Lord of my love, to whom in vassalage,
Thy merit hath my duty strong knit,
To thee I send this written embassage,
To witness duty, not to show my wit:
Duty so great, which wit so poor as mine
May make seem bare in wanting words to show it,
But that I hope some good conceit of thine
In thy soul's thought all naked will bestow it;
Till whatsoever star that guides my moving
Points on me graciously with fair aspect,
And puts apparel on my tattered loving,
To show me worthy of thy sweet respect:
Then may I dare to boast how I do love thee;
Till then not show my head where thou mayst prove me.

This may well have been addressed to the same patron, but that cannot be taken as certain because the tone is conventional. There seems to be a more definite clue in the Sonnet beginning,

> I grant thou wert not married to my Muse,
> And therefore mayst without attaint o'erlook
> The dedicated words which writers use
> Of their fair subject, blessing every book.

This may mean that the boy addressed in the *Sonnets* had overlooked a dedication to him, and we have no reason to think that Shakespeare had dedicated Poems to anyone except to Southampton. The dedication of *The Rape of Lucrece* proves that the former one had not been neglected. The first sentence in it, "The love I dedicate to your Lordship is without end, whereof this pamphlet without beginning is a superfluous moiety," may mean that this was the second half of a tribute or that it was the superfluous (that is, the remaining) half a poem which had lost its beginning. *The Rape of Lucrece* has no beginning, the first part of its story is told in a shambling Prose argument and one of its chief Characters, Tarquin, is only described through his resemblance to Sinon. It does not seem probable that a young Poet striving for Fame would have planned this. It would have been explained if Southampton had been

depicted as Tarquin, for (if so) he or his older friends might have objected to this, and the picture of Tarquin might have been struck out of the Poem and with it the beginning. In that case the dedication of the superfluous moiety might have been overlooked.

The Poet describes how Lucrece looks at the Tapestry:

She throws her eyes about the painting round,
And who she finds forlorn she doth lament.
At last she sees a wretched image bound,
That piteous looks to Phrygian shepherds lent:
His face, though full of cares, yet showed content;
Onward to Troy with the blunt swains he goes,
So mild that Patience seemed to scorn his woes.

In him the painter laboured with his skill
To hide deceit and give the harmless show,
An humble gait, calm looks, eyes wailing still,
A brow unbent, that seemed to welcome woe,
Cheeks neither red nor pale, but mingled so
That blushing red no guilty instance gave,
Nor ashy pale the fear that false hearts have,

But, like a constant and confirmed devil,
He entertained a show so seeming just,
And therein so ensconced his secret evil,
That jealousy itself could not mistrust
False-creeping craft and perjury should thrust
Into so bright a day such black-faced storms
Or blot with hell-born sin such saintlike forms.

The well-skilled workman this mild image drew
For perjured Sinon whose enchanting story
The credulous old Priam after slew. . . .
This picture she advisedly perused,
And chid the painter for his wondrous skill,
Saying, some shape in Sinon's was abused;
So fair a form lodged not a mind so ill:
And still on him she gazed, and gazing still,
Such signs of truth in his plain face she spied,
That she concludes the picture was belied.

"It cannot be," quoth she, "that so much guile"—
She would have said—"can lurk in such a look";
But Tarquin's shape came to her mind the while,
And from her tongue "can lurk" from "cannot" took;
"It cannot be" she in that sense forsook,
And turned it thus, "It cannot be, I find,
But such a face should bear a wicked mind.

"For even as subtle Sinon here is painted,
So sober-sad, so weary and so mild,
As if with grief or travail he had fainted,
To me came Tarquin armed: so beguiled
With outward Honesty, but yet defiled
With inward Vice; as Priam did him cherish
So did I Tarquin; so my Troy did perish. . . .

"Such devils steal effects from lightless Hell,
For Sinon in his fire doth quake with cold,
And in that cold hot-burning fire doth dwell;
These contraries such unity do hold
Only to flatter fools and make them bold."

Sinon bears a curious resemblance to the seducer in *A Lover's Complaint*, of whom it is said,

> In him a plenitude of subtle matter,
> Applied to cautels, all strange forms receives,
> Of burning blushes or of weeping water,
> Or swounding paleness; and he takes and leaves
> In either's aptness, as it best deceives,
> To blush at speeches rank, to weep at woes,
> Or to turn white and swound at tragic shows:
>
> That not a heart which in his level came
> Could 'scape the hail of his all-hurting aim.
> Showing fair nature is both kind and tame;
> And, veiled in them, did win whom he would maim:
> When he most burned in heart-wished luxury
> He preached pure maid and praised cold chastity.
>
> Thus merely with the garments of a Grace
> The naked and concealed fiend he covered;

That the unexperient gave the tempter place,
Which, like a cherubin, above them hovered.

If we could be certain that Southampton was drawn as the seducer in *A Lover's Complaint* we could infer that he had also been depicted as Tarquin, who is now only seen through his resemblance to Sinon. And it must be admitted that the description of Sinon

So sober-sad, so weary and so mild,

could be applied to Southampton's portrait at Welbeck painted when he was aged twenty-one. All this may have been Shakespeare's young notion of a lover's complaint. In *Romeo and Juliet* he made Juliet complain of Romeo thus:

Oh serpent heart, hid with a flowering face!
Did ever dragon keep so fair a cave?
Beautiful tyrant! fiend angelical!
Dove-feathered raven! wolvish-ravening lamb!
Despisèd substance of divinest show!
Just opposite to what thou justly seem'st!
A damnèd saint, an honourable villain!
Oh, Nature! what hadst thou to do in Hell
When thou didst bower the spirit of a fiend
In mortal Paradise of such sweet flesh?
Was ever book containing such vile matter
So fairly bound? Oh that deceit should dwell
In such a gorgeous Palace!

And in the *Sonnets* he made the Poet complain:

How sweet and lovely dost thou make the shame
Which, like the canker in the fragrant rose,
Doth spot the beauty of thy budding name!
Oh, in what sweets dost thou thy sins enclose!
That tongue that tells the story of thy days,
Making lascivious comments on thy sport,
Cannot dispraise but in a kind of praise;
Naming thy name blesses an ill report.
Oh, what a mansion have those vices got
Which for their habitation chose out thee!

These denunciations may have been as short-lived as Juliet's. Even the boy in *Britain's Ida* was praised for inspiring affection which he did not return,

> 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.

And these lines resemble those in the description of Sinon,

> For Sinon in his fire doth quake with cold,
> And in that cold hot-burning fire doth dwell.

All these complaints were conventional, and may have been copied from Chaucer, who, in the fragment called *The Squire's Tale*, made the Falcon denounce the Tercelet in similar grief :

> There dwelled a Tercelet me fast by,
> That seemed well of all gentillesse ;
> But he was full of treason and falseness,
> It was iwrapped under humble cheer,
> And under hue of truth in such manere,
> Under plesaunce and under besy pain
> That no wight wende that he could feign,
> So deep ingrain he dyed his colours :
> Right as a serpent hides him under flowers
> Till he may see his time for to bite :
> Right so this god of Love's hypocrite
> Doth so his sermons and his observance,
> Under subtil colour and acquaintance
> That sowneth like the gentilesse of Love,
> As in a tomb is all the fair above,
> And under is the corpse, which that ye wot ;
> Such was this hypocrite, both cold and hot,
> And in this wise he served his intent
> That, save the Fiend, none wist what he meant.
> Till he so long had weeped and complained,
> And many a year his service to me feigned. . . .
> So on a day he took of me his leave,
> So sorrowful eke, that I weened verily

That he had feeled as much sorrow as I,
When that I heard him speak, and saw his hue,
But none the less I thought he was so true
And eke that he should soon repaire again
Within a little while, sooth to seyn,
And reason would eke that he must go
For his honour, as oft it happeth so.
Then made I virtue of necessity.

This last phrase, which is to be found, too, in Chaucer's *Knight's Tale*:

> Then is it wisdom, as it thinketh me,
> To maken virtue of necessity,

was echoed by Shakespeare when in *King Richard the Second* he made John of Gaunt say,

> Teach thy necessity to reason thus,
> There is no virtue like necessity,

and when in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* he made the Second Outlaw say:

> Are you content to be our General,
> To make a virtue of necessity?

If the *Lover's Complaint* was a deliberate echo of the Falcon's lament there is the less need to infer that it was an accusation against Southampton, even if we conclude that he was drawn in that Poem. Neither need we suppose that he had played the part of Adonis if we conclude that William Barkstead's *Mirrha, the Mother of Adonis*, printed in November, 1607, lamented Mary formerly Countess of Southampton who had died in that year as Lady Hervey, and referred to him in its last lines:

> But stay, my Muse, in thy own confines keep
> And wage not war with so dear-loved a neighbour,
> But having sung thy day-song, rest and sleep;
> Preserve thy small fame and his greater favour,
> His song was worthy merit, Shakespeare, he
> Sang the fair blossom, thou the withered tree.

It may be that a clue to the meaning of all these Poems of Love is to be found in the note on *Willobie his Avisa* in which the author explains that " in this discourse is lively represented the unruly rage of unbridled fancy, having the reins to rove at liberty, with the divers and sundry changes of affections and temptations which Will set loose from Reason can devise." That Poem was linked with Shakespeare (and perhaps with Southampton) by the lines in the Preface :

> Yet Tarquin plucked his glistering grape,
> And Shakespeare paints poor Lucrece' rape.

The initials given, H. W. and W. S., may indicate Southampton and Shakespeare. H. W., whose name is given in full as Henry Willobie, is described as " Italo-Hispalensis "—an Italian Sevillan, or one who copied the manners of Italy and Seville. The statement that " he would see whether it would sort to a happier end for the new actor than for the old player " does not mean that W. S. was old, but that he was a former player of H. W's. part. Still, it may be meant to suggest that he was a Player by trade. The theme may have been a parody of the tale in the *Sonnets* and, if so, it is a proof that some of them were known when it was printed in 1594, in the same year as *The Rape of Lucrece*. And this would explain why this little book was reprinted in 1609. The note may mean that it derided the extravagant tales of the Temptations of Love which Will Shakespeare set loose from Reason devised.

If Shakespeare had Southampton in mind when he wrote some of the *Sonnets* and the Narrative Poems he might have excused himself as the Poet did in the *Sonnets* :

> Or whether doth my mind, being crowned with you,
> Drink up the monarch's plague, this flattery ?
> Or whether shall I say, mine eye saith true,
> And that your love taught it this alchemy,
> To make of monsters and things indigest
> Such cherubins as your sweet self resemble ? . . .
> How can my Muse want subject to invent
> While thou dost breathe, that pour'st into my Verse
> Thine own sweet argument ? . . .

> What is your substance ? whereof are you made
> That millions of strange shadows on you tend ?
> Since every one hath, every one, one shade,
> And you, but one, can every shadow lend.
> Describe Adonis, and the counterfeit
> Is poorly imitated after you. . . .
> Oh know, sweet love, I always write of you
> And you and Love are still my argument.

Whether he drew Southampton in these Poems of Love as a boy of fourteen and afterwards as an effeminate youth, or had some other model, or imagined the boy and the youth, it is evident that some of the Sonnets were written when he was young. It so happened that two of them were printed as his by Jaggard in *The Passionate Pilgrim* in 1598 with one which came from *Love's Labour's Lost.* The second of these, beginning,

> Two loves I have of comfort and despair,
> That like two spirits do suggest me still;
> My better angel is a man right fair,
> My worser spirit a woman coloured ill,

tells the story about a dark lady and a treacherous friend which some students have taken as a statement of truth. This was a favourite theme, and there are similar stories in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* and in *Much Ado About Nothing*, and in *Love's Labour's Lost.* It was an Italianate story, and its mood was denoted by a line in this Sonnet,

> I guess one angel in another's hell,

which is a humorous reference to one of Boccaccio's *Decameron* tales, the tenth of the third day, "Alibech diviene romita, ad cui rustico monaco insegna rimettere il Diavolo in Inferno." Instead of concluding that by a coincidence Shakespeare found this old story repeated in his private affairs and then proceeded to complain to the World that he had been betrayed by a friend I infer that he chose it as a conventional theme.

Some students have argued that he could not have written so passionately if the story was false; but he wrote with as sincere an emotion, for instance, in *Macbeth* and *Othello*, and

we do not conclude that he had killed his King or his wife. He was aged about forty-five, and had written most of his Tragedies when the *Sonnets* were printed in 1609. Like Petrarch's *Sonetti* and Boccaccio's *Rime* they were written from time to time in varying moods. The moods tell us nothing about his private affairs, for no Lyrical Poem can ever be taken as a statement of truth : it may be that he wrote his most sorrowful Sonnets in his happiest times. Neither can we conclude that a real Love was expressed by any of them any more than we can be certain that a true Laura or Amaryllis was worshipped. As he wrote in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*,

> As imagination bodies forth
> The forms of things unknown, the Poet's pen
> Turns them to shape, and gives to airy nothing
> A local habitation and a name.

Ariosto need not have been telling the truth when (like a hundred other poets) he wrote in the Third Satire,

> Altri vada a Parnaso, c'hora i'vegno
> Dolci occhi a voi ; ne cheder altra aita
> A versi mei se non da voi, disegno.

Still, the manner and mood of Shakespeare's *Sonnets* can help us to guess when they were written. For instance, the two printed last by Thorpe and beginning,

> Cupid laid by his brand and fell asleep

and

> The little Love-god lying once asleep,

which may have been copied from a Latin translation of verses by Marianus Scholasticus, must have been written when he was beginning to write. They probably belong to the same time as the three Sonnets on Venus and Adonis, which were printed as his in *The Passionate Pilgrim*. These Sonnets may show that he began a Sonnet-sequence on Venus and Adonis before he wrote his Narrative Poem. It is probable that (like many other Poets) he wrote Sonnets in boyhood, and it is certain that many of those printed in 1609 were

written when his mind was mature. For instance, the Sonnet, beginning

> Like as the waves make towards the pebbled shore,
> So do our minutes hasten to their end

has an elderly man's measured gravity and knowledge that life is passing away. Cervantes wrote in this mood when he was ending *Don Quixote*: "Como las cosas humanas no sean eternas, yendo siempre en declinacion de sus principios hasta llegar à su ultimo fin, especialmente las vidas de los hombres." And the Sonnet beginning,

> The expense of spirit in a waste of shame
> Is lust in action,

which was probably based on the verses by Petronius Arbiter

> Fœda est in coitu et brevis voluptas,
> Et tædet Veneris statim peracta,

seems an elderly comment of all the young tales of the Temptations of Love. If the *Sonnets* were printed in a rational Order, this should be the last of them all.

I think that the *Sonnets* of 1609 are a collection or selection which Shakespeare made when he had reached the climax of his Tragical work and that in a revision in his Tragical days some of the early ones became passionate instead of fantastic and the "dark lady" became a Cleopatra instead of the Rosaline of *Love's Labour's Lost.* Some of the *Sonnets* of 1609 are humorous Poems, for instance, the Will Sonnets which may have been addressed to some lady (perhaps his friend, Mrs. Davenant), who had a will of her own and a child christened William, and others are trifles; but many of them have a solemn maturity and a sorrowful passion which were alien to him when he was young. These darker Poems control the mood of the rest. But, even as we have them, the *Sonnets* keep a resemblance to the Narrative Poems. Mr. George Wyndham, for instance, though he looked on them as later work, wrote in his *Essay on the Poems of Shakespeare*: "It is indeed strange to find how much of thought, imagery and rhythm is common to *Venus and Adonis* and the *Sonnets*."

There would be nothing strange in this if, as I think, many of them were written before *Venus and Adonis* was printed.

I think that the conventional Sonnets about a beautiful boy and his behaviour in the Temptations of Love were first written when Shakespeare was young enough to choose such a theme and in the days when it was the fashion. The fact that in them the Poet described himself as elderly proves nothing, for this too was conventional. Richard Barnfield, for instance, wrote when he was aged about twenty,

> Behold my grey head, full of silver hairs,
> My wrinkled skin, deep furrows in my face,
> Cares bring old age, old age increaseth cares.

Barnfield's Sonnets, like Shakespeare's, were written in the first person because this was the custom; but this did not mean that he drew himself as the elderly man or that he loved a beautiful Ganymede. Neither need we conclude that Virgil was worshipping a cruel Alexis when he wrote in the Second Eclogue (which seems to be copied from the Third and Eleventh Idylls of Theocritus),

> O formose puer, nimium ne crede colori,
> Alba ligustra cadunt, vaccinia nigra leguntur.

Even if Southampton was drawn as the boy in the *Sonnets*, this would not prove that Shakespeare was shown in them as the elderly lover or that the adoration was real; but it would explain why some of the " sugared Sonnets " were only known among private friends (as Meres wrote in 1598), and why Shakespeare may have not intended to publish the *Sonnets* in 1609, for the fact that he had dedicated two other Poems to Southampton would have made the resemblance notable, and the amorous tone of them might have been misconstrued. The signs of revision in the *Sonnets* appear to prove that he wanted them to be published, and apart from this, any Poet who had written such things must have hoped that they would survive. He may have put them aside to be published after he and Southampton had passed beyond the insults of slander. There may have been an additional reason for such a delay in the fact that their tone was more apt to be misconstrued in those days. Some students have thought that

an effeminate vice is suggested by the amorous Sonnets to a beautiful boy. In 1609 that vice was common at Court and the King himself was accused of it. And I think that Thorpe's dedication and Benson's changes are tokens that when the *Sonnets* were printed in 1609 they were interpreted as proofs of that vice.

Thorpe's dedication ran thus: "To the only begetter of these insuing Sonnets, Mr. W. H., all happiness and that eternity promised by our ever-living Poet, wisheth the well-wishing adventurer in setting forth.—T. T." It seems to me that this dedication to "the only begetter" was an obvious insult. Boswell and others have argued that the only begetter was the person who stole the *Sonnets* for Thorpe; but the Poet had promised eternity to the boy in the *Sonnets*, and not to a future only thief of those Poems. Mr. Knox Pooler, in his edition printed in 1918, has observed that the word adventurer is "an allusion to the Merchant Venturers, the insuing Sonnets being Thorpe's cargo." He did not observe the facts that Southampton was one of the chief patrons of the Merchant Adventurers to America, where his name is retained by Hampton River and Hampton Roads, and secured a charter for them in 1609, and was in that year a member of the Virginia Council. The words, "in setting forth," may be an allusion to Prince Hal's words, "How shall we part with them in setting forth?" and Poins' reply, "Then will they adventure upon the exploit themselves." In 1609 Southampton had made Catholic enemies by changing his Creed in that year (as Sir Edwyn Sandys recorded) while his triumphant feud with Lord Grey had already provided him with Puritan ones, and he had offended the King and the courtiers by his open disdain. He was living apart at Titchfield; but he had plenty of servants who would have been quick to avenge an open affront. So Thorpe may have thought it wiser to veil his dedication transparently by printing the Earl's initials as W. H. instead of H. W. He may have arranged the *Sonnets* to suit the meaning which he wished to allege, beginning with those which offered a clue to men who remembered that Southampton had twice resisted pressure to marry when he was young. He may have printed *A Lover's Complaint* with the *Sonnets* as a clue to the meaning of his

veiled dedication because the picture of Southampton in it was easily recognized. And he may have meant it to be read as Shakespeare's Complaint. When Lintott reprinted Thorpe's book a hundred years later he called this fanciful poem *A Lover's Complaint of His Angry Mistress*, as if there was an inversion of sex.

When John Benson printed the *Sonnets* as Poems in 1640 he grouped them in a different order and under separate headings, and did this in such a way that nearly all of them seemed addressed to a woman, and omitted several, including the one which has the verses :

> Oh know, sweet love, I always write of you,
> And you and Love are still my argument,

and the one beginning,

> Some say thy fault is youth, some wantonness

and the one beginning,

> Oh thou, my lovely boy, who in thy power
> Dost hold Time's fickle glass,

and hid the sex in others, printing, for instance, " sweet love " instead of " sweet boy " in the Sonnet beginning

> What's in the brain that ink may character
> Which hath not figured to thee my true spirit ?

In his Address to the Reader he wrote : " I here presume (under favour) to present to your view some excellent and sweetly composed poems of Master William Shakespeare, which in themselves appear of the same purity, the Author himself then living avouched ; they had not the fortune by reason of their Infancy in his death, to have the due accommodation of proportionable glory with the rest of his ever-living Works, yet the lines of themselves will afford you a more authentic approbation than my assurance any way can, to invite your allowance ; in your perusal you shall find them Seren, clear and elegantly plain, such gentle strains as shall recreate and not perplex your brain, no intricate or cloudy stuff to puzzle intellect, but perfect eloquence ; such as will raise your admiration to his praise." He seems to have

amused himself by writing a part of this statement in irregular Verse, for he could have printed it thus:

> Elegantly plain,
> Such gentle strain
> As shall recreate
> And not perplex your brain;
> No intricate
> Or cloudy stuff to puzzle intellect,
> But perfect eloquence, such as will raise
> Your admiration to his praise.

His statement that these Poems had been in their infancy when Shakespeare died was untrue, and it suggests that he believed that all the copies of Thorpe's edition of 1609 (which he used in compiling his own, for he repeats its mistakes) had been successfully hidden. Shakespeare could not have avouched the accuracy of this tardy edition, which has many misprints and contains some Poems written about him after his death, so Benson's statement that he had avouched its purity may only have meant that he had claimed that his Poems printed in it were free from offence. And Benson's assertion that the Poems contained no cloudy stuff to puzzle intellect may have repudiated a meaning alleged. It may be that the last Earl of Southampton had employed him to hide a scandalous meaning insinuated by Thorpe. And in any case his alterations appear to indicate that the *Sonnets* had been interpreted in a scandalous way. We have no means of knowing whether they served their only possible purpose, for the *Sonnets* were neglected again till Lintott revived Thorpe's edition of them in 1709. Benson's edition may have been small and only intended as a safeguard against the reappearance of Thorpe's, or it may have been overlooked in the troubled times which began with the Earl of Strafford's impeachment in 1640.

None of this can be proved, but it seems the only way of explaining how Shakespeare's most admirable Poems, the *Sonnets*, came to be neglected so long. Though the old fashion of writing Italianate Sequences of Sonnets was dead (which was one of the reasons why it is improbable that

Shakespeare would have written a Sequence in his elderly days) there were many poets and scholars, such as Milton and Herrick, who would have admired the *Sonnets* if these had not been hidden from them and many men, such as Suckling, who saw Shakespeare's supremacy, and we have no record that anyone quoted or praised or imitated the *Sonnets* till Lintott revived them in 1709. It seems to me that the neglect of the *Sonnets* of 1609 can only be explained by concluding that they were quickly suppressed. And if they were quickly suppressed by the man who had been drawn as the boy in them, or by Shakespeare, we can infer that a slanderous meaning had been given to them. But, of course, that would not prove that this interpretation was right. Even a plain statement from Thorpe would have been worthless, and his veiled dedication may have been only a publisher's ingenious advertisement.

One Poem ascribed to Shakespeare, *The Phœnix and Turtle*, belongs (if it is his) to the days when he could write of Love nobly. It was published in 1601 with "*Love's Martyr or Rosaline's Complaint*, allegorically showing the truth of Love in the constant fate of the Phœnix and Turtle." The title page of that Poem says, "Hereafter follow some poetical essays on the former subject, viz., the *Turtle and the Phœnix*, done by the best and chiefest of our modern writers, with their names subscribed to their particular works, never before extant, and now first consecrated by them all generally to the love and merit of the true noble Knight, Sir John Salisbury." This has been taken as meaning that Sir John Salisbury and his wife were the Turtle and the Phœnix, and this may have been an old view, for Father Henry More, telling a ghost-story in his *History of the English Province of the Society of Jesus*, written in 1660, says "Lord Stourton called his wife, a daughter of Edward, Earl of Derby, and sister to the Stanley whose epitaph Shakespeare wrote." Sir John Salisbury's wife was Ursula Stanley, who is said to have been an illegitimate daughter of Henry, fourth Earl of Derby, but (unless the Records have been misinterpreted) she lived after 1601 and bore him some children though not till after that date. Father Henry More may have thought that Poems must be founded on fact, and (if he referred to this Poem) he was

probably wrong in thinking that Ursula Stanley and Anne Lady Stourton were sisters.

This Poem was stated to be a poetical essay written on a particular theme, and this dedication to Salisbury may have been merely a compliment without any reference to his private affairs. If Shakespeare wrote these beautiful Verses he never wrote anything else like them. If he was intimate with Jonson's friend Donne before he quarrelled with Jonson in 1599, he may have echoed Donne's brooding austerity. This is one of Donne's themes, as in *The Relic*, and in *The Funeral* in which he described himself as Love's Martyr.

This Poem (if indeed it is Shakespeare's) could not have been written by him when he was young enough and foolish enough to write the three Narrative Poems and the juvenile *Sonnets*, and to imitate Ovid as he did when he based *Venus and Adonis* on Ovid's *Amores* and the *Ravishment* or *The Rape of Lucrece* on Ovid's *Fasti*. When Francis Meres wrote that "the sweet witty soul of Ovid lives in mellifluous and honey-tongued Shakespeare," he saw that Shakespeare could have pleaded (as Nashe did) that his juvenile faults were due to Ovid's wanton example,—

> Yet Ovid's wanton Muse did not offend,
> He is the fountain whence my streams do flow.

And it may be that Shakespeare meant to plead this and to hail young Southampton as his "flavus Apollo" when he inscribed on the title page of *Venus and Adonis* the lines from Ovid's *Amores*.

> Vilia miretur vulgus; mihi flavus Apollo
> Pocula Castalia plena ministret aqua.

probably wrong in thinking that Lucy Shelby and Anne Lady Southampton were sisters.

The Poem will stand to be a poetical story written on a particular theme, and this dedication to Salisbury may have been merely a compliment without any reference to his private affairs. If Shakespeare wrote these beautiful Verses he never wrote anything else like them. If he was intimate with Jonson's friend Donne before he quarrelled with Jonson in 1599, he may have echoed Donne's brooding austerity. This is one of Donne's themes, as in *The Relic*, and in *The Funeral* in which he described himself as Love's Martyr.

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Pocula Castalia plena ministret aqua.

MIDSUMMER DREAMS

THE Editors of the First Folio printed seven Comedies after *Love's Labour's Lost* in the following order: *A Midsummer Night's Dream, The Merchant of Venice, As You Like It, The Taming of the Shrew, All's Well that Ends Well, Twelfth Night* and *The Winter's Tale.* It may be that all these were written or revised in this order during the ten years between 1593 and 1603 and that during this time Shakespeare rewrote *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and *Much Ado About Nothing* and *The Tempest,* and wrote his Chronicle Pageant and a version of *Troilus* and *Cressida* (in the War of the Poets) and forms of four of his Tragedies, *Timon of Athens, Othello, Julius Cæsar* and *Hamlet.*

There were three seasons in his life as a writer, the Spring and Summer and Autumn. The juvenile Plays had all the charms of the Spring, a time of pleasant rain and promising light. Four of these seven "Comedies" belong to the time when it was Summer with him: they were mellow and happy, the light was mature in them and the rain was forgotten. But only the fourth Act of *The Winter's Tale* seems to belong to it and *The Taming of the Shrew* is a close version of a juvenile Play and *All's Well that Ends Well* became a Tragi-comedy later. And the Tragedies and Tragi-comedies written after 1603 were autumnal with the Winter at hand.

Sir Israel Gollancz writes in the Temple Shakespeare that several elements "manifestly connect *A Midsummer Night's Dream* with the group of early love-plays, *Love's Labour's Lost, The Two Gentlemen of Verona* and *The Comedy of Errors.*" And Mr. Saintsbury writes in his *History of English Prosody,* "Next to *Romeo and Juliet* there are strong prosodic reasons for taking *A Midsummer Night's Dream.*" These views can be reconciled if this Play was composed from two earlier ones after *Romeo and Juliet,* as we have it, was written.

Romeo and Juliet had been a Tragedy of Midsummer Moonlight: it dealt with four nights of a fevered Summer in Italy, about a fortnight from Lammas-tide, the beginning

of August. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* was a Comedy of Midsummer Moonlight: it was meant to deal with four nights of England's temperate Summer, for Hippolyta says in the beginning,

> Four nights will quickly dream away the time,

though this is no longer seen in the Play. It may be now mainly concerned with the Eve of St. John, the Midsummer Night on which the Fairies had power. These Plays are companions: the Fairy-tale is a humorous comment on the illusions of Love. The Woodland Comedy had another companion, the Woodland Tragedy of *Titus Andronicus*, and it is linked with *The Tempest* because they are Fairy-tales. Its woods and its pairs of lovers unite it with *As You Like It;* but that is an older Comedy seen with Jaques' eyes instead of Mercutio's. It is another *Comedy of Errors*, though these are caused by a Fairy spell and not by resemblance, and *The Taming of the Shrew* was connected with it by the Induction, though till then it had been more akin to *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*—Sly is dreaming awake, as Bottom is, and he and his friends could have acted an Interlude with Starveling and Quince: all these honest men could have figured among Falstaff's recruits and he was a minion of the moon in his turn. There are obvious links with other Comedies, too, but these are enough to afford an example of the way in which many of the Plays are united. None of them can be studied apart, for each is illuminated by others.

Shakespeare found his Fairies in England; but he gave them a King and Queen from foreign Romances. The Fairies of England were a miniature race, dwindled perhaps as the immemorial belief in the Wood-spirits had faded. Queen Mab was one of them in Mercutio's speech, as she was in Drayton's *Nymphidia*, which does not seem to have been printed before 1627, but may have been written at a much earlier date. Drayton says in it,

> Then since no Muse hath been so bold,
> Or of the later or the old,
> Those elvish secrets to unfold
> Which lie from others' reading;

My active Muse to light shall bring
The Court of that proud fairy King.

He represented Oberon as married to Mab, as Herrick did in the *Fairy Temple or Oberon's Chapel*, published in his *Hesperides* in 1647; but this was an error, for Oberon was not one of our Fairies: he was imported by Chaucer from a foreign Romance, *Huon of Bordeaux*, and he was full-grown, like other foreign Fairies, for instance, Melusine in the Mediæval *Romance of Partenay*, which was printed in French in 1478 and in German about the same time and in Spanish in 1489 and translated into English in manuscript some twenty years later. Ben Jonson may have known better when he gave him no wife in his Masque *Oberon, The Fairy Prince*, which was published in his Folio of 1616, but this may have been due to the fact that Prince Henry acted the part. And in his *Particular Entertainment of the Queen and Prince*, written in 1603 and first printed in 1616, he wrote,

This is Mab, the Mistress Fairy,
That doth nightly rob the dairy,

but did not give her a husband. Spenser copied Oberon's name from Chaucer, but Greene used another form of it, "Oboram," in the Prelude to his *Scottish History of King James the Fourth*; and a third version of it, "Oberion," was assigned to a dumb Devil who was said to have served Cardinal Wolsey.

Even in Chaucer's time Fairyland had faded away. *The Wife of Bath's Tale* began:

In the old days of King Arthour,
Of which that Britons speken great honour,
All was this land fulfilled of Faery:
The Elf-Queen and her joly company
Danced full oft in many a green mead;
This was the old opinion, as I rede,—
I speak of many hundred years ago
For now no more can none see elves mo.

Here, of course, Chaucer used the word Faery as meaning enchantment, as Spenser did.

Shakespeare found the name Titania in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, where it is a form of Diana; but in *The Merchant's Tale* Chaucer gave the Queen of Faery's name as Proserpina and this example was followed, for instance, in a song which was in Campion's and Rossiter's *Book of Airs*, printed in 1601,

> In myrtle arbours on the downs
> The Fairy Queen, Proserpina,
> This night by moonshine leading merry rounds.

Chaucer's Proserpina was married to Pluto,—

> Pluto, that is King of Faerie,
> And many a lady in his company
> Following his wife, the Queen Proserpina.

Sir Thopas in *The Host's Tale* was only seeking an Elf-Queen, and found one who was Oberon's wife,—

> Me dreamed all this night, pardie,
> An Elf-Queen shall my Leman be.

It has been suggested that Chaucer remembered Artemis and Persephone when he made this distinction; but it is more probable that he was copying the foreign Romances. Sir Thopas did not expect to find a miniature leman. That Elf-Queen was full-grown, like the fair ladies who wove their spells in the *Morte d'Arthur*, and when Bottom imitated Sir Thopas he was not loved by Queen Mab but by a foreign Titania who was big enough to be mated with him.

Though Puck was English by birth he was not one of the Fairies. A Fairy says to him in this Play,

> Either I mistake your shape and making quite,
> Or else you are that shrewd and knavish sprite,
> Called Robin Goodfellow. . . .
> Those that Hobgoblin call you, and sweet Puck,
> You do their work, and they shall have good luck,

and Puck answers,

> Thou speakest aright;
> I am that merry wanderer of the night,
> I jest to Oberon and make him smile.

He belonged to a bigger race of humorous spirits. Mr. Charles Squire says in his *Mythology of the British Islands*: "We shall hardly do wrong in regarding such spectres as the degraded gods of a pre-Aryan race, like the Irish Leprechauns and Pookas, who have nothing in common with the still beautiful, still noble figures of the Tuatha Dé Danaun." Puck dealt in practical jokes and he was a stranger among the innocent midgets who frolicked in Fairyland as the old Leprechaun was in Tyrnanoge, the Land of the Young.

The Fairy-tale part of this Play seems to have been first written in Rhyme, and I think that Shakespeare re-wrote it and blended it with the rest in the Autumn of 1594. That date seems suggested by Titania's account of the weather and by the signs that this Play was connected with a marriage and written for a performance at Court.

In 1594 the Summer was wet. Simon Forman's Diary states that "these months of June and July were very wet and wonderful cold. . . . There were many great floods this summer." Stow's *Chronicle* supports that assertion: "This year in the month of May, fell many great showers of rain, but in the month of June and July much more . . . all which notwithstanding in the month of August there followed a fair Harvest, but in the month of September fell great rains which raised high waters." And in King's *Lectures upon Jonas* it was said that "the Spring was very unkind by reason of the abundance of rains that fell; our July hath been like to a February, our June even as an April, so that the air must needs be corrupted: God amend it in His mercy and stay this plague of waters. . . . We may say that the course of nature is very much inverted: our Summers are no Summers, our Harvests are no Harvests." He disagrees with Stow on this point, and must have been right since there could not have been a fair Harvest in such weather as this. Titania in the second Act says:

> Therefore the winds, piping to us in vain,
> As in revenge, have sucked up from the sea
> Contagious fogs; which, falling in the land,
> Have every pelting river made so proud,
> That they have overborne their continents. . . .

> The fold stands empty in the drowned field, . . .
> The nine men's morris is filled up with mud. . . .
> The Spring, the Summer,
> The childing Autumn, angry Winter, change
> Their wonted liveries.

Oberon's speech in the second Act about Cupid aiming

> At a fair vestal throned by the West

is plainly a compliment to the Queen who

> passed on,
> In maiden meditation, fancy free

in her sixty-third year. It is the only one to be found in the Plays. This may show that the Queen disliked this compliment paid by a mere Player and a servant of hers to an old lady who had always been notoriously amorous, though she might have accepted such nonsense amiably as a gentleman's homage if it had been spoken to her privately by Essex or Raleigh. We know that even when some gentlemen acted a Device to amuse her in the following year at York House in the Strand she did not thank them for praise: Rowland Whyte wrote to Sir Robert Sidney, "the Queen said that if she had thought there would have been so much said about her, she would have not been there that night, and so to bed."

The Treasurer's Accounts for 1594–1595 state that Shakespeare and Burbage and Kemp presented "two several Comedies or Interludes" before her at Greenwich on the twenty-sixth and twenty-eighth of December, St. Stephen's Day and Innocents' Day. The setting of the Fairy-tale shows that the Play as we have it celebrated a marriage and the third Earl of Bedford was married at Stepney on the twelfth of December. While none of these indications would be conclusive if it was taken apart, their agreement leaves little doubt that this Play was one of the Comedies acted before the Queen in December 1594.

This Earl of Bedford was one of Southampton's dearest friends at this time: he was the friend coupled with him in this year as too young and fantastical to be a fit husband for Bridget Manners. We have no record that Shakespeare had been summoned to entertain the Court before this, and

the fact that he was named first of the three leading Players may show that this summons was a favour to him. It is possible that Southampton rewarded his homage by obtaining for him the favour of a Royal Command.

Shakespeare was not concerned with the marriage except as Snug was when he said, " Masters, the Duke is coming from the temple, and there is two or three lords and ladies more married : if our sport had gone forward we had all been made men." If he had wished to flatter a bridegroom he would not have chosen a mockery of the illusions of Love. It was his business to produce a Play suited to Queen Elizabeth's taste, and he may have taken the part of Oberon, leaving Theseus to Burbage and Bottom to Kemp, because he wished to recite the compliment which was paid to the Queen.

The Fairy-tale is spoilt by the setting, which was provided to please that superior audience, the Court, and to explain to it that the writer knew the Play to be foolish. The charm of the Comedy lies in its simplicity and juvenile sweetness, not in the wisdom of the older spectators who appear on the stage. The setting was made Classical to suit the Queen's taste. It was suggested to him by Chaucer's *Knight's Tale*, in which Hippolyta was " the fair hardy queen of Scythia," and perhaps by the Life of Theseus in North's version of Plutarch, and it helped to denote that Oberon and Titania belonged to foreign Romances. It clashed with the English scene of the Fairy-tale and the farcical Interlude of the Rustics of England. The stage audience was Athenian because Athenian meant wise, and it may be that when Shakespeare put the Queen and her Court in the Athenians' place as spectators, he did this with the private amusement which he must have felt when he described her immunity from the dangers of Love. If he had merely wished to provide a superfluous explanation that Fairyland was not meant to be true he need only have copied Lyly's Prologue to *The Woman in the Moon* :

> Remember all is but a poet's dream,
> The first he had in Phœbus' holy bower,

but his ironical setting turned his Fairies to ridicule as well as his Rustics.

There are two separate Interludes in this Play as we have it. They were written apart, the Fairy-tale first, I think, and then the farcical one showing how Rustics acted a Tragedy.

It may be that the Fairy-tale was suggested to him by *The Cradle of Security* which (according to Willis' *Mount Tabor*) was acted at Gloucester about 1570 and may have been also exhibited in the neighbouring town of Stratford-on-Avon then. In this Interlude or Moral, a King or some great Prince was transformed while he was asleep by three ladies "who fastened a visard like a swine's snout upon his face, and then discovered his face that the spectators might see how they had transformed him." Or he could have been guided to it by the fact that the Mummers wore the heads of Apes and Asses and Swine.

Besides, such transformations belong to the World's stock of stories. There are many of them in the *Arabian Nights' Entertainments*, for instance, in the Tale of the Three Calendars and the History of Sidi Nouman. And the belief in them is shown by an Arab Legend which tells how a Saint had a favourite Ass named Abdullah and how some evil men stole it and tied a Tailor instead and how, when the Saint saw the change, the Tailor alleged that he had been turned into an Ass for ten years as a penalty for beating his mother-in-law and had resumed his first shape during the night and how when the Saint, believing him, went to buy a new Ass he saw his own for sale in the market-place and exclaimed, "O Abdullah, Son of Iniquity! have you been beating your mother-in-law again?" Shakespeare may have known something about the most famous of all these stories, the one told in *Metamorphoseon Libri XI* (de Asino Aureo) by Apuleius, in which Lucius is turned into an Ass through a mistake but (unlike Bottom) prefers choice food to hay. Or he may have read the one told in Reginald Scot's *Discovery of Witchcraft*, printed in 1584, according to which in the City of Salamin in the Kingdom of Cyprus an Englishman, "a sturdy young fellow," was turned into an Ass by Witchcraft and only rescued after three years when "being near to a Church, he heard a little sacring-bell ring to the Elevation of a Morrow Mass, and not daring to go into the Church, lest he should have been driven out with cudgels, in great devotion he fell

down in the Churchyard upon the knees of his hinder-legs and did lift his forefeet over his head." Or the change might have been suggested to him by Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, or he may have known the old nursery-song which comes nearest to Titania's illusion :

> There was a lady loved a swine :
> " Honey," said she,
> " Pig-hog, pig-hog, wilt thou be mine ? "
> " Hunc " said he.
>
> " I'll build thee straight a silver sty,
> Honey," said she ;
> " And in it, dearest, thou shalt lie."
> " Hunc " said he.
>
> " I'll pin it with a silver pin,
> Honey," said she ;
> " That thence thou may'st go out and in."
> " Hunc " said he.
>
> " So, Sweetheart, wilt thou have me now,
> Honey ? " said she ;
> " Speak quickly, or my heart will break."
> " Hunc " said he.

The Farce of the Rustical Players seems to have been acted apart after his time, for " the *Merry Conceited Humours of Bottom the Weaver* as it hath been publicly acted by some of his Majesty's Comedians, and lately privately presented by several apprentices for their harmless recreation, with great applause " was printed in 1661. In Tate's *Cuckold's Haven*, which was printed in 1685, one of the Characters says, " Why I will act thee a better Play myself. What wilt thou have ? *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*, or the *Doleful Comedy of Piramus and Thisbe* ? That is my masterpiece. When Piramus comes to be dead, I can act a dead man rarely. The raging rocks and shivering shocks shall break the locks of prison gates." And in *New Shreds of the old Snare*, printed in 1624, we have the reference, " as for flashes of light, we might see very cheap in the Comedy of *Piramus and Thisbe*, where one comes in with a lanthorn and acts Moonshine."

This part appeared in the Play as it was printed in the Quarto edition dated 1600, which may have been published in 1619, but we have no means of knowing whether it was represented at Court. This is doubtful, for the Play, as we have it, seems too long for an Interlude and the Queen's interest in her Rustics was small.

The German *Absurda Comica Oder Herr Peter Squentz*, which was printed in 1663, has the same mockery of Rustical acting; but Andreas Gryphius claimed that this was not copied from a foreign example. The subject was an obvious one in Germany as well as in England since in both Countries the Rustics had acted Religious and other Plays for themselves from time immemorial. This Interlude, as it survives in a *Midsummer Night's Dream*, is plainly shortened, for instance in the first Act Quince chooses three Players who have no part in it now.

The story of Pyramus and Thisbe was popular. It had been printed, for instance, in *The Book of the Cyte of Ladies* in 1521 and again in 1562 "a book entitled Pyramus and Thisbe," and in *The Gorgeous Gallery of Gallant Inventions* in 1578 and in a *Handful of Pleasant Delights* in 1584. Shakespeare could have found it in Chaucer's *Merchant's Tale*:

> O noble Ovid, well sayst thou, God wot!
> What sleight is it, though it be long and hot,
> That he nyl find it out in some manere?
> By Piramus and Thisbe men may leere;
> Though they were kept full long streyte overall,
> They ben accorded rowning through a wall"

or in the Third Book of Gower's *Confessio Amantis*. Besides, he had probably read it in Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and he had referred to it in *Titus Andronicus*,—

> So pale did shine the Moon on Pyramus,
> When he by night lay bathed in maiden blood.

He chose it as the theme of this Interlude because it afforded scope for mocking the shifts of Rustical Players. And he had an eye to the shifts of his own associates when they were compelled to act Moonlit scenes in the afternoon in an open-air theatre and to suggest so many things which could not be

depicted with their scanty resources. He was mocking his trade, as he did when he drew the Players in *Hamlet.*

This was natural if he hoped that the Courtiers, or some of them, would remember that he was a poet and had claims to gentility though he had been driven to the trade of a mountebank. He may even have hoped that the Queen might have heard that he had published two Poems. When in the setting of this Play he described hunting and dogs in the fourth Act he expected some of his heroes (including Southampton) to recall how the poet of *Venus and Adonis* had proved his knowledge of horses; and this Comedy is written throughout as if it was the work of a man who merited a better employment.

He used the common device of a Play set in a Play as in *Love's Labour's Lost* and in *Hamlet*, and the device of a setting as when he re-wrote *The Taming of a Shrew.* The rhyming Play which survives in the Fairy-tale had been a companion to *Titus Andronicus.* When Hermia says,

> And in the wood where often you and I
> Upon faint primrose beds were wont to lie,

and Titania says,

> Come, sit thee down upon this flowery bed,
> While I thy amiable cheeks do coy,

they are innocently echoing Tamora's invitation of Aaron to golden slumber. This rhyming Play is full of echoes of Chaucer, for instance the music of the beginning of *The Merchant's Tale*,

> Weeping and wailing, care and other sorrow
> I know enough,

is repeated when Hermia says in the third Act,

> Never so weary, never so in woe,
> Be-dabbled with the dew and torn with briars.

The farce in Prose, Pyramus and Thisbe, which now only survives shortened and carelessly linked with it, had a later companion, the Comedy of Falstaff. These Interludes, each combined with a dissimilar one, were taken from life. The

doings of Bottom and his friends were a comment on Fairyland as those of Falstaff and his ridiculed Chivalry. These Interludes, like, for instance, the use of Lance in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* and of Launcelot in *The Merchant of Venice*, and of all the Clowns and Fools and of the Rustics in *The Taming of The Shrew* and *As You Like It* and *The Winter's Tale* brought Shakespeare's Country in touch with the real life of his day. These were the true things in his work before he was ripe enough to attain the darker truth of his Tragedies.

The next Comedy in the Folio Order is *The Merchant of Venice* which would be a Tragi-comedy now if it was not controlled by Midsummer mirth, for the laughter in it is on the brink of calamity and the fortunate ending is a sudden escape. Indeed, as we have it, there is a Tragical story told in its laughter,—the Tragedy of Shylock the Jew, the old man who ends in disgrace, forsaken by the daughter he loved, robbed and betrayed, denying his Creed to purchase a miserable remnant of life.

This Play was entered in the Stationers' Register in 1598 and named in *Palladis Tamia* in the same year; but we have no means of knowing when it was written. Even the time of its publication is doubtful, for Mr. Greg and others have argued that the Quarto edition dated 1600 was printed in 1619. A Play called *The Venetian Comedy* was acted by the Admiral's Men in 1594 according to Henslowe's Diary, and this may have been a version of *The Merchant of Venice.* Shylock was one of Burbage's parts: his *Funeral Elegy* said,

> Heart-broke Philaster, and Amintas too,
> Are lost for ever with the red-haired Jew
> Which sought the bankrupt merchant's pound of flesh,
> By woman-lawyer caught in his own mesh.

But we know that his Company acted with the Admiral's Men in 1594.

Some students have argued that *The Merchant of Venice* was first written in 1594 because Roderigo Lopez was executed then and have thought that Shylock was a picture of him. But Shylock could never have been a popular

physician at Court. Bacon wrote in his *Report of Lopez' Treason*: "This Lopez, by nation a Portuguese and suspected to be in sect secretly a Jew, though here he conformed himself to the rites of the Christian Religion, had for a long time professed physic in this land, by occasion whereof, being withal a man very observant and officious and of a pleasing and applicable behaviour, in that regard, rather than for any great learning in his faculty, he grew known and favoured at Court." And he describes him as "though a man in semblance of a heavy wit, yet indeed, subtle of himself."

We have no portrait of Lopez, unless the "Chandos Portrait of Shakespeare," which looks like a picture of a Portuguese Jew and agrees with Bacon's description, should be reckoned as one. But all we know of him through his trial, when Essex and Antonio Perez hunted him down on a false charge, agrees with Bacon's account. It is probable that his real offence was a plot against Antonio Perez, for this would explain why Burghley tried to protect him. And there is no record that he was called a Jew before that.

It may be that the dislike felt for Jews was embittered by the statement that Lopez had been one of them secretly and this may have led to a revival of this Play in that year; but the first form could not have belonged to this time.

In this Play, as we have it, a savage tale like *Titus Andronicus* is combined with the gaiety of the amorous youths in *Love's Labour's Lost* and *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, and these opposite elements of the story are softened with a happy maturity. Shylock and his hatred are true and therefore the Play fails as a Comedy: it could only be one if he was interpreted as a farcical monster; if we are allowed to behold him as a suffering man the laughter is spoilt.

It may be that Shakespeare wrote *Shylock's Revenge* as a Tragedy like *Titus Andronicus* when he was beginning to write, and the *Choice of the Caskets* as an Italianate Comedy in the days when he wrote *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, and in a revision in 1594 blended them in a Comedy in which he made Shylock a real Jew instead of a bugbear. Perhaps Burbage was tired of the showers of bitten apples which showed the general detestation of Shylock and so asked for redeeming qualities; or it may be that Shakespeare's greater knowledge

of life and the sympathy which came with the years compelled him to make Shylock a man, though he knew that this broke the harmony of this Midsummer Dream in the same way as Malvolio's nobility made Sir Toby detestable. If Bottom had not been left farcical the beauty of his adventure would fade in the misery of losing his vision : he remained too dull to believe that he had been loved by Titania,

> In sleep a King, but waking no such matter :

he says, " I have had a dream, past the wit of man to say what dream it was ; man is but an ass if he go about to expound this dream." And *The Merchant of Venice* can only be expounded by recognising that it was re-written in a different mood.

The legend of a murderous Jew demanding a pound of flesh and the story of the Choice of the Caskets may have been Spanish before they were Italian, for Jews were much more hated in Spain than in Italy and the Prince of Morocco has the pride and the gallantry of the Moors of Granada. Mr. Addington Symonds suggested that the cruelty seen in *The Jew of Malta* betokens the origin of that story in Spain, and the same cruelty marks *The Merchant of Venice* though it is softened when Shylock is allowed to survive. If this story had ended in its natural way Shylock would have been punished like his brothers in wickedness, Aaron the Moor in *Titus Andronicus* and Iago in *Othello* and Barabas in the *Jew of Malta* who dies boiled on the Stage. Barabas dies without wavering, saying,

> I would have brought confusion on you all,
> Damned Christian dogs and Turkish infidels,

and so do Aaron and Iago ; but Shylock, who had been glaring with hatred and sharpening his knife on his shoe a few minutes before, breaks and cringes when he is foiled. This collapse and the scornful pardon it earns are appropriate to a Comical villain, a mere butt like Parolles.

Alleyn used to wear a false nose when he acted Barabas for the Admiral's Men, according to Samuel Rowley, who mentions " the artificial Jew of Malta's nose " in his *Search for Money* which was first printed in 1609, and we can conclude

that Burbage wore one too and a red wig and red beard when he was acting as Shylock. The usurer must have been despised and repulsive to justify Antonio's scorn. Shylock was a caricature studied from life. There must have been Jews in London in Queen Elizabeth's time though the old Statutes which banished them were still unrepealed. That is proved by this picture, and besides in those days London was beginning to be a centre of commerce and a market of gold.

Ser Giovanni Fiorentino's tale of the Jew's savage demand and of his defeat by a lady had been printed in Italy in 1558. The tale of the Caskets had been printed in England in 1577 in Richard Robinson's version of *Gesta Romanorum*, and there had been many stories about penniless Christians converting and marrying the daughters of Jews. In this Play, as we have it, the Casket Scenes are apart and they are written in a different mood and with an open imitation of Marlowe. Shakespeare may have borrowed the notion of linking them with the crude Wager-story from a Play called *The Jew*, mentioned by Stephen Gosson in his *School of Abuses*, printed in 1579, as "representing the greediness of worldly choosers and bloody minds of usurers." His Jew shows the difference between him and his master: he watched some old money-lender setting his snares and held him to mockery; Marlowe found his noble Barabas in his conquering heart.

While *The Merchant of Venice* keeps the hardness and shallowness of *Love's Labour's Lost* beneath its bloom of maturity these are not found in *As You Like It*, the Play which comes next in the Folio of 1623. This Play, like *Twelfth Night* and the fourth Act of *The Winter's Tale*, blends wisdom with laughter: these are the work of a man old enough to see Life as it is and young enough to take delight in it still; there is humour in them instead of witty derision, and Shakespeare looks on his young lovers with Jaques in them, singing with Amiens,

> Most friendship is feigning; most loving mere folly:
> Then heigh-ho! the holly!
> This life is most jolly.

This older mood indicates that years had gone by or that

something had aged him. We do not know when *As You Like It* was written. It does not seem to have been printed before the Folio of 1623; but it is mentioned with *King Henry the Fifth*, *Every Man in His Humour* and *Much Ado About Nothing* in the Stationers' Register between entries in May and August, 1600. Coleridge put it in before *The Merchant of Venice* in his *Classification* of 1819; but the Folio Order is supported, for instance, where Antonio says in *The Merchant of Venice*,

> I hold the World, but as the World, Gratiano,
> A Stage where every man must play his part,
> And mine a sad one,

and Jaques expands this familiar reflection into,

> All the World's a Stage,
> And all the men and women merely Players.

The date commonly accepted, 1599, may be right, for this would agree with the entry in the Stationers' Register and with our safest guide, the mood in the Comedy. It may be that after Shakespeare re-wrote *The Merchant of Venice*, as we have it, he wrote as a companion to it a Tragi-comical form of *Othello*, The Moor of Venice, and then (perhaps partly because he was disheartened by a failure in it) turned from his Comedies to his Chronicle Pageant for several years and then wrote *As You Like It* in the quiet of Stratford. During these years he lost his only son Hamnet in 1596 and many hopes when he died, and bought a home in Stratford-on-Avon in 1597 and repaired it in 1598. It may be that after his son's death he was wiser and softened by sorrow and had found peace in resignation.

This Comedy is the third Forest-play but, unlike the two others, *Titus Andronicus* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, it gives the name of the Forest. He changed the Ardennes of Lodge's *Rosalynde* to the Forest of Arden when he founded this Play on that delightful Romance.

Part of the story of *Rosalynde* was based on *The Tale of Gamelyn*, which has often been printed as Chaucer's since 1721 though it appears to be an older Romance which he had intended to use. In that Tale Sir John de Boundys divided

his property among his three sons, and the youngest was maltreated and robbed by the eldest and took refuge with outlaws who made him their King. When he came on them they were feasting under the trees;

> Then Gamelyn under the Wood looked right,
> Seven score of young men he saw well adight,
> All set at meat in company about.

In Lodge's version Rosader found a banished King in the Forest: "It chanced that Gerismond, the lawful King of France, banished by Torismond, who with a lusty crew of outlaws lived in that Forest, that day in honour of his birth made a feast to all his bold yeomen, and frolicked it with store of wine and venison, sitting all at a long table under the shadow of lemon trees." These lemon trees indicate that he was thinking of a Southern Romance when he changed the old tale of adventure to a Pastoral Story. There were no women and no shepherds in it and the wicked eldest brother was hanged at the end of it; but a Pastoral Story needed amorous ladies and impossible shepherds and a fortunate close.

It may be that when he set his story in France and named the old knight Sir John de Bordeaux, recalling *Sir Huon de Bordeaux*, he reminded his readers that these stories were French. And Shakespeare may have meant to do this when he called the old Knight Sir Rowland de Bois and his son Orlando, for he probably knew that these were the French and Italian forms of one name.

The English Pastoral convention established by Sidney's *Arcadia* was borrowed from France. The Latin *Bucolics* had a different falsity. The Greek goatherd's flock was as dear to him as his lost Amaryllis; but Corydon neglected his task to wander under the beeches and Mopsus carved his song on their boles and Gallus sighed to emulate him,—

> Certum est in silvis, inter spelæa ferarum,
> Malle pati tenerisque meos incidere amores
> Arboribus.

When Longus wrote *The Lesbian Pastorals of Daphnis and Chloe* in the Second Century or at the beginning of the

Third he copied Virgil's dangerous Forest, though he kept the earlier Greek veracity, as when he said that the Rustics sang with the harsh and grating voices of peasants as if they had been labouring with mattock and hoe. His Romance was a Pastoral because Daphnis and Chloe were foundlings who had been adopted by shepherds, and its pleasant adventures were *παιδίων παίγνια*, the sports of children. The Pastorals founded on Boccaccio's *Ameto* were older and they were French in their mood; the shepherdesses in them were like Watteau's pretty ladies who minced among impossible sheep.

This falsity is not to be found in *Aucassin et Nicolete*, which seems to be of Arabic origin and to have been written in the Thirteenth Century. When Nicolete came to the Forest she slept on its brink because she was afraid of its dangers: " Si s'endormi dusqu'au demain a haute prime, que li pastorel isçirent de la vile et geterent lor bestes entre le bos et la riviere, si se traient d'une part a une mout belle fontaine qui estoit au cief de la Forest, si estendirent une cape se missent lor pain sus." These Rustics lived in a town and took their cows and sheep to pasture between the trees and the river and feasted on bread and water beside the spring in the Forest and they were silent and shy. The other whom Aucassin met was drawn from life, " grans estoit et mervellex et lais et hidex." So was the peasant in the twenty-fourth Canto of Dante's *Inferno*:

> Lo villanello, a cui la roba manca,
> Si leve e guarda, e vede la campagna
> Biancheggiar tutta . . .
> e prende suo vincastro,
> E fuor le pecorelle a pascer caccia.

And the later pictures of the amorous peasants in the Pastorals, and in the *Stornelli* were known to be false, as Lorenzo de' Medici proved when he wrote truly in *Nencia da Barberino*.

When Boccaccio, who had a French mother and was probably born in Paris, wrote his *Ameto* about 1342, he took his laughing method from France in the same way as he based his *Filicopo* on *Floris et Blanchefleur*. And the French Kings of Naples helped to make the Songs of Provence familiar in Italy and to teach the Italians a fanciful gaiety which was

alien to them. The next important Pastoral, the rambling Romance called *Arcadia*, was written about 1489 by Jacopo Sannazaro, a Neapolitan of Spanish descent who served a French King of Naples. The *Ameto* and the *Arcadia* were copied by two Portuguese Writers, Bernardim Ribeiro, who wrote *Menina e Moça* before 1523, and Jorge de Montemayor or Montemôr, who wrote his unfinished *Diana Enamorada* in Castilian about 1542 though it does not seem to have been printed before 1589. The *Arcadia* and the *Diana Enamorada* seem to have been the chief sources of Philip Sidney's *Arcadia*. Apart from this derivation from Boccaccio's *Ameto* these were French in their mood, for all the earlier writers of Spain and Portugal were taught by their neighbours in the hills of Provence.

There were few flocks of sheep in Italy or Spain or Provence, and the peasants in those Countries were apt to tend goats on the hills or swine under the trees. The few shepherds there had to find pasture under the trees because the open country was parched. This was one of the reasons why the shepherds in Pastorals inhabited Forests, and besides, these provided adventures with wild beasts and with robbers. This Woodland nature of the Pastoral Stories helped to make them absurd in England where the shepherds were numerous and every one knew that they seldom danced in the Woods or wrote Sonnets or carved their loves on the trees.

The English Woodland Romances were the Robin Hood Ballads and Plays which were mainly concerned with feasting and fighting under the greenwood tree and were imitated in France in such Comedies as *Robin et Marion*. The men in the Pit found the Pastoral convention ridiculous. So did Shakespeare and he turned it to ridicule. *As You Like It* is an ironical Comedy. Instead of interpreting the tale by a setting as he did in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Taming of the Shrew*, he provided a wise man and a Fool to censure its folly.

Lodge's imitation of Lyly's *Euphues* and of Sidney's *Arcadia* retained the form invented in France, the alternate employment of Prose and Verse which is seen in *Aucassin et Nicolete* with the headings " Or dient et content et fabloient " and " Or se cante." This form seems to show that such

Romances were told alternately by a man who recited and another who sang; but by his time Verse was only employed to decorate the story with "Sonnets" (which were amorous verses not bound by a particular form) or with Eclogues such as the one between Montanus and Corydon inserted in *Rosalynde*.

Lyly may have copied his *Euphues* from the traditional account of Euripides who was said to have been dissolute and to have ended his days in solitude in a cavern at Salamis. And Lodge may have seen his own character in the picture of Euphues (who had sinned in his Youth and had wandered and had retired to be calm) though he was still restless when he was writing this tale during a long voyage at Sea.

Lodge wrote in his Address to the Gentlemen Readers: "To be brief, gentlemen, room for a soldier and sailor that gives you the fruit of his labours that he wrote in the Ocean, where every line was wet in the surge and every humorous passion counterchecked with a storm. If you like it, so; and yet I will be yours in duty if you be mine in favour." He took the more pleasure in this dream of the Woods because he was far from land when he wrote. And Lope de Vega resembled him in this, if it is true that he wrote his Pastoral Novel *Arcadia* on board the *San Juan* with the Armada.

It may be that Shakespeare took delight too in *Rosalynde* because he was an exile from the Forest of Arden when it was published ten years after *Euphues and his England* and in the same year as Sidney's *Arcadia* and the first Books of *The Faery Queen*. In those days it was in the height of the fashion and he was young enough to appreciate its fanciful charm and merry enough to parody it; but in 1599 the fashion had faded with Queen Elizabeth's enjoyment of it, and he treated the story smilingly, retaining its charm while he was denying its truth with Touchstone and Jaques.

There are signs of haste or change in this Play, as when Celia is described by Le Beau as taller than Rosalind who claims the boy's part because she is "more than common tall," though Orlando (of whom Phebe admits that he is not very tall) says that she is just as high as his heart. This seems to show that Rosalind was meant to be short (probably to suit the Boy-player who represented her) and that her own state-

ment of her height was from Lodge " I, thou seest, am of a tall stature and would very well become the person and apparel of a page." But Le Beau's statement is contradicted by Oliver :

> The boy is fair,
> Of female favour, and bestows himself
> Like a ripe sister ; the woman low
> And browner than her brother.

Orlando's impossible failure to recognise Rosalind is also from Lodge,—" Rosader, who took him flat for a shepherd's swain, made him this answer." So is the Wicked Brother's repentance and his fortunate marriage. In Lodge's version Rosader knew Saladin but was not recognised till he said, " Know Saladin that thou hast met with Rosader." In Shakespeare's they knew one another but the repentance became more sudden and only caused by the rescue. In one point his tale is wilder than Lodge's, for the second Wicked Brother, Duke Frederick, is quickly reformed but King Torismond is defeated and killed. In the same way as Lodge had softened the *Tale of Gamelyn* by reforming and sparing Saladin, Shakespeare now softened *Rosalynde* by converting Duke Frederick, and the story became less credible in each of its stages.

These Midsummer Comedies might all have been named *All's Well that Ends Well* or *As You Like It* or *What You Will.* In this Play Jaques says, " Come, more, another stanzo—call you 'em stanzo ? " and Amiens replies, " What you will, Monsieur Jaques." Its name was probably suggested by Lodge's Preface to *Rosalynde*, " if you like it, so," and it gave a clue to the meaning and the mood of this Comedy.

There seems to be one notable misprint in this Play. When Jaques parodies " Under the Greenwood Tree," with its call, " come hither, come hither, come hither," in his reply,

> If it do come to pass
> That any man turn Ass,

he is now made to sing,

> Ducdame, ducdame, ducdame.

It has been alleged that these cryptic words are a Welsh or

an Irish call, but it may be that they were the Latin for "come hither," "Huc veni" (as in Catullus,

> Huc veni niveo gerens
> Luteum pede soccum),

pronounced in the old way, and that when he was asked, "What's that Ducdame?" he answered, "'Tis a Greek invocation to call fools into a circle," because the question had shown that it was Greek to the illiterate Amiens. If so, it may also have been Greek to the Printer who decided to put "Ducdame" instead.

The name Jaques was borne by Englishmen then, for instance by Captain Jaques, who fought under Sir William Stanley in Flanders, but it is a French name here, like Amiens and Le Beau, and a sign that all the outlaws are French. This is shown too when we are told in the first Scene that the banished Duke is "in the Forest of Arden and a many merry men with him, and there they live like the old Robin Hood of England," and that Orlando is "the stubbornest young fellow of France."

This Forest of Arden is never said to be English. Still, when in the fifth Act a Rustic named William, who is aged five and twenty and is content with his wit and wisdom and wealth, thanks God that he was born in a Forest, Shakespeare may have been thinking of himself and his home. This may have been a sign that this Play was first written when he was aged about five and twenty. Though it is now mature and serene the changes or contradictions in it may show that there was an earlier form. He was aged about twenty-six in 1590, the year in which *Rosalynde* and *Arcadia* were printed, and he may have parodied a prevalent fashion then as he did in *Love's Labour's Lost*, instead of returning to it nine years or so after it was ruling at Court. This would be probable if we could be sure that he drew Lodge as Jaques and George Whetstone as Touchstone.

Thomas Lodge, who was a son of a Lord Mayor of London, was born about 1558 and after education at Oxford and Lincoln's Inn abandoned the Law for Literature. He seems to have led a dissolute life when he was young, and he was given to travel: he sailed to the Canaries with Clarke in

1588 and to Brazil with Cavendish in 1591 and visited France several times. Early in 1589 he published *Scilla's Metamorphoses,* Enterlaced with the unfortunate Love of Glaucus, afterwards called *Glaucus and Scilla,* which seems to have been imitated by Shakespeare in *Venus and Adonis.* And he seems to have renounced work for the Stage then, for he vowed in it,

> To write no more of that whence shame doth grow,
> Or tie my pen to penny-knaves delight,
> But live with fame and so for fame to write.

In the next year he published *Rosalynde* : *Euphues' Golden Legacy found in his cell at Silexdra.* About 1596 he changed his Religion (becoming a Catholic) and his manner of life and married and left London for Essex. After this he became a physician, but devoted his leisure to translating Josephus and Seneca. He was named in the Recusant List of 1604 and seems to have been in trouble for the Gunpowder Plot, which was planned at White Webbs in Essex, for he fled to France in 1605 and did not obtain leave to return till 1610. And he died about nine years after Shakespeare.

Lodge's Romances and his Poems were melancholy: *Rosalynde,* for instance, is full of mournful reflections. If Shakespeare drew him as Jaques, who had been a libertine and a wanderer, he may have added some touches after Lodge had become a Convertite in 1596. It may have amused him to make Lodge (who had written *Diogenes his Singularities*) a cynical critic of Euphuism's dainty devices. And the fact that Lodge was in his Youth a close friend of Robert Greene's and had written a *Looking-glass for London and England* with him about 1587 might have suggested another reason for this.

We do not know when George Whetstone was born, though we can guess that this was about 1544, nor when he died, for there is no trace of him after 1587 when he published a version of the Babington Plot. Like Lodge, he provided Shakespeare with the base of a Play, for *Measure for Measure* was partly founded on his *Promos and Cassandra,* printed in 1578. If, like Greene, he resented this liberty, Shakespeare may have drawn him with Lodge as Touchstone of whom

Celia says in the first Act that Fortune "hath sent this natural for our whetstone, for always the dullness of the fool is the whetstone of the wits." It so happened that Whetstone had published *The Touchstone for the Times* in 1584. The clownish Fool's part in this Comedy was to act as a whetstone for wit and a touchstone for the pleasant illusions.

If we could be certain that these two men (who were probably hostile to Shakespeare) had been drawn in this Play, this would suggest that there had been an earlier version, partly because Lodge had renounced work for the Stage in 1589 and London in 1596, and we have no record of Whetstone after 1587, and partly because Jaques and Touchstone, as we have them, are Characters too admirable to be caricatures. Shakespeare may have sketched Jaques and Touchstone and many other Characters from men of his time, for we have evidence that he was supposed to copy his Characters from living men often; but if he did, he transformed them by putting his own nature in them. Even if there remained a resemblance to Essex or Southampton in Hamlet or to Burghley in Polonius or to Ben Jonson in Falstaff or to Marston in Pistol or to Lodge in Jaques, all these had become children of Shakespeare. And Jaques seems to speak with Shakespeare's own voice.

Shakespeare does not seem to have taken the part of Jaques, if we can trust the legend that he was seen as Old Adam (whose name he borrowed from Lodge, who took it from *Gamelyn*), for these come on the Stage together. But that legend may deal with a later time. If we could be certain that he chose such a part as Old Adam in 1599 we could infer that he was tired of the Stage.

Whether Touchstone was drawn from Whetstone or merely christened with intent to annoy him, he now belongs to the group of wise Fools with Feste in *Twelfth Night* and Lavache in *All's Well that Ends Well* and the nameless Fool in *King Lear*. All these are Court-jesters. They were not copied from the Vice in the Morals or any other jesters in the Morality or Miracle Plays. They may have been suggested by Greene's Ralph Simnel (the King's Fool in *Friar Bacon*), or Nashe's *Will Summer*, but if so, they were derived from Court-fools. Nashe's Will Summer probably

took more than his name from King Henry the Eighth's favourite Jester.

George Cavendish told in his *Life of Cardinal Wolsey* how when the fallen Cardinal parted from Norris on Putney Heath he sent his Fool to the King, perhaps because he wished to retain one faithful friend at the Court: "'I am sorry,' quoth he, 'that I have no condign token to send to the King. But if ye would, at this my request, present the King with this poor Fool, I trust his Highness would accept him well, for surely for a nobleman's pleasure he is worth a thousand Pounds.' So Master Norris took the Fool with him, with whom my Lord was fain to send six of tall yeomen to conduct and convey the Fool to the Court, for the poor Fool took on and fired so in such rage when he saw that he must needs depart from my Lord. Yet notwithstanding, they conveyed him with Master Norris to the Court where the King received him most gladly." This poor Fool, Master Williams otherwise Patch, who raged and wept when he was dragged from the master whom the wise had forsaken, may have been the chief model of the Fool in *King Lear*.

I think that Lavache in *All's Well that Ends Well* was the first of Shakespeare's Court-jesters because he is the worst, and he may have been copied from Greene's Ralph Simnel. Feste, the malicious Fool in *Twelfth Night*, seems an improved version of him and may have been partly drawn from Queen Elizabeth's Fool, Pace, of whom Bacon recorded in his *Apophthegms* how "Pace, the bitter Fool, was not suffered to come at Queen Elizabeth because of his bitter humour," and how when she relented and said to him, "Come on, Pace, now we shall hear our faults," Pace replied, "I do not use to talk of that all the town talks of." But the loving Fool in *King Lear*, who pines away when he loses Cordelia, and the kindly Fool Touchstone, who rivals him in fidelity, have little in common with them except their wit and their singing. These two, I think, were drawn at a time when Shakespeare had learnt to value love more than laughter.

Donald Lupton wrote of the Players in his *London and the Country Carbonadoed*, "they practice a wise order, for most commonly the wisest man is the Fool." This was Touch-

stone's view when he said, "I do now remember a saying, 'the Fool doth think he is wise, but the wise man doth know himself to be a fool,'" and it may have been Shakespeare's when he was wise enough to know his own folly.

Sir Walter Raleigh writes of this Comedy: "A minute examination of this Play has given a curious result. No single bird, or insect, or flower, is mentioned by name. The words 'flower' and 'leaf' do not occur. The trees of the Forest are the oak, the hawthorn, the palm-tree and the olive. For animals, there are the deer, one lioness, and one green and gilded snake. The season is not easy to determine; perhaps it is Summer; we hear only of the biting cold and the wintry wind." These things are natural in a tapestry-picture, like the Narrative Poems, and it may be that this fanciful atmosphere is one of the signs that Shakespeare had written a form of this Play when he wrote *Venus and Adonis* and *The Two Gentlemen of Verona;* but, if he did, he transformed it when he was able to draw robust English girls and boys and his two wisest Jesters, Touchstone and Jaques. The first scene may have been meant to be French, like the scene of *Love's Labour's Lost*, but all the Characters of the Play are now English though the Forest of Arden is in the Country of Dreams.

The Taming of the Shrew, which was printed next in the Folio of 1623, is a boisterous farce. It does not seem to have been printed before 1623. Its place in the Folio suggests that it was revised after *As You Like It* was written. If that Play was written at Stratford during the Summer of 1599, this one may have been hastily revised at that time for a performance by his Company there. This was a farce fit to amuse the Rustics of Stratford, and the local allusions which were added to it would have been welcome to them though lost on the Londoners. Mr. Saintsbury suggests in *The Cambridge History of Literature* that it was written at Stratford for a local performance.

Coleridge in his *Classification* of 1802 put the old *Taming of The Shrew* and the old *King John* as transition works (Uebergangswerke) at the beginning and couples the present form of this Play with *The Merry Wives of Windsor* as

"worked-up afresh (umgearbeitet)" between the later *King John* and *Measure for Measure.* I think that this guess was nearly right though I suspect that there was a still older form which Shakespeare adapted.

The oldest form survives in the jingling verses, for instance,

> And as he stooped again to take it up,
> This mad-brained bridegroom took him such a cuff,
> That down fell priest and book and book and priest,
> "Now take them up," quoth he, "if any list."

The second form is in the early Blank Verse:

> You wrong me, Signor Gremio; give me leave,
> I am a gentleman of Verona, Sir.

The last form is seen in some of the Prose, for instance, Biondello's speech in the third Act beginning "Why, Petruchio is coming in a new hat and old jerkin" and in the Induction.

In the same way as the setting of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* explained that Fairy-tale to the Court the Induction brought the people of Stratford into touch with this farce. Christopher Sly had Bottom's brief illusion of greatness. The Rustics who saw this farce, which had been written for a different audience, were in Christopher's place. The Players were brought in, as they were in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and in *Hamlet*, to act a Play within a Play, as they did in all their performances since all the spectators were acting the Tragical Comedies of their private affairs.

We can trace Christopher Sly's deception to *The Sleeper Awakened* in *The Arabian Nights' Entertainments* which relates how the Caliph Haroun Al-Raschid deceived Abou Hassan. The many authors who imitated this trick (for instance, Calderon in *La Vida es Sueno*) were repeating a tale told in forgotten days in the East. When Duke Philip of Burgundy played this trick about 1440 (according to Luis Vivez), he was acting a farce already long familiar in Spain through the old stories imported by the Moors of Granada.

Shakespeare may have found his Induction in *The Taming of A Shrew*, which was printed in 1594, 1596 and 1607.

That old farce may have been the foundation of this one as the *Troublesome Reign of King John* was of *King John* or it may have been a separate version of an earlier Play. For instance, the lines in the last Act of *The Taming of The Shrew*,

> Then vail your stomachs, for it is no boot,
> And place your hands below your husband's foot :
> In token of which duty, if he please,
> My hand is ready, may it do him ease,

do not seem later than the similar ones in *The Taming of A Shrew*,

> Obey them, love them, keep and nourish them,
> If they by any means do want our helps,
> Laying our hands under their feet to tread.

There are two tales in this farce. The one about Bianca's three lovers was borrowed from George Gascoigne's *Supposes*, and the other, the story of the taming, is traced to the Moors of Granada and through them to the East. When Don Juan Manuel, who died in 1347, wrote *El Conde Lucanor* he took most of " the fifty pleasant tales of Patronio " from the neighbouring Moors. His tale of " What happened to a Young Man on his Wedding-day " related that there were two Moors who were friends and that one of them had a promising son and the other had a termagant daughter. In it the son insisted on marrying the termagant because she was rich though his father and hers tried to dissuade him, and he subdued her on the wedding-day by feigning ferocity, killing a dog and a cat and a horse for disobeying his orders. This was repeated in the *Notti Piacevoli di Straparola* and in the *Novelliero Italiano* and in *La Collection de Legrande D'Aussy* and elsewhere. It was probably invented in Persia, like most of the *Arabian Nights' Entertainments*, for the humour of such Sanskrit collections as the *Ocean of Tales* (Kathasaritsagara) is milder and is more lenient to women.

Shakespeare may have thought it Italian though when he set it in Padua he followed the fashion of that time, as he did when he linked *The Tempest* with Milan and two

Plays with Verona and two with Venice. By using the familiar device of the Induction he transported the story to England and labelled it as one fit to amuse Christopher Sly.

This Play has often been coupled with *The Merry Wives of Windsor* (for instance by Coleridge and Mr. Dowden) and it may be that both were revised about the same time to please the townsmen of Stratford. This would agree with the view that *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, as we have it, was written about 1599, and it would help to explain the possible statement in Kemp's *Nine Days' Wonder* that the merry host of the Inn was drawn from John Shakespeare. It may be that in these Plays Shakespeare drew his neighbours at home comically in the same way as he used names which are to be found in the Recusant Lists of Warwickshire, such as Page, Bardolph, Bates, Bolt and Fluellen, for his Comical Characters.

The date of *All's Well that Ends Well*, the Comedy printed after *The Taming of The Shrew* in the Folio of 1623, is obscured by revisions. This Play does not seem to have been printed before the Folio of 1623. Coleridge in his *Classification* of 1819 put it among the earliest Plays, but he probably meant this to be subject to his note in his *Classification* of 1802, where he ranked it as the first of the Second Epoch "afterwards worked-up afresh (umgearbeitet) especially Parolles."

Sir Israel Gollancz, who inclines to take it to be *Love's Labour's Won* (as Coleridge did), writes, "The Play was probably originally a companion Play to *Love's Labour's Lost* and was written about the years 1590–1592." I think that the second form of this Play was written before the revision of *Twelfth Night* and suggested it. Three versions are visible,—an Italianate Comedy and a skilful revision in the mood of *Twelfth Night* and a Tragi-comedy written with a darker intention. The second form is to be seen, for instance, when the Countess debates with her Clown or Jester, Lavache. It is the principal one, for the Tragi-comical version, which was written when Shakespeare had begun to be elderly, was never completed and so the Play was left a Comedy spoilt.

Parolles is impossible because he is drawn in contradictory moods. The Parolles of the first Act could never have been fooled in the fourth. And the Helena who converses with him in the beginning could never have chosen to tell her grief in a Sonnet. Some of the Editors have seen fit to reject that talk of virginity because they consider it a blot on the Play; but I think that it survives from the first form in the manner of the second revision. So does the Countess's advice to her son which is expanded by Polonius in Hamlet,—

> Love all, trust a few,
> Do wrong to none; be able for thine enemy
> Rather in power than use; and keep thy friend
> Under thy own life's key.

This was a conventional opening and it had been used in *Rosalynde* when the dying Knight says, "Therefore, my sons, choose a friend as the Hyperborei do the metals, sever them from the ore with fire and let them not bide the stamp before they be current: so try them and then trust." In this Play the advice is wasted on Bertram as is Helena's love. He survives from the days when Shakespeare could admire such a boy. In the first form he was meant to be admirable and Helena's love was the same as the lady's in *A Lover's Complaint.* The last Helena could never have loved him or forced herself upon him or stooped to the stale trick which Mariana employed in *Measure for Measure:* her wisdom and nobility clash with a tale fit to amuse the merry ladies of Florence.

I think that *Twelfth Night* or *What You Will*, the Comedy printed next in the Folio of 1623, sprang from this Play. We do not know when it was written, and we have no earlier edition of it.

The Twelfth Night after Christmas, which was the Feast of the Epiphany, January the sixth, had been associated with Plays since *El Misterio de Los Reyes Majos* had been written for it about the Twelfth Century. It marked the close of the rejoicings at Christmas. Shakespeare's Company acted at Greenwich at Christmas in 1594, 1595, 1596, 1598

and 1599 and at Whitehall in 1597 and at Richmond (which the Queen called "a Winter box for her Age") in 1600. In some of these years, for instance, in 1597 and 1600 (and perhaps in all, except in 1594) they acted on Twelfth Night. Sir Sidney Lee says that this Play was designed for the Twelfth Night of 1599–1600 and adds "the alternative title, *What You Will*, repeats the easy levity of *As You Like It*." While this casual name may show that this Play was first seen on Twelfth Night at Court, it may have also meant that there was a tone of Christmas jollity in it instead of a mocking Carnival mood.

John Manningham's Diary proves that a form of this Play was seen at the Middle Temple in February, 1601–1602: he wrote, "At our feast we had a Play called *Twelfth Night* or *What You Will*. Much like the *Comedy of Errors* or *Menechmi* in Plautus, and most like and near to that in Italian called *Inganni*. A good practise in it to make the steward believe his lady-widow was in love with him by counterfeiting a letter as from his lady, in general terms, telling him what she liked best in him and prescribing his gesture in smiling, his apparel, etc., and then when he came to practise, making him believe they took him to be mad."

One change is indicated in this, for Olivia is not described as a widow in the Play as we have it. This change was probably made to leave her masterful courting of Viola and Sebastian more seemly by reducing her age. While she was a widow this Play was still nearer to *All's Well that Ends Well*, a development of the Scene in that Comedy (the third in the first Act), where the Countess of Rousillon consults with her steward. Malvolio may have been made by combining the solemn steward with the fantastic Parolles who, when he was fooled, confessed himself to Morgan whom he supposed to be a Friar.

I think that a first form of this Play closely linked with *The Comedy of Errors* was written after the first version of *All's Well that Ends Well*. I infer this from the fact that the story of the deception is heartless. Shakespeare could not have chosen a noble gentleman's heartbreak as the theme of a jest after he had drawn Jaques. The noble strain in Malvolio may have been added in the riper days when he

changed the Comical Shylock to a suffering man shamefully used. Malvolio, who began as a laughing-stock, a fool and a hypocrite, was changed, I think, to a gentleman blinded by Love and nearly driven to madness by a conspiracy of drunkards and fools. In the first form drunkenness and madness were Comical. In the last form Malvolio is pitied, and though Sir Toby Belch keeps his name (and justifies it when he says, " a plague o' these pickle herrings ") he is amiably fuddled and destined to be reformed by Maria. Some students complain that a man of his rank should not have married a servant, but in doing this they forget that she was a gentlewoman.

Malvolio's dream was a version of *The Sleeper Awakened.* His misfortune was nearer to Abou Hassan's than Sly's or Bottom's had been, for he shared his imprisonment in chains as a madman. But in the last form of the Play he was more akin to Don Quixote than to any of them.

It may be that after Shakespeare had written the second revision of *All's Well that Ends Well* he altered *Much Ado About Nothing*, which was printed in a Quarto edition in 1600, and then turned to *Twelfth Night.* The two themes in this Play, the Error's Tale and the deception, may have been written first as separate Interludes, but they are now linked with such skill that the customary Errors become only a setting for Malvolio's mistake. The theme of the Interlude of the Errors was old. He may have found it in the Italian Comedies called *Gli Inganni* and *Gli Ingannati*, which were partly derived from Ariosto's *Suppositi ;* but there was no need of a particular model for this hackneyed device. The Interlude of Malvolio's deception must have seemed probable to people who when they heard him reflect, " there is example for it : the lady of the Strachy married the yeoman of the wardrobe," remembered how the Tudors had risen because King Henry the Sixth's widow had married Owen Tudor, a yeoman of her wardrobe, and how the second Duchess of Suffolk of King Henry the Eighth's time and the next Duchess of Suffolk had married men of similar rank (Richard Bertie and Adrian Stokes), and how the widow of the eighth Earl of Northumberland married her steward, Francis Fitton, in 1588. And Olivia's wooing of Viola,

whose rank was nothing to her and seemed to her lower than Malvolio's, explained why he considered her encouragement possible.

This Play is linked, for instance, with *Pericles* and *The Winter's Tale* and *The Tempest* by the shipwreck and its part in the story, and with *Romeo and Juliet* and *As You Like It* and *The Merchant of Venice* by the tone of the love-making and with *The Comedy of Errors* and *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* and *Much Ado About Nothing* by smartness and a juvenile gaiety. If Shakespeare wrote it first at this time he was ringing the changes on the old happy themes before he abandoned them.

This Play is a triumph of Stage-craft. When it is seen on the Stage all its elements chime together like the notes of a song. This sets it apart from the other Midsummer Comedies except the last version of *Much Ado About Nothing*, which was probably written about the same time. It may be that he wrote two other Comedies, Falstaff's in *King Henry the Fourth* and the fourth Act of *The Winter's Tale*, and changed the first form of *The Tempest* from a fantastic Romance of Magic founded on *Pericles* to a Fairy-tale Comedy linked with *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and combined two juvenile Plays in a satirical version of *Troilus and Cressida* about this time before he turned to his Tragedies.

The Winter's Tale is put next to *Twelfth Night* in the First Folio, but this would have been done if Heminge and Condell had looked on it as the last of the Comedies, whether it had been revised in these days or at the end of his work. Only the fourth Act is a Comedy. Though it resembles *As You Like It* in many ways it differs from it in lacking the ironical mood, which may have been due to the fact that *As You Like It* began as a parody, like *Love's Labour's Lost*, though it also prevails in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. This Comedy is a delighted glimpse of Rustical England, in spite of the fact that it is set in Greene's Country, "Bohemia." It may have been written at Stratford when Shakespeare had begun to enjoy his home in the fields though he was still fettered to the trade of the Stage.

A second form of *The Tempest* may have been written there too in a domestic serenity, and retouched in 1603 as a

farewell to his trade. *Troilus* and *Cressida* may have been rewritten in London in the War of the Poets. But the metrical tests are enough to prove that these Plays were all revised later, and Falstaff's Comedy shines in the dark Chronicle Pageant; so *Twelfth Night*, as we have it, is the last of the Comedies. The sympathy due now to Malvolio helps to explain why it was the last. In the same way as Falstaff's laughter announced the end of the false Chronicle Pageant, the pity shown now for Shylock and Malvolio proved that the time for jesting was over.

In *Twelfth Night* the insistence that all this is a Midsummer Dream haunts the merry fooling again. Sebastian says,

> What relish is in this? how runs the stream?
> Or I am mad or else this is a dream:
> Let Fancy still my sense in Lethe steep,
> If it be thus to dream, still let me sleep.

Fabian says, "here is more matter for a May morning." And the singing Clown, Feste, ends these happy dreams with his song:

> When that I was and a little tiny boy,
> With hey ho! the wind and the rain!
> A foolish thing was but a toy,
> For the rain it raineth every day.