

**NO. XXIX, MODERN
STANDART DRAMA; THE TWO
GENTLEMEN OF VERONA:
A COMEDY; IN FIVE ACTS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649329380

No. XXIX, Modern standart drama; The Two Gentlemen of Verona: A Comedy; in Five Acts by William Shakespeare

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Cover @ 2017

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WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

**NO. XXIX, MODERN
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No. XXIX.

MODERN STANDARD DRAMA.

EDITED BY EPES SARGENT.

AUTHOR OF "VELASCO, A TRAGEDY," &c.



THE

TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA,

A Comedy

IN FIVE ACTS.

BY WILLIAM SHAKSPEARE.

WITH THE STAGE BUSINESS, CAST OF CHARACTERS, COSTUMES, RELATIVE POSITIONS, &c.

AS PRODUCED AT THE PARK THEATRE BY MR. AND MRS. CHARLES KEAN.



NEW YORK:

WM. TAYLOR & CO.

151 NASSAU STREET, CORNER OF SPRUCE.

EDITORIAL INTRODUCTION.

VARIOUS opinions have been hazarded by Shaksperian commentators, upon the authenticity of this play. It is rejected as entirely spurious by Hamner, Theobald, and Upton. Mr. Malone considers it as Shakspeare's first dramatic production; and Dr. Johnson, with much pertinency, inquires, "If it be taken from him, to whom shall it be given!" We think Malone's conjecture is nearest the truth. We can easily believe that it was Shakspeare's first comedy—written before he had much opportunity of practically acquainting himself with the dramatic art—before that more consummate union of the poet with the play-wright, which we see in his maturer pieces.

Some sagacious critic asserts, that the internal evidence is against this supposition—that it has neither the beauties nor the faults, the exuberance nor the inequalities, that generally distinguish the inexperienced efforts of a rich and original genius.—Our own judgment leads us to a very different conclusion. We find the hand and spirit of Shakspeare in every line—in the comic as well as the grave portions of the play; but it is Shakspeare in the bud—Shakspeare as a novice, rather than a master in dramatic writing. Where, we would ask, could *Launce* and his dog have strayed from, but from the brain that afterwards gave birth to a *Falstaff* and a *Dogberry*? The character of *Julia* is a foreshadowing of *Viola*; and *Proteus*, *Valentine*, and *Thurio*, are neither devoid of individuality, nor are they creations unworthy of the genius that afterwards gave to the world *Romeo*, *Antonio*, and *Malvolio*.

Blackstone, the celebrated jurist, says of this play, with his characteristic acuteness, that its great fault, "is the hastening too abruptly, and without preparation to the *dénouement*, which shows that it was one of Shakspeare's very early performances." Johnson was inclined to believe that it had escaped corruption,

"only because, being seldom played, it was less exposed to the hazards of transcription." This is not improbable. There was no edition of the play till after the author's death, in 1623, although it must have been represented long before that period, as it is mentioned by Meares in his list of the dramatic productions by which Shakspeare had, before the year 1598, established the general reputation of being "the most excellent among the English in both tragedy and comedy."

Attempts have been made to trace the origin of the plot of this piece to the "Diana" of George of Montemayor, a pastoral romance, which, according to Mrs. Lenox, was translated in Shakspeare's time. His obligations to this source appear, however, to be slight, although it is more than probable that he was not unacquainted with it. We occasionally find traces of pastoral language in the play, as in the song to Sylvia and elsewhere. *Sir Eglamour* is somewhat in the vein of the knights of the old romances. *Sylvia's* address, when she asks him to accompany her to Mantua, and his reply, have been justly commended for the gracefulness of the language and the sentiment. The incident of *Valentine's* joining the robbers is said to have been borrowed from the *Arcadia* of Sir Philip Sydney; but both this adventure and the story of *Proteus* and *Julia* had no doubt been, time out of mind, portions of the common stock in trade of romance writers.

The versification of "The Two Gentlemen of Verona" is singularly fluent and melodious; but it affords us another evidence that this comedy was one of the "first heirs of the author's invention." It is deficient in those breaks and transitions, which in rendering the verse of his subsequent productions more rugged, made it more adapted to the stage, and less in contrast with the colloquial language of every-day life.

We fancy we can see the revelry of youthful humor (but that humor, a Shakspeare's!) in the soliloquies of *Launce*, and his appeals to *Crab*, his dog, who, by the way, is not the least important character in the play. "Is it probable," asks Thomas Campbell, "that even such a fool as *Launce* should have put his feet into the stocks for the puddings which his dog had stolen or poked his head through the pillory for the murder of

geese which the same dog had killed?—yet the ungrateful cur never denies one item of the facts, with which *Launce* so tenderly reproaches him. Nay, what is more wonderful, this enormous outrage on the probable excites our common risibility. The imagination is a liberal creditor of its faith as to incidents, when the poet can either touch our affections, or tickle our ridicule. The poet or the fictionist—and every great fictionist is a true poet—gives us an image of life at large, and not of the narrow and stinted probabilities of every-day life. But real life teems with events which, unless we knew them to have actually happened, would seem to us to be next to impossibilities. So that if you chain down the poet from representing every thing that may seem in dry reasoning to be improbable, you will make his fiction cease to be a probable fiction of Nature."

We cannot part with *Launce* and his dog without noticing a little omission or inconsistency, which appears to have escaped the scrutiny of commentators. After making unheard-of sacrifices for his ungrateful cur through the strength of his attachment, the clown seems to have gone to "deliver him as a present to mistress *Silvia*" without any show of compunction or grief whatever. We cannot but think that *Launce* would have shed a few tears on the occasion. Unhandsomely as *Crab* had behaved, it could not have been without a struggle, that his master would have summoned up resolution enough to abandon him to another. We look in vain for some manifestation of these remorseful feelings on the part of *Launce*.

An edition of the "*Two Gentlemen of Verona*" was altered and prepared for the stage by John Philip Kemble in 1808, in which some profane hand has made *Launce* to re-appear in the fourth and fifth acts, and talk nonsense, of which we are quite certain even *Crab* would have been ashamed. But the present stage edition is of more recent date, and contains no such impertinent interpolations. It is now for the first time published; and we take pleasure in expressing our acknowledgments to Mr. CHARLES KEAN for the loan of the carefully-revised prompt-book from which our copy was prepared. The stage directions in this edition will be found unusually full and appropriate, and add much to its theatrical value; while it must be interest-

ing to the general reader to see what curtailments and alterations are expedient to render a comedy of Shakspeare's acceptable to a modern audience.*

We learn from Cumberland, that "Liston's *Thurio* was better than his *Launce*, though neither of them was a just representation. Munden's *Launce* was acting *indeed*; he put in requisition his whole gallery of faces, varying them according to the jest. He added, also, a critical knowledge of the part—he knew *Launce* to be a buffoon; but remembering that it was Shakspeare who made him one, he bestowed his first attention on the *words*, and the *vis comica* he introduced only as an illustration of them. Blanchard's *Speed* was excellent, and worthy to stand by the side of Munden's *Launce*. Kemble and Pope, in *Valentine* and *Proteus*, completed the admirable cast of this delightful comedy."

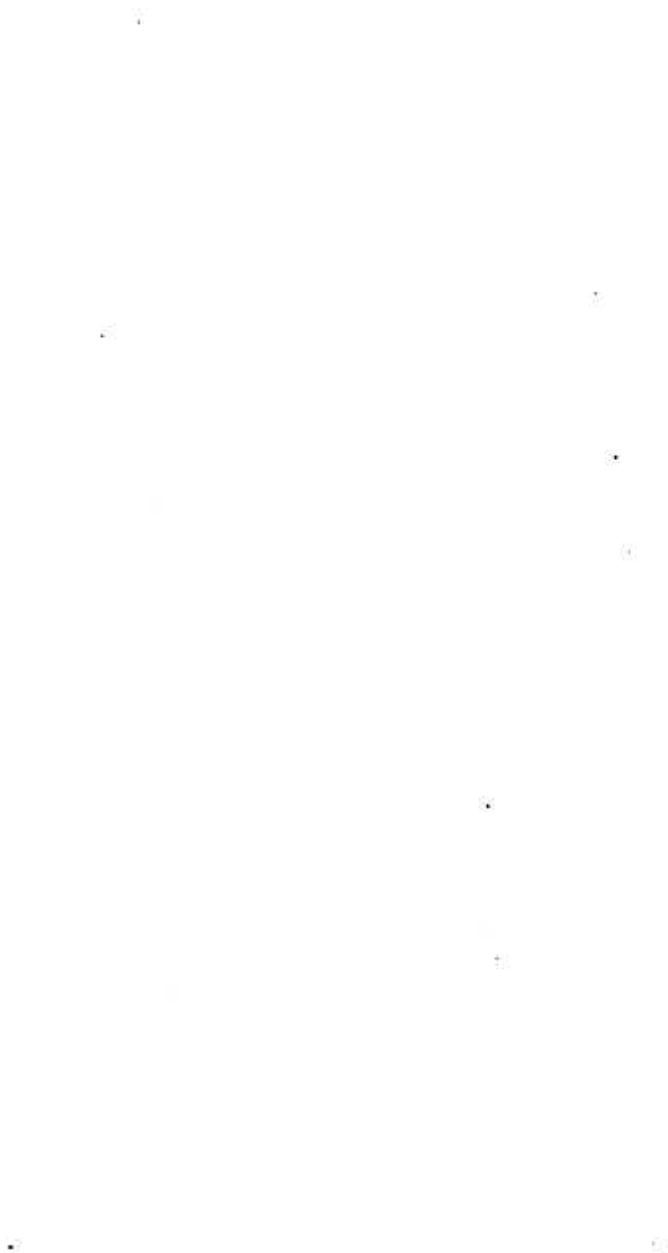
The present version will be produced for the first time in this country, at the Park Theatre, Oct. 5, 1846, with a cast which will fairly test its attractiveness as an acting comedy. What we may expect from the *Julia* of Mrs. Kean, may be imagined by those who have witnessed her *Rosalind* and *Viola*; and we have no fear but Mr. Kean will bring out in full relief all the capabilities of the character of the gentle, but brave and generous *Valentine*. In the *Launce* of Mr. Bass we may look for a personation, which will remind experienced play-goers of that celebrated school, of which he is one of the last and worthiest representatives—a school which numbered Munden, Dowton, and Blanchard among its ornaments. The *Speed* of Mr. Fisher cannot fail to be also highly successful; for, in his peculiar line, embracing testy old gentlemen, consummate simpletons, and many kindred characters, we consider him without a rival.

* At the Park theatre, the following lines from Shakspeare's "*Venus and Adonis*" are introduced as a glee on the first entrance of the Eobbers:

To see his face the lion walks along,
Behind some hedge, because he would not fear him;
To recreate himself, when he hath sung,
The tiger would be tame, and gently hear him.

The following is sung as the finale of the closing act:

Good Duke, receive thy daughter!
Hymen from Heaven brought her;
Such union is Juno's crown—
To Hymen honour and renown!



CAST OF CHARACTERS.

	<i>Covent Garden, 1808.</i>	<i>Park, 1846.</i>
<i>Duke of Milan</i>	Mr. Murray.	Mr. Bellamy.
<i>Valentine</i>	" J. P. Kemble.	" Charles Kean.
<i>Proteus</i>	" Pope.	" Dyott.
<i>Antonio</i>	" Creswell.	" Anderson.
<i>Thurio</i>	" Liston.	" A. Andrews.
<i>Eglamour</i>	" Claremont.	" Sutherland.
<i>Speed</i>	" Blanchard.	" Fisher.
<i>Launce</i>	" Munden.	" Bass.
<i>Fanthine</i>	" Chapman.	" M' Donnell.
<i>Host</i>	" Dayenport.	" Povey.
<i>First Outlaw</i>	" King.	" Pearson.
<i>Second do</i>	" Treby.	" Sprague.
<i>Third do</i>	" Taylor.	" Gallot.
<i>Julia</i>	Miss Norton.	Mrs. Chas. Kean.
<i>Silvia</i>	Miss Smith.	Mrs. Abbott.
<i>Lucetta</i>	Miss Waddy.	Mrs. Dyott.

Officer, Chorus, Musicians, Attendants, &c.

COSTUMES.

DUKE.—White kersyeimere body and trunk, silver lace, large crimson velvet robe, trimmed with silver and fur.

VALENTINE.—Green velvet shirt with hanging sleeves, lined with white satin and richly embroidered with gold, white satin and gold light under-sleeves and pouch, white muslin drawing shirt, white silk pantaloons, black velvet shoes with strap on the instep, black velvet hat and white feathers.—*Second dress*: Plain green cloth shirt, lightly trimmed with black, green pantaloons, and russet shoes.

PROTEUS.—Scarlet kersyeimere tunic, black velvet cloak with spangled trimming, silk pantaloons, green silk dominic.

ANTONIO.—Purple velvet shape with blue puffs and spangled trimmings, arm-hole cloak, and blue stockings.

THURIO.—White kersyeimere body and trunk, scarlet satin cloak, spangled richly all over.

EGLAMOUR.—Yellow spangled shirt and black velvet spangled cloak.—*Second dress*: A pilgrim's gown.

SPEED.—Green and black flowered woollen shape, green stockings and puffs.

LAUNCE.—Red and yellow flowered woollen shape with green puffs, green cloak broad leather belt, and green stockings.

FANTHINE.—Gray shape and pantaloons, crimson silk sash, and dominic.

HOST.—Peasant's shape-dress.

OUTLAWS.—Short doublets and trunks, hats and feathers, swords, cloaks, &c.

JULIA.—Pale pink silk dress with silver gauze over it, coloured jewels round the waist and head.—*Second dress*: Dove-coloured shirt with hanging sleeves, blue under-sleeves, white pantaloons.

SILVIA.—Blue velvet boddice, with short sleeves trimmed with gold bullion and looped up with a jewel, a net crossed with gold covering neck and arms, white muslin demi-train petticoat, richly flowered with gold over white satin, a gold net covering the head, small blue velvet hat placed on side of the head with three small white feathers, the hair braided in front and hanging in curls down the back.

LUCETTA.—Blue silk petticoat, yellow jacket trimmed with crimson and silver.

'EXITS AND ENTRANCES.

R. means *Right*; **L.** *Left*; **R. D.** *Right Door*; **L. D.** *Left Door*;
S. E. *Second Entrance*; **U. E.** *Upper Entrance*; **M. D.** *Middle Door*.

RELATIVE POSITIONS.

R., means *Right*; **L.**, *Left*; **C.**, *Centre*; **R. C.**, *Right of Centre*;
L. C., *Left of Centre*.