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SHAKESPEARE'S PLAY OF
A
MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM.

ARRANGED FOR REPRESENTATION AT
THE PRINCESS'S THEATRE,
WITH
HISTORICAL AND EXPLANATORY NOTES,
BY
CHARLES KEAN.

AS FIRST PERFORMED ON
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 15TH, 1856.

ENTERED AT STATIONERS' HALL.

SECOND EDITION.

London:

PRINTED BY JOHN K. CHAPMAN AND CO.,
5, SHOE LANE, AND PETERBOROUGH COURT, FLEET STREET.

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JOHN K. CHAPMAN AND COMPANY, 5, SHOE LANE, AND
PETERBOROUGH COURT, FLEET STREET.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

THESEUS, (<i>Prince of Athens</i>)	Mr. RYDER.
EGEUS, (<i>Father to Hermia</i>)	Mr. GRAHAM.
LYSANDER, } (<i>in love with Hermia</i>)....	{ Mr. J. F. CATHCART.
DEMETRIUS, }	{ Mr. BRAZIER.
PHILOSTRATE, { (<i>Master of the Revels to Theseus</i>) }	Mr. BUTLER.
QUINCE, (<i>the Carpenter</i>)	Mr. F. MATTHEWS.
SNUG, (<i>the Joiner</i>)	Mr. F. COOKE.
BOTTOM, (<i>the Weaver</i>).....	Mr. HARLEY.
FLUTE, (<i>the Bellows-mender</i>)	Mr. SAKER.
SNOUT, (<i>the Tinker</i>).....	Mr. MEADOWS.
STARVELING, (<i>the Tailor</i>)	Mr. BARSBY.
HIPPOLYTA, { (<i>Queen of the Amazons, betrothed to Theseus</i>) }	Miss MURRAY.
HERMIA, { (<i>Daughter of Egeus, in love with Lysander</i>) }	Miss BUFTON.
HELENA, (<i>in love with Demetrius</i>)	Miss HEATH.
OBERON, (<i>King of the Fairies</i>)	Miss F. TERNAN.
TITANIA, (<i>Queen of the Fairies</i>)	Miss C. LECLERCQ.
PUCK, or ROBIN GOODFELLOW (<i>a Fairy</i>) ..	Miss ELLEN TERRY.
FIRST SINGING FAIRY,	Miss MARIAN TAYLOR.
SECOND SINGING FAIRY,	Miss LAURA HONEY.
ANOTHER FAIRY,	Miss R. LECLERCQ.
FAIRIES, } (<i>Who join in Titania's Dance</i>)	Miss DESBOROUGH.
	Miss C. ADAMS.
	Miss KATE TERRY.
	Miss STARTIN.
PEAS-BLOSSOM, } (<i>Fairies</i>)	Miss E. EDMONDS.
COBWEB, }	Miss A. SMITH.
MOTH, }	Miss E. GREY.
MUSTARD-SEED, }	Miss J. WARTON.
PYRAMUS, } (<i>Characters in the Interlude performed by the Clowns.</i>)	
THISBE, }	
WALL, }	
MOONSHINE, }	
LION, }	

Other Fairies attending their King and Queen. Attendants on Theseus and Hippolyta.

Scene—ATHENS, and a Wood not far from it.

THE SCENERY under the Direction of Mr. GRIEVE, and Painted
by Mr. GRIEVE, Mr. W. GORDON, Mr. F. LLOYDS,
Mr. CUTHBERT, Mr. DAYES, Mr. MORRIS,
And numerous Assistants.

THE MUSIC under the direction of Mr. J. L. HATTON.

THE DANCES AND ACTION, by Mr. OSCAR BYRN.

THE DECORATIONS & APPOINTMENTS by Mr. E. W. BRADWELL.

THE DRESSES by Mrs. and Miss HOGGINS.

THE MACHINERY by Mr. G. HODSON.

PERRUQUIER, Mr. ASPLIN, of No. 13, New Bond Street.

*† For reference to Historical Authorities indicated by
Letters, see end of each Act.*

A Midsummer-Night's Dream was, according to the best authorities, written by Shakespeare, at a period of life when his creative mind "glowed with all the warmth of a youthful and lively imagination." The poet did not search into history or tradition for the story, but, relying solely on his own exquisite genius, bequeathed to posterity one of "those unparalleled compositions which have rendered him the delight and wonder of successive ages."

Apart from the supernatural agencies, which relate to the quarrels of Oberon, the Fairy Monarch, and his Queen Titania, the classical figures of Theseus and Hippolyta stand forward as the chief human personages of this most harmonious of dramas. Nevertheless, the general character of the play is so far from historical, that while I have made Athens and its neighbourhood the subject of illustration, I have held myself unfettered with regard to chronology. Indeed, sufficient is not known of the details of Greek life and architecture in the time of Theseus to render complete (or proximate) accuracy possible, even if a theatrical representation of the period were attempted.

It may be added, that the buildings existing in Athens during that early age (twelve hundred years before the Christian era), were most probably rude in construction, were formed of the simplest materials, and retained the Egyptian features introduced

by Cecrops, the mythical founder of the city. Such edifices could have nothing in common with the impressions of Greek civilization that exist in every educated mind.

Influenced by these considerations, I have selected a later period, in the hope of conveying an idea of Athens as it would have appeared to one of its own inhabitants, at a time when it had attained its greatest splendour in literature and in art—when it stood in its pride and glory, ennobled by a race of illustrious men, and containing the most beautiful objects the world had ever seen.

The Acropolis, on its rocky eminence, surrounded by marble Temples, has been restored, together with the Theatre of Bacchus, wherein multitudes once thronged to listen to the majestic poetry of Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides; and near which stands that memorable hill from whence the words of sacred truth were first promulgated to the Athenian citizens by apostolic inspiration.

A portion of the music, hitherto introduced in the "*Midsummer-Night's Dream*," will be retained (under the direction of Mr. J. L. Hatton), with the addition of the overtures, *entr'actes*, and airs composed expressly for this play by the late Dr. Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy, and pronounced to be amongst the most successful efforts of that celebrated master.

CHARLES KEAN.

MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM.

ACT I.

SCENE I.—A TERRACE ADJOINING THE PALACE
OF THESEUS, OVERLOOKING THE CITY OF
ATHENS.(A)

*Enter THESEUS,(B) HIPPOLYTA,(C) PHILOSTRATE, and
Attendants.*

The. Now, fair Hippolyta, our nuptial hour
Draws on apace; four happy days bring in
Another moon; but, oh, methinks, how slow
This old moon wanes.

Hsp. Four days will quickly steep themselves in nights;
Four nights will quickly dream away the time;
And then the moon, like to a silver bow
New bent in heaven, shall behold the night
Of our solemnities.

The. Go, Philostrate,
Stir up the Athenian youth to merriments;
Awake the pert and nimble spirit of mirth;
Turn melancholy forth to funerals,
The pale companion is not for our pomp.

[*Exit PHILOSTRATE.*

Hippolyta, I woo'd thee with my sword,
And won thy love, doing thee injuries;
But I will wed thee in another key,
With pomp, with triumph,¹ and with revelry.

¹ Shows.

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Enter EGEUS, HERMIA, LYSANDER, and
DEMETRIUS.

Ege. Happy be Theseus, our renowned prince!

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 prince,
This man hath witch'd the bosom of my child:
Turn'd her obedience which is due to me,
To stubborn hardness:—And, my gracious lord,
Be it so she will not here before your grace
Consent to marry with Demetrius,
I beg the ancient privilege of Athens;
As she is mine, I may dispose of her:
Which shall be either to this gentleman,
Or to her death; according to our law.

Her. I do entreat your grace to pardon me.
I know not by what power I am made bold,
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;
Take time to pause: and, by the next new moon
(The sealing-day betwixt my love and me),
Upon that day either prepare to die,
For disobedience to your father's will,
Or else, to wed Demetrius, as he would:
Or on Diana's altar to protest,
For aye, austerity and single life.

Lys. I am, my lord, as well deriv'd as he,
As well possess'd; my love is more than his;
My fortunes every way as fairly rank'd;
And, which is more,
I am belov'd of Hermia:

Why should not I, then, prosecute my right?
 Demetrius, I'll avouch it to his head,
 Made love to Nedar's daughter, Helena,
 And won her soul; and she, sweet lady, dotes,
 Devoutly dotes,—dotes in idolatry,
 Upon this spotted² and inconstant man.

The. I must confess, that I have heard so much,
 And with Demetrius thought to have spoke thereof;
 But, being over-full of self-affairs,
 My mind did lose it.—But, Demetrius, come;
 And come, Egeus, you shall go with me,
 I have some private schooling for you both.—
 For you, fair Hermia, look you arm yourself
 To fit your fancies to your father's will:
 Or else the law of Athens yields you up
 To death, or to a vow of single life.—
 Come, my Hippolyta.

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

Lys. How now, my love? Why are your cheeks so pale?

Her. Belike, for want of rain; which I could well
 Beteem them³ from the tempest of mine eyes.

Lys. Ah me! for ought that ever I could read,
 Could ever hear by tale or history,
 The course of true love never did run smooth:
 But, either it was different in blood;
 Or, if there were a sympathy in choice,
 War, death, or sickness did lay siege to it;
 Making it momentary as a sound,
 Swift as a shadow, short as any dream;
 Brief as the lightning in the collied night,⁴

² ———spotted—] As *spotless* is innocent, so *spotted* is wicked.
 JOHNSON.

³ Beteem *them*—] Give them, bestow upon them. The word is
 used by Spencer.

⁴ ———the collied night,] *Collied*, i. e., black, smutted with coal;
 a word still used in the Midland Counties.

That, in a spleen,⁶ unfolds both heaven and earth,
 And ere a man hath power to say—Behold!
 The jaws of darkness do devour it up:
 So quick bright things come to confusion.

Her. If thus true lovers have been ever cross'd,
 Then let us teach our trial patience.

Lys. A good persuasion; therefore, hear me, *Hermia*.
 I have a widow aunt,
 Of great revenue, and she hath no child:
 From Athens is her house remote seven leagues.
 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 to-morrow night;
 And in the wood,
 Where I did meet thee once with *Helena*,
 There will I stay for thee.

Her. My good *Lysander*!
 I swear to thee, by Cupid's strongest bow;
 By the simplicity of *Venus*' doves;
 By that which knitteth souls, and prospers loves;
 By all the vows that ever men have broke,
 In number more than ever women spoke;—
 In that same place thou hast appointed me,
 To-morrow truly will I meet with thee.

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

Enter HELENA.

Her. How now, fair *Helena*! Whither away?

Hel. Call you me fair? that fair again unsay.
 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. The more I hate, the more he follows me.

Hel. The more I love, the more he hateth me.

⁶ Spleen—a sudden, hasty fit.

Her. Take comfort ; he no more shall see my face ;
Lysander and myself will fly this place.

Lys. Helen, to you our minds we will unfold :
To-morrow night, when Phoebe doth behold
Her silver visage in the wat'ry glass,
Decking with liquid pearl the bladed grass
(A time that lovers' flights doth still conceal),
Through Athens' gates have we devis'd to steal.

Her. And in the wood, where often you and I
Upon faint⁶ primrose-beds were wont to lie,
Emptying our bosoms of their counsel sweet ;⁷
There my Lysander and myself shall meet :
And thence, from Athens, turn away our eyes,
To seek new friends and stranger companies.
Farewell, sweet playfellow ; pray thou for us,
And good luck grant thee thy Demetrius !—
Keep word, Lysander : we must starve our sight
From lovers' food, till morrow deep midnight.

[*Exit* HERMIA.]

Lys. I will, my Hermia.—Helena, adieu :
As you on him, Demetrius dote on you ! [*Exit* LYSANDER.]

Hel. How happy some, o'er other some can be !
Through Athens I am thought as fair as she.
But what of that ? Demetrius thinks not so ;
He will not know what all but he do know.
And as he errs, doting on Hermia's eyes,
So I, admiring of his qualities,
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 beguil'd.
As waggish boys in game⁸ themselves forswear,

⁶ Whether the epithet *faint* has reference to the colour or smell of Primroses, let the reader determine.—STEEVENS.

⁷ That is, emptying our bosoms of those secrets upon which we were wont to consult each other with so sweet a satisfaction.

⁸ —in game—] *Game* here signifies *sport, jest*.

So the boy Love is perjur'd every where:
 For ~~ere~~ Demetrius look'd on Hermia's eyne,⁹
 He hail'd down oaths, that he was only mine;
 And when this hail some heat from Hermia felt,
 So he dissolv'd, 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 dear recompense:
 But herein mean I to enrich my pain,
 To have his sight thither, and back again. [Exit.]

SCENE II.—WORKSHOP OF QUINCE, THE
 CARPENTER.

*The Furniture and Tools introduced in this Scene are
 copied from discoveries at Herculaneum.*

Enter SNUG, BOTTOM, FLUTE, SNOUT, QUINCE, and
 STARVELING.¹⁰

Qui. Is all our company here?

Bot. You were best to call them generally, man by man,
 according to the scrip.¹¹

⁹ —Hermia's eyne,] This plural is common both in Chaucer and Spenser.

¹⁰ In this scene Shakespeare takes advantage of his knowledge of the theatre, to ridicule the prejudices and competitions of the players. Bottom, who is generally acknowledged the principal actor, declares his inclination to be for a tyrant, for a part of fury, tumult, and noise, such as every young man pants to perform when he first steps upon the stage. The same Bottom, who seems bred in a tiring-room, has another histrionical passion. He is for engrossing every part, and would exclude his inferiors from all possibility of distinction. He is therefore desirous to play Pyramus, Thisbe, and the Lion, at the same time.—JOHNSON.

¹¹ —the scrip.] *id est.*, the written list.

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

Bot. First, good Peter Quince, say what the play treats on.

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

Bot. A very good piece of work, I assure you, and a merry.¹³ Now, good Peter Quince, call forth your actors by the scroll: Masters, spread yourselves.¹³

Qui. Answer, as I call you.—Nick Bottom, the weaver.

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

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

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

Qui. A lover, that kills himself most gallantly 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. Yet my chief humour is for a tyrant: I could play Ercles¹⁴ rarely, or a part to tear a cat in, to make all split.

“ The raging rocks,
 “ With shivering shocks,
 “ Shall break the locks
 “ Of prison-gates:
 “ And Phibbus¹⁵ car
 “ Shall shine from far,
 “ And make and mar
 “ The foolish fates.”

This was lofty!—Now name the rest of the players.

Qui. Francis Flute, the bellows-mender.¹⁶

Flu. Here, Peter Quince.

¹³ This is designed as a ridicule on the titles of our ancient moralities and interludes. Thus Skelton's *magnificence* is called “a goodly interlude and a merry.”—STEEVENS.

¹³ —spread yourselves.] i. e., stand separately, not in a group.

¹⁴ *id. est.*, Hercules.

¹⁵ Phoebus.

¹⁶ I have been told that a bellows-mender was one who had the care of organs, regals, &c.—STEEVENS.

Qui. You must take Thisby on you.

Flu. What is Thisby? a wandering knight?

Qui. It is the lady that Pyramus must love.

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

Qui. That's all one.

Bot. 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!*

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

Bot. Well, proceed.

Qui. Robin Starveling, the tailor.

Sta. Here, Peter Quince.

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

Sno. Here, Peter Quince.

Qui. You, Pyramus's 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.

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

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

Qui. An you should do it too terribly, you would fright 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 gentle as any sucking dove; I will roar you an 'twere¹⁷ any nightingale.

Qui. You can play no part but Pyramus: for Pyramus is a sweet-faced man; a proper man, as one shall see in a

¹⁷ — an 'twere—] *An* means *as if*.

summer's day; a most lovely, gentleman-like man; therefore you must needs play Pyramus.

Bot. Well, I will undertake it.

Qui. 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 moon-light; there will we rehearse: for if we meet in the city, we shall be dogg'd with company, and our devices known. In the mean time I will draw a bill of properties,¹⁸ such as our play wants. I pray you, fail me not.

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

Qui. At the prince's oak we meet.

Bot. Enough; Hold, or cut bow-strings.¹⁹

[*Exeunt QUINCE, BOTTOM, and others.*]

¹⁸ — *properties.*] *Properties* are whatever articles are wanted in a play for the actors, according to their respective parts, dresses and scenes excepted. The person who delivers them out is to this day called the *property-man*.

¹⁹ *At the prince's oak we meet.*

— *Hold, or cut bow-strings.*] To meet, *whether bow-strings hold or are cut*, is to meet in all events. To cut the bow-string, when bows were in use, was probably a common practice of those who bore enmity to the archer.

END OF ACT FIRST.

HISTORICAL NOTES TO ACT FIRST.

(A) Athens, the capital of Attica, was situated on a promontory, formed by the confluence of two rivers, the Ilissus and the Cephissus. It was built on the side of an abrupt rocky eminence, rising out of an extensive plain. Its origin, like that of most ancient and renowned cities, is involved in fable. Its reputed founder is Cecrops, described by some as an Egyptian, and also as a contemporary with Moses. B.C. 1556.

Athens was burnt by Xerxes in B.C. 480, but was soon rebuilt under the administration of Themistocles, and was adorned with public buildings by Cimon, and especially by Pericles, in whose time (B.C. 460—429) it reached its greatest splendour. Its beauty was chiefly owing to its public buildings, for the private houses were mostly insignificant, and its streets badly laid out.

The summit of the Acropolis was covered with temples, statues of bronze and marble, and various other works of art. Of the temples, the grandest was the Parthenon, sacred to the "virgin" goddess Athena (Minerva); and North of the Parthenon was the magnificent Erechtheum, containing three separate temples, one of Athena Polios, or the "Protectress of the State," the Erechtheum proper, or sanctuary of Erectheus, and the Pandrosium, or sanctuary of Pandrosos, the daughter of Cecrops. Between the Parthenon and Erechtheum was the colossal statue of Athena Promachos, or the "Fighter in the Front," whose helmet and spear was the first object on the Acropolis visible from the sea.—*Dr. Smith's "Classical Dictionary."*

(B) Theseus was the son of Ægeus, king of Athens, and of Æthra, daughter of Pittheus, king of Troezen. On his return to Athens, Ægeus left Æthra behind him at Troezen, enjoining her not to send their son to Athens till he was strong enough to lift from beneath a stone of prodigious weight his father's sword and sandals, which would serve as tokens of recognition. Theseus, when grown to manhood, accomplished the appointed feat with ease, and took the road to Athens over the isthmus of Corinth, a journey beset with many dangers from robbers who barbarously mutilated or killed the unhappy wayfarers who fell into their hands. But Theseus overcame them all, and arrived in safety

at Athens, where he was recognised by Ægeus, and declared his successor. Among his many memorable achievements, the most famous was his deliverance of Athens from the frightful tribute imposed upon it by Minos, for the murder of his son. This consisted of seven youths and seven maidens, whom the Athenians were compelled to send every nine years to Crete, there to be devoured by the Minotaur, a monster with a human body and a bull's head, which Minos kept concealed in an inextricable labyrinth. The third ship was already on the point of sailing with its cargo of innocent victims, when Theseus offered to go with them, hoping to put an end for ever to the horrible tribute. Ariadne, the daughter of Minos, became enamoured of the hero, and having supplied him with a clue to trace the windings of the labyrinth, Theseus succeeded in killing the monster, and in tracking his way out of the mazy lair. As he returned towards Athens, the pilot forgot to hoist the white sail, agreed on as the signal of success, in place of the black sail usually carried by the vessel which bore that melancholy tribute, whereupon Ægeus thinking that his son had perished, threw himself into the sea which afterwards bore his name.

Theseus having now ascended the throne, B. C. 1235, proceeded to lay the foundations of the future greatness of Athens. He united into one political body the twelve independent states into which Cecrops had divided Attica, and made Athens the capital of the new kingdom. In order to accommodate the increased population of the city, he covered with buildings the ground lying to the south of the Cecropian citadel; and in commemoration of the union, he instituted the festivals of the Panathenæa and Synoika, in honour of Athena (Minerva), the patron goddess of the city. He then divided the citizens into three classes, namely *Eupatridæ*, or nobles, *Geomori*, or husbandmen, and *Demiurgi*, or artisans. He is further said to have established a constitutional government, retaining in his own hands only certain definite powers and privileges, so that he was regarded in a later age as the founder of civil equality at Athens. He also extended the Attic territory to the confines of Peloponnesus, and established the games in honour of Poseidon (Neptune,) which were celebrated on the Isthmus. He subsequently engaged in a variety of adventures in conjunction with Hercules and Pirithous, king of the Lapithæ. But on his return to Athens after these exploits, the Athenians refused to obey him any longer, whereupon he retired to the island of Scyros, and was there murdered through the treachery of King Lycomedes.—*Dr. Smith's "History of Greece."*

(c) Hippolyta, Queen of the Amazons, marched with her army into Attica, to take vengeance on Theseus for having carried off her sister Antiope, but, being conquered by Theseus, she fled to Megara, where she died of grief, and was buried. In some accounts, Hippolyta, and not Antiope, is said to have been married to Theseus.—*Vide Smith's "Classical Dictionary."*

B

ACT II.

SCENE I.—A WOOD NEAR ATHENS.

MOONLIGHT.

*Enter a FAIRY, and 2nd Singing FAIRY.**Fai.* How now, spirit! whither wander you?

SONG.

2nd Fai. Over hill, over dale,
 Thorough bush, thorough briar,
 Over park, over pale,
 Thorough flood, thorough fire,
 I do wander every where,
 Swifter than the moon's sphere;
 And I serve the fairy queen,
 To dew her orbs upon the green:¹
 The cowslips tall, her pensioners be,
 In their gold coats spots you see.

Farewell, thou dainty spirit, I'll be gone;
 Our queen and all our elves come here anon.

Fai. The king doth keep his revels here to-night;
 Take heed, the queen come not within his sight;
 For Oberon is passing fell and wrath,
 Because that she, as her attendant, hath
 A lovely boy, stol'n from an Indian king:
 She never had so sweet a changeling:²

¹ *To dew her orbs upon the green:*] These *orbs* are circles supposed to be made by the fairies on the ground, whose verdure proceeds from the fairies' care to water them.

² *Changeling* is commonly used for the child supposed to be left by the fairies, but here for a child taken away.—JOHNSON.

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 star-light sheen;³
But they do square ;⁴ that all their elves, for fear,
Creep into acorn cups, and hide them there.

2nd Fai. Either I mistake his shape and making quite,
Or hither comes that shrewd and knavish sprite,
Call'd Robin Good-fellow ; (A)

[*Puck rises on a mushroom—Music.*

Are you not he,
That fright the maidens of the villagery ;
And sometimes make the drink to bear no barm ;⁵
Mislead night-wanderers, laughing at their harm ?
Those that Hobgoblin call you, and sweet Puck, (B)
You do their work, and they shall have good luck :
Are not you he ?

Puck. Fairy ; thou speak'st aright :
I am that merry wanderer of the night.
I jest to Oberon, and make him smile,
And sometime lurk I in a gossip's bowl,
In very likeness of a roasted crab ;⁶
And, when she drinks, against her lips I bob,
And, on her wither'd dew-lap pour the ale.
Sometime for three-foot stool she taketh me ;
Then slip I from her seat, down topples she,
And then the whole quire hold their hips and laugh ;
But room, Fairy, here comes Oberon.

2nd Fai. And here my mistress :—'Would that he were
gone !

[*Music.*

³ — *sheen,*] Shining, bright, gay.

⁴ *But they do square ;*] To square here is to quarrel.

⁵ — *no barm ;*] *Barme* is a name for yeast.

⁶ — *a roasted crab ;*] i. e., a wild apple of that name

Enter OBERON (C), with his train, and TITANIA (D), with hers, at opposite sides.

Obe. Ill met by moon-light, proud Titania.

Tit. What, jealous Oberon? Fairies, skip hence;
Why art thou here,
Come from the farthest steep of India?
But that, forsooth, the bouncing Amazon,
Your buskin'd mistress, and your warrior love,
To Theseus must be wedded; and you come
To give them both joy and prosperity.

Obe. How canst thou thus, for shame, Titania,
Glance at my credit with Hippolyta,
Knowing I know thy love to Theseus?

Tit. These are the forgeries of jealousy;
And never, since the middle summer's spring,⁷
Met we on hill, in dale, forest, or mead,
To dance our ringlets to the whistling wind,
But with thy brawls thou hast disturb'd our sport.

Obe. Why should Titania cross her Oberon?
I do but beg a little changeling boy,
To be my henchman. (E)

Tit. Set your heart at rest,
Thy fairy land buys not the child of me.
His mother was a vot'ress of my order:
And, in the spiced Indian air, by night,
Full often hath she gossip'd by my side;
And sat with me on Neptune's yellow sands.
But she, being mortal, of that boy did die;
And, for her sake, I do rear up her boy:
And, for her sake, I will not part with him.

Obe. How long within this wood intend you stay?

Tit. 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.

⁷ *And never, since the middle summer's spring, &c.] The middle summer's spring, is, I apprehend, the season when trees put forth their second, or, as they are frequently called, their midsummer shoots.*
—HENLEY.

Obe. Give me that boy, and I will go with thee.

Tit. Not for thy Fairy kingdom.—Fairies, away :
We shall chide down-right, if I longer stay. [*Music.*
[*Exeunt TITANIA, and her train.*

Obe. Well, go thy way : thou shalt not from this grove,
Till I torment thee for this injury.—
My gentle Puck, come hither : Thou remember'st
Since once I sat upon a promontory,
And heard a mermaid, on a dolphin's back,⁸
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 musick.

Puck. I remember.

Obe. That very time I saw (but thou could'st not),
Flying between the cold moon and the earth,
Cupid all arm'd : a certain aim he took
At a fair vestal, throned by the west ;⁹
And loos'd 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 wat'ry moon ;
And the imperial votress passed on,

⁸ "A mermaid on a dolphin's back" is supposed by some commentators to be an allegorical allusion to Mary Queen of Scots (who was at one time caricatured as a mermaid), and bears reference to her marriage with the Dauphin of France, son of Henry II., while the succeeding line, "uttering such dulcet and unharmonious breath," alludes to her great abilities of genius and learning.

"That the rude sea grew civil at her song," is conjectured to mean Scotland, encircled with the ocean, which rose up in arms against the Regent while Mary was in France, but her return home presently quieted those disorders.

"Certain stars shot madly from their spheres,

To hear the sea-maid's music."

By which is meant the Earls of Northumberland and Westmoreland, who fell in Mary's quarrel ; and principally the great Duke of Norfolk, whose projected marriage with her was attended with such fatal consequences.

⁹ At a fair vestal, throned by the west ;] A compliment to Queen Elizabeth.

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In maiden meditation, fancy-free.¹⁰
 Yet mark'd I where the bolt of Cupid fell :
 It fell upon a little western flower,—
 Before, milk-white ; now purple with love's wound,—
 And maidens call it love-in-idleness.
 Fetch me that flower ; the herb I show'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 is seen.
 Fetch me this herb : and be thou here again,
 Ere the leviathan can swim a league.

Puck. I'd put a girdle round about the earth

In forty minutes.

[*Music—Exit PUCK.*]

Obe. Having once this juice,
 I'll watch Titania when she is asleep,
 And drop the liquor of it in her eyes :
 The next thing then she waking looks upon,
 She shall pursue it with the soul of love.
 And ere I take this charm off from her sight,
 I'll make her render up her page to me.
 But who comes here ? I am invisible ;
 And I will overhear their conference.

Enter DEMETRIUS, HELENA following him.

Dem. Where is Lysander, and fair Hermia ?
 Thou told'st me, they were stol'n into this wood ;
 Hence, get thee gone, and follow me no more.
 You do impeach your modesty¹¹ too much
 To leave the city, and commit yourself
 Into the hands of one that loves you not.

Hel. Your virtue is my privilege for that.¹²
 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 :

¹⁰ — *fancy free.*] i. e., exempt from the power of love.

¹¹ — *impeach your modesty—*] i. e., bring it into question.

¹² — *for that.*] i. e., For leaving the city.

Then how can it be said, I am alone,
When all the world is here to look on me?

Dem. I will not stay thy question;¹³ let me go:
Or, if thou follow me, do not believe

But I shall do thee mischief in the wood. [Exit.]

Hel. Ay, in the temple, in the town, the field,
You do me mischief. Demetrius!

I'll follow thee, and

Die upon the hand¹⁴ I love so well. [Exit HELENA.]

Obe. Fare thee well, nymph: ere he do leave this grove,
Thou shalt fly him, and he shall seek thy love. [Music.]

Re-enter PUCK.

Hast thou the flower there? Welcome, wanderer.

Puck. Ay there it is.

Obe. I pray thee, give it me.

I know a bank whereon the wild thyme blows,
Where ox-lips¹⁵ and the nodding violet grows;¹⁶
There sleeps the Fairy Queen, some time of the night,
Lull'd in these bowers with dances and delight;

And with the juice of this I'll streak her eyes,
And make her full of hateful fantasies.
Take thou some of it, and seek through this grove:
A sweet Athenian lady is in love
With a disdainful youth: anoint his eyes;
But do it, when the next thing he espies
May be the lady: Thou shalt know the man
By the Athenian garments he hath on.
Effect it with some care; that he may prove
More fond on her, than she upon her love:

¹³ Discourse—conversation.

¹⁴ To die upon the hand, &c.] To die upon, &c., in our author's language, perhaps, means—"to die by the hand."

¹⁵ Where ox-lips—] The *oxlip* is the greater cowslip.

¹⁶ Nodding violet grows;] *Id est*, that declines its head, like drowsy person.—STEEVENS.

And look thou meet me ere the first cock crow.

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

[*Music.* OBERON *glides away.*]

SCENE II.—TITANIA'S BOWER. ANOTHER
PART OF THE WOOD.

Titania and Fairies Dance.

Tit. Come, a fairy song; sing me now asleep;
Then to your offices, and let me rest.

SONG AND CHORUS.

1st Fai. You spotted snakes, with double tongue,¹⁷
Thorny hedge-hogs, be not seen;
Newts,¹⁸ 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.

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

CHORUS.

Philomel, with melody, &c.

1st Fai. Hence, away; now all is well:
One, aloof, stand sentinel.

[*Exeunt FAIRIES.* *TITANIA sleeps.*]

¹⁷ — with double tongue,] our author means *forked*.

¹⁸ Newts, and blind-worms,] The *newt* is the *eft*, the *blind worm* is the *Cecilia* or *slow-worm*.

Enter OBERON. Music.

INCANTATION.

Obe. What thou seest, when thou dost wake,

[Squeezes the flower on TITANIA'S eye-lids.

Do it for thy true-love take;
 Love, and languish for his sake:
 Be it ounce,¹⁹ 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.

[Music. Exit.

Enter LYSANDER and HERMIA.

Lys. Fair Love, you faint with wandering in the wood:

And to speak truth, I have forgot our way;

We'll rest us, Hermia, if you think it good,

And tarry for the comfort of the day.

Her. Be it so, Lysander, find you out a bed,

For I upon this bank will rest my head.

And good night, sweet friend:

Thy love ne'er alter, till thy sweet life end!

Lys. Amen, Amen, to that fair prayer say I;

And then end life, when I end loyalty!

Here is my bed: Sleep give thee all his rest!

Her. With half that wish the wisher's eye be press'd!

[They sleep.

Enter PUCK. Music.

Puck. Through the forest have I gone,

But Athenian found I none,

Night and silence! who is here?

Weeds of Athens he doth wear:

This is he, my master said,

Despised the Athenian maid;

And here the maiden, sleeping sound,

On the dank and dirty ground.

¹⁹ *Be it ounce,*] The ounce is a small tiger, or tiger-cat.

Churl, upon thine eyes I throw
 All the power this charm doth owe :²⁰
 When thou wak'st, let love forbid
 Sleep his seat on thy eye-lid.
 So awake, when I am gone ;
 For I must now to Oberon.

[*Music. Exit.*]

Enter DEMETRIUS and HELENA, hastily.

Hel. Stay, tho' thou kill me, sweet Demetrius.

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

Hel. O, wilt thou darkling²¹ leave me? do not so.

Dem. Stay, on thy peril ; I alone will go.

[*Exit DEMETRIUS.*]

Hel. O, I am out of breath in this fond chase !
 The more my prayer, the lesser is my grace²²
 Happy is Hermia, wheresoe'er she lies ;
 For she hath blessed and attractive eyes.
 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. And run through fire I will, for thy sweet sake.

[*Walking.*]

Transparent Helena! Nature here shows art,
 That through thy bosom makes me see thy heart.
 Where is Demetrius? O, how fit a word
 Is that vile name, to perish on my sword!

Hel. Do not say so, Lysander ; say not so,
 What though he love your Hermia? Yet, 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 now I love :
 Who will not change a raven for a dove?

²⁰ *All the power this charm doth owe:]* i. e., all the power it possesses.

²¹ *—wilt thou darkling—]* i. e., in the dark.

²² *— my grace.]* My acceptableness, the favour that I can gain.

Hel. Wherefore was I to this keen mockery born?
 When, at your hands, did I deserve this scorn?
 Is't not enough? is't not enough, young man,
 That I did never, no, nor never can,
 Deserve a sweet look from Demetrius' eye,
 But you must flout my insufficiency?
 Good troth, you do me wrong, good sooth, you do.
 In such disdainful manner me to woo.
 But fare you well: perforce I must confess.
 I thought you lord of more true gentleness.²³
 O, that a lady of one man refus'd,
 Should, of another, therefore be abus'd! [Exit.

Lys. She sees not Hermia:—Hermia, sleep thou there;
 And never may'st thou come Lysander near!
 And all my powers, address your love and might,
 To honour Helen, and to be her knight! [Exit.

Her. (starting.) Help me, Lysander, help me! do thy
 best,
 To pluck this crawling serpent from my breast!
 Ah 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, remov'd? Lysander, dear!
 Alack, where are you? speak, an if you hear;
 No?—then I well perceive you are not nigh:
 Either death, or you, I'll find immediately. [Exit.

*Enter QUINCE, SNUG, BOTTOM, FLUTE, SNOUT, and
 STARVELING.* (F)

Bot. Are we all met?

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

Bot. Peter Quince—

²³ *True gentleness.*] Gentleness is equivalent to what in modern
 language we should call the spirit of a gentleman.

Qui. What say'st thou, bully Bottom ?

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

Sno. By'r'lakin, a parlous fear.²⁴

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

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

Sta. I fear it, I promise you.

Bot. Masters, you ought to consider with yourselves : to bring in 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 it.

Sno. Another prologue must tell he is not a lion.

Bot. Nay, you must name his name, and half his face must be seen through the lion's neck ; and he himself must speak through, saying thus, or to the same defect.—Ladies, or fair ladies, I would wish you not to fear, not to tremble. 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.(g)

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

Bot. One must come in with a bush of thorns and a lanthorn, and say, he comes to disfigure, or to present, the person of moon-shine.

Qui. 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 never can bring in a wall.—What say you, Bottom ?

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

²⁴ By'r'lakin, a parlous fear.] By our ladykin, or little lady. *Parlous* is a word corrupted from *perilous*, i.e., dangerous.

Qui. 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 ;²⁵ and so every one according to his cue.

Enter PUCK, behind. Music.

Qui. Speak, Pyramus :—Thisby, stand forth.

Pyr. *Thisby, the flowers have odious savours sweet,—*

Qui. Odours, odours.

Pyr. — *odours savours sweet :*

So hath thy breath, my dearest Thisby dear.—

But, hark, a voice ! stay thou but here a while,

And by and by I will to thee appear.

{ Music. Exeunt PUCK and BOTTOM.

Flute. Must I speak now ?

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

Thi. *Most radiant Pyramus, most lilly-white of hue,
Of colour like the red rose on triumphant brier,
Most brisky juvenal,²⁶ and eke most lovely Jew,
As true as truest horse, that yet would never tire,
I'll meet thee, Pyramus, at Ninny's tomb.*

Qui. Ninus' tomb, man : Why you must not speak that yet ; that you answer to Pyramus : you speak all your part at once, cues and all.²⁷—Pyramus enter ; your cue is past ; it is *never tire*.

*Re-enter PUCK, waving his hand, and then retires ; and
BOTTOM, with an ass's head. Music.*

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

Pyr. *If I were fair, Thisby, I were only thine :—*

²⁵ — that brake ;] Brake signifies here a thicket, or furze bush.

²⁶ — juvenal,] i. e., young man.

²⁷ — cues and all.] A cue, in stage phrase, is the last few words of the preceding speech, and serves as a hint to him who is to speak next.

Qui. O monstrous! O strange! we are haunted. Pray, masters! fly, masters! help! [*Exeunt CLOWNS.*]

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

Re-enter SNOUT.

Sno. O Bottom, thou art changed! what do I see on thee? An ass's head?

Bot. What do you see? you see an ass's head of your own: Do you?

Re-enter QUINCE.

Qui. Bless thee, Bottom! bless thee! thou art translated.

[*Exit.*]

Bot. I see their knavery: this is to make an ass of me; to fright me, if they could. But I will not stir from this place, do what they can: I will walk up and down here, and I will sing, that they shall hear I am not afraid. [*Sings.*]

*The ousel-cock,²⁸ so black of hue,
With orange-tawney bill,
The throstle²⁹ with his note so true,
The wren with little quill;*

Tit. What angel wakes me from my flowery bed. [*Waking.*]

Bot. *The finch, the sparrow, and the lark,
The plain-song cuckoo³⁰ gray,
Whose note full many a man doth mark,
And dares not answer, nay.*

Tit. I pray thee, gentle mortal, sing again:
Mine ear is much enamour'd of thy note.

²⁸ *The ousel-cock.*] The *ousel cock* is generally understood to be the cock blackbird; but the *Ouzel* differs from the *Blackbird* by having a white crescent upon the breast, and is, besides, rather larger.

²⁹ *The throstle was the nightingale.*

³⁰ — *plain-song cuckoo, &c.*] That is, the cuckoo, who, having no variety of strains, sings in *plain song*, or in *plano cantu*; by which expression the uniform modulation or simplicity of the *chant* was anciently distinguished, in opposition to *prick-song*, or *variegated musick* sung by note.

So is mine eye enthralled to thy shape;
On the first view, to say, to swear, I love thee.

Bot. Methinks, mistress, you should have little reason for that: And yet, to say the truth, reason and love keep little company together now-a-days.

Tit. Thou art as wise as thou art beautiful.

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

Tit. Out of this wood do not desire to go;
Thou shalt remain here, whether thou wilt or no.
For I do love thee: therefore, go with me;
I'll give thee fairies to attend on thee.

Peas-blossom! Cobweb! Moth! and Mustard-seed!

[*Music.*

Enter Four FAIRIES.

1st Fai. Ready.

2nd Fai. And I.

3rd Fai. And I.

4th Fai. And I.

All. Where shall we go?

Tit. Be kind and courteous to this gentleman;
Hop in his walks, and gambol in his eyes;
Nod to him, elves, and do him courtesies.

1st Fai. Hail, mortal!

2nd Fai. Hail!

3rd Fai. Hail!

4th Fai. Hail!

Bot. I cry your worships' mercy, heartily. I beseech, your worship's name.

Cob. Cobweb.

Bot. I shall desire you of more acquaintance, good master Cobweb: If I cut my finger, I shall make bold with you.—Your name, honest gentleman?

Pea. Peas-blossom.

Bot. Peas-blossom, I shall desire more acquaintance.—Your name, I beseech you, sir?

Mus. Mustard-seed.

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Bot. Good master Mustard-seed, I know you well: I promise you, your kindred hath made my eyes water ere now.

Tit. Come, wait upon him; lead him to my bower.
The moon, methinks, looks with a watery eye;
Tie up my love's tongue, bring him silently.

[*Music—Exeunt.*]

END OF ACT SECOND.

HISTORICAL NOTES TO ACT SECOND.

(A) Robin Goodfellow is mentioned by Cartwright (Ordinary Act III., sc. i.), as a spirit particularly fond of disconcerting and disturbing domestic peace and economy.

The following anecdote is one out of many related in the life, entitled, "Robin Good-fellow; his mad pranks, and merry jests, full of honest mirth, and is a fit medicine for melancholy," which was re-printed from a black letter tract of the utmost rarity, published at London in 1628.

Robin Good-fellow going over a field met with a clownish fellow, to whom he spake in this manner: "Friend," quoth he, "what is a clocke?" "A thing," answered the clowne, "that shewes the time of the day." "Why then," sayd Robin Good-fellow, "bee thou a clocke, and tell me what time of the day it is." "I owe thee not so much service," answered hee againe, "but because thou shalt thinke thyselfe beholding to mee, know that it is the same time of the day as it was yesterday at this time."

These crosse answers vext Robin Good-fellow, so that in himselfe hee vowed to be revenged of him, which he did in this manner.

Robin Good-fellow turned himselfe into a bird, and followed this fellow, who was going into a field a little from that place to catch a horse that was at grasse. The horse being wilde ran over dike and hedge, and the fellow after, but to little purpose, for the horse was too swift for him. Robin was glad of this occasion, for now or never was the time to put his revenge in action.

Presently Robin shaped himselfe like to the horse that the fellow followed, and so stood before the fellow: presently the fellow tooke hold of him and got on his backe, but long had he not rid, but with a stumble he hurled this churlish clowne to the ground, that he almost broke his necke; yet tooke he not this for a sufficient revenge for the crosse answers he had received, but stood still and let the fellow mount him once more.

In the way the fellow was to ride was a great splash of water of a good depth; thorow this must he of necessity ride. No sooner was hee in the midst of it, but Robin Good-fellow left him with nothing but a pack-saddle betwixt his leggs, and in the shape of a fish swomme to the shore, and ran away laughing, *ho, ho, hoh!* leaving the poore fellow almost drowned.

(b) *Those that Hobgoblin call you, and sweet Puck,
You do their work,]*

An account of Puck is given by Drayton, in his *Nymphidia* :—

“ He meeteth Puck, which most men call
“ Hobgoblin, and on him doth fall.
“ This Puck seems but a dreaming dolt,
“ Still walking like a ragged colt,
“ And oft out of a bush doth bolt,
“ Of purpose to deceive us ;
“ And leading us, makes us to stray,
“ Long winter's nights out of the way,
“ And when we stick in mire and clay,
“ He doth with laughter leave us.”

The name Puck signifies fiend or devil. It seems that in the fairy mythology, Puck or Hobgoblin, was the trusty servant of Oberon, and always employed to watch or detect the intrigues of Queen Mab, called by Shakespeare, Titania.

(c) *Enter Oberon,]* Shakespeare may have taken the name of Oberon from the early French romance of Huon of Bourdeaux, which was translated into English, in 1570, by Lord Berners, and is probably the work in which Shakespeare had read of Oberon and Fairy-land. The earliest edition of the English translation now known to exist, bears date in 1601. The editor of *The Canterbury Tales* of Chaucer, in his *Introductory Discourse* (See Vol. IV., p. 161), observes that *Pluto* and *Proserpina*, in *The Merchant's Tale*, appear to have been the true “progenitors of Oberon and Titania.”

(d) *Titania,]* As to the *Fairy Queen* (says Mr. Warton, in his *Observations on Spenser*), considered apart from the race of fairies, Chaucer, in his *Rime of Sir Topas*, mentions her, together with a fairy land. Again, in *The Wif of Bathes Tale*, v. 6439 :

“ In olde dayes of the king Artour,
“ Of which that Bretons speken gret honour ;
“ All was this lond fulfilled of faerie,
“ The *Elf-queene*, with hire joly compaignie
“ Danced ful oft in many a grene mede :
“ This was the old opinion as I rede.”

(e) *Henchman*, page of honour.—This office was abolished by Queen Elizabeth, but probably remained in the city.

Henchmen were a certain number of youths, the sons of gentlemen, who stood or walked near the person of the monarch on all public occasions. They are mentioned in the sumptuary statutes of the 4th of Edward IV., and 24th of Henry VIII. Henchman or Heinsmen, is a German word, as Blount informs us in his “Glossographia,” signifying a domestic, whence our ancients term Hind, a servant in the house of a farmer. Dr. Percy, in a note on the Earl of Northumberland's “Household Book,” with less probability, derives the appellation from their custom of standing by the side, or haunch of their lord.—REED.

At the funeral of Henry VIII., nine Henchmen attended with Sir Francis Bryan, *master of the Henchmen*.—*Strype's "Eccl. Mem., V. II., app. n. 1."*

(F) In the time of Shakspeare there were many companies of players, sometimes five at the same time, contending for the favour of the publick. Of these some were undoubtedly very unskilful and very poor, and it is probable that the design of this scene was to ridicule their ignorance, and the odd expedients to which they might be driven by the want of proper decorations. Bottom was perhaps the head of a rival house, and is therefore honoured with an ass's head.—JOHNSON.

(G) *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.*] There are probably many temporary allusions to particular incidents and characters scattered through our author's plays, which gave a poignancy to certain passages, while the events were recent, and the persons pointed at yet living.—In the speech now before us, I think it not improbable that he meant to allude to a fact which happened in his time, at an entertainment exhibited before Queen Elizabeth. It is recorded in a manuscript collection of anecdotes, stories, &c., entitled, *Merry Passages and Jeasts, MS. Harl. 6395*:

“There was a spectacle presented to Queen Elizabeth upon the water, and among others *Harry Goldingham* was to represent *Arion* upon the dolphin's backe; but finding his voice to be verye hoarse and unpleasant, when he came to perform it, he tears off his disguise, and swears he was none of *Arion*, not he, but even honest *Harry Goldingham*; which blunt discoverie pleased the queene better than if it had gone through in the right way:—yet he could order his voice to an instrument exceeding well.”

ACT III.

SCENE I.—ANOTHER PART OF THE WOOD.

OBERON *discovered. Music.*

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

Enter PUCK. Music.

Here comes my messenger.—How now, mad spirit?
What night-rule¹ 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,² rude mechanicals,
That work for bread upon Athenian stalls,
Were met together to rehearse a play,
Intended for great Theseus' nuptial day.
The shallowest thick-skin of that barren sort,
Who Pyramus presented, in their sport,
An ass's nowl³ I fixed on his head ;
So, at his sight, away his fellows fled :
When in that moment (so it came to pass)
Titania wak'd, and straightway lov'd an ass.

¹ *What night-rule—*] *Night-rule* in this place should seem to mean, what frolick of the night, what revelry is going forward?

² *—patches,*] *Patch* was in old language used as a term of opprobry; perhaps with much the same import as we use *raggomuffin*, or *tatterdemalion*.

³ *An ass's nowl—*] a head.

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

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

Enter DEMETRIUS and HERMIA.

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?
I 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,
Then kill me too.

The sun was not so true unto the day,
As he to me: Would he have stol'n away
From sleeping Hermia?
Hast thou slain him then?

Henceforth be never number'd among men!

Dem. You spend your passion in a mispris'd flood:³
I am not guilty of Lysander's blood;
Nor is he dead, for aught that I can tell.

Her. I pray thee, tell me then that he is well.

Dem. An if I could, what should I get therefore?

Her. A privilege, never to see me more.—
And from thy hated presence part I so:
See me no more, whether he be dead or no. [Exit.

Dem. There is no following her in this fierce vein:
Here, therefore, for a while I will remain.
So sorrow's heaviness doth heavier grow,
For debt that bankrupt sleep doth sorrow owe.

[Lies down.
Obe. What hast thou done? thou hast mistaken quite,
And laid the love-juice on some true-love's sight;
About the wood go swifter than the wind,
And Helena of Athens look thou find:

* —latch'd—] signifies to infect.

³ — in a mispris'd flood:] that is, in a mistaken torrent :

By some illusion see thou bring her here ;
I'll charm his eyes, against she do appear.

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

INCANTATION.

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

Re-enter PUCK.

Puck. Captain of our fairy band,
Helena is here at hand,
And the youth, mistook by me,
Pleading for a lover's fee ;
Shall we their fond pageant see ?
Lord, what fools these mortals be !
Obe. Stand aside : the noise they make,
Will cause Demetrius to awake.

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.

Hel. You do advance your cunning more and more.
These vows are Hermia's ; Will you give her o'er ?

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 ?

Hel. O spiteful fate ! I see you all are bent
To set against me for your merriment.

If you were men, as men you are in show,
 You would not use a gentle lady so.
 You both are rivals, and love Hermia ;
 And now both rivals, to mock Helena :
 A trim exploit, a manly enterprize,
 To conjure tears up in a poor maid's eyes.

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 to my death.

Hel. Never did mockers waste more idle breath.

Dem. Lysander, keep thy Hermia ; I will none :
 If e'er I lov'd her, all that love is gone.
 My heart with 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.

Enter HERMIA.

Her. Oh ! why unkindly didst thou leave me so ?

Lys. Why should he stay whom love doth press to go ?

Her. What love could press Lysander from my side ?

Lys. Lysander's love, that would not let him bide ;
 Fair Helena, who more engilds the night
 Than all yon fiery oes^e and eyes of light.

Her. You speak not as you think ; it cannot be.

Hel. Lo, she is one of this confederacy !
 Injurious Hermia ! most ungrateful maid !
 Have you conspir'd, have you with these contriv'd
 To bait me with this foul derision ?
 Is all the counsel that we two have shar'd,

^e —all yon fiery oes—] Shakespeare uses O for a circle.

The sisters' vows, the hours that we have spent,
 When we have chid the hasty-footed time
 For parting us,—O, and is all forgot?
 All school-days' friendship, childhood innocence?
 Did we not Hermia grow together,
 Like to a double cherry, seeming parted;
 But yet a union in partition,
 Two loving berries moulded on one stem?
 And will you rent our ancient love asunder,
 To join with men in scorning your poor friend?
 But, fare ye well: 'tis partly mine own fault;
 Which death, or absence, soon shall remedy.

Lys. Stay, gentle Helena; hear my excuse;
 My love, my life, my soul, fair Helena;
 Helen, I love thee; by my life, I do.

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

Lys. If thou say so, withdraw, and prove it too.
 Now follow, if thou dar'st, to try whose right,
 Or thine or mine, is most in Helena.

Dem. Follow? nay, I'll go with thee.

[*Exeunt* LYSANDER and DEMETRIUS.]

Her. I am amaz'd, and know not what to say;
 You canker blossom, have you come by night,
 And stol'n my love's heart from him? Fine, i'faith!

Hel. Good Hermia, do not be so bitter with me:
 I evermore did love you, Hermia;
 Did ever keep your counsels; never wrong'd you:
 Save that, in love unto Demetrius,
 I told him of your stealth unto this wood:
 He followed you; for love I followed him;
 But he hath chid me hence, and threatened me,
 And now, so you will let me quiet go,
 To Athens will I bear my folly back,
 And follow you no further.

[*Exit* HELENA.]

Her. Get you gone:
 Here will I rest me till the break of day:—
 Heavens shield Lysander, if they mean a fray!

[*Lies down on bank.*—*Music.*]

Obs. This is thy negligence: still thou mistak'st,
 Or else commit'st thy knaveries wilfully.

Puck. Believe me, king of shadows, I mistook.
Did not you tell me, I should know the man
By the Athenian garments he had on?
And so far blameless proves my enterprize,
That I have 'nointed an Athenian's eyes.

Obe. Thou seest, 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;
Till o'er their brows death-counterfeiting sleep,
With leaden legs and batty wings doth creep:
Then crush this herb into Lysander's eye;
Whose liquor hath such virtuous property,⁷
When they next wake, all this derision
Shall seem a dream, and fruitless vision;
About it, Spirit, haste, make no delay,
We may effect this business yet ere day.

SONG.

Obe. Up and down, up and down;
Spirit lead them up and down:
Thou art fear'd in field and town;
Goblin, lead them up and down.

[*Exit OBERON.—Music.*

[*PUCK waves his hand, and a thick fog pervades the scene.*

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.*

⁷ — virtuous property,] id est, healthy property.

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,
And wilt not come?

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;
Once let gentle day show me her grey light,
I'll find Demetrius, and revenge this spite.

[*Exit.*]

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;
By day's approach look to be visited.

[*Lies down and sleeps.—Music.*]

[*The mist clears off, and discovers the Forest.
DEMETRIUS, LYSANDER, HELENA, and HER-
MIA asleep on separate banks. PUCK advances,
and touches the eyes of each with the magic
herb.*]

CHORUS OF FAIRIES.

On the ground
Sleep sound :
We'll apply
To your eye,

Gentle lover, remedy.

[PUCK *squeezing the juice on* LYSANDEE'S eye.

When thou wak'st,
Thou tak'st
True delight
In the sight

Of thy former lady's eye :
And the country proverb known,
That every man should take his own,
In your waking shall be shown :

Jack shall have Jill ;
Nought shall go ill ;

The man shall have his mare again, and all shall be well.

DANCE OF FAIRIES.

END OF ACT THIRD.

ACT. IV.

SCENE I.—TITANIA'S BOWER.

TITANIA *and* BOTTOM, FAIRIES *attending.**Music.*

Tit. Come, sit thee down upon this flowery bed,
 While I thy amiable cheeks do coy,¹
 And stick musk-roses in thy sleek, smooth head,
 And kiss thy fair large ears, my gentle joy.

Bot. Where's Peas-blossom?

Pea. Ready.

Bot. Scratch my head, Peas-blossom.—Where's Cobweb?

Cob. Ready.

Bot. Good Cobweb, get your weapons in your hand, and kill me a red-hipped humble-bee on the top of a thistle; and, good Cobweb, bring me the honey-bag. Where's Mustard-seed?

Mus. Ready.

Bot. Give me your neif,² Mustard-seed.

Mus. What's your will?

Bot. Nothing, good sir, but to help Peas-blossom to scratch. I must to the barber's; 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.

Tit. What, wilt thou hear some music?

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.

¹ — do coy,] To coy, is to sooth, to stroke.

² — neif,] i.e., fist.

Tit. I have a venturous fairy that shall seek
The squirrel's hoard, and fetch thee 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.

Tit. Fairies, begone, and be a while away.

[*Exeunt FAIRIES.*
[*They sleep. Music.*

OBERON *advances.* Enter PUCK.

Obs. 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,
She, in mild terms, did beg my patience;
I then did ask of her her changeling child;
Which straight she gave me, and her fairy sent
To bear him to my bower in fairy land.
And now I have the boy, I will undo
This hateful imperfection of her eyes.

INCANTATION.

Be, as thou was wont to be;

[*Touching her eyes with an herb.*

See, as thou was wont to see:

Dian's bud o'er Cupid's flower⁴

Hath such force and blessed power.

Now, my Titania; wake you, my sweet queen.

Tit. My Oberon! what visions have I seen!
Methought, I was enamour'd of an ass.

Obe. There lies your love.

Tit. How came these things to pass?

O, how mine eyes do loath his visage now!

Obe. Silence, a while.—Robin take off this head.—

[*PUCK takes the ass's head off BOTTOM,*
and flies away.

³ — and be all ways away.] i.e., disperse yourselves, and scout
out severally, in your watch, that danger approach us from no
quarter.

⁴ Dian's bud o'er Cupid's flower —] 'Dian's bud, is the bud of
Agnus Castus, or *Chaste Tree*. Cupid's flower is the *Viola Tricolor*,
or *Love in Idleness*.

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Obe. Sound, musick. [*Music.*] Come, my queen, take hands with me ;

Now thou and I are new in amity ;
We will, to-morrow midnight, solemnly,
Dance in Prince Theseus' house triumphantly,
And bless it to all fair posterity.

TRIO.

1st Fai. Fairy king, attend and mark ;
I do hear the morning lark.

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

2nd Fai. Fairy king, attend and mark,
I do hear the morning lark.

1st Fai. Come, my lord ; and in our flight,
Tell me how it came this night,
Sleeping here our queen was found,
With this mortal on the ground. [*Exeunt.*]

[*As they go out BOTTOM awakes.*]

Bot. When my cue comes, call me, and I will answer :—my next is, *Most fair Pyramus.*—Hey, ho!—Peter Quince! Flute, the bellows-mender! Snout, the tinker! Starveling! stolen hence, and left me asleep! I have had a most rare vision. I have had a dream,—past the wit of man to say what dream it was : Man is but an ass, if he go about to expound this dream. Methought I was—there is no man can tell what. Methought I was, and methought I had,—But man is but a patched fool,⁵ if he will offer to say what methought I had. The eye of man hath not heard, the ear of man hath not seen : man's hand is not able to taste, his tongue to conceive, nor his heart to report, what my dream was. I will get Peter Quince to write a ballad of this dream : it shall be called Bottom's Dream, because it hath no bottom ; and I will sing it in the latter end of the play, before the prince : Peradventure, to make it the more gracious, I shall sing it at Thisbe's death. [*Exit.*]

⁵ —patched fool,] That is, a fool in a parti-colour'd coat.

SCENE II.—ATHENS. INTERIOR OF QUINCE'S HOUSE.

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

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

Sta. 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?

Qui. 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 handycraft man in Athens.

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

Flu. You must say, paragon: a paramour is, Heaven bless us, a thing of nought.

Snug. If our sport had gone forward, we had all been made men.

Enter BOTTOM.

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

Qui. Bottom!—O most courageous day! O most happy hour!

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

Qui. Let us hear, sweet Bottom.

Bot. Not a word of me. Ali that I will tell you, is—Get your apparel together; and 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, most dear actors, eat no onions, nor garlick; for we are to utter sweet breath; and I do not doubt, but to hear them say, it is a sweet comedy. No more words; away; go away. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—THE WOOD AS IN LAST ACT.
SUNRISE.

DEMETRIUS, LYSANDER, HERMIA, and HELENA
discovered asleep. Horns heard without.

Enter THESEUS, HIPPOLYTA, EGEUS, and train.

The. Go, one of you, find out the forester ;—
And since we have the vaward of the day,⁶
My love shall hear the music of my hounds.
Uncouple in the western valley ; go ;
We will, fair queen, up to the mountain's top,
And mark the musical confusion
Of hounds and echo in conjunction.

Hip. I was with Hercules, and Cadmus, once,
When in a wood of Crete they bay'd the bear
With hounds of Sparta : never did I hear
Such gallant chiding ;⁷ for, besides the groves,
The skies, the fountains, every region near
Seem'd all one mutual cry : I never heard
So musical a discord, such sweet thunder.

The. My hounds are bred out of the Spartan kind,
So flew'd,⁸ so sanded :⁹ and their heads are hung
With ears that sweep away the morning dew ;
Crook-knee'd, and dew-lap'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,

⁶ —the vaward of the day,] *Vaward* is compounded of *van* and *ward*, the forepart.

⁷ —such gallant chiding ;] *Chiding* in this instance means only *sound*.

⁸ *So flew'd,*] Sir T. Hanmer remarks, that *flews* are the large chaps of a deep-mouth'd hound.

⁹ —so sanded :] Of a sandy colour, which is one of the true denotements of a blood-hound.

In Crete, in Sparta, nor in Thessaly :
Judge, when you hear.—But, soft ; what nymphs are
these ?

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

The. Speak, good 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.
No doubt, that they, hearing of our intent,
Came here in grace of our solemnity.—

[*Horns sound.* DEMETRIUS, LYSANDER, HER-
MIA, and HELENA, wake and start up.

The. Good morrow, friends.

Lys. Pardon, my lord.

[*He and the rest kneel to THESEUS.*

The. I pray you all, stand up.

I know you are two 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 I think,
I came with Hermia hither : our intent
Was, to be gone from Athens, where we might be
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 stol'n away, they would, Demetrius,
Thereby to have defeated you and me.

Dem. My lord, fair Helen told me of their stealth,
And I in fury hither follow'd them :
But, my good lord, I wot not by what power,
My love to Hermia seems to me now
As the remembrance of an idle gawd,¹⁰

¹⁰ —an idle gawd,] i. e., bauble, toy, or trifle.

And all the faith, the virtue of my heart,
The object, and the pleasure of mine eye,
Is only Helena.

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

[*Horns sound.*

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

END OF ACT FOURTH.

ACT V.

SCENE I. — ATHENS. INTERIOR OF 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.
The lunatic, the lover, and the poet,
Are of imagination all compact :
One sees more devils than vast hell can hold—
That is the madman : the lover, all as frantic,
Sees Helen's beauty in a brow of Egypt :
The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,
Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven,
And, as imagination bodies forth
The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing
A local habitation and a name.
Here come the lovers, full of joy and mirth.

Enter LYSANDER, DEMETRIUS, HERMIA, and HELENA.

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

Lys. More than to us

Wait on your royal walks, your board, your home !

The. Come now : what masks, what dances shall we
have ?

Where is our usual manager of mirth ?

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What revels are in hand ?

Call Philostrate.

Phi. Here, mighty Theseus.

The. Say, what abridgment¹ have you for this evening ?
What mask ? what musick ?

Phi. There is a brief,² how many sports are ripe ;
Make choice of which your highness will see first.

[*Giving a paper to LYSANDEE.*]

Lys. (reads)—*The battle with the Centaurs to be sung
By an Athenian Minstrel to the harp.*

The. We'll none of that : that have I told my love,
In glory of my kinsman Hercules.

*Lys. The riot of the tipsy Bacchanals,
Tearing the Thracian singer in their rage.*

The. That is an old device, and it was play'd
When I from Thebes came last a conqueror.

*Lys. A tedious brief scene of young Pyramus,
And his love Thisbe ; very tragical mirth.*

The. Merry and tragical ? Tedious and brief ?
How shall we find the concord of this discord ?

Phi. A play there is, my lord,
Which is as brief as I have known a play ;
And tragical, my noble lord, it is ;
For Pyramus therein doth kill himself.

The. What are they that do play it ?

Phi. Hard-handed men, that work in Athens here,
And now have toil'd their unbreath'd³ memories
With this same play, against your nuptial.

The. And we will hear it.

Phi. 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.

¹ *Say, what abridgment, &c.]* By *abridgment* our author may mean a dramattick performance, which crowds the events of years into a few hours. It may be worth while, however, to observe, that in the North, the word *abatement* had the same meaning as *diversion* or *amusement*.

² — a brief,] i. e., a short account or enumeration.

³ — *unbreath'd*—] Unexercised, unpractised.

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. He says, they can do nothing in this kind.

The. The kinder we, to give them thanks for nothing.
Our sport shall be, to take what they mistake.

Enter PHILOSTRATE.

Phi. So please your grace, the prologue is addrest.⁴

The. Let him approach. [*Flourish of trumpets.*]⁵

Enter QUINCE as PROLOGUE.

Pro. "If we offend, it is with our good will.

That you should think, we come not to offend,
But with good will. To show our simple skill,

That is the true beginning of our end.

Consider, then, we come but in despite.

We do not come as minding to content you,
Our true intent is. All for your delight,

We are not here. That you should here repent you,
The actors are at hand ; and, by their show,
You shall know all, that you are like to know."

The. This fellow doth not stand upon points. His speech
was like a tangled chain ; nothing impaired, but all dis-
ordered. Who is next ?

Enter SNOOT as WALL.

Wall. "In this same interlude, it doth befall,
"That I, one Snout by name, present a wall :
"Through which the lovers, Pyramus and Thisby,
"Did whisper often very secretly.
"And this the cranny, is right and sinister,
"Through which the fearful lovers are to whisper."

⁴ ——— *addrest.*] That is ready.

⁵ *Flourish of trumpets.*] It appears that the prologue was an-
ciently ushered in by trumpets.

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

The. Pyramus draws near the wall: silence!

Enter BOTTOM, as PYRAMUS.

Pyr. "O grim-look'd night! O night with hue so black!

"O night, which ever art, when day is not!

"O night, O night, alack, alack, alack,

"I fear my Thisby's promise is forgot!

"Shew me thy chink,

"O sweet and lovely wall.

[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;

"Curst be thy stones for thus deceiving me!"

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

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

Enter FLUTE, as THISBE.

Thi. "O wall, full often hast thou heard my moans,

"My cherry lips have often kiss'd thy stones."

Pyr. "I see a voice: now will I to the chink,

"To spy an I can hear my Thisby's face.

"Thisby!"

Thi. "My love! thou art my love, I think."

Pyr. "Think what thou wilt, I am thy lover's grace.

O, kiss me through the chink of this vile wall."

Thi. "I kiss the wall, but not your lips at all."

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

Thi. "Tide life, tide death, I come without delay."

Wall. "Thus have I, wall, my part discharged so;

"And, being done, thus wall away doth go."

[*Exeunt WALL, PYRAMUS, and THISBE.*

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

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

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

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

Enter SNUG, *as the* LION, *and* STARVELING, *as* MOONSHINE.
Bundle of Faggots, Lantern,⁶ and Dog.

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's fell,⁷ nor else no lion's dam:

"For if I should as lion come in strife

"Into this place, 'twere pity on my life."

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

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

The. The man should be put into the lantern: How is it else the man i' the moon?

Hip. I am weary of this moon: Would he would change.

The. Proceed, Moon.

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

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

Enter FLUTE, *as* THISBE.

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

Lion. "Oh—"

[*The* LION *roars.*—*THISBE runs off.*]

⁶ The lantern used by Starveling, as Moonshine, is copied from one found at Herculaneum.

⁷ "Lion's fell" means "lion's skin;" and Snug intends to assure the ladies that he is no more than a man in a lion's hide.

Dem. Well roared, lion.

The. Well run, Thisbe.

Hip. Well shone, moon.—Truly the moon shines with a good grace.

The. Well moused, lion.⁸

[*The LION tears THISBE'S mantle, and exit.*]

Dem. And so comes Pyramus.

Lys. And then the moon vanishes.

Enter BOTTOM, & 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 streams,

"I trust to taste of truest Thisby's sight.

"But stay ;—O spite !

"But mark ;—Poor knight,

"What dreadful dole is here ?

"Eyes, do you see ?

"How can it be ?

"O dainty duck ! O dear !

"Thy mantle good,

"What, stain'd with blood ?

"Approach, ye furies fell !

"O fates ! come, come ;

"Cut thread and thrum ;⁹

"Quail, crush, conclude, and quell !" ¹⁰

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

Pyr. "O, wherefore, nature, didst thou lions frame ?

"Since lion vile hath here destroyed my dear :

"Which is—no, no—which was the fairest dame,

"That liv'd, that lov'd, that lik'd, that look'd with cheer."¹¹

⁸ *Well moused, lion.*] To mouse signified to mammock, to tear in pieces, as a cat tears a mouse.

⁹ *Cut thread and thrum ;*] *Thrum* is the end or extremity of a weaver's warp ; it is popularly used for very coarse yarn. The maids now call a mop of yarn a *thrum mop*.

¹⁰ — and quell !] To *quell* is to murder, to destroy.

¹¹ — *cheer.*] i. e., countenance.

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"Come, tears, confound:

"Out, sword, and wound

"The——heart of Pyramus:

"Thus die I, thus, thus, thus. [*Stabs himself.*

"Now am I dead,

"Now am I fled;

"My soul is in the sky:

"Tongue, lose thy light!

"Moon, take thy flight!

"Now die, die, die, die. [*Dies.*

[*Exit MOONSHINE.*

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

The. She will find him by star-light.—Here she comes; and her passion ends the play.

Enter THISBE.

Hip. I hope she will be brief.

Thi.

"Asleep my love?

"What, dead, my dove?

"O Pyramus, arise,

"Speak, speak. Quite dumb?

"Dead, dead? A tomb

"Must cover thy sweet eyes.

"O sisters three,

"Come, come to me,

"With hands as pale as milk;

"Lay them in gore,

"Since you have shore

"With shears his thread of silk.

"Tongue, not a word:—

"Come, trusty sword;

"Come, blade, my breast imbrue:

"And farewell, friends;—

"Thus Thisbe ends:

"Adieu, adieu, adieu." [*Dies.*

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

Dem. Ay, and wall too.

Bot. No, I assure you; the wall is down that parted their fathers. Will it please you to see the epilogue?

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 had writ it, had play'd Pyramus, and hang'd himself, it would have been a fine tragedy: and so it is, truly; and very notably discharged; but let your Epilogue alone.

DANCE OF CLOWNS.

The iron tongue of midnight hath told twelve:—
 Lovers, away; '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 beguil'd
 The heavy gait¹² of night.—Sweet friends, away.—
 A fortnight hold we this solemnity,
 In nightly revels, and new jollity. [*Flourish. Exeunt.*]

PUCK rises.

Puck. Now the hungry lion roars,
 And the wolf howls the moon;
 Whilst the heavy ploughman snores,
 All with weary task fordone.¹³
 And we fairies, that do run
 By the triple Hecat's team,
 From the presence of the sun,
 Following darkness like a dream,
 Now are frolick; not a mouse
 Shall disturb this hallow'd house:
 I am sent, with broom, before,
 To sweep the dust behind the door.¹⁴

¹² —heavy gait—] i. e., slow passage, progress.

¹³ —fordone.] i. e., overcome.

¹⁴ *I am sent, with broom, before,*

To sweep the dust behind the door.] Cleanliness is always necessary to invite the residence and the favour of the fairies.

Scene changes, discovering OBERON and TITANIA, with their Trains.

CHORUS.

Through this 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.

1st Fai. First, rehearse this song by rote :
 To each word a warbling note,
 Hand in hand, with fairy grace,
 Will we sing, and bless this place.

CHORUS.

Through this 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.

RECITATIVE.

Obe. If we shadows have offended,
 Think but this, (and all is mended,)
 That you have but slumber'd here,
 While these visions did appear.
 Gentles, do not reprehend ;
 If you pardon, we will mend,
 Else our Puck a liar call.
 So, good night unto you all.

CHORUS.

Through this 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.
 Trip away,
 Make no stay;
Meet we all by break of day.

THE END.

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