

**AIRY NOTHINGS OR
WHAT YOU WILL**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649042432

Airy Nothings or What You Will by George Gordon

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GEORGE GORDON

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BY

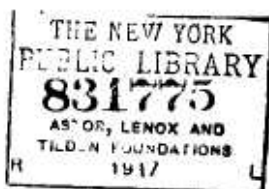
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NEW YORK
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Set up and electrotyped. Published, October, 1917.

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TO
MISS KATHERINE MACDONALD
In memory of many pleasant evenings spent
at the theatre, and in especial of the
night we witnessed Mr. Granville
Barker's production of "A
Midsummer Night's
Dream"

17.



An antique fable, and thereto a preface on morals, such as Theseus, reputed sometime Duke of Athens, vowed he never could believe. And with good reason: poets, lovers and madmen have such seething brains, bodying forth the form of things unknown, giving to airy nothing a local habitation and a name. And yet, what's in a name? The first recorded William Shakespeare was hanged for robbery in 1248; the latest Cleopatra dances in burlesque. Mary Fitton or Mistress Davenant — what odds the name? A poet loved a woman and wooed her frailty into immortal rhyme. You are content to read his verses; then why not I? Why must I see all Helen's beauty in a brow of Egypt? Because I know there is a world of romance in a name; and when you whisper "Guenevere" to me, my soul harks back to Arthur's court, mine eyes look on the queen, and in a dream I seem to see her walking 'mid the flowers of Camelot; I see her pause and raise her head as on the gravel-walk she hears the tread of Lancelot's mailed feet. And Mary? 'Tis the name of the Mother of God.

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