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MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

by
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Edited, with
An Introduction and Notes, by

F. E. BUDD, B.A., PH.D.

*Lecturer in English Language and Literature
Queen Mary College, University of London*

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INTRODUCTION

Date

There is a strong probability that *Much Ado About Nothing* was composed in the winter of 1598-1599. The absence of the title from Francis Meres's list of Shakespeare's plays in *Palladis Tamia* (1598)—there is no reason to believe that the *Loue labours wonne* of Meres is *Much Ado About Nothing* under another name—makes a date earlier than 1598 improbable, while the fact that Will Kemp acted in the play helps place its performance not later than the early part of 1599, when he left the Lord Chamberlain's company of players. This date is consistent with the internal evidence of style and technique and with the printing of the play in August 1600. By this time it had been "sundrie times publikely acted," so that its theatrical novelty, which otherwise might have been impaired by premature publication, would be temporarily exhausted.

Attention may be drawn to Professor J. Dover Wilson's interesting theory (see *Much Ado About Nothing*, Cambridge, 1923) that the play was not composed, but *revised*, at this date. In his opinion Shakespeare is here reworking an earlier play of his own wherein he had been principally concerned with the fortunes of Hero and Claudio but had attached thereto two minor plots devoted to Benedick and Beatrice and to Borachio and Margaret. In the revision of 1598-1599 Shakespeare sought to expand considerably the rôles of Benedick and Beatrice, and space was found for this chiefly by curtailing the Borachio-Margaret intrigue. To save himself trouble, as much as possible of the main plot was retained from the early version, which Professor Dover Wilson believes to have been a verse play, and these survivals are

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to be found in the verse scenes devoted to Claudio and Hero in the Quarto of 1600. Otherwise the revision was a prose one, so that the prose elements of the Quarto may be dated 1598-1599. To the carelessness with which the revision was undertaken Professor Dover Wilson ascribes the obscurity of the Borachio-Margaret intrigue in the play as we have it, the various loose ends which careful reading reveals, and such other features of the Quarto (now mostly remedied by editors) as irregular stage directions, inadequate speech-headings, imperfectly deleted passages, and scanty punctuation in the prose sections.

There is, however, no external evidence whatsoever for the existence of such an early version as Professor Dover Wilson postulates, and his critics have argued against his interpretation of the internal evidence. For instance, they contend that the verse differs in no vital respects from that of Shakespeare's other plays of the late 1590's and that the obscurities of the Borachio-Margaret intrigue are attributable to the use of a conventional plot-motive, they have parallels in the versions of Ariosto and Spenser (see below, *Sources*), and in any case they are not perceptible in the theatre, for which, after all, Shakespeare was writing. Professor Dover Wilson's theory cannot, therefore, be said to carry complete conviction, but it is fascinating in itself and the detailed analysis of the Quarto text on which it is based has produced results of permanent value.

*Sources**

Shakespeare appears to have borrowed the general

* The problem of Shakespeare's sources is not complicated by Professor Dover Wilson's theory, as he allows the early version

NOTE

THE text here adopted is, for the most part, that of Macmillan's *Globe Edition*. Certain modifications have been introduced into the stage directions and the dialogue.

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SHAKESPEARE'S TREATMENT OF HIS MATERIAL

Much Ado About Nothing is one of the earliest and most delightful products of Shakespeare's dramatic maturity. By 1599, when the play was in all probability composed, Shakespeare, though still only in the middle thirties, had produced one-half of his total dramatic output. Had he written no more he would still have been a prince of poets. But the next dozen years held even richer products in store, and, by their light, we are tempted to regard the earlier works as the fruit of an inspired novitiate during which was acquired that complete mastery of technique, characterisation, and dialogue which enabled him to proceed, unhampered by difficulties of craftsmanship, to his full command of comedy and tragedy. Both chronologically and artistically *Much Ado About Nothing*, the first of that magnificent trilogy of romantic comedies of which *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night* are the other members, occupies a central point in Shakespeare's dramatic activity.

The consummate craftsman is seen in the handling of the plot. The main theme is briefly as follows. Claudio, a young lord of Florence, returning to Messina after distinguished service with the army of Don Pedro, Prince of Arragon, in a campaign

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against the latter's rebellious bastard brother Don John, falls in love with Hero, daughter of Leonato, the governor of the city, and with the Prince's help woos and wins her. The villainous Don John, anxious to revenge himself on Claudio for the honours which he has won from him, plots with Borachio and Conrade to wreck the impending marriage. They contrive that Claudio and the Prince shall hear Margaret, disguised as her mistress Hero, converse amorously with Borachio from Hero's window on the night before the wedding. The listeners are deceived by the trick, and at the altar Claudio harshly rejects Hero, accusing her of unchastity and infidelity. She swoons and is thereafter reported to the world as dead. The unmasking of the conspiracy leads Claudio to make amends for his slander by submitting to betrothal to Hero's "cousin," who thereupon stands forth as Hero herself. From the general reconciliation which follows only the villains are excluded, and, not to mar the happy ending, their punishment is deferred.

Such a theme would appear to be more suited to tragic than to comic treatment. To us, moreover, it seems poor, old-fashioned stuff, although its popularity in sixteenth-century literature, whence Shakespeare derived it, suggests that his audience would have found it alluring enough. Shakespeare, however, is careful to hide as far as possible the shortcomings of his unpropitious material. By skilful characterisation he persuades us to devote our major interest to the personalities of his figures, and their actions he succeeds in rendering at least plausible in the theatre. The creation of a tragic atmosphere is avoided by his letting the audience into all the

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secrets. They know that Hero is innocent ; they know, too, that even before she is disgraced at the altar the truth of the conspiracy has been discovered and that the wordiness of the officers of the law only delays its inevitable publication. For them, indeed, it is literally much ado about nothing.

Although the main theme is thus prevented from barring the entry of the comic spirit, it does not of itself make any positive contribution to our delight. This comes from Shakespeare's own additions to his borrowed story. No suggestion of Benedick and Beatrice or of Dogberry, Verges, and the Watch is to be found in any previous treatment of the Claudio-Hero motive, yet it is of them, particularly of Benedick and Beatrice, that we at once think when the play is mentioned. When Charles I inscribed in his copy of the Second Folio an alternative title to serve as a more apt reminder of the substance of the piece than *Much Ado About Nothing*, he wrote, not " Claudio and Hero," but " Benedick and Beatrice." These witty lovers invade the play and make it theirs. Their very conception is the work of a mature imagination, and the skill with which their activities are grafted on to the initial theme bears the hallmark of the master craftsman. While all is going well with Claudio and Hero, the witty animosity of Benedick and Beatrice can be exploited by their friends for the purposes of practical joking ; but when the main theme takes its turn towards tragedy, the jokers have so far succeeded in bringing the two together in acknowledged love that Beatrice, passionately convinced of Hero's innocence, can at once put Benedick to the supreme test by bidding him " kill Claudio." From this crisis the development of

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their characters takes a fresh turn, and its dynamic progress, revealed with a subtlety that anticipates the great tragedies, henceforth occupies the major share of our interest. Thereby our attention is diverted from the improbabilities of the close of the Claudio-Hero story, and what is nominally the main theme is boldly subordinated to a position of secondary importance, to the lasting advantage of the play as a whole.

It so happens that Benedick, although prepared to sacrifice his friend Claudio to the sense of justice aroused by Beatrice's vehemence, is not called upon to do so, and thus further tragic possibilities are averted. The reason lies in Shakespeare's second addition to his sources, Dogberry and his fellows, whose laughable presence is opportunely introduced just as the atmosphere of the play is beginning to darken. Coleridge asserts that "any other less ingeniously absurd watchmen and night-constables would have answered the mere necessities of the action." This is hardly true. Less efficient officers would not have made so prompt an arrest; less absurd ones would have proclaimed their capture immediately and so prevented Claudio's rejection of Hero, with all its important consequences for them and for Benedick and Beatrice. There is no need to emphasise Dogberry's value as a source of laughter, but it is essential to recognise the dramatic insight which planned his part in the action and then created the one figure that could fit it to perfection.

Shakespeare, therefore, by sheer dramatic dexterity builds upon the basis of his unpromising borrowed theme a plot whose varied elements are firmly interwoven. The Claudio-Hero thread at

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outline and certain details of his Claudio-Hero theme from the story of Timbreo and Fenecia told by the Italian prose-writer Bandello in the twenty-second of his *Novelle* (1554). The *Novelle* were adapted into French by Belleforest under the title of *Histoires Tragiques* (1569), but the fact that certain modifications introduced by Belleforest and well suited to a dramatist's purpose have left no trace in *Much Ado About Nothing* suggests that Shakespeare used the Italian original only. A lost play *Panecia*, which is mentioned in the records as having been presented by the Earl of Leicester's players in 1574, is thought to have been an early dramatisation of Bandello's story, the supposition being that "Panecia" is a misspelling of "Fenecia." A German play by Jacob Ayrer, *Die Schöne Phänecia* (c. 1595?), reworks the theme, probably from Belleforest's version, but there is not the slightest evidence that Shakespeare knew it.

The actual trick whereby Claudio is deceived does not derive from Bandello or Belleforest, who have no impersonation of the heroine by her waiting-maid at the chamber window. This, however, is to be found in the kindred story of Ariodante and Genevra told by the Italian poet Ariosto in the fifth canto of his *Orlando Furioso* (1516). Even if Shakespeare had not read this in the original he could have known it in one or more of its English versions. Peter Beverley had

which he postulates to be Shakespeare's own work. Furness's suggestion that the *Benedicte and Betteris* mentioned in Lord Treasurer Stanhope's accounts for 1613 as having been acted at Court was an older comedy which acted as a source for Shakespeare has little to recommend it. *Benedicte and Betteris* was almost certainly *Much Ado About Nothing* (which is itself mentioned in the accounts for the same year) by an alternative title—the title which Charles I inscribed in his copy of the Second Folio.

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translated this particular story in 1565 ; a lost play on the theme, *Ariondante and Genevora*, had been performed at Court by the boys of Merchant Taylors' School in 1583 ; Spenser adapted it for his story of Phaon and Claribell in the second book of *The Faerie Queene* ; and Sir John Harington's complete translation of the *Orlando Furioso* appeared in 1591.

To his borrowings Shakespeare adds the affairs of Benedick and Beatrice and of Dogberry, Verges, and the Watch. These original contributions are, as we have seen, of such importance in our final impression of the play that any talk of sources may prove misleading unless it be clearly borne in mind that they provide merely the basis of the Claudio-Hero plot. Those elements which raise the play to the level of high comedy derive from Shakespeare, and from Shakespeare alone. In essentials, therefore, *Much Ado About Nothing*, like all of Shakespeare's great plays, is a work of original creative genius.

F. E. B.

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

DON PEDRO, prince of Arragon.	FRIAR FRANCIS.
DON JOHN, his bastard brother.	DOGBERRY, a constable.
CLAUDIO, a young lord of Florence.	VERGES, a headborough.
BENEDICK, a young lord of Padua.	A Sexton.
LEONATO, governor of Messina.	A Boy.
ANTONIO, his brother.	HERO, daughter to Leonato.
BALTHASAR, attendant on Don Pedro.	BEATRICE, niece to Leonato.
CONRADE followers of	MARGARET gentlewomen
BORACHIO Don John.	URSULA attending on
	Hero.
	Messengers, Watch, Attendants, etc.

SCENE : *Messina.*

ACT I

SCENE I. LEONATO's orchard. *Enter LEONATO, HERO, and BEATRICE, with a Messenger.*

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

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

Leon. How many gentlemen have you lost in this action ?

Mess. But few of any sort, and none of name.

Leon. A victory is twice itself when the achiever brings home full numbers. I find here that Don Pedro hath bestowed much honour on a young Florentine called Claudio. 11

Mess. Much deserved on his part and equally remembered by Don Pedro : he hath borne himself beyond the promise of his age, doing, in the figure of a lamb, the feats of a lion : he hath indeed better bettered expectation than you must expect of me to tell you how.

Leon. He hath an uncle here in Messina will be very much glad of it. 19

Mess. I have already delivered him letters, and there appears much joy in him ; even so much that joy could not show itself modest enough without a badge of bitterness.

Leon. Did he break out into tears ?

Mess. In great measure.

Leon. A kind overflow of kindness : there are no faces truer than those that are so washed. How much better is it to weep at joy than to joy at weeping !

✓ *Beat.* I pray you, is Signior Mountanto returned from the wars or no ? 30

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

Leon. What is he that you ask for, niece ?

Hero. My cousin means Signior Benedick of Padua.

Mess. O, he's returned ; and as pleasant as he ever was.

Beat. He set up his bills here in Messina and challenged Cupid at the flight ; and my uncle's fool, reading the challenge, subscribed for Cupid, and challenged him at the bird-bolt. I pray you, how many hath he killed and eaten in these wars ? But how many hath he killed ? for indeed I promised to eat all of his killing. 43

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

' *Mess.* He hath done good service, lady, in these wars.

Beat. You had ^{Stale} musty victual, and he hath help to eat it ; he is a very valiant trencher-man ; he hath an excellent stomach. 50

Mess. And a good soldier too, lady.

Beat. And a good soldier to a lady : but what is he to a lord ?

Mess. A lord to a lord, a man to a man ; stuffed with all honourable virtues.

Beat. It is so, indeed ; he is no less than a stuffed man : but for the stuffing,—well, we are all mortal.

Leon. You must not, sir, mistake my niece. There

is a kind of merry war betwixt Signior Benedick and her : they never meet but there's a skirmish of wit between them. 61

Beat. Alas ! he gets nothing by that. In our last conflict four of his five wits went halting off, and now is the whole man governed with one : so that if he have wit enough to keep himself warm, let him bear it for a difference between himself and his horse ; for it is all the wealth that he hath left, to be known a reasonable creature. Who is his companion now ? He hath every month a new sworn brother.

Mess. Is't possible ? 70

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

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

Beat. No ; an he were, I would burn my study. But, I pray you, who is his companion ? Is there no young squarer now that will make a voyage with him to the devil ?

Mess. He is most in the company of the right noble Claudio. 81

Beat. O Lord, he will hang upon him like a disease : he is sooner caught than the pestilence, and the taker runs presently mad. God help the noble Claudio ! if he have caught the Benedick, it will cost him a thousand pound ere a' be cured.

Mess. I will hold friends with you, lady.

Beat. Do, good friend.

Leon. You will never run mad, niece.

Beat. No, not till a hot January. 90

Mess. Don Pedro is approached.

*Enter DON PEDRO, DON JOHN, CLAUDIO, BENEDICK,
and BALTHASAR.*

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

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

D. Pedro. You embrace your charge too willingly. I think this is your daughter. 100

Leon. Her mother hath many times told me so.

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

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

D. Pedro. You take it full, Benedick; we may guess by this what you are, being a man. Truly, the lady fathers herself. Be happy, lady; for you are like an honourable father.

Bene. If Signior Leonato be her father, she would not have his head on her shoulders for all Messina, as like him as she is. 110

Beat. I wonder that you will still be talking, Signior Benedick: nobody marks you. 111

Bene. What, my dear Lady Disdain! are you yet living?

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

Bene. Then is courtesy a turncoat. But it is certain I am loved of all ladies, only you excepted: and I would I could find in my heart that I had not a hard heart; for, truly, I love none. 122

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

Bene. God keep your ladyship still in that mind ! so some gentleman or other shall 'scape a predestinate scratched face. 130

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

Bene. Well, you are a rare parrot-teacher.

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

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

Beat. You always end with a jade's trick ; I know you of old. 139

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

Leon. If you swear, my lord, you shall not be forsworn. [*To Don John*] Let me bid you welcome, my lord : being reconciled to the prince your brother, I owe you all duty.

D. John. I thank you : I am not of many words, but I thank you. 151

Leon. Please it your grace lead on ?

D. Pedro. Your hand, Leonato ; we will go together. [*Exeunt all except Benedick and Claudio.*]

Claud. Benedick, didst thou note the daughter of Signior Leonato ?

Bene. I noted her not ; but I looked on her.

Claud. Is she not a modest young lady ?

Bene. Do you question me, as an honest man should do, for my simple true judgement ; or would you have me speak after my custom, as being a professed tyrant to their sex ? 162

✓ *Claud.* No ; I pray thee speak in sober judgement.

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

✓ *Claud.* Thou thinkest I am in sport : I pray thee tell me truly how thou likest her. 171

✓ *Bene.* Would you buy her, that you inquire after her ?

✓ *Claud.* Can the world buy such a jewel ?

Bene. Yea, and a case to put it into But speak you this with a sad brow ? or do you play the flouting Jack, to tell us Cupid is a good hare-finder and Vulcan a rare carpenter ? Come, in what key shall a man take you, to go in the song ? *Join in*

✓ *Claud.* In mine eye she is the sweetest lady that ever I looked on. 181

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

✓ *Claud.* I would scarce trust myself, though I had sworn the contrary, if Hero would be my wife. 189

Bene. Is't come to this ? In faith, hath not the

world one man but he will wear his cap with suspicion?
 Shall I never see a bachelor of threescore again? Go
 to, i' faith; an thou wilt needs thrust thy neck into a
 yoke, wear the print of it and sigh away Sundays.
 Look; Don Pedro is returned to seek you.

Re-enter DON PEDRO.

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

Bene. I would your grace would constrain me to tell.

D. Pedro. I charge thee on thy allegiance. 199

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

✓ *Claud.* If this were so, so were it uttered. *in this jest*

Bene. Like the old tale, my lord: "it is not so, nor
 'twas not so, but, indeed, God forbid it should be so."

✓ *Claud.* If my passion change not shortly, God for-
 bid it should be otherwise. 210

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

✓ *Claud.* You speak this to *put me into confession* fetch me in, my lord.

D. Pedro. By my troth, I speak my thought.

✓ *Claud.* And, in faith, my lord, I spoke mine.

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

✓ *Claud.* That I love her, I feel.

D. Pedro. That she is worthy I know. 219

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

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

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

Bene. That a woman conceived me, I thank her ; that she brought me up, I likewise give her most humble thanks : but that I will have a recheat winded in my forehead, or hang my bugle in an invisible baldrick, all women shall pardon me. Because I will not do them the wrong to mistrust any, I will do myself the right to trust none ; and the fine is, for the which I may go the finer, I will live a bachelor. 234

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

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

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

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

D. Pedro. Well, as time shall try :
 “ In time the savage bull doth bear the yoke.” 248

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

✓*Claud.* If this should ever happen, thou wouldst be horn-mad. *funious and also cuckold*

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

Bene. I look for an earthquake too, then. 259

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

Bene. I have almost ^{Q. m. s.} matter enough in me for such an embassage ; and so I commit you—

✓ *Claud.* To the tuition of God : From my house, if I had it,—

D. Pedro. The sixth of July : Your loving friend, Benedick. 270

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

Claud. My liege, your highness now may do me good. ^{help me}

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

Claud. Hath Leonato any son, my lord ? 280

D. Pedro. No child but Hero ; she's his only heir. Dost thou affect her, Claudio ?

Claud. O, my lord,
When you went onward on this ended action,
I look'd upon her with a soldier's eye,
That liked, but had a rougher task in hand
Than to drive liking to the name of love :
But now I am return'd and that war-thoughts
Have left their places vacant, in their rooms

Come thronging soft and delicate desires,
All prompting me how fair young Hero is, 290
Saying, I liked her ere I went to wars.

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

Claud. How sweetly you do minister to love,
That know love's grief by his complexion !
But lest my liking might too sudden seem, 300
I would have salved it with a longer treatise.

D. Pedro. What need the bridge much broader than
the flood ?
The fairest grant is the necessity.
Look, what will serve is fit : 'tis once, thou lovest,
And I will fit thee with the remedy.
I know we shall have revelling to-night :
I will assume thy part in some disguise
And tell fair Hero I am Claudio,
And in her bosom I'll unclasp my heart
And take her hearing prisoner with the force 310
And strong encounter of my amorous tale ;
Then after to her father will I break ;
And the conclusion is, she shall be thine.
In practice let us put it presently. [Exeunt.

SCENE II. *A room in LEONATO's house. Enter LEONATO
and ANTONIO, meeting.*

Leon. How now, brother ! Where is my cousin,
your son ? hath he provided this music ?

SC. III] MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

Ant. He is very busy about it. But, brother, I can tell you strange news that you yet dreamt not of.

Leon. Are they good? *quite true*

Ant. As the event stamps them : but they have a good cover ; they show well outward. The prince and Count Claudio, walking in a thick-pleached alley in the orchard, were thus much overheard by a man of mine : the prince discovered to Claudio that he loved my niece your daughter and meant to acknowledge it this night in a dance ; and if he found her accordant, he meant to take the present time by the top and instantly break with you of it.

Leon. Hath the fellow any wit that told you this ?

Ant. A good sharp fellow : I will send for him ; and question him yourself. 18

Leon. No, no ; we will hold it as a dream till it appear itself : but I will acquaint my daughter withal, that she may be the better prepared for an answer, if peradventure this be true. Go you and tell her of it. [*Enter Antonio's son, with a Musician.*] Cousin, you know what you have to do. O, I cry you mercy, friend ; go you with me, and I will use your skill. Good cousin, have a care this busy time. [*Exit.*]

SCENE III. *The same.* Enter DON JOHN and
CONRADE

Con. What the good-year, my lord ! why are you thus out of measure sad ? *moderation (He is punning)*

D. John. There is no measure in the occasion that breeds ; therefore the sadness is without limit.

Con. You should hear reason.

D. John. And when I have heard it, what blessing brings it ?

Con. If not a present remedy, at least a patient sufferance.

D. John. I wonder that thou, being, ^{misfortune} as thou sayest thou art, born under Saturn, goest about to apply a moral medicine to a mortifying mischief. I cannot hide what I am : I must be sad when I have cause and smile at no man's jests, eat when I have stomach and wait for no man's leisure, sleep when I am drowsy and tend on no man's business, laugh when I am merry and claw no man in his humour.

Con. Yea, but you must not make the full show of this till you may do it without controlment. You have of late stood out against your brother, and he hath ta'en you newly into his grace ; where it is impossible you should take true root but by the fair weather that you make yourself : it is needful that you frame the season for your own harvest. 24

D. John. I had rather be a canker in a hedge than a rose in his grace, and it better fits my blood to be disdained of all than to fashion a carriage to rob love from any : in this, though I cannot be said to be a flattering honest man, it must not be denied but I am a plain-dealing villain. I am trusted with a muzzle and enfranchised with a clog ; therefore I have decreed not to sing in my cage. If I had my mouth, I would bite ; if I had my liberty, I would do my liking : in the meantime let me be that I am and seek not to alter me.

Con. Can you make no use of your discontent ?

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

Enter BORACHIO.

What news, Borachio ? 39

Bora. I came yonder from a great supper : the prince your brother is royally entertained by Leonato ; and I can give you intelligence of an intended marriage.

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

Bora. Marry, it is your brother's right hand.

D. John. Who ? the most exquisite Claudio ?

Bora. Even he.

D. John. A proper squire ! And who, and who ? which way looks he ? 50

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

D. John. A very forward March-chick ! How came you to this ? ^{previous youngsters}

Bora. Being ^{lived as} entertained for a perfumer, as I was smoking a musty room, comes me the prince and Claudio, hand in hand, in sad conference : I whipt me behind the arras ; and there heard it agreed upon that the prince should woo Hero for himself, and having obtained her, give her to Count Claudio.

D. John. Come, come, let us thither : this may prove food to my displeasure. That young start-up hath all the glory of my overthrow : if I can cross him any way, I bless myself every way. You are both sure, and will assist me ?

Con. To the death, my lord.

D. John. Let us to the great supper : their cheer is the greater that I am subdued. Would the cook were of my mind ! Shall we go prove what's to be done ?

Bora. We'll wait upon your lordship. [*Exeunt.* 70

ACT II

SCENE I. *A hall in LEONATO's house. Enter LEONATO, ANTONIO, HERO, BEATRICE, MARGARET, URSULA, and others.*

Leon. Was not Count John here at supper ?

Ant. I saw him not.

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

Hero. He is of a very melancholy disposition.

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

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

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

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

' *Ant.* In faith, she's too curst. *Over* 19

| *Beat.* Too curst is more than curst : I shall lessen God's sending that way ; for it is said, "God sends a curst cow short horns" ; but to a cow too curst he sends none.

sc. 1] MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

Leon. So, by being too curst, God will send you no horns. *Prausch w.*

Beat. Just, if he send me no husband ; for the which blessing I am at him upon my knees every morning and evening. Lord, I could not endure a husband with a beard on his face : I had rather lie in the woollen. 30

Leon. You may light on a husband that hath no beard.

Beat. What should I do with him ? dress him in my apparel and make him my waiting-gentlewoman ? He that hath a beard is more than a youth, and he that hath no beard is less than a man : and he that is more than a youth is not for me, and he that is less than a man, I am not for him : therefore I will even take sixpence in earnest of the bear-ward, and lead his apes into hell.) 40

Leon. Well, then, go you into hell ? *beat-kupfr*

Beat. No, but to the gate ; and there will the devil meet me, like an old cuckold, with horns on his head, and say " Get you to heaven, Beatrice, get you to heaven ; here's no place for you maids " : so deliver I up my apes, and away to Saint Peter for the heavens ; he shows me where the bachelors sit, and there live we as merry as the day is long.

Ant. [To Hero] (Well, niece, I trust you will be ruled by your father.) 50

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

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

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING [ACT II

Beat. Not till God make men of some other metal than earth. Would it not grieve a woman to be overmastered with a piece of valiant dust? to make an account of her life to a clod of wayward marl? No, uncle, I'll none : Adam's sons are my brethren ; and, truly, I hold it a sin to match in my kindred. 63

Leon. Daughter, remember what I told you : if the prince do solicit you in that kind, you know your answer.

Beat. The fault will be in the music, cousin, if you be not wooed in good time : if the prince be too important, tell him there is measure in everything and so dance out the answer. For, hear me, Hero : wooing, wedding, and repenting, is as a Scotch jig, a measure, and a cinque pace : the first suit is hot and hasty, like a Scotch jig, and full as fantastical ; the wedding, mannerly-modest, as a measure, full of state and ancientry ; and then comes repentance and, with his bad legs, falls into the cinque pace faster and faster, till he sink into his grave.

Leon. Cousin, you apprehend passing shrewdly.

Beat. I have a good eye, uncle ; I can see a church by daylight. 80

Leon. The revellers are entering, brother : make good room. [ANTONIO *masks*.

Enter DON PEDRO, CLAUDIO, BENEDICK, BALTHASAR, DON JOHN, BORACHIO, and others, masked.

D. Pedro. Lady, will you walk about with your friend?

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

D. Pedro. With me in your company ?

Hero. I may say so, when I please.

sc. 1] MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

D. Pedro. And when please you to say so ?

Hero. When I like your favour ; for God defend the lute should be like the case ! 91

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

Hero. Why, then, your visor should be thatched.

D. Pedro. Speak low, if you speak love.

[*They pass on.*

Balth. Well, I would you did like me.

Marg. So would not I, for your own sake ; for I have many ill qualities.

Balth. Which is one ?

Marg. I say my prayers aloud. 100

Balth. I love you the better : the hearers may cry, Amen.

Marg. God match me with a good dancer !

Balth. Amen.

Marg. And God keep him out of my sight when the dance is done ! Answer, clerk.

Balth. No more words : the clerk is answered.

[*They pass on.*

Urs. I know you well enough ; you are Signior Antonio.

Ant. At a word, I am not. 110

Urs. I know you by the wagging of your head.

Ant. To tell you true, I counterfeit him. (X)

Urs. You could never do him so ill-well, unless you were the very man. Here's his dry hand up and down : you are he, you are he.

Ant. At a word, I am not.

Urs. Come, come, do you think I do not know you by your excellent wit ? can virtue hide itself ? Go to, mum, you are he : graces will appear, and there's an end.

[*They pass on.* 120

Beat. Will you not tell me who told you so ?

Bene. No, you shall pardon me.

Beat. Nor will you not tell me who you are ?

Bene. Not now.

Beat. That I was disdainful, and that I had my good wit out of the "Hundred Merry Tales" :—well, this was Signior Benedick that said so.

Bene. What's he ?

Beat. I am sure you know him well enough.

Bene. Not I, believe me. 130

Beat. Did he never make you laugh ?

Bene. I pray you, what is he ?

Beat. Why, he is the prince's jester : ^{invariable} a very dull fool ; only his gift is in devising impossible slanders : none but libertines delight in him ; and the commendation is not in his wit, but in his villainy ; for he both pleases men and angers them, and then they laugh at him and beat him. I am sure he is in the fleet : I would he had boarded me.

Bene. When I know the gentleman, I'll tell him what you say. 141

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

Bene. In every good thing.

Beat. Nay, if they lead to any ill, I will leave them at the next turning. 149

[*Dance. Then exeunt all except Don John, Borachio, and Claudio.*]

D. John. Sure my brother is amorous on Hero and hath withdrawn her father to break with him about it. The ladies follow her and but one visor remains.

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

D. John. Are not you Signior Benedick ?

Claud. You know me well ; I am he.

D. John. Signior, you are very near my brother in his love : he is enamoured on Hero ; I pray you, dissuade him from her : she is no equal for his birth : you may do the part of an honest man in it. 160

Claud. How know you he loves her ?

D. John. I heard him swear his affection.

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

D. John. Come, let us to the banquet.

[*Exeunt Don John and Borachio.*]

Claud. Thus answer I in name of Benedick,
But hear these ill news with the ears of Claudio.

'Tis certain so ; the prince woos for himself.

Friendship is constant in all other things ;

Save in the office and affairs of love : } 170

Therefore all hearts in love use their own tongues ;

Let every eye negotiate for itself

And trust no agent ; for beauty is a witch

Against whose charms faith melteth into blood.

This is an accident of hourly proof, & very far

Which I mistrusted not. Farewell, therefore, Hero !

Re-enter BENEDICK.

Bene. Count Claudio ?

Claud. Yea, the same.

Bene. Come, will you go with me ?

Claud. Whither ? 180

Bene. Even to the next willow, about your own business, county. What fashion will you wear the garland of ? about your neck, like an usurer's chain ?

or under your arm, like a lieutenant's scarf? You must wear it one way, for the prince hath got your Hero.

Claud. I wish him joy of her.

Bene. Why, that's spoken like an honest drovier : so they sell bullocks. But did you think the prince would have served you thus ? 190

Claud. I pray you, leave me.

Bene. Ho ! now you strike like the ^{wildly} blind man : 'twas the boy that stole your meat, and you'll beat the post. *i.e. me (who had nothing to do with it)*

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

Bene. Alas, poor hurt fowl ! now will he creep into sedges. But that my Lady Beatrice should know me, and not know me ! The prince's fool ! Ha ! It may be I go under that title because I am merry. Yea, but so I am apt to do myself wrong ; I am not so reputed : it is the base, though bitter, disposition of Beatrice that puts the world into her person, and so gives me out. Well, I'll be revenged as I may. 203

Re-enter DON PEDRO, HERO, and LEONATO.

D. Pedro. Now, signior, where's the count ? did you see him ?

Bene. Troth, my lord, I have played the part of Lady Fame. I found him here as melancholy as a lodge in a warren : I told him, and I think I told him true, that your grace had got the good will of this young lady ; and I offered him my company to a willow-tree, either to make him a garland, as being forsaken, or to bind him up a rod, as being worthy to be whipped. 213

D. Pedro. To be whipped ! What's his fault ?

Bene. The flat transgression of a schoolboy, who,

being overjoyed with finding a bird's nest, shows it his companion, and he steals it.

D. Pedro. Wilt thou make a trust a transgression ?
The transgression is in the stealer. 219

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

D. Pedro. I will but teach ^{ie. birds} them to sing, and restore them to the owner. *if what you say proves true*

Bene. If their singing answer your saying, by my faith, you say honestly. *Speak honourably*

D. Pedro. The Lady Beatrice hath a quarrel to you : the gentleman that danced with her told her she is much wronged by you. 231

Bene. O, she misused me past the endurance of a block ! an oak but with one green leaf on it would have answered her ; my very visor began to assume life and scold with her. She told me, not thinking I had been myself, that I was the prince's jester, that I was duller than a great thaw ; huddling jest upon jest with such impossible conveyance upon me that I stood like a man at a mark, with a whole army shooting at me. She speaks poniards, and every word stabs ; if her breath were as terrible as her terminations, there were no living near her ; she would infect to the north star. I would not marry her, though she were endowed with all that Adam had left him before he transgressed ; she would have made Hercules have turned spit, yea, and have cleft his club to make the fire too. Come, talk not of her : you shall find her the infernal Atë in good apparel. I would to God some scholar would con-

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING [ACT II

jure ner ; for certainly, while she is here, a man may live as quiet in hell as in a sanctuary ; and people sin upon purpose, because they would go thither ; so indeed, all disquiet, horror and perturbation follows her. 254

D. Pedro. Look, here she comes.

Enter CLAUDIO and BEATRICE.

Bene. Will your grace command me any service to the world's end ? I will go on the slightest errand now to the Antipodes that you can devise to send me on ; I will fetch you a toothpicker now from the farthest inch of Asia, bring you the length of Prester John's foot, fetch you a hair off the great Cham's beard, do you any embassage to the Pigmies, rather than hold three words' conference with this harpy. You have no employment for me ?

D. Pedro. None, but to desire your good company.

Bene. O God, sir, here's a dish I love not : I cannot endure my Lady Tongue. [Exit.

D. Pedro. Come, lady, come ; you have lost the heart of Signior Benedick. 269

Beat. Indeed, my lord, he lent it me awhile ; and I gave him use for it, a double heart for his single one : marry, once before he won it of me with false dice, therefore your grace may well say I have lost it.

D. Pedro. You have put him down, lady, you have put him down.

Beat. So I would not he should do me, my lord. I have brought Count Claudio, whom you sent me back to seek.

D. Pedro. Why, how now, count ! wherefore are you sad ? 280

Claud. Not sad, my lord.

D. Pedro. How then ? sick ?

Claud. Neither, my lord.

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

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

Leon. Count, take of me my daughter, and with her my fortunes : his grace hath made the match, and all grace say Amen to it. *I e. Good, the source of all J'*

Beat. Speak, count, 'tis your cue.

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

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

D. Pedro. In faith, lady, you have a merry heart.

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

✓ *Claud.* And so she doth, cousin.

Beat. Good Lord, for alliance ! Thus goes every one to the world but I, and I am sunburnt ; I may sit in a corner and cry heigh-ho for a husband !

D. Pedro. Lady Beatrice, I will get you one.

Beat. I would rather have one of your father's getting. Hath your grace ne'er a brother like you ? Your father got excellent husbands, if a maid could come by them.

D. Pedro. Will you have me, lady?

Beat. No, my lord, unless I might have another for working-days : your grace is too costly to wear every day. But, I beseech your grace, pardon me : I was born to speak all mirth and no matter. 320

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

Beat. No, sure, my lord, my mother cried, but then there was a star danced, and under that was I born. Cousins, God give you joy !

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

Beat. I cry you mercy, uncle. By your grace's pardon. (*ie Please excuse me*) [Exit. 330

D. Pedro. By my troth, a pleasant-spirited lady. 330

Leon. There's little of the melancholy element in her, my lord : she is never sad but when she sleeps, and not ever sad then ; for I have heard my daughter say, she hath often dreamed of unhappiness and waked herself with laughing.

D. Pedro. She cannot endure to hear tell of a husband.

Leon. O, by no means : she mocks all her wooers out of suit. 339

D. Pedro. She were an excellent wife for Benedick.

Leon. O Lord, my lord, if they were but a week married, they would talk themselves mad.

D. Pedro. County Claudio, when mean you to go to church ?

✓ *Claud.* To-morrow, my lord : time goes on crutches -till love have all his rites.

Leon. Not till Monday, my dear son, which is hence a just seven-night ; and a time too brief too, to have all things answer my mind. 349

SC. II] MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

D. Pedro. Come, you shake the head at so long a breathing ; but, I warrant thee, Claudio, the time shall not go dully by us. I will in the interim undertake one of Hercules' labours : which is, to bring Signior Benedick and the Lady Beatrice into a mountain of affection the one with the other. I would fain have it a match, and I doubt not but to fashion it, if you three will but minister such assistance as I shall give you direction.

Leon. My lord, I am for you, though it cost me ten nights' watchings. 360

✓*Claud.* And I, my lord.

D. Pedro. And you too, gentle Hero ?

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

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

SCENE II. *The same.* Enter DON JOHN and
BORACHIO.

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

Bora. Yea, my lord ; but I can cross it.

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

Bora. Not honestly, my lord ; but so ^{Secretly} covertly that no dishonesty shall appear in me. 10

D. John. Show me briefly how.

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

D. John. I remember.

Bora. I can, at any unseasonable instant of the night, appoint her to look out at her lady's chamber-window.

D. John. What life is in that, to be the death of this marriage ? 20

Bora. The poison of that lies in you to temper. Go you to the prince your brother ; spare not to tell him that he hath wronged his honour in marrying the renowned Claudio—whose estimation do you mightily hold up—to a contaminated stale, such a one as Hero.

D. John. What proof shall I make of that ?

Bora. Proof enough to misuse the prince, to vex Claudio, to undo Hero, and kill Leonato. Look you for any other issue ? 30

D. John. Only to despise them, I will endeavour any thing.

Bora. Go, then ; find me a meet hour to draw Don Pedro and the Count Claudio alone : tell them that you know that Hero loves me ; intend a kind of zeal both to the prince and Claudio, as,—in love of your brother's honour, who hath made this match, and his

sc. III] MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

friend's reputation, who is thus like to be cozened with the semblance of a maid,—that you have discovered thus. They will scarcely believe this without trial : offer them instances ; which shall bear no less likelihood than to see me at her chamber-window, hear me call Margaret Hero, hear Margaret term me Claudio ; and bring them to see this the very night before the intended wedding,—for in the meantime I will so fashion the matter that Hero shall be absent,—and there shall appear such seeming truth of Hero's disloyalty that jealousy shall be called assurance and all the preparation overthrown.

D. John. Grow this to what adverse issue it can, I will put it in practice. Be cunning in the working this, and thy fee is a thousand ducats. 52

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

D. John. I will presently go learn their day of marriage. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III. LEONATO's orchard. *Enter* BENEDICK.

Bene. Boy !

Enter Boy.

Boy. Signior ?

Bene. In my chamber-window lies a book : bring it hither to me in the orchard.

Boy. I am here already, sir.

Bene. I know that ; but I would have thee hence, and here again. [*Exit* Boy.] I do much wonder that one man, seeing how much another man is a fool when he dedicates his behaviours to love, will, after he hath laughed at such shallow follies in others,

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING [ACT II

become the argument of his own scorn by falling in love : and such a man is Claudio. I have known when there was no music with him but the drum and the fife ; and now had he rather hear the tabor and the pipe : I have known when he would have walked ten mile a-foot to see a good armour ; and now will he lie ten nights awake, carving the fashion of a new doublet. He was wont to speak plain and to the purpose, like an honest man and a soldier ; and now is he turned orthography ; his words are a very fantastical banquet, just so many strange dishes. May I be so converted and see with these eyes ? I cannot tell ; I think not : I will not be sworn but love may transform me to an oyster ; but I'll take my oath on it, till he have made an oyster of me, he shall never make me such a fool. One woman is fair, yet I am well ; another is wise, yet I am well ; another virtuous, yet I am well ; but till all graces be in one woman, one woman shall not come in my grace. Rich she shall be, that's certain ; wise, or I'll none ; virtuous, or I'll never cheapen her ; fair, or I'll never look on her ; mild, or come not near me ; noble, or not I for an angel ; of good discourse, an excellent musician, and her hair shall be of what colour it please God. Ha ! the prince and Monsieur Love ! I will hide me in the arbour. *[Withdraws.]*

*Enter DON PEDRO, LEONATO, CLAUDIO, and
BALTHASAR with music.*

D. Pedro. Come, shall we hear this music ?

Claud. Yea, my good lord. How still the evening is,
As hush'd on purpose to grace harmony !

D. Pedro. See you where Benedick hath hid himself ?

SC. III] MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

Claud. O, very well, my lord : the music ended,
We'll fit the kid-fox with a pennyworth.]

D. Pedro. Come, Balthasar, we'll hear that song
again.

Balth. O, good my lord, tax not so bad a voice
To slander music any more than once.

D. Pedro. It is the witness still of excellency
To put a strange face on his own perfection.
I pray thee, sing, and let me woo no more.

Balth. Because you talk of wooing, I will sing ;
Since many a wooer doth commence his suit 50
To her he thinks not worthy, yet he woos,
Yet will he swear he loves.

D. Pedro. Now, pray thee, come ;
Or, if thou wilt hold longer argument,
Do it in notes.

Balth. Note this before my notes ;
There's not a note of mine that's worth the noting.

D. Pedro. Why, these are very crotchets that he
speaks ;

Note, notes, forsooth, and nothing. [*Air.*

Bene. Now, divine air ! now is his soul ravished !
Is it not strange that sheeps' guts should hale souls
out of men's bodies ? Well, a horn for my money,
when all's done. 61

The Song.

Balth. Sigh no more, ladies, sigh no more,
Men were deceivers ever,
One foot in sea and one on shore,
To one thing constant never :
Then sigh not so, but let them go,
And be you blithe and bonny,

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING [ACT II

Converting all your sounds of woe
Into Hey nonny, nonny.

Sing no more ditties, sing no moe, 70
Of dumps so dull and heavy ;
The fraud of men was ever so,
Since summer first was leavy :
Then sigh not so, etc.

D. Pedro. By my troth, a good song.

Balth. And an ill singer, my lord.

D. Pedro. Ha, no, no, faith ; thou singest well enough for a shift.

Bene. An he had been a dog that should have howled thus, they would have hanged him : and I pray God his bad voice bode no mischief. I had as lief have heard the night-raven, come what plague could have come after it.

D. Pedro. Yea, marry, dost thou hear, Balthasar ? I pray thee, get us some excellent music ; for to-morrow night we would have it at the Lady Hero's chamber-window.

Balth. The best I can, my lord. 88

D. Pedro. Do so : farewell. [*Exit Balthasar.*] Come hither, Leonato. What was it you told me of to-day, that your niece Beatrice was in love with Signior Benedick ?

Claud. O, ay : stalk on, stalk on ; the fowl sits. I did never think that lady would have loved any man.

Leon. No, nor I neither ; but most wonderful that she should so dote on Signior Benedick, whom she hath in all outward behaviours seemed ever to abhor. 99

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

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

D. Pedro. May be she doth but counterfeit.

Claud. Faith, like enough.

Leon. O God, counterfeit! There was never counterfeit of passion came so near the life of passion as she discovers it.

D. Pedro. Why, what effects of passion shows she?

Claud. Bait the hook well; this fish will bite. 110

Leon. What effects, my lord? She will sit you, you heard my daughter tell you how.

Claud. She did, indeed.

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

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

Bene. I should think this a gull, but that the white-bearded fellow speaks it; knavery cannot, sure, hide himself in such reverence. 121

Claud. He hath ta'en the infection: hold it up.

D. Pedro. Hath she made her affection known to Benedick?

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

Claud. 'Tis true, indeed; so your daughter says: "Shall I," says she, "that have so oft encountered him with scorn, write to him that I love him?"

Leon. This says she now when she is beginning to write to him; for she'll be up twenty times a night, and there will she sit in her smock till she have writ a sheet of paper: my daughter tells us all. 133

Claud. Now you talk of a sheet of paper, I remember a pretty jest your daughter told us of.

Leon. O, when she had writ it and was reading it over, she found Benedick and Beatrice between the sheet?

Claud. That. 139

Leon. O, she tore the letter into a thousand half-pence; railed at herself, that she should be so immodest to write to one that she knew would flout her; "I measure him," says she, "by my own spirit; for I should flout him, if he writ to me; yea, though I love him, I should."

Claud. Then down upon her knees she falls, weeps, sobs, beats her heart, tears her hair, prays, curses; "O sweet Benedick! God give me patience!"

Leon. She doth indeed; my daughter says so; and the ecstasy hath so much overborne her that my daughter is sometime afraid she will do a desperate outrage to herself: it is very true. 152

D. Pedro. It were good that Benedick knew of it by some other, if she will not discover it.

Claud. To what end? He would make but a sport of it and torment the poor lady worse.

D. Pedro. An he should, it were an alms to hang him. She's an excellent sweet lady; and, out of all suspicion, she is virtuous.

Claud. And she is exceeding wise. 160

D. Pedro. In everything but in loving Benedick.

Leon. O, my lord, wisdom and blood combating in so tender a body, we have ten proofs to one that blood hath the victory. I am sorry for her, as I have just cause, being her uncle and her guardian.

D. Pedro. I would she had bestowed this dotage on me: I would have dashed all other respects and

made her half myself. I pray you, tell Benedick of it, and hear what a' will say.

Leon. Were it good, think you? 170

✓*Claud.* Hero thinks surely she will die ; for she says she will die, if he love her not, and she will die, ere she make her love known, and she will die, if he woo her, rather than she will bate one breath of her accustomed crossness.

D. Pedro. She doth well : if she should make tender of her love, 'tis very possible he'll scorn it ; for the man, as you know all, hath a contemptible spirit.

✓*Claud.* He is a very proper man. 179

D. Pedro. He hath indeed a good outward happi-
ness.

✓*Claud.* Before God ! and, in my mind, very wise.

D. Pedro. He doth indeed show some sparks that are like wit.

✓*Claud.* And I take him to be valiant.

D. Pedro. As Hector, I assure you : and in the managing of quarrels you may say he is wise ; for either he avoids them with great discretion, or undertakes them with a most Christian-like fear. 189

Leon. If he do fear God, a' must necessarily keep peace : if he break the peace, he ought to enter into a quarrel with fear and trembling.

D. Pedro. And so will he do ; for the man doth fear God, howsoever it seems not in him by some large jests he will make. Well, I am sorry for your niece. Shall we go seek Benedick, and tell him of her love ?

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

Leon. Nay, that's impossible : she may wear her heart out first. 201

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

Leon. My lord, will you walk ? dinner is ready.

Claud. If he do not dote on her upon this, I will never trust my expectation. 209

D. Pedro. Let there be the same net spread for her ; and that must your daughter and her gentlewomen carry. The sport will be, when they hold one an opinion of another's dotage, and no such matter : that's the scene that I would see, which will be merely a dumb show. Let us send her to call him in to dinner.

[*Exeunt Don Pedro, Claudio, and Leonato.*]

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

appetite alter? a man loves the meat in his youth that he cannot endure in his age. Shall quips and sentences and these paper bullets of the brain awe a man from the career of his humour? No, the world must be peopled. When I said I would die a bachelor, I did not think I should live till I were married. Here comes Beatrice. By this day! she's a fair lady: I do spy some marks of love in her. 242

Enter BEATRICE.

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

Bene. Fair Beatrice, I thank you for your pains.

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

Bene. You take pleasure then in the message?

Beat. Yea, just so much as you may take upon a knife's point and choke a daw withal. You have no stomach, signior: fare you well. [*Exit.* 252

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

[*Exit.*

ACT III

SCENE I. LEONATO'S orchard. *Enter HERO,
MARGARET, and URSULA.*

Hero. Good Margaret, run thee to the parlour ;
There shalt thou find my cousin Beatrice
Proposing with the prince and Claudio :
Whisper her ear and tell her, I and Ursula
Walk in the orchard and our whole discourse
Is all of her ; say that thou overheard'st us ;
And bid her steal into the pleached bower,
Where honeysuckles, ripen'd by the sun,
Forbid the sun to enter, like favourites,
Made proud by princes, that advance their pride 10
Against that power that bred it ; there will she hide her,
To listen our purpose. This is thy office ;
Bear thee well in it and leave us alone.

Marg. I'll make her come, I warrant you, presently.
[*Exit.*

Hero. Now, Ursula, when Beatrice doth come,
As we do trace this alley up and down,
Our talk must only be of Benedick.
When I do name him, let it be thy part
To praise him more than ever man did merit :
My talk to thee must be how Benedick 20
Is sick in love with Beatrice. Of this matter
Is little Cupid's crafty arrow made,
That only wounds by hearsay.

Enter BEATRICE, behind.

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

Urs. The pleasant'st angling is to see the fish
Cut with her golden oars the silver stream,
And greedily devour the treacherous bait :
So angle we for Beatrice ; who even now
Is couched in the woodbine coverture. 30
Fear you not my part of the dialogue.

Hero. Then go we near her, that her ear lose nothing
Of the false sweet bait that we lay for it.

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

Urs. But are you sure
That Benedick loves Beatrice so entirely ?

Hero. So says the prince and my new-trothed lord.

Urs. And did they bid you tell her of it, madam ?

Hero. They did entreat me to acquaint her of it ; 40
But I persuaded them, if they loved Benedick,
To wish him wrestle with affection,
And never to let Beatrice know of it.

Urs. Why did you so ? Doth not the gentleman
Deserve as full as fortunate a bed
As ever Beatrice shall couch upon ?

Hero. O god of love ! I know he doth deserve
As much as may be yielded to a man :
But Nature never framed a woman's heart
Of prouder stuff than that of Beatrice ; 50
Disdain and scorn ride sparkling in her eyes,
Misprising what they look on, and her wit

Values itself so highly that to her
 All matter else seems weak : she cannot love,
 Nor take no shape nor project of affection,
 She is so self-endear'd.

Urs. — — — Sure, I think so ;
 And therefore certainly it were not good
 She knew his love, lest she make sport at it.

Hero. Why, you speak truth. I never yet saw man,
 How wise, how noble, young, how rarely featured, 60
 But she would spell him backward : if fair-faced,
 She'd swear the gentleman should be her sister ;
 If black, why, Nature, drawing of an antique,
 Made a foul blot ; if tall, a lance ill-headed ;
 If low, an agate very vilely cut ;
 If speaking, why, a vane blown with all winds ;
 If silent, why, a block mov'd with none.
 So turns she every man the wrong side out
 And never gives to truth and virtue that
 Which simpleness and merit purchaseth. 70

Urs. Sure, sure, such carping is not commendable.

Hero. No, not to be so odd and from all fashions
 As Beatrice is, cannot be commendable :
 But who dare tell her so ? If I should speak,
 She would mock me into air ; O, she would laugh me
 Out of myself, press me to death with wit.
 Therefore let Benedick, like cover'd fire,
 Consume away in sighs, waste inwardly :
 It were a better death than die with mocks,
 Which is as bad as die with tickling. 80

Urs. Yet tell her of it : hear what she will say.

Hero. No ; rather I will go to Benedick
 And counsel him to fight against his passion.
 And, truly, I'll devise some honest slanders
 To stain my cousin with : one doth not know

How much an ill word may empoison liking.

Urs. O, do not do your cousin such a wrong.
She cannot be so much without true judgement—
Having so swift and excellent a wit
As she is prized to have—as to refuse 90
So rare a gentleman as Signior Benedick.

Hero. He is the only man of Italy,
Always excepted my dear Claudio.

Urs. I pray you, be not angry with me, madam,
Speaking my fancy : Signior Benedick,
For shape, for bearing, argument and valour
Goes foremost in report through Italy.

Hero. Indeed, he hath an excellent good name.

Urs. His excellence did earn it, ere he had it.
When are you married, madam ? 100

Hero. Why, every day, to-morrow. Come, go in :
I'll show thee some attires, and have thy counsel
Which is the best to furnish me to-morrow.

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

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

[Exeunt Hero and Ursula.]

Beat. *[Coming forward]* What fire is in mine ears ?
Can this be true ?

Stand I condemn'd for pride and scorn so much ?
Contempt, farewell ! and maiden pride, adieu !

No glory lives behind the back of such. 110
And, Benedick, love on ; I will requite thee,

Taming my wild heart to thy loving hand :
If thou dost love, my kindness shall incite thee

To bind our loves up in a holy band ;
For others say thou dost deserve, and I

Believe it better than reportingly. *[Exit.]*

SCENE II. *A room in LEONATO'S house. Enter DON PEDRO, CLAUDIO, BENEDICK, and LEONATO.*

D. Pedro. I do but stay till your marriage be consummate, and then go I toward Arragon.

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

D. Pedro. Nay, that would be as great a soil in the new gloss of your marriage as to show a child his new coat and forbid him to wear it. I will only be bold with Benedick for his company ; for, from the crown of his head to the sole of his foot, he is all mirth : he hath twice or thrice cut Cupid's bow-string and the little hangman dare not shoot at him ; he hath a heart as sound as a bell and his tongue is the clapper, for what his heart thinks his tongue speaks.

Bene. Gallants, I am not as I have been.

Leon. So say I : methinks you are sadder.

Claud. I hope he be in love.

D. Pedro. Hang him, truant ! there's no true drop of blood in him, to be truly touched with love : if he be sad, he wants money. 20

Bene. I have the toothache.

D. Pedro. Draw it.

Bene. Hang it !

Claud. You must hang it first, and draw it afterwards.

D. Pedro. What ! sigh for the toothache ?

Leon. Where is but a humour or a worm.

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

Claud. Yet say I, he is in love. 30

D. Pedro. There is no appearance of ^{love} fancy in him, unless it be a fancy that he hath to strange disguises ; as, to be a Dutchman to-day, a Frenchman to-morrow, or in the shape of two countries at once, as, a German from the waist downwards, all slops, and a Spaniard from the hip upward, no doublet. Unless he have a fancy to this foolery, as it appears he hath, he is no fool for fancy, as you would have it appear he is.

✓*Claud.* If he be not in love with some woman, there is no believing old signs : a' brushes his hat o' mornings ; what should that bode ? 41

D. Pedro. Hath any man seen him at the barber's ?

✓*Claud.* No, but the barber's man hath been seen with him, and the old ornament of his cheek hath already stuffed tennis-balls.

Leon. Indeed, he looks younger than he did by the loss of a beard.

✓*D. Pedro.* Nay, a' rubs himself with civet : can you smell him out by that ?

✓*Claud.* That's as much as to say, the sweet youth's in love. 51

D. Pedro. The greatest note of it is his melancholy.

✓*Claud.* And when was he wont to wash his face ?

D. Pedro. Yea, or to paint himself ? for the which, I hear what they say of him.

✓*Claud.* Nay, but his jesting spirit ; which is now crept into a lute-string and now governed by stops.

D. Pedro. Indeed, that tells a heavy tale for him : conclude, conclude he is in love.

✓*Claud.* Nay, but I know who loves him. 60

D. Pedro. That would I know too ; I warrant, one that knows him not. ^{bad condition}

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

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING [ACT III

D. Pedro. She shall be buried with her face upwards.

Bene. Yet is this no charm for the toothache. Old signior, walk aside with me : I have studied eight or nine wise words to speak to you, which these hobby-horses must not hear. [*Exeunt Benedick and Leonato.*

D. Pedro. For my life, to break with him about Beatrice. 72

✓ *Claud.* 'Tis even so. Hero and Margaret have by this played their parts with Beatrice ; and then the two bears will not bite one another when they meet.

Enter DON JOHN.

D. John. My lord and brother, God save you !

D. Pedro. Good den, brother.

D. John. If your leisure served, I would speak with you.

D. Pedro. In private ? 80

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

D. Pedro. What's the matter ?

D. John. [*To Claudio*] Means your lordship to be married to-morrow ?

D. Pedro. You know he does.

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

✓ *Claud.* If there be any impediment, I pray you discover it. 90

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

D. Pedro. Why, what's the matter ?

D. John. I came hither to tell you ; and, circumstances shortened, for she has been too long a talking of, the lady is disloyal. 100

Claud. Who, Hero ?

D. John. Even she ; Leonato's Hero, your Hero, every man's Hero.

Claud. Disloyal ?

D. John. The word is too good to paint out her wickedness ; I could say she were worse : think you of a worse title, and I will fit her to it. Wonder not till further warrant : go but with me to-night, you shall see her chamber-window entered, even the night before her wedding-day ; if you love her then, to-morrow wed her ; but it would better fit your honour to change your mind. 112

✓*Claud.* May this be so ?

D. Pedro. I will not think it.

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

✓*Claud.* If I see anything to-night why I should not marry her to-morrow, in the congregation, where I should wed, there will I shame her. 121

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

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

D. Pedro. O day untowardly turned !

✓*Claud.* O mischief strangely thwarting ! 128

D. John. O plague right well prevented ! so will you say when you have seen the sequel. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III. *A street. Enter DOGBERRY and
VERGES with the Watch.*

Dog. Are you good men and true?

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

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

Verg. Well, give them their charge, neighbour Dogberry.

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

First Watch. Hugh Oatcake, sir, or George Seacole; for they can write and read.

Dog. Come hither, neighbour Seacole. God hath blessed you with a good name; to be a well-favoured man is the gift of fortune; but to write and read comes by nature.

Sec. Watch. Both which, master constable,—

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

Sec. Watch. How if a' will not stand?

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

30

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

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

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

Dog. Why, you speak like an ancient and most quiet watchman ; for I cannot see how sleeping should offend : only, have a care that your bills be not stolen. Well, you are to call at all the ale-houses, and bid those that are drunk get them to bed. 43

Watch. How if they will not ?

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

Watch. Well, sir.

Dog. If you meet a thief, you may suspect him, by virtue of your office, to be no true man ; and, for such kind of men, the less you meddle or make with them, why, the more is for your honesty. 52

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

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

Verg. You have been always called a merciful man, partner. 60

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

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

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

Dog. Why, then, depart in peace, and let the child wake her with crying ; for the ewe that will not hear her lamb when it baes will never answer a calf when he bleats. 70

Verg. 'Tis very true.

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

Verg. Nay, by'r lady, that I think a' cannot.

Dog. Five shillings to one on't, with any man that knows the statues, he may stay him : marry, not without the prince be willing ; for, indeed, the watch ought to offend no man ; and it is an offence to stay a man against his will. 80

Verg. By'r lady, I think it be so.

Dog. Ha, ah, ha ! Well, masters, good night : an there be any matter of weight between us, call up me : keep your fellows' counsels and your own ; and good night. Come, neighbour.

Watch. Well, masters, we have our charge : let us go sit here upon the church-bench till two, and then all to bed.

Dog. One word more, honest neighbours. I pray you, watch about Signior Leonato's door : for the wedding being there to-morrow, there is a great coil to-night. Adieu : be vigilant ; I beseech you. 92

[*Exeunt Dogberry and Verges.*]

Enter BORACHIO and CONRADE.

Bora. What, comrade !

Watch. [*Aside*] Peace ! stir not.

Bora. Conrade, I say !

Con. Here, man ; I am at thy elbow.

Bora. Mass, and my elbow itched ; I thought there would a scab follow.

Con. I will owe thee an answer for that : and now forward with thy tale. 100

Bora. Stand thee close, then, under this pent-house, for it drizzles rain ; and I will, like a true drunkard, utter all to thee.

Watch. [*Aside*] Some treason, masters : yet stand close.

Bora. Therefore know I have earned of Don John a thousand ducats.

Con. Is it possible that any villainy should be so dear ? 109

Bora. Thou shouldst rather ask if it were possible any villainy should be so rich ; for when rich villains have need of poor ones, poor ones may make what price they will.

Con. I wonder at it.

Bora. That shows thou art unconfirmed. Thou knowest that the fashion of a doublet, or a hat, or a cloak, is nothing to a man.

Con. Yes, it is apparel.

Bora. I mean, the fashion.

Con. Yes, the fashion is the fashion. 120

Bora. Tush ! I may as well say the fool's the fool. But seest thou not what a deformed thief this fashion is ?

Watch. [*Aside*] I know that Deformed ; a' has been a vile thief this seven year ; a' goes up and down like a gentleman : I remember his name.

Bora. Didst thou not hear somebody ?

Con. No ; 'twas the vane on the house. 128

Bora. Seest thou not, I say, what a deformed thief

this fashion is? how giddily a' turns about all the hot bloods between fourteen and five-and-thirty? sometimes fashioning them like Pharaoh's soldiers in the reechy painting, sometime like god Bel's priests in the old church-window, sometime like the shaven Hercules in the smirched worm-eaten tapestry, where his codpiece seems as massy as his club?

Con. All this I see; and I see that the fashion wears out more apparel than the man. But art not thou thyself giddy with the fashion too; that thou hast shifted out of thy tale into telling me of the fashion? 140

Bora. Not so, neither: but know that I have to-night wooed Margaret, the Lady Hero's gentlewoman, by the name of Hero: she leans me out at her mistress' chamber-window, bids me a thousand times good night,—I tell this tale vilely:—I should first tell thee how the prince, Claudio and my master, planted and placed and possessed by my master Don John, saw afar off in the orchard this amiable encounter.

Con. And thought they Margaret was Hero? 149

Bora. Two of them did, the prince and Claudio; but the devil my master knew she was Margaret; and partly by his oaths, which first possessed them, partly by the dark night, which did deceive them, but chiefly by my villainy, which did confirm any slander that Don John had made, away went Claudio enraged; swore he would meet her, as he was appointed, next morning at the temple, and there, before the whole congregation, shame her with what he saw o'er night and send her home again without a husband. 160

First Watch. We charge you, in the prince's name, stand!

Sec. Watch. Call up the right master constable.

SC. IV] MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

We have here recovered the most dangerous piece of lechery that ever was known in the commonwealth.

First Watch. And one Deformed is one of them : I know him : a' wears a lock.

Con. Masters, masters,—

Sec. Watch. You'll be made bring Deformed forth, I warrant you. 170

Con. Masters,—

First Watch. Never speak : we charge you let us obey you to go with us.

Bora. We are like to prove a goodly commodity, being taken up of these men's bills.

Con. A commodity in question, I warrant you. Come, we'll obey you. [Exeunt.

SCENE IV. HERO'S apartment. Enter HERO,
MARGARET, and URSULA.

Hero. Good Ursula, wake my cousin Beatrice, and desire her to rise.

Urs. I will, lady.

Hero. And bid her come hither.

Urs. Well. [Exit.

Marg. Troth, I think your other rebato were better.

Hero. No, pray thee, good Meg, I'll wear this.

Marg. By my troth, 's not so good ; and I warrant your cousin will say so.

Hero. My cousin's a fool, and thou art another : I'll wear none but this. 11

Marg. I like the new tire within excellently, if the hair were a thought browner ; and your gown's a most rare fashion, i' faith. I saw the Duchess of Milan's gown that they praise so.

Hero. O, that exceeds, they say.

Marg. By my troth, 's but a night-gown in respect of yours : cloth o' gold, and cuts, and laced with silver, set with pearls down sleeves, side sleeves, and skirts, round underborne with a bluish tinsel : but for a fine, quaint, graceful and excellent fashion, yours is worth ten on't. 22

Hero. God give me joy to wear it ! for my heart is exceeding heavy.

Marg. 'Twill be heavier soon by the weight of a man.

Hero. Fie upon thee ! art not ashamed ?

Marg. Of what, lady ? of speaking honourably ? Is not marriage honourable in a beggar ? Is not your lord honourable without marriage ? I think you would have me say, saving your reverence, " a husband " ; an bad thinking do not wrest true speaking, I'll offend nobody : is there any harm in " the heavier for a husband " ? None, I think, an it be the right husband and the right wife ; otherwise 'tis light, and not heavy : ask my Lady Beatrice else ; here she comes.

Enter BEATRICE.

Hero. Good morrow, cos.

Beat. Good morrow, sweet Hero. 39

Hero. Why, how now ? do you speak in the sick tune ?

Beat. I am out of all other tune, methinks.

Marg. Clap's into " Light o' love " ; that goes without a burden : do you sing it, and I'll dance it.

Beat. Yea, light o' love, with your heels ! then, if your husband have stables enough, you'll see he shall lack no barns.

Marg. O illegitimate construction ! I scorn that with my heels. 49

Beat. 'Tis almost five o'clock, cousin ; 'tis time you were ready. By my troth, I am exceeding ill : heigh-ho !

Marg. For a hawk, a horse, or a husband ?

Beat. For the letter that begins them all, H.

Marg. Well, an you be not turned Turk, there's no more sailing by the star.

Beat. What means the fool, trow ?

Marg. Nothing I ; but God send every one their heart's desire !

Hero. These gloves the count sent me ; they are an excellent perfume. 61

Beat. I am stuffed, cousin ; I cannot smell.

Marg. A maid, and stuffed ! there's goodly catching of cold.

Beat. O, God help me ! God help me ! how long have you professed apprehension ?

Marg. Ever since you left it. Doth not my wit become me rarely ?

Beat. It is not seen enough, you should wear it in your cap. By my troth, I am sick. 70

Marg. Get you some of this distilled Carduus Benedictus, and lay it to your heart : it is the only thing for a qualm.

Hero. There thou prickest her with a thistle.

Beat. Benedictus ! why Benedictus ? you have some moral in this Benedictus.

Marg. Moral ! no, by my troth, I have no moral meaning ; I meant, plain holy-thistle. You may think perchance that I think you are in love : nay, by'r lady, I am not such a fool to think what I list, nor I list not to think what I can, nor indeed I cannot

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING [ACT III

think, if I would think my heart out of thinking, that you are in love or that you will be in love or that you can be in love. Yet Benedick was such another, and now is he become a man : he swore he would never marry, and yet now, in despite of his heart, he eats his meat without grudging : and how you may be converted I know not, but methinks you look with your eyes as other women do.

Beat. What pace is this that thy tongue keeps ? 90

Marg. Not a false gallop.

Re-enter URSULA.

Urs. Madam, withdraw : the prince, the count, Signior Benedick, Don John, and all the gallants of the town, are come to fetch you to church.

Hero. Help to dress me, good cos, good Meg, good Ursula. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE V. *Another room in LEONATO's house. Enter LEONATO, with DOGBERRY and VERGES.*

Leon. What would you with me, honest neighbour ?

Dog. Marry, sir, I would have some confidence with you that decerns you nearly.

Leon. Brief, I pray you : for you see it is a busy time with me.

Dog. Marry, this is it, sir.

Verg. Yes, in truth it is, sir.

Leon. What is it, my good friends ?

Dog. Goodman Verges, sir, speaks a little off the matter : an old man, sir, and his wits are not so blunt as, God help, I would desire they were ; but, in faith, honest as the skin between his brows. 12

Verg. Yes, I thank God I am as honest as any man living that is an old man and no honester than I.

Dog. Comparisons are odorous : palabras, neighbour Verges.

Leon. Neighbours, you are tedious.

Dog. It pleases your worship to say so, but we are the poor Duke's officers ; but truly, for mine own part, if I were as tedious as a king, I could find it in my heart to bestow it all of your worship. 21

Leon. All thy tediousness on me, ah ?

Dog. Yea, an 'twere a thousand pound more than 'tis ; for I hear as good exclamation on your worship as of any man in the city ; and though I be but a poor man, I am glad to hear it.

Verg. And so am I.

Leon. I would fain know what you have to say.

Verg. Marry, sir, our watch to-night, excepting your worship's presence, ha' ta'en a couple of as arrant knaves as any in Messina. 31

Dog. A good old man, sir ; he will be talking ; as they say, When the age is in, the wit is out : God help us ! it is a world to see. Well said, i' faith, neighbour Verges : well, God's a good man ; an two men ride of a horse, one must ride behind. An honest soul, i' faith, sir ; by my troth he is, as ever broke bread ; but God is to be worshipped ; all men are not alike ; alas, good neighbour !

Leon. Indeed, neighbour, he comes too short of you.

Dog. Gifts that God gives. 41

Leon. I must leave you.

Dog. One word, sir : our watch, sir, have indeed comprehended two aspicious persons, and we would have them this morning examined before your worship.

Leon. Take their examination yourself and bring it

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING [ACT III. SC. V

me : I am now in great haste, as it may appear unto you.

Dog. It shall be suffigance.

Leon. Drink some wine ere you go : fare you well.

Enter a Messenger.

Mess. My lord, they stay for you to give your daughter to her husband. 52

Leon. I'll wait upon them : I am ready.

[Exeunt Leonato and Messenger.]

Dog. Go, good partner, go, get you to Francis Seacole ; bid him bring his pen and inkhorn to the gaol : we are now to examine these men.

Verg. And we must do it wisely.

Dog. We will spare for no wit, I warrant you ; here's that shall drive some of them to a noncome : only get the learned writer to set down our excommunication and meet me at the gaol. *[Exeunt.]*

ACT IV

SCENE I. *A church. Enter DON PEDRO, DON JOHN, LEONATO, FRIAR FRANCIS, CLAUDIO, BENEDICK, HERO, BEATRICE, and attendants.*

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

Friar. You come hither, my lord, to marry this lady.

Claud. No.

Leon. To be married to her: friar, you come to marry her.

Friar. Lady, you come hither to be married to this count.

Hero. I do. 10

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

Claud. Know you any, Hero?

Hero. None, my lord.

Friar. Know you any, count?

Leon. I dare make his answer, none.

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

Bene. How now! interjections? Why, then, some be of laughing, as, ha, ha, he! 21

Claud. Stand thee by, friar. Father, by your leave: Will you with free and unconstrained soul

Give me this maid, your daughter ?

Leon. As freely, son, as God did give her me.

Claud. And what have I to give you back, whose worth

May counterpoise this rich and precious gift ?

D. Pedro. Nothing, unless you render her again.

Claud. Sweet prince, you learn me noble thankfulness.

There, Leonato, take her back again : 30

Give not this rotten orange to your friend ;

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

Behold how like a maid she blushes here !

O, what authority and show of truth

Can cunning sin cover itself withal !

Comes not that blood as modest evidence

To witness simple virtue ? Would you not swear,

All you that see her, that she were a maid,

By these exterior shows ? But she is none :

She knows the heat of a luxurious bed ; 40

Her blush is guiltiness, not modesty.

Leon. What do you mean, my lord ?

Claud. Not to be married,

Not to knit my soul to an approved wanton.

Leon. Dear my lord, if you, in your own proof,

Have vanquish'd the resistance of her youth

And made defeat of her virginity,—

Claud. I know what you would say : if I have known her,

You will say she did embrace me as a husband,

And so extenuate the 'forehand sin :

No, Leonato, 50

I never tempted her with word too large ;

But, as a brother to his sister, show'd

Bashful sincerity and comely love.

sc. 1] MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

Hero. And seem'd I ever otherwise to you ?

Claud. Out on thy seeming ! I will write against it :
You seem to me as Dian in her orb,
As chaste as is the bud ere it be blown ;
But you are more intemperate in your blood
Than Venus, or those pamper'd animals
That rage in savage sensuality. 60

Hero. Is my lord well, that he doth speak so wide ?

Leon. Sweet prince, why speak not you ?

D. Pedro. What should I speak !
I stand dishonour'd, that have gone about
To link my dear friend to a common stale.

Leon. Are these things spoken, or do I but dream ?

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

Bene. This looks not like a nuptial. }

Hero. True ! O God !

Claud. Leonato, stand I here ?

Is this the prince ? is this the prince's brother ?

Is this face Hero's ? are our eyes our own ? 70

Leon. All this is so : but what of this, my lord ?

Claud. Let me but move one question to your
daughter ;

And, by that fatherly and kindly power

That you have in her, bid her answer truly.

Leon. I charge thee do so, as thou art my child.

Hero. O, God defend me ! how am I beset !

What kind of catechising call you this ?

Claud. To make you answer truly to your name.

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

Claud. Marry, that can Hero ; 80
Hero itself can blot out Hero's virtue.

What man was he talk'd with you yesternight

Out at your window betwixt twelve and one ?

Now, if you are a maid, answer to this.

XHero. I talk'd with no man at that hour, my lord.

D. Pedro. Why, then are you no maiden. Leonato,
I am sorry you must hear : upon mine honour,
Myself, my brother and this grieved count
Did see her, hear her, at that hour last night
Talk with a ruffian at her chamber-window ; 90
Who hath indeed, most like a liberal villain,
Confess'd the vile encounters they have had
A thousand times in secret.

D. John. Fie, fie ! they are not to be named, my
lord,

Not to be spoke of :

There is not chastity enough in language
Without offence to utter them. Thus, pretty lady,
I am sorry for thy much misgovernment.

Claud. O Hero, what a Hero hadst thou been,
If half thy outward graces had been placed 100
About thy thoughts and counsels of thy heart !
But fare thee well, most foul, most fair ! farewell,
Thou pure impiety and impious purity !
For thee I'll lock up all the gates of love,
And on my eyelids shall conjecture hang,
To turn all beauty into thoughts of harm,
And never shall it more be gracious.

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

[*Hero swoons.*

Beat. Why, how now, cousin ! wherefore sink you
down ?

D. John. Come, let us go. These things, come thus
to light, 110

Smother her spirits up.

[*Exeunt Don Pedro, Don John, and Claudio.*

Bene. How doth the lady ?

Beat. Dead, I think. Help, uncle !
 Hero ! why, Hero ! Uncle ! Signior Benedick !
 Friar !

Leon. O Fate ! take not away thy heavy hand.
 Death is the fairest cover for her shame
 That may be wish'd for.

Beat. How now, cousin Hero !

Friar. Have comfort, lady.

Leon. Dost thou look up ?

Friar. Yea, wherefore should she not ?

Leon. Wherefore ! Why, doth not every earthly
 thing 120

Cry shame upon her ? Could she here deny
 The story that is printed in her blood ?
 Do not live, Hero ; do not ope thine eyes ;
 For, did I think thou wouldst not quickly die,
 Thought I thy spirits were stronger than thy shames,
 Myself would, on the rearward of reproaches,
 Strike at thy life. Grieved I, I had but one ?
 Chid I for that at frugal nature's frame ?
 O, one too much by thee ! Why had I one ?
 Why ever wast thou lovely in my eyes ? 130

Why had I not with charitable hand
 Took up a beggar's issue at my gates,
 Who smirched thus and mired with infamy,
 I might have said " No part of it is mine ;
 This shame derives itself from unknown loins " ?
 But mine and mine I loved and mine I praised
 And mine that I was proud on, mine so much
 That I myself was to myself not mine,
 Valuing of her,—why, she, O, she is fallen
 Into a pit of ink, that the wide sea 140
 Hath drops too few to wash her clean again

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING [ACT IV

And salt too little which may season give
To her foul-tainted flesh !

Bene. Sir, sir, be patient.

For my part, I am so attired in wonder,
I know not what to say.

(*Beat.* O, on my soul, my cousin is belied !)

Bene. Lady, were you her bedfellow last night ?

Beat. No, truly not ; although, until last night,
I have this twelvemonth been her bedfellow.

Leon. Confirm'd, confirm'd ! O, that is stronger
made 150

Which was before barr'd up with ribs of iron !
Would the two princes lie, and Claudio lie,
Who loved her so, that, speaking of her foulness,
Wash'd it with tears ? Hence from her ! let her die.

Friar. Hear me a little ;

For I have only been silent so long,
And given way unto this course of fortune,
By noting of the lady : I have mark'd
A thousand blushing apparitions start 160
Into her face, a thousand innocent shames
In angel whiteness beat away those blushes ;
And in her eye there hath appear'd a fire,
To burn the errors that these princes hold
Against her maiden truth. Call me a fool ;
Trust not my reading nor my observations,
Which with experimental seal doth warrant
The tenour of my book : trust not my age,
My reverence, calling, nor divinity,
If this sweet lady lie not guiltless here
Under some biting error.

Leon. *Friar,* it cannot be. 170

Thou seest that all the grace that she hath left
Is that she will not add to her damnation

A sin of perjury ; she not denies it :
 Why seek'st thou then to cover with excuse
 That which appears in proper nakedness ?

Friar. Lady, what man is he you are accused of ?

Hero. They know that do accuse me ; I know none ;
 If I know more of any man alive
 Than that which maiden modesty doth warrant,
 Let all my sins lack mercy ! O my father, 180
 Prove you that any man with me conversed
 At hours unmeet, or that I yesternight
 Maintain'd the change of words with any creature,
 Refuse me, hate me, torture me to death !

Friar. There is some strange misprision in the
 princes.

Bene. Two of them have the very bent of honour ;
 And if their wisdoms be misled in this,
 The practice of it lives in John the bastard,
 Whose spirits toil in frame of villainies.

Leon. I know not. If they speak but truth of her,
 These hands shall tear her ; if they wrong her honour,
 The proudest of them shall well hear of it. 192
 Time hath not yet so dried this blood of mine,
 Nor age so eat up my invention,
 Nor fortune made such havoc of my means,
 Nor my bad life reft me so much of friends,
 But they shall find, awaked in such a kind,
 Both strength of limb and policy of mind,
 Ability in means and choice of friends,
 To quit me of them throughly.

Friar. Pause awhile, 200

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

Maintain a mourning ostentation
 And on your family's old monument
 Hang mournful epitaphs and do all rites
 That appertain unto a burial.

Leon. What shall become of this ? what will this do ?

Friar. Marry, this well carried shall on her behalf
 Change slander to remorse ; that is some good : 211
 But not for that dream I on this strange course,
 But on this travail look for greater birth.
 She dying, as it must be so maintain'd,
 Upon the instant that she was accused,
 Shall be lamented, pitied and excused
 Of every hearer : for it so falls out
 That what we have we prize not to the worth
 Whiles we enjoy it, but being lack'd and lost,
 Why, then we rack the value, then we find 220
 The virtue that possession would not show us
 Whiles it was ours. So will it fare with Claudio :
 When he shall hear she died upon his words,
 The idea of her life shall sweetly creep
 Into his study of imagination,
 And every lovely organ of her life
 Shall come apparell'd in more precious habit,
 More moving-delicate and full of life,
 Into the eye and prospect of his soul,
 Than when she lived indeed ; then shall he mourn,
 If ever love had interest in his liver, 231
 And wish he had not so accused her,
 No, though he thought his accusation true.
 Let this be so, and doubt not but success
 Will fashion the event in better shape
 Than I can lay it down in likelihood.
 But if all aim but this be levell'd false,
 The supposition of the lady's death

Will quench the wonder of her infamy :
 And if it sort not well, you may conceal her, 240
 As best befits her wounded reputation,
 In some reclusive and religious life,
 Out of all eyes, tongues, minds and injuries.

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

Leon. Being that I flow in grief,
 The smallest twine may lead me. 250

Friar. 'Tis well consented : presently away ;
 For to strange sores strangely they strain the cure.
 Come, lady, die to live : this wedding-day
 Perhaps is but prolong'd : have patience and endure.

[*Exeunt all but Benedick and Beatrice.*]

Bene. Lady Beatrice, have you wept all this while ?

Beat. Yea, and I will weep a while longer.

Bene. I will not desire that.

Beat. You have no reason : I do it freely.

Bene. Surely I do believe your fair cousin is wronged.

Beat. Ah, how much might the man deserve of me
 that would right her ! 261

Bene. Is there any way to show such friendship ?

Beat. A very even way, but no such friend.

Bene. May a man do it ?

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

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

Beat. As strange as the thing I know not. It were
 as possible for me to say I loved nothing so well as
 you : but believe me not ; and yet I lie not ; I con-

fess nothing, nor I deny nothing. I am sorry for my cousin. 272

Bene. By my sword, Beatrice, thou lovest me.

Beat. Do not swear, and eat it.

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

Beat. Will you not eat your word ?

Bene. With no sauce that can be devised to it. I protest I love thee.

Beat. Why, then, God forgive me ! 280

Bene. What offence, sweet Beatrice ?

Beat. You have stayed me in a happy hour : I was about to protest I loved you.

Bene. And do it with all thy heart.

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

Bene. Come, bid me do anything for thee.

Beat. ~~Kill Claudio.~~

Bene. Ha ! not for the wide world.

Beat. You kill me to deny it. Farewell. 290

Bene. Tarry, sweet Beatrice.

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

Bene. Beatrice,—

Beat. In faith, I will go.

Bene. We'll be friends first.

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

Bene. Is Claudio thine enemy ? 299

Beat. Is he not approved in the height a villain, that hath slandered, scorned, dishonoured my kinswoman ? O that I were a man ! What, bear her in hand until they come to take hands ; and then, with public accusation, uncovered slander, unmitigated

rancour,—O God, that I were a man ! I would eat his heart in the market-place.

Bene. Hear me, Beatrice,—

Beat. Talk with a man out at a window ! A proper saying !

Bene. Nay, but, Beatrice,—

310

Beat. Sweet Hero ! She is wronged, she is slandered, she is undone.

Bene. Beat—

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

Bene. Tarry, good Beatrice. By this hand, I love thee.

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

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

Beat. Yea, as sure as I have a thought or a soul. 330

Bene. Enough, I am engaged ; I will challenge him. I will kiss your hand, and so I leave you. By this hand, Claudio shall render me a dear account. As you hear of me, so think of me. Go, comfort your cousin : I must say she is dead : and so, farewell.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II. *A prison. Enter DOGBERRY, VERGES, and Sexton, in gowns ; and the Watch, with CONRADE and BORACHIO.*

Dog. Is our whole dissembly appeared ?

Verg. O, a stool and a cushion for the sexton.

Sex. Which be the malefactors ?

Dog. Marry, that am I and my partner.

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

Sex. But which are the offenders that are to be examined ? let them come before master constable.

Dog. Yea, marry, let them come before me. What is your name, friend ? 10

Bora. Borachio.

Dog. Pray, write down, Borachio. Yours, sirrah ?

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

Dog. Write down, master gentleman Conrade. Masters, do you serve God ?

Con. } Yea, sir, we hope.
Bora. }

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

Con. Marry, sir, we say we are none.

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

Bora. Sir, I say to you we are none. 29

Dog. Well, stand aside. 'Fore God, they are both in a tale. Have you writ down, that they are none?

Sex. Master constable, you go not the way to examine : you must call forth the watch that are their accusers.

Dog. Yea, marry, that's the efastest way. Let the watch come forth. Masters, I charge you, in the prince's name, accuse these men.

First Watch. This man said, sir, that Don John, the prince's brother, was a villain. 39

Dog. Write down Prince John a villain. Why, this is flat perjury, to call a prince's brother villain.

Bora. Master constable,—

Dog. Pray thee, fellow, peace : I do not like thy look, I promise thee.

Sex. What heard you him say else?

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

Dog. Flat burglary as ever was committed.

Verg. Yea, by mass, that it is. 50

Sex. What else, fellow?

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

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

Sex. What else?

Watch. This is all. 58

Sex. And this is more, masters, than you can deny. Prince John is this morning secretly stolen away ; Hero was in this manner accused, in this very manner refused, and upon the grief of this suddenly died.

Master Constable, let these men be bound, and brought to Leonato's : I will go before and show him their examination. [Exit.

Dog. Come, let them be opinioned.

Verg. Let them be in the hands—

Con. Off, coxcomb !

Dog. God's my life, where's the sexton ? let him write down the prince's officer coxcomb. Come, bind them. Thou naughty varlet ! 71

Con. Away ! you are an ass, you are an ass.

Dog. Dost thou not suspect my place ! dost thou not suspect my years ? O that he were here to write me down an ass ! But, masters, remember that I am an ass ; though it be not written down, yet forget not that I am an ass. No, thou villain, thou art full of piety, as shall be proved upon thee by good witness. I am a wise fellow, and, which is more, an officer, and, which is more, a householder, and, which is more, as pretty a piece of flesh as any is in Messina, and one that knows the law, go to ; and a rich fellow enough, go to ; and a fellow that hath had losses, and one that hath two gowns and every thing handsome about him. Bring him away. O that I had been writ down an ass ! [Exeunt

ACT V

SCENE I. *Before LEONATO's house. Enter
LEONATO and ANTONIO.*

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

Leon. I pray thee, cease thy counsel,
Which falls into mine ears as profitless
As water in a sieve : give not me counsel ;
Nor let no comforter delight mine ear
But such a one whose wrongs do suit with mine.
Bring me a father that so loved his child,
Whose joy of her is overwhelm'd like mine,
And bid him speak of patience ; 10
Measure his woe the length and breadth of mine '
And let it answer every strain for strain,
As thus for thus and such a grief for such,
In every lineament, branch, shape, and form :
If such a one will smile and stroke his beard,
And, sorry wag, cry " hem ! " when he should groan,
Patch grief with proverbs, make misfortune drunk
With candle-wasters ; bring him yet to me,
And I of him will gather patience.
But there is no such man : for, brother, men 20
Can counsel and speak comfort to that grief
Which they themselves not feel ; but, tasting it,
Their counsel turns to passion, which before

Would give preceptual medicine to rage,
 Fetter strong madness in a silken thread,
 Charm ache with air and agony with words :
 No, no ; 'tis all men's office to speak patience
 To those that wring under the load of sorrow,
 But no man's virtue nor sufficiency
 To be so moral when he shall endure 30
 The like himself. Therefore give me no counsel :
 My griefs cry louder than advertisement.

Ant. Therein do men from children nothing differ.

Leon. I pray thee, peace. I will be flesh and blood ;
 For there was never yet philosopher
 That could endure the toothache patiently,
 However they have writ the style of gods
 And made a push at chance and sufferance.

Ant. Yet bend not all the harm upon yourself ;
 Make those that do offend you suffer too. 40

Leon. There thou speak'st reason ; nay, I will do so.
 My soul doth tell me Hero is belied ;
 And that shall Claudio know ; so shall the prince
 And all of them that thus dishonour her.

Ant. Here comes the prince and Claudio hastily.

Enter DON PEDRO and CLAUDIO.

D. Pedro. Good den, good den.

Claud. Good day to both of you.

Leon. Hear you, my lords,—

D. Pedro. We have some haste, Leonato.

Leon. Some haste, my lord ! well, fare you well,
 my lord ;

Are you so hasty now ? Well, all is one.

D. Pedro. Nay, do not quarrel with us, good old
 man. 50

Ant. If he could right himself with quarrelling,

Leon. Marry, thou dost wrong me; thou dissembler, thou :—

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

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

Leon. Tush, tush, man ; never fleer and jest at me :

I speak not like a dotard nor a fool,
As under privilege of age to brag
What I have done being young, or what would do
Were I not old. Know, Claudio, to thy head,
Thou hast so wrong'd mine innocent child and me
That I am forced to lay my reverence by
And, with grey hairs and bruise of many days,
Do challenge thee to trial of a man.
I say thou hast belied mine innocent child ;
Thy slander hath gone through and through her heart,
And she lies buried with her ancestors ;
O, in a tomb where never scandal slept,
Save this of hers, framed by thy villainy !

Claud. My villainy?

Leon. Thine, Claudio ; thine, I say.

D. Pedro. You say not right, old man.

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

Claud. Away ! I will not have to do with you.

Leon. Canst thou so daff me? Thou hast kill'd my
child :

It thou kill'st me, boy, thou shalt kill a man.

Ant. He shall kill two of us, and men indeed : 80
But that's no matter ; let him kill one first ;
Win me and wear me ; let him answer me.
Come, follow me, boy ; come, sir boy, come, follow
me :

Sir boy, I'll whip you from your foining fence ;
Nay, as I am a gentleman, I will.

Leon. Brother,—

Ant. Content yourself. God knows I loved my
niece ;

And she is dead, slander'd to death by villains,
That dare as well answer a man indeed
As I dare take a serpent by the tongue : 90
Boys, apes, braggarts, Jacks, milksops !

Leon. Brother Antony,—

Ant. Hold you content. What, man ! I know
them, yea,

And what they weigh, even to the utmost scruple,—
Scambling, out-facing, fashion-monging boys,
That lie and cog and flout, deprave and slander,
Go anticly, show outward hideousness,
And speak off half a dozen dangerous words,
How they might hurt their enemies, if they durst ;
And this is all.

Leon. But, brother Antony,—

Ant. Come, 'tis no matter ;
Do not you meddle ; let me deal in this. 101

D. Pedro. Gentlemen both, we will not wake your
patience.

My heart is sorry for your daughter's death :
But, on my honour, she was charged with nothing
But what was true and very full of proof.

Leon. My lord, my lord,—

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D. Pedro. I will not hear you.

Leon. No? Come, brother; away! I will be heard.

Ant. And shall, or some of us will smart for it.

[*Exeunt Leonato and Antonio.*]

D. Pedro. See, see; here comes the man we went to seek.

110

Enter BENEDICK.

Claud. Now, signior, what news?

Bene. Good day, my lord.

D. Pedro. Welcome, signior: you are almost come to part almost a fray.

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

D. Pedro. Leonato and his brother. What thinkest thou? Had we fought, I doubt we should have been too young for them.

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

121

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

Bene. It is in my scabbard; shall I draw it?

D. Pedro. Dost thou wear thy wit by thy side?

Claud. Never any did so, though very many have been beside their wit. I will bid thee draw, as we do the minstrels; draw, to pleasure us.

D. Pedro. As I am an honest man, he looks pale. Art thou sick, or angry?

131

Ⓒ *Claud.* What, courage, man! What though care killed a cat, thou hast mettle enough in thee to kill care.

Bene. Sir, I shall meet your wit in the career, an

you charge it against me. I pray you choose another subject.

Claud. Nay, then, give him another staff; this last was broke cross.

D. Pedro. By this light, he changes more and more : I think he be angry indeed. 141

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

Bene. Shall I speak a word in your ear ?

Claud. God bless me from a challenge !

Bene. [*Aside to Claudio*] You are a villain ; I jest not : I will make it good how you dare, with what you dare, and when you dare. Do me right, or I will protest your cowardice. You have killed a sweet lady, and her death shall fall heavy on you. Let me hear from you. 150

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

D. Pedro. What, a feast, a feast ?

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

Bene. Sir, your wit ambles well ; it goes easily. 158

D. Pedro. I'll tell thee how Beatrice praised thy wit the other day. I said, thou hadst a fine wit : " True," said she, " a fine little one." " No," said I, " a great wit " : " Right," says she, " a great gross one." " Nay," said I, " a good wit " : " Just," said she, " it hurts nobody." " Nay," said I, " the gentleman is wise " : " Certainly," said she, " a wise gentleman." " Nay," said I, " he hath the tongues " : " That I believe," said she, " for he swore a thing to me on Monday night, which he forswore on Tuesday morning ; there's a double

sc. 1] MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

tongue ; there's two tongues." Thus did she, an hour together, trans-shape thy particular virtues : yet at last she concluded with a sigh, thou wast the properest man in Italy. 173

Claud. For the which she wept heartily and said she cared not.

D. Pedro. Yea, that she did ; but yet, for all that, and if she did not hate him deadly, she would love him dearly : the old man's daughter told us all.

Claud. All, all : and, moreover, God saw him when he was hid in the garden. 180

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

Claud. Yea, and text underneath, " Here dwells Benedick the married man " ?

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

[Exit.

D. Pedro. He is in earnest.

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

D. Pedro. And hath challenged thee.

Claud. Most sincerely. 198

D. Pedro. What a pretty thing man is when he goes in his doublet and hose and leaves off his wit !

Claud. He is then a giant to an ape ; but then is an ape a doctor to such a man.

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING [ACT V

D. Pedro. But, soft you, let me be : pluck up, my heart, and be sad. Did he not say my brother was fled ?

Enter DOGBERRY, VERGES, and the Watch, with CONRADE and BORACHIO.

Dog. Come you, sir : if justice cannot tame you, she shall ne'er weigh more reasons in her balance : nay, an you be a cursing hypocrite once, you must be looked to. 209

D. Pedro. How now ? two of my brother's men bound ! Borachio one !

Claud. Hearken after their offence, my lord.

D. Pedro. Officers, what offence have these men done ?

Dog. Marry, sir, they have committed false report ; moreover, they have spoken untruths ; secondarily, they are slanders ; sixth and lastly, they have belied a lady ; thirdly, they have verified unjust things ; and, to conclude, they are lying knaves. 219

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

Claud. Rightly reasoned, and in his own division ; and, by my troth, there's one meaning well suited.

D. Pedro. Who have you offended, masters, that you are thus bound to your answer ? this learned constable is too cunning to be understood : what's your offence ? 229

Bora. Sweet prince, let me go no farther to mine answer : do you hear me, and let this count kill me. I have deceived even your very eyes : what your wisdoms could not discover, these shallow fools have

brought to light ; who in the night overheard me confessing to this man how Don John your brother incensed me to slander the Lady Hero, how you were brought into the orchard and saw me court Margaret in Hero's garments ; how you disgraced her, when you should marry her : my villainy they have upon record ; which I would rather seal with my death than repeat over to my shame. The lady is dead upon mine and my master's false accusation ; and, briefly, I desire nothing but the reward of a villain.

D. Pedro. Runs not this speech like iron through your blood ?

Claud. I have drunk poison whiles he utter'd it.

D. Pedro. But did my brother set thee on to this ?

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

D. Pedro. He is composed and framed of treachery :
And fled he is upon this villainy. 250

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

Dog. Come, bring away the plaintiffs : by this time our sexton hath reformed Signior Leonato of the matter : and, masters, do not forget to specify when time and place shall serve, that I am an ass.

Verg. Here, here comes master Signior Leonato, and the sexton too.

Re-enter LEONATO and ANTONIO, with the SEXTON.

Leon. Which is the villain ? let me see his eyes,
That, when I note another man like him, 260
I may avoid him : which of these is he ?

Bora. If you would know your wronger look on me.

Leon. Art thou the slave that with thy breath hast
kill'd

My innocent child ?

Bora. Yea, even I alone.

Leon. No, not so, villain ; thou beliest thyself :

Here stand a pair of honourable men ;

A third is fled, that had a hand in it.

I thank you, princes, for my daughter's death :

Record it with your high and worthy deeds :

'Twas bravely done, if you bethink you of it. 270

Claud. I know not how to pray your patience ;

Yet I must speak. Choose your revenge yourself ;

Impose me to what penance your invention

Can lay upon my sin : yet sinn'd I not

But in mistaking.

D. Pedro. By my soul, nor I :

And yet, to satisfy this good old man,

I would bend under any heavy weight

That he'll enjoin me to.

Leon. I cannot bid you bid my daughter live ;

That were impossible : but, I pray you both, 280

Possess the people in Messina here

How innocent she died ; and if your love

Can labour aught in sad invention,

Hang her an epitaph upon her tomb

And sing it to her bones, sing it to-night :

To-morrow morning come you to my house,

And since you could not be my son-in-law,

Be yet my nephew : my brother hath a daughter,

Almost the copy of my child that's dead,

And she alone is heir to both of us : 290

Give her the right you should have given her cousin,

And so dies my revenge.

Claud. O noble sir,

Your over-kindness doth wring tears from me !

I do embrace your offer ; and dispose

For henceforth of poor Claudio.

Leon. To-morrow then I will expect your coming ;
To-night I take my leave. This naughty man
Shall face to face be brought to Margaret,
Who I believe was pack'd in all this wrong,
Hired to it by your brother. 300

Bora. No, by my soul, she was not,
Nor knew not what she did when she spoke to me,
But always hath been just and virtuous
In any thing that I do know by her.

Dog. Moreover, sir, which indeed is not under white
and black, this plaintiff here, the offender, did call
me ass : I beseech you, let it be remembered in his
punishment. And also, the watch heard them talk
of one Deformed : they say he wears a key in his ear
and a lock hanging by it, and borrows money in
God's name, the which he hath used so long and
never paid that now men grow hard-hearted and will
lend nothing for God's sake : pray you, examine him
upon that point.

Leon. I thank thee for thy care and honest pains.

Dog. Your worship speaks like a most thankful and
reverend youth ; and I praise God for you.

Leon. There's for thy pains.

Dog. God save the foundation !

Leon. Go, I discharge thee of thy prisoner, and I
thank thee. 321

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

[*Exeunt Dogberry and Verges.*]

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING [ACT V

Leon. Until to-morrow morning, lords, farewell.

Ant. Farewell, my lords : we look for you to-morrow. 330

D. Pedro. We will not fail.

Claud. To-night I'll mourn with Hero.

Leon. [*To the Watch*] Bring you these fellows on.

We'll talk with Margaret,
How her acquaintance grew with this lewd fellow.
[*Exeunt, severally.*]

SCENE II. LEONATO'S garden. Enter BENEDICK
and MARGARET meeting.

Bene. Pray thee, sweet Mistress Margaret, deserve well at my hands by helping me to the speech of Beatrice.

Marg. Will you then write me a sonnet in praise of my beauty ?

Bene. In so high a style, Margaret, that no man living shall come over it ; for, in most comely truth, thou deservest it.

Marg. To have no man come over me ! why, shall I always keep below stairs ? 10

Bene. Thy wit is as quick as the greyhound's mouth ; it catches.

Marg. And yours as blunt as the fencer's foils, which hit, but hurt not.

Bene. A most manly wit, Margaret ; it will not hurt a woman : and so, I pray thee, call Beatrice : I give thee the bucklers.

Marg. Give us the swords ; we have bucklers of our own.

Bene. If you use them, Margaret, you must put in

the pikes with a vice ; and they are dangerous weapons for maids. 22

Marg. Well, I will call Beatrice to you, who I think hath legs.

Bene. And therefore will come. [Exit Margaret.

[Sings] The god of love,
That sits above,

And knows me, and knows me,

How pitiful I deserve,— 29

I mean in singing ; but in loving, Leander the good swimmer, Troilus the first employer of pandars, and a whole bookful of these quondam carpet-mongers, whose names yet run smoothly in the even road of a blank verse, why, they were never so truly turned over and over as my poor self in love. Marry, I cannot show it in rhyme ; I have tried : I can find out no rhyme to “ lady ” but “ baby,” an innocent rhyme ; for “ scorn,” “ horn,” a hard rhyme ; for “ school,” “ fool,” a babbling rhyme ; very ominous endings : no, I was not born under a rhyming planet, nor I cannot woo in festival terms. 41

Enter BEATRICE.

Sweet Beatrice, wouldst thou come when I call thee ?

Beat. Yea, signior, and depart when you bid me.

Bene. O, stay but till then !

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

Bene. Only foul words ; and thereupon I will kiss thee.

Beat. Foul words is but foul wind, and foul wind is but foul breath, and foul breath is noisome ; therefore I will depart unknissed. 52

Bene. Thou hast frightened the word out of his right sense, so forcible is thy wit. But I must tell thee plainly, Claudio undergoes my challenge ; and either I must shortly hear from him, or I will subscribe him a coward. And, I pray thee now, tell me for which of my bad parts didst thou first fall in love with me ? 59

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

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

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

Bene. Thou and I are too wise to woo peaceably. 70

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

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

Beat. And how long is that, think you ? 79

Bene. Question : an hour in clamour and a quarter in rheum : therefore is it most expedient for the wise, if Don Worm, his conscience, find no impediment to the contrary, to be the trumpet of his own virtues, as I am to myself. So much for praising myself, who, I myself will bear witness, is praiseworthy : and now tell me, how doth your cousin ?

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Beat. Very ill.

Bene. And how do you ?

Beat. Very ill too.

Bene. Serve God, love me and mend. There will
I leave you too, for here comes one in haste. 91

Enter URSULA.

Urs. Madam, you must come to your uncle.
Yonder's old coil at home : it is proved my Lady
Hero hath been falsely accused, the prince and
Claudio mightily abused ; and Don John is the author
of all, who is fled and gone. Will you come presently ?

Beat. Will you go hear this news, signior.

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

SCENE III. *A churchyard. Enter DON PEDRO,
CLAUDIO, and three or four with tapers.*

Claud. Is this the monument of Leonato ?

A Lord. It is, my lord.

Claud. [*Reading out of a scroll*]

Done to death by slanderous tongues

Was the Hero that here lies :

Death, in guerdon of her wrongs,

Gives her fame which never dies.

So the life that died with shame

Lives in death with glorious fame.

Hang thou there upon the tomb,

Praising her when I am dumb. 10

Now, music, sound, and sing your solemn hymn.

SONG.

Pardon, goddess of the night,
 Those that slew thy virgin knight ;
 For the which, with songs of woe,
 Round about her tomb they go.
 Midnight, assist our moan ;
 Help us to sigh and groan,
 Heavily, heavily :
 Graves, yawn and yield your dead,
 Till death be uttered, 20
 Heavily, heavily.

Claud. Now unto thy bones good night !

Yearly will I do this rite.

D. Pedro. Good morrow, masters ; put your torches
 out :

 The wolves have prey'd ; and look, the
 gentle day,
 Before the wheels of Phœbus, round about,
 Dapples the drowsy east with spots of grey.
 Thanks to you all, and leave us : fare you
 well.

Claud. Good morrow, masters : each his several
 way.

D. Pedro. Come, let us hence, and put on other weeds :
 And then to Leonato's we will go. 31

Claud. And Hymen now with luckier issue speed's
 Than this for whom we render'd up this
 woe. [Exeunt.]

SCENE IV. *A room in LEONATO'S house. Enter LEONATO, ANTONIO, BENEDICK, BEATRICE, MARGARET, ÚRSULA, FRIAR FRANCIS, and HERO.*

Friar. Did I not tell you she was innocent ?

Leon. So are the prince and Claudio, who accused her

Upon the error that you heard debated :
But Margaret was in some fault for this,
Although against her will, as it appears
In the true course of all the question.

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

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

Leon. Well, daughter, and you gentlewomen all, 10
Withdraw into a chamber by yourselves,
And when I send for you come hither mask'd.

[Exeunt Ladies.]

The prince and Claudio promised by this hour
To visit me. You know your office, brother :
You must be father to your brother's daughter,
And give her to young Claudio.

Ant. Which I will do with confirm'd countenance.

Bene. Friar, I must entreat your pains, I think.

Friar. To do what, signior ?

Bene. To bind me, or undo me ; one of them. 20
Signior Leonato, truth it is, good signior,
Your niece regards me with an eye of favour.

Leon. That eye my daughter lent her : 'tis most
true.

Bene. And I do with an eye of love requite her.

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

Bene. Your answer, sir, is enigmatical :
 But, for my will, my will is your good will
 May stand with ours, this day to be conjoin'd
 In the state of honourable marriage : 30
 In which, good friar, I shall desire your help.

Leon. My heart is with your liking.

Friar. And my help.
 Here comes the prince and Claudio.

Enter DON PEDRO and CLAUDIO, and two or three others.

D. Pedro. Good morrow to this fair assembly.

Leon. Good morrow, prince ; good morrow,
 Claudio :

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

Claud. I'll hold my mind, were she an Ethiope.

Leon. Call her forth, brother ; here's the friar
 ready. [*Exit Antonio.*]

D. Pedro. Good morrow, Benedick. Why, what's
 the matter, 40

That you have such a February face,
 So full of frost, of storm and cloudiness ?

Claud. I think he thinks upon the savage bull.
 Tush, fear not, man ; we'll tip thy horns with gold
 And all Europa shall rejoice at thee,
 As once Europa did at lusty Jove,
 When he would play the noble beast in love.

Bene. Bull Jove, sir, had an amiable low ;
 And some such strange bull leap'd your father's
 cow,

And got a calf in that same noble feat 50
 Much like to you, for you have just his bleat.

Claud. For this I owe you : here comes other
 reckonings.

Re-enter ANTONIO, with the Ladies masked.

Which is the lady I must seize upon ?

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

Claud. Why, then she's mine. Sweet, let me see your face.

Leon. No, that you shall not, till you take her hand Before this friar and swear to marry her.

Claud. Give me your hand : before this holy friar, I am your husband, if you like of me.

Hero. And when I lived, I was your other wife. 60

[Unmasking.]

And when you loved, you were my other husband.

Claud. Another Hero !

Hero. Nothing certainer :

One Hero died defiled, but I do live,

And surely as I live I am a maid.

D. Pedro. The former Hero ! Hero that is dead.

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

Friar. All this amazement can I qualify ;

When after that the holy rites are ended,

I'll tell you largely of fair Hero's death :

Meantime, let wonder seem familiar,

70

And to the chapel let us presently.

Bene. Soft and fair, friar, which is Beatrice ?

Beat. *[Unmasking]* I answer to that name. What is your will ?

Bene. Do not you love me ?

Beat. Why, no ; no more than reason.

Bene. Why, then your uncle and the prince and Claudio

Have been deceived ; they swore you did.

Beat. Do not you love me ?

Bene. Troth, no ; no more than reason.

Beat. Why, then my cousin Margaret and Ursula
Are much deceived ; for they did swear you did. 81

Bene. They swore that you were almost sick for me.

Beat. They swore that you were well-nigh dead for
me.

Bene. 'Tis no such matter. Then you do not love
me ?

Beat. No, truly, but in friendly recompense.

Leon. Come, cousin, I am sure you love the gentle-
man.

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

Hero. And here's another 90
Writ in my cousin's hand, stolen from her pocket,
Containing her affection unto Benedick.

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

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

Bene. Peace ! I will stop your mouth. [*Kissing her.*

D. Pedro. How dost thou, Benedick, the married
man ? 100

Bene. I'll tell thee what, prince ; a college of wit-
crackers cannot flout me out of my humour. Dost
thou think I care for a satire or an epigram ? No :
if a man will be beaten with brains, a' shall wear
nothing handsome about him. In brief, since I do
propose to marry, I will think nothing to any pur-
pose that the world can say against it ; and therefore

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never flout at me for what I have said against it ;
for man is a giddy thing, and this is my conclusion.
For thy part, Claudio, I did think to have beaten thee ;
but in that thou art like to be my kinsman, live un-
bruised and love my cousin. 112

Claud. I had well hoped thou wouldst have denied
Beatrice, that I might have cudgelled thee out of thy
single life, to make thee a double-dealer ; which, out
of question, thou wilt be, if my cousin do not look
exceeding narrowly to thee.

Bene. Come, come, we are friends : let's have a
dance ere we are married, that we may lighten our
own hearts and our wives' heels. 120

Leon. We'll have dancing afterward.

Bene. First, of my word ; therefore play, music.
Prince, thou art sad ; get thee a wife, get thee a wife :
there is no staff more reverend than one tipped with
horn.

Enter a Messenger.

Mess. My lord, your brother John is ta'en in flight,
And brought with armed men back to Messina.

Bene. Think not on him till to-morrow : I'll
devise thee brave punishments for him. Strike up,
pipers. [Dance. Exeunt.

NOTES

Act I

Scene 1

Don Pedro, returning victorious from a campaign, visits Messina and is entertained by the governor, Leonato. The contest of wits between the professed marriage-haters, Benedick and Beatrice, begins. Claudio confesses his love for Hero to Benedick and Don Pedro. He is mocked by the former, but is promised the help of the latter.

1. 1. (Stage Direction) *Leonato's orchard*: See note to I. ii. 9.
- Enter Leonato*. . . . The Quarto and Folio include Innogen, wife of Leonato, among those who enter here. She is again mentioned in the original stage direction for II. 1. As no allusion is made to her in the text itself, it seems possible that these stage directions are unrevised survivals from an old play which Shakespeare was remodelling.
1. 7. *Sort*: rank.
1. 18. *An uncle*: not mentioned elsewhere in the play.
1. 22. *Badge*: "a mark of service: hence appropriately used for a mark of inferiority, and as such an expression of modesty" (W. A. Wright).
1. 26. *Kind*: natural.
1. 29. *Mountanto*: Literally, an upward blow in fencing, but here used ironically for Benedick in allusion to his supposed taste for fighting.
11. 37-40. *He set . . . bird-bolt*: One certain thing about this obscure sentence is that its various statements are not to be taken literally; e.g., it is not to be believed that Benedick did actually set up any *bills* in Messina. The general idea seems to be that Benedick, who thought

himself "loved of all ladies," considered himself Cupid's equal in subduing hearts, but the Jester in some way put him out of countenance and deflated his arrogance. The probability is that there is here a reference to some topical incident, familiar to Shakespeare's audience but lost to us, in which a Court Fool and such a gallant as Benedick were concerned.

1. 37. *Set up his bills* : displayed his advertisements, publicly announced his challenge.
1. 38. *Flight* : long distance shooting with light, well-feathered arrows called "flights" or "flight-arrows."
1. 39. *Subscribed for* : accepted on behalf of.
1. 40. *Bird-bolt* : a short, blunt-headed arrow used for shooting at birds. Not being very dangerous, it was a suitable weapon for Fools to use. Moreover, it was popularly regarded as Cupid's own weapon.
1. 44. *Tax* : gibe at, censure.
1. 45. *Meet with* : even with.
1. 49. *Valiant trencher-man* : hearty eater.
1. 50. *Stomach* : appetite, with possibly a quibble on its other sense of "courage."
- ll. 56-57. *Stuffed man* : dummy.
1. 63. *Five wits* : According to Stephen Hawes's "Pastime of Pleasure" (c. 1506), ch. xxiv. st. 2, the five wits are :—
First common wit, and then imagination,
Fantasy, and estimation truly,
And memory.
1. 66. *Difference* : "an alteration or addition to a coat of arms, to distinguish a junior member or branch of a family from the chief line" (N.E.D.).
1. 69. *Sworn brother* : a brother in arms. In the days of chivalry, knights who had taken oaths to share each other's fortune were known as *fratres jurati*, or sworn brothers.
1. 73. *Block* : the wooden mould on which a hat was made.
- ll. 74-75. *In your books* : in your favour, in your good books.
1. 78. *Squarer* : quarrelsome fellow.
1. 84. *Presently* : immediately.
1. 87. *Hold friends* : keep friends, in order to avoid Beatrice's raillery.

1. 103. *For then . . . child* : Had Benedick, at the time of Hero's birth, been a grown man with his present reputation as a libertine, there might have been cause to question her paternity. See ll. 104-105.
1. 104. *You have it full* : Leonato's retort has scored a direct hit.
1. 106. *Fathers herself* : shows that Leonato is her father by her likeness to him.
1. 111. *Still* : always, constantly.
1. 112. *Marks* : pays attention.
1. 116. *Feed it* : i.e. feed her disdain.
1. 117. *Convert* : change (intransitive).
1. 123. *A dear happiness* : a stroke of excellent luck.
- ll. 129-130. *A predestinate scratched face* : the scratched face which is predestined for the man who marries you.
1. 132. *As yours were* : as yours is.
1. 136. *Continuer* : one able to "stay the course."
1. 138. *Jade's trick* : the trick of a vicious horse. "Beatrice means simply 'end the argument by stopping suddenly and so casting me off,' which is what Benedick had just done" (Prof. Dover Wilson).
1. 143. *Month* : This is not to be taken literally. Don Pedro, speaking in jest, merely means that he will avail himself fully of Leonato's hospitality. Cf. III. ii. 1-2.
1. 157. *Noted her not* : did not study her carefully.
1. 176. *Sad* : serious.
- ll. 176-177. *Flouting Jack* : impudent, mocking fellow.
- ll. 177-178. *Cupid . . . carpenter?* : These are flat contradictions, for the blind Cupid would be of no use in searching for hares, and Vulcan was a smith. Benedick asks if Claudio is not praising Hero for qualities that she does not possess.
1. 179. *Go in* : join in.
- ll. 182-183. *No such matter* : nothing of the kind.
1. 191. *Wear . . . suspicion* : i.e. be suspected that he wears a cap to hide the horns which the infidelity of a wife was supposed to plant in her husband's head. There are many allusions in the play to the cuckold's horns.
1. 194. *Sundays* : the days which would normally be spent at home, in the presence of your wife.

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1. 206. *So were it uttered*: in this jesting manner would Benedick blurt out my confidence.
1. 207. *The old tale*: Probably an old version of an eighteenth-century Bluebeard story contributed by Blakeway to the Variorum edition of 1821. In this story "it is not so," etc., is frequently repeated.
1. 213. *To fetch meⁱⁿ*: to cheat, deceive me.
1. 216. *My two . . . troths*: Probably his conflicting allegiances to Don Pedro and Claudio.
11. 225-226. *In the force of his will*: by wilful obstinacy. According to the definition of the medieval schoolmen, heresy consisted in obstinate adherence to heterodox opinion.
11. 229-231. *But that I . . . pardon me*: but women must excuse me if I do not give them the opportunity of cuckolding me by my marrying one of them. *Recheat*: a set of notes sounded upon the horn to call the hounds together. *Baldrick*: a leather belt worn over the shoulder and used for supporting the bugle or horn. Notice in each word an implied allusion to the cuckold's horn.
1. 233. *Fine*: conclusion.
1. 238. *Lose . . . blood*: It was—and by some people still is—believed that a sigh draws a drop of blood from the heart.
1. 240. *Ballad-maker's pen*: the instrument used for writing ballads of love, and consequently, in Benedick's opinion, a thing to be despised.
1. 241. *The sign . . . Cupid*: Blind Cupid was often painted over the doors of such houses.
1. 243. *Argument*: subject (for ridicule).
1. 244. *Bottle*: In this case probably a wicker basket.
1. 246. *Adam*: Probably an allusion to Adam Bell, the Robin Hood of the North and a famous archer.
1. 247. *Try*: prove.
1. 248. "*In time . . . yoke*": A line borrowed from Kyd's "The Spanish Tragedy," II. i. 3.
1. 256. *Horn-mad*: raving mad, with a quibble on the cuckold's horn.
1. 258. *Venice*: This city was, in Shakespeare's day, proverbial for the licentious behaviour of its inhabitants.
1. 260. *Temporise with the hours*: "come to terms in the

- course of time," i.e. fall a victim to marriage in due course.
1. 265. *Matter* : intelligence.
 11. 266-270. *I commit . . . Benedick* : The usual Elizabethan manner of concluding a letter.
 1. 269. *The sixth of July* : " Old Midsummer Day, an appropriate date for such midsummer madness " (W. A. Wright).
 1. 272. *Guarded with fragments* : ornamented with quotations.
 11. 272-273. *And the guards . . . neither* : nor are the ornaments sewn on except loosely. *Basted* : from " baste," to sew together with temporary stitches.
 1. 274. *Old ends* : tags, quotations.
Examine your conscience : see if such quotations do not apply to you.
 1. 276. *My liege* : The change here from prose to verse is in keeping with the change from the prosaic to the poetic in sentiment.
 1. 282. *Affect* : love.
 1. 283. *Ended action* : the campaign just concluded.
 1. 287. *Now* : i.e. now that.
 1. 295. *Break with her* : broach the question with her.
 1. 299. *His complexion !* : its outward appearance.
 1. 301. *Salved it . . . treatise* : toned down its abruptness by leading up to it gradually " with a book of words " (l. 293) or whole volumes of love talk.
 1. 303. *The fairest . . . necessity* : " the best boon is that which answers the necessities of the case " (Staunton).
 1. 304. *'Tis once* : in brief, once for all, enough said.

Scene II

Antonio, misled by an erroneous report, informs his brother Leonato that Don Pedro is about to beg the hand of Hero for himself.

1. 1. *Cousin* : really " nephew," but in Shakespeare's day " cousin " was used loosely as the equivalent of " kinsman."
1. 8. *Thick-pleached alley* : garden walk bordered or over-arched by closely interwoven boughs.
1. 9. *The orchard* : The Quarto reads *mine*, the Folio *my*.

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING [ACT I. SC. III]

The emendation to *the* was first suggested by Dr. F. S. Boas to harmonise with his placing of the opening scene in Leonato's orchard. It was Don Pedro's speech there at the close of I. 1. which Antonio's man overheard and reported erroneously to his master.

- l. 10. *Discovered* : revealed.
- l. 13. *Accordant* : willing to accept his courtship.
- ll. 13-14. *By the top* : We should say "by the forelock."
- l. 15. *Wit* : sense.
- l. 20. *Appear itself* : materialise.
- l. 23. (Stage Direction) *Enter . . . Musician* : It seems clear that Antonio's son and the musician whom he has provided (see l. 2) enter here. Leonato greets his nephew as *Cousin* (l. 23 and l. 26), and then begs the musician, whose skill he will use, to excuse him ("I cry you mercy, friend," ll. 24-25). This stage direction, suggested by Dr. Boas, is better because more explicit than the usual "*Enter Attendants*."

Scene III

The disgruntled Don John, on hearing of Claudio's love for Hero, determines to thwart it by villainous means.

- l. 1. *What the good-year* : A mild imprecation of obscure origin, like its counterpart "What the dickens," which Shakespeare also uses.
- l. 11. *Born under Saturn* : born when the planet Saturn was in the ascendant and so of a "saturnine," morose disposition.
- l. 12. *Mortifying* : deadly.
- l. 17. *Claw* : flatter.
- l. 20. *Stood out* : been in opposition to.
- l. 25. *Canker* : dog-rose.
- l. 26. *Blood* : disposition.
- l. 27. *Carriage* : behaviour, deportment.
- ll. 30-32. *I am trusted . . . cage* : "They show perfect trust in me,—yes, by putting a muzzle on me like a dangerous dog ; they give me perfect freedom,—yes, by fettering me with a clog, like an animal they are afraid will run away : so, like a caged bird, I am determined I will not sing to please them" (Deighton). The metaphors are rather mixed in this speech.

1. 37. *It only* : *i.e.* only it. "I make nothing else my counsellor" (Steevens).
1. 40. *Came* : have come.
1. 43. *Model* : ground-plan, design.
1. 44. *What . . . fool* : *i.e.* What sort of a fool is he?
1. 49. *Proper* : fine (here used ironically).
And who, and who? : The repetition indicates Don John's impatience to know with whom Claudio is in love.
1. 53. *March-chick!* : Here used as a type of precocity; for March is usually too early a month to rear chickens!
1. 55. *Entertained for* : hired as.
1. 56. *Smoking a musty room* : In those days of little cleanliness such precautions were taken to sweeten unsavoury rooms. Cf. Burton's "Anatomy of Melancholy" (1632), p. 261 : "the smoake of juniper is in great request with us at Oxford, to sweeten our chambers."
11. 56, 58. *Me* : ethic dative.
1. 57. *Sad* : serious.
1. 58. *Arias* : tapestry hangings. The name is derived from the town in France where they were first made.
11. 58-60. *And there . . . Claudio* : We gather from this that Don Pedro and Claudio have discussed their scheme afresh, this time within the house. Borachio is in error when he says that Don Pedro was to woo Hero "for himself," since he intended to disguise as Claudio (see I. 1. 307-308); but the error convinces Don John, who in his turn convinces Claudio of Don Pedro's supposed double-dealing.
1. 63. *Cross* : thwart, with a quibble on the sense of "make the sign of the cross," as the use of the word *bless* immediately afterwards shows.
1. 65. *Sure* : to be depended on.
11. 68-69. *Would . . . mind!* : If he were, he would poison the whole company.

Act II

Scene 1

At a masquerade Beatrice defeats Benedick in the renewed battle of wits, and Don Pedro successfully woos Hero for Claudio. Claudio is persuaded by Don John and the

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deceived Benedick that the Prince is wooing her for himself, but the Prince convinces him of his error and Claudio is betrothed to Hero. They determine to while away the interval before the marriage by scheming to make Benedick and Beatrice fall in love with each other.

1. 4. *Heart-burned* : suffering from heart-burn, produced in this case by the tartness, or acidity, of Don John's looks.
1. 9. *My lady's eldest son* : a spoilt child.
1. 18. *Shrewd* : "curst" (l. 19), bitter.
1. 22. *Curst cow* : vicious cow.
1. 26. *Just* : precisely so.
1. 30. *In the woollen* : between blankets.
1. 39. *In earnest . . . bear-ward* : as a pledge, or first instalment of my wages, from the bear-keeper, with whom I would find employment.
1. 40. *Lead his apes into hell* : Those who died old maids were proverbially said to lead apes in hell, possibly because they could not lead children into heaven. The origin of the proverb is unknown. Bears and apes were sometimes exhibited together in the Elizabethan period ; hence the present association of apes with the bear-ward.
1. 42. *But* : only.
1. 60. *With* : by.
1. 63. *To match . . . kindred* : to marry within the degrees of affinity forbidden by the Church.
1. 65. *In that kind* : in that manner, with a view to marriage.
1. 68. *In good time* : A pun on the musical and the ordinary sense of *time*.
1. 69. *Important* : importunate.
1. 72. *Measure* : Another pun on the senses "moderation" and "a stately, solemn dance."
1. 75. *Ancientry* : old-fashioned style ; here possibly = dignity suited to old age.
- ll. 76-77. *Cinque pace* : the first five steps of a galliard, a lively dance ; hence used for the galliard itself. It was sometimes spelt, as Beatrice would pronounce it, *sinkapace* ; hence the pun in "till he sink into his grave."

1. 78. *Passing shrewdly* : exceedingly keenly.
- ll. 79-80. *I can . . . daylight* : Said ironically, probably with an allusion to marriage ; cf. "to go to church" (ll. 343-344) = to be married.
1. 82. (Stage Direction) *Antonio masks* : It is improbable that Leonato, as host, would mask, and the ladies present certainly do not. Prof. Dover Wilson makes Antonio go out at this point and re-enter masked after the arrival of Don Pedro's company.
Enter Don Pedro . . . masked : Prof. Dover Wilson omits the name of Balthasar, arguing that it is a compositor's error for Borachio, who is not mentioned by name in the Quarto or Folio stage directions here. Consequently he gives Balthasar's speeches (ll. 96, 99, 101, 104, 107) to Borachio, who is indeed, in the light of later developments, a more fitting partner for Margaret.
1. 83. *Friend* : lover.
1. 90. *Favour* : appearance, looks.
- ll. 90-91. *God defend . . . case !* : God forbid that your face should be no better than your mask !
- ll. 92-95. *My visor . . . speak love* : These lines really form a fourteener couplet, the metre in which Golding translated Ovid's "Metamorphoses." They allude to Ovid's story of Baucis and Philemon, who entertained as guests in their thatched cottage Jupiter and Mercury, disguised as mortals ("Metamorphoses," viii. 630 *et seq.*).
1. 96. *Balthasar* : The Quarto and Folio give Balthasar's first three speeches to Benedick ; Theobald assigned them to Balthasar. All of Balthasar's speeches to Margaret are assigned to Borachio by Prof. Dover Wilson (see above, note to l. 82).
1. 106. *Answer, clerk* : i.e. Say "Amen." The clerk would read the responses in church.
1. 110. *At a word* : indeed (literally, "briefly").
1. 113. *Do him so ill-well* : imitate his foolish personal habits so accurately.
1. 114. *Dry hand* : In this case a sign of old age.
- ll. 114-115. *Up and down* : A common Elizabethan phrase meaning "exactly."
1. 126. *The "Hundred Merry Tales"* : a jest book printed by John Rastell in 1526. As the jests are often feeble

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and frequently indecent, Beatrice's indignation is easily understood.

- l. 134. *Only his gift* : his only gift.
Impossible : so exaggerated as to be incredible.
- l. 139. *Fleet* : company.
Boarded : accosted.
- ll. 142-143. *Break . . . on me* : cf. "You break jests as braggarts do their blades" (V. i. 187). The word *break* suggests verbal tilting or fencing.
- l. 145. *There's a partridge . . . saved* : Said ironically, for a partridge wing, although esteemed the best part of the bird, would prove but a poor supper for such a "very valiant trencher-man" as Benedick.
- l. 149. (Stage Direction) *Dance* : So far the masquers have been merely choosing their partners and taking their places for the dance.
- ll. 150-152. *Sure . . . about it* : It is obvious from I. iii. 58-60 that Don John was fully aware that Don Pedro was merely wooing Hero on Claudio's behalf. Consequently he is here deliberately lying in order to wound Claudio, the "one visor" remaining, whose identity Borachio's remark (l. 153) confirms for the benefit of the audience.
- l. 152. *One visor* : one masked person.
- ll. 157-158. *Very near . . . love* : very much in my brother's confidence.
- l. 170. *Office* : business.
- l. 171. *All hearts . . . use* : let all hearts . . . use.
- l. 174. *Against* : under the influence of.
Blood : passion.
- l. 175. *Accident of hourly proof* : incident of very frequent occurrence.
- l. 176. *Mistrusted* : suspected.
- l. 177. *Count Claudio?* : The question is necessary because Claudio is still masked.
- l. 181. *Willow* : an emblem of forlorn love.
- l. 182. *County* : another form of "count."
- l. 183. *Garland* : The garland would be of willow.
Usurer's chain : In Shakespeare's day the wealthy citizens, who would often combine money-lending with their normal business, wore chains of gold for personal adornment. To-day such chains would be worn only

- by mayors and aldermen on official occasions.
1. 188. *Drovier* : a variant form of *drover*.
 1. 195. *If it . . . be* : if you will not leave me.
 11. 199-200. *But so* : but if I believe that I am called the prince's fool.
 1. 201. *Base, though bitter* : As there is no contrast between *base* and *bitter*, we should perhaps assume that an original "the" was misread as "tho'" and printed "though."
 11. 202-203. *That puts . . . me out* : that pretends to represent public opinion, and so reports me.
 1. 203. (Stage Direction) *Re-enter . . . Leonato* : The Quarto makes Don John, Borachio, and Conrade enter here, but no speeches are given to them and the next scene shows that they have not been present when the date of Hero's marriage is discussed. The Folio reads *Enter the Prince*.
 1. 207. *Lady Fame* : *Fame* is here used in the sense of "rumour," "gossip."
 11. 207-208. *A lodge in a warren* : a keeper's lodge or huntsman's shelter in a game preserve—a solitary dwelling likely to breed melancholy.
 1. 215. *Flat transgression* : absolute folly.
 1. 218. *A trust* : a trusting act, such as that of the schoolboy.
 1. 225. *Them* : the young birds in the nest.
 11. 227-228. *If . . . honestly* : if their love-making corresponds to your promises on Hero's behalf, then I shall believe your professions of honest dealing.
 11. 229-230. *Quarrel to you* : complaint against you.
 1. 232. *Misused* : abused.
 11. 235-236. *Not thinking . . . myself* : Actually Beatrice knew very well that it was Benedick to whom she was talking.
 1. 238. *Impossible conveyance* : extraordinary dexterity.
 1. 239. *A man at a mark* : Probably the man who stood near the butts to inform the archers of the results of their shooting.
 1. 240. *Poniards* : daggers.
 1. 242. *Terminations* : terms, words.
 1. 245. *Had left him* : still possessed, namely, dominion over the whole of creation.

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- II. 248-249. *The infernal Ate . . . apparel* : the classical goddess of discord, beautiful though Beatrice is to look at.
- II. 249-250. *Some scholar . . . her* : Latin was the language of exorcisms, and therefore a scholar would be needed to drive the devil out of Beatrice.
1. 251. *Live . . . sanctuary* : "Hell itself becomes a sanctuary, in comparison with her presence" (Furness).
1. 259. *Toothpicker* : toothpick.
- II. 260-261. *Prester John's foot* : Prester, or Presbyter, John was a mythical Christian ruler of a wealthy kingdom sometimes identified as Abyssinia, sometimes as India.
1. 261. *The great Cham's beard* : "The Great Cham" was the title given to the Khans or Emperors of the Tartars. Purchas in his "Pilgrimage" says that Presbyter John was at one time ruler of the Tartars and later became subject to the Great Cham.
1. 262. *The Pigmies* : Homer ("Iliad," Book III.) describes this race of dwarfs and their constant wars with the cranes. They were supposed to dwell beyond Mount Imaus in India : cf. Milton, "Paradise Lost," I. 781-782 :—

"Like that Pygmæan race
Beyond the Indian mount."
- II. 270-273. *Indeed . . . lost it* : This indication that Benedick had previously been in love with Beatrice seems out of place in the present play, where the whole point of the Prince's scheme to bring Benedick and Beatrice into a state of love lies in the apparent impossibility of the task. It is suggested that these lines refer to a love-passage in an earlier version of the play ; otherwise they defy explanation.
1. 271. *Use* : interest.

Double heart : Beatrice implies that she gave Benedick her own heart as well as his, which he had lent her.
- II. 272-273. *False dice* : false pretences ; literally, dice so loaded as to throw numbers advantageous to the gambler.
1. 274. *Put him down* : overthrown him, got the better of him in the exchange of wit.
1. 285. *Civil as an orange* : Notice the quibble on *civil*=

- “serious” and *civil* = “Seville.”
1. 286. *Jealous complexion* : Yellow was regarded as the symbol of jealousy.
 1. 287. *Blazon* : description ; literally, heraldic description of a coat of arms or shield.
 1. 288. *Conceit* : belief, idea.
 1. 290. *Have broke with* : have broached the question with.
 1. 294. *My fortunes* : Hero was heiress to all Leonato’s possessions.
 1. 295. *All grace* : i.e. God.
 1. 304. *Fool* : A term of endearment in Shakespeare’s day.
 1. 305. *Windy side* : windward side, and so able to escape easily from care.
 1. 308. *Good Lord, for alliance !* : Probably a retort to Claudio’s *cousin* (l. 307). Beatrice says : “ Good Lord, here have I got a new cousin by marriage ! ” Other editors suppose that Beatrice is expressing an ironical wish for alliance with a husband.
 11. 308-309. *Goes . . . world* : gets married.
 1. 309. *Sunburnt* : Elizabethan ladies prized a fair skin, so that to be sunburnt would diminish Beatrice’s power of attracting a husband.
 1. 313. *Getting* : begetting.
 1. 320. *No matter* : nothing weighty or sensible.
 1. 325. *A star danced* : Notice that Beatrice, Conrade (I. iii. 11), and Benedick (V. ii. 40) all pretend to account for their dispositions by the influence of the stars under which they were born.
 11. 328-329. *I cry . . . pardon* : Beatrice first apologises to her uncle for her forgetfulness and then excuses herself to the Prince for leaving the company.
 1. 331. *Melancholy element* : According to the old theory of the humours, a person’s disposition was determined by the proportions in which the four elements—earth, water, fire, and air—were mingled in his composition. Melancholy was due to an excess of the element of earth, which was regarded as dry and cold.
 1. 333. *Ever* : always. Even when Beatrice dreams of sad things she is her merry self again on waking.
 1. 339. *Out of suit* : out of courtship, with a quibble on

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the legal sense of putting anybody "out of court."

- ll. 343-344. *To go to church* : to get married.
- l. 348. *A just seven-night* : just a week.
- l. 351. *Breathing* : delay.
- ll. 354-355. *Mountain of affection* : very great affection.
- l. 360. *Watchings* : lying awake.
- l. 367. *Strain* : quality, or lineage.
- l. 368. *Honesty* : honour.
- l. 370. *Your two helps* : the help of you two.
- Practise on* : work subtly upon.
- l. 371. *Queasy stomach* : fastidious taste.

Scene II

Don John and Borachio lay their plot to prevent the marriage of Hero and Claudio.

- l. 5. *Medicinable* : medicinal, healing.
Sick . . . to him : made ill by my hatred of him.
- l. 6. *His affection* : what he affects or desires.
- l. 7. *Ranges evenly* : suits, agrees.
- l. 21. *Temper* : mix so as to render effective.
- l. 24. *Estimation* : merit, high reputation.
- l. 25. *Contaminated stale* : debased, loose woman.
- l. 27. *What proof . . . that?* : what evidence shall I offer to prove my words?
- l. 28. *Misuse* : mislead.
Vex : distress.
- l. 31. *To despite* : to spite. This is the only occasion when Shakespeare uses *despite* as a verb.
- l. 35. *Intend* : pretend.
- l. 36. *As* : This is to be connected with the *that* of l. 38 ; i.e. a zeal such as has led you to make this discovery.
- l. 38. *Cozened* : deceived, cheated.
- l. 41. *Instances* : proofs.
- l. 44. *Claudio* : Theobald substituted "Borachio" for *Claudio* on the grounds that, should Margaret (as Hero) address her lover by Claudio's name, Claudio would naturally suspect that she was herself deceived and he would have no grounds for objection. This emendation does not really solve the problem. By some means never mentioned, Borachio secures the "just and

virtuous " Margaret's consent to do a little play-acting, in which she personates Hero and he Claudio. The improbability of this would not be noticed in the theatre, and it is not the only such improbability in the play.

- l. 48. *Disloyalty* : infidelity.

That jealousy . . . assurance : that mere suspicions will be regarded as proved facts.

- l. 49. *Preparation* : i.e. for the wedding.

- ll. 51-52. *In the working this* : To-day we should say either " in working this " or " in the working of this."

- l. 52. *Ducats* : Italian coins, sometimes of gold, sometimes of silver, " so called because, when first coined in the duchy of Apulia (about A.D. 1140), they bore the legend ' Sit tibi, Christe, datus, quem tu regis, iste ducatus ' " (Skeat, " Etymological Dictionary").

- l. 54. *Shame* : i.e. by failing me.

- l. 55. *Presently* : immediately.

Scene III

Benedick, after asserting to himself the impossibility of his ever falling in love, overhears the schemers Don Pedro, Claudio, and Leonato discussing Beatrice's supposed passion for him. He immediately determines to requite her love and to outface the ridicule that his sudden change of front may entail upon him.

- l. 5. *I am . . . sir* : This merely means " I will be speedy about it," but Benedick pretends to take the words literally.

- l. 9. *Behaviours* : " The plural indicates the details of his behaviour, the various ways in which he shows that he is in love " (W. A. Wright).

- l. 11. *Argument* : subject matter.

- ll. 13-15. *The drum . . . pipe* : Formerly Claudio found pleasure only in martial music, but now he prefers the accompaniment to dancing and revelry. *Tabor* : a small drum.

- l. 17. *Carving* : designing.

- l. 18. *Doublet* : the close-fitting upper part of a man's dress.

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- l. 20. *Orthography* : Abstract for concrete. The frequent emendation to *orthographer* is unnecessary.
- ll. 21-22. *May I . . . converted* : Is it possible that I should ever be so changed ?
- ll. 26-27. *Yet I am well* : yet it does not cause me to fall in love with her.
- l. 29. *In my grace* : into my favour.
- l. 30. *I'll none* : I will have nothing to do with her.
- l. 31. *Cheapen* : bid for, attempt to buy.
- l. 32. *Come not* : let her not come.
- ll. 32-33. *Noble . . . angel* : There is a quibble here on the words in their ordinary senses and as the names of coins. A "noble" was worth 6s. 8d., an "angel" (so named because on one side of it was depicted the archangel Michael trampling on the dragon) was worth 10s.
- l. 42. *Kid-fox* : "*Benedick*, pleased with his own cunning and himself the dupe of others, certainly combines in himself, in this scene, the two characters of fox and kid" (Miss Grace R. Trenery). Warburton suggested the emendation *hid-fox*, believing it to be a reference to that children's game of hiding referred to in "*Hamlet*," IV. ii. 32 : "Hide fox, and all after."
Pennyworth : bargain ; here, a bad bargain. "We'll get our own back on Benedick for hiding away thus to eavesdrop."
- l. 44. *Tax* : task.
- l. 46. *It is . . . still* : it is always the proof.
- l. 47. *His* : its.
- l. 51, l. 52. *Yet* : still.
- l. 56. *Crotchets* : Used quibblingly in the senses of "musical notes" and "whims," "fads," the latter referring to Balthasar's mixture of mock-modesty and puns.
- l. 57. *Nothing* : The pun here depends on the fact that *nothing* could be pronounced to resemble *noting* (l. 55).
- l. 59. *Sheeps' guts* : The strings of a violin were made from the intestines of sheep or calves.
- l. 61. *When all's done* : when all is said and done.
- l. 62. *The Song* : This song accords well with the atmosphere of the scene, and it helps render Benedick susceptible to the appealing picture of Beatrice which Don Pedro and Claudio proceed to draw.

1. 70. *Moe* : more.
1. 71. *Dumps* : fits of depression, or melancholy strains in music. Either of these Elizabethan meanings of the word would suit the context.
1. 78. *For a shift* : as a makeshift.
1. 79. *An* : if.
11. 81-82. *Had as lief* : would as soon. *lief* : dear.
1. 82. *Night-raven* : a bird of ill-omen. It has been identified by various editors with the owl, the night-heron, and the bittern, but probably the ordinary raven is meant, the adjective *night* being attached to emphasise its gloomy, foreboding character.
1. 84. *Dost thou hear* : These words are intended to attract Balthasar's attention : they do not refer to Benedick's remark, which was not supposed to be overheard.
11. 85-87. *Get us . . . chamber-window* : No more is heard of this proposed serenading of Hero. It would certainly have complicated Borachio's scheme for deceiving Claudio.
1. 93. *Stalk on . . . sits* : Fowlers formerly used a stalking-horse to cover their approach to the game.
1. 100. *Sits . . . corner* ? : Is that the way the wind blows ? Is that the state of affairs ?
1. 102. *Enraged* : violent.
1. 103. *The infinite of thought* : the utmost bounds of man's power to imagine.
1. 107. *Life* : reality.
1. 108. *Discovers* : reveals.
1. 109. *Effects* : outward signs, visible results.
1. 111. *Sit you* : *You* is the ethic dative.
1. 119. *Gull* : trick.
1. 122. *Hold it up* : keep the game up.
1. 132. *Smock* : under-garment : here, apparently, "night-dress."
11. 140-141. *Halfpence* : minute fragments as small as the old silver halfpence.
1. 150. *Ecstasy* : frenzy.
1. 157. *An alms* : an act of charity.
1. 158. *Out of* : beyond.
1. 162. *Blood* : passion.
1. 167. *Daffed* : put aside.
Respects : considerations.

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING [ACT III

- l. 175. *Crossness* : perverseness.
- l. 177. *Tender* : voluntary offer.
- l. 178. *Contemptible* : contemptuous.
- l. 179. *Proper* : handsome.
- ll. 180-181. *A good outward happiness* : a handsome appearance.
- l. 184. *Wit* : wisdom.
- l. 194. *Howsoever . . . him* : however much it may appear to the contrary.
- l. 195. *Large* : broad, coarse.
- l. 199. *Counsel* : reflection.
- l. 203. *Let . . . while* : let the matter rest meanwhile.
- l. 207. *Dinner is ready* : There is a slight slip here as to time. From l. 38 we know that it is evening, whereas dinner was a midday meal with the Elizabethans.
- l. 212. *Carry* : contrive.
- l. 215. *Dumb show* : Dumb shows, wherein the players conveyed their meaning solely by action, had appeared between the acts of such early Elizabethan tragedies as "Gorboduc" and had been employed within the acts of Kyd's "Spanish Tragedy."
- l. 218. *Was sadly borne* : was seriously conducted.
- l. 222. *Censured* : judged.
- l. 229. *Reprove* : disprove.
- l. 231. *Argument* : proof.
- l. 232. *Quirks* : quips, jests.
- l. 237. *Sentences* : maxims.
- Paper bullets* : jests as harmless as bullets made of paper.
- l. 238. *Career of his humour* : pursuit of his inclinations.
- l. 251. *Withal* : Shakespeare frequently employs this form of "with," especially at the end of a clause or sentence.
- l. 252. *Stomach* : appetite.
- l. 259. *A Jew* : Shakespeare often uses the word in this contemptuous manner.

Act III

Scene I

By a similar trick, Hero and Ursula convince the eaves-dropping Beatrice that Benedick loves her, and she also immediately determines to requite his love.

1. 1. *Thee* : The use of "thee" for "thou" after imperatives was frequent in Shakespeare.
1. 3. *Proposing* : conversing.
1. 4. *Whisper her ear* : The preposition "in" is understood.
1. 7. *Pleached* : See note to I. II. 8.
1. 12. *Purpose* : The Quarto reads *propose*, conversation.
1. 21. *Of this matter* : of things such as this.
1. 23. *Only* : The sense requires this to be placed after *hearsay*.
1. 24. *Like a lapwing* : An allusion to the lapwing's habit of running silently from its nest when anyone approaches ; only when at a safe distance from the nest does it utter its cry.
1. 30. *Woodbine* : This seems to be used as an alternative name for honeysuckle (cf. l. 8). To-day the name *woodbine* is applied to convolvulus or bindweed.
1. 36. *Haggards* : untrained female hawks.
1. 45. *Full* : fully. The sentence means : "Does not Benedick deserve as great happiness as to marry a wife in every respect equal to Beatrice?" Dr. F. S. Boas suggests the emendation *at full*.
1. 52. *Misprising* : undervaluing.
1. 54. *Weak* : worthless.
1. 55. *Project* : idea ; something vaguer than the *shape* with which it is contrasted.
1. 56. *Self-endear'd* : wrapped up in love of herself.
1. 60. *How* : however.
1. 61. *Spell him backward* : turn his merits to defects. It is suggested that these words allude to the practice of witches in uttering prayers backwards.
1. 62. *Should be her sister* : ought to be her sister, so effeminate did his fair complexion seem.
1. 63. *Black* : swarthy.
Drawing . . . antique : in drawing an "antic," a buffoon or grotesque figure.
1. 65. *Low* : short.
Agate : Here used for "a very small person," in allusion to the small figures cut in the agates of rings and seals.
1. 66. *If speaking . . . winds* : if he is talkative, he is as noisy and changeable as a weather-vane constantly creaking round.

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1. 70. *Simpleness* : straightforwardness, integrity.
11. 72-73. *Not . . . cannot* : A double negative ; the *not* is unnecessary.
1. 72. *From* : contrary to.
1. 76. *Press me to death* : An allusion to the old judicial punishment called *peine forte et dure*, whereby those who refused to plead guilty or not guilty were pressed to death by a weight laid upon their stomach.
1. 84. *Honest slanders* : slanders which are rendered *honest* because, though false in themselves, they are uttered with a good purpose. This is a case of the end justifying the means.
1. 89. *Swift* : acute.
1. 90. *Prized* : reputed.
1. 96. *Argument* : " the power of reasoning " (Johnson).
1. 101. *Every day, to-morrow* : " Hero plays on the form of Ursula's interrogatory : ' When are you married ? ' ' I am a married woman every day, after to-morrow ' " (Staunton).
1. 103. *To furnish me* : to dress myself in.
1. 104. *Limed* : caught as with bird-lime.
1. 105. *By haps* : by chance, accident.
1. 107. *What fire . . . ears ?* : What burning words concerning myself have I just heard ? There may be an allusion here to the belief that a person's ears burn when he is being spoken about in his absence. Beatrice, of course, was not absent, but she believes Hero and Ursula to have thought her so.
1. 110. *No glory . . . such* : no good is spoken of such qualities when the owner's back is turned.
1. 112. *Taming . . . hand* : Beatrice has been accused of being as wild as *haggards of the rock*. Here she says that she will tame her wild heart into subjection to Benedick. Well-trained hawks would perch upon the hand, or rather wrist, of the hawker.
1. 116. *Reportingly* : by mere hearsay.

Scene II

Don Pedro and Claudio, after rallying Benedick on the change wrought in him by love, are informed by Don John of

Hero's alleged wantonness. He arranges to demonstrate the truth of his accusations that night.

- ll. 1-2. *Consummate* : consummated.
- l. 3. *Bring* : escort.
- l. 4. *Vouchsafe* : permit.
- ll. 7-8. *I will . . . company* : I will ask only Benedick for his company.
- ll. 10-11. *Cut Cupid's bow-string* : defeated the attacks of love. *Hangman* : Farmer points out that in Sidney's "Arcadia" Jove appointed Cupid
 *"In this our world a hangman for to be
 Of all those fooles that will have all they see."*
Hangman had, however, in Shakespeare's time come to mean "executioner in general" and even "rogue," "rascal."
- l. 21. *The toothache* : Love was jestingly supposed to be the cause of toothache.
- l. 23. *Hang it !* : "A quibbling reference to the barber's practice of hanging extracted teeth upon a lute-string in the window of his shop" (Prof. Dover Wilson). ✓
- ll. 24-25. *You . . . afterwards* : A quibble upon hanging, drawing, and quartering, the punishment of traitors.
- l. 27. *A humour or a worm* : "The cause of such aking is humours that come downe from the head. . . . Wormes breede in the cheeke-teeth of rotted humours that be in the holownesse thereof" ("Batman uppon Bartholome," Book V. chap. 20 ; quoted by Furness).
- ll. 31, 32. *Fancy* : In the first case *fancy* means "love," in the second "affectation." Cf. also ll. 37, 38.
- ll. 32-36. *Strange disguises* ; . . . *doublet* : This is a hit at the Elizabethan Englishman's love of foreign fashions.
- l. 35. *Slops* : loose breeches.
- l. 36. *No doublet* : "In other words, all cloak" (Malone). The Folio omits *or in the shape . . . doublet*. Possibly the passage was cut out when the play was performed at Court in 1613, before the Princess Elizabeth and the Elector Palatine, to whom the reference to *a German*, etc., might have given offence.
- ll. 44-45. *The old . . . tennis-balls* : From other allusions in Elizabethan literature it seems to have been the actual practice to stuff tennis-balls with beard-trimmings.

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING [ACT III

- l. 48. *Civet* : a scent derived from the civet cat. It was much used by the affected gallants of the time.
- l. 52. *Note* : proof, indication.
- l. 53. *Wash his face* : This refers, not to ordinary washing, but to the use of cosmetic washes.
- l. 57. *Stops* : frets, or lengths of wire across the finger-board of a lute at intervals of a semitone. Dr. F. S. Boas emends the *now crept* of ll. 56-57 to *new-crept*.
- l. 63. *Ill conditions* : bad qualities.
- ll. 65-66. *She . . . upwards* : i.e. in her lover's arms. Steevens compares "The Winter's Tale," IV. iv. 131-132 :—
 " Not like a corse ; or if, not to be buried,
 But quick and in mine arms."
- ll. 68-70. *I have studied . . . hear* : From V. iv. 28-30 it seems that Benedick did not speak these *wise words*, i.e. request Leonato's consent to his courting Beatrice.
- ll. 69-70. *Hobby-horses* : buffoons. A hobby-horse was, literally, a figure in the morris-dance "represented by a man equipped with as much pasteboard as was sufficient to form the head and hinder-parts of a horse, the quadrupedal defects being concealed by a long mantle or foot-cloth that nearly reached the ground. The performer on this occasion exerted all his skill in burlesque horsemanship" (Douce).
- l. 73. *Margaret* : Presumably an error for *Ursula* ; see III. i.
- l. 77. *Good den* : "good even," good evening, a salutation used formerly as soon as midday was past.
- l. 90. *Discover* : reveal.
- ll. 92-93. *Aim better . . . manifest* : judge me more truly in the light of the proof of friendship that I am about to show you.
- l. 93. *For* : as for.
- ll. 93-94. *Holds you well* : loves you, thinks well of you.
- l. 94. *Dearness of heart* : sincerity of affection.
- ll. 98-99. *Circumstances shortened* : to cut out unnecessary details.
- l. 100. *Disloyal* : unfaithful to Claudio.
- l. 105. *To paint out* : to describe in detail.
- l. 113. *May* : can.
- ll. 115, 116. *That* : what.

- l. 116. *Me* : i.e. my advice.
- l. 125. *Bear it coldly* : keep cool about it.
- l. 127. *Untowardly turned* : unhappily changed from joy to sorrow.

Scene III

Dogberry instructs the Watchmen in their duties. Borachio reveals to Conrade the conspiracy against Hero. The Watchmen overhear the villains and arrest them.

- ll. 3. *Salvation* : for "damnation." It is, however, scarcely necessary to interpret all of Dogberry's mis-usages of words.
- l. 7. *Charge* : instructions as to their duty.
- l. 9. *Desartless* : for "deserving."
- ll. 14-16. *To be . . . nature* : Dogberry, of course, means the opposite.
- l. 19. *Favour* : appearance.
- l. 25. *Vagrom* : vagrant.
- l. 41. *Bills* : halberds, consisting usually of a concave blade with a long wooden handle.
- l. 50. *True* : honest.
- ll. 55-56. *They . . . defiled* : From Ecclesiasticus xiii. 1 : "He that toucheth pitch shall be defiled therewith."
- ll. 69-70. *Will never . . . bleats* : This apparently belongs to a proverbial expression, and the humour of Dogberry's comparison of the Watchman's injunctions to a calf's bleating is probably unconscious.
- l. 73. *To present* : to represent.
- l. 74. *Stay* : stop and question.
- l. 84. *Keep . . . your own* : Malone pointed out that this is part of the oath of a grand-juryman, at present worded : "The King's counsel your Fellows and your own you shall observe and keep secret."
- l. 87. *Church-bench* : A bench outside the church, or in the church porch, for the convenience of visitors and worshippers.
- l. 92. *Coil* : disturbance, confusion.
- l. 97. *Mass* : by the mass (an innocent oath).
- Elbow itched* : This seems to portend some unpleasant consequence.
- l. 98. *Scab* : A quibble, because the word was often applied contemptuously to persons.

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11. 101-102. *Pent-house* : a sloping roof ; here the roof of the church porch.
11. 102-103. *True drunkard* : A double allusion, primarily to the proverb "*in vino veritas*," and, secondarily, to Borachio's name, which was the Spanish for "drunkard."
1. 111. *Villainy . . . rich* : *i.e.* the villainy of Don John.
1. 115. *Unconfirmed* : inexperienced.
1. 117. *Is nothing to a man* : bears no relation to a man's personality.
1. 122. *Deformed* : deforming.
1. 133. *Reechy* : dirtied by smoke.
11. 133-134. *God Bel's priests* : The apocryphal book of "Bel and the Dragon" tells of the overthrow of the priests of Bel by Daniel. This was probably the incident depicted in the stained glass of *the old church-window*.
11. 134-135. *The shaven Hercules* : The precise allusion has not been traced. It is usually related to the story of Hercules in the house of Omphale, who dressed him in woman's clothes and set him to spin among her maidens. "But firstly, the Hercules alluded to here is in man's not woman's apparel and he holds his club ; secondly, according to Sir Philip Sidney, Hercules was represented in contemporary art as retaining his beard when spinning for Omphale" (Miss G. R. Treney). Among the tapestries at Kenilworth in 1588 were "six peeces of the historie of Hercules" ; perhaps these would have provided the solution. Warburton suggested that the allusion is to Samson, with his locks shorn by Delilah ; but one would have expected him to be represented as armed, not with a club, but with the jawbone of an ass.
1. 136. *Codpiece* : an appendage to the front of the breeches.
Massy : massive, huge.
1. 139. *Giddy with the fashion* : *i.e.* affected by the fashion to change your subject as others do their clothes.
1. 140. *Shifted out* : There is here a play on the word "shift" in the sense of a "change of clothing."
1. 143. *Me* : Ethic dative.
1. 147. *Possessed* : instructed. Cf. 1. 152, where it implies "convinced."
1. 148. *Amiable* : loving.

1. 163. *Right* : Used adverbially ; cf. "right honourable."
- ll. 164-165. *Recovered . . . lechery* : for "discovered . . . treachery."
1. 167. *Lock* : a love-lock, or lock of hair hanging down on the left shoulder and sometimes adorned with ribbons. *The fashion seems to have come from France.*
- ll. 174-175. *Commodity . . . bills* : "Here is a cluster of conceits. *Commodity* was formerly, as now, the usual term for an article of merchandise. *To take up*, besides its common meaning (to apprehend), was the phrase for obtaining goods on credit" (Malone). *Bills* is a quibble on the bonds given as security for goods not paid for and on the bills or halberds of the watchmen.
1. 176. *In question* : "subject to judicial trial or examination" (Steevens).

Scene IV

Hero and her waiting-women make their preparations on the wedding morning. Beatrice is rallied on the recent change in her behaviour, which she attempts to ascribe to sickness, not love.

1. 6. *Rebato* : "a collar-band, or ruff, which turned back upon the shoulders" (Skeat and Mayhew, "Tudor and Stuart Glossary") ; from French *rabat*.
1. 12. *Tire* : head-dress.
Within : in an inner room. Some editors explain *tire within* as "the inner trimming of hair upon the head-dress."
1. 16. *Exceeds* : is surpassing. The verb is here intransitive and is used absolutely.
1. 17. *Night-gown* : dressing-gown.
- ll. 17-18. *In respect of* : in comparison with.
1. 18. *Cuts* : slashes in the edge of a garment.
1. 19. *Set with pearls* : It was a fashion of the time to sew small pearls on garments designed for important occasions.

Down sleeves, side sleeves : By omitting the comma of the Quarto and Folio before *down* this word becomes a preposition. It is, however, conjectured (but without

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proof) that *down sleeves* may mean tight-fitting sleeves, in contrast with *side sleeves*, the wide sleeves attached only at the shoulders and designed to fall away over the back (Anglo-Saxon *sīd*, broad, wide). If this interpretation could be vindicated the comma would have to be retained. If we omit it, we must understand *set with pearls* as applying not only to the *sleeves* but also to the *side sleeves* and *skirts*.

- l. 20. *Round underborne*: Probably "trimmed all round with." Capell, however, suggests that it is the pearls, not the skirts, which are referred to. If so, it would mean that the pearls were set off by the tinsel to which they were stitched.
- l. 21. *Quaint*: elegant (French *cointe*).
- ll. 23-24. *My heart . . . heavy*: Hero has a premonition that unhappiness is about to come upon her.
- l. 31. *Saving your reverence*: An apology for mentioning something offensive or indelicate. Margaret implies that her substitution of *husband* for *man* (l. 26) can leave Hero with no grounds for offence.
- l. 32. *An bad . . . speaking*: unless immodest thoughts cause a wrong construction to be placed upon innocent remarks.
- l. 35. *Light*: "wanton" as well as "not heavy"; a quibble.
- l. 36. *Else*: if you do not believe me.
- l. 43. *Clap's . . . love*: Let us quickly strike up the tune of the dance "Light o' Love." There are frequent references to this tune in Elizabethan drama.
- l. 44. *Burden*: The burden, or undersong, required male voices. Margaret means that men need not be involved on this occasion. There is also a play on *burden* in the sense of "load," with a reference to Hero's heaviness of heart.
- l. 45. *Light . . . heels*: *i.e.* you are a light o' love and light-heeled, two Elizabethan terms applied to a loose woman.
- l. 47. *Barns*: A quibble on the two senses of "barns" and "bairns" (children).
- ll. 48-49. *I scorn . . . heels*: I spurn your interpretation.
- ll. 52-53. *Heigh-ho! . . . husband*: Cf. II. i. 310, where

Beatrice mockingly says: "I may sit in a corner and cry heigh-ho for a husband!" Now she sighs in earnest, and Margaret's "for . . . a husband" completes the phrase, which formed the title of the old ballad "Heigh-ho for a husband, or the willing Maid's Wants made known."

1. 54. *Letter*: The word "ache" was formerly pronounced "aitch"; hence the point of Beatrice's remark.
1. 55. *Turned Turk*: renounced your vows, *i.e.* become a lover. "To turn Turk" was a common expression for a complete change of condition.
1. 56. *Star*: the pole star. Margaret, in other words, says that there is nothing more certain than that Beatrice is falling in love.
1. 57. *Trow*: do you think.
11. 60-61. *Gloves . . . perfume*: Scented gloves at this time made fashionable presents.
1. 62. *Stuffed*: Beatrice pretends that she has a cold in the head.
1. 66. *Professed apprehension*: set up for a wit.
11. 69-70. *You should . . . cap*: "*i.e.* as the fool does his coxcomb" (Prof. Dover Wilson).
11. 71-72. *Carduus Benedictus*: the "blessed thistle," which was accounted a remedy for all diseases.
1. 76. *Moral*: secret meaning. The *moral*, of course, lies in Margaret's implication that Beatrice would soon be cured if she took Benedick to her heart.
1. 80. *List*: please.
1. 84. *Such another*: *i.e.* a scoffer.
1. 85. *Man*: *i.e.* one susceptible to love.
11. 86-87. *In despite . . . grudging*: in spite of his resolution, he has an appetite towards things amorous.
11. 88-89. *You look . . . women do*: you are as prone to love as any other woman.
1. 91. *False gallop*: unnatural pace.

Scene v

Dogberry and Verges seek to inform the busy Leonato of the discovery made by the Watchmen, but their long-windedness

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prevents the conspiracy from being disclosed in time to stop the shaming of Hero in the church.

1. 2. *Confidence* : for "conference," talk.
1. 12. *Honest . . . brows* : A proverbial expression. Furness suggests that it originates from the practice of branding criminals on the skin between their brows. Miss G. R. Trenergy, however, supposes that *brows* means "eyebrows," and that the phrase refers to the popular belief that a man whose eyebrows met was not to be trusted.
1. 15. *Palabras* : *i.e.* *pocas palabras*, a scrap of Spanish meaning "few words." Apparently the phrase was current in popular speech, for it occurs also in the mouth of the Tinker in "The Taming of the Shrew," Induction i. 5, and in "The Spanish Tragedy," III. xiv. 118.
1. 19. *The poor Duke's officers* : *i.e.* the Duke's poor officers. A similar transposition occurs in "Measure for Measure," II. i. 47, where Elbow says : "I am the poor duke's constable."
1. 21. *Of* : on.
1. 24. *Exclamation* : possibly for "acclamation." Dogberry's tribute to Leonato is, of course, well-intentioned; unfortunately he is ignorant of the meaning of *tediousness*.
11. 29-30. *Excepting . . . presence* : Verges intends to apologise for mentioning villainy in Leonato's presence, but his actual words imply that Leonato is the greatest knave in Messina.
1. 30. *Arrant* : thorough, notorious.
1. 33. *When . . . out* : The old proverb actually said "ale," not *age*.
1. 34. *It is . . . see* : A proverbial expression meaning "it is wonderful to see."
1. 35. *God's . . . man* : Another proverbial expression, "meaning apparently 'the world is as God made it and all is for the best'" (Prof. Dover Wilson).
11. 35-36. *An two . . . behind* : Yet another proverbial expression, implying that only one man can take control. In this case the leader is Dogberry, and he suggests that one cannot expect much in the way of intellect from

such a subordinate as Verges.

1. 56. *Examine* : The Quarto reads *examination*, but as Dogberry's errors are of meaning, not grammatical usage, and as he has just employed the verb correctly (l. 45), the reading of the Folio has been preferred.
1. 59. *Noncome* : i.e. *non plus*, which Dogberry confuses with *non compos mentis*.
11. 60-61. *Excommunication* : for "communication," official report.

Act IV

Scene I

Hero is publicly denounced by Claudio at the altar. She swoons. Friar Francis persuades Leonato, Benedick, and Beatrice to announce publicly that she is dead, so that her accusers may be stricken with remorse and opportunity may be given for some unforeseen happy issue to materialise. Benedick joins forces with Beatrice to vindicate Hero, and he agrees to challenge Claudio.

1. 5. *No* : Claudio means this in all seriousness, but Leonato supposes him to be quibbling on the literal accuracy of the Friar's remark.
11. 20-21. *Interjections ? . . . ha, ha, he !* : A quotation from the old grammars. Cf. Lyly's "Endymion," III. iii. 5, where Sir Tophas mentions a tragic interjection : "An interjection, whereof some are of mourning : as *eho, vah*."
1. 22. *By* : aside.
1. 29. *Learn* : teach.
1. 40. *Luxurious* : lascivious.
1. 43. *Approved* : proved, convicted.
1. 44. *Your own proof* : your own trial of Hero's virtue.
1. 47. *Known her* : i.e. carnally.
1. 49. *Extenuate . . . sin* : excuse Hero's fault in granting me conjugal rights before the actual marriage had been celebrated. Betrothal, in Shakespeare's day, was a more solemn ceremony and constituted a more binding contract than the engagement of to-day.
1. 51. *Large* : licentious.
1. 55. *Thy* : This is Pope's emendation for the *thee* of the Quarto and Folio, which could, however, stand. Other editors read *the seeming*.

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Write against : denounce.

- l. 61. *Wide* : wide of the mark.
- l. 63. *Gone about* : endeavoured.
- l. 64. *Stale* : wanton, prostitute.
- l. 67. *True! O God!* : Hero's *True!* refers to Don John's remark, not to Benedick's.
- l. 72. *Mole* : put.
- l. 73. *Kindly* : natural.
- l. 78. *Answer . . . name* : As in the Catechism.
- l. 81. *Hero itself* : the name "Hero."
- l. 91. *Liberal* : licentious.
- l. 92. *Confess'd* : Presumably this false confession was the substance of the "villainy, which did confirm any slander that Don John had made" (III. iii. 154-155).
- ll. 96-97. *There is . . . them* : i.e. Offensive words alone could describe such offensive deeds.
- l. 98. *Much misgovernment* : very abandoned conduct.
- l. 105. *Conjecture* : suspicion.
- l. 111. *Up* : The preposition is used to intensify the *smother*.
- l. 118. *Look up* : revive.
- l. 122. *The story . . . blood* : "the story which her blushes discover to be true" (Johnson).
- l. 126. *On the . . . reproaches* : after I had heaped reproaches on you.
- l. 128. *Frame* : system.
- ll. 138-139. *That I . . . of her* : that, in prizing her, I gave myself wholly to her and ceased to possess any separate identity.
- ll. 140-141. *That the . . . again* : cf. "Macbeth," II. ii. 60-61 :—
"Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood
Clean from my hand?"
- l. 142. *Season* : preserve by seasoning, as meat is preserved by salting.
- l. 144. *Attired* : wrapped.
- l. 151. *Barr'd up* : buttressed, supported.
- l. 154. *Wash'd* : i.e. he washed.
- ll. 155-158. *Hear me . . . mark'd* : This passage is printed as prose in the Quarto and Folio. The punctuation here given is Pope's, and the meaning is

that the Friar's silence was due to his having been busily occupied in observing Hero's behaviour. Prof. Dover Wilson believes that Shakespeare intended to cut out ll. 156-157, and he prints them in square brackets. The speech would then read :—

"Hear me a little— . . .

By noting of the lady, I have marked," etc.

- ll. 162-163. *A fire, To burn* : i.e. as if they were heretics.
- l. 166. *Experimental seal* : the seal of experience.
- l. 167. *The tenour . . . book* : the conclusions drawn from what I have read.
- l. 175. *Proper* : its own.
- l. 183. *Maintained . . . words* : kept up an exchange of words, maintained a conversation.
- l. 184. *Refuse* : disown, reject.
- l. 185. *Misprison* : error.

Princes : Claudio is included here with Don Pedro and Don John.

- l. 186. *The very bent of* : the true disposition towards, propensity for.
- l. 188. *Practice* : underhand scheming.
- Lives in* : takes its life from.
- l. 189. *Frame of* : the contrivance of.
- l. 196. *Nor my . . . friends* : nor has my life been so evil as to rob me of friends.
- l. 197. *Awaked . . . kind* : This is to be taken with l. 200 ; i.e. "aroused in such a fashion as to make me completely even with them."

- l. 203. *Secretly kept in* : kept in retirement.
- l. 205. *Mourning ostentation* : exhibition of mourning.
- l. 207. *Hang mournful epitaphs* : In Elizabethan times it was customary to attach verse tributes to the hearse or tomb of a distinguished person.
- l. 209. *What shall . . . this ?* : What good will this do ?
- l. 210. *Carried* : managed.
- l. 218. *To the worth* : at its full value.
- l. 220. *Rack* : exaggerate, stretch abnormally.
- l. 223. *Upon* : in consequence of.
- l. 225. *His study of imagination* : his imaginative study or musing.
- l. 226. *Every . . . life* : all her personal charms and beauty.
- l. 228. *Moving-delicate* : touchingly graceful.

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1. 229. *Prospect* : This is largely a reduplication of *eye*.
1. 231. *Liver* : The liver, not the heart, was the seat of love for the Elizabethans.
1. 234. *Success* : issue, result.
- ll. 237-239. *But if . . . infamy* : But even if my scheme should fail in all other respects, yet it will succeed in this, that the supposition of Hero's death will put an end to the gossip about her shame.
1. 237. *Levell'd* : directed, aimed.
1. 240. *Sort* : turn out.
1. 242. *Reclusive* : secluded.
1. 244. *Let . . . you* : take the Friar's advice.
1. 245. *Inwardness* : intimacy.
1. 249. *Being that* : seeing that, since.
Flow : melt.
1. 251. *Presently* : immediately.
1. 252. *For to . . . cure* : cf. "Hamlet," IV. iii. 9-11 :—
"Diseases desperate grown
By desperate appliance are relieved,
Or not at all."
1. 254. *Prolong'd* : postponed.
1. 263. *Even* : plain, straightforward.
1. 265. *But not yours* : Beatrice, conscious of her love for Benedick, is as yet a little diffident in admitting to him that he is the man who might deserve much of her.
1. 274. *Eat it* : i.e. eat your oath, swallow your words. Benedick pretends to take the *it* to refer to his sword.
1. 280. *God forgive me !* : Probably Beatrice merely means "God help me !" but Benedick again takes her words literally.
1. 282. *In a happy hour* : just in time.
1. 290. *To deny it* : by refusing.
1. 292. *I am gone . . . here* : Benedick obviously detains Beatrice by force, but she says that in her heart she is gone.
1. 300. *Approved . . . height* : proved in the highest degree.
- ll. 302-303. *Bear her in hand* : delude her with false hopes.
1. 308. *Proper* : fine (derisive).
1. 315. *Count Confect* : Count Sugar-plum, "my Lord Lollipop" (Staunton). Grant White suggests that this has the secondary sense of "conte confect," a made-up

story, the reference being to the *princely testimony*. *Confect* is our word "confection," a sweetmeat; hence Beatrice's next scoff, *a sweet gallant, surely*.

1. 316. *For his sake* : *i.e.* so that I might challenge him.
1. 318. *Curtseys* : Men, as well as women, used the curtsy as a salute in Elizabethan times.
1. 320. *Trim* : fine (derisive). The change from singular (*tongue*) to plural (*ones*) was not uncommon in Elizabethan English.
1. 331. *Engaged* : *i.e.* in Beatrice's campaign to vindicate Hero.
11. 332-333. *By this hand* : *i.e.* Beatrice's, not, as in l. 324, his own.
1. 333. *Dear* : heavy.

Scene II

Dogberry and his fellows' examine the prisoners and take the evidence of the Watchmen.

1. 1. (Stage Direction) *In gowns* : Dogberry and Verges would wear the black gowns which formed part of a constable's official dress in Shakespeare's time, while the Sexton, as parish clerk (he is called "the Towne clearke" in the Quarto and Folio), would also be entitled to his gown.

The speech-headings in the Quarto and Folio texts of this scene prove conclusively that the original "copy" had been used as a theatrical prompt-book. Dogberry's speeches, with the exception of two marked *Const.* and *Andrew*, are headed *Ke.*, *Kem.*, or *Kemp*, the reason being that Will Kemp, the merry-andrew or clown of the company, had originally played Dogberry; while Verges' speeches are headed *Cowley*, *Couley*, and (once) *Const.*, his part having been created by the actor Richard Cowley.

1. 2. *A stool and a cushion* : "*i.e.* for the writing. Shakespeare is represented writing on a cushion in his bust at Stratford" (Prof. Dover Wilson).
1. 5. *Exhibition* : Verges probably means some such word as "admonition," "injunction." He is thinking of Leonato's instructions : "Take their examination

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- yourself, and bring it me" (III. v. 46-47).
- l. 13. *I am a gentleman* : Conrade objects to being called *sirrah* by a mere constable.
 - ll. 17-20. *Yea, sir . . . villains!* : These words were omitted from the Folio, either through carelessness or deliberately, to avoid the penalties of King James's statute against the profane use of God's name (in *God defend*, i.e. forbid).
 - l. 26. *Go about with* : deal with, circumvent.
 - l. 35. *Eftest* : quickest, best.
 - l. 41. *Perjury* : for "treason."
 - l. 44. *Promise* : assure.
 - l. 49. *Burglary* : for "conspiracy."
 - l. 56. *Redemption* : for "damnation."
 - ll. 67-68. *Let them . . . coxcomb!* : This is Malone's rearrangement of the Quarto : "*Couley*. Let them be in the hands of Coxcombe."
 - l. 71. *Naughty* : wicked, "of naught." The word had a general application in Shakespeare's day, whereas now it is reserved chiefly for addressing children.
 - l. 81. *As pretty . . . flesh* : as fine a fellow.
 - l. 83. *Losses* : Dogberry boasts of his substance. In spite of past losses, he still is "a rich fellow enough" and lives in comfort.

Act V

Scene I

Leonato, supported by Antonio, accuses Claudio of villainy and challenges him. Benedick does the same, and renounces Don Pedro's friendship. Dogberry and his fellows bring in the prisoners and Borachio makes full confession of the conspiracy to the Prince and Claudio. Leonato commands the remorseful Claudio to publish Hero's innocence, and offers him his "niece" in marriage.

1. 2. *To second* : to act as a second in a duel, to assist.
- l. 12. *Strain* : Probably used in the sense of "stretching," as measurement is involved. Elsewhere the word occurs in the sense of "feeling," which some editors prefer.
- l. 16. *And, sorry wag* : and, wretched jester. The Quarto and Folio read : "And sorrow, wagge." Stevens, in 1778, first suggested the emendation to "And, sorry

wag," which gives better sense than Capell's widely accepted suggestion, "Bid sorrow wag" (*i.e.* be gone). Many other conjectures have been made.

Cry "*hem!*" : This clearing of the throat, combined with stroking of the beard, seems to have been a recognised indication that an old man was about to utter platitudes ; cf. "*Troilus and Cressida*," I. III. 165 :—

"Now play me Nestor : *hem*, and stroke thy beard,
As he being drest to some oration."

1. 18. *Candle-wasters* : scholars who burn the midnight oil. Leonato says that the philosophy and wisdom of such, derived from books instead of experience, would merely stupefy the sorrowful man, not comfort him.

Yet : "even now" (Deighton).

1. 24. *Preceptual medicine* : medicine consisting of precepts, good advice ; the application of "a moral medicine to a mortifying mischief" (I. III. 12).

1. 28. *Wring* : writhe.

1. 29. *Sufficiency* : self-sufficiency, ability.

1. 30. *Moral* : "capable of moralising" (Wright).

1. 32. *Advertisement* : moral instruction.

1. 38. *And made . . . sufferance* : and pretended to scorn the accidents of fortune and suffering. *Push* : a variant of "*pish*," an exclamation of impatience.

1. 49. *Now* : Leonato probably implies that the Prince had not always been so anxious to escape from his company.

All is one : it does not matter.

1. 57. *Nothing to* : *i.e.* in moving towards. The action was unconscious, and was not a gesture of hostility.

1. 58. *Fleer* : snceer.

1. 62. *To thy head* : to your face I say it.

1. 64. *To lay . . . by* : to forget my age.

1. 65. *Bruise . . . days* : *i.e.* battered as I am by the experiences of my long life.

1. 69. *She lies buried* : A speedy burial, as it is still the morning of the wedding-day.

1. 72. *My villainy?* : The self-centred Claudio shows no interest in the news of Hero's death.

1. 75. *Nice fence . . . practice* : his skill at fencing and his being in active practice.

1. 76. *Bloom of lustihood* : flower of strength and vigour.

1. 78. *Daff* : put off.

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- l. 82. *Win . . . wear me* : A proverbial expression, meaning here "Defeat me first and crow over me afterwards." *Wear* : enjoy.
Answer : encounter in combat.
- l. 83. *Sir boy* : An expression of scorn.
- l. 84. *I'll . . . fence* : I will beat down your skilful fencing.
Foining : thrusting.
- l. 89. *A man indeed* : a real man (as in l. 80).
- l. 91. *Jacks* : Used contemptuously, as in l. 1. 177.
- l. 94. *Scambling* : shuffling, hustling.
Fashion-monging : *monging* is the older form of "mongering."
- l. 95. *Cog* : cheat.
Deprave : defame.
- l. 96. *Anticly* : like "antics," i.e. clowns, buffoons.
- l. 97. *Dangerous* : threatening.
- l. 102. *We will . . . patience* : Presumably this is said ironically, as Leonato and Antonio are already "waked," or roused, to wrath. It has, however, been suggested that Don Pedro is here trying to appease them, and that *patience*, the obstacle to wrath, is here used instead of "wrath" itself.
- l. 115. *Had like* : were likely.
- l. 116. *With* : by.
- l. 123. *High-proof* : in the highest degree. Cf. "above proof," applied to spirits which have more than a certain proportion of alcohol.
- l. 128. *Beside their wit* : beside themselves, out of their wits.
- ll. 128-129. *I will . . . minstrels* : I will bid you draw your wit from your scabbard, as we bid minstrels draw their bows across their instruments (or their instruments from their cases). Claudio has no inkling that Benedick is in earnest, nor is there any reason why he should have, for he is ignorant of Benedick's pledge to Beatrice.
- l. 135. *In the career* : at full tilt.
- l. 138. *Staff* : the shaft of a lance ; here=another subject for him to try his wit on.
- l. 139. *Broke across* : "It was dishonourable for a tilter to have his lance broken crosswise instead of lengthways against his opponent's shield" (Dr. F. S. Boas).

Claudio means that Benedick came off very poorly in the last exchange of repartee.

- l. 142. *To turn his girdle* : "According to some the metaphor is from a practice in wrestling when the buckle of the belt was turned behind in order to give the adversary a fairer grasp at the belt ; and to do so was regarded as a challenge. According to others, the sword was formerly worn much at the back, and, to bring it within reach, the buckle of the belt had to be turned behind " (Deighton). If the phrase is here used metaphorically, it may mean : "If he is in a bad humour, let him employ himself till he is in a better " (Steevens).
- l. 144. *Bless* : save, protect.
- ll. 146-147. *I will . . . dare* : I will substantiate my charge by fighting you in any manner that you suggest, with whatever weapons and at whatever time you prefer.
- l. 148. *Protest* : proclaim publicly.
- l. 151. *So* : provided that.
- ll. 155-157. *Calf's head . . . capon . . . woodcock* : Three types of stupidity.
- l. 156. *Curiously* : skilfully.
Naught : useless.
- l. 163. *Just* : true.
- ll. 165-166. *A wise gentleman* : Probably the emphasis is on the *gentle*, "a wise gentle man." Steevens, however, suggests that the phrase means "wiseacre."
- ll. 166-167. *Hath the tongues* : knows foreign languages.
- l. 171. *Trans-shape* : distort.
- l. 173. *Properest* : handsomest, finest.
- l. 178. *The old . . . all* : To involve Hero thus falsely in such jesting seems particularly callous, since, so far as Don Pedro is aware, she is but recently dead.
- ll. 179-180. *God . . . garden* : By means of this allusion to Genesis iii. 8, Claudio clearly hints to Benedick that his presence in the orchard in II. iii. was known. Benedick, however, fails to catch the point, probably because of his concern with the more serious matter of the moment.
- ll. 181-182. *But when . . . head?* : But when shall we see prudent Benedick married and made a cuckold?

- l. 183. *Text* : " to write in capital letters, or in a text-hand " (Prof. Dover Wilson). A text-hand is large round handwriting.
- l. 187. *As braggarts . . . blades* : as boastful cowards deliberately break their swords and then pretend that the weapons were broken in a genuine fight.
- l. 198. *Most sincerely* : in all seriousness.
- ll. 199-200. *What . . . wit !* : Steevens's explanation of this difficult passage seems satisfactory : " What an inconsistent fool is man, when he covers his body with clothes and at the same time divests himself of his understanding ! " Benedick's intense seriousness appears ridiculous to the Prince, as it robs him of his mental balance.
- ll. 201-202. *He is . . . a man* : The idea here seems to be that the witty man turned deadly serious has changed from an ape, or mocking wit, to one who (in his own opinion) is of terrifying proportions ; but, by comparison with such a giant, all brawn and no brain, the ape is an intelligent creature (*doctor*=learned man). Other editors interpret differently ; e.g. Prof. Dover Wilson quotes Dr. W. W. Greg's rendering : " Then he seems a hero in the eyes of a fool—but then in reality a fool were good medicine for him to make him laugh himself out of his humour."
- ll. 203-204. *But . . . sad* : But be quiet, let me alone for a moment's thought ; pull yourself together, my heart, and be serious.
- l. 207. *Reasons* : Some editors see a quibble on " raisins."
- l. 218. *Verified* : for " testified." Cf. *specify* (l. 255).
- l. 225. *Well suited* : with a variety of dresses, expressed in several different ways.
- l. 228. *Cunning* : clever.
- ll. 230-231. *Let me . . . answer* : i.e. let me come straight to the point.
- ll. 235-236. *Incensed* : incited, prompted.
- l. 238. *In Hero's garments* : This is our first information that Margaret had so disguised.
- l. 241. *Upon* : in consequence of.
- l. 248. *Practice* : deceitful execution.
- l. 252. *That* : in which.

- l. 266. *Honourable* : Used derisively.
- l. 273. *Impose me to* : impose on me ; cf. *enjoin me to* (l. 278), *enjoin on me*.
- l. 281. *Possess* : inform.
- l. 283. *Labour . . . invention* : create anything in the vein of elegiac poetry. *Invention* : i.e. poetic invention or composition.
- l. 284. *Hang . . . tomb* : See note to IV. i. 207.
- l. 290. *She alone . . . us* : Antonio's son, mentioned in I. ii. 1, seems to have been forgotten. Prof. Dover Wilson suggests that in the "old play," from which he believes this verse to derive, Antonio may have been really childless.
- l. 294. *Dispose* : i.e. do you dispose.
- l. 299. *Pack'd* : a confederate, in league.
- l. 304. *By her* : concerning her.
- ll. 305-306. *Under . . . black* : for "in black and white," in writing.
- ll. 309-310. *He wears . . . by it* : Dogberry here enlarges upon the First Watchman's remark in III. iii. 167, which he has misunderstood.
- ll. 310-311. *In God's name* : i.e. as a beggar.
- l. 311. *Used* : practised.
- l. 319. *God . . . foundation !* : This was the customary expression of thanks for alms, especially for those received from religious foundations. Dogberry's ready use of it suggests that he was accustomed to receive gratuities, to the improvement of his comfortable circumstances (cf. IV. ii. 82-83).
- l. 330. *Look for* : expect.
- l. 335. *Lewd* : The word may be used in its modern sense here, or in one of its older senses, "wicked," "worthless."

Scene II

Benedick and Beatrice learn of the discovery of the conspiracy.

- l. 6. *Style* : There is a quibble on "stile," as *shall come over it* shows.
- l. 10. *Keep below stairs* : remain in the servants' quarters.
- ll. 16-17. *I give . . . bucklers* : I admit myself beaten.
- l. 21. *Pikes* : the detachable spikes screwed into the

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centre of the buckler, or shield.

Vice : screw.

- ll. 26-29. *The god . . . deserve* : This is part of an old song, now lost, by William Elderton.
- l. 30. *Leander* : Marlowe's "Hero and Leander" had appeared in 1598, and the story was otherwise very familiar.
- l. 31. *Troilus . . . pandars* : The go-between Pandarus had already played a large part in Chaucer's "Troilus and Criseyde," and Shakespeare was soon to present him afresh in his "Troilus and Cressida."
- l. 32. *Carpet-mongers* : "carpet-knights," knights dubbed not for military but for court or civil service ; hence, effeminate people. Troilus does not deserve the title, as he achieved valiant exploits against the Greeks at the Siege of Troy.
- ll. 33-34. *Whose names . . . verse* : i.e. who still form the theme of poetry.
- ll. 34-35. *Turned . . . love* : overcome, turned topsyturvy, by love ; or, tumbled head over heels into love.
- l. 37. *Innocent* : foolish.
- l. 41. *Festival terms* : ornate phraseology, differing from everyday language as *festivals* (holidays) do from working days.
- l. 46. *That I came* : what I came for.
- l. 53. *His* : The old form of the neuter possessive.
- l. 55. *Undergoes* : bears, has received.
- l. 56. *Subscribe* : proclaim him (literally, in a signed writing).
- l. 64. *Epithet* : expression.
- l. 71. *It appears . . . confession* : This wisdom does not appear in this last remark of yours.
- l. 74. *Instance* : proverbial saying.
- ll. 74-75. *That lived . . . neighbours* : i.e. that held true in days when a man's neighbours gave him his due and he had not to praise himself. This is itself a proverbial saying.
- ll. 77-78. *Than . . . weeps* : W. Aldis Wright quotes from "The Hundred Merry Tales" two instances of widows who provided themselves with fresh husbands by the time that the funeral bell had rung for their last.
- l. 80. *Question* : That is the question. Some editors read

Question! when the meaning would be "What a foolish question!"

Clamour : noisy lamentation.

1. 81. *Rheum* : weeping.
1. 82. *Don Worm, his conscience* : Cf. "Richard III," I. iii. 222 : "The worm of conscience still begnaw thy soul!" In the accounts of the Coventry Mystery Plays there is recorded : "Item, payd to ij wormes of conscience, xvj d."
1. 90. *Mend* : improve.
1. 93. *Old coil* : great trouble, confusion. *Old* is intensive.
1. 95. *Abused* : deceived.
1. 96. *Presently* : immediately.
11. 99-100. *And moreover . . . uncle's* : Benedick ends his deliberately rhetorical professions of love with an equally deliberate anticlimax.

Scene III

Claudio publishes Hero's innocence in an epitaph hung upon the tomb where, as he believes, she lies dead.

1. 1. (Stage Direction) *A churchyard* : Most editors follow Pope in placing this scene inside the church, but ll. 25-27 show that it takes place in the open. A similar churchyard scene is to be found in "Romeo and Juliet," V. iii.
1. 5. *Guerdon* : recompense.
1. 7. *With shame* : through undeserved shame.
11. 9-11. *Hang . . . hymn* : These lines are spoken by Claudio in his own person and do not form part of the epitaph.
1. 12. (Stage Direction) *Song* : This song would no doubt have been sung by the actor who played Balthasar.
Goddess . . . night : Diana, the goddess of chastity, whose devotees are her "virgin knights." The word *knight* is elsewhere applied to ladies.
1. 20. *Uttered* : Probably "proclaimed," "published," although other suggestions have been made. The line seems to mean "till the death-dirge be sung" (Dr. F. S. Boas).
1. 25. *Have prey'd* : have ceased to prey, night being over.

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- l. 30. *Weeds* : garments ; cf. "widow's weeds."
- l. 32. *Speed's* : speed us. This is Thirlby's conjecture for the *speeds* of the Quarto and Folio. If the latter is correct, the line becomes a prophetic assertion, not a wish.
- l. 33. *This for whom* : *i.e.* this of hers for whom.

Scene IV

A general reconciliation is effected. Claudio is betrothed to Leonato's "niece," who proves to be Hero herself. Benedick and Beatrice are affianced. News is brought that Don John, who had taken to flight, is captured. The action concludes in a merry dance.

- l. 5. *Against her will* : *i.e.* not wilfully, unintentionally. The question (l. 6), "investigation," has shown that Margaret erred in ignorance, although it is difficult to see how she could have fulfilled all of Borachio's requests without having her suspicions aroused.
- l. 7. *Sort* : turn out.
- l. 8. *Faith* : his word pledged to Beatrice. Benedick, who had all along been most reluctant to fight his friend Claudio, is very relieved at this release from his vow.
- l. 17. *Confirm'd* : solemn, unmoved.
- l. 20. *To bind . . . undo me* : To bind me in the bonds of matrimony, or to ruin me (with a quibble on the other sense of *undo*, "unbind"). Probably Benedick, in jest, implies that marrying and ruining are one and the same, although he presents them as alternatives. If, however, he is not jesting, he must imply that not to be married to Beatrice would mar his life.
- l. 23. *That eye . . . her* : *i.e.* Hero was instrumental in making Beatrice fall in love with you. In view of Hero's part in the trick played on Beatrice, Leonato's remark is all too true.
- l. 27. *Your . . . enigmatical* : Benedick, who never learnt the truth about the trick played on him by Leonato, Don Pedro, and Claudio, in spite of some broad hints, does not understand Leonato's assertion that he derived his *eye of love* for Beatrice from them.
- ll. 28-29. *My will . . . conjoin'd* : my desire is that your goodwill may agree with the wish of Beatrice and

- myself, which is to be joined together to-day, etc.
- l. 32. *My . . . liking* : I heartily approve of your wish.
 - l. 36. *Attend* : await.
 - l. 43. *I think . . . bull* : Claudio is here recalling I. i. 249-251 and V. i. 181-182.
 - l. 45. *All Europa* : all Europe.
 - ll. 46-47. *Europa . . . love* : Jove, in the shape of a white bull, courted Europa and carried her away on his back to Crete.
 - l. 52. *For this . . . reckonings* : For this thrust I shall "pay you out" later ; here come other things to be reckoned with.
 - l. 59. *Like of* : like.
 - l. 63. *Defiled* : i.e. by slander.
 - l. 67. *Qualify* : moderate.
 - l. 68. *When after that the* : i.e. when the.
 - l. 69. *Largely* : at length.
 - l. 70. *Let . . . familiar* : treat strange things as if they were everyday occurrences.
 - l. 71. *Let . . . presently* : let us go immediately.
 - l. 72. *Soft and fair* : i.e. just a moment.
 - l. 89. *Halting* : i.e. in metre.
Of . . . brain : purely, entirely, of his own composition.
 - l. 96. *I . . . you* : I should not like to refuse you.
 - l. 99. *Bene* : The Quarto and the Folio wrongly give this line to Leonato.
 - l. 102. *Humour* : inclination.
 - ll. 104-105. *If . . . him* : "if a man is to live in fear of an epigram, he will not dare to put on even a handsome suit of clothes—how much more, to marry a handsome woman" (Furness).
 - l. 109. *Giddy* : changeable, fickle.
 - ll. 114-115. *Thy single life* : your bachelor state.
 - l. 115. *Double-dealer* : deceiver, with a play on the word in its sense of "an unfaithful husband."
 - ll. 124-125. *There is . . . horn* : Benedick ironically identifies "the state of honourable marriage" (l. 30) with the reverend state of being a cuckold. *Staff . . . horn* : "The walking-sticks or staves used by elderly people might be intended, which were often headed or

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tipped with a cross piece of *horn*, or sometimes amber ”
(Douce).

l. 127. *With* : by.

l. 129. *Brave* : fine.

(Stage Direction) *Dance* : This is the only play by Shakespeare that ends with a dance, although the device was otherwise common. “ In Bandello’s Novel from which Shakespeare is supposed to have obtained the present plot, unusual festivities mark the close. May not these have supplied the *motive* of this Dance ? ” (Furness).

APPENDIX

I. THE LIFE OF SHAKESPEARE

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE was born in 1564 at Stratford-on-Avon. His father, one of the leading citizens of the town, was a glover who also traded in agricultural produce and possibly did some farming. It is assumed that he gave his son the ordinary education of a boy of his class at the local grammar school. Nothing is definitely known of the early life of the dramatist, however, until his marriage at the age of eighteen to Anne Hathaway, a woman some eight years older than himself. About 1584 he left Stratford and came to London. Here he must soon have joined a company of players, but there is no record of his activities until 1592, in which year it appears from a satirical comment made on him by Robert Greene that he was becoming well known as a playwright. His first published work, the poem *Venus and Adonis*, appeared in 1593; it was followed by *Lucrece* in the next year. Both these poems were dedicated to the Earl of Southampton. We next hear of him as a member of the Lord Chamberlain's Company of actors (who became "the King's men" after James's accession), and he probably remained in association with them for the rest of his working life. From 1599 the company occupied the Globe Theatre on the Bankside in Southwark. As an actor Shakespeare is said to have taken the parts of Adam in *As You Like It* and the Ghost in *Hamlet*. As a playwright he was the mainstay of the company; for about fifteen years he provided them on the average with two plays a year. His growing prosperity was indicated by his purchase, in 1597, of New Place, one of the largest houses in Stratford. About 1610 he left London and went to live as a retired gentleman at his Stratford home. He died there in 1616.

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2. THE ORDER OF THE PLAYS

In the collected edition of Shakespeare's plays published in 1623 no indication was given of the dates when they were first produced. Even in the case of the previously issued Quartos of some of the separate plays the dates on the title-pages are not to be taken as those of the earliest productions. The dating of Shakespeare's works is therefore a matter for conjecture based on such indirect evidence as is available. The following list gives an order which would be generally accepted :—

1590—1596

Henry VI, Pts. I, II, and III
Richard III
Comedy of Errors
Titus Andronicus
Taming of the Shrew
Two Gentlemen of Verona
Love's Labour's Lost
Romeo and Juliet
Richard II
Midsummer-Night's Dream

1596—1600

King John
Merchant of Venice
Henry IV, Pts. I and II
Much Ado About Nothing
Henry V
Julius Caesar
Merry Wives of Windsor
As You Like It
Twelfth Night

1600—1608

Hamlet
Troilus and Cressida
All's Well that Ends Well
Measure for Measure
Othello

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Macbeth
King Lear
Antony and Cleopatra
Coriolanus
Timon of Athens

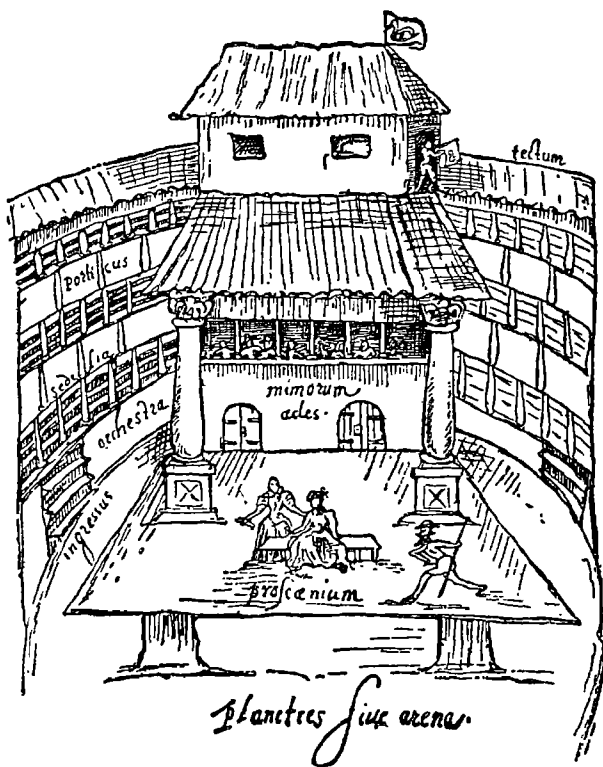
1608-1613

Pericles
Cymbeline
Winter's Tale
Tempest
Henry VIII
Two Noble Kinsmen

3. THE ELIZABETHAN THEATRE

Shakespeare's plays were originally acted under conditions very different from those of to-day. Playhouses were new institutions—the first of them had been built in Shoreditch in 1576—and the technique of play-production was in its infancy. Moreover, as the first theatres were by no means like those we know in plan and construction, the dramatists necessarily employed methods that would seem strange to their present-day successors.

In general form the public theatres of Shakespeare's time resembled the galleried inn-yards in which companies of actors had previously set up a temporary stage for their performances. The stage was a rectangular platform projecting into the "yard," which was open to the sky. There were no seats on the floor around the stage; the "groundlings" stood and enclosed the actors on three sides. More expensive accommodation was provided in tiers of galleries running right round the building. The topmost gallery had a thatched roof. Fashionable young gallants were allowed seats on the stage itself. The plays were performed in daylight, usually in the afternoon. There were some differences between the "public" and the "private" theatres: the private theatres, like the Blackfriars, were roofed, used artificial light, and were attended by a better-class audience. No painted scenery was used; but some indication of the place represented might be given by such movable properties



THE DE WITT DRAWING OF THE SWAN THEATRE

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as a bed or a single small tree symbolising a wood. The stage itself was sheltered by a roof. In the floor there was a trap-door through which ghosts and apparitions rose and descended. This is the explanation of the stage direction "Descends" in connection with the apparitions in *Macbeth*, IV. 1. The main stage could not, of course, be curtained off.

At the back of the platform were two doors through which the actors entered. In the space between these doors was hung a curtain which, when drawn, revealed an inner stage. In this recess Ferdinand and Miranda would have been shown playing their game of chess, and the play-scene in *Hamlet* would have been performed. It could serve also for Lear's hovel, Prospero's cell, or the tomb of the Capulets.

Above the inner stage was a balcony forming part of the lowest gallery running round the house. This upper space could be used for the sleeping-rooms of Macbeth's castle, for Juliet's balcony, or the room in Shylock's house from which Jessica throws down the casket to Lorenzo. The stage direction "Enter Above" frequently found in the old texts means that the actors are to come on to this gallery.

The De Witt drawing of the Swan Theatre, here reproduced, is the only clear contemporary pictorial evidence of what one of the Elizabethan playhouses looked like. Even this is probably incorrect in some of the details. The original rough sketch of the theatre made by John de Witt for his *Observationes Londinenses* is lost, but a copy of it made by Arend van Buchell of Utrecht survives.

With regard to the actors who performed on the Elizabethan stage, all that need be said is that they included no women in their companies. Female parts were played by boys. At one time a company consisting entirely of boys—members of the choir of the Chapel Royal—was very popular.

The peculiar conditions of the Elizabethan theatre must be taken into account when we are examining Shakespeare's stage-craft. They explain, for instance, the frequent change of scene which is a characteristic of the plays of the time. The audiences did not demand realism: they were prepared to use their imagination and accept the simplest symbolism as a means of suggesting the place of action. The extreme example of Shakespeare's free treatment of place and time is seen in *Antony and Cleopatra*, where he has a

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succession of very short scenes located in a variety of widely separated places. The typical modern dramatist would not deal with his material in this way. He works with the knowledge that a change in the supposed place demands a change in scenery, which takes time and may cause an undesirable break in the action. Moreover, every additional "set" required adds considerably to the expense of production. There is good reason, therefore, why a modern play should differ considerably in shape from an Elizabethan play.

The absence of scenery and lighting had other minor but interesting results. The dramatist was compelled, for example, to introduce into the dialogue indications of time and place that would now be superfluous. A famous instance occurs in *Julius Caesar*. In the Orchard Scene the audience is to suppose that it is night. Brutus therefore opens with the remark :—

I cannot, by the progress of the stars,
Give guess how near to day.

And throughout the scene the darkness of night is insisted on by the speakers. Similarly, the second act of *Macbeth* begins at night. Hence, when Banquo enters, he is preceded by a torch-bearer, and he talks about the moon and the stars. Again, the description of Macbeth's castle put into the mouth of Duncan and Banquo is introduced not merely for the sake of the lyrical touch, very welcome at this point, but in order to give the spectators information which could not be conveyed to the eye by a stage-picture of a castle.

Since the actors were playing on an open platform-stage, they had to aim at different effects of grouping from those obtained in the modern theatre, where the proscenium acts like a picture-frame entirely separating performers from spectators. Processions and dancing were freely introduced, and the elaborate costumes worn by the actors gave colour to the scene. The fact that the performers were immediately surrounded by spectators obviated to some extent the difficulty experienced nowadays in speaking the soliloquies and the asides that were a regular part of the old stage convention. There was an intimacy between players and audience

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that made it seem not unnatural for a character to allow his private thoughts to be overheard.

Owing to the absence of a curtain for the main stage, the dramatist had to take special measures when he required a scene to end with a definite break in the action. He had to arrange for all his characters to leave the stage. The problem was most serious at the end of the play. The final scene of *Hamlet* illustrates the difficulty. A modern playwright would bring down the curtain at the climax, that is, when Horatio, bending over the body of his dead friend, says :—

Good night, sweet prince,
And flights of angels sing thee to thy rest.

But, on the Elizabethan stage, if the play had ended here, the dead would have had to rise and walk off. To obviate this absurdity, Fortinbras and the English ambassadors are brought in, and the scene is prolonged for Fortinbras to say :—

Let four captains
Bear Hamlet, like a soldier, to the stage . . .

There is a dead march, and the soldiers carry the bodies of Hamlet and the other dead off the stage.

It may be noted, finally, that the first theatres were used not only for dramatic performances but also for bear-baiting, cock-fighting, and athletic contests. The public liking for exhibitions of bodily skill to some extent influenced the fare provided by the playwrights. Shakespeare, for example, indulged his audiences with the wrestling match in *As You Like It*. This was a genuine contest. Similarly, the broadsword fight at the conclusion of *Macbeth* was a real trial of skill between combatants accustomed to their weapons.

QUESTIONS ON THE TEXT

Act I

1. What light does the opening scene throw upon the differences between Benedick and Claudio ?

2. "The exposition of the main threads of the action of the play is skilfully effected in Act I." Discuss.

3. What reasons does Shakespeare give in explanation of Don John's villainy ? Do you consider them convincing ?

4. Give the context of the following passages and explain their meaning and dramatic significance :—

(a) And the fine is, for the which I may go the finer, I will live a bachelor.

(b) There's her cousin, an she were not possessed with a fury, exceeds her as much in beauty as the first of May doth the last of December.

(c) I am trusted with a muzzle and enfranchised with a clog ; therefore I have decreed not to sing in my cage.

Act II

1. Illustrate Beatrice's wit and gaiety from Act II. Scene 1.

2. Why is it, do you think, that Benedick falls so easy a victim to the trick played upon him in the orchard (II. iii.) ?

3. Rewrite the following passage in your own words in such a way as to bring out clearly its full meaning :—

I have known when there was no music with him but the drum and the fife ; and now had he rather hear the tabor and the pipe : I have known when he would have walked ten mile a-foot to see a good armour ; and now will he lie ten nights awake, carving the fashion of a new doublet. He was wont to speak plain and to the purpose,

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like an honest man and a soldier ; and now is he turned orthography ; his words are a very fantastical banquet, just so many strange dishes.

4. Explain carefully the meaning of the following phrases :—I will even take sixpence in earnest of the bearward ; a Scotch jig, a measure, and a cinque pace ; My visor is Philemon's roof ; an accident of hourly proof ; as melancholy as a lodge in a warren.

Act III

1. By what means does Shakespeare avoid the effect of mere repetition in his use of the same trick to entrap both Beatrice and Benedick ?

2. In what way is your previous impression of Hero modified by her conduct in this act ?

3. Describe the effects of love on (a) Benedick and (b) Beatrice.

4. State clearly why the conspiracy is not disclosed in time to prevent the shaming of Hero at the altar.

Act IV

1. Attempt a character sketch of Friar Francis.

2. What new light is thrown on the characters of (a) Claudio and (b) Benedick by their conduct in Act IV. Scene 1 ?

3. Quote from Acts III. and IV. what you consider to be the dozen most amusing misusages of words by Dogberry, and say in each case what word seems to be intended.

4. Give the context of the following passages and explain their meaning and dramatic significance :—

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

(b) But manhood is melted into curtsies, valour into compliment, and men are only turned into tongue, and trim ones too : he is now as valiant as Hercules that only tells a lie and swears it.

(c) O that I had been writ down an ass !

QUESTIONS ON THE TEXT

Act V

1. Illustrate the differences between the characters of Leonato and Antonio.
2. Indicate, by reference to Claudio's conduct here and elsewhere in the play, the instability of his character.
3. Draw as vivid a picture as you can of the scene at Hero's tomb (V. iii.).
4. Summarise in about 200 words the events of the closing scene of reconciliation.

ESSAY SUBJECTS

1. "The interest in the plot is always on account of the characters, not *vice versa*" (Coleridge). Discuss with reference to "Much Ado About Nothing."
2. Illustrate the varieties of wit displayed in "Much Ado About Nothing" and give your frank opinion of their merit.
3. Attempt an analysis of the comic spirit of "Much Ado About Nothing."
4. Distinguish, with brief illustrations, between the *wit* and the *humour* in "Much Ado About Nothing."
5. Trace the development of the characters of Benedick and Beatrice.
6. What is your opinion of the theatrical effectiveness of "Much Ado About Nothing"?
7. Consider the dramatic significance of Dogberry.
8. Discuss the assertion that the altar scene (IV. 1.) marks the emotional crisis of "Much Ado About Nothing."
9. Illustrate Shakespeare's use of parallel and contrast in the characterisation of "Much Ado About Nothing."
10. It has been said that Shakespeare's villains nearly always have some redeeming feature. Do you consider that this is true of the villains in "Much Ado About Nothing"?
11. There are a number of improbabilities and loose ends in the action of "Much Ado About Nothing." Mention as many of these as you have noticed, and say how far they affect your impression of Shakespeare's technical skill.
12. How far is it true to say that the spirit of youth dominates "Much Ado About Nothing"?

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