

**SHAKESPEARE: SELECT
PLAYS. TWELFTH NIGHT,
OR, WHAT YOU WILL**

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Shakespeare: Select Plays. Twelfth Night, or, What You Will by William Shakespeare & William Aldis Wright

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WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE & WILLIAM ALDIS WRIGHT

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Clarendon Press Series

SHAKESPEARE

SELECT PLAYS

TWELFTH NIGHT

OR, WHAT YOU WILL



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AT THE CLARENDON PRESS

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P R E F A C E.

IT was at one time believed that *Twelfth Night* was among the latest of Shakespeare's plays. The use of the word 'undertaker' in iii. 4. 301 induced Tyrwhitt to suppose that the play was written in 1614, when this word had an unenviable notoriety; and Malone at first adopted Tyrwhitt's opinion, though he afterwards referred the play to an earlier date, 1607, on account of a supposed allusion in iii. 1. 133 to Dekker's *Westward Ho*, which was printed in that year. Chalmers thought that the internal evidence pointed to the year 1613 as the date of the composition of the play. But these various conclusions, which were arrived at from very insufficient premises, were set aside by a discovery made by Mr. Hunter in 1828 of a piece of evidence the existence of which had up to that time been unknown. Among the Harleian MSS. in the British Museum is a small duodecimo volume (No. 5353) containing, among other things, the Diary of a member of the Middle Temple from Jan. 1601-2 to April 1603. Mr. Hunter's subsequent investigations led him to identify the writer of the Diary with John Manningham, who was entered at the Middle Temple 16 March 1597-8, and called to the Bar 7 June 1605. In 1612, on the death of a distant relative, Richard Manningham, a retired merchant, he succeeded to an estate at Bradbourne, near East Malling, in Kent, and died in 1622. The Diary was edited for the Camden Society by the late Mr. John Bruce in 1868 at the cost of the President, Mr. (afterwards Sir) William Tite. The only entry which concerns us is the following (p. 18), compared with the original MS. :—

'Febr: 1601.

'2. At our feast wee had a play called Twelue night or what you will. much like the commedy of errores or Menechmi in Plautus, but most like and neere to that in Italian called Inganni a good practise in it to make the steward beleeeue his Lady widdowe was in Loue with him by counterfayting a letter, as from his Lady, in generall termes, telling him what shee liked best in him, and prescribing his gesture in smiling his apparaille &c. And then when he came to practise making him beleeeue they tooke him to be mad.'

This brief description is quite sufficient to identify the play which was acted in the Middle Temple Hall¹ at the Readers' Feast, Candlemas 1601-2, with the Twelfth Night of Shakespeare, although the young gentleman who is so familiar with his Latin and Italian plays has not troubled himself to record, if he had ever heard it, the name of the author. Collier, in his *History of English Dramatic Poetry* (i. 327), was the first (1831) to publish this important entry. It does not appear whether he had derived his knowledge of its existence from Mr. Hunter, whose name he does not mention; but it is to Mr. Hunter's investigations that we are indebted for the discovery of the diarist's name, as well as for the identification of the Italian play to which he refers. (See *New Illustrations of Shakespeare*, i. 365-400.) He shews that the play which Manningham thought so like Twelfth Night was not the *Inganni of Secchi* (Florence, 1562) or of *Gonzaga* (Venice, 1592), or still less of *Cornaccini* (Venice, 1604), although the two former might have suggested some incidents to Shakespeare, if he had seen them; but another comedy altogether, acted at Siena in 1531, and printed at Venice as early as 1537, under the title '*Il Sacrificio degli Intronati*.' This consists of an Induction, like *The Taming of the Shrew*, called *Il Sacrificio*, and a comedy the title of which is *Gl'Ingannati*, or

¹ Shakespeare in the Middle Temple is the subject of an agreeable paper by Mr. Ainger in *The English Illustrated Magazine* for 1884, pp. 366-376.

The Deceived. The following analysis of the story is given in Mr. Hunter's own words:—

'Fabritio and Lelia, a brother and sister, are separated at the sack of Rome, in 1527. Lelia is carried to Modena where resides Flaminio, to whom she had formerly been attached. Lelia disguises herself as a boy, and enters his service. Flaminio had forgotten Lelia, and was a suitor to Isabella, a Modenese lady. Lelia, in her male attire, is employed in love-embassies from Flaminio to Isabella. Isabella is insensible to the importunities of Flaminio, but conceives a violent passion for Lelia, mistaking her for a man. In the third act Fabritio arrives at Modena, where mistakes arise owing to the close resemblance there is between Fabritio and his sister in her male attire. Ultimately recognitions take place; the affections of Isabella are easily transferred from Lelia to Fabritio, and Flaminio takes to his bosom the affectionate and faithful Lelia.'

Here is undoubtedly the plot of *Twelfth Night* without the underplot. An abridged translation of *GI'ingannati* was published in 1862 by Mr. T. L. Peacock, but he appears to have been ignorant of what Mr. Hunter had written, and does not even mention his name, although he says, 'It seems strange that the *Inganni* should have remained undiscovered by Shakspearian critics: but the cause which concealed the *Ingannati* from their researches is somewhat curious.'

The story on which *GI'ingannati* was founded there can be little doubt was substantially the same as that told by Bandello in his *Novelle*, parte II. nov. 36, of which the argument is as follows: 'Nicuola, innamorata di Lattanzio, va a servirlo vestita da paggio, e dopo molti casi seco si marita, e ciò che ad un suo fratello avvenne.' Paolo and Nicuola, brother and sister, were the children of Ambrogio Nanni, a merchant of Rome, and resembled each other so much that when dressed alike it was very difficult to distinguish them. Like Fabritio and Lelia in the play, they were separated when

Rome was taken in 1527 ; and substituting Lattanzio for Flaminio, and Catella for Isabella, the plot of the story in *Bandello* is essentially the same as that of the *Ingannati*.

Before the discovery of *Manningham's Diary* had directed attention to an Italian play as the origin of *Twelfth Night*, it was thought probable that Shakespeare had taken the main outlines of his plot from the story of *Apolonius and Silla*, as told by *Barnabe Riche* in his *Farewell to Militarie Profession*, which was first published in 1581, and reprinted by the Shakespeare Society in 1846. It appears to have been pointed out to *Malone* in 1806 by *Mr. Octavius Gilchrist*. The story by itself was included by *Collier* in his *Shakespeare's Library*, and by *Mr. W. C. Hazlitt* in his second edition of that book. In the original work of *Riche* it stands second among the eight histories with which the book is enlivened, and is one of five which, the author says, 'are tales that are but forged onely for delight, neither credible to be beleved, nor hurtfull to be perused.' He describes the other three as 'Italian histories, written likewise for pleasure by *Maister L. B.*' and apparently wishes his readers to infer that the five first mentioned are his own composition and invention. However this may be, although there is a kind of general resemblance in this history to *Bandello's* novel, it is by no means certain that *Riche* copied it. As in the novel and as in *Twelfth Night* there are the brother and sister exactly alike, *Silvio* and *Silla*, children of *Pontus* governor of *Cyprus*. *Apolonius*, a worthy duke of *Constantinople*, is wrecked off the coast of *Cyprus*, where he is entertained by *Pontus* and unconsciously engages the affections of *Silla*, who follows him to *Constantinople* and dressed as a boy is taken into his service. *Apolonius*, making suit to a wealthy widow *Julina*, employs *Silla*, who calls herself by her brother's name *Silvio*, as his messenger. *Julina*, like *Olivia*, falls in love with the pretty page, and bids him speak for himself and no longer for his master. It is needless to say that the real *Silvio*, in search of his sister, appears on the scene, and

Julina's passion, like Olivia's, does not distinguish the real from the counterfeit. After some incidents with which Shakespeare did not think fit to disfigure his play, Silla's constancy is rewarded by the hand of Apolonius, and Julina marries Silvio. Apart from the entanglements brought about by the close resemblance of the brother and sister, and the cross purposes which are the inevitable sequel, the history of Apolonius and Silla has very little in common with the fortunes of Paolo and Nicuola as narrated by Bandello. The incidents and surroundings of the plot are entirely different, although the catastrophe is the same, and it is by no means improbable that the story may have existed in a great variety of forms. With one of these Shakespeare may have been familiar, and it may have suggested to him some points in his play; but whether he became acquainted with the outline of the story in Riche's Farewell or in some version of Bandello's novel, it is clear that he took nothing but the outline, and that all the filling in of the characters is his own.

The plot of *Gl'Inganni*, the play mentioned by Manningham, is not really like that of *Twelfth Night* or Bandello's novel, as may be seen from the argument as given by Collier in his Introduction to the play. And even if there had been a still greater likeness than there really is, the conclusion at which Dyce arrived is probably the true one. 'The resemblance,' he says, 'in certain particulars between these Italian comedies—especially *Gl'Ingannati*—and *Twelfth Night* is, therefore, fully proved: but it by no means follows that the foreign originals were used by Shakespeare; and, indeed, I suspect that his knowledge of Italian was small. Much of the lighter literature of his time,—many a printed tale and many a manuscript play,—has long ago perished; and among them may have been some piece translated or imitated from the Italian, which supplied him with materials for the serious parts of *Twelfth Night*.

But from whatever source Shakespeare derived the general