

**PUBLICATIONS OF THE SHAKESPEARE  
SOCIETY OF NEW YORK, NO. 9.  
CALIBIAN, A PHILOSOPHICAL  
DRAMA CONTINUING "THE TEMPEST"  
OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649331222

Publications of the Shakespeare Society of New York, No. 9. Calibian, a philosophical drama continuing "The Tempest" of William Shakespeare by Ernest Renan

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.  
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

[www.triestepublishing.com](http://www.triestepublishing.com)

**ERNEST RENAN**

**PUBLICATIONS OF THE SHAKESPEARE  
SOCIETY OF NEW YORK, NO. 9.  
CALIBIAN, A PHILOSOPHICAL  
DRAMA CONTINUING "THE TEMPEST"  
OF WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE**



Publications of The Shakespeare Society of New York. No. 9.

## CALIBAN

A Philosophical Drama Continuing "The  
Tempest" of William Shakespeare.

*Translated from the French of*

**ERNEST RÉNAN,**

*Member of The French Institute.*

*By*

**ELEANOR GRANT VICKERY,**

*With an Introduction By*

**WILLIS VICKERY, LL.B., (Boston University)**

*A Member of The Shakespeare Society of New York.*

NEW YORK:  
THE SHAKESPEARE PRESS.

LONDON:  
KEGAN PAUL, TRENCH, TRÜBNER & CO., LTD.

1896.

## INTRODUCTION.

"The Tempest" was first given to the public in the folio edition issued by Heninge and Condell, in 1623, occupying the first nineteen pages of the volume. It was written about 1611, and was, so far as can be conjectured or inferred, the last of Shakespeare's dramas.

All authorities agree that it was among the last, but there is every reason to believe it to be his very last, literary work. He had reached the limit of his power. His mind could go no farther. He had entered into the make-up of every class of society, had lived their lives and thought their thoughts. Each man can find his prototype in Shakespeare. His dramas are the history of all mankind for all time, past, present and future. With a foresight which has apparently been given to none other, he realized that he could say nothing further. The last word is said, the book is closed "and drowned deeper than ever plummet sounded." What he meant by that last word has challenged the attention of scholars for centuries. Perhaps no other of the dramas, save only the "Hamlet," has earned so much speculation as "The Tempest." Is it a political thesis? Is it a poet's dream of an ideal country? It has been the fashion in all ages for scholars and philosophers to dream dreams of government which could exist nowhere except on paper. Plato wrote his "Atlantis," Sir Thomas More his "Utopia," and Lord Bacon his "New Atlantis." "The Tempest" is far other than these. Where is the en-

chanted island situated? Nowhere, yet everywhere. It is not down on any map, yet it as truly exists as any island ever vouched for by the geographers. As the island is real, so are the characters. No one can tell in what day and age the Milan of Prospero existed, or when Prospero reigned. Then did he never reign?

In the character of Prospero one can see the highest type of man—of what man may become. He is still in advance of humanity. There is a profound significance in the placing of the highest and lowest forms of human life in juxtaposition in this play. As in Prospero we find a being higher than mankind, so in Caliban we find a being lower and nearer to the brute creation than any which the history of anthropology mentions. Books have been written to prove that in Caliban the long-lost missing link was found, that Shakespeare was before Darwin the teacher of Evolution, as he was before Harvey the teacher of the circulation of the blood. In Prospero, Shakespeare created the profoundest being in all art or literature—created in the zenith of his powers a student, a booklover, who would vie with the bibliomaniac of any century; one who thought his dukedom of less worth than his beloved volumes, a profound thinker, a man who could by his most potent art control the elements, whose attendants were spirits and whose slave was a Caliban! The time in which he is before us is short, but in that time he acts the part of a god. He is the god of the play. All his enemies are vanquished, his dukedom is restored to him and he leaves the island for Milan. It is all wrought by his magic art. This is the end of Shakespeare's play. He leaves Prospero alive, and Caliban alone on the island. With Caliban

left alone there, it is easy to conceive him rapidly sinking again to his former condition, forgetting the language even, which had been taught him with infinite pains. Such we conceive to be the end of Caliban, the monster-man.

Ernest Rénan, the most brilliant member of the French Institute, in his most inimitable style and with profound philosophical insight, has in the following drama imagined otherwise for the chief actors of "The Tempest." He follows the restored Prospero to Milan, and with him takes the most delicate spirit Ariel, and the slave Caliban, with Gonzalo and Trinculo. With these he creates a new drama in a new situation. Prospero is placed on the throne of Milan, and Caliban, with nothing to do, lies wallowing in drunken stupor, cursing as of yore. He is the same Caliban, and as in Browning's vivid picture, we see him still sprawling, still blaspheming, still worshipping his mother Sycorax's horrible god, Setebos.

Prospero is more intent on helping Nature to express itself than on governing his dukedom. Giving himself still up to his books and experiments, he is speedily in the way of again losing his dukedom. The same profound philosopher, he is too great to be bound down to the humdrum life of governing a dominion. "I ignore what I do myself, my gentle friend, but I am sure of being the instrument of a will which seeks expression. Nature does not comprehend itself, my gentle Ariel." Bound up in study and revery, he does not discern the clouds lowering on the political horizon of his government. He does not heed the mutterings of his people, for he has not heard them. Now a strange thing is to happen, strange, yet often true in



history. Caliban, the brute who has been wallowing in the mire, drunk on Prospero's wine, actuated by his fierce hatred for Prospero, fans the flames until they are ready to break into a great conflagration. All that the people need is a leader. Caliban, by a few well-chosen and adroit words, draws attention to himself. He directs their thoughts to the faults of Prospero. He becomes their leader. "Each revolution produces a grand man, and the one of this revolution is Caliban, the grand citizen Caliban." He assumes control and directs the revolution—certainly a great advance over the Caliban of old, yet not so great after all, for had his advice to Trinculo and Stephano been followed in "The Tempest," possibly Prospero would never have been restored to his dukedom. Yet it is such an advance that it caused wonderment. "What good sense that Caliban has! but whence does he come? Yet what he says is true; he loves the common people." As director of the revolution, Caliban advises the populace how to strike Prospero in the most vulnerable point. He had learned that Prospero's strength lay in his books, hence he advises, "But the most essential thing is to seize upon his books at once. Those books of hell! how I hate them! They have been the instruments of my slavery! We must snatch and burn them immediately! No other method will serve but this! War to the books! They are our worst enemies, and those who possess them will have power over all their fellows!" This was sage advice, for, while to Caliban the books made Prospero a little lower than a god, they were the instruments of all his power, which kept the slave in subjugation and fear. To the people they were that for which Prospero had neglected his govern-

ment, and were, in fact, the cause of the revolution. Hence Caliban and the people were in accord, though for different reasons. The people attributed no particular virtue to his books; they were only things to them, things for which Prospero had neglected them. He to them was only a man, while to Caliban he was a god. Hence his incantations, his magic art, so potent with Caliban and on the island, had no power over the people. Prospero is deposed, the revolution is successful, the leader thereof is elevated to the throne—Caliban is carried in triumph on the shoulders of the multitude and placed in the palace of Prospero. Caliban, the brute, has become the Duke of Milan. While all this is taking place at Milan, Prospero is absorbed with his books and experiments at Pavia, heedless of what is going on. The news is brought to him that he has been deposed and Caliban elevated to his position. When told this he says:

“Whom didst thou say was the Grand Citizen?”

*Gonzalo*—“Why, it is Caliban, your brute, whom you have kept near you at Milan, and who intoxicated himself on your wine, without rendering you one single other service.”

*Prospero*—“Caliban? Ah! I cannot believe that human beings are such base things! Caliban succeeds me! (*He bursts out laughing.*) O, dukes of Milan, my noble ancestors, the farce is ended! We will see about it, however.”

He calls Ariel and bids him summon all his spirits against the rebels in such a contest that the wonders performed in the island would sink into insignificance. Gonzalo is doubtful. The conditions are different, and Gonzalo is right. Prospero's art has failed. What

was all powerful in the island over the king and nobles is powerless against the people. Ariel reports his failure to Prospero,—“Oh! my master, our art has vanished! It is impossible to prevail against the people, \* \* \* \* the spirits which were so terrible against Alonzo's fleet could do nothing against the people.”

Prospero is astonished, but a philosopher still—“What thou sayest is so marvellous that the knowledge thereof is worth a lost throne.” He surrenders everything, only reserving the right to laugh. To him it is supremely ridiculous that Caliban, the brute, should succeed Prospero, the peer, as Duke of Milan. Absurdity could be carried no further.

The time has come when he must part with his delicate spirit, Ariel, who has been with him and loved him until now. He must return to the elements whence Prospero called him. With the most pure, poetical words breathed in soft, loving accents, Ariel, with profound pathos, says: “It will be my sorrow to mingle no more in the life of man. But although strong and vigorous, it is very wicked and I must have purer caresses than it gives. All idealism shall be my love and each pure heart shall be my sister. I will be the virgin purity of the young girl's heart, the blond of her golden hair. I will flourish with the rose. I shall be green with the myrtle, odorous with the violet, pale with the olive. Farewell, my master; farewell! Think thou at times of thy little Ariel.”

As Ariel disappears Prospero falls dead. Now the last word has been said. The magician's wand is forever broken, but the lessons forever remain.

WILLIS VICKERY.

CLEVELAND, O., May 1, 1896.