

## AN IMAGE OF SHAKESPEARE

Sir Israel Gollancz writes: "It is possible to differentiate no less than three styles in *Pericles*." The most charming of these is either Christopher Marlowe's or an exceedingly skilful imitation of him. Marlowe's music is repeated, for instance, in such verses as

Thou comest as a physician, Helicanus

or

A terrible child-bed hast thou had, my dear.

It may be that Marlowe, working with others, perhaps Peele and Kyd, shaped a version of *Pericles* from an old Traditional Play about the time when Shakespeare had written the first forms of *Cymbeline* and *The Winter's Tale*. This would account for a change in Shakespeare's manner of writing. And in that case the many things in other Plays which resemble *Pericles* were repeated from it, and this Tragi-comic Romance taught him how to write most of his Tragi-comical and Comical Plays in the same way as *The Spanish Tragedy* guided him when he began to write Tragedies. This Play may have shown him how to avoid the monotony of *Titus Andronicus* and to enliven his others, even his Tragedies, by contrasts and changes.

## THE PLAYS OF YOUTH

### II

SOME students who think that *The Tempest* is an elderly Play support this belief by contending that it is founded on *Pericles*, which they take to have been written by Wilkins in 1607. Mr. Dowden, for instance, thinks that Shakespeare retouched *Pericles* in 1608, and calls Marina's Romance a sketch of *The Tempest*. And the common belief that *Cymbeline* and *The Winter's Tale* are elderly work is partly derived from the theory that they should be taken as allied with *The Tempest*, which should be read as a farewell to the Plays.

The German students who held this theory had the excuse that the Tragical part of *The Winter's Tale* and the structure of *Cymbeline* appealed to their taste. Besides, they interpreted Shakespeare as if he was a German: Schiller might have dreamt of such work, and Goethe could have ended his task with a complacent farewell. The kindly German hearts of the days when Schlegel and his followers laboured with such zeal to explain Shakespeare to his countrymen found a pleasure in thinking that he had ended his work jolly and kind. So they linked these three Plays, which seemed masterpieces to them, as a proof that there was a sunny close to his life and that he emerged from the gloomy meditations of *Hamlet* to adopt as his motto "All's Well that Ends Well." They thought that the false happiness at the end of these Plays showed that he had lived to repent the truth of his Tragedies, and they discovered in them a last mood of reconciliation and pardon. But in doing this they overlooked the fact that this mood was not a new one to him, since it is as plain in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *Measure for Measure*, *As You Like It*, and *The Merchant of Venice*, and they studied those Plays as if they were as German as their notion of *Hamlet*.

Sir Sidney Lee writes, "The composition of *Cymbeline* and *The Winter's Tale* may be best assigned to the Spring and Autumn respectively of 1610, and *The Tempest* to the

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early months of the following year." He bases this date for *The Tempest* on the metrical tests and the mood and, for instance, on his trust in the Book of Revels which mentions a performance at Court in November, 1611, and on his belief that Gonzalo quotes Florio's version of Montaigne and that Prospero's Island represented Bermuda. None of these things could show that *The Tempest* was not a revision of a juvenile form.

He writes of Prospero's Island: "Suggestions for these episodes reached Shakespeare from a quarter nearer home than Spain or Germany. In the Summer of 1609 a fleet bound for the new plantation of Jamestown in Virginia, under the command of Sir George Somers, was overtaken by a storm off the West Indies, and the Admiral's ship, the *Sea Venture*, was driven on the coast of the hitherto unknown Bermuda Isles." And Mr. Hamilton Mabie, in his *William Shakespeare*, writes: "In the Autumn of 1610 a great sensation was made in London by the arrival of a company of sailors who had been wrecked off the Bermudas, until that moment undiscovered."

Bermuda was known long before this. In *Hakluyt's Voyages*, printed in 1589 and reprinted with many additions between 1598 and 1600, we have Job Hortop's mention of passing it in 1570, and the accounts of the storm which the *Edward Bonaventure* met there in 1593, and of the wreck of a French ship on its rocks in the same year, and of Dudley's meeting "foul weather enough to disperse many fleets" there in 1595. And it has a place in the two Ruttiers preserved by Hakluyt: one of them says, "In the winter time go on the south side of Bermuda, and must go with great care because many have been lost here about this Island." Shakespeare may have known of this Island and of shipwrecks there when he was a child, and his use of the name Bermoothes, which is nearer to the discoverer's name, Juan Bermudez, does not suggest that he depended on the *Discovery* printed in 1610. "Discovery," of course, meant exploration, as it did when Raleigh published the *Discovery of Guiana*, a country which had been seen by Columbus, and when Ben Jonson called his *Discoveries* "*Explorata*," and told Drummond of Hawthornden that he intended to write an account of his Pilgrimage from London to Scotland and call it a Discovery.

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The fact that Ariel was sent to fetch dew from the still-vexed Bermoothes is a proof that Bermuda was not Prospero's Island. Besides, Prospero told Miranda that their enemies

Hurried us aboard a bark,  
Bore us some leagues to Sea, where they prepared  
A rotten carcase of a butt, not rigged,  
Nor tackle, sail nor mast,

when he was banished from Milan, and he said that Sycorax had been exiled to it from Algiers, and Ferdinand said that he was returning from Tunis to Naples, when he was driven on it, and Ariel said,

For the rest of the fleet  
Which I dispersed, they have all met again  
And are upon the Mediterranean flote,  
Bound sadly home for Naples.

All this seems to prove that when Prospero was banished from Milan he made his home on a dream-island in the Mediterranean. Even if we accepted the theory that his Island resembled the one described in the pamphlets published in 1610, this could be explained by supposing that Shakespeare had introduced that resemblance in a later revision. Fortunate Islands and haunted ones had been famous in the legends and Poetry of the sea-going Nations from time immemorial.

There may be one link between Prospero's Island and the dreaded Bermudas. Job Hortop, in his account of his voyage with Diego Flores de Valdez in 1570, which was published by Hakluyt and may have been current before, wrote, "When we came in the height of Bermuda we discovered a monster in the Sea, who showed himself three times unto us from the middle upwards, in which parts he was proportioned like a man of the complexion of a Mulatto or tawny Indian. The General did command one of his clerks to put it in writing and he certified the King and his Nobles thereof." This monster may have suggested Caliban (whom Trinculo called "half a fish and half a monster") when Shakespeare remembered the old stories about a Magician and his innocent daughter and wished to provide them with company on their Fortunate Island.

It may be that Shakespeare drew Caliban, the land-fish

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who resembled a tortoise and had a very ancient and fishlike smell, from an Esquimaux brought to England by Frobisher in 1576 and then called an Indian. He may have heard him described or seen him exhibited in Stratford or London, alive or dead. Trinculo says, "When they would not give a doit to relieve a lame beggar, they will lay out ten to see a dead Indian. Were I in England now, as once I was, and had but this fish painted, not a holiday fool there but would give a piece of silver: then would this monster make a man."

It may be that this picture of Caliban and the mention of Setebos, the Patagonian Devil, are signs of the early date of *The Tempest*. Several of the names in this Play are to be found in Eden's *History of Travels* which described Patagonia and was published in 1577. In 1610 Eden's book and the Esquimaux were things of the Past. Caliban's name is not to be found in it and Sir Israel Gollancz writes that "it is most probably a contemporary variant of Canibal, which is itself merely another form of Caribal, i.e. Caribbean." If this could be proved it would support the impression that *The Tempest* as we have it derides Montaigne's *Essay Des Cannibales*. Even in that case the name might have been given in a later revision. This derivation cannot be proved, and the name may have been found in a Spanish form of the story, for similar names (such as Oliban) are still used in Spain.

Prospero's farewell to his Magic has been interpreted as Shakespeare's to his. I do not believe that Shakespeare said good-bye to his dreams as if he was closing a shop. This farewell seems based on Medea's assertion in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*,

Et silvas moveo, jubeoque tremescere montes  
Et mugire solum, manesque exire sepulchris.

Since these verses must have been familiar to Shakespeare in the days of his Youth, this echo of them may be a sign that this Comedy was first written then. And the renunciation of Magic was involved in the story. Perhaps he developed his Magician's farewell, making it his, when he said good-bye to his trade and to his fanciful dreams, turning to Tragedies, and saw himself as Prospero parting from the tricky sprite Ariel.

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Ariel did not belong to Fairyland but to Magic as is shown by his name. Sir Israel Gollancz says that it is "of Hebraistic origin, and was, no doubt, derived from some such treatise as Heywood's *Hierarchie of the Blessed Angels*."

The earth's great Lord  
Ariel, the Hebrew's Rabbins thus accord."

Ben Jonson wrote in the *Alchemist*, acted in 1610 :

And in the east side of your shop aloft  
Write Mathlai, Tarmiel and Baraborat,  
Upon the north part Rael, Velel, Thiel,  
They are the names of those Mercurial Spirits.

And when he wrote his Masque *The Fortunate Isles*, which was "designed for the Court on the Twelfth Night, 1626," he began it with Johphiel : "His Majesty being set, entereth in running, Johphiel, an aery spirit, and according to the Magi the Intelligencer of Jupiter's Sphere, attired in light silks of several colours, with wings of the same, a bright yellow hair, a chaplet of flowers, blue silk stockings and pumps and gloves, with a silver fan in his hand." He must have remembered that other Fortunate Island on which Prospero lived, and though he may have been glad to correct Shakespeare's inaccuracy by giving the proper Magical name to his Messenger, he may have attired him as he had been shown on the Stage.

*A Midsummer Night's Dream* as we have it is akin to *The Tempest*. Oberon is in Prospero's place, and Ariel is Puck compounded with the Fairy who sings to him. When gentle Puck is sent to fetch Love in Idleness he replies,

I'll put a girdle round about the earth  
In forty minutes,

showing Ariel's activity, and he misleads Lysander and Demetrius unseen. And Prospero wrought his miracles through Oberon's Fairies. But Oberon's Court is happier than Prospero's Island : as Drayton said of it in his *Nymphidia*,

This Palace standeth in the air,  
By Necromancy placed there,  
That it no Tempest need to fear ;

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and *The Tempest*, as we have it, is darkened, for disillusion has supplanted illusion. Puck is a prose spirit; but Ariel is a Poem with wings. Still, Puck lives in *The Tempest* though he has been changed from Robin Goodfellow,—

Nothing of him that doth fade,  
But doth suffer a sea-change  
Into something rich and strange.

Though Puck was able to take the disguise of a roasted apple at will he did not change his form in the Play; but Ariel, though he must have been acted by a boy, was intended to have no definite size. He could sing,

Where the bee sucks, there suck I:  
In a cowslip's bell I lie,

and could summon the elves to play with him on the sands. This vagueness of stature is one of the proper signs of a dream and may have been added when Shakespeare changed a boyish Romance partly founded on *Pericles* and on old stories of Magic which were current in Spain and Italy and probably sprang from Oriental tales, for Ariel resembles the Jinn who were released and employed in the *Arabian Nights' Entertainments*.

Mr. de Perott in *The Probable Source of the Plot of Shakespeare's Tempest*, printed in 1905, and Mr. Henry Thomas in *Spanish and Portuguese Romances of Chivalry*, printed in 1920, have shown the resemblance between this Play and the First Book of *Espejo de Principes y Cavalleros*, written by Diego Ortunez de Calahorra and printed in Spanish in 1562 and in English as *The Mirror of Princely Deeds and Knighthood* about 1580. Shakespeare knew the book, for in the First Part of *King Henry the Fourth* he made Falstaff say, "We that take purses go by the moon and seven stars, and not by Phœbus, he 'that wandering knight so fair.'" In it there are Magicians, for instance, Artidor brother of Polidarca King of Phœnicia, and Polisteo elder son of the King of Phrygia, and there is an Island in which Polisteo lives with his two children while he practises Magic. And, as Mr. Henry Thomas says, "There is also the Island of Artimaga, named after its mistress, the most wicked and abominable

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among women, who worhipped only the Devil, and had by him a son called Fauno, at whose birth she died. The Island passed to the son, and was known as Maniac Island, frequented by storms and legions of Devils.”

If this island suggested Prospero's Island we cannot deduce the date of *The Tempest* from the fact that *A Discovery of the Bermudas* was printed in 1610. It does not seem probable that Shakespeare would have turned to the First Part of the *Mirror of Knighthood* in his elderly days, thirty years after it had been printed. This was a popular book when he was beginning to write, and though he made Falstaff deride it afterwards, it may have attracted him while he was still young.

*The Tempest* retains the atmosphere of the old story borrowed by Chaucer in his *Man of Law's Tale*, and by Gower in the Second Book of his *Confessio Amantis* from Vincent of Beauvais' *Speculum Historiale*. In the *Man of Law's Tale*, Constance marries the Sultan of Syria, as Claribel (whose name can be found in the *Mirror of Knighthood*) marries the King of Tunis, and she is twice set adrift as Prospero and Miranda and Sycorax were. According to Chaucer,

Years and days floated this creature,  
Throughout the Sea of Greece, unto the Strait  
Of Marok, as it was her aventure,

and afterwards

Floateth in the Sea in pain and woe  
Five year and more, as pleased Christ's hand,  
Ere that her ship approached unto land.

*The Tempest's* Geography is as hazy as Chaucer's, for Tunis is so distant from Naples that Claribel can have no news of her home

Till newborn chins  
Be rough and razorable.

This statement (which the return of the wedding-party disproves) seems one of the signs that *The Tempest* echoed the mood of Constance's impossible journeys and that its Characters dwelt “ten leagues beyond man's Life.”



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The apparent growth of Ariel from Puck and the employment of Fairyland may show that *The Tempest*, as we have it, was partly based on *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Coleridge in his *Classification* of 1802 ranked *The Tempest*, *The Winter's Tale* and *Cymbeline* last, but he put *The Tempest* between *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night* in 1810 and before *As You Like It* in 1819. These changes must have been due to his recognition of *The Tempest's* resemblance to *As You Like It* in mood, and that resemblance would be explained if *The Tempest* ended a series of riper plays which began with the other vision of Fairyland. It may be that the first form of *The Tempest* was a story of Magic and that it was partly changed to a Fairy-tale, in which Ariel became a poetic version of Puck, after *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was reshaped as we have it.

The first Magical form seems suggested, for instance, by the story and by Ariel's name and by Prospero's farewell to his Magic and his final repentance, which is not told in the Comedy, as we have it, but in an Epilogue which clashes with it.

Tragedies of Magic were popular when Shakespeare was young. We cannot be certain when Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* and Greene's *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay* were written. Sir Adolphus Ward says in his *Old English Drama*: "There is no reason against the assumption that *Friar Bacon* was written before February 1589—very possibly in 1588 or even already in 1587; after, and if so, doubtless very soon after, *Doctor Faustus* had been produced on the Stage." And Mr. Charles Gayley in *Representative English Comedies* says: "The period between July and the end of 1589 will probably cover the production of *Friar Bacon*, but the latter limit might include the Spring of 1590." Faustus and Friar Bacon repented. Faustus ended saying,

My God, my God, look not so fierce on me!  
I'll burn my books.

and Friar Bacon said,

Bungay, I'll spend the remnant of my life  
In pure devotion, praying to my God  
That he would save what Bacon vainly lost.

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Remorse of this kind would be out of place in *The Tempest*, as we have it, and Prospero bids farewell to his Magic with a gentle regret. But the Epilogue has a different tone: in it he says,

Now I want  
Spirits to enforce, art to enchant,  
And my ending is despair  
Unless I be relieved by prayer.

This Epilogue seems suggested by Gower's words in the fifth Act of *Pericles*,

Now our sands are almost run;  
More a little and then dumb.  
This my last boon give me,  
For such kindness must relieve me.

It would be explained if *The Tempest* began as a fantastic Romance or Tragicomedy, a story of Magic written in imitation of *Pericles* about the same time as the first form of *Love's Labour's Lost* in the days when *Doctor Faustus* and *Friar Bacon* were first admired on the Stage.

It may be that Ben Jonson referred to a form of this Play in *Every Man Out of His Humour*, where Mitis asks "What's his scene?" and Cordatus replies "Marry, Insula Fortunata, Sir," and Mitis rejoins "Oh, the Fortunate Island! Mass, he has bound himself to a strict law there." If so this form may have been written in 1598, for Meres did not mention this Play and *Every Man Out of His Humour* was acted in 1599. This date would explain the close resemblance between *The Tempest* and *As You Like It*, in which there is another banished Duke and an equally repentant Usurper.

An innocent fantastic Romance with the sweetness of *Pericles* seems to survive in the satire and weariness of a final revision. It may be that this was written in Youth and rewritten with the wisdom and ripeness of a *Midsummer Dream* and again under the shadow of a Tragical mood. The alacrity of *Love's Labour's Lost* seems combined with the mellow mood of *Twelfth Night*: the Fortunate Island is as sequestered as the Forest of Arden, and Jaques sees the folly

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of Youth as soberly as Prospero does and turns away to hear solemn music, saying,

I am for other than for dancing measures,  
seeking with Prospero

A solemn air, and the best comforter  
To an unsettled fancy.

It may be that *The Tempest's* vague connexion with Italy and the success of the Comical Scenes in it and a ripening mood in which he began to learn the value of laughter led Shakespeare to Comedies. Heminge and Condell printed *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* after *The Tempest*, and then *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Measure for Measure*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *Much ado About Nothing* and *Love's Labour's Lost* before *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. I follow Coleridge's classification of 1819 in adding to these the first forms of *The Taming of the Shrew* and *All's Well that Ends Well*. And I think that the first forms of the Story of Troilus in *Troilus and Cressida*, and of *Romeo and Juliet* and of the Choice of the Caskets in *The Merchant of Venice*, and of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and of Imogen's adventure in Wales in *Cymbeline* are united with them.

All these except the Story of Troilus and the Choice of the Caskets, were Comedies of Errors depending on mistakes and disguises. When Ariosto wrote his *Suppositi* as a Carnival play in 1509 (copying, as he said, Terence and Plautus and Menander), he set an example imitated in Italy first and in England when George Gascoigne wrote his *Supposes* in 1566. Italian vivacity and sharpness of wit and love of masquerading became fashionable in London instead of the horseplay and the simple buffoonery of the Traditional Stage. Shakespeare's Italianate Comedies were masquerades written in the mood of a Carnival. His turning to them seems a sign of an ambition to please the idle students of Law and other young men who sat in the boxes or galleries or on the stage, exhibiting themselves with the show, as well as the rougher men in the Pit. The Italianate youths in them resembled the "sharp wits"

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described by Lyly in *Euphues His Anatomy of Wit* who indulged in "fine phrases, smooth quips, merry taunts, jesting without mean and abusing mirth without measure." These Plays were as fit for the Court or the Inns of Court as Lyly's had been, but when they were performed by the Players they must have seemed travesties or caricatures of the behaviour of gentlemen, and this must have helped the men and boys of the Pit to find amusement in them.

It may be that his first juvenile Comedy was the Story of Troilus. Sir Walter Raleigh writes of this in his *Shakespeare*: "The love-story is written, for the most part, in the style of *Romeo and Juliet* and the early Comedies with many similar phrases and jests." And he surmises that Shakespeare wrote it first as a Tragedy in imitation of Chaucer and then, finding the story unsuitable, "wrote *Romeo and Juliet* instead, and retained the go-between in the character of the Nurse, who is twin-sister to Pandarus even in tricks of speech." But it seems to me that Shakespeare neglected Chaucer's version and took his story from Lydgate's *Troy Book* or Caxton's *Recuyell of the Histories of Troy*. The version to be found in these books may have led him to write it as a Comedy first. This form may have been suggested to him by the Story of Hector and it may have linked his early Classical Tragedies with his Juvenile Comedies. It may have suggested the stories of betrayal in them and in the *Sonnets*. And it may have been echoed in a first form of *Romeo and Juliet* with a fortunate end.

The *Two Gentlemen of Verona* does not seem to have been printed before 1623, but Meres cited it in *Palladis Tamia* in 1598 as the first of the Comedies. It may have been partly suggested by a couple of Plays, *Felix and Philiomena*, which (according to the Revels Accounts for 1584-1585) was "acted before Her Highness by Her Majesty's Servants on the Sunday next after New Year's Day at night," and *Fidele and Fortunio, the Receipts in Love discoursed in a Comedy of Two Italian Gentlemen*, which was probably written by Anthony Munday and was printed in 1585. *Felix and Philiomena* seems to have been founded on a Castilian Pastoral

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story, *Diana Enamorada*, written by Jorge de Montemayor or Montemôr, which may have been translated in 1583; and *Fidele and Fortunio* copied Luigi Pasqualigo's *Fidele*, printed in 1576.

These Plays may have led Shakespeare to blend a Woodland Romance with an Italianate Comedy. These two strains were old, for the *Diana Enamorada* revived the mood of a Greek Romance, the *Lesbian Pastorals of Daphnis and Chloë* written by Longus in the Second Century, or at the beginning of the Third, and the Italian Comedies sprang from Ariosto's imitation of Greek and Roman Comical methods. The Italian strain in this Romantic Comedy may have been partly derived from Barnabe Riche's story of *Apolonius and Silla*, printed in his *Farewell to the Military Profession* in 1581 and copied from one of the tales in Cinthio's *Hecatommithi*. The Scenes in the Forest near Mantua may have come from the *Tale of Gamelyn* which (though it does not seem to have been printed as Chaucer's till 1721) must have been current, for Thomas Lodge used it in *Rosalynde*. Or if Shakespeare wrote this Play or revised it about 1590 he could have found them in *Rosalynde*, or have borrowed the Woodland strain from Sidney's *Arcadia*.

These Scenes link *As You Like It* with this story of Italy. Valentine is like Jaques when he says,

How use doth breed a habit in a man!  
This shadowy desert, unfrequented woods;  
I better brook than flourishing peopled towns.

And these Scenes may have suggested the first form of that version of *Rosalynde*.

This young Play is as lyrical as *Titus Andronicus*, but it imitates Lyly instead of Marlowe and Kyd. In it Shakespeare's young Poetry is combined with the mirth as when Valentine says:

Oh, thou that dost inhabit in my breast,  
Leave not the mansion so long tenantless,  
Lest, growing ruinous, the building fall.

Mr. Masefield says that "it comes from the mood in which the *Sonnets* were written," and that "one of the noblest

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things in this Play is the forgiveness at the end." This forgiveness is shown, too, in the *Sonnets*, and it is implied or expressed in every one of the Comedies. There was no room for it in the Tragedies, for it would have been fatal to a picture of Justice: the deceivers were pardoned in tales which were not meant to be true.

It may be that *The Tempest* would have justified Heminge and Condell's place for it by being the Prologue to the rest of the Comedies if it had not been revised with a wisdom which has left it an Epilogue. This Play is the Prologue now. Proteus was properly named, for he was destined to appear on the Stage in many disguises. When Julia said to her maid,

Gentle Lucetta, fit me with such weeds  
As may beseem some well-reputed page,

she set the example which Portia, Jessica, Viola and Rosalind followed. There is another favourite trick when Julia says,

Madam, he sends your Ladyship the ring,

and Silvia answers,

The more shame for him that he sends it me,  
For I have heard him say a thousand times  
His Julia gave it him at his departure,

and when Launce fooled with his dog (which may have been a performing one borrowed from a neighbouring show) and argued with Speed he prepared the way for Launcelot Gobbo and the Court-Jesters.

It may be that after this happy experiment in different strains Shakespeare wrote the first forms of *As You Like It* and *Romeo and Juliet* and of the Choice of the Caskets. Then, perhaps because Launcelot's fooling had been greatly admired, he may have turned to write Comedies which were intended to win similar laughter.

*A Midsummer Night's Dream*, as we have it, seems composed of three parts,—a Fairy-tale and a travesty of Rustical Players and a more mature setting of both for a performance at Court. The Interlude of the Rustical Players may have been the first of four Farces in which he echoed the boisterous

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humour of the Traditional Stage. These Farces, the Interlude of the Rustical Players and the *Merry Wives of Windsor* and *The Taming of the Shrew* and *The Comedy of Errors*, are linked closely in mood, and this seems to suggest that they were written together.

Heminge and Condell printed *The Merry Wives of Windsor* the third on their list of Comedies. There are two Interludes or adventures in it. The Story of the Basket is one that might have been told by Rabelais or the Queen of Navarre and there are similar tales in *Notti Piacevoli* and *Il Pecorone*. The adventure in the Forest is English and it is a version of the Fairy-tale part of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. The Character now called Falstaff in it is as much of a laughing-stock as Bottom the Weaver, but his adventures are Prose.

The usual belief that this Comedy was written to please Queen Elizabeth who had expressed a desire to see Falstaff in love is based on a suggestion first made by John Dennis in 1702. As a matter of fact, Falstaff is not shown in love, he is merely indulging in a vicious adventure with a couple of strangers: neither is he the Falstaff of *King Henry the Fourth*; he has nothing in common with that lovable Knight except his size and his name. William Hazlitt wrote in his *Characters of Shakespeare's Plays*, "Falstaff in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* is not the man he was in the two parts of *Henry the Fourth*. His wit and eloquence have left him. Instead of making a butt of others, he is made a butt of by them. Neither is there a single particle of love in him to excuse his follies: he is merely a designing, barefaced knave and an unsuccessful one."

It does not seem possible that Shakespeare could have drawn this dull laughing-stock as a picture of Falstaff after Sir John had come to glorious life in his dreams. Mistress Quickly is Dr. Caius' servant in this Play and is a stranger to Falstaff till they meet in it and only resembles her name-sake by some blunders in speech, and Justice Shallow is no more than a name. These three are at best crude sketches of the three who are living in *King Henry the Fourth*. And no writer ever drew his rough sketches after his pictures. All this seems enough to refute Dennis's guess, even if the

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whole structure of the Play did not prove that it was earlier work.

The fact that the name Falstaff was used in *King Henry the Fourth* (after Shakespeare had ceased to call his Knight "Old-castle") has been cited as proving that this Play was written after that time. But Heminge and Condell called Fastolfe "Falstaff" in *King Henry the Sixth*. It may have been the laughing-stock's name in a form of this Play written before *King Henry the Fourth* or it may not have been his original name.

This Falstaff may have begun as a Fleming and this would explain why Mrs. Page says of him, "What an unweighed behaviour hath this Flemish drunkard picked, with the Devil's name, out of my conversation." If he began as a Fleming this may be a sign that a form of this Interlude (which may not have been the earliest) was based on the doings of the three German Devils who are now only mentioned. Even if we conclude that the Quarto's reading "cozen garmombles" had anything to do with Count Frederick of Mompelgard, this would be only a proof that this allusion was written after he visited Windsor in 1592.

This crude Falstaff may have been a caricature of some townsman of Stratford, as Sir William Bishop asserted (according to Oldys), or he may have been merely one of the natural butts of Farces, a very fat and very foolish old man. Shakespeare may have used the familiar names, such as Falstaff and Shallow, in a revision about 1599 because he wanted to profit by their renown. The title of the Quarto edition (which was printed in 1602 and 1619) proclaims that these Characters appeared in the Play: it runs, "a most pleasant and excellent conceited Comedy of Sir John Falstaff and the merry Wives of Windsor. Intermixed with sundry variable and pleasing humours of Sir Hugh the Welsh Knight, Justice Shallow and his cousin M. Slender. With the swaggering vein of Ancient Pistol and Corporal Nym." This edition is only half as long as the other and may give a form shortened to suit the Stage when the Interludes were shown as one Play. Shakespeare may have revised the second part of this Play, the Interlude of the adventure in the Forest of Windsor, for a performance at Court, perhaps at Windsor



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Castle; but he could not have written this Comedy about the time when he wrote *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night* or after the Comedy of Falstaff had been a foil to the Pageant of *King Henry the Fourth*.

*The Taming of the Shrew* was derived from the forty-fourth story in Don Juan Manuel's *Conde Lucanor*. Mr. Dowden has coupled it and this Play as "rough and boisterous Comedies" and Coleridge bracketed them in his *Classification* of 1802 and Gervinus coupled *The Taming of the Shrew* and *The Comedy of Errors* among the earliest plays. These different views can be reconciled if these Plays were first written in the days when *The Comedy of Errors* exposed Shakespeare's rawness in Comedy. Perhaps Heminge and Condell separated *The Taming of the Shrew* from the others because it was governed by the later Induction, as they may have ranked *A Midsummer Night's Dream* according to the date of the setting added to it.

It may be that they put *Measure for Measure* before *The Comedy of Errors* according to the date of a form of it which was founded on *Pericles* and on a Play printed in 1578, *Promos and Cassandra*, by Whetstone. *Measure for Measure* was made noble and sorrowful in a final revision; but it retains the first form which Mr. Saintsbury, for instance, discerns. The tale in this was Italian and so was the cynical and pitiless mood. And a first form of *Twelfth Night* may have been written as a companion to it. That Comedy is sweet and mature and there is no trace of any rawness in it; but Angelo and Malvolio are brothers and both of them are tricked and derided and the disguises and mistakes in it leave it a Comedy of Errors combined with a gay story of love and with a cruel deception.

*The Comedy of Errors* appears to have been partly founded on the story of *Pericles*, for it has a tale of a shipwreck and a lost child and a wife believed to be dead who is restored at the end. The first form of this Comedy may have been written as an imitation of *Pericles* and this may have been changed to a travesty of Gascoigne's *Supposes*. It is not known to have been printed before 1623, but there are no

## THE COMEDY OF ERRORS

signs of an elderly revision in it: I think that Shakespeare left it little changed at the end because he valued it little and that it was revised, as we have it, in 1594 to suit the taste of the students who belonged to Gray's Inn. It was performed for them on an appropriate festival, Holy Innocents' Day (the twenty-eighth of December) in that year as we know from *Gesta Grayorum*: "After such sport *A Comedy of Errors* (like to Plautus his *Menechmi*) was played by the Players; so that night began and continued to the end in nothing but confusion and error; whereupon it was ever afterwards called *The Night of Errors*."

This Comedy, as we have it, was planned as a travesty of the popular Error Plays, for in it their theme was made frankly preposterous by adding the second pair of twins, the two servants.

The Comedy printed next by Heminge and Condell, *Much Ado About Nothing*, was published in 1600 in a Quarto edition. Meres did not mention it in *Palladis Tamia* (unless he referred to it as *Love's Labour's Won* which he cited after *Love's Labour's Lost*), and this has been accepted as showing that it must have been written between 1598 and 1600; but that argument fails if, as I think, Mr. Saintsbury is right in observing that Meres was only naming some instances of popular Plays. We have no other reason for disputing the place indicated by Heminge and Condell except the fact that the style and the Stagecraft in this Play are mature, and this might have been due to a revision about 1599. The heartlessness and shallow jocosity of the mood in this Play link it with the Italianate Comedies. The tale in it is allied with the one in *Measure for Measure*, as Davenant saw when he blended these Comedies in his *Law against Lovers*. It is based on one to be found in Bandello's *Novelle* and Belleforest's *Histoires Tragiques*. An English translation of Ariosto's version of it in the Fifth Canto of *Orlando Furioso* was printed in 1565 and seems to have been used in a Play acted by Leicester's Servants in 1574, according to the Revels Accounts, "My Lord of Leicester's men showed him matter of Panecia," and in another mentioned in them as acted in 1583, "a History of Ariodante and Gennora, showed before

## AN IMAGE OF SHAKESPEARE

Her Majesty on Shrove Tuesday at night, enacted by Mr. Mulcaster's Children." The trick by which Margaret passes for Hero is to be found also in *Tirant lo Blanch*, which was begun by Johannot Martorell in 1460 and printed in 1490 in Catalan and was reproduced in Italian as *Tirante el Bianco* by Lelio Manfredi about 1538. It was used too in *The Mirror of Knighthood*.

When Shakespeare wrote the Play first he dealt with an old popular tale familiarly known when he was young. Such a subject might well have been chosen by him when he was writing his Comedies borrowed or imitated from Italy. The faults of this Play, the baseness and hardness of its impossible story, are radical: the merits, the skill and the brilliancy, are ornaments which may have been added when he had grown to maturity.

The story of Benedick and Beatrice seems a separate Interlude blended with a Play which resembles *Cymbeline* and *All's Well that Ends Well*. It may have been acted apart and this may have been why King Charles the First wrote the name "Benedick and Bettrice" under the title of this Play in his copy of the Folio of 1632 in the same way as he added "Piramus and Thisbe" beneath the title of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and why the Treasurer's Accounts for 1613 state that Burbage produced a Play called *Benedicte and Betteris* at Court and why Robert Burton in the edition of his *Anatomy of Melancholy* printed in 1628 added a note "like Benedict and Bettris in the Comedy." This was the famous part of the Play, as is shown, for instance, by Leonard Digges' Verses printed in John Benson's edition of *Shakespeare's Poems* in 1640,

Let but Beatrice  
And Benedick be seen, in a trice  
The Cockpit, Galleries, Boxes all are full.

If it was developed or added after Meres wrote *Palladis Tamia* this would explain why he did not mention this Play. If so, there may have been a revision about 1599, for William Kemp seems to have quarrelled with Shakespeare or with his associates in that year and it is known that he had taken the part of Dogberry.

## MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

The English humour of Dogberry and his companions repeats the simplicity of the Rustical Players in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. This part may have begun as a brief Interlude deriding the Watchmen, and this would account for their prominence in a tale of Messina. Dogberry is an alien in Sicily, like Bottom in Fairyland. This may have been a common theme on the Stage, for Ben Jonson wrote in his Induction to *Bartholomew Fair*, which was acted in 1614, "And then a substantial Watch to have stolen in upon them and taken them away with mistaking words, as the fashion is in the Stage-practice."

*Much Ado About Nothing* is a composite Play (like so many others) and this accounts for the clash between its different moods. It may be that a form of it belongs to this time and that Heminge and Condell took it to be the principal one because a later revision only altered its style and developed the wit-combats between the secondary lovers in it. This may have been the story of Hero and Claudio told in an Italianate mood. There is a trace of a first form when Hero, who is afterwards as blameless as Imogen, says,

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.

This may have been remembered from the Italian Romance in which the deception was devised by a lady (though in the Catalan *Tirant lo Blanch* it had been assigned to a man) and it suggests that the tale was to be as heartless as *Troilus and Cressida*. The employment of slander in this tale was repeated from the *Two Gentlemen of Verona* where Proteus says,

The best way is to slander Valentine  
With falsehood, cowardice, and poor descent ;  
Three things that women highly hold in hate.

The picture of shrewishness appears in this Play, though it is changed to be charming in Beatrice, as it did in *The Comedy of Errors*, where Adriana is drawn as a shrewish wife and her husband says,

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Go thou,  
And buy a rope's end : that will I bestow  
Among my wife and her confederates.

There are traces too of juvenile work when Claudio emulates the Brothers in *Cymbeline*, reading an epitaph and singing a dirge by the tomb which he believes to be Hero's, and says,

Now unto thy bones good-night !  
Yearly will I do this rite,

before he goes to meet his new wife, and when Hero is restored from the tomb. The difference between this tale and the others in which wives are restored is that Claudio does not even pretend to take any pleasure in recovering her : he says "Another Hero" and then the merry story of Errors and Masquerading continues.

Some students have seen in this Play the Comedy called *Love's Labour's Won* mentioned by Meres. This would suggest that this Play and *Love's Labour's Lost* were written at about the same time, and the places given to them by Heminge and Condell would agree with that view ; but I think it more probable that *All's Well that Ends Well* was formerly called *Love's Labour's Won*.

Valentine says in the first Scene of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*,

It boots thee not . . .  
To be in love, where scorn is bought with groans ;  
Coy looks with heartsore sighs ; one fading moment's mirth  
With twenty watchful, weary, tedious nights :  
If haply won, perhaps a hapless gain ;  
If lost, why then a grievous labour won ;  
However but a folly bought with wit,  
Or else a wit by folly vanquished.

These verses give the notion of Love in these Italianate Comedies. Nearly all of them could have been named *Love's Labour's Won* or *Love's Labour's Lost* or *Much Ado About Nothing*.

*Love's Labour's Lost* had as good a claim to be christened *Much Ado About Nothing* as any of these. The nominal

## LOVE'S LABOUR'S LOST

scene was laid in Navarre, and two of the chief Characters, Biron and Longaville were named after associates of King Henry the Fourth of France, who was King of Navarre from 1572 to 1589. This suggests that this Comedy belongs to the years before 1589 when the English regarded him as a Protestant hero before he changed his Religion. The true scene was also in France but it was in Rabelais' Abbey of Theleme, and another Character, Holofernes, was called after Gargantua's master. The mood too is like Rabelais', for this Play is a parody which we can read as a satire, if we want to be wise, instead of interpreting it by our recollection of the folly of Youth. It is a Comedy of happy young people exchanging silly retorts in the brief intoxication of Youth and in the glamour of moonlight. The answer to all wisdom is plain in it, "Dictynna, goodman Dull."

It was printed in a Quarto edition in 1598 with the title, "A Pleasant Conceited Comedy, called *Love's Labour's Lost*, as it was presented before Her Highness this last Christmas, newly corrected and augmented. By W. Shakespeare." This may indicate a revision about 1597. If so, this was carelessly done, as is shown by the survival of passages which he improved and expanded. He may have seen that a revision with a heavier hand would only deprive it of its irrational charm. Mr. Masefield says: "The Play is full of experiments. Some of it is written in a loose swinging couplet, some in quatrains, some in Blank Verse, some in the choice picked prose made the fashion by Lyly." It seems to me the Play is full of parodies rather: I do not see an experiment in "the preylful Princess pierced and pricked a pretty pleasing pricket," or in "More fairer than fair, beautiful than beauteous, truer than Truth itself, have commiseration on thy heroical vassal. The magnanimous and most illustrate King Cophetua set eye upon the pernicious and indubitate beggar Zenetophon." I suggest that Heminge and Condell's place for it furnishes a clue to its drift. Shakespeare did not linger to copy different manners; but he turned to mock the old ways and the fascinating follies of Euphuism.

*Love's Labour's Lost* is the *Don Quixote* of Euphuism, but the former love lived in Shakespeare as it did in Cervantes: he renounced,

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Taffeta phrases, silken terms precise,  
Three-piled hyperboles, spruce affectation,  
Figures pedantical,

with Biron; but he acknowledged with him,

Yet have I a trick  
Of the old rage: bear with me; I am sick;  
I'll leave it by degrees.

*Love's Labour's Lost* and *Romeo and Juliet* are companions because they are lyrical and thrilling with Youth and happiness and the beginning of triumph. This may have been the time when he wrote his juvenile Sonnets. There are three Sonnets in this Play, one in the first Scene of the first Act, beginning,

Study me how to please the eye indeed,  
and another in the third Scene of the fourth Act, beginning,

So sweet a kiss the golden sun gives not,  
and a third in the same Scene, beginning,

Did not the heavenly rhetoric of thine eye,  
and there are many Quatrains which may have been quotations from Sonnets, such as Biron's words,

Oh, if in black my lady's brows be decked,  
It mourns that painting and usurping hair  
Should ravish doters with a false aspect,  
And therefore is she born to make black fair.

Here Shakespeare brought in the customary Braggart and Pedant and the Mummer's Plays of the Worthies and a Masque such as the English Gargantua, King Henry the Eighth, loved when (as the Stage-direction has it) "Enter Blackamoors with music; Moth, the King, Biron, Longaville and Dumain in Russian habits and masked." And he ended his parody of them with another of the Traditional contests between Summer and Winter. In this he described the

## CYMBELINE

Seasons not as poets had feigned them but as he knew them to be,

When all aloud the wind doth blow,  
And coughing drowns the Parson's saw,  
And birds sit brooding in the snow,  
And Marian's nose looks red and raw.

Then, admitting the charm of the old ways he had mocked and saying good-bye to them, he concluded "The words of Mercury are harsh after the songs of Apollo. You that way; we this way."

Some students have argued that this Play is a parody of Lyly's *Endimion*, which seems to have been written before 1587, though it was not printed till 1591. That Comedy may have also suggested the Fairy-tale part of the *Midsummer Night's Dream*. It may have been helped in this by the Prelude to Robert Greene's *Scottish History of King James the Fourth* which may have been written before 1590. Mr. Woodberry doubts this in *Representative English Comedies*, saying that "If *James the Fourth* with its Oberon preceded *A Midsummer Night's Dream*—which is undetermined—it was an unique inversion of the order which made Greene always the second and not the first." But Greene should not have rebuked Shake-scene for stealing his feathers if he had paid him the same compliment, and in this instance he may have been only second to Lyly. The Fairy-tale part may have owed something to the Second Book of *The Faery Queen* which was printed in 1590 and was current in manuscript in 1589.

The mood of this Fairy-tale may have suggested Imogen's adventure in Wales while her new name Fidele may have been borrowed from *Fidele and Fortunio*. Imogen's harmless drug and her trance (which may have been copied from Boccaccio's *Decameron*) and her waking beside the dead body which she took for her husband's are all to be found in *Romeo and Juliet*. Mr. Saintsbury says of *Measure for Measure* in his *History of English Prosody*, "Shakespeare surely never drew Pompey *after* he had conceived his great Clowns and Lucio *after* he had drawn Benedick or even Sir Toby." In the same way instead of concluding that Shakespeare imitated



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*Romeo and Juliet* in a juvenile manner when he was elderly, I infer that the Tragical end of *Romeo and Juliet* sprang from the childish Scene in which Imogen awoke and believed that the headless Cloten was Posthumus.

Gervinus coupled *Love's Labour's Lost* with a lyrical version of *All's Well that Ends Well*. If that version was called *Love's Labour's Won* the name meant that Helena won the labour of Love and nothing else,—

If haply won, perhaps a hapless gain  
If lost, why then a grievous labour won.

Traces of that version are seen in the affectation of wit and the trick played on Parolles and when Helena says,

Ere twice the horses of the Sun shall bring  
Their fiery torches his diurnal ring,  
Ere twice in murk and occidental damp  
Moist Hesperus hath quenched his sleepy lamp,

and writes to explain her woes in a Sonnet,

I am Saint Jaques' pilgrim, thither gone,  
Ambitious Love hath so in me offended,  
That barefoot plod I the cold ground upon,  
With sainted vow my faults to have amended.

This Comedy was based on a story in Boccaccio's *Decameron*, the ninth of the third day, "Giletta di Nerbona guerisce il Re di Francia duna fistola, domanda per marito Beltrano di Rossiglione." Shakespeare may have used the translation in Paynter's *Palace of Pleasure*. Helena's trick was used in the Greek Mythology and it had been repeated, for instance, in *Periander of Corinth*, written by Parthenius, who (according to Macrobius) was Virgil's tutor in Greek. The deception of Parolles in this Play may have been a separate Interlude of a Braggart's exposure.

*Romeo and Juliet* was printed in a Quarto edition in 1597 as "an excellent conceited Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet as it hath been often with great applause played publicly." The traces of revision in it are evident and admitted by all.

## ROMEO AND JULIET

The fact that the Nurse says, " 'Tis since the earthquake now eleven years " may show that a form of her speech was written in 1591, for there was an earthquake in England in 1580. Apart from this possible hint we only know that this Play must have been first written in Youth.

It was probably founded on Arthur Broke's version of a popular story or on an English Play acted before 1552, for Broke in his Address to the Reader prefixed to *Romeus and Juliet* (which was printed in that year) wrote that he had seen the same argument " lately set forth on the Stage with more commendation than I can look for." Shakespeare may have used other Plays also, for instance, *La Hadriana*, by Groto, which was printed in Venice in 1583.

The story in these Plays was as old as *Apollonius of Tyre*. Ovid told it in the fourth book of his *Metamorphoses*, using the names Pyramus and Thisbe,

Juvenum pulcherrimus alter,  
Altera, quas Oriens habuit, prælata puella.

Xenophon Ephesius told it (perhaps copying Ovid) in his Greek Romance *Ephesiaca*, which may have been written in the First Century. Gower repeated Ovid's version in the Third Book of *Confessio Amantis*, spoiling it in his usual way, and omitting the fact which was the root of the tragedy "vetuere patres." In his story Piramus thought that Tisbe was dead and

Suddenly  
His sword all naked out he braid,  
In his Fool-haste, and thus he said,  
"I am cause of this felony,  
So it is reason that I die,  
And she is dead by cause of me,"

and Tisbe killed herself with his sword.

The same Tragical end had been related by Plutarch when he told how Antonius stabbed himself, thinking that Cleopatra was dead, and how she died for his sake, and this is one of the links between this young Play of young Love and that mature Tragedy of elderly Passion, *Antony and Cleopatra*. There may be another if Sir Walter Raleigh is right in surmising

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that this Play sprang from the Story of Troilus, for *Antony and Cleopatra* seems to have sprung from the last version of *Troilus and Cressida*.

This ancient story seems to have been linked with Verona by Luigi da Porto's *La Giuletta* which was printed in 1536 and was probably founded on one of Masuccio Salernitano's *Novelle* printed in 1476. Bandello developed *La Giuletta* in his *Novelle*, printed in 1554, and his version was put into French by Francois Boaistuau de Launay and was printed in 1559 as one of Belleforest's *Histoires Tragiques*. Arthur Broke based his rhymed version on the French one which Paynter employed in his *Palace of Pleasure*.

Mr. Masefield writes: "This Play is one of the early Plays, written perhaps before Shakespeare was thirty years old. It was much revised during the next few years; but a good deal of the early work remains. Much of the early work is in rhymed couplets. Much is in picked Prose full of quibbles and mistaking of the word. Another sign of early work is the mention of the dark lady Rosaline . . . here called by the same name, and described in similar terms, viz. a high forehead, a hard heart, a white face, big black eyes and red lips. Perhaps she appeared as one of the Characters in the early drafts of the Play."

The reappearance of Rosaline not only connects this Play with the *Sonnets* but also unites the first form of it with *Love's Labour's Lost*. In the first Scene of this Play Romeo enters worshipping Rosaline,

Oh, she is rich in beauty, only poor

That, when she dies, with beauty dies her store,

and Benvolio undertakes to cure him by showing another beautiful lady. Romeo says,

Show me a mistress that is passing fair. . . .

Farewell: thou canst not teach me to forget,

and Benvolio answers,

I'll pay that doctrine, or else die in debt.

No one ever began a Tragedy in this jocular way, but this might well have been the beginning of a Comedy which was

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meant to repeat *Love's Labour's Lost* and became the forerunner of the merry revision of *Much Ado About Nothing* in which Rosaline and Biron had different names, Beatrice and Benedick. This mood is unbroken during the first couple of Acts and till Mercutio is killed in the third. This form, I think, was used as the base of part of the second form of *Much Ado About Nothing* and was blended with a Tragical Comedy which *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* suggested. That form had linked *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* with *Cymbeline*, repeating the tricks of the innocuous drug and the supposed death and the waking and the return from the tomb. I think that Shakespeare blended these forms as the foundation of his lyrical descant. In the same way as he travestied the popular Error Plays in *The Comedy of Errors* and the old methods of Comedy in *Love's Labour's Lost*, he now mocked the fantastic foreign ways of expressing sorrow and pain. He was not writing a Tragedy when he made the Nurse say in the fourth Act,

O woe, O woeful, woeful, woeful day!  
Most lamentable day, most woeful day,  
That ever, ever, I did yet behold!  
O day! O day! O day! oh hateful day!

and Paris rejoin,

O love! O life! not life but love in death!

and Capulet echo then,

O child! O child! my soul and not my child!

He was parodying Kyd's *Spanish Tragedy* or copying a French fashion of Verse as light-heartedly as he echoed the Sonnets imitated from Italy, for instance, when the Chorus recited,

Now old desire doth on his deathbed lie,  
And young affection gapes to be his heir,

or Romeo said,

When the devout religion of mine eye  
Maintains such falsehood, then turn tears to fires;

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And these, who, often drowned, could never die,  
Transparent heretics, be burnt for liars!  
One fairer than my love! the all-seeing sun  
Ne'er saw her match since first the World begun.

It may be that he took these six lines from the end of a Sonnet which had been in his Sequence.

This Play is the nearest to the Poems of Love. It has the eloquent sorrow of the *Rape of Lucrece* and the young delight in beautiful things which is seen in the *Sonnets* and in *Venus and Adonis*. When Juliet hears that Tybalt is killed she raves in the manner of *A Lover's Complaint*. In this Play Friar Laurence, who is a repetition of Friar Patrick in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, strikes the natural note when he explains why Rosaline was callous to Romeo:

O, she knew too well  
Thy love did read by rote and could not spell.  
But come, young waverer, come go with me,  
In one respect I'll thy assistant be,  
For this alliance may so happy prove  
To turn your household's rancour to pure love.

This is the note of a Comedy which might have been christened *All's Well that Ends Well*, one in which the child Juliet was restored from the tomb, like the other innocent ladies, and the jolly old Capulet danced off the stage with the Nurse. Old Capulet (who is an Alderman of London disguised) and the Comical Nurse are out of place in a tale with an unfortunate ending. So are most of the Characters, including the lovesick boy Romeo and the amorous child who makes him forget Rosaline's coldness. Lope de Vega saw that such a story should end happily when he wrote *Castelvinos y Monteses*; but Shakespeare, when he revised it in the mood of the *Sonnets* and of the other Poems of Love, made it as wantonly pathetic as they are. He added a true Tragical note when Tybalt exclaims, "I was hurt under your arm," and Romeo answers, "I thought all for the best." This he repeated afterwards when Kent said in *King Lear*,

We are not the first  
Who with best meaning have incurred the worst.

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And this became a dominating note in this Play : every one means well in it now and every one has helped the calamity. But that calamity is only a chance which finishes the laughter in tears.

It may be that his Tragical ambition revived when he had succeeded in Comedies and that he turned aside to write the first form of *Coriolanus* and to revise *Titus Andronicus* as it was printed in 1594 before he made *Romeo and Juliet* end sorrowfully. This Play, as it was probably acted with Burbage as Romeo and Kemp as Peter and Shakespeare as the loquacious Mercutio, who was prepared to revive and join in the jig after the sorrows, and with Juliet performed by an English boy of her age, in an open-air theatre by daylight with a placard to show that it was a Tragedy of Midsummer Moonlight in romantic Verona, must have been Comical in spite of its eloquent recitation of grief. The sorrow in it is the mere wantonness of Youth. Shakespeare could have said with King Richard the Second,

Shall we play the wanton with our woes  
And make some pretty match with shedding tears ?

These Plays of Youth are all full of the high spirits of boyhood and whether they deal with Tragical or Comical stories they are careless and light. And as the King says in *Hamlet*,

Youth no less becomes  
The light and careless livery that it wears  
Than settled Age his sables and his weeds,  
Importing health and graveness.

When in *The Winter's Tale* the worthy Antigonus suddenly says, "I am gone for ever," and the Stage-direction adds, "exit pursued by a bear" we are no more moved than the first crowd in the Pit was while it laughed at the Clown's tale of his doom, which was probably the more comic because the bear had been recognized as a tame one from the neighbouring Bear Garden. Neither was Shakespeare moved by any grief for Antigonus or Lavinia or Imogen. The calamity of *Romeo and Juliet* is too sad to be true. The true things in this Play

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are the gaiety and the young ecstasy of Love in the Moonlight. This descant on Love is the climax of the Plays of his Youth in the same way as *Antony and Cleopatra* became the crown of his Tragedies.

## THE POEMS OF LOVE

FRANCIS MERES wrote in *Palladis Tamia*, printed in 1598: "As the soul of Euphorbus was thought to live in Pythagoras, so the sweet witty soul of Ovid lives in mellifluous and honey-tongued Shakespeare; witness his *Venus and Adonis*, his *Lucrece*, his sugared sonnets among his private friends, etc." In the same year another tribute to Shakespeare was paid in Richard Barnfield's *Encomion of Lady Pecunia*,

And Shakespeare, thou whose honey-flowing vein,  
(Pleasing the World), thy praises doth obtain,  
Whose Venus and whose Lucrece (sweet and chaste),  
Thy name in Fame's immortal book have placed,  
Live ever you, at least, in fame live ever,  
Well may the body die, but Fame dies never.

In the next year he was praised in one of John Weever's *Epigrams* which were probably written in 1597,

Honey-tongued Shakespeare, when I saw thine issue,  
I swore Apollo got them and no other:  
Their rosy-tainted features clothed in tissue,  
Some heaven-born goddess said to be their mother;  
Rose-cheeked Adonis, with his amber tresses,  
Fair, fire-hot Venus charming him to love her,  
Chaste Lucretia, virgin-like her dresses,  
Proud lust-stung Tarquin seeking still to prove her,  
Romeo, Richard, more whose names I know not,  
Their sugared tongues and power-attractive beauty;  
Say they are Saints, although that Saints they show not,  
For thousands vow to them subjective duty:  
They burn in love, thy children, Shakespeare, het them,  
Go, woo thy Muse, more nymphish brood beget them.

And in the Second Part of the *Return from Parnassus*, which



## AN IMAGE OF SHAKESPEARE

was printed in 1606, and was probably written between 1598 and 1602, he was described as one

Who loves Adonis' love or Lucrece' rape.  
His sweeter Verse contains heart-robbing life,  
Could but a graver subject him content  
Without Love's foolish lazy languishment.

These tributes agreed that Shakespeare had imitated Ovid in his Poems of Love, *Venus and Adonis*, first printed in 1593, and *The Rape of Lucrece*, first printed in 1594.

Another tribute was paid to him in 1614 by Thomas Freeman in his *Rubbe and a Great Cast*:

Shakespeare, that nimble Mercury, thy brain,  
Lulls many hundred Argus eyes asleep;  
So fit for all thou fashionest thy vein.  
At the horse-foot fountain thou hast drunk full deep;  
Virtue's or Vice's theme to thee all one is:  
Who loves chaste life, there's Lucrece for a teacher;  
Who list read lust, there's *Venus and Adonis*,  
True model of a most lascivious lecher.

Only one of these tributes mentions some Sonnets and that reference sounds as if they were only known by repute as Poems written for friends. This would explain why Barnfield and Weever neglected them; but they had been published with *A Lover's Complaint* five years before Freeman's verses were printed. We have no record that the *Sonnets* attracted any kind of attention in 1609, and when they were printed (with remarkable changes) in 1640 they seem to have been neglected again. This apparent neglect of the *Sonnets* is the only mysterious thing about the Poems of Love.

Many students have argued whether the third Earl of Southampton or somebody else was drawn in the *Sonnets*. If we could infer that Southampton was Romeo because Lord Montague was one of his grandfathers or that he was Dumain who is described as

## THE THIRD EARL OF SOUTHAMPTON

The young Dumain, a well-accomplished youth,  
Of all that virtue love for virtue loved :  
Most power to do most harm, least knowing ill ;  
For he hath wit to make an ill shape good,

this would have nothing to do with the merits of *Romeo and Juliet* or *Love's Labour's Lost*. Still, if we could be certain that he was drawn in the *Sonnets* this would help us to guess when some of them were first written and would help to explain the mystification when they were published in 1609 and the changes in 1640 and the apparent neglect, and it would furnish a superfluous proof that the tale in them was not meant to be true. So it is worth while to bear in mind what we know of the young Earl of Southampton.

*Honour in his Perfection*, which may have been written by Gervase Markham, records of the second Earl of Southampton that "he was highly revered and favoured by all that were of his own rank, and bravely attended and served by the best gentlemen of those counties wherein he lived. His muster-roll never consisted of four lacqueys and a coachman, but of a whole troop of, at least, a hundred well-mounted gentlemen and yeomen." The third Earl of Southampton was as proud as his father, and his chief friends were always men of his rank, the third Earl of Bedford, the fifth Earl of Rutland and the second Earl of Essex for instance. In those days such Earls as these were treated with deference by men of high rank. Sir Fulke Greville relates how when Sir Philip Sidney had been insulted by the seventeenth Earl of Oxford Queen Elizabeth "presently undertakes Sir Philip, like an excellent Monarch, lays before him the difference in degree between Earls and Gentlemen, the respect inferiors ought to their superiors." And it is recorded that when the arrogant Sir Everard Digby was executed for the Gun-powder Plot he first bowed respectfully to the Lords who were standing near the scaffold and then, "with a show of equality," to the gentlemen there. In those days a rich gentleman of ancient descent could take pride in attending and serving one of the Great Earls, such as Essex or Southampton, who held the highest rank in a time when there was no Duke or Marquis in England.

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The four Earls of Southampton were melancholy and doomed to misfortune. It is recorded of the first Earl that "fearing he should come to some open painful end, he poisoned himself or pined away for thought." The second Earl, who was left fatherless when he was five, was prominent in the Catholic Plots and tried to escape from England in 1567 and was sent to the Tower, charged with High Treason, in the following year and again in the next, and was about to be arrested again when he died young after his elder son's death. The third Earl, who was left fatherless when he was eight, began gloriously but was destined to see his dearest friends perish and his dearest hopes fail. And Clarendon says of the fourth Earl that he was "by nature much inclined to melancholy, and being born a younger brother, and his father and elder brother dying upon the point together whilst he was but a boy, he was at first much troubled to be called 'My Lord' and with the noise of attendance, so much he then delighted to be alone. He had a great spirit: he had never any conversation in the Court or obligation to it."

In those days it was often said that the new owners of Monastic estates were under a curse. These four Earls owed their wealth to the fact that the first of them served King Henry the Eighth and was rewarded with two of the Great Abbeys, Beaulieu and Titchfield, both in the New Forest. Their chief home was Titchfield House by the Sea ("a right stately house" according to Leland), built from the ruins of the Abbey of Titchfield. And the Catholics looked on them as one of the families doomed by their homes and cited the fact that in each generation the elder son died before obtaining the Earldom.

The third Earl was brought up by his mother who was rigidly Catholic. If (as is probable) she believed in the curse, her fears must have been doubled by the fact that her father, Anthony Browne, the first Viscount Montague, held Battle Abbey, a home which has retained to our days the reputation for entailing misfortune. And the melancholy which overshadowed this Earl's life may well have begun when he was a child in Titchfield House with his mother and his only sister Mary, who afterwards married a belligerent Catholic, Thomas Arundel, the first Lord

## THE THIRD EARL OF SOUTHAMPTON

Arundel of Wardour. He had Catholic masters, as is stated in Allen's Report to the Pope in 1583 which names the chief Catholic Lords, "the Earls of Cumberland, Oxford and Southampton, who is yet but a minor but under Catholic masters, and the Viscounts Montague and Morley." And his official guardian, Lord Burghley, sent him to Cambridge when he was aged about twelve.

In those days Catholics went to Oxford or Cambridge very young so as to finish their studies before they were sixteen, after which age they could only remain there if they took the Oath of Supremacy. But this Oath does not seem to have been exacted from the Lords at this time, so Southampton's early going to Cambridge may have been due to the fact that Burghley wanted to take him from his Catholic home and a life of solitude with his mother and sister. That life may have helped to make him effeminate, and he was probably guarded with excessive devotion because there was no heir to his title. His name was entered at Gray's Inn in London two years later, in 1587.

The palatial London home of his family, Southampton House by Chancery Lane, stood opposite the gate of Gray's Inn; but we do not know whether he lived in it then or at any time. It was famous then as a refuge for Priests. The informer Benjamin Beard, who seems to have been one of the Tichbornes, wrote in 1594: "This Butler was sometime chamber-fellow with one Harrington, that serveth the Lady Southampton, which maketh me guess that he is still harboured by him. They lay there, about eight years since, in Southampton House, next chamber to Robert Gage that was executed, and then he fled, being nominated to be of Babington's Conspiracy." And Father Anthony Tyrell (the wavering Jesuit who was three times reconciled to the Anglican Church), in his Confession printed by Father John Morris in his *Troubles of our Catholic Forefathers* in 1875, admitted that he had alleged that John Ballard or Fortescue, one of the leaders of the Babington Plot, had stayed with Lady Southampton and he also avowed in it that he had said that "Fortescue's man, whom he brought out of Cornwall, and a little boy, which was Henry Wells his son," were lying then in Southampton House. The house seems to

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have been leased for some years before 1591 to a Catholic named Swithun Wells. In his time it was often searched for Priests but in vain till in 1591 Father Jennings was caught there in his vestments. He and two other Priests and three laymen who were arrested with him were hanged and quartered at Tyburn (under the Penal Laws according to *Troubles of our Catholic Forefathers*), and in the same year Swithun Wells was executed in Holborn between Southampton House and Gray's Inn for having harboured the Priests. This tragedy may have made the third Earl avoid the house afterwards: we know, for instance, that he was lodging in Drury Lane when he was a leader of the Essex Revolt. But it may be that the house belonged for life to his mother, who married Sir Thomas Heneage in 1594 when her son came of age, and Sir William Hervey of Kidbrook (afterwards the first Lord Hervey of Ross) in 1598 and died in 1607.

The young Earl was courted from the first by the Catholics because they expected him to rival his father as a champion of theirs and by their opponents because it was important to divert him from that. The students at Gray's Inn were conspicuous as friends of the Stage, and the brilliant newcomer must have been observed by the Players. We know that he was fond of the Stage, for in 1599 it was recorded of him that he and his friend Lord Rutland "come not to Court, but pass away the time merely in going to Plays every day." It may be that Shakespeare first saw him in 1587.

There is a chance that the young Earl may have stooped to admit a vague connection between them. He had been connected with Edward Arden of Parkhall in Warwickshire through the Throckmortons and Catesbys and Brownes, for Arden had married Mary Throckmorton. He would have valued this then because Arden, who had been executed in 1583, was ranked by the Catholics as one of their martyrs; and it is probable that Shakespeare could boast that through his mother he had been a cousin of Arden's. In those days remote connexions by marriage were still reckoned as cousinship, though that word seems to have lost the wider meaning given to it by Chaucer in the *Shipman's Tale*,

## THE THIRD EARL OF SOUTHAMPTON

And for as muchil as this good man  
And eke this Monk, of which that I began,  
Were both two iborn in one village,  
The Monk him claimeth as for Cousinage.

Cousinship of this kind would have given a rich gentleman a right to be seen in Southampton's train when he rode or to follow him when he walked in the streets; but Shakespeare would have forfeited this because he was poor and because he was earning his livelihood by the trade of a mountebank.

Apart from this, Shakespeare may have been attractive enough to win a brief kindness from the arrogant boy. The *Sonnets* claim nothing more: they say,

But out, alack! he was but one hour mine . . .  
Thus have I held thee as a dream doth flatter,  
In sleep a King, but waking no such matter.

Southampton seems to have first attended the Court in 1591 when he was about seventeen. Queen Elizabeth took him into favour at once, partly because she always tried to win the affection of the Catholic Lords and partly because she loved the homage of boys when she began to be old. She was then about sixty, and the young Earl of Essex was the chief of her favourites. Southampton was soon recognized as one who might rival Essex, and when they accompanied her to Oxford in 1592 he was praised after the favourite in welcoming Verses,

Post hunc insequitur clara de stirpe Dynasta  
Jure suo dives, quem South-Hamptonia magnum  
Vendicat heroem, quo non formosior alter  
Affuit, aut docta juvenis præstantior arte.

The only tradition which links him with Shakespeare is recorded by Rowe in his *Account of the Life of Shakespeare*, printed in 1709: "There is one instance so singular in the magnificence of this patron of Shakespeare's that if I had not been assured that the story was handed down by Sir William Davenant, who was probably very well acquainted with his affairs, I should not have ventured to have inserted,

## AN IMAGE OF SHAKESPEARE

that my Lord Southampton at one time gave him a thousand Pounds to enable him to go through with a purchase which he heard he had a mind to. A bounty very great and very rare at any time." Even if this story was true it would not prove that the Earl and the Player were on terms of equality, and it is open to doubt, for we have no reason to think that Shakespeare ever made such a purchase. He only paid sixty Pounds for his home at Stratford-on-Avon. It may mean that Southampton enabled Shakespeare to buy a share in his Company. This may have been done in 1594, in which year the young Earl came of age and Shakespeare was named as the first of the three Players summoned to Greenwich, and in that case the gift may have redeemed a promise made earlier, for instance when *Venus and Adonis* was printed in 1593. In any case the amount is incredible. Poets were not paid on that scale then; for instance, George Peele dedicated the *Honours of the Garter* to the eighth Earl of Northumberland in 1593 and (according to the Earl's House Rolls) was paid "as my Lord's liberality" three Pounds.

In *As You Like It* Shakespeare made Rosalind, speaking in the disguise of a boy, say: "He was to imagine me his love, his mistress, and I set him every day to woo me: at which time would I, being but a moonish youth, grieve, be effeminate, changeable, longing and liking, proud, fantastical, apish, shallow, inconstant, full of tears, full of smiles, for every passion something and for no passion truly anything, as boys and women are for the most part cattle of this colour." He drew a youth of this kind in some of the *Sonnets* and in *A Lover's Complaint*; and in *Venus and Adonis* he drew a young boy, probably aged about fourteen, who might have grown into a youth of this kind.

Southampton was a rosy-cheeked boy with long auburn hair (as we know from his portraits painted a few years after this) like Weever's

Rose-cheeked Adonis with his amber tresses.

*Venus and Adonis* begins

Even as the Sun with purple-coloured face  
Had ta'en his last leave of the weeping morn,

## BRITAIN'S IDA

Rose-cheeked Adonis hied him to the chase ;  
Hunting he loved, but love he laughed to scorn :  
Sick-thoughted Venus makes amain unto him,  
And like a bold faced suitor 'gins to woo him.

“Thrice fairer than myself,” thus she began,  
“The field's chief flower, sweet above compare,  
Stain to all nymphs, more lovely than a man,  
More white and red than doves or roses are ;  
Nature that made thee, with herself at strife,  
Saith that the world hath ending with thy life.”

The same boy is described in *Britain's Ida*, a Poem which was published by Thomas Walkley in 1715 :

Among the rest that all the rest excelled,  
A dainty boy there wonned, whose harmless years  
Now in their freshest budding gently swelled ;  
His nymph-like face ne'er felt the nimble sheers,  
Youth's downy blossom through his cheek appears :  
His lovely limbs (but Love he quite discarded)  
Were made for play (but he no play regarded)  
And fit Love to reward, and with Love be rewarded.

High was his forehead, arched with silver mould,  
(Where never anger churlish wrinkle dighted),  
His auburn locks hung like dark threads of gold  
That wanton airs (with their fair length incited)  
To play amongst their wanton curls delighted ;  
His smiling eyes with simple Truth were stored,  
Ah ! how should Truth in those thief eyes be stored,  
Which thousand Loves had stolen, and never one restored.

His lily cheek might seem an ivory plain,  
More purely white than frozen Appenine ;  
Where lovely bashfulness did sweetly reign,  
In blushing scarlet clothed, and purple fine.  
A hundred hearts had this delightful shrine  
(Still cold itself) inflamed with hot desire,  
That well the face might seem in divers tire  
To be a burning snow, or else a freezing fire.



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His cheerful looks and merry face would prove  
(If eyes the index be where thoughts are read)  
A dainty play-fellow for naked Love;  
Of all the other parts enough is said,  
That they were fit twins for so fair a head;  
Thousand boys for him, thousand maidens died,  
Die they that list for such his rigorous pride  
He thousand boys (ah, Fool!) and thousand maids denied.

His joy was not in Music's sweet delight,  
(Though well his hand had learned that cunning art)  
Or daintier songs to daintier ears to indite;  
But through the plains to chase the nimble hart  
With well-tuned hounds; or with his certain dart,  
The tusked boar or savage bear to wound:  
Meantime, his heart with Monsters doth abound,  
Ah Fool! to seek so far what nearer might be found.

His name (well known unto these woody shades  
Where unrewarded lovers oft complain them)  
Anchises was.

It may be that this Anchises of Ida is a picture of the boy who was called the Prince of the New Forest. Marlowe called Ida a forest in the fifth Scene of the Second Part of *Tamburlaine*,

In numbers more than are the quivering leaves  
Of Ida's forest, where your Highness' hounds  
With open cry pursue the wounded stag,

and the New Forest may have been Britain's Ida. Southampton always loved hunting and was famous for horsemanship. *Venus and Adonis* may have been current in manuscript before publication, as many other Poems were then and, like *Britain's Ida*, may have been written while he was young enough to prefer horses to ladies.

The probable resemblance between Southampton and Adonis proves little, for Adonis was often called rose-cheeked as by Marlowe, for instance, in his fragment of *Hero and Leander*. Neither can we be certain that he was drawn as

## HERO AND LEANDER

the effeminate youth with rosy cheeks and brown hair who was described in the *Sonnets* :

A woman's face, with Nature's own hand painted,  
Hast thou, the master-mistress of my passion. . . .  
Thou art thy mother's glass, and she in thee  
Calls back the lovely April of her prime. . . .  
The lily I condemned for thy hand,  
And buds of marjoram had stolen thy hair :  
The roses fearfully on thorns did stand,  
One blushing shame, another white despair.

Amorous youths were often drawn effeminate then like Marlowe's Leander,

Amorous Leander, beautiful and young, . . .  
His dangling tresses that were never shorn. . . .  
Some swore he was a maid in man's attire,  
For in his looks were all that men desire.

It is possible that Leander was drawn from Southampton whose tresses were probably unshorn in those days. In the portrait of him at Welbeck, painted when he was about twenty-one, his hair is very long and his pride in it is proved by the fact that some of the tresses are shown dangling in front. This way of wearing his hair was fantastic, for it was not in the fashion, and Queen Elizabeth showed her disapproval of it when she said that she was glad that Ambrose Willoughby pulled some of his curls out during a quarrel at Court. Still, Leander may have been only a conventional type. But if we could conclude that Southampton was drawn deliberately as the seducer in *A Lover's Complaint*, who is like both Adonis and the youth in the *Sonnets*, it would become more probable that those two other pictures were intended for him.

Here is Sir Sidney Lee's account of Southampton's picture at Welbeck painted in 1595. (I cite him because he doubts whether Shakespeare wrote *A Lover's Complaint* and has not observed a portrait of Southampton in it.) "The eyes are blue, the cheeks pink, the complexion clear and the expression sedate; rings are in the ears; beard and moustache are at an incipient stage, and are of the same bright hue as the

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hair in a picture of Southampton's mother that is also at Welbeck. But however scanty is the down on the youth's cheek, the hair on his head is luxuriant. It is worn very long and falls over and above the shoulder. The colour is now of walnut but was originally of lighter tint." He writes of his character: "Although gentle and amiable in most relations of life, he could be childishly selfwilled and impulsive, and outbursts of anger involved him, at Court and elsewhere, in many petty quarrels." And he quotes Bridget Manners' description of him in 1594 as young and fantastical and easily carried away.

Here is the picture in *A Lover's Complaint* of

One by nature's outwards so commended,  
That maidens' eyes stuck over all his face.

His browny locks did hang in crooked curls;  
And every light occasion of the wind  
Upon his lips their silken parcels hurls. . . .

Small show of man was yet upon his chin;  
His phoenix down began but to appear,  
Like unshorn velvet, on that termless skin, . . .  
His qualities were beauteous as his form,  
For maiden-tongued he was and thereof free,  
Yet, if men moved him, was he such a storm  
As oft twixt May and April is to see,  
When Winds breathe sweet, unruly though they be,  
His rudeness so with his authorized youth  
Did livery falseness in a pride of truth.

Well could he ride, and often men would say,  
"That horse his mettle from his rider takes;  
Proud of subjection, noble by the sway." . . .  
He had the dialect and different skill,  
Catching all passions in his craft of will.

That he did in the general bosom reign  
Of young, of old, and sexes both enchanted,  
To dwell with him in thoughts, or to remain  
In personal duty, following where he haunted. . . .

## THE SONNETS

Many there were that did his picture get,  
To serve their eyes, and in it put their mind,  
Like fools that in the imagination set  
The goodly objects which abroad they find  
Of lands and mansions, theirs in thought assigned :  
And labouring in more pleasures to bestow them  
Than the true gouty landlord which doth owe them :

So many have, that never touched his hand,  
Sweetly supposed them mistress of his heart.

Sir Sidney Lee writes : " Shakespeare's many references to his youth's painted counterfeit suggest that his hero often sat for his portrait. Southampton's countenance survives in probably more canvases than that of any of his contemporaries." Shakespeare may have been one of the many who got the boy's picture when he wrote in the *Sonnets*,

With my love's picture then my eye doth feast,  
And to the painted banquet bids my heart.

If we could be sure that Southampton was the boy in the *Sonnets* we could infer that some of them were written about 1590 and many of them would be explained. The *Sonnets* advising marriage may have referred to his reluctance to marry Elizabeth Vere in 1590. The verses

Three beauteous Springs to yellow Autumn turned,  
In process of the Seasons have I seen,  
Three Aprils' perfumes in three hot Junes burned  
Since first I saw you fresh which yet are green

may have referred to a meeting three years before, in 1587. The verse

A man in hue, all hues in his controlling,  
instead of referring mysteriously to the fact that the Earl of Essex was also Earl of Ewe (as Gerald Massey suggested) or denoting that the boy was named William Hughes or that Southampton controlled the Hue and Cry in the New Forest may merely mean that like the seducer in *A Lover's Complaint* he could turn red or white

## AN IMAGE OF SHAKESPEARE

As it best deceives  
To blush at speeches rank, to weep at woes,  
Or to turn white and swound at tragic shows.

The verses

The Mortal Moon hath her eclipse endured,  
And the sad augurs mock their own presage,

may refer to Queen Elizabeth's danger in 1588 when the Armada came and her emergence from it. Sir John Harrington in his *Nugæ Antiquæ* relates that Anthony Rudde, when preaching before her in 1596, "fell to treat of more plausible numbers, as 666 making Latinus, with which he said he could prove the Pope to be Antichrist, also of the fatal number 88, which being so long spoken of for a dangerous year, yet it had pleased God that year not only to preserve her but to give her a famous victory against the united forces of Rome and Spain." Some students have argued that this Sonnet implies that the boy had been imprisoned, but it probably means that the Poet's love of him had appeared "forfeit to a confined doom." This Sonnet may have been one of the earliest and written when the Poet took courage to proclaim his affection.

The question who was the Master-Poet might also be explained by this date. At this time there was only one poet of whom Shakespeare could write with such a show of humility, echoing Lyly's comparison of himself to a cock-boat and of Lord Oxford to a tall ship in his dedication of *Euphues and his England*,

My saucy bark inferior, far to his, . . .  
I am a worthless boat,  
He of tall building and of goodly pride.

This Poet was Edmund Spenser, who was called "Great Colin, chief of Shepherds all" in a sonnet by Barnfield printed in 1595. Spenser visited London during the Winter of 1589 and the Spring of 1590 to publish three Books of *The Faery Queen* and to find patrons for it, and during this stay he lived in Essex House in the Strand. We cannot be certain that he courted Southampton; but it would have

## THE MASTER-POET IN THE SONNETS

been natural. He may have written Poems to him which have been lost (like so much of his work) or may have drawn him as one of the Knights in the part of *The Faery Queen* which has survived or in the part which has perished.

He wrote

With golden quill,  
And precious phrase by all the Muses filed.

He was renowned for his learning: he wrote in *The Tears of the Muses*,

Each idle wit at will presumes to make,  
And doth the Learned's task upon him take.

And he called some of his Poetry "hymns" in the same sense as Ronsard did, as, for instance, in *Daphneida*, printed in 1591 and current before,

Colin, her own shepherd,  
That her with heavenly hymns doth deify.

The reference to "that affable familiar ghost" might be explained if we had his lost book *Dreams or a Sennight's Slumber*, or it may have referred to his inspiration by Chaucer, whom he addressed in the Fourth Book of *The Faery Queen* as "most sacred, happy spirit."

The first stanzas of *A Lover's Complaint* seem an imitation or parody of the beginning of Spenser's *Ruins of Time*,

There on the other side I did behold,  
A woman sitting sorrowfully wailing.

That Poem was probably written about 1590, for Spenser in his dedication of it to the Countess of Pembroke said that since his late coming into England some of his friends had blamed him for not lamenting his patrons late deceased, Sidney who died in 1586, Leicester who died in 1588, and Warwick who died in 1590. When he visited England again Sidney had been dead for ten years. If the beginning of *A Lover's Complaint* was a humorous copy of the *Ruins of Time*, this would agree with the notion that the Master-Poet may have been Spenser. And this notion would be supported if Mr. George Wyndham was right in thinking

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that *The Faery Queen* was described in the verses in one of the Sonnets,

When in the chronicle of wasted time,  
I see descriptions of the fairest wights,  
And beauty making beautiful old rhyme,  
In praise of ladies dead and lovely Knights,

and if we could be sure that Shakespeare wrote the assertion in *The Passionate Pilgrim*,

Dowland to thee is dear, whose heavenly touch  
Upon the lute doth ravish human sense,  
Spenser to me whose deep conceit is such  
As passing all conceit needs no defence.

There would be little room for doubt left if we could be sure that Spenser wrote *Britain's Ida*. That Poem was published as his by Thomas Walkley, who wrote: "I am certainly assured by the ablest and most knowing men that it must be a work of Spenser's, of whom it were a pity that anything should be lost." Others have thought that it was not his because they have reckoned it unworthy of him (which is a poor reason, for it is only a trifle meant to flatter a boy) or because they considered him too holy to write it, but it is now known that he did not claim to be virtuous. In the Introduction to the Fourth book of *The Faery Queen*, which was written in Ireland after this stay in London, he wrote that Lord Burghley

My looser rhymes, I wot, doth sharply wite,  
For praising Love as I have done of late. . . .  
By which frail youth is oft to Folly led,  
Through false allurements of that pleasing bait.

Burghley's anger would have been justified if *Britain's Ida*, which is openly loose, had been written to please his ward, the young Earl.

An old story which is repeated in Mr. Percy Addleshaw's *Life of Sir Philip Sidney* relates how Spenser submitted the first Books of *The Faery Queen* to Southampton and was kept waiting while the Poem was judged, and how the Earl showed his delight by sending him twenty Pounds by a servant and soon afterwards twenty more, as he continued

## DEDICATIONS

to read, and the same sum twice again, but then cried, "Turn the fellow out of the house, for I shall be ruined if I read any further." This could only have happened in the Winter of 1589 or the Spring of 1590 before that Poem was published, and besides proving that Southampton was courted by Spenser, would show why he was not on the list of generous patrons.

Whether this story is true or not it is faithful to the ways of those times. Thomas Nashe wrote in *Pierce Penniless*, printed in 1592, "Men of great calling take it of merit to have their names eternized by Poets, and whatsoever pamphlet or dedication encounters them they thrust it up their sleeves and scarce give him thanks that presents it."

The men who wrote these dedications hoped to be paid for them by money or patronage, and some of them wished their other readers to think that they were on intimate terms with men of great calling: they could have said as John Dryden did when he dedicated *King Arthur* to Lord Halifax in 1691, "What I pretend by this dedication is an honour which I do myself to Posterity by acquainting them that I have been conversant with the first persons of the age in which I lived."

Southampton received his share of such dedications. Nashe, for instance, dedicated the *Life of Jack Wilton* to him in 1594, writing "a new brain, a new wit, a new soul, a new style, will I get me to canonize your name to Posterity if in this my first attempt I have been not taxed of presumption." And Barnabe Barnes wrote to him in 1593,

Receive, sweet Lord, with thy thrice sacred hand,  
 (Which sacred Muses make their instrument)  
 These worthless leaves which I to thee present. . . .  
 Vouchsafe, right virtuous Lord, with gracious eyes,  
 Those heavenly lamps which gave the Muses light,  
 Which give and take in course that holy fire,  
 To view my Muse with your judicial sight.

Gervase Markham addressed him in 1595,

Thou glorious laurel of the Muses' hill,  
 Whose eye doth crown the most victorious pen,



## AN IMAGE OF SHAKESPEARE

Bright lamp of Virtue, in whose sacred skill  
Lives all the bliss of ear-enchancing men,  
From graver subjects if thy grave assays,  
Bend thy courageous thought unto these lines. . . .  
So shall my tragic lays be blessed by thee  
And from thy lips suck their Eternity.

And about the same time Nashe dedicated his *Choice of Valentines* to the Right Honourable Lord S. with an apology for wanton behaviour,

Pardon, sweet flower of matchless Poetry,  
And fairest bud the red rose ever bare,  
Although my Muse, divorced from deeper care,  
Present thee with a wanton Elegy.

This may have referred to the belief that the first Earl of Southampton married Stephen Gardiner's niece, and that Stephen Gardiner's mother was Jasper Tudor's illegitimate child. These things are open to doubt, but there is no other connexion between the Wriothesleys and the Red Rose of Lancaster. Nashe wrote in another Sonnet at the end of this Poem,

Thus hath my pen presumed to praise my friend,  
Oh mightest thou likewise please Apollo's eye!  
No, Honour brooks no such impiety,  
Yet Ovid's wanton Muse did not offend.  
He is the fountain whence my streams do flow. . . .  
My mind, once purged of such lascivious wit,  
With purified words and hallowed verse  
Thy praises in large volumes shall rehearse  
That better may thy graver view befit:  
Meanwhile it rests, you smile at what I write,  
Or for attempting banish me your sight.

Shakespeare's two dedications to Southampton were written in this conventional vein which Ben Jonson parodied in *Every Man in his Humour* in 1598:

To thee, the purest object to my sense,  
The most refined essence Heaven covers,

## DEDICATIONS TO SOUTHAMPTON

Send I these lines wherein I do commence  
The happy state of turtle-billing lovers ;  
If they prove rough, unpolished, harsh and rude,  
Hast made the waste : thus mildly I conclude.

Both were inscribed "To the Right Honourable Henry Wriothsesley, Earl of Southampton and Baron of Titchfield." The first, of *Venus and Adonis*, ran thus : "I know not how I shall offend in dedicating my unpolished lines to your Lordship, nor how the World will censure me for choosing so strong a prop to support so weak a burden, only if your Honour seem but pleased, I count myself highly praised, and vow to take advantage of all idle hours till I have honoured you with some graver labour. But if the first heir of my invention prove deformed, I shall be sorry it had so noble a godfather : and never after ear so barren a land, for fear it yield me still so bad a harvest, I leave it to your Honourable survey and your Honour to your heart's content which I wish may always answer your own wish and the World's hopeful expectation."

And here is the dedication of *The Rape of Lucrece* : "The love I dedicate to your Lordship is without end : whereof this pamphlet without beginning is but a superfluous moiety. The warrant I have of your Honourable disposition, not the worth of my untutored lines, makes it assured of acceptance. What I have done is yours, what I have to do is yours, being part in all I have, devoted yours. Were my worth greater, my duty would show greater ; meantime, as it is, it is bound to your Lordship ; to whom I wish long life still lengthened with all happiness."

In this dedication the words "What I have done is yours, what I have to do is yours" may be an echo of Virgil's statement to Pollio in the Eighth Eclogue, "A te principium : tibi desinam." Neither of these dedications can be taken as proving that the young Player was a friend of the Earl's unless we are prepared to conclude that the unfortunate Nashe (who had written *Pierce Penniless*, his *Supplication to the Devil* in 1592 and the *Apology of Pierce Penniless* in 1593 with a patent sincerity) was also his bosom-friend.

There is a dedication too in the *Sonnets* :