



Edwin Booth's

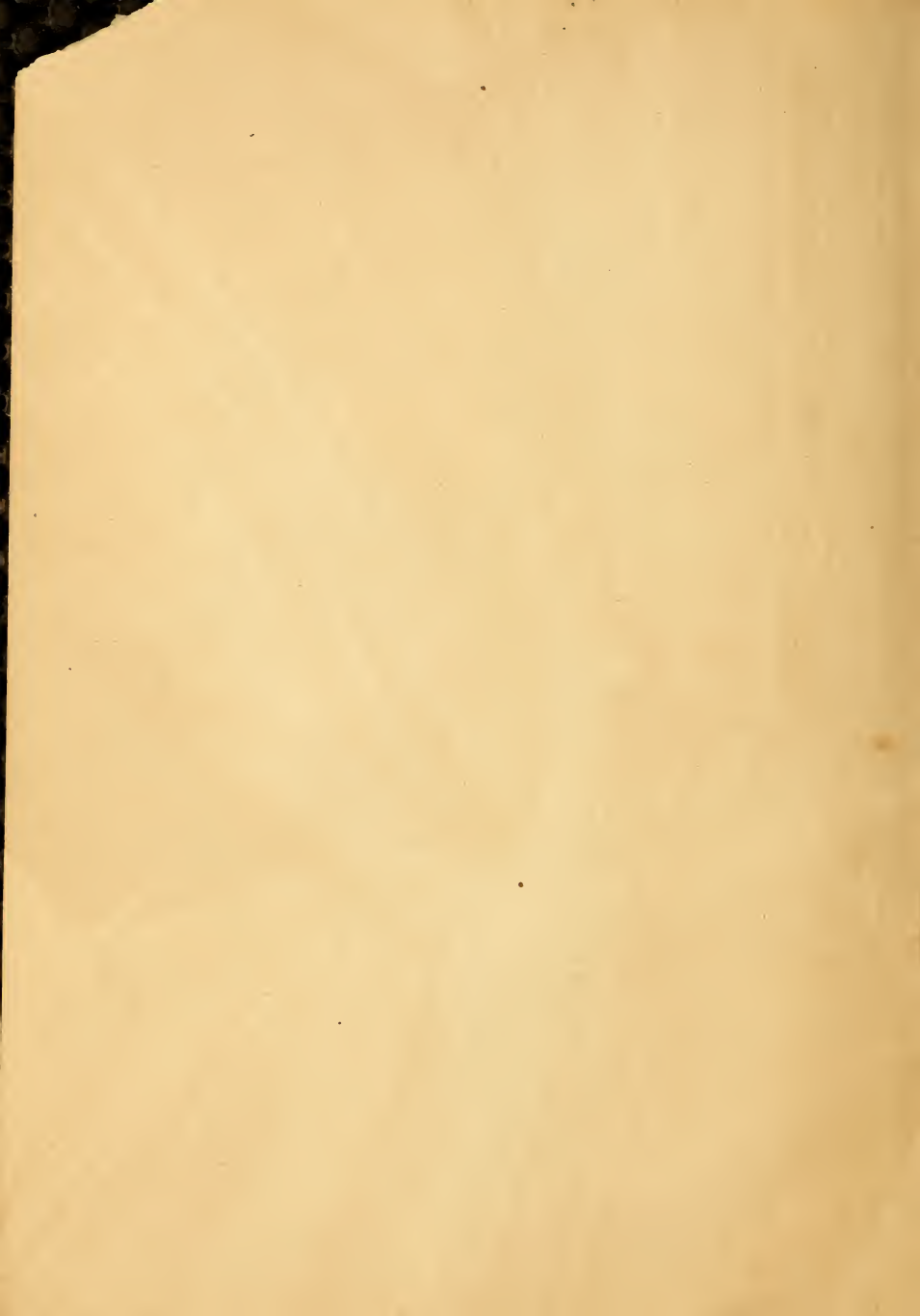
Prompt-Book of

Much Ado †

† *About Nothing.*

✦
Edited by

William Winter.



Booth, Ed.
The Prompt-Book.

Edited by
William Winter.



In uniform volumes :

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| ✓ Hamlet. | ✓ The Merchant of Venice. | ✓ King Lear. |
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| ✓ The Fool's Revenge. | ✓ Ruy Blas. | ✓ Brutus. |

&c. &c.

As presented by
Edwin Booth.



Lee & Shepard, 41 Franklin Street, Boston.

Charles T. Dillingham, 678 Broadway, New-York.

The Prompt-Book.

Edited by William Winter.



Shakespeare's Comedy

Of

Much Ado About Nothing.

As Presented by

Edwin Booth.



"My cousin means Signior Benedick of Padua."

"He is of a noble strain, of approved valour, and confirmed honesty."

"From the crown of his head to the sole of his foot he is all mirth."

*"Nature never framed a woman's heart
Of prouder stuff than that of Beatrice."*

"There was a star danced, and under that was I born."

"There is a kind of merry war betwixt Signior Benedick and her."

"When I said I would die a bachelor ; I did not think I should live till I were married."

"Man is a giddy thing, and this is my conclusion."

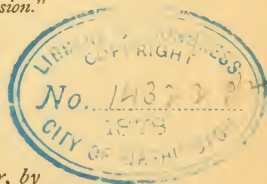


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Preface.



FRANCIS MERES,—1598,—who mentions twelve of Shakespeare's plays, then known, does not mention "*Much Ado About Nothing*"; and this comedy was first published in 1600. The date of its composition is indicated by these facts. That part of it which relates to Hero and Claudio is founded on the story of Genevra and Ariodant, in Ariosto's "*Orlando Furioso*"—a translation of which, by Sir John Harrington, appeared in England, in 1591. There is a similar story in one of Bandello's novels, translated by Belleforest, and also in Spenser's "*Faerie Queen*," Book ii, Canto 4th, 1590. An earlier play, touching upon the same theme, was acted before Queen Elizabeth, by "*the Children of Paul's*," in 1582-3. Either or all of these may have met the eye of Shakespeare. His treatment of the story, however, is found to be entirely his own; and he may, in fact, be said to have re-created it. Benedick and Beatrice, Dogberry and Verges, and all that relates to these characters, are the invention of Shakespeare. The text of "*Much Ado*," as first published, was not divided into acts; but, in the Folio of 1623 these divisions appear. The comedy was popular in Shakespeare's time, and it has always been a favourite in the theatres. The original representative of Dogberry was William Kempe; who, also, probably, was the original of Bottom. Verges was first acted by Towley; and Balthazar,—with the song of "*Sigh no more, ladies*,"—by Wilson: these facts

are denoted in the Folio reprint. The period of "Much Ado" is supposed to be about 1529-35; for the reason that the last war in which the Italians under Spanish rule were engaged was ended in 1529, and the Emperor Charles V., of Spain, who had gained the crowns of Naples and Sicily, made a triumphal entry into Palermo and Messina in 1535. To these events the opening of the comedy seems to refer. The present acting-copy of "Much Ado," which differs from all others, condenses the piece from five acts into three. The volume of excisions is, of course, considerable. The most important sacrifice is that of the scene in which Dogberry bestows his "tediousness" upon Leonato. Balthazar's song will also be missed. It is thought, though, that this version of "Much Ado"—which has been effectually tested in the practical experience of Edwin Booth—does no injustice to either the story, the characters, the movement, or the text of the original. The stage copy generally used is that which John Philip Kemble arranged, in 1799. The animalism, the self-assertive intrusiveness, and the rank flippancy of Benedick and Beatrice—qualities which caused Campbell to characterize the lady as "odious," and the cavalier as only a little less disagreeable—are apparent in the original, but subdued in the acting version. The most admired Benedick of the last century was Garrick; the most brilliant representatives of Beatrice were Mrs. Pritchard and Mrs. Abington. The latter was the original Lady Teazle. "Beatrice has more wit and pertness than good-breeding," says old John Taylor, "and in that she [Mrs. Abington] was excellent." The most renowned Benedick of recent times was Charles Kemble.

W. W.

New-York, October 24th, 1878.





" *The wars are over,
The Spring is come.*"—BYRON.

" *Then let me live one long romance,
And learn to trifle well ;
And write my motto, 'Vive la dance,'
And 'Vive la bagatelle' !*"—PRAED.

" *White favours rest
On every breast,
And yet methinks we seem not gay :
The church is cold,
The priest is old,
And who shall give the bride away ?*"

WILLIAM ALLINGHAM.

" *Each lonely scene shall thee restore,
For thee the tear be duly shed ;
Beloved till life can charm no more,
And mourned till Pity's self be dead.*"—COLLINS.

" *You suspect, I see,
And rightly—there has been some masking here.*"
KNOWLES.

" *A lover's jealousy and hopeless pangs
No kindly heart contemns.*"—JOANNA BAILLIE.

" *A human heart should beat for two,
Despite the scoffs of single scorers,
And all the hearths I ever knew
Had got a pair of chimney corners.*"
FREDERICK LOCKER.



Persons Represented.



DON PEDRO, *Prince of Aragon.*

DON JOHN, *Natural Brother to Don Pedro.*

CLAUDIO, *a young Lord of Florence,* } *Favourites to Don Pedro.*
BENEDICK, *a young Lord of Padua,* }

LEONATO, *Governor of Messina.*

ANTONIO, *Brother to Leonato.*

BALTHAZAR, *Servant to Don Pedro.*

BORACHIO, } *Followers of Don John.*
CONRADE, }

DOGBERRY, } *Officers of Police in Messina.*
VERGES, }

SEACOAL, } *Watchmen.*
OATCAKE, }

FRIAR FRANCIS.

A SEXTON.

HERO, *Daughter to Leonato.*

BEATRICE, *Niece to Leonato.*

MARGARET, } *Gentlewomen, attendant on Hero.*
URSULA, }

LORDS, LADIES, WATCHMEN, AND ATTENDANTS.

Place and Time.



SCENE.—*Messina, in the Island of Sicily.*

PERIOD.—*The Sixteenth Century [1535].*

TIME OF ACTION.—*In this version of the Comedy, four days.*



MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.



Act first.

Scene First. { MESSINA. COURT, BEFORE THE HOUSE
OF LEONATO. LEONATO, HERO, BEATRICE, AND BALTHAZAR ARE DISCOVERED.

Leon.

I learn in this letter that Don Pedro of Aragon comes this night to Messina.

Balt.

He is very near by this; he was not three leagues off when I left him.

Leon.

How many gentlemen have you lost in this action?

Balt.

But few of any sort, and none of name.

Beat.

I pray you, is Signior Montanto returned from the wars, or no?



Balt.

I know none of that name, lady; there was none such in the army of any sort.

Leon.

What is he that you ask for, niece?

Hero.

My cousin means Signior Benedick of Padua.

Balt.

O, he is returned, and as pleasant as ever he was.

Beat.

I pray you, how many hath he killed and eaten in these wars? But how many hath he killed? for indeed, I promise to eat all of his killing.

Leon.

Faith, niece, you tax Signior Benedick too much; but he'll be meet with you, I doubt it not.

Balt.

He hath done good service, lady, in these wars.

Beat.

You had musty victual, and he hath help to eat it: he is a very valiant trencher-man, he hath an excellent stomach.

Balt.

And a good soldier too, lady.

Beat.

And a good soldier to a lady; but what is he to a lord? Who is his companion now? He hath every month a new sworn brother.



Balt.

Is it possible ?

Beat.

Very easily possible: he wears his faith but as the fashion of his hat; it ever changes with the next block.

Balt.

I see, lady, the gentleman is not in your books.

Beat.

No: an he were, I would burn my study. But, I pray you, who is his companion ?

Balt.

He is most in the company of the right noble Claudio.

Beat.

O lord! he will hang upon him like a disease; he is sooner caught than the pestilence, and the taker runs presently mad.

Heaven help the noble Claudio! if he have caught the Benedick, it will cost him a thousand pound ere he be cured.

Leon.

You will never run mad, niece.

Beat.

No, not till a hot January.

Balt.

[*March.*
[*Looking off.*

Don Pedro is approached.

[*Enter Don Pedro, Don John, Claudio and Benedick, R. U. E.*



Don P.

Good Signior Leonato, are you come to meet your trouble? the fashion of the world is to avoid cost, and you encounter it.

Leon.

Never came trouble to my house in the likeness of your grace; for trouble being gone, comfort should remain; but when you depart from me, sorrow abides and happiness takes his leave.

Don P.

You embrace your charge too willingly. I think this is your daughter. [*Bowing to Hero.*

Leon.

Her mother hath many times told me so.

Bened.

Were you in doubt, sir, that you asked her?

Leon.

Signior Benedick, no; for then were you a child.

Don P.

You have it full, Benedick: we may guess by this what you are, being a man. Truly the lady fathers herself.— Be happy, lady! for you are like an honourable father.

Bened.

If Signior Leonato be her father, she would not have his head on her shoulders for all Messina, as like him as she is.

[*All retire up stage, except Benedick and Beatrice, and converse, c.*]



Beat.

I wonder that you will still be talking, Signior Benedick ; nobody marks you.

Bened.

What, my dear lady disdain ! are you yet living ?

Beat.

Is it possible disdain should die, while she hath such meet food to feed it as Signior Benedick ? Courtesy itself must convert to disdain if you come in her presence.

Bened.

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

Beat.

A dear happiness to women ; they would else have been troubled with a pernicious suitor. I thank heaven, and my cold blood, I am of your humour for that ; I had rather hear my dog bark at a crow than a man swear he loves me.

Bened.

Heaven keep your ladyship still in that mind ! so some gentleman or other shall 'scape a predestinate scratched face.

Beat.

Scratching could not make it worse, an 't were such a face as yours.

Bened.

Well, you are a rare parrot-teacher.

Beat.

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

Bened.

I would my horse had the speed of your tongue ; and so good a continuer. But keep your way, o' heaven's name ; I have done.

Beat.

You always end with a jade's trick ; I know you of old.
[*All advance.*]

Don P.

This is the sum of all : Leonato,—Signior Claudio, and Signior Benedick,—my dear friend Leonato hath invited you all. I tell him we shall stay here at the least a month ; and he heartily prays some occasion may detain us longer : I dare swear he is no hypocrite, but prays from his heart.

Leon.

If you swear, my lord, you shall not be forsworn.
[*To Don John.*]

Let me bid you welcome, my lord : being reconciled to the prince your brother, I owe you all duty.

Don J.

I thank you : I am not of many words, but I thank you.

Leon.

Please it your grace lead on ?

Don P.

Your hand, Leonato ; we will go together.
[*Exeunt all but Benedick and Claudio* L. U. E.]

Claud.

Benedick ! didst thou note the daughter of Signior Leonato ?

Bened.

I noted her not : but I looked on her.

Claud.

Is she not a modest young lady?

Bened.

Do you question me, as an honest man should do, for my simple true judgment; or would you have me speak after my custom, as being a professed tyrant to their sex?

Claud.

No, I pray thee, speak in sober judgment.

Bened.

Why, i' faith, methinks she's too low for a high praise, too brown for a fair praise, and too little for a great praise: only this commendation I can afford her: that were she other than she is, she were unhandsome; and being no other but as she is, I do not like her.

Claud.

Thou thinkest I am in sport; I pray thee tell me truly how thou likest her.

Bened.

Would you buy her, that you inquire after her?

Claud.

Can the world buy such a jewel?

Bened.

Yea, and a case to put it into. But speak you this with a sad brow? or do you play the flouting jack?

Claud.

In my eye she is the sweetest lady that ever I looked on.

Bened.

I can see yet without spectacles, and I see no such matter: there's her cousin, an she were not possessed with a fury, exceeds her as much in beauty as the first of May doth the last of December. But I hope you have no intent to turn husband; have you?

Claud.

I would scarce trust myself, though I had sworn the contrary, if Hero would be my wife.

Bened.

Is't come to this, i' faith? Hath not the world one man but he will wear his cap with suspicion? Shall I never see a bachelor of three-score again? Go to, i' faith: an' thou wilt needs thrust thy neck into a yoke, wear the print of it, and sigh away Sundays. Look, Don Pedro is returned to seek you. [Re-enter Don Pedro.

Don P.

What secret hath held you here, that you followed not to Leonato's?

Bened.

I would your grace would constrain me to tell.

Don P.

I charge thee on thy allegiance.

Bened.

You hear, Count Claudio? I can be secret as a dumb man, I would have you think so; but on my allegiance—mark you this, on my allegiance! He is in love. With whom?—now that is your grace's part. Mark, how short his answer is,—with Hero, Leonato's short daughter.

Claud.

If this were so, so were it uttered.

Bened.

Like the old tale, my lord: "it is not so, nor 't was not so; but, indeed, heaven forbid it should be so."

Claud.

If my passion change not shortly, heaven forbid it should be otherwise.

Don P.

Amen, if you love her; for the lady is very well worthy.

Claud.

You speak this, to fetch me in, my lord.

Don P.

By my troth, I speak my thought.

Claud.

And in faith, my lord, I spoke mine.

Bened.

And by my two faiths and troths, my lord, I spoke mine.

Claud.

That I love her, I feel.

Don P.

That she is worthy, I know.

Bened.

That I neither feel how she should be loved, nor know how she should be worthy, is the opinion that fire cannot melt out of me; I will die in it at the stake.

Don P.

Thou wast ever an obstinate heretic in the despite of beauty.

Claud.

And never could maintain his part but in the force of his will.

Bened.

That a woman conceived me, I thank her; that she brought me up, I likewise give her most humble thanks: but that I will have a recheat winded in my forehead, all women shall pardon me. Because I will not do them the wrong to mistrust any, I will do myself the right to trust none; and the fine is (for the which I may go the finer), I will live a bachelor.

Don P.

I shall see thee, ere I die, look pale with love.

Bened.

With anger, with sickness, or with hunger, my lord; not with love: prove that ever I lose more blood with love than I will get again with drinking—pick out mine eyes with a ballad-maker's pen, and hang me up for the sign of blind Cupid.

Don P.

Well, if ever thou dost fall from this faith, thou wilt prove a notable argument.

Bened.

If I do, hang me in a bottle like a cat, and shoot at me, and he that hits me, let him be clapped on the shoulder and called, Adam.

Don P.

Well, as time shall try:

“In time the savage bull doth bear the yoke.”

Bened.

The savage bull may, but if ever this sensible Benedick bear it, pluck off the bull's horns and set them in my forehead: and let me be vilely painted, and in such great letters as they write "Here is good horse to hire," let them signify under my sign,— "Here you may see Benedick, the married man."

Don P.

Nay, if Cupid have not spent all his quiver in Venice, thou wilt quake for this shortly.

Bened.

I look for an earthquake too, then.

Don P.

Well, you will temporize with the hours. In the meantime, good Signior Benedick, repair to Leonato's; commend me to him, and tell him I will not fail him at supper; for, indeed, he hath made great preparation.

Bened.

I have almost matter enough in me for such an embassage; and so I commit you—— [*Going up.*]

Claud.

To the tuition of heaven: From my house,—if I had it——

Don P.

The sixth of July: Your loving friend, Benedick.

Bened.

Nay, mock not, mock not: The body of your discourse is sometimes guarded with fragments, and the guards are but slightly basted on neither: ere you flout old ends any farther, examine your conscience—and so I leave you.

[*Exit Benedick* L. U. E.]

Claud.

My liege, your highness now may do me good.

Don P.

My love is thine to teach ; teach it but how,
And thou shalt see how apt it is to learn
Any hard lesson that may do thee good.

Claud.

Hath Leonato any son, my lord ?

Don P.

No child but Hero, she 's his only heir :
Dost thou affect her, Claudio ?

Claud.

O, my lord,
When you went onward on this ended action,
I looked upon her with a soldier's eye,
That liked, but had a rougher task in hand
Than to drive liking to the name of love :
But now I am returned, and that war-thoughts
Have left their places vacant, in their rooms
Come thronging soft and delicate desires,
All prompting me how fair young Hero is,
Saying, I liked her ere I went to wars.

Don P.

Thou wilt be like a lover presently,
And tire the hearer with a book of words.
If thou dost love fair Hero, cherish it ;
And I will break with her ; and with her father,
And thou shalt have her. Was 't not to this end
That thou began'st to twist so fine a story ?

Claud.

How sweetly do you minister to love,
That know love's grief by his complexion !
But lest my liking might too sudden seem,
I would have salved it with a longer treatise.

Don P.

What need the bridge much broader than the flood ?
The fairest ground is the necessity.
Look, what will serve is fit : 't is once, thou lovest ;
And I will fit thee with the remedy.
I know we shall have revelling to-night ;
I will assume thy part, in some disguise,
And tell fair Hero I am Claudio ;
And in her bosom I 'll unclasp my heart,
And take her hearing prisoner with the force
And strong encounter of my amorous tale :
Then, after, to her father will I break ;
And, the conclusion is, she shall be thine.
In practice let us put it presently.

[*Exeunt* L. U. E.—*Scene changes.*

Scene Second.—A SPACIOUS HALL IN LEONATO'S HOUSE.

[*Enter Don John and Conrade c.*

Con.

What the good year, my lord ? why are you thus out
of measure sad ?

Don J.

I cannot hide what I am : I must be sad when I have
cause, and smile at no man's jests ; eat when I have
stomach, and wait for no man's leisure ; sleep when I am
drowsy, and tend no man's business ; laugh when I am
merry, and claw no man in his humour.

Con.

Yea, but you must not make the full show of this, till you may do it without controlment. You have of late stood out against your brother, and he hath ta'en you newly into his grace; where it is impossible you should take true root, but by the fair weather that you make yourself: it is needful that you frame the season for your own harvest.

Don J.

I had rather be a canker in a hedge than a rose in his grace; and it better fits my blood to be disdained of all, than to fashion a carriage to rob love from any. I am trusted with a muzzle, and enfranchised with a clog; therefore, I have decreed not to sing in my cage;—if I had my mouth I would bite; if I had my liberty I would do my liking: in the meantime, let me be that I am, and seek not to alter me.

Con.

Can you make no use of your discontent?

Don J.

I make all use of it, for I use it only. Who comes here?

[*Enter Borachio L.*

What news, Borachio?

Borach.

I can give you intelligence of an intended marriage.

Don J.

Will it serve for any model to build mischief on? What is he for a fool, that betroths himself to unquietness?

Borach.

Marry, it is your brother's right hand.

Don J.

Who? the most exquisite Claudio?

Borach.

Even he.

Don J.

A proper squire! And who, and who? which way looks he?

Borach.

Marry, on Hero, the daughter and heir of Leonato.

Don J.

A very forward March-chick! This may prove food to my displeasure: that young start-up hath all the glory of my overthrow; if I can cross him in any way I bless myself every way. You are both sure, and will assist me?

Con.

To the death, my lord.

[Exeunt C. As they go out, enter Leonato, Antonio, Hero, and Beatrice. The ladies wear dominoes and carry masks. The parties exchange bows.]

Beat.

How tartly that gentleman looks! I never can see him, but I am heart-burned an hour after.

Hero.

He is of a very melancholy disposition.

Beat.

He were an excellent man that were made just in the mid-way between him and Benedick; the one is too like an image, and says nothing; and the other too like my lady's eldest son, evermore tattling.

Leon.

Then half Signior Benedick's tongue in Count John's mouth, and half Count John's melancholy in Signior Benedick's face —

Beat.

With a good leg, and a good foot, uncle, and money enough in his purse, such a man would win any woman in the world,—if he could get her good-will.

[*Hero and Antonio retire up stage, and converse.*]

Leon.

By my troth, niece, thou wilt never get thee a husband if thou be so shrewed of thy tongue.

Beat.

For the which blessing I am upon my knees every morning and evening: Lord! I could not endure a husband with a beard on his face.

Leon.

You may light upon a husband that hath no beard.

Beat.

What should I do with him? dress him in my apparel, and make him my waiting-gentlewoman? He that hath a beard is more than a youth; and he that hath no beard is less than a man: and he that is more than a youth is not for me; and he that is less than a man I am not for him.

Ant. [To *Hero*, advancing.]

Well, niece, I trust you will be ruled by your father.

Beat.

Yes, faith; it is my cousin's duty to make courtsey, and say, "Father, as it please you:"—but yet for all that, cousin, let him be a handsome fellow, or else make another courtsey, and say, "Father, as it please me."

Leon.

Well, niece, I hope to see you one day fitted with a husband.

Beat.

Not till heaven make men of some other metal than earth. Would it not grieve a woman to be over-mastered with a piece of valiant dust? to make an account of her life to a clod of wayward marl? No, uncle, I'll none: Adam's sons are my brethren; and truly, I hold it a sin to match in my kindred.

Leon.

Cousin, you apprehend passing shrewdly.

Beat.

I have a good eye, uncle; I can see a church by daylight. [*Music within.*]

Leon.

The revellers are entering.

[*Leonato, Antonio, Beatrice, and Hero retire up stage. Exit Beatrice. Enter Don Pedro, Claudio, Balthazar, Don John, Borachio, Conrade, Margaret, Ursula, and others, masked.*]

Don P.

[*To Hero.*]

Lady, will you walk about with your friend?

Hero.

So you walk softly, and look sweetly, and say nothing, I am yours for the walk; and, especially, when I walk away.

Don P.

With me in your company?

Hero.

I may say so, when I please.

Don P.

And when please you to say so ?

Hero.

When I like your favour ; for heaven defend the lute should be like the case !

Don P.

My visor is Philemon's roof ; within the house is Jove.

Hero.

Why, then your visor should be thatched.

Don P.

Speak low, if you speak love.

[*Music. Exeunt omnes.—Enter Benedick, masked, followed by Beatrice, laughing.*

Beat.

Will you not tell me who told you so ?

Bened.

No, you shall pardon me.

Beat.

Nor will you not tell me who you are ?

Bened.

Not now.

Beat.

That I was disdainful,—and that I had my good wit out of the “Hundred Merry Tales” ;—Well, this was Signior Benedick that said so.

Bened.

What 's he ?

Beat.

I am sure you know him well enough.

Bened.

Not I, believe me.

Beat.

Did he never make you laugh ?

Bened.

I pray you, what is he ?

Beat.

Why, he is the prince's jester : a very dull fool ; only his gift is in devising impossible slanders : none but libertines delight in him ; and the commendation is not in his wit, but in his villainy ; for he both pleaseth men and angers them, and then they laugh at him and beat him.

Bened.

When I know the gentleman, I'll tell him what you say.

Beat.

Do, do : he'll but break a comparison or two on me : which, peradventure, not marked, or not laughed at, strikes him into melancholy ; and then there 's a partridge's wing saved, for the fool will eat no supper that night.

[*Music.* *The guests move off slowly.*

We must follow the leaders.

[*Exeunt.*

[*Music.* *Enter Don John, Borachio, and Claudio.*

Don J.

Sure, my brother is amouros on Hero, and hath withdrawn her father to break with him about it : the ladies follow her, and but one visor remains.

Borach.

And that is Claudio : I know him by his bearing.

Don J. [*Unmasked ; to Claudio.*]

Are not you Signior Benedick ?

Claud.

You know me well ; I am he.

Don J.

Signior, you are very near my brother in his love : he is enamoured on Hero. I pray you dissuade him from her, she is no equal for his birth : you may do the part of an honest man in it.

Claud.

How know you he loves her ?

Don J.

I heard him swear his affection.

Borach.

So did I too ; and he swore he would marry her to-night.

Don J.

Come, let us to the banquet.

[*Exeunt Don John and Borachio.*]

Claud.

Thus answer I in name of Benedick,
But hear these ill news with the ears of Claudio.
'T is certain so ; — the prince wooes for himself.
Friendship is constant in all other things,
Save in the office and affairs of love :
Therefore, all hearts in love use their own tongues ;



Let every eye negotiate for itself,
 And trust no agent: for beauty is a witch,
 Against whose charms faith melteth into blood.
 This is an accident of hourly proof,
 Which I mistrusted not: farewell, therefore, Hero.

[*Re-enter Benedick c.*

Bened.

Count Claudio?

Claud.

Yea, the same.

Bened.

Come, will you go with me?

Claud.

Whither?

Bened.

Even to the next willow, about your own business, count. What fashion will you wear the garland of? About your neck, like an usurer's chain? or under your arm, like a lieutenant's scarf? You must wear it one way, for the prince hath got your Hero.

Claud.

I wish him joy of her.

Bened.

Why, that's spoken like an honest drover; so they sell bullocks. But did you think the prince would have served you thus?

Claud.

I pray you, leave me.

Bened.

Ho! now you strike like the blind man; 't was the boy that stole your meat, and you 'll beat the post.

Claud.

If it will not be, I 'll leave you.

[*Exit Claudio.*



Bened.

Alas! poor hurt fowl! Now will he creep into sedges. — But that my lady Beatrice should know me, and not know me! The prince's fool! — Ha, it may be I go under that title, because I am merry.—Yea; but so I am apt to do myself wrong: I am not so reputed: it is the base though bitter disposition of Beatrice that puts the world into her person, and so gives me out. Well, I'll be revenged as I may. [*Enter Don Pedro c.*

Don P.

Now, signior, where's the count? Did you see him?

Bened.

Troth, my lord, I have played the part of lady Fame. I have found him here as melancholy as a lodge in a warren; I told him, and I think told him true, that your grace had got the will of this young lady; and I offered him my company to a willow tree, either to make him a garland, as being forsaken, or to bind him a rod, as being worthy to be whipped.

Don P.

To be whipped! What's his fault?

Bened.

The flat transgression of a schoolboy; who, being overjoyed with finding a bird's nest, shows it his companion, and he steals it.

Don P.

Wilt thou make a trust a transgression? The transgression is in the stealer.

Bened.

Yet it had not been amiss the rod had been made, and the garland too; for the garland he might have worn himself; and the rod he might have bestowed on you, who, as I take it, have stolen his bird's nest.



Don P.

I will but teach them to sing, and restore them to the owner.

Bened.

If their singing answer your saying, by my faith, you say honestly.

Don P.

The lady Beatrice hath a quarrel to you; the gentleman that danced with her told her she is much wronged by you.

Bened.

Wronged? She wronged? O, she misused me past the endurance of a block: an oak, but with one green leaf on it, would have answered her; my very visor began to assume life and scold with her. She told me, not thinking I had been myself, that I was the prince's jester, and that I was duller than a great thaw; huddling jest upon jest, with such impossible conveyance, upon me, that I stood like a man at a mark, with a whole army shooting at me: She speaks poniards, and every word stabs: I would not marry her though she were endowed with all that Adam had left him before he transgressed: she would have made Hercules have turned spit; yea, and have cleft his club to make the fire too. Come, talk not of her, you shall find her the infernal Até in good apparel. I would to heaven some scholar would conjure her; for, certainly, while she is here, a man may live as quiet in hell as in a sanctuary; and people sin upon purpose because they would go thither; so, indeed, all disquiet, horror, and perturbation follow her.

[*Laughter within.*]

Don P.

Look, here she comes.

Bened.

Will your grace command me any service to the world's end? I will go on the slightest errand now to the antipodes, that you can devise to send me on; I will



fetch you a toothpicker now from the farthest inch of Asia ; bring you the length of Prester John's foot ; fetch you a hair off the great Cham's beard ; do you any embassage to the Pigmies,—rather than hold three words' conference with this harpy.—You have no employment for me ?

Don. P.

None, but to desire your good company.

Bened.

O lord, sir, here 's a dish I love not ; I cannot endure my lady Tongue. [*Exit Benedick R.*

[*Enter Beatrice, Leonato, Claudio, and Hero, L. C.*

Don P.

Come, lady, come ; you have lost the heart of Signior Benedick.

Beat.

I have brought Count Claudio, whom you sent me to seek.

Don P.

Why, how now, count—wherefore are you sad ?

Claud.

Not sad, my lord.

Don P.

How, then—sick ?

Claud.

Neither, my lord.

Beat.

The count is neither sad, nor sick, nor merry, nor well ; but civil, count, civil as an orange, and something of that jealous complexion.

Don P.

I' faith, lady, I think your blazon to be true; though I'll be sworn, if he be so, his conceit is false. Here, Claudio, I have wooed in thy name, and fair Hero is won; I have broke with her father, and his good-will obtained: name the day of marriage, and heaven give thee joy!

Leon.

Count, take of me my daughter, and with her my fortunes; his grace hath made the match, and all grace say "Amen" to it.

Beat.

Speak, count, 't is your cue.

Claud.

Silence is the perfectest herald of joy. I were but little happy if I could say how much. Lady, as you are mine, I am yours; I gave away myself for you, and dote upon the exchange.

Beat.

Speak, cousin; or, if you cannot, stop his mouth with a kiss, and let not him speak neither.

Don P.

In faith, lady, you have a merry heart.

Beat.

Yea, my lord, I thank it; poor fool, it keeps on the windy side of care. My cousin tells him in his ear that he is in her heart.

Claud.

[*Up stage.*

And so she doth, cousin.



Beat. [c.

Good lord, for alliance! Thus goes every one to the wood but I, and I am sunburned; I may sit in a corner and cry heigh-ho! for a husband!

Don P.

Will you have me, lady?

Beat.

No, my lord, unless I might have another for working-days; your grace is too costly to wear every day. But I beseech your grace, pardon me; I was born to speak all mirth, and no matter.

Don P.

Your silence most offends me, and to be merry best becomes you; for, out of question, you were born in a merry hour.

Beat.

No, sure, my lord, my mother cried; but then there was a star danced, and under that was I born.—

Cousins, heaven give you joy! [To *Hero and Claudio*.

Leon. [To *Beatrice*.

Niece, will you look to those things I told you of?

Beat.

I cry you mercy, uncle. [Crosses R.

By your grace's pardon. [To *Don Pedro*.

[*Beatrice curtsies to Don Pedro, and goes off* R.

Don P.

By my troth, a pleasant-spirited lady. I would have a match between Signior Benedick and the lady Beatrice; and I doubt not but to fashion it, if you three will but minister such assistance as I shall give you direction.



Leon.

My lord, I am for you, though it cost me ten nights' watchings.

Claud.

And I, my lord.

Don P.

And you too, gentle Hero?

Hero.

I will do any modest office, my lord, to help my cousin to a good husband.

Don P.

And Benedick is not the unhopefullest husband that I know. Thus far can I praise him; he is of a noble strain, of approved valour, and confirmed honesty. I will teach you how to humour your cousin, that she shall fall in love with Benedick:—and I, with your two helps, will so practise on Benedick, that, in despite of his quick wit and his queasy stomach, he shall fall in love with Beatrice. If we can do this, Cupid is no longer an archer; his glory shall be ours, for we are the only love-gods. Go in with me, and I will tell you my drift.

[*Exeunt c. Scene changes.*]

Scene Third. { A HALL IN LEONATO'S HOUSE. [FIRST GROOVES.]

[*Enter Don John and Borachio R.*]

Don J.

It is so; the Count Claudio shall marry the daughter of Leonato.



Borach.

Yea, my lord, but I can cross it.

Don J.

Any bar, any cross, any impediment will be medicinable to me: I am sick in displeasure to him; and whatsoever comes athwart his affection ranges evenly with mine. How canst thou cross this marriage?

Borach.

Not honestly, my lord; but so covertly that no dishonesty shall appear in me.

Don J.

Show me briefly how.

Borach.

I think I told your lordship, a year since, how much I am in the favour of Margaret, the waiting-gentlewoman to Hero.

Don J.

I remember.

Borach.

I can, at any unseasonable instant of the night, appoint her to look out at her lady's chamber window. Find me a meet hour to draw Don Pedro and the Count Claudio, alone: tell them that you know that Hero loves me. They will scarcely believe this without trial: offer them instances; which shall bear no less likelihood than to see me at her chamber-window; hear me call Margaret, Hero: hear Margaret call me, Borachio; and bring them to see this, the very night before the intended wedding: for, in the mean time, I will so fashion the matter that Hero shall be absent; and there shall appear such seeming truth of Hero's disloyalty, that jealousy shall be called assurance, and all the preparation overthrown.



Don J.

Grow this to what adverse issue it can, I will put it in practice. Be cunning in the working this, and thy fee is a thousand ducats.

Borach.

Be you constant in the accusation, and my cunning shall not shame me.

Don J.

I will presently go learn their day of marriage.

[*Exeunt Borachio R., and Don John L. Scene changes.*]

Scene Fourth. { LEONATO'S GARDEN. BENEDICK DISCOVERED, SEATED.

Bened.

I do much wonder that one man, seeing how much another man is a fool when he dedicates his behaviours to love, will, after he hath laughed at such shallow follies in others, become the argument of his own scorn, by falling in love: And such a man is Claudio. I have known when there was no music with him but the drum and the fife; and now had he rather hear the tabor and the pipe: I have known when he would have walked ten mile afoot to see a good armour; and now will he lie ten nights awake, carving the fashion of a new doublet. He was wont to speak plain, and to the purpose, like an honest man and a soldier; and now is he turned orthographer; his words are a very fantastical banquet, just so many strange dishes. May I be so converted, and see with these eyes? I cannot tell; I think not: I will not be sworn but love will transform me to an oyster; but I'll take my oath on it, till he have made an oyster of me, he shall never make me such a fool. One woman is fair,



yet I am well; another is wise, yet I am well; another virtuous, yet I am well; but till all graces be in one woman, one woman shall not come in my grace. Rich she shall be, that's certain; wise, or I'll none; virtuous, or I'll never cheapen her; fair, or I'll never look on her; mild, or come not near me; noble, or not I; of good discourse, an excellent musician, and her hair shall be of what colour it please heaven. Ha! the prince and Monsieur Love! I will hide me in the arbour. [Withdraws.]

[Enter Don Pedro, Leonato, Claudio and Balthazar,
R. U. E.]

Don P. [To Claudio.]

See where Benedick hath hid himself. [To Balthazar.]

Dost thou hear, Balthazar? I pray thee, get us some excellent music; for to-morrow night we would have it at the lady Hero's chamber-window.

Balt.

The best I can, my lord.

Don P.

Do so: farewell. [Exit Balthazar.]

Come hither, Leonato. What was it you told me of to-day? that your niece Beatrice was in love with Signior Benedick?

Claud.

O, ay! [Aside.]

Stalk on, stalk on: the fowl sits. [To Pedro.]

I did never think that lady would have loved any man.

Leon.

No, nor I neither; but most wonderful that she should so doat on Signior Benedick, whom she hath in all outward behaviours seemed ever to abhor.

Bened. [Listening in arbour.]

Is't possible? Sits the wind in that corner.



Leon.

By my troth, my lord, I cannot tell what to think of it; but that she loves him with an enraged affection,—it is past the infinite of thought.

Don P.

May be she doth but counterfeit.

Claud.

Faith, like enough.

Leon.

Counterfeit! There was never counterfeit of passion came so near the life of passion as she discovers it.

Don P.

Why, what effects of passion shows she?

Claud.

[*Aside.*

Bait the hook well; this fish will bite.

Leon.

What effects, my lord! She will sit you—you heard my daughter—Hero—tell you how.

Claud.

She did, indeed.

Don P.

How, how, I pray you? You amaze me: I would have thought her spirit had been invincible against all assaults of affection.

Leon.

I would have sworn it had, my lord; especially against Benedick.

Bened.

[*Aside.*

I should think this a gull, but that the white-bearded fellow speaks it; knavery cannot, sure, hide himself in such reverence.



Claud.

[*Aside.*

He hath ta'en the infection ; hold it up.

Don P.

Hath she made her affection known to Benedick ?

Leon.

No ; and swears she never will ; that 's her torment.

Bened.

So, so!

Leon.

The ecstasy hath so much overborne her that my daughter is sometimes afraid she will do desperate outrage to herself.

Don P.

It were good that Benedick knew of it by some other, if she will not discover it. I pray you tell him, and hear what he will say.

Leon.

Were it good, think you ?

Don P.

'T is very possible he 'll scorn it ; for the man, as you all know, hath a contemptible spirit. I am sorry for your niece. Shall we see Benedick, and tell him of her love ?

Bened.

Very well.

Claud.

Never tell him, my lord ; let her wear it out with good counsel.

Leon.

Nay, that 's impossible ; she may wear her heart out first.



Don P.

Well, we will hear further of it by your daughter; let it cool the while. I love Benedick well; and I could wish he would modestly examine himself, to see how much he is unworthy so good a lady. [*Bell rings.*]

Leon.

My lord, will you walk? Dinner is ready.

Claud.

[*Aside.*]

If he do not dote on her upon this, I will never trust my expectation.

Don P.

[*Aside.*]

Let there be the same net spread for her, and that [*To Leonato*] must your daughter and her gentlewoman carry. The sport will be, when they hold an opinion of one another's dotage, and no such matter; that's the scene that I would see. Let us send her to call him to dinner.

[*Exeunt R.; Benedick advances softly to c.*]

Bened.

This can be no trick: the conference was sadly borne. They have the truth of this from Hero. They seem to pity the lady; it seems her affections have their full bent. Love me! why, it must be requited. I hear how I am censured; they say I will bear myself proudly, if I perceive the love come from her: they say too that she will rather die than give any sign of affection. I did never think to marry.—I must not seem proud.—Happy are they that hear their detractions, and can put them to mending. They say the lady is fair; 't is a truth, I can bear them witness; and virtuous;—'t is so, I cannot reprove it; and wise—but for loving me:—By my troth, it is no addition to her wit, nor no great argument of her folly, for I will be horribly in love with her. I may chance have some odd quirks and remnants of wit broken on me,



because I have railed so long against marriage. But doth not the appetite alter? A man loves the meat in his youth, that he cannot endure in his age. Shall quips and sentences and these paper bullets of the brain awe a man from the career of his humour? No: the world must be peopled! When I said I would die a bachelor, I did not think I should live till I were married. Here comes Beatrice. By this day, she's a fair lady: I do spy some marks of love in her.

[*Enter Beatrice* L. I. E.

Beat.

Against my will, I am sent to bid you come in to dinner.

Bened.

Fair Beatrice, I thank you for your pains.

Beat.

I took no more pains for those thanks than you take pains to thank me; if it had been painful, I would not have come.

Bened.

You take pleasure, then, in the message?

Beat.

Yea, just so much as you can take upon a knife's point, and choke a daw withal. You have no stomach, signior? fare you well.

[*Exit* L. I. E.

Bened.

Ha! "Against my will I am sent to bid you come in to dinner;"—there's a double meaning in that. "I took no more pains for those thanks than you take pains to thank me"—that's as much as to say—any pains that I take for you is as easy as thanks. If I do not take pity on her, I am a villain; if I do not love her, I am a Jew. I will go get her picture.

[*Exit* L. I. E.

CURTAIN.



Act Second.

Scene First.—LEONATO'S GARDEN. SAME AS BEFORE.

[Enter Hero, Margaret and Ursula, L.

Hero.

[R. C.

Good Margaret, run thee into the parlour,
There shalt thou find my cousin, Beatrice ;
Whisper her ear, and tell her, I and Ursula
Walk in the orchard, and our whole discourse
Is all of her ; say that thou overheard'st us ;
And bid her steal into the garden here,
To listen our purpose. This is thy office,
Bear thee well in it, and leave us alone.

[Exit Margaret L.

Now, Ursula, when Beatrice doth come,
Our talk must only be of Benedick :
When I do name him let it be thy part
To praise him more than ever man did merit.
My talk to thee must be, how Benedick
Is sick in love with Beatrice : of this matter
Is little Cupid's crafty arrow made,
That only wounds by hearsay.

[Enter Beatrice L., and steals into arbour R.

Now begin ;

[Aside.

For look where Beatrice, like a lapwing, runs
Close by the ground, to hear our conference.

Urs.

[C. Aside.

Fear you not my part of the dialogue.

[They walk backwards and forwards during the dialogue.



Hero.

No, truly, Ursula, she is too disdainful ;
I know her spirits are as coy and wild
As haggards of the rock.

Urs.

But are you sure
That Benedick loves Beatrice so entirely ?

Hero.

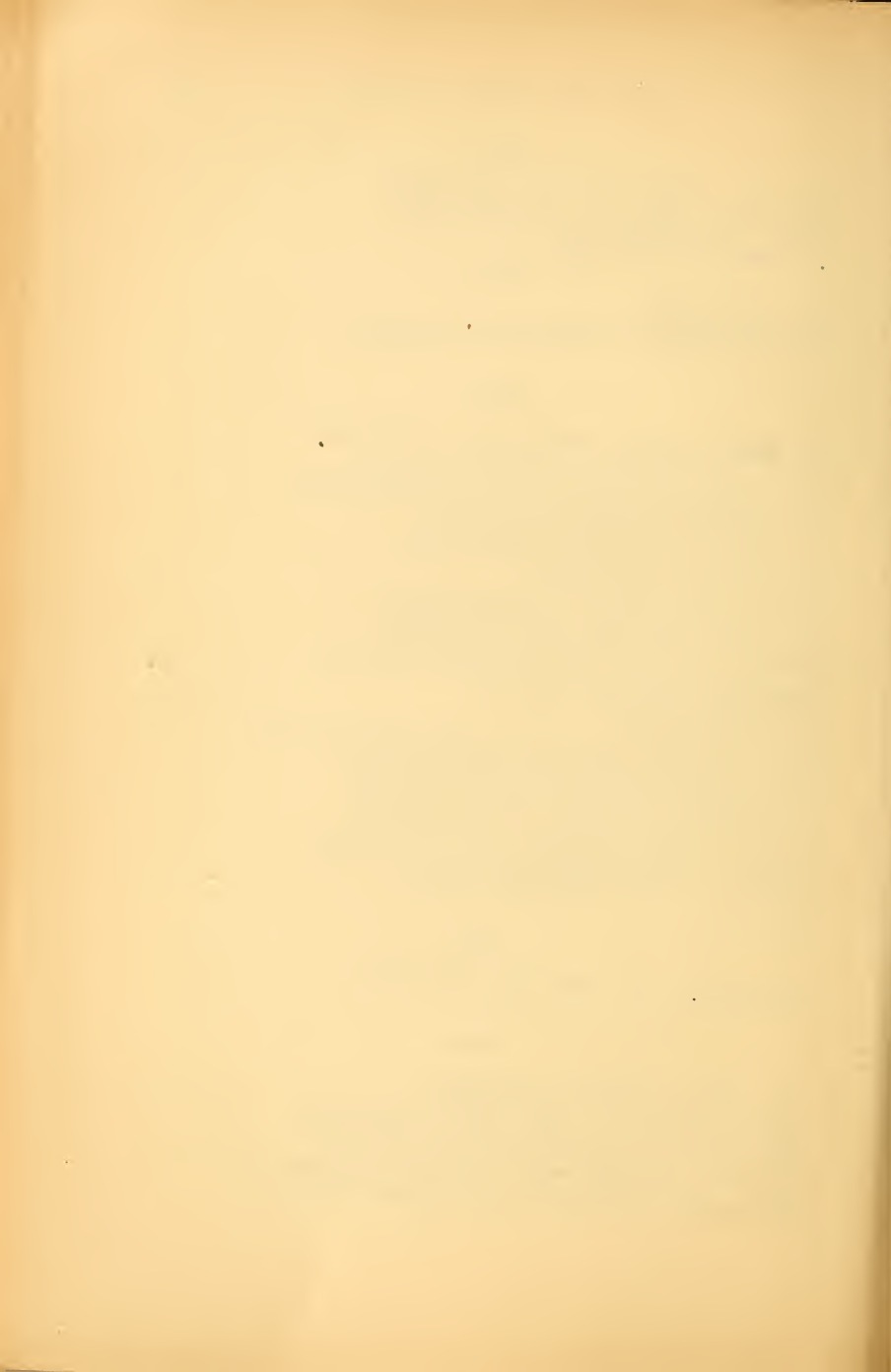
So says the prince, and my new-trothèd lord.
They did entreat me to acquaint her of it :
But I persuaded them, if they loved Benedick,
To wish him wrestle with affection,
And never to let Beatrice know of it :
For, who dare tell her ? —
Nature never framed a woman's heart
Of prouder stuff than that of Beatrice ;
Disdain and scorn ride sparkling in her eyes,
Misprizing what they look on.
If I should speak,
She 'd mock me into air ; O, she would laugh me
Out of myself, press me to death with wit.
Therefore let Benedick, like covered fire,
Consume away in sighs, waste inwardly :
It were a better death than die with mocks,
Which is as bad as die with tickling.

Urs.

Yet tell her of it ; hear what she will say.

Hero.

No, rather I will go to Benedick,
And counsel him to fight against his passion :
And truly I 'll devise some honest slanders
To stain my cousin with : one doth not know
How much an ill word may empoison liking.



Urs.

O, do not do your cousin such a wrong ;
 She cannot be so much without true judgment
 (Having so sweet and excellent a wit
 As she is prized to have) as to refuse
 So rare a gentleman as Signior Benedick.

Hero.

Indeed, he hath an excellent good name.

Urs.

His excellence did earn it ere he had it.—
 When are you married, madam ?

Hero.

Why, in a day ;—to-morrow.

Urs.

[*Aside.*

She's limed, I warrant you ; we have caught her, madam.

Hero.

[*Aside.*

If it proves so, then loving goes by haps ;
 Some Cupid kills with arrows, some with traps.

[*Exeunt Hero and Ursula L. Beatrice advances cautiously.*

Beat.

What fire is in mine ears ? Can this be true ?
 Stand I condemned for pride and scorn so much ?
 Contempt, farewell ! and maiden pride, adieu !
 No glory lives behind the back of such.
 And, Benedick, love on, I will requite thee :
 Taming my wild heart to thy loving hand ;
 If thou dost love, my kindness shall incite thee
 To bind our loves up in a holy band :



For others say, thou dost deserve; and I
Believe it better than reportingly. [Exit L. I. E.]

[Enter Don Pedro, Claudio, Leonato, and Benedick,

R. U. E.]

Don P.

I do but stay till your marriage be consummate, and then go I toward Aragon.

Claud.

I'll bring you thither, my lord, if you'll vouchsafe me.

Don P.

[c.]

Nay; I will only be bold with Benedick for his company; for, from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot, he is all mirth; he hath twice or thrice cut Cupid's bow-string, and the little hangman dare not shoot at him; he hath a heart as sound as a bell, and his tongue is the clapper; for what his heart thinks, his tongue speaks.

Bened.

[Sighing.]

Gallants, I am not as I have been.

Leon.

So say I! methinks you are sadder.

Claud.

I hope he be in love.

Don P.

Hang him, truant! there's no true drop of blood in him, to be truly touched with love. If he be sad, he wants money.

Bened.

I have the tooth-ache.

Don P.

Draw it.



Bened.

[*Sighing.*

Hang it!

Don P.

What! sigh for the tooth-ache?

Leon.

Which is but a humour, or a worm?

Bened.

Well, every one can master a grief, but he that has it.

Claud.

Yet say I he is in love. If he be not in love with some woman, there is no believing old signs; he brushes his hat o' mornings; what should that bode?

Don P.

Nay, he rubs himself with civet: can you smell him out by that?

Claud.

That's as much as to say, the sweet youth's in love.

Don P.

The greatest note of it is his melancholy.

Claud.

Nay, but his jesting spirit, which is crept into a lute-string——

Don P.

Indeed, that tells a heavy tale for him. Conclude, conclude, he is in love.

Claud.

Nay, but I know who loves him.



Don P.

That would I know too ; I warrant, one that knows him not.

Claud.

Yes, and his ill conditions ; and in despite of all, dies for him.

Don P.

She shall be buried with her face upwards.

Bened.

Yet this is no charm for the tooth-ache.— [*To Leonato.*
Old signior, walk aside with me.

I have studied eight or nine wise words to speak to you, which these hobby-horses must not hear.

[*Exeunt Benedick and Leonato.*

Don P.

For my life, to break with him about Beatrice.

Claud.

'T is even so : Hero and Margaret have, by this time, played their parts with Beatrice ; and then the two bears will not bite one another, when they meet.

[*Enter Don John L.*

Don J.

My lord and brother, heaven save you !

Don P.

Good den, brother.

Don J.

If your leisure served, I would speak with you.

Don P.

In private ?

Don J.

If it please you ;—yet Count Claudio may hear ; for what I would speak of concerns him.

Don P.

What 's the matter ?

Don J. [*To Claudio.*

Means your lordship to be married to-morrow ?

Don P.

You know, he does.

Don J.

I know not that, when he knows what I know.

Claud.

If there be any impediment, I pray you discover it.

Don J.

You may think I love you not ; let that appear hereafter, and aim better at me by that I now will manifest. For my brother, I think he holds you well ; and, in dear-ness of heart, hath help to effect your ensuing marriage ; surely, suit ill spent, and labour ill bestowed !

Don P.

Why, what 's the matter ?

Don J.

I came hither to tell you, and, circumstances shortened, for she hath too long been a-talking of, the lady is disloyal.

Claud.

Disloyal !

Don J.

The word is too good to paint out her wickedness : I could say she were worse ; think you of a worse title, and I will fit her to it. Wonder not till farther warrant : go

but with me to-night, you shall see her chamber-window entered, even the night before her wedding-day; if you love her then, to-morrow wed her; but it would better fit your honour to change your mind.

Claud.

May this be so?

Don P.

I will not think it.

Don J.

If you dare not trust that you see, confess not that you know. If you will follow me, I will show you enough; and when you have seen more, and heard more, proceed accordingly.

Claud.

If I see anything to-night why I should not marry her to-morrow, in the congregation, where I should wed, there will I shame her.

Don P.

And, as I wooed for thee to obtain her, I will join with thee to disgrace her.

Don J.

I will disparage her no farther, till you are my witnesses; bear it coldly but till midnight, and let the issue show itself.

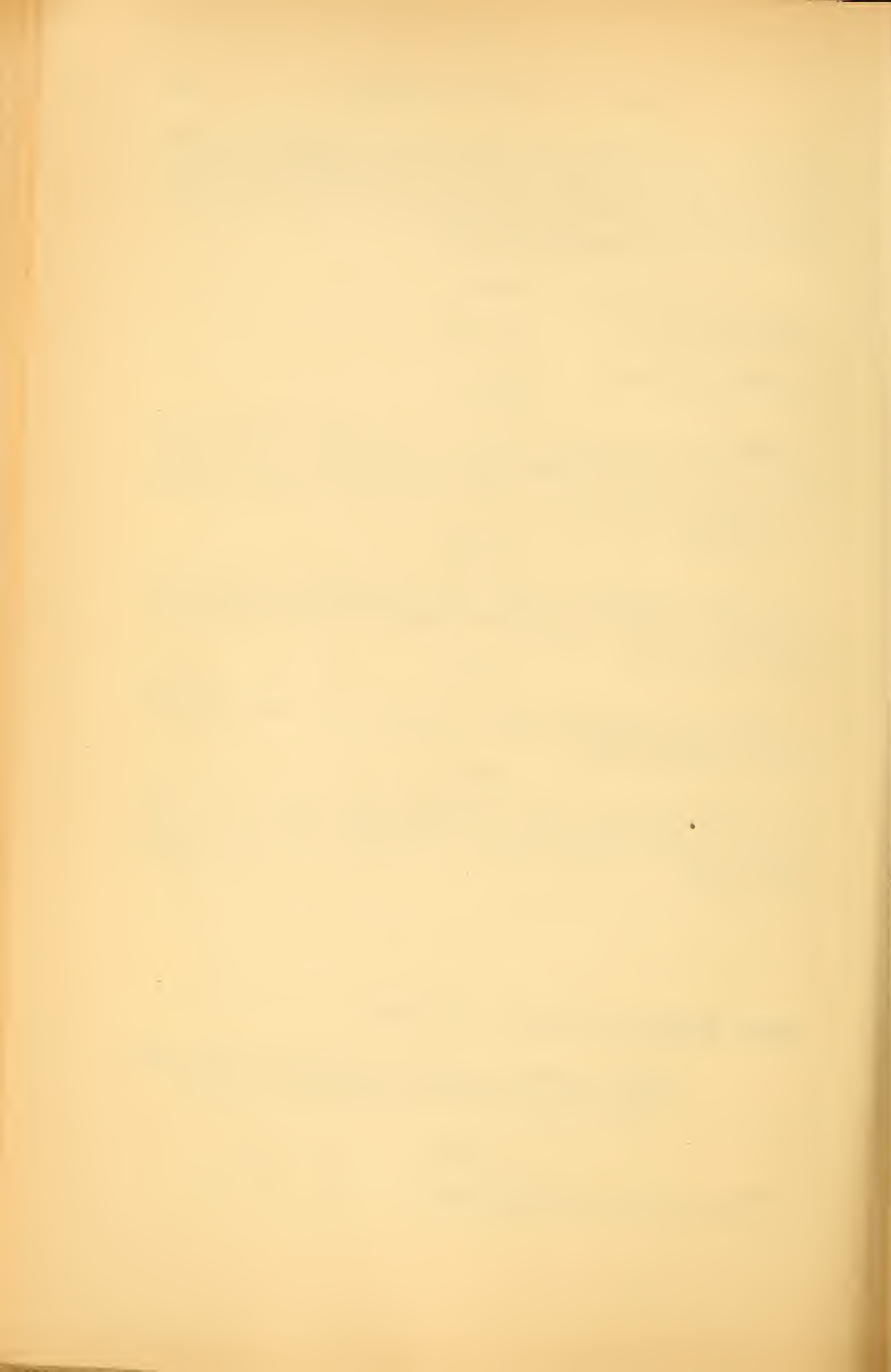
[*Exeunt L.*

Scene Second.—STREET IN MESSINA.

[*Enter Dogberry, carrying a lanthorn, Verges, Sea-coal, Oatcake, and four Watchmen, L. U. E.*

Dogb.

Are you good men and true?



Verg.

Yea, or else it were pity but they should suffer salvation, body and soul.

Dogb.

Nay, that were a punishment too good for them, if they should have any allegiance in them, being chosen for the prince's watch.

Verg.

Well, give them their charge, neighbour Dogberry.

Dogb.

First, who think you the most desartless man to be constable ?

Verg.

Hugh Oatcake, sir, or George Seacoal ; for they can write and read.

Dogb.

Come hither, neighbour Seacoal : [*Crosses c.*

Heaven hath blessed you with a good name : to be a well-favoured man is the gift of fortune ; but to write and read comes by nature.

Seac.

Both which, Master Constable —

Dogb.

You have : I knew it would be your answer. Well, for your favour, sir, why, give heaven thanks, and make no boast of it ; and for your writing and reading, let that appear when there is no need of such vanity. You are thought here to be the most senseless and fit man for the constable of the watch ; therefore, bear you the lanthorn [*Gives it*] : This is your charge :—You shall comprehend all vagrom men ; you are to bid any man stand, in the prince's name.



Seac.

How if a will not stand?

Dogb.

Why then, take no note of him, but let him go; and presently call the rest of the watch together, and thank heaven you are rid of a knave.

Verg.

If he will not stand when he is bidden, he is none of the prince's subjects.

Dogb.

True; and they are to meddle with none but the prince's subjects. You shall also make no noise in the streets; for, for the watch to babble and talk is most tolerable and not to be endured.

Seac.

We will rather sleep than talk; we know what belongs to a watch.

Dogb.

Why, you speak like an ancient and most quiet watchman, for I cannot see how sleeping should offend: only, have a care that your bills be not stolen:—Well, you are to call at all the alehouses, and bid those that are drunk get them to bed.

Seac.

How if they will not?

Dogb.

Why then, let them alone till they are sober: if they make you not then the better answer, you may say, they are not the men you took them for.

Seac.

Well, sir.

Dogb.

If you meet a thief, you may suspect him, by virtue of your office, to be no true man ; and for such kind of men, the less you meddle or make with them, why, the more is for your honesty.

Seac.

If we know him to be a thief, shall we not lay hands on him ?

Dogb.

Truly, by your office, you may ; but, I think, they that touch pitch will be defiled. The most peaceable way for you, if you do take a thief, is, to let him show himself what he is, and steal out of your company.

Ver.

You have been always called a merciful man, partner.

Dogb.

Truly, I would not hang a dog by my will ; much more a man who hath any honesty in him.

Ver.

If you hear a child cry in the night, you must call to the nurse, and bid her still it.

Sea.

How, if the nurse be asleep, and will not hear us ?

Dogb.

Why then, depart in peace, and let the child wake her with crying ; for the ewe that will not hear her lamb when it baes, will never answer a calf when he bleats.

Ver.

'T is very true.



Dogb.

This is the end of the charge. You, constable, are to present the prince's own person; if you meet the prince in the night, you may stay him.

Ver.

Yay, by 'r lady, that, I think he cannot.

Dogb.

Five shillings to one on 't with any man, that knows the statutes, he may stay him: marry, not without the prince be willing: for, indeed the watch ought to offend no man; and it is an offence to stay a man against his will.

Ver.

By 'r lady, I think it be so.

Dogb.

Ha! ha! ha! Well, masters, good-night [*Going L.*]: an there be any matter of weight chances, call up me. Keep your fellows' counsels and your own, and good-night.—Come, neighbour. [*Exeunt Dogberry and Verges L.*]

Sea.

Well, masters, we hear our charge: let us go sit upon the church-bench till two, and then all to bed. [*Re-enter Dogberry and Verges L.*]

Dogb.

One word more, honest neighbours: I pray you, watch about Signior Leonato's door; for the wedding being there to-morrow, there is a great coil to-night. Adieu! be vigilant, I beseech you.

[*Exeunt omnes—Dogberry and Verges L., the Watch R.*]



Scene Third. { INTERIOR OF A CHAPEL. DON PEDRO,
DON JOHN, LEONATO, FRIAR FRANCIS,
CLAUDIO, BENEDICK, HERO, AND BEA-
TRICE, DISCOVERED.

Leon.

Come, Friar Francis, be brief; only to the plain form of marriage, and you shall recount their particular duties afterwards.

Friar.

You come hither, my lord, to marry this lady?

Claud.

No!

Leon.

To be married to her, Friar; you come to marry her.

Friar.

Lady, you come hither to be married to this Count?

Hero.

I do.

Friar.

If either of you know any inward impediment, why you should not be conjoined, I charge you, on your souls to utter it.

Claud.

Know you any, Hero?

Hero.

None, my lord.

Friar.

Know you any, count?

Leon.

I dare make his answer, none.

Claud.

O! what men dare do! what men may do! what men daily do, not knowing what they do!

Bened.

How now? Interjections?

Claud.

Stand thee by, friar.

Father, by your leave;

Will you, with free and unconstrained soul,

Give me this maid, your daughter?

[*To Leonato.*

Leon.

As freely, son, as heaven did give her me.

Claud.

And what have I to give you back, whose worth

May counterpoise this rich and precious gift?

Don P.

Nothing, unless you render her again.

Claud.

Sweet prince, you learn me noble thankfulness:

There, Leonato, take her back again:

She's but the sign and semblance of her honour.—

Behold, now like a maid she blushes here!

Her blush is guiltiness, not modesty.

Leon.

What do you mean, my lord?

Claud.

Not to be married,

Not to knit my soul to an approvèd wanton —

[*All start.*

Leon.

Dear my lord, if you, in your own proof,
Have vanquished the resistance of her youth —

Claud.

No, Leonato,
I never tempted her with word too large;
But, as a brother to a sister, showed
Bashful sincerity, and comely love.

Hero.

And seemed I ever otherwise to you?

Claud.

Out on thy seeming! I will write against it;
You seem to me as Dian in her orb;
[*Benedick retires up stage.*
As chaste as is the bud ere it be blown.

Hero.

Is my lord well, that he doth speak so wild?

Leon. [To *Don Pedro.*

Sweet prince, why speak not you?

Don P.

What should I speak?
I stand dishonoured, that have gone about
To link my dear friend to a wanton here.

Leon.

Are these things spoken, or do I but dream?

Don J.

Sir, they are spoken, and these things are true.

Hero.

True, O heaven!

Claud.

Leonato, stand I here?
Is this the prince? Is this the prince's brother?
Is this face Hero's? Are our eyes our own?

Leon.

All this is so; but what of this, my lord:

Claud.

Let me but move one question to your daughter,
And, by that fatherly and kindly power
That you have in her, bid her answer truly.

Leon.

[*To Hero.*

I charge thee do so, as thou art my child!

Hero.

O heaven defend me! how am I beset!—
What kind of catechizing call you this?

Claud.

To make you answer truly to your name.

Hero.

Is it not Hero? Who can blot that name
With any just reproach?

Claud.

Marry, that can Hero;
Hero itself can blot out Hero's virtue.
What man was he talked with you yesternight,
Out at your window, betwixt twelve and one?
Now, if you are a maid, answer to this.



Hero.

I talked with no man at that hour, my lord.

Don P.

Leonato,
I am sorry you must hear:—upon mine honour,
Myself, my brother, and this grievèd count,
Did see her, hear her, at that hour last night,
Talk with a ruffian at her chamber window.

Don J.

Fie, fie!
Not to be named, my lord, not to be spoke of!
Thus, pretty lady,
I am sorry for thy much misgovernment.

Claud.

O Hero, what an angel hadst thou been,
If half thy outward graces had been placed
About the thoughts and counsels of thy heart!
But, fare thee well, most foul, most fair! farewell!
For thee I'll lock up all the gates of love,
And on my eye-lids shall conjecture hang,
To turn all beauty into thoughts of harm,
And never shall it more be gracious.

*[Hero swoons in the arms of Beatrice. Exeunt
Claudio, Don Pedro and Don John.]*

Leon.

Hath no man's dagger here a point for me?

Beat.

Why, how now, cousin? wherefore sink you down?

Bened.

[Advancing.]

How doth the lady?

Beat.

Dead, I think;—help, uncle!
 Hero! why, Hero!—uncle!—Signior Benedick!—
 Friar! [*They raise Hero.*]

Leon.

O fate, take not away thy heavy hand!
 Death is the fairest cover for her shame,
 That may be wished for.

Beat.

How now, cousin Hero?

Friar.

[*Advancing to c.*

Have comfort, lady.

[*Hero revives.*]

Leon.

Dost thou look up?

Friar.

Yea; wherefore should she not?

Leon.

Wherefore? Why, doth not every earthly thing
 Cry shame upon her? Could she here deny
 The story, that is printed in her blood!
 Do not live, Hero: do not ope thine eyes;
 For did I think thou wouldst not quickly die,
 Thought I thy spirits were stronger than thy shames,
 Myself, would, on the rearward of reproaches,
 Strike at thy life. Grieved I, I had but one?
 Chid I for that, at frugal nature's frame?
 O, one too much by thee! O, she is fallen
 Into a pit of ink! that the wide sea
 Hath drops too few to wash her clean again!

Friar.

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



Leon.

What shall become of this? What will this do?

Friar.

She dying, as it must be so maintained,
 Upon the instant that she was accused,
 Shall be lamented, pitied, and excused
 Of every hearer:—So will it fare with Claudio:
 When he shall hear she died upon his words,
 The idea of her life shall sweetly creep
 Into his study of imagination,
 And every lovely organ of her life
 Shall come apparelled in more precious habit,
 Into the eye and prospect of his soul,
 Than when she lived indeed:—then shall he mourn,
 And wish he had not so accused her;—
 No, though he thought his accusation true.
 Let this be so, and doubt not but success
 Will fashion the event in better shape
 Than I can lay it down in likelihood.

Bened.

Signior Leonato, let the friar advise you.
 And though you know my inwardness and love
 Is very much unto the prince and Claudio,
 Yet, by mine honour, I will deal in this
 As secretly and justly as your soul
 Should with your body.

Leon.

Being that I flow in grief,
 The smallest twine may lead me.

Friar.

'T is well consented; presently away;
 Come, lady, die to live; this wedding day,
 Perhaps, is but prolonged; have patience and endure.

[*Exeunt R., all but Benedick, and Beatrice.*]



Bened.

Lady Beatrice, have you wept all this while ?

Beat.

Yea, and I will weep awhile longer.

Bened.

[*Advances to her.*

I will not desire that.

Beat.

You have no reason : I do it freely.

Bened.

Surely I do believe your fair cousin is wronged.

Beat.

Ah, how much might the man deserve of me, that would right her.

Bened.

Is there any way to show such friendship ?

Beat.

A very even way, but no such friend.

Bened.

May a man do it ?

Beat.

It is a man's office, but not yours.

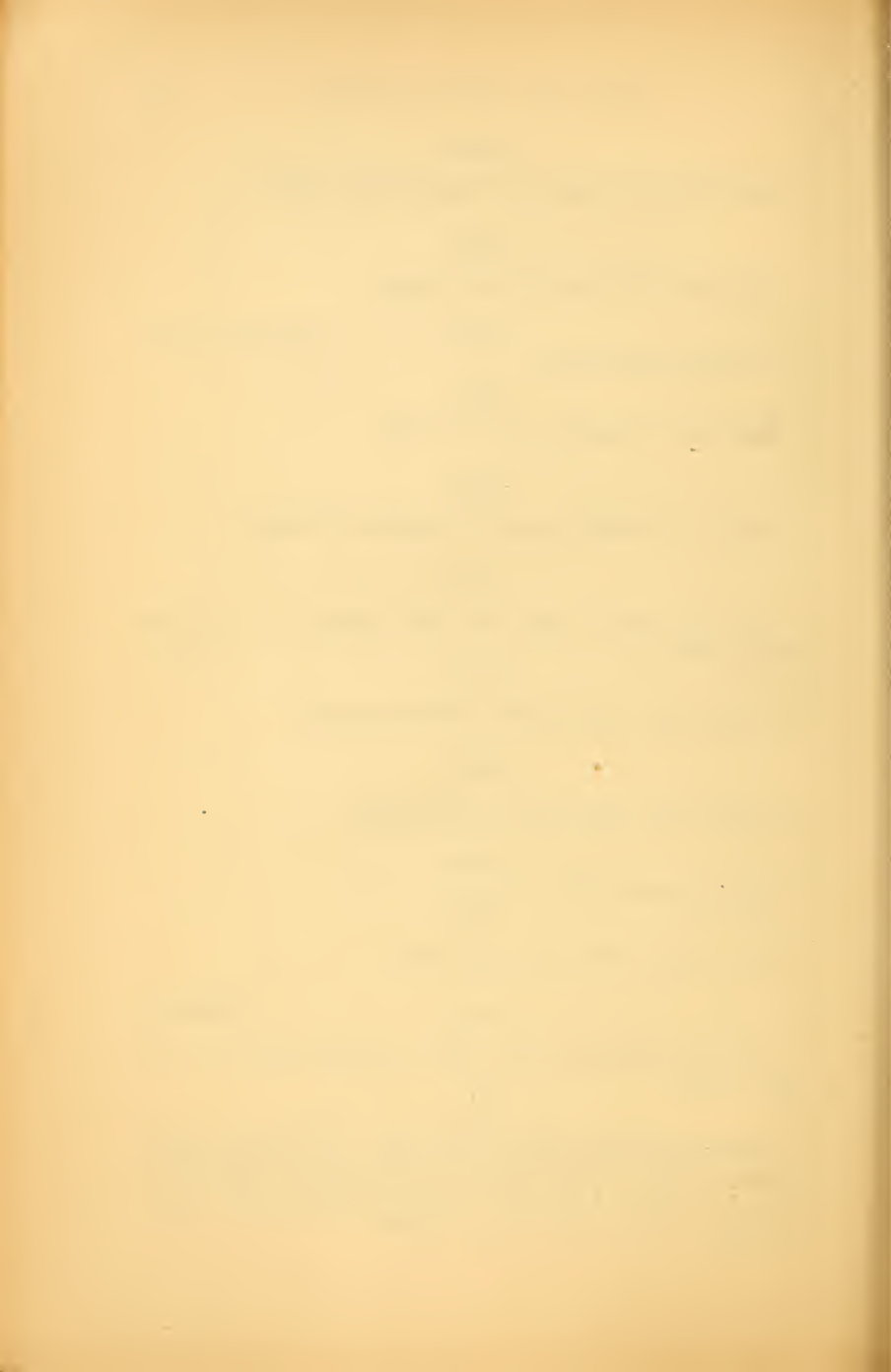
Bened.

[*Pausing.*

I do love nothing in the world so well as you. Is not that strange ?

Beat.

As strange as the thing I know not. It were as possible for me to say, I loved nothing so well as you : but, believe me not ; and yet I lie not ; I confess nothing, nor I deny nothing :—I am sorry for my cousin.



Bened.

By my sword, Beatrice, thou lovest me!

Beat.

Do not swear by it, and eat it.

Bened.

I will swear by it, that you love me; and I will make him eat it that says I love not you.

Beat.

Will you not eat your word?

Bened.

With no sauce that can be devised to it; I protest I love thee!

Beat.

Why, then, heaven forgive me!

Bened.

What offence, sweet Beatrice?

Beat.

You have stayed me in an happy hour; I was about to protest I loved you.

Bened.

And do it, with all thy heart!

Beat.

I love you with so much of my heart that none is left to protest.



Bened.

Come, bid me do any thing for thee.

Beat.

Kill Claudio!

Bened.

Ha! not for the wide world!

Beat.

You kill me to deny it:—farewell! [*Going R.*

Bened.

Tarry, sweet Beatrice!

Beat.

I am gone, though I am here:—there is no love in you:—Nay, I pray you, let me go.

Bened.

Beatrice ——

Beat.

In faith, I will go!

Bened.

We 'll be friends first. [*Follows and detains her.*

Beat.

You dare easier be friends with me than fight with mine enemy.

Bened.

Is Claudio thine enemy?

Beat.

Is he not approved in the height a villain, that hath slandered, scorned, dishonoured my kinswoman?—O, that



I were a man!—What! bear her in hand until they come to take hands, and then, with public accusation, uncovered slander, unmitigated rancour—O heaven, that I were a man! I would eat his heart in the market-place.

Bened.

Hear me, Beatrice.

Beat.

Talk with a man out at a window?—a proper saying!

Bened.

Nay, but Beatrice ——

Beat.

Sweet Hero!—she is wronged, she is slandered, she is undone!

Bened.

Beat ——

Beat.

Princes and counties! Surely, a princely testimony, a goodly count confect, a sweet gallant, surely! O that I were a man, for his sake! or that I had any friend, would be a man for my sake! But manhood is melted into courtesies, valour into compliment, and men are only turned into tongues, and trim ones too: he is now as valiant as Hercules, that only tells a lie, and swears it.—I cannot be a man with wishing, therefore I will die a woman with grieving.

Bened.

Tarry, good Beatrice:—By this hand I love thee!

Beat.

Use it for my love, some other way than swearing by it.

Bened.

Think you, in your soul, the Count Claudio hath wronged Hero?



Beat.

Yea, as sure as I have a thought or a soul!

Bened.

Enough! I am engaged; I will challenge him.

Beat.

Will you?

Bened.

Upon my soul I will. I'll kiss your hand, and so leave you. By this hand Claudio shall render me a dear account.

Beat.

You'll be sure to challenge him?

Bened.

By those bright eyes I will.

Beat.

My dear friend! kiss my hand again.

Bened.

As you hear of me, so think of me. Go, comfort your cousin: I must say she is dead; and so farewell.

Beat.

Benedick, kill him, kill him dead, if you can.

Bened.

As sure as he is alive, I will!

[*Exeunt Beatrice R., Benedick L.*

CURTAIN.

Act Third.

Scene First. } INTERIOR OF A PRISON. DOGBERRY, VERGES, SEACOAL, AND OATCAKE DISCOVERED, SEATED L. OF TABLE.

Dogb.

Is our whole dissembly appeared?

[*Enter Sexton L.*

Ver.

O, a stool and a cushion for the sexton!

Sext.

Which be the malefactors?

Dogb.

Marry, that am I and my partner.

Ver.

Nay, that's certain; we have the exhibition to examine.

Sext.

But which are the offenders that are to be examined? let them come before Master Constable.

[*Opens book and prepares to write.*

Dogb.

Yea, marry, let them come before me.

[*Enter Watchman, bringing in Borachio and Conrade R.*

What is your name, friend?

[*To Borachio.*

Borach.

Borachio.

Dogb.

Pray write down Borachio. Yours, sirrah?

Con.

I am a gentleman, sir, and my name is Conrade.

Dogb.

Write down master gentleman Conrade.—Masters, do you serve heaven?

Con. and Borach.

Yes, sir, we hope ——

Dogb.

Write down, that they hope they serve heaven—and write heaven first: for heaven defend but heaven should go before such villains! Masters, it is proved already that you are little better than false knaves; and it will go near to be thought so shortly. How answer you for yourselves?

Con.

Marry, sir, we say we are none.

Dogb.

A marvellous witty fellow, I assure you!—but I will go about with him. Come you hither, sirrah! a word in your ear, sir; I say to you, it is thought you are false knaves.

Borach.

Sir, I say to you, we are none.

Dogb.

Well, stand aside—'Fore heaven they are both in a tale! Have you writ down that they are none?

Sext.

Master Constable, you go not the way to examine; you must call forth the watch that are their accusers.

Dogb.

Yea, marry, that's the efast way. Let the watch stand forth:—Masters, I charge you, in the prince's name, accuse these men!

Seac.

This man said, sir, that Don John, the prince's brother, was a villain.

Dogb.

Write down,—Prince John, a villain.—Why, that is flat perjury, to call a prince's brother villain!

Borach.

Master Constable ——

Dogb.

Pray thee, fellow, peace!—I do not like thy look, I promise thee.

Sext.

What heard you him say else?

Oat.

Marry, that he had received a thousand ducats of Don John, for accusing the lady Hero wrongfully.

Dogb.

Flat burglary, as ever was committed!

Verg.

Yea, by the mass, that it is!

Sext.
What else, fellow?

Seac.

And that Count Claudio did mean, upon his words, to disgrace Hero before the whole assembly, and not marry her.

Dogb.

O villain! thou wilt be condemned into everlasting redemption for this.

Sext.

What else?

Seac.

This is all.

Sext.

And this is more, masters, than you can deny. Prince John is this morning secretly stolen away: Hero was in this manner accused, in this very manner refused, and, upon the grief of this, suddenly died. Master Constable, let these men be bound, and brought to Leonato's; I will go before, and show him their examination. [*Exit R.*]

Dogb.

Come, let them be opinioned. Come, bind them. Thou naughty varlet!

[*Conrade and Borachio are bound, singly.*]

Con. [*To Dogberry.*]

Away, you are an ass! you are an ass!

Dogb.

Dost thou not suspect my place? Dost thou not suspect my years? O that he were here, to write me down an ass! —but masters, remember that I am an ass; though it be not written down, yet forget not that I am an ass:—No, thou villain, thou art full of piety, as shall be proved upon thee by good witness! I am a wise fellow; and, which is



more, an officer; and, which is more, a householder; and, which is more, as pretty a piece of flesh as any in Messina; and one that knows the law, go to; and a rich fellow enough, go to; and a fellow that hath had losses; and one that hath two gowns, and every thing handsome about him.—Bring him away. O that I had been writ down an ass!

[*Exeunt. Scene changes.*]

Scene Second. { THE COURT BEFORE LEONATO'S HOUSE.
SAME AS SCENE I., ACT I.

[*Enter Leonato and Antonio R. U. E.*]

Ant.

If you go on thus, you will kill yourself;
And 't is not wisdom thus to second grief
Against yourself.

Leon.

I pray thee, peace; I will be flesh and blood;
For there was never yet philosopher
That could endure the tooth-ache patiently,
However they have writ the style of gods.
My soul doth tell me Hero is belied;
And that shall Claudio know, so shall the prince,
And all of them, that thus dishonour her.

Ant.

Here comes the prince, and Claudio, hastily.

[*Enter Don Pedro and Claudio L., and cross to R.*]

Don P.

Good den, good den.

Claud.

Good day to both of you.

Leon.

Hear you, my lords —

Don P.

We have some haste, Leonato.

Leon.

Some haste, my lord! — well, fare you well, my lord :
Are you so hasty now? — well, all is one.

Don P.

Nay, do not quarrel with us, good old man.

Ant.

If he could right himself with quarrelling,
Some of us would lie low.

Claud.

Who wrongs him?

Leon.

Marry, thou dost wrong me, thou, dissembler thou!

[Claudio grasps his sword.]

Nay, never lay thy hand upon thy sword;
I fear thee not.

Claud.

Marry, beshrew my hand,
If it should give your age such cause of fear.
In faith, my hand meant nothing to my sword.

Leon.

Tush, tush, man! Never flear and jest at me!
I speak not like a dotard, nor a fool,
As, under privilege of age, to brag
What I have done being young, or what would do,
Were I not old: know, Claudio, to thy head,
Thou hast so wronged mine innocent child, and me,



That I am forced to lay my reverence by ;
 And, with grey hairs, and bruise of many days,
 Do challenge thee to trial of a man ;— [*Draws his sword.*
 I say, thou hast belied mine innocent child.

Don P.

You say not right, old man.

Leon.

My lord, my lord,
 I 'll prove it on his body, if he dare ;
 Despite his nice fence, and his active practice,
 His May of youth and bloom of lustyhood.

Claud.

Away, I will not have to do with you !

Don P.

Gentlemen both, we will not wake your patience.
 My heart is sorry for your daughter's death ;
 But, on my honour, she was charged with nothing
 But what was true, and very full of proof.

Leon.

My lord, my lord ——

Don P.

I will not hear you.

Leon.

No ?

Come brother, away.—I will be heard !

Ant.

And shall,
 Or some of us will smart for it.

[*Exeunt Leonato and Antonio* L. U. E.]

Don P.

See, see,

Here comes the man we went to seek !

[*Enter Benedick L.*

Claud.

[*C.*

Now, signior, what news ?

Bened.

[*L.*

Good day, my lord.

[*To Don Pedro.*

Don P.

Welcome, signior ! You are almost come to part almost a fray.

Claud.

We had like to have had our two noses snapped off, with two old men without teeth.

Don P.

Leonato and his brother. What think'st thou ? Had we fought, I doubt, we should have been too young for them.

Bened.

In a false quarrel, there is no true valour. I came to seek you both.

Claud.

We have been up and down to seek thee ; for we are high-proof melancholy, and would fain have it beaten away. Wilt thou use thy wit ?

Bened.

It is in my scabbard ; shall I draw it ?

Don P.

Dost thou wear thy wit by thy side ? As I am an honest man, he looks pale.—Art thou sick, or angry ?

Claud.

What! courage, man! What, though care killed a cat,
thou hast metal enough in thee to kill care.

Bened.

Sir, I shall meet your wit in the career, an you charge
it against me;— I pray you, choose another subject. I
don't like it.

Don P.

By this light, he changes more and more! I think, he
be angry, indeed! *[Retires up stage.]*

Claud.

If he be, he knows how to turn his girdle.

Bened.

Shall I speak a word in your ear?

Claud.

Heaven bless me from a challenge!

Bened.

You are a villain! I jest not—I will make it good,
how you dare, with what you dare, and when you dare:
—do me right, or I will protest your cowardice. You have
killed a sweet lady, and her death shall fall heavy upon
you! Let me hear from you.

Claud.

Well, I will meet you, so I may have good cheer.

Don P.

[Advancing.]

What, a feast, a feast!

Claud.

I' faith, I thank him, he hath bid me to a calf's-head and a capon ; the which, if I do not carve most curiously, say my knife 's naught.

Bened.

Sir, your wit ambles well ; it goes easily.

Don P.

But when shall we set the savage bull's horns on the sensible Benedick's head ?

Claud.

Yea, and text underneath : " Here dwells Benedick, the married man ! "

Bened.

Fare you well, boy ! you know my mind. I will leave you now to your gossip-like humour : you break jests as braggarts do their blades, which, heaven be thanked, hurt not ! — My lord [*To Don Pedro*], for your many courtesies, I thank you : I must discontinue your company : your brother is fled from Messina ; you have, among you, killed a sweet and innocent lady : for my lord Lackbeard there, he and I shall meet, and till then, peace be with him !

[*Exit.*

Don P.

He is in earnest.

Claud.

In most profound earnest ; and, I'll warrant you, for the love of Beatrice !

Don P.

And hath challenged thee ?

Claud.

Most sincerely !

[*Enter Dogberry, Verges, with Conrade and Borachio bound, followed by Seacoal, Oatcake, and Watchmen, R. One of the Watchmen goes off*

L. U. E.

Dogb.

Come you, sir! if justice cannot tame you, she shall ne'er weigh more reasons in her balance; nay, an you be a cursing hypocrite once, you must be locked to.

Don P.

How now, two of my brother's men bound! Borachio one!

Claud.

Harken after their offence, my lord.

Don P.

Officers, what offence have these men done?

Dogb.

Marry, sir, they have committed false report: moreover, they have spoken untruths; secondarily, they are slanderers; sixth and lastly, they have belied a lady; thirdly, they have verified unjust things; and, to conclude, they are lying knaves.

Don P.

First, I ask thee, what they have done? thirdly, I ask thee, what 's their offence? sixth and lastly, why they are committed? and, to conclude, what you lay to their charge?

Claud.

Rightly reasoned, and in his own division.

Don P. [*To the Prisoners.*]

Whom have you offended, masters, that you are thus bound to your answer? This learned constable is too cunning to be understood:—what 's your offence?

Borach.

Sweet prince, let me go no further to mine answer; do you hear me, and let this count kill me. I have deceived even your very eyes; what your wisdoms could not discover, these shallow fools have brought to light; who, in the night, overheard me confessing to this man how Don John, your brother, incensed me to slander the lady Hero; how you were brought into the orchard, and saw me court Margaret, in Hero's garments; how you disgraced her, when you should marry her: my villainy they have upon record, which I had rather seal with my death than repeat over to my shame; the lady is dead, upon mine and my master's false accusation; and briefly, I desire nothing but the reward of a villain.

Don P. [To Claudio.

Runs not this speech like iron through your blood?

Claud.

I have drunk poison whiles he uttered it.

Don P.

But did my brother set thee on to this?

Borach.

Yea, and paid me richly for the practice of it.

Don P.

He is composed and framed of treachery: and fled he is upon this villainy.

Claud.

Sweet Hero! now thy image doth appear
In the rare semblance that I loved it first.

Dogb.

Come, bring away the plaintiffs; by this time, our sexton hath reformed Signior Leonato of the matter; and, mas-

ters, do not forget to specify, when time and place shall serve, that I am an ass.

Verg.

Here comes Master Signior Leonato, and the sexton too.
 [Enter Leonato, Servants and the Sexton, L.

Leon.

Which is the villain? Let me see his eyes;
 That, when I note another man like him,
 I may avoid him: which of these is he?

Borach.

If you would know your wronger, look on me.

Leon.

Art thou the slave, that, with thy breath, hast killed
 Mine innocent child?

Borach.

Yea—even I alone.

Leon.

No, not so, villain; thou beliest thyself;
 Here stand a pair of honourable men,
 A third is fled, that had a hand in it:

[Turning to Claudio and Don Pedro.

I thank you, princes, for my daughter's death;
 Record it with your high and worthy deeds;
 'T was bravely done, if you bethink you of it.

Claud.

I know not how to pray your patience,
 Yet I must speak: Choose your revenge yourself;
 Impose me to what penance your invention
 Can lay upon my sin; yet sinned I not,
 But in mistaking.

Don P.

By my soul, nor I ;
And yet, to satisfy this good old man,
I would bend under any heavy weight
That he 'll enjoin me to.

Leon.

I cannot bid you bid my daughter live,
That were impossible ; but, I pray you both,
Possess the people in Messina here
How innocent she died ;
To-morrow morning come you to my house ;
And, since you could not be my son-in-law.
Be yet my nephew : my brother hath a daughter,
Almost a copy of my child that 's dead,
And she alone is heir to both of us ;
Give her the right you should have given her cousin,
And so dies my revenge.

Claud.

O, noble sir,
Your over-kindness doth wring tears from me !
I do embrace your offer, and dispose
For henceforth of poor Claudio.

Leon.

To-morrow, then, I will expect your coming.
To-night I take my leave.

[Exeunt Don Pedro and Claudio.]

This naughty man
Shall face to face be brought to Margaret.

Dogb.

Moreover, sir, which, indeed, is not under white and
black, this plaintiff here, the offender, did call me an ass :
I beseech you, let it be remembered in his punishment.
And also the watch heard them talk of one Deformed—
pray you examine him upon that point.

Leon.

I thank thee for thy care and honest pains.

Dogb.

Your worship speaks like a most thankful and reverend youth; and I praise heaven for you!

Leon.

There 's for thy pains.

[*Giving money.*

Dogb.

Heaven save the foundation!

Leon.

Go, I discharge thee of thy prisoners, and I thank thee.

Dogb.

I leave an arrant knave with your worship, which, I beseech your worship, to correct yourself for the example of others. Heaven keep your worship—I wish your worship well. Heaven restore you to health! I humbly give you leave to depart; and, if a merry meeting may be wished, heaven prohibit it! Come, neighbour.

[*Exeunt Dogberry, Verges, the Sexton, Seacoal, Oatcake, and the Watch, L.*

Leon.

[*To Servants.*

Bring you these fellows on: we 'll talk with Margaret.

[*Exeunt L. U. E.*

Scene Third.—A HALL IN LEONATO'S HOUSE.

[*Enter Benedick L.*

Bened.

Hist! Hist! Beatrice!

[*Enter Beatrice R.*

Sweet Beatrice, wouldst thou come when I called thee?

Beat.

Yea, signior, and depart when you bid me.

Bened.

O, stay but till then!

Beat.

“Then” is spoken; fare you well now:—and yet, ere I go, let me go with that I came for, which is, with knowing what hath passed between you and Claudio.

Bened.

Claudio undergoes my challenge; and either I must shortly hear from him, or I will subscribe him a coward. And I pray thee now, tell me, for which of my bad parts didst thou first fall in love with me?

Beat.

For them all together; which maintained so politic a state of evil, that they will not admit any good part to intermingle with them. But for which of my good parts did you first suffer love for me?

Bened.

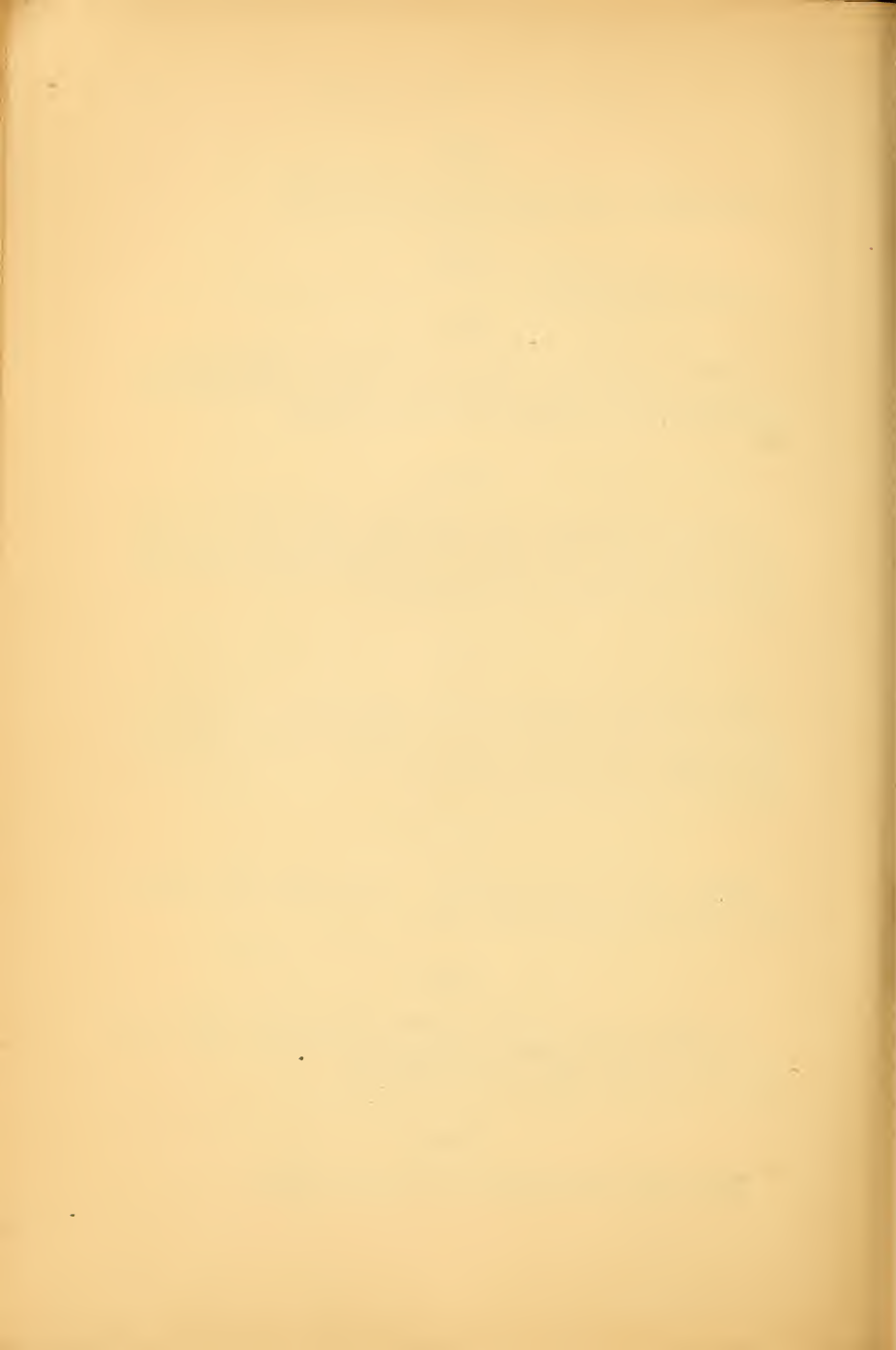
Suffer love; a good epithet! I do suffer love, indeed, for I love thee against my will.

Beat.

In spite of your heart, I think! alas! poor heart! If you spite it for my sake, I will spite it for yours; for I will never love that which my friend hates.

Bened.

Thou and I are too wise to woo peaceably.



Beat.

It appears not in this confession; there 's not one wise man among twenty that will praise himself.

Bened.

An old, an old instance, Beatrice, that lived in the time of good neighbours. If a man do not erect, in this age, his own tomb ere he dies, he shall live no longer in monument than the bell rings and the widow weeps.

Beat.

And how long is that, think you?

Bened.

Why, an hour in clamour, and a quarter in rheum. And now tell me, how doth your cousin?

Beat.

Very ill.

Bened.

And how do you?

Beat.

Very ill too.

Bened.

Serve heaven, love me, and mend.

Here comes one in haste. [*Enter Ursula* L. I. E.]

Urs.

Madam, you must come to your uncle; it is proved my lady Hero hath been falsely accused, the prince and Claudio mightily abused, and Don John is the author of all, who is fled and gone. [*Exit Ursula* L.]

Beat.

Will you go hear this news, signior?

Bened.

I will live in thy eyes, die in thy lap, and be buried in thy heart ; and, moreover, I will go with thee to thy uncle.
 [Exeunt L.

Scene Fourth. { A SPACIOUS HALL IN LEONATO'S HOUSE.
 LEONATO, HERO, FRIAR, ANTONIO,
 BENEDICK, BEATRICE, URSULA, AND
 LORDS AND LADIES DISCOVERED.

Friar.

Did not I tell you she was innocent ?

Leon.

So are the prince and Claudio, who accused her,
 Upon the error that you heard debated :
 But Margaret was in some fault for this ;
 Although against her will, as it appears.

Ant.

Well, I am glad that all things sort so well.

Bened.

And so am I, being else by faith enforced
 To call young Claudio to a reckoning for it.

Leon.

[To the Ladies, who stand R.

Well, daughter, and you gentlewomen, all,
 Withdraw into a chamber by yourselves ;
 And, when I send for you, come hither, masked :
 The prince and Claudio promised by this hour
 To visit me.

[Exeunt Beatrice, Hero, and all the Ladies, R.

You know your office, brother ;
 You must be father to your brother's daughter,
 And give her to young Claudio.

Ant.

Which I will do with confirmed countenance.

Bened.

Friar, I must entreat your pains, I think.

Friar.

To do what, signior ?

Bened.

To bind me, or undo me ; one of them.—
 Signior Leonato, truth it is, good signior,
 Your niece regards me with an eye of favour.

Leon.

That eye my daughter lent her : 't is most true.

Bened.

And I do with an eye of love requite her.

Leon.

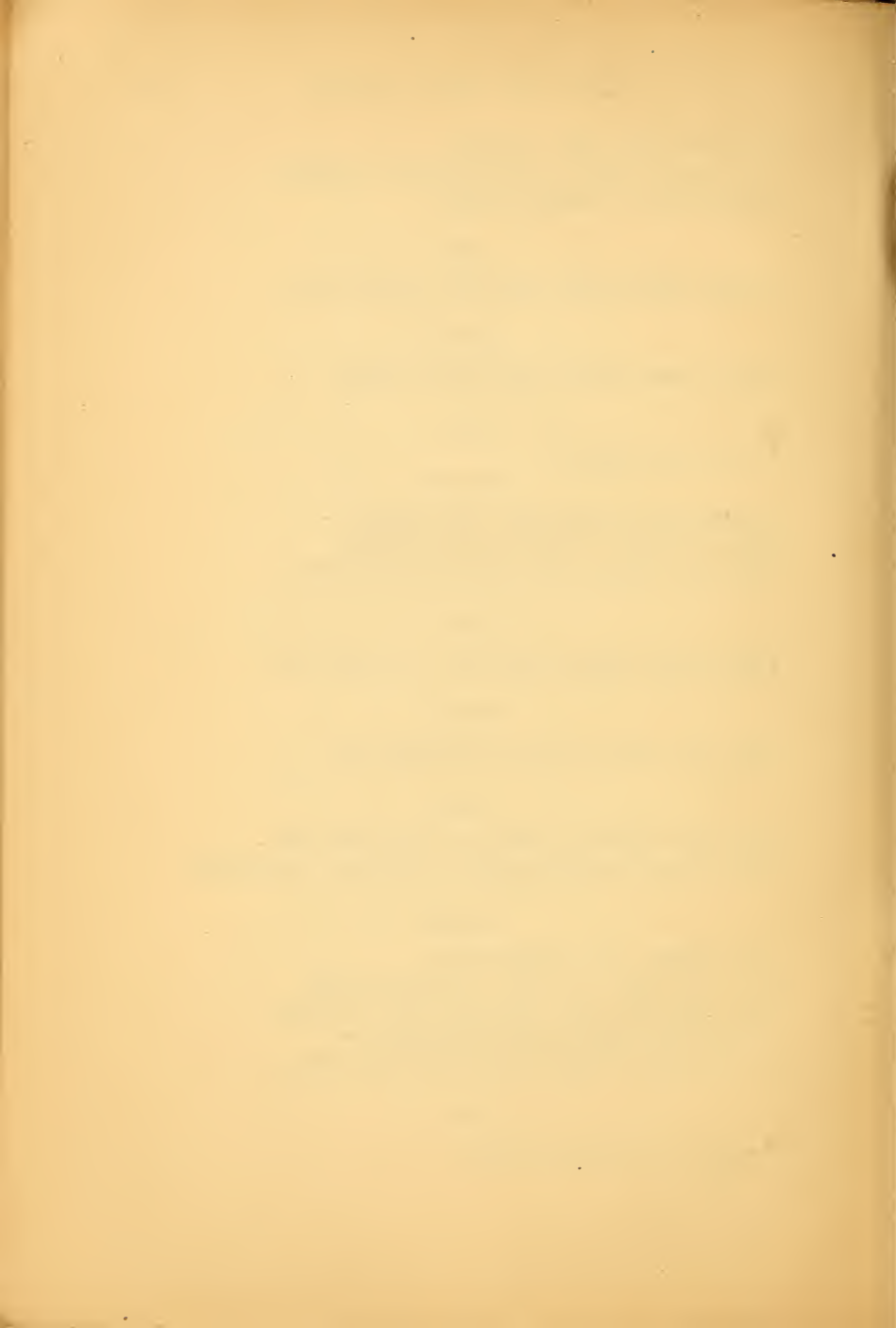
The sight whereof, I think, you had from me,
 From Claudio and the prince. But what 's your will ?

Bened.

Your answer, sir, is enigmatical :
 But for my will, my will is, your good-will
 May stand with ours, this day to be conjoined
 In the estate of honourable marriage ;—
 In which, good friar, I shall desire your help.

Leon.

My heart is with your liking.



Friar.

And my help.

Here comes the prince and Claudio.

[*Enter Don Pedro, Claudio, and Attendants, L.*

Don P.

Good-morrow to this fair assembly.

Leon.

We here attend you: are you yet determined
To-day to marry with my brother's daughter?

Claud.

I'll hold my mind, were she an Ethiop.

Leon.

Call her forth, brother: here's the friar ready.

[*Exit Antonio.*

Don P.

Good-morrow, Benedick: why, what's the matter,
That you have such a February face,
So full of frost, of storm, and cloudiness?

Claud.

I think he thinks upon the savage bull:—
Tush! fear not, man, we'll tip thy horns with gold.

Bened.

O, here they come!

[*Enter Antonio, with Hero, Beatrice, Ursula, and
other Ladies, masked, and wearing dominoes.*

Claud.

Which is the lady I must seize upon?

Ant.

This same is she, and I do give you her.

[*Presenting Hero.*

Claud.

Another Hero ?

Hero.

Nothing certainer;
One Hero died defiled, but I do live,
And, surely as I live, I am innocent.

Don P.

The former Hero! Hero, that is dead!

Leon.

She died, my lord, but whiles her slander lived.

Friar.

All this amazement can I qualify;
When, after that the holy rites are ended,
I 'll tell you largely of fair Hero's death:
Meantime, let wonder seem familiar,
And to the chapel let us presently.

Bened.

Soft and fair, friar. Which is Beatrice ?

Beat.

I answer to that name.

[*Beatrice and the other Ladies unmask.*

What is your will ?

Bened.

Do you not love me ?

Beat.

No ; no more than reason.



Bened.

Why, then, your uncle, and the prince, and Claudio,
Have been deceived — they swore you did.

Beat.

Do not you love me ?

Bened.

Troth, no ; no more than reason.

Beat.

Why, then, my cousin, Margaret, and Ursula,
Are much deceived, for they did swear you did.

Bened.

They swore that you were almost sick for me.

Beat.

They swore that you were well nigh dead for me.

Bened.

'T is no such matter : — Then, you do not love me ?

Beat.

No, truly, but in friendly recompense.

Leon.

Come, cousin. I am sure you love the gentleman.

Claud.

And I 'll be sworn upon 't that he loves her ;
For here 's a paper, written in his hand,
A halting sonnet of his own pure brain,
Fashioned to Beatrice. [Gives the paper to Beatrice.



Hero.

And here 's another,
Writ in my cousin's hand, stolen from her pocket,
Containing her affection unto Benedick.

[*Gives the paper to Benedick.*

Bened.

A miracle!—here 's our own hands against our hearts!
Come, I will have thee; but, by this light, I take thee for
pity.

Beat.

I would not deny you;—but, by this good day, I yield
upon great persuasion; and, partly, to save your life; for
I was told you were in a consumption.

Bened.

Peace, I will stop your mouth.

Don P.

How dost thou, Benedick, the married man? [*All laugh.*

Bened.

I 'll tell thee what, prince, a college of wit-crackers can-
not flout me out of my humour.—Claudio, I did think to
have beaten thee; but, in that thou art like to be my kins-
man; live unbruised, and love my cousin. Prince, thou
art sad.

Don P.

Yes, I 've got the tooth-ache. [*All laugh.*

Bened.

Got the tooth-ache! Get thee a wife; and all will be
well. Nay, laugh not, laugh not.

Your jibes and mockeries I laugh to scorn:
No staff more reverend than one tipt with horn.

CURTAIN.



MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING.

APPENDIX.

I.—THE MEANING AND THE CHARACTERS OF MUCH ADO.

“THE title is not to be understood in an external sense merely; it rather indicates the inherent nothingness of human life, whenever its hopes terminate in mere earthly interests and relations. Every one of us makes much ado about nothing, in this life, so long as he is unable, by the annihilation of the terrestrial naught, to attain to the eternal realities which he has within himself. * * * * English critics, after Steevens, have reproached our poet with repeating himself, and playing off the same trick upon Beatrice and Benedick. But it is evident that this uniformity was required, by the great resemblance which these two characters bear to each other, and also by the necessity of avoiding any further complication of a plot already sufficiently involved. * * * * The poet seems to have drawn his ground idea from a contemplation of the contrast which human life presents between the reality of outward objects and the perception of the inward subject—between that which the world really is, and that which it appears to those who yet live in it and have experience of it. * * * * The most ordinary and insignificant matters and circumstances are arrayed in all the pomp of form,¹ and, by the personages of the drama, stuffed out with the gravest possible importance. * * * * This contrast between the objective reality and the subjective apprehension of things is most amusingly set forth and embodied in the senseless and stupid Dogberry. * * * * The comic humour of chance chooses to employ the silliest and most ridiculous of simpletons to bring to light what no doubt lay near enough to the surface, but nevertheless escaped the discernment of the cleverest.”

ULRICI.

“The war at the opening begins without reason and ends without result. Don Pedro seems to woo Hero for himself, while he gains her for his friend. Benedick and Beatrice, after carrying on a merry cam-

paign of words, without real enmity, are entrapped into a marriage, without real love. The leading story rests on a seeming faithlessness, and its results are a seeming death and funeral, a challenge which produces no fighting, and a marriage in which the bride is a pretender; and the weakness and shadowiness of human wishes and plans are exposed with yet more cutting irony in the means that bring about the fortunate catastrophe,—an incident in which the unwitting agents, headed by Dogberry, the very representative of the idea of the piece, are the lowest and most stupid characters of the whole group."

EDINBURGH REVIEW.

"The players of the game of life see nothing; but the dullest bystander has glimpses of something more."

KNIGHT.

"The chief persons, Hero and Claudio, Beatrice and Benedick, are contrasted pairs. Hero's character is kept subdued and quiet in tone, to throw out the force and colour of the character of Beatrice; she is gentle, affectionate, tender, and, if playful, playful in a gentle way. If our interest in Hero were made very strong, the pain of her unmerited shame and suffering would be too keen. And Claudio is far from being a lover like Romeo: his wooing is done by proxy, and he does not sink under the anguish of Hero's disgrace and supposed death. Don John, the villain of the piece, is a melancholy egoist, who looks sourly on all the world, and has a special grudge against his brother's young favourite, Claudio. The chief force of Shakespeare in the play comes out in the characters of Benedick and Beatrice. They have not a touch of misanthropy nor of sentimentality, but are thoroughly healthy and hearty human creatures; at first a little too much self-pleased, but framed by and by to be entirely pleased with one another. * * * * It is a charming incongruity to find, while Leonato rages and Benedick offers his challenge, that the solemn ass Dogberry is the one to unravel the tangled threads of their fate. * * * * Friar Francis is a near spiritual kinsman of Friar Lawrence, in 'Romeo and Juliet.'" DOWDEN.

"In Beatrice high intellect and high animal spirits meet, and excite each other, like fire and air. In her wit [which is brilliant without being imaginative] there is a touch of insolence, not unfrequent in women when the wit predominates over reflection and imagination. In her

temper, too, there is a slight infusion of the termagant, and her satirical humour plays with such an unrespective levity over all subjects alike that it required a profound knowledge of women to bring such a character within the pale of our sympathy. But Beatrice, though wilful, is not wayward. She has not only an exuberance of wit and gaiety, but of heart and soul, of energy and spirit. * * * Benedick is by far the most pleasing, because the independence and gay indifference of temper, the laughing defiance of love and marriage, the satirical freedom of expression, common to both, are more becoming to the masculine than to the feminine character. * * * The wit of Beatrice is less good-humoured than that of Benedick; or, from the difference of sex, appears so. It is observable that the power is, throughout, on her side, and the sympathy and interest on his; which, by reversing the usual order of things, seems to excite us 'against the grain.' * * * She cannot for a moment endure his neglect, and he can as little tolerate her scorn. * * * In the midst of all this tilting and sparring of their nimble and fiery wits, we find them infinitely anxious for the good opinion of each other, and secretly impatient of each other's scorn; but Beatrice is the most truly indifferent of the two—the most assured of herself. * * * The affection of Benedick induces him to challenge his intimate friend for her sake, but the affection of Beatrice does not prevent her from risking the life of her lover. * * * Beatrice more charms and dazzles us by what she is than by what she says. * * * We dismiss Benedick and Beatrice to their matrimonial bonds rather with a sense of amusement than a feeling of congratulation or sympathy; rather with an acknowledgment that they are well matched and worthy of each other, than with any well-founded expectation of their domestic tranquillity."

MRS. JAMESON.

"In the comedies of Shakespeare the wit plays and dazzles like dancing light. * * * But his humour was still more his own than his wit. In that rich but delicate and subtle spirit of drollery,—moistening and softening whatever it touches, like a gentle oil, and penetrating, through all infoldings and rigorous incrustments, into the kernel of the ludicrous that is in everything,—which mainly created Malvolio, and Shallow, and Slender, and Dogberry, and Verges, and Bottom, and Lancelot, and Launce, and Costard, and Touchstone, and a score of other clowns, fools, and simpletons, and which, gloriously overflowing in Falstaff, makes his wit exhilarate like wine, Shakespeare has had almost as few successors as he had predecessors."

CRAIK.

Two love-stories are told in "Much Ado About Nothing." One of them is all glitter and dash, asperity and mischievous frolic; the other commingles tenderness and shy delight, and, though clouded for a while with a cruel sorrow, is irradiated at last with justice and happiness. One of the beauties of Shakespeare's design, in this comedy, is apparently the intention to make the portrayal of the spring-time of love all the more bright, fragrant and luxuriant, by setting it against a background of that slumberous repose which an old state of society expresses, even in its ordinary adjuncts. The ivy is never so gloriously green as when it gleams against the rough and frowning rock; flowers are never so beautiful as when they grow over ruins; and youthful love has never elsewhere the tender sweetness and pathos that hallow its life amid associations of the ancient and the past.

W. W.

II.—COSTUME FOR MUCH ADO.

Italian raiment, of the Sixteenth Century, tastefully modified, is required in the dressing of this comedy. Actors might advantageously consult the descriptions given by Cæsar Vecellio. Serviceable hints may be found in the remarks on Costume appended to the Prompt-Book editions of "Othello" and "The Merchant of Venice." In the production of "Much Ado" by Macready—at Drury Lane, February 24th, 1843—the male characters wore parti-coloured suits fitting tightly to the form, with short tunics. Examples may be found in Herbè's Costumes, and in similar works by Mercurj and Bounard. Planché thinks that the costume worn by both sexes in England and France in the reigns of Henry VIII. and Francis I. might, with propriety and advantage, be used in "Much Ado." Don Pedro and his party, on their first entrance, should, perhaps, appear in martial attire, since they have just come from the camp; but this is not imperative.

W. W.

NEW-YORK, October 31st, 1878.

