

**THE TWO NOBLE
KINSMEN. PUBLICATIONS.
SERIES 2, PLAYS NO.15**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649102020

The two noble Kinsmen. Publications. Series 2, Plays No.15 by William Shakespeare & John Fletcher

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WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE & JOHN FLETCHER

**THE TWO NOBLE
KINSMEN. PUBLICATIONS.
SERIES 2, PLAYS NO.15**

The Two Noble Kinsmen.

BY

WILLIAM SHAKSPERE AND JOHN FLETCHER.

New Shakspeare Society
[Publications]
Series 2. Plays

No. 15

THE
TWO NOBLE KINSMEN.

BY
WILLIAM SHAKSPERE AND JOHN FLETCHER.

Edited from the Quarto of 1634

BY
HAROLD LITTLEDALE, B.A.

PART II.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION AND LIST OF WORDS.

PUBLISHED FOR
The New Shakspeare Society
BY N. TRÜBNER & CO., 57, 59, LUDGATE HILL,
LONDON, E.C., 1885.

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12/1/94

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DEDICATED
TO MY WIFE.

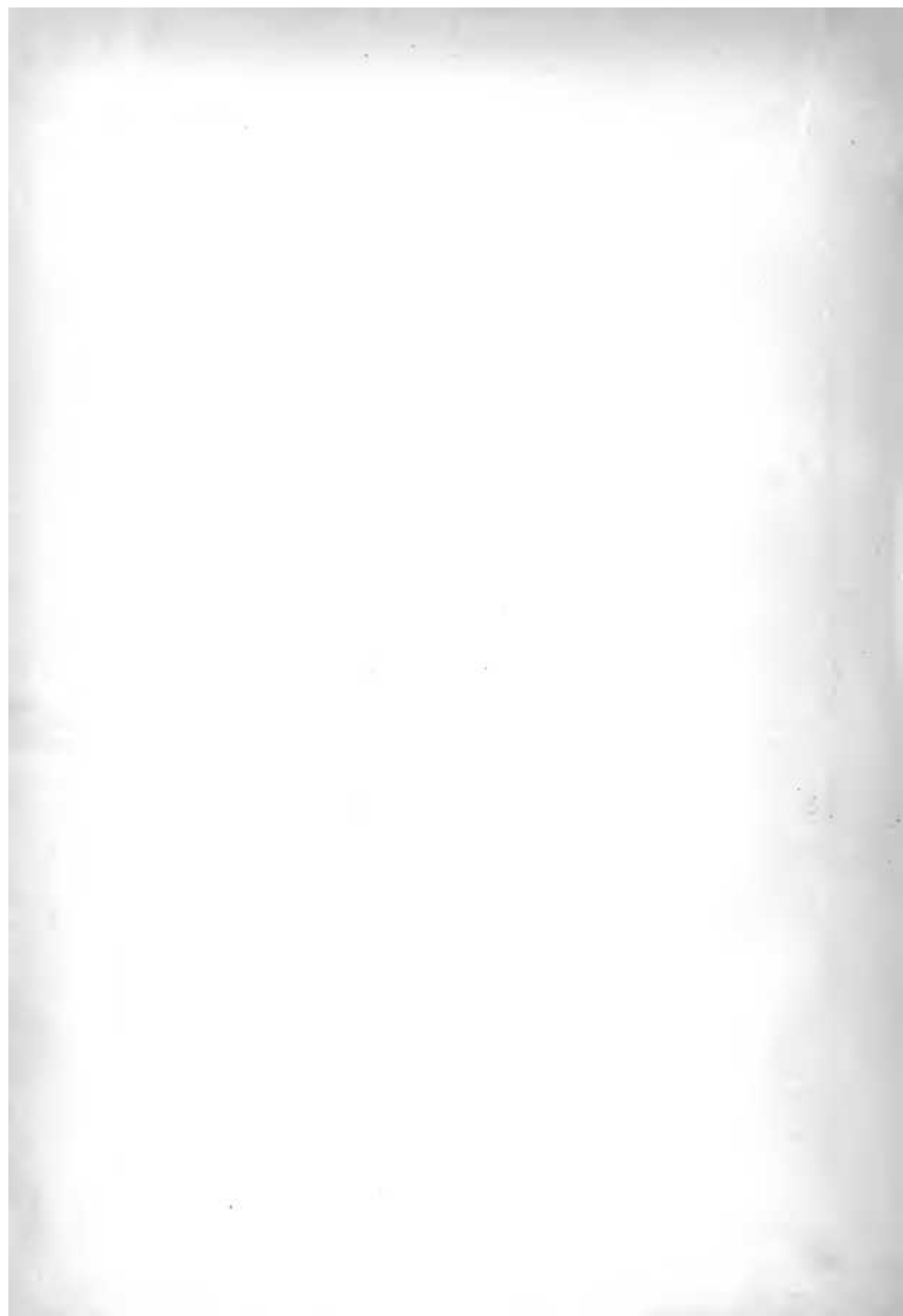
H. L.

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But, inasmuch as the Revised Edition may have to be frequently compared with the Quarto Reprint, Members are strongly advised to bind that by itself, apart from the Introduction and Revised Text. To bind them together, is to quarter the usefulness of each.



INTRODUCTION.

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§ 1. THE source of this play is the *Knights Tale*, in Chaucer's Sources of the play. *Canterbury Tales*; and a comparison of play and poem will show how closely the original story has been adhered to in the structure of the main plot. Unlike many of the plays which Shakspeare Chaucer. produced, we have no evidence, beyond the vaguest conjecture, to suggest that this play has been based on an earlier drama on the same subject.

§ 2. We know that in 1566 a play called *Palamon and Arcyte*, Edwardes's Palamon and Arcyte. by Richard Edwardes, was performed before Queen Elizabeth at Oxford; but certain indications make it quite clear, though this play has perished, that it can have had little likeness to the *Two Noble Kinsmen*, and may rather have resembled the *Damon and Pythias* (see Hazlitt's *Dodsley*, vol. iv.) of the same author.

§ 3. Wood's account in the *Athenæ Oxonienses* has mention of Wood mentions Edwardes's play several times. the play several times, but the following passages,¹ communicated to Nicholls, the historian of Elizabeth's Progresses, by Mr. Gutch, from Wood's MSS., are more detailed, and clearly show that Edwardes's play and the play before us must have differed so materially as to make it almost certain that the authors of the latter

¹ Previously pointed out by me in Introduction, *Leopold Shakspeare*, p. xcix.

Wood's chief
account of play
of 1566 quoted.

can have known nothing of the former. "Sept. 2, 1566. At night the Queen heard the first part of an English play, named *Palæmon*, or *Palamon Arcyte*, made by Mr. Richard Edwards, a gentleman of her chapel, acted with very great applause in Christ Church Hall At the beginning of which play, there was, by part of the stage which fell, three persons slain; namely, Walker, a scholar of St. Mary Hall; one Penrice, a Brewer, and John Gilbert, Cook of Corpus Christi College, beside five that were hurt: which disaster coming to the Queen's knowledge, she sent forthwith the Vice-chancellor and her Chirurgeons to help them, and to have a care that they want nothing for their recovery. Afterwards the actors performed their parts so well, that the Queen laughed heartily thereat, and gave the author of the play great thanks for his pains. (p. 210—11.)

Elizabeth's
criticisms.

. . . . Sept 4, 1566. At night the Queen was present at the other part of the play of *Palæmon and Arcyte*, which should have been acted the night before, but deferred because it was late when the Queen came from disputations at St. Mary's. When the play was ended, she called for Mr. Edwards, the author, and gave him very great thanks, with promises of reward, for his pains; then, making a pause, said to him and her retinue standing about her, this relating to part of the play: 'By Palæmon, I warrant he dallieth not in love when he was in love indeed; by Arcyte, he was a right martial knight, having a swart countenance¹ and a manly face; by Treccatio, God's pity, what a knave it is; by Perithous, throwing St. Edward's rich cloak into the funeral fire, which a stander-by would have stayed by the arm with an oath, Go fool, he knoweth his part, I warrant.' In the said play was acted a cry of hounds in the Quadrant, upon the train of a fox in the hunting of Theseus, with which the young scholars, who stood in the windows, were so much taken (supposing it was real), that they cried out, 'Now, now!—there, there!—he's caught, he's caught!' All which the Queen merrily beholding, said, 'O excellent! these boys, in very troth, are ready to leap out of the windows, to follow the hounds!' This part it seems, being repeated before certain courtiers, in the lodgings of Mr. Robert Marbeck, one of the Canons of Christ Church, by the

¹ Cf. *Two Noble Kinsmen*, IV. ii. 44: Arcite is "a mere gipsy."