

THE COMEDIES OF SHAKESPEARE.

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY E. A. ABBEY, AND COMMENT BY ANDREW LANG.

X.—LOVE'S LABOR'S LOST.

A P L E A S A N T

Conccited Comedie
CALLED

Loues labors lost

As it was presented before her Highnes
this last Christmas.

Newly corrected and augmented

By W. SHAKESPEARE.

Imprinted at London by W. H. for Cutbert Barby.
1598.

SO stands the title-page of the piece in the quarto of 1598. The title is in itself a criticism, and the play, which was acted before the Queen at White Hall at Christmas, 1597, cannot be better described than as "conceited" and "pleasant." The ambiguity of the title-page might lead one to ask whether Shakespeare wrote *Love's Labor's* (he spells it *more Americano*) *Lost*, or whether he only augmented and corrected it. But no modern Holofernes need waste much ink over this enigma. *Aut Guilielmus aut Diabolus!* Who else could have written it? The piece is no doubt among his earliest—the style, the rhymes, the blank verse, which Marlowe taught him, all declare it; nor is the gay revelry of the manner less significant. There is no *Weltschmerz* here, a mood not suitable to a yule-tide entertainment. The poet is merely mocking at the pedantries, the affectations of his time—affectations for which he has a liking, to which he has a leaning, but which his common-sense and humor recognize for ridiculous. A euphuist himself, at his hours, he is ever gibing at euphuism, at Osric and Armado, and all his many rivals in contorted sentences, odd words, far-sought, dear-bought, and worthless verbal devices. Euphuism and his England had set the fashion—the constantly recurring fashion—of affectation, of over-refinement, of epigram dragged in by the ears, of cheap perpetual antithesis. We moderns know the

Elizabethan manner of it from two rather unsuccessful parodies—Scott's, in Sir Percy Shaffton (in the *Monastery*); Charles Kingsley's, in *Westward Ho!* Kingsley, with the best intentions, had no humor; like the proverbial Scotch editor, he "jocked wi' deeficulty." As to Sir Percy Shaffton, Lockhart says, "Scott might have considered with advantage how lightly and briefly Shakespeare introduces his euphuism, though actually the prevalent humor of the hour when he was writing." However, Don Adriano de Armado, that fantastical Spaniard, is neither very light nor very brief. He and Sir Percy might have passed many a pleasant hour in sharpening each other's wits and bartering similes.

This piece is in Shakespeare's work what *Les Précieuses Ridicules* is in the stage of Molière. The affectations of speech, the straining after a style wholly out of the common, were analogous foibles under Elizabeth, under Louis XIV., under Victoria. The great Elizabethan age, newly enriched by the revival of letters, by the spoils of Greece, had a most uncertain taste. As in Chapman's poems, not to speak of *Euphuism*, it wandered far in search of periphrases and new-fangled turns, which were really barbarous, which are in the taste of those Icelandic staves which Grettir and Skarphedin sang. It is a curious thing that the heroic Northern age should have shared a taste with the age of Elizabeth, a taste for esoteric, conventional, scarce intelligible periphrases, for a tormented and alembicated style. Yet so it was; the court beauties and wits tricked their discourse with quaint epithets, with similes borrowed from all the queer tales of fabulous beasts, birds, and fishes in the mediæval bestiaries or in Pliny. It was as if the *élégants* of the time had chosen to drape themselves in Roman helmets, Greek greaves, in fantastic feather-work dresses, and monstrous gold ornaments from Montezuma's treasure. In place of the plain English of Shallow and Dame

THE KING'S
QUANDARY.
Act I., Scene I.





JAQUENETTA.

Quickly—the English which we still speak—they habited their thoughts in barbaric, classic, exotic raiment of every dye. They “have been at a great feast of languages, and stolen the scraps,” as Moth says in this play, with what looks curiously like a reference to the remark of Æschylus that his tragedies were “scraps from the great feast of Homer.” That was “the humor of it”—a humor which is always reappearing. The language of the *Précieuses* of Molière has a contemporary dictionary to itself, a lexicon not so big, to be sure, as that of Liddell and Scott, or of Faccioliati. In our own day we have

had, nay, we have, the *affettuosi*, the *raf-finés*, the euphuists, with us. “We too have played.” Was there not an age when *ballades* and *envoys* filled the magazines? And nobody had the wit to quote Costard’s “I smell some *l’envoy*, some goose, in this.” “Sweet smoke of rhetoric,” it is fragrant still in the nostrils of cheap culture, which goes about clamoring for “style.” By “style” cheap culture means

“Taffeta phrases, silken terms precise,
Three-piled hyperboles, spruce affectation,”

words used out of their senses, epithets dragged into unheard-of society, epigrams

at any price, adjectives hunted up in dictionaries, all "too too vain, too too vain," as Armado hath it. This very phrase "too too" was reborn some ten years ago, and made mirth for the mockers. We need not fall back, in a violent reaction, on "russet yeas, and honest kersey noes," but let us try to tell a plain tale, to write English once again. Let us prefer, with Costard, one that "is a marvelous good neighbor, insooth, and a very

good bowler," to critics whose knowledge of literature is apparently bounded by Mr. Rossetti and Mr. Ruskin in the remote past, and half a dozen affected modern novelists in the present. *Love's Labor's Lost* ought to form part of compulsory education in schools, colleges, and newspaper offices. The age is rich in representatives of Armado and Holofernes, in authors whose English is a deplorable jargon, obviously difficult to write,



COSTARD.

and, except to esoteric disciples, impossible to read. But the disciples are many, are active, are voluble, their voice is loud in current criticism, they are in sore need of a new *Love's Labor's Lost*. Therein Shakespeare laughs at the modish wits of his day; and laughs, perhaps, a little at himself, as in that of Holofernes, "ripe as a pomewater, who now hangeth like a jewel in the ear of *cælo*—the sky, the welkin, the heaven."

Compare Romeo's

"Her beauty hangs upon the cheek of night
Like a rich jewel in an Ethiope's ear."

In the same manner Scott parodies his own "dread horn on Fontarabian echoes borne," in the rhymes of Frank Osbaldistone. When Shakespeare was young, and wrote

"Her two blue windows faintly she upheaveth,"

he was perilously near Crashaw's way; indeed, he often wanders in that willow-wood of false conceit.

As to the original source of *Love's Labor's Lost*, of the story in it, nothing seems to be known. In Hazlitt's *Shakespeare's Library* (1875, vol. I. pp. 1, 2), a tale is quoted from Monstrelet about Charles, King of Navarre, who made some exchanges of territory with the French monarch, and bargained also for "two hundred thousand gold crowns of the coin of our lord the King." This may be the father of Ferdinand, King of Navarre, in the comedy, the sovereign who never heard of the receipt of the French gold. For the rest, the plot cannot be shown to be older than Shakespeare. It is the converse of the late—alas that we should say "late"—Laureate's "Princess," and the "Princess" may have been suggested by *Love's Labor's Lost*. In the modern poem it is the lady who founds a college for maids, and banishes all men from its precincts, while it is the Prince who comes a-wooing. In *Love's Labor's Lost* this is all reversed; it is the King of Navarre who binds his friends "to vows impossible" in his enthusiasm for study, while the Princess and her ladies break in on the bachelors' Academe, and rout their great resolves. Shakespeare was probably well acquainted with Rabelais's learned Abbey of Thelema, where men and women are studious, indeed, but under no vow save *Fay ce que voudras*.

"O, these are barren tasks, too hard to keep;
Not to see ladies, study, fast, not sleep,"

as Biron says. He is called Berowne in the Oxford Shakespeare. This may be very proper and learned, but Berowne reminds us too much of plain Browne, and we shall call him Biron. The King is a taking figure; with his great hunger and thirst for learning, he should have been a Wolf or a Casaubon, not a prince to

"war against his own affections,
And the huge army of the world's desires,"—

lines with the accent of Marlowe. His plan of a three years' seclusion is the old ideal of the English universities. But the rule "not to see ladies" has been sadly broken. Rosaline, Maria, Katharine, Jaquenetta, have all come to the college, and some twenty years ago the young Fellows got married in clusters. Good or bad (a matter that may be argued), the old rule was for cloisters, not courts.

"Small have continual plodders ever won,
Save base authority from others' books."

The bookworms are a minute minority in this world, and all mankind is prepared to laugh when the women come. The poet of the Greek anthology was reading Hesiod when Doris passed that way. Instantly he threw down his roll. "Old Hesiod, what are thy works to me?" he cried, and ran after pretty Doris. The King had quite forgot that the French Princess was coming "about surrender up of Aquitain," and we guess that *not* "vainly comes the admired Princess hither" to play Doris's part. Nor are nobles only aimed at by Love's arrows. Armado, "a refined traveller of Spain," "a man of fire-new words, fashion's own knight," has detected the clown Costard in flagrant breach of his new monastic vows. Costard was "seen with Jaquenetta in the manor-house, sitting with her upon the form, and taken following her into the park;" and this Armado calls "that obscene and most preposterous event."

Love's Labor's Lost is not very frequently acted, but Costard must be delightful on the stage, when, after Armado's letter describes him as "that base minnow of thy mirth," he ejaculates "Me!" Again, "he consorted with—with,—O with—but with this I passion to say wherewith—"

Cost. With a wench.

So Costard is handed over for safe cus-

WELCOME
TO THE
PRINCESS.
Act II, Scene I.



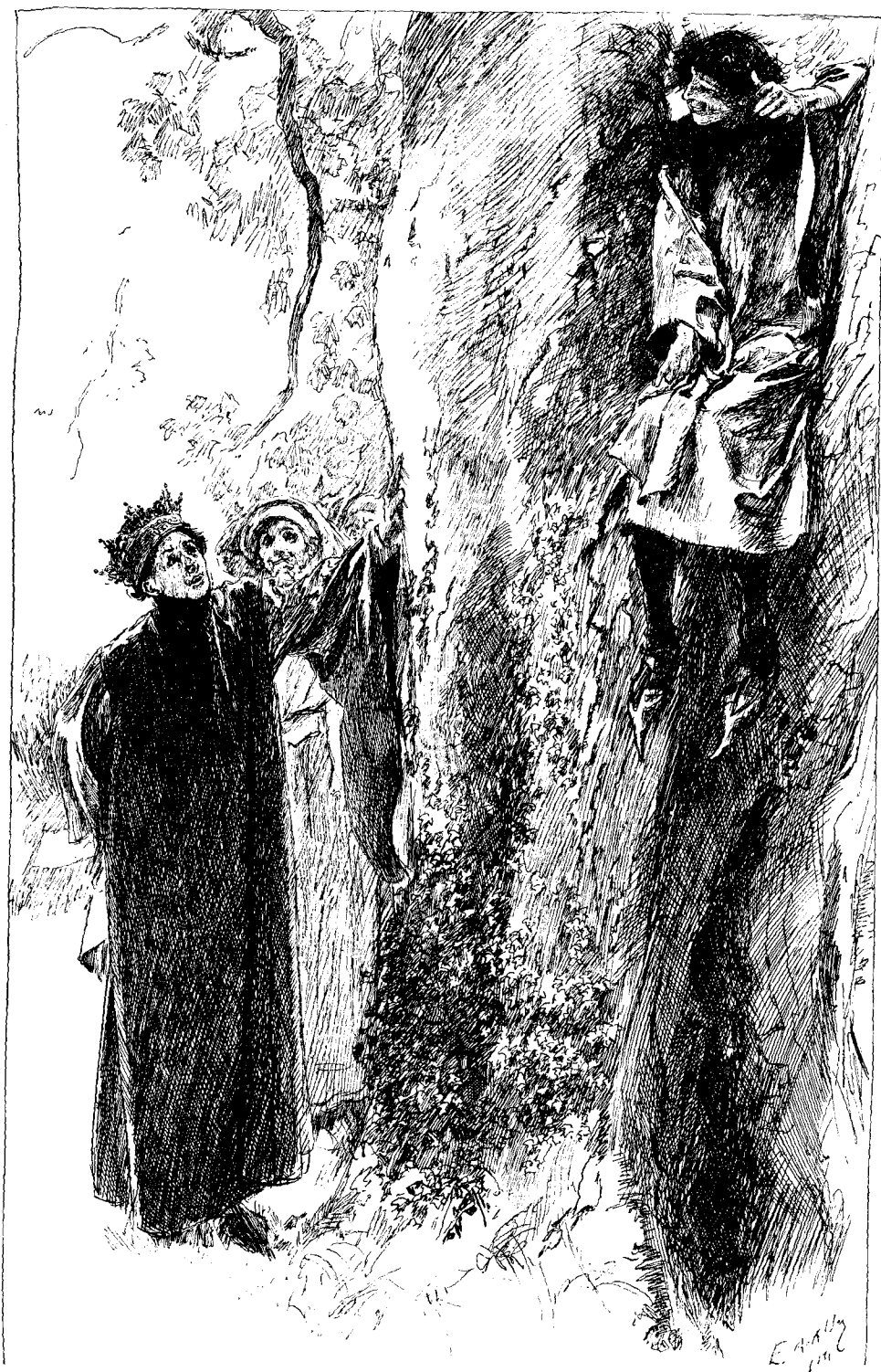
tody to Armado, and we meet that hero, with his knavish attendant Moth. And here we learn that Armado is not invulnerable: "Boy, I do love that country girl that I took in the park with the rational hind Costard."

Indeed, the knight "does betray himself with blushing" when Jaquenetta is consigned to him. This maid is like a rough early sketch for Audrey, as Costard is for Touchstone, and Rosaline and Biron are studies for Benedick and Beatrice. Like most great artists, even Shakespeare has his types, which he occasionally repeats with variations. The painters have been specially remarkable for their favorite faces; with those of Leonardo, Botticelli, Luini, every one is acquainted. Scott has certain moulds of character—parallel characters we may call them—which recur again and again, and Shakespeare, though much less frequently, reproduces his types. The second act introduces the French Princess with her ladies. In the quarto the acts are not divided, and the division as we have it is far from regular. The Princess, from her ladies' descriptions of the Navarre gentlemen, learns that "they are all in love." Rosaline is not captious like Beatrice; of Biron (with whom she "has danced in Brabant once") she says,

"A merrier man,
Within the limit of becoming mirth,
I never spent an hour's talk withal."

Indeed, Biron's mirth is more limited by the becoming than that of Shakespeare's wits in general. The ladies mask before the Navarrese enter—a useful aid to stage confusions. Masking, even in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, was a very common practice. The gallants threw the ends of their cloaks over their faces. The Papers of the Mures of Caldwell show how late in the last century the Edinburgh ladies wore masks. Perhaps they had less desire of concealment than regard for their complexions in the bitter northeast winds of the gray town. In spite of masks, Biron and Rosaline recognize each other as old partners. Their "wit combat" in brief rhyming lines is less attractive than the skirmishes of Benedick and Beatrice. Naturally the parties of France and Navarre fall in love with each other; the bookish King is captured, and captives are his "bookmen." The following scenes with Moth, Costard, and

Armado continue the purpose of the comedy, the rational hind breaks his jests on the knight's euphuisms, and receives "remuneration," "the Latin word for three farthings." Like some words brought in by the *Précieuses* in France, "remuneration" has held its own, and is, perhaps, more classical than "compensation" in the sense of "payment." Then follows one of Shakespeare's scenes of tricky ambush—the Princess lying in wait for Navarre, and opening the letter, carried by Costard, which Armado has written to Jaquenetta. Costard makes a knavish blunder, and insists that it is from Biron to Rosaline. The Princess retires, the scene is left to a new pedant, Holofernes, Sir Nathaniel, and Dull the constable, ancestor, probably, of "the young woman named Dull" in the *Pilgrim's Progress*. The humor of Holofernes is an outrageous taste for synonyms and Latin quotations. He is thought to be a caricature of Florio, the translator of Montaigne. The idea was originated by Warburton, and is opposed by Collier. "The only apparent offence by Florio was a passage in his *Second Fruits* (1591), where he complained of the want of decorum in English representations. The provocation was evidently insufficient, and we may safely dismiss the whole conjecture as unfounded." In a similar way Paris recognized Trissotin (in *Les Femmes Savantes*) as the Abbé Cotin, and, later, discovered M. Caro in a personage of *Le Monde où l'on s'ennuie*. Perhaps Holofernes's best thing is his tribute to Virgil. "I salute thee, Mantovano," as the Laureate says, Holofernes might say: "Old Mantuan! old Mantuan! who understandeth thee not, loves thee not!" Holofernes has this essential mark of the pedant, that he loves his learning less for its own sake than because he meets other people to whom it is caviare. To oblige Jaquenetta, Nathaniel reads a letter, which she supposes to be from Armado to herself, but which is really from Biron to Rosaline. Jaquenetta is sent to bear it to the King, and Holofernes promises to prove Biron's verses to be "very unlearned, neither savoring of poetry, wit, nor invention." But love has taught Biron "to rhyme, and to be melancholy; and here is part of my rhyme, and here my melancholy." The King enters, not observing Biron, and drops his own rhyme and his melan-



BIRON AND THE KING.—Act IV., Scene III.

choly on the grass. Then follows another lord, Longaville, with his rhyme; and next Dumain, whose rhyme is by far the best of all the rhymes.

Dum. On a day, alack the day!
 Love, whose month is ever May,
 Spied a blossom passing fair
 Playing in the wanton air:
 Through the velvet leaves the wind,
 All unseen, 'gan passage find;
 That the lover, sick to death,
 Wish'd himself the heaven's breath.
 Air, quoth he, thy cheeks may blow;
 Air, would I might triumph so!
 But alack! my hand is sworn
 Ne'er to pluck thee from thy thorn:
 Vow, alack! for youth unmeet,
 Youth so apt to pluck a sweet.
 Do not call it sin in me
 That I am forsworn for thee;
 Thou for whom e'en Jove would swear
 Juno but an Ethiop were;
 And deny himself for Jove,
 Turning mortal for thy love.

They are all perjured, and all poets. The King rebukes them all, when Biron, descending from the tree where he has hidden himself, sets to "whip hypocrisy." As his poem is not in view, he denounces the perjurers. Moreover, he warns them that "none but minstrels like of sonnetting." Ladies do not like of it. Minstrels live in a fool's paradise when they think that girls care for their verses. How many poor Pen wrote for the Fotheringay—how many, and how ineffectual! Perhaps no lady has yet betrayed her sex, and frankly confessed that verses bore them, at least after they are once safely "engaged." We live in an age of many poets. Mr. Traill has counted sixty-five in England only, exclusive of himself and Lord Tennyson. These are old confessed offenders, though even of them a few have repented. The multitude of young poets, not yet, perhaps, wholly hardened, not quite lost (for nobody is lost till he publishes), no census reveals. Take Biron's advice, young gentlemen, and that of a penitent brother—send your verses to magazines, if you must, but to ladies, never. They "like to be loved in a more human sort of way"; they do not like of sonnetting. Conceive the case reversed; fancy being adored by a fair poet! Fancy her insisting on reading her canzonets, her lyrics, her villanelles! You would arise and flee to Texas, or the uttermost parts of Arizona. But women are wiser than we. I never heard of one who wrote sonnets to her lover's eyebrow, and

showed him the sonnets. Indeed it is to be supposed that ladies do not berhyme men at all. Conceive a song to "The Miller's Son," to "The Gardener's Boy"! It sounds quite improper and impossible.

Biron is detected. Jaquenetta brings in Berowne's rhyme. He is commanded to read it; tears it to pieces. Dumain joins them together, and here are the four forswearers of womankind caught out in flagrant guilt. In place of being penitent, they glory in their crime.

King. But what of this? Are we not all in love?
Biron. O, nothing so sure; and thereby all forsworn.

Then Biron defends the proposition that women's eyes are

"the ground, the books, the academes,
 From whence doth spring the true Promethean fire."

They go off to woo, and Holofernes, with his associates, prepares a kind of Masque of the Nine Worthies, to be acted in "the posterior of the day." The ladies meet, and Rosaline promises to torture Biron ere she goes. They cannot endure the poetry, these "wise girls." "The letter is too long by half a mile," says Maria. But women are, perhaps, not so free from the reproach of writing long letters as of writing love-poetry. Boyet, a French lord, arrives, and announces that the Navarre wooers mean to appear in the guise of Muscovites. The ladies then mask and disguise themselves. The "frozen Muscovites" are received with banter, which needs the illusion of the stage to make it very entertaining. They return as themselves, and Biron formally abjures euphuism. Then comes the Masque of the Nine Worthies, by no means so amusing as that of the Athenian mechanics in the *Midsummer-Night's Dream*. The masque seems to be a slightly varied version of a Christmas foolery acted in parts of England still, and in Scotland by "the guisards." As a child I have often seen lads come and perform this quite unintelligible play; last year (1890) it was acted at a revel of the Folk-lore Society. In course of ages the text has probably been depraved, through oral tradition. There is a good deal of clashing of swords, and much magniloquent declamation. This fooling was very appropriate in a Christmas merriment, but it is no longer very enjoyable to read. The ladies, who have much the better of all the wit encounters, decline to marry their perjured



ARMADO AND MOTH.—Act III., Scene I.



E. A. 1834
1832

DULL.

SIR NATHANIEL.

HOLOFERNES.

wooters, till a space of a year has proved them more true to love than to literature. The Princess proposes to

“shut

My woful self up in a mourning house,
Raining the tears of lamentation,
For the remembrance of my father's death,”

which does not seem to have very bitterly afflicted her. Biron is sent by Rosaline to amuse himself in hospitals if he can, or to learn a little seriousness.

“That's the way to choke a gibing spi-it.”

The play ends with the delightful songs of Hiems and Ver, the owl and the cuckoo.

SPRING.

I.

When daisies pied, and violets blue,
And lady-smocks all silver-white,
And cuckoo buds of yellow hue,
Do paint the meadows with delight,
The cuckoo then, on every tree,
Mocks married men, for thus sings he:
Cuckoo;
Cuckoo, cuckoo,—O word of fear,
Unpleasing to a married ear!

II.

When shepherds pipe on oaten straws,
And merry larks are ploughmen's clocks,
When turtles tread, and rooks, and daws,
And maidens bleach their summer smocks,
The cuckoo then, on every tree,
Mocks married men, for thus sings he:
Cuckoo;
Cuckoo, cuckoo,—O word of fear,
Unpleasing to a married ear!

WINTER.

III.

When icicles hang by the wall,
And Dick the shepherd blows his nail,
And Tom bears logs into the hall,
And milk comes frozen home in pail,
When blood is nipp'd, and ways be foul,
Then nightly sings the staring owl,
To-who;
Tu-whit, to-who—a merry note—
While greasy Joan doth keel the pot.

IV.

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

When roasted crabs hiss in the bowl,
 Then nightly sings the staring owl,
 To-who;
 Tu-whit, to-who—a merry note—
 While greasy Joan doth keel the pot.

Thus, at the very close, when we are
 apt to think that Shakespeare for once

tions spoken of on the quarto title-page.
 That title-page, as we have said, provides
 the most terse and true of criticisms. The
 comedy keeps its promise, and is "pleas-
 ant and conceited." There is no break in
 the genial mirth,—not even a Jaques is
 here. There is no villain, like Orlando's



BOYET.

has given us a play with little in it of his
 wood-notes wild, he surprises and de-
 lights us by two of his sweetest songs.
 It is natural to imagine, in the absence
 of proof, that this and the Christmas
 masque may have been among the addi-

brother, like the disloyal Italians of the
 preface, to repent and be married in a
 hurry. Her maiden Majesty, Queen
 Elizabeth, had no love of matrimony.
 Like the sour spinster in *The Heart of*
Mid-Lothian, she thanked Heaven that



BEFORE THE
PRINCESS'S
PAVILION.
Act V, Scene II.

she knew nothing of those matters, being, like her, "thankfu' for sma' mercies." The Queen would see with some pleasure and approval that in this drama the nuptials were prudently deferred. Whether she, who so much rejoiced in the Fat Knight, was equally diverted by Costard and Biron, we cannot presume to conjecture. But she must have liked the Beatrice vein of the mirthful Rosaline, later to be so much amplified and intensified in Benedick's lady. But Rosaline has no such occasion for anger as Beatrice. The play has not a *nodus*, except the discovery of the students' harmless perfidy.

There are one or two curious features—for example, the repetition in Biron's long speech of the lines about ladies' eyes and Promethean fire. It seems that Shakespeare augmented and improved them, while the old lines remained in the prompter's copy, and so found their way into the quarto, and thence into the folio.

It is unlikely that Shakespeare read the proofs of the quarto; his indifference to the honors of print was sublime. The race of bibliomaniacs may point to a passage in which their taste has not been useless. In a speech of Biron's, Act IV., Scene III., we now read, "or groan for love." The quarto which belonged to Lord Francis Egerton has "or groan for Ione." What is Ione to Biron, or Biron to Ione? The Duke of Devonshire's quarto reads, correctly, "or groan for love." The folios followed the incorrect quarto, and made nonsense of the speech.

In the quarto of 1631 some conjectural emendator made sense, at least, by printing, "or groan for Joane," greasy Joan, who "keels the pot," perhaps being in the editor's mind. The Oxford edition has "or groan for Joan." Mr. Payne Collier supplies the note on the Duke of Devonshire's quarto. Perhaps it should be verified? There be some who like not Bardolph's security.

THE REFUGEES.*

A TALE OF TWO CONTINENTS.

BY A. CONAN DOYLE.

PART II.—IN THE NEW WORLD.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE HAIRLESS MAN.

ALL day they pushed on through the woodlands, walking in single file, Amos Green first, then the seaman, then the lady, and De Catinat bringing up the rear. The young woodman advanced cautiously, seeing and hearing much that was lost to his companions, stopping continually and examining the signs of leaf and moss and twig. Their route lay for the most part through open glades amid a huge pine forest, with a greensward beneath their feet made beautiful by the white euphorbia, the golden-rod, and the purple aster. Sometimes, however, the great trunks closed in upon them, and they had to grope their way in a dim twilight, or push a path through the tangled brushwood of green sassafras or scarlet sumac. And then again the woods would fall suddenly away in front of

them, and they would skirt marshes overgrown with wild-rice and dotted with little dark clumps of alder-bushes, or make their way past silent woodland lakes, all streaked and barred with the tree shadows which threw their crimsons and clarets and bronzes upon the fringe of the deep blue sheet of water. There were streams, too, some clear and rippling, where the trout flashed and the kingfisher gleamed, others dark and poisonous from the tamarack swamps, where the wanderers had to wade over their knees and carry Adèle in their arms. So all day they journeyed amid great forests, with never a hint or token of their fellow-man.

But if man were absent, there was at least no want of life. It buzzed and chirped and chattered all round them, from marsh and stream and brushwood. Sometimes it was the dun coat of a deer which glanced between the distant trunks, sometimes the squirrel which scuttled

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