

**LODGE'S 'ROSALYNDE':
BEING THE ORIGINAL OF
SHAKESPEARE'S 'AS YOU
LIKE IT'**

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Lodge's 'Rosalynde': being the original of Shakespeare's 'As you like it' by Thomas Lodge & W. Greg

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BY W. W. GREG, M.A.

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*Drawn
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INTRODUCTION

L ODGE'S 'Rosalynde' has shared the fate of all books which have been the occasion of achievements greater than themselves. While its name has lived, along with those of a number of other works of more or less ephemeral interest and more or less secondary merit, as having supplied material for the consummate art of Shakespeare, little attention has ever been bestowed upon it for its own sake, and its own individual merits have been cast into the shade by the glory of its offspring. It has been treated merely as a source, as a thing of no value in itself; the interest it has aroused has been antiquarian rather than literary. Thus one class of Shakespearean editors dismiss it, along with other works in the same position, with some such facile remark as that Shakespeare's genius is nowhere more clearly seen than in the comparison of his work with his so-called sources; while others have patronized it with such injudicious praise as to commend its 'natural force and simplicity.' But such phrases have long ago returned upon the heads of those that coined them. Shakespeare's genius stands in no need of exaltation at the expense of those of his predecessors and contemporaries whose work he made his own, while nothing can be more grossly unfair than

to subject such a work as 'Rosalynde' to a comparison with such a one as 'As you Like it,' merely because Shakespeare's insight saw in the earlier work possibilities to which his less gifted editors have usually been blind. Had it not been for the fact of Lodge's novel having furnished the dramatist with the outline—and a good deal more than the outline—of one of his most delightful comedies, its name would doubtless have figured less in the text books of English literature, but there would have been more chance of its receiving a genuinely critical appreciation. Since, however, the fact remains that upon 'Rosalynde' Shakespeare did found 'As you Like it,' the comparison of the two, not from the judicial but from the truly critical standpoint, becomes a matter of first-rate literary importance. It is, however, a point belonging primarily to the criticism of Shakespeare and not of Lodge, and though it will be necessary to treat it at some length in the present introduction, it will first be necessary to consider the place occupied in the history of literature by 'Rosalynde' itself, and the position it holds among its peers in the development of the English novel.

Pastoral Romance. The genus to which 'Rosalynde' may most conveniently be referred, the pastoral romance, is one of respectable antiquity. The earliest example of which we have knowledge is the famous 'Daphnis and Chloe,' a late Greek composition of the third century probably, by an author of the name of Longus. This work became popular in the sixteenth century in the French translation by

Jacques Amyot, of which an English version by Angel Day appeared in 1587. It was, however, destined to remain in a somewhat solitary position and to exercise little influence upon the pastoral romance of later days. The work belonged to the school of so-called erotic romances, the majority of which were in no wise particularly pastoral. Moreover, though later writers appear to have been in many cases familiar with the work of Longus, and to have freely borrowed ideas and incidents, it was not from it that they received the impulse to pastoral creation, and neither continuity of tradition nor conscious discipleship connects the Greek romancier with his Italian successors. Longus himself appears to have been indebted to Theocritus for his pastoral inspiration and to have reproduced on Lesbian pastures the shepherd life of Sicily, and it is to Theocritus that we must return in seeking to trace out the history of pastoral tradition. The poetry of the Greek idylist, but feebly re-echoed in his immediate successors, rose once more to the first rank in literature, though under altered conditions and its character greatly changed, in the hands of Vergil. It was the form imposed on the tradition by the Roman poet that came to be venerated as classical in later ages, and the tradition left by him flowered once again in the first dawn of renaissance humanism. Petrarch composed Latin eclogues, and Boccaccio was proud to claim him as his master. Scarcely less important for the future of pastoralism than the tradition of the Vergilian eclogue, were the mythological legends such as supplied the