary modern speech : such as *aby*, *anon*, *an*, *antic*, *beshrew*, *beteem*, *bottle* (bundle), *bootless*, *coy* (as verb), *eke*, *fell* (adj.), *gaud*, *harbinger*, *gleek*, *henchman*, *hight*, *juvenal*, *lob*, *marry* (exclamation), *misprise*, *neaf*, *nole*, *owe* (as a form of *own*), *parlous*, *quern*, *recreant*, *rermouse*, *scrip*, *sooth*, *tiring-house*, *weeds*, *welkin*, *wode*, *wot*, etc.

(b) Words which are used to-day and by Shakespeare, but with some special sense in each of the two periods : such as *abridgment*, *admirable*, *amiable*, *approve*, *brief*, *bully*, *fantasy*, *favour*, *fond*, *gossip*, *humour*, *impeach*, *mimic*, *patch*, *pert*, *proper*, *quaint*, *shrewd*, *sinister*, *spleen*, *wanton*, *worm*, etc.

A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

(c) Interesting words used with the same meaning both in Shakespeare's and our own time: such as, potion, lunatic, dowager, adamant, interlude, spaniel, mew (to confine), pageant, antipodes, adder, vixen, cherry, jewel, etc., etc.

*2. Consider the meaning of the following phrases, on which there has been a good deal of controversy among editors of this play:—

(a) Hold, or cut bowstrings (II. i.).

(b) To dance our ringlets to the whistling wind (II. i.).

(c) 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 (III. ii.).

(d) Then know that I, one Snug the joiner, am

A lion fell, nor else no lion's dam (V. i.).

(e) Thou hast . . . stol'n the impression of her fantasy . . . with bracelets, etc. (I. i.).

*3. Discuss the excellence of the following emendations (see also page 103):—

IN QUARTOS AND FOLIOS

(a)—I. i. The moon . . . *now*
bent in heaven.

(b)—I. i. Were favour so
Your *words* I catch.

(c)—I. i. To seek new friends
and *strange companions*.

(d)—II. i. On old Hiems' *chin*
and icy crown.

(e)—III. ii. Two of the first *life*
coats in heraldry.

(f)—III. ii. Her weak *praise*.

(g)—IV. i. Doing observance
to the *right* of May.

(h)—IV. i. I *see* Hermia.

(i)—V. i. Now is the *morall*
downe (F).

Now is the *moon used* (Q).

EMENDED TO

New-bent in heaven
(Rowe).

Yours would I catch
(Hanmer).

Stranger companies
(Theobald).

Thin and icy (Halli-
well).

Like coats (Theobald).

Her weak prayers
(Theobald).

The rite of May (Pope).

I saw Hermia (Steevens).

The mural down (Pope).

APPENDIX

- (j)—V. i. A *moth* will turn the A mote (Steevens).
balance.
- (k)—V. i. And the wolf *beholds* Behowls the moon
the moon. (Theobald).

B. ACCOMPANIMENTS OF THE PLAY: STAGING, MUSIC, ILLUSTRATION

*1. On the modern stage there are three ways of staging a Shakespearean play :—

(1) One group of enthusiasts would play it as it was played in the Elizabethan period, with no scenery.

(2) Other stage managers give the play a most elaborate and *realistic* setting : background painted in imitation of a wood, cardboard trees in the wings, real water running, toy nightingale singing off, etc. The late Sir Beerbohm Tree produced pastoral plays thus.

(3) Others, the most modern, following the idea first formulated by Mr. Gordon Craig, attempt in their stage setting, " not to *reproduce* nature, but to *suggest* some of her most beautiful and living ways."

Boys and girls interested in art, and the art of the theatre, may write an interesting essay discussing these theories.

2. For those who learn and like music : Mendelssohn's incidental music to *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* (Novello).

Dr. Dunstan has edited a selection of vocal pieces to be incorporated with Mendelssohn's music (Novello).

" You spotted Snakes " and " Through the house give glimmering light " may be obtained separately.

Other pieces set to music are " I know a bank " (Liza Lehmann and C. E. Horn), " Over hill, over dale " (J. L. Hatton, etc.), " Through the Forest " (J. B. Gattie), " Trip Away " (C. E. Horn), " Up and Down " (J. C. Smith).

A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

Messrs. Novello and Company, Wardour Street, London, will on request send a complete catalogue of Shakespearean music published by their house.

3. Those who are interested in the illustration of Shakespeare, and particularly of this play, should see, if they get the chance, the beautiful illustrated editions by Mr. Heath Robinson, Mr. Arthur Rackham, and Mr. Anning Bell. They are expensive books, but a friendly bookseller might let a customer buying school books look at one of them. They are not always Shakespearean (for instance, should Mr. Heath Robinson have drawn Flute as an oldish man?), but on the whole they have the qualities of imaginative interpretation that some of the older illustrators lack. In one eighteenth-century picture the fairies attendant on Titania are undistinguishable from ordinary ladies of the period. There is a beautiful drawing by Blake in the National Gallery of Oberon and Titania, with Puck and fairies dancing—but the elves do not seem quite like those of *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*. The whole question of the possibility of satisfactory illustration is a very interesting one to those who like both books and pictures, and a good essay might be written on "The Illustration of Shakespeare." A useful book is *Shakespeare in Pictorial Art*, published as special spring number of *The Studio*, in the year of Shakespeare's tercentenary, 1916.

An interesting little gallery of pictures illustrating scenes and characters of Shakespeare's plays may soon be formed in a school, if at "breaking up" the artist of each class contributes a drawing or painting, original or copied, suggested by the plays studied that term or that year.

C. THE ACTING OF THE PLAY IN SCHOOL

There is no play more suitable for a school dramatic company than is this one. The charm of the fairies,

APPENDIX

the humour of the mechanics, and the woes of the spell-bound lovers are all within the scope of young actors, and the opportunity for "dances and delight" is one that many girls' schools will rejoice in. The ideal stage is out-of-doors, but, if the comedy is acted in a garden, the difficulty of audible speech in the open air must be borne in mind, some sort of sounding-board contrived, and the number of the audience strictly limited according to the carrying power of the actors' voices. If time or other considerations forbid the production of the entire play, the stories of the fairies and mechanics make a beautiful and complete little comedy. The dress is easily contrived, but a wise stage manager will enlist the services of art or classical master or mistress in devising Greek garments, which, made of unsuitable material, badly draped, and worn with the wrong type of shoes and ornament, may be most grotesque. Some form of the chiton may be worn by every character in the play except Puck, who is neater and quicker in tunic and hose, and the changeling boy, who should wear the simplest sort of little smock. The fairies should be very flimsily garbed, whether in the thin clinging chiton with jagged edges, or in the old ballerina type of dress, which has its charms, though it is much more difficult to make.

In the class-room, the interlude of *Pyramus and Thisbe* is an excellent end-of-term performance. Those who take part in it should rehearse privately, for they will do far better if not "dogged with company," and the rest of the form will enjoy the final performance more keenly if they have not seen it in the making.

D. LECTURES TO BE GIVEN IN SENIOR FORMS

The boy or girl responsible for giving the lecture should choose the subject early in the year, and deliver the lecture at the end of a term or session, when the

A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

whole class is familiar with and interested in Shakespeare and his play or plays. The lecturer may work alone, or be the spokesman of a group of boys or girls who have been doing co-operative work on this particular subject.

I. FAIRIES IN ENGLISH LITERATURE

Look up the allusions by Milton in *L'Allegro*, *Comus*, *Paradise Lost*; the poems of Drayton, Corbett, and Herrick; the "toilet-table fairies" of Pope's *Rape of the Lock*; the fay in the ballad, in Malory's *Morte Darthur*, and in the poetry of Keats and Tennyson, the modern fairy poems of Mr. Walter de la Mare, Miss Rose Fyleman, Miss Edith Sitwell (*The Sleeping Beauty*), etc. Do not make your lecture one long string of allusions—note differences and similarities of imaginative treatment, etc., etc.; if you can, find some uninteresting fairy stuff written by the people who think that a human being in fancy dress is a fairy (there is only too much of it in many children's books), and, comparing it with what is "good," try to get at the fundamentals of imaginative creation. If you know Gilbert and Sullivan, do not forget the fun of *Iolanthe*, and how the Fairy Queen falls in love with Private Willis, B Company, 1st Grenadier Guards. Choose your quotations carefully—be sure that they will interest and amuse your audience.

2. SHAKESPEARE'S BOYHOOD

Find out what you can of the environment of Shakespeare's childhood: the sort of clothes he wore, the food he ate, the house he lived in, the games he played, the books he read, and so on. In any public library you will find books to help you. *Shakespeare's England* (1917) gives comprehensive material, but, in massing your facts, be careful not to give your hearers

APPENDIX

more than they can digest, and choose what is of most significance and will interest them. A good book on English costume is Dion Clayton Calthrop's, and the Elizabethan chapters are charmingly illustrated. The best illustrated book on Shakespeare's country is *Warwickshire*, "painted by Fred Whitehead, described by Clive Holland."

3. THE EARLY PLAYS OF SHAKESPEARE

Love's Labour Lost, Comedy of Errors, Midsummer-Night's Dream, The Taming of the Shrew, Two Gentlemen of Verona, Romeo and Juliet, Titus Andronicus, Henry VI. (in part), Richard III., King John, Richard II.

A good deal of "working together" should be done in collecting the material for this lecture. One group might undertake the comedies, one the histories, one the tragedies. It will probably be impossible for any but ardent book-lovers to find time to read from beginning to end of the plays of their group, but enough may be done to realize the subjects Shakespeare chose, the grouping of his characters, which of these characters are most vivid and living, what sort of comedy and tragedy first interested him, etc.

ON THINKING IT OVER

I. FOR YOUNGER BOYS AND GIRLS

(Aged about 12 and 13.)

1. WRITE a description of Shakespeare's fairies—their size, swiftness, occupations, pleasures, pranks, and so on.

2. In this play Shakespeare tells four stories—that of Theseus and Hippolyta, of the fairies, of the lovers, and of the mechanics. Show how he has linked them together (that is, how one depends on the others, how the fairies are concerned with the lovers, etc.). How do the different characters all come to be (a) in the enchanted wood, (b) in the hall of Theseus?

3. Write in good English a few sentences about incidents in the play illustrating:—

The courtesy of Theseus.

The mischief of Puck.

The conceit of Bottom.

4. How does Shakespeare describe the blackbird, the cuckoo, snakes, spiders, hounds, beds of primroses, woodbine, moonrise over the water, sunrise over the sea? (Give his exact words.)

5. Describe, with as much spirit as you can:—

The quarrel of the fairy king and queen.

The rehearsal of the play of *Pyramus and Thisbe*.

The acting of this play.

ON THINKING IT OVER

6. In what other tales have you read of fairies who bestow favours or play tricks on "human mortals"? In what ways do they and their actions differ from and resemble the elves of *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*?

7. Learn by heart "You Spotted Snakes," "Over hill, over dale," "I know a bank where the wild thyme blows," "I am that merry wanderer of the night," "Come, now a roundel," "Out of this wood do not desire to go," "Be kind and courteous to this gentleman," "I was with Hercules and Cadmus once," "My hounds are bred out of the Spartan kind," "Now the hungry lion roars," "Through the house give glimmering light."

8. Learn by heart twelve of the old words Shakespeare uses, so that you will know what they mean when you come across them in another play.

9. Draw a picture of any figure or scene in the play; or, if you cannot draw very well, describe in words how you imagine such a figure or scene would appear, using what detail Shakespeare gives you, and supplying the rest.

10. Make a plan of the fairy wood, showing where the lovers rested, the green plot where the rehearsal took place, the hawthorn brake, the water over which the moon rose, the primrose beds where Helena and Hermia used to lie and tell one another their secrets, the bushes and briars where the mechanics were pixy-led, the bank where the wild thyme grows, Titania's bower, and so on. Draw it neatly and colour it, to make it as pretty and interesting as a plan of an enchanted wood should be.

11. If you have a toy theatre, make and paint cardboard figures or dress tiny dolls to represent—

The meeting of Puck and the fairy;

Titania and Bottom in the fairy queen's bower;

The revels of the fairies in the hall of Theseus—

or any other scene that appeals to you. (If you

A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

have not made or do not possess one of the miniature theatres described lately in many children's magazines, you can of course arrange a very pretty tableau of your little figures without a stage setting.)

II. FOR OLDER PUPILS

(Aged about 14 to 17.)

Themes marked * should be considered only by the top forms. Needless to say, many passages of this most beautiful play should be learned by heart.

A. THE SPIRIT OF THE PLAY.

* 1. The play (*A Midsummer-Night's Dream*) is a gay mockery on the theme of "love is blind." Trace the working out of this.

2. One of Shakespeare's early plays is a *Comedy of Errors*, pure and simple. How far does the entertainment of *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* lie in "mistakings"? Do you know of any similar devices of amusement in eighteenth-century or modern plays? What other motives of comedy have you noticed in *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*? Which do you find most entertaining?

3. Find any types of character, descriptions, allusions, etc., in this play which seem to show that its writer was bred in a little market town, and familiar with country life.

B. CHARACTERS OF THE PLAY

(*Note.*—In describing character, do not, as some good critics have done, let your eloquence run away with you. Let your description be as vivid, as interesting, as alive as possible, but make no statement which cannot be borne out by direct evidence from the

ON THINKING IT OVER

play. Quotation and allusion to illustrate what you say should be used freely.)

1. Write an appreciative character study of Bottom the Weaver.

(Notice his entertaining vanity—his “push” and self-confidence (I. ii.)—his eagerness to make suggestions (III. i.)—his unshakable belief in himself, making him quite at ease in the bower of Titania and the hall of Theseus (III. i.-iv., I.-V. i.). Do any of the others enjoy the play as he does? Notice that his good opinion of himself is shared by them (IV. ii.).

2. What distinctive characteristics have you noticed in the other mechanics? How would you wish their personalities to be represented on the stage?

*3. How far do you realize the individuality of Lysander and Demetrius, of Helena and Hermia? Why do you think they are not characterized with as much vividness and detail as the heroes and heroines of certain other comedies, such as Portia and Bassanio, Rosalind and Orlando, etc.?

4. Contrast the fairies with the “human mortals” of the play.

C. CONSTRUCTION, FORM, AND TITLE OF THE PLAY

1. A play, like most forms of literary art, must have a beginning, a middle, and an end. These essential parts of comedy are called the *situation*, the *climax*, the *solution*, or *dénouement*. Between the beginning and the middle, the “situation” and “climax,” is a gradual *complication* of matters.

(a) Distinguish the three chief stories in the play.

(b) Very briefly, in one sentence for each, if possible, describe the situation of the characters in these three at the opening of the play.

(c) Where does the climax come in each story?

(d) How is the “happy ending” of each brought about?

A MIDSUMMER-NIGHT'S DREAM

2. Distinguish the different threads of the plot, and show how Shakespeare has woven them together.

3. What scenes in this play are written in prose? If you have read other plays by Shakespeare, look at them again, and notice for what type of scene prose is invariably used.

4. In later plays, Shakespeare uses rhymed verse for some special effect—its frequent use is a sign of early work. Mark the scenes and passages of *A Midsummer-Night's Dream* that are written in rhyme.

5. If you have studied metre, point out the differences of the "make" of the blank verse of Shakespeare's earlier and later plays, illustrated by the two following passages. As you are working at them, try to learn by heart (you will probably find you have done it without trying) two of the loveliest passages in English poetry.

(a) TITANIA'S REBUKE TO OBERON

These are the forgeries of jealousy :
And never, since the middle summer's spring,
Met we on hill, in dale, forest or mead,
By pavèd fountain or by rushy brook,
Or in the beachèd margent of the sea,
To dance our ringlets to the whistling wind,
But with thy brawls thou hast disturb'd our sport.
(A Midsummer-Night's Dream, II. i.)

(b) PERDITA WISHES FOR SPRING FLOWERS

O Proserpina,
For the flowers now, that frighted thou lett'st fall
From Dis's waggon !—daffodils,
That come before the swallow dares, and take
The winds of March with beauty ; violets dim,
But sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes
Or Cytherea's breath ; pale primroses,

ON THINKING IT OVER

That die unmarried, ere they can behold
Bright Phœbus in his strength—a malady
Most incident to maids ; bold oxlips and
The crown imperial ; lilies of all kinds,
The flower-de-luce being one !

(*The Winter's Tale*, IV. iv.)

6. Does the action of the play take place on Midsummer eve? (See IV. i.) If not, does the title, *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, still seem an appropriate one?

THE END

MANUSCRIPT NOTES

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