

**WHAT HAS BECOME OF  
SHAKESPEARE'S PLAY "LOVE'S  
LABOUR'S WON"?, THE  
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## WHAT HAS BECOME OF SHAKESPEARE'S PLAY "LOVE'S LABOUR'S WON"?

ALBERT H. TOLMAN

IN 1598 a volume appeared which furnishes perhaps the most important single piece of evidence that we have concerning the reputation that Shakespeare's writings enjoyed among the men of his own day. This book, "*Palladis Tamia. | WITS TREASURY | Being the Second part | of Wits Common | wealth,*"<sup>1</sup> was written by Francis Meres, "Maister of Artes of both Uniuersities." The portion which especially interests us is a sketch, or short treatise, which comes near the end of the work, and bears the title "A comparatiue discourse of our English Poets, with the *Greeke, Latine, and Italian Poets.*" "Wytt's Treasurie,"<sup>2</sup> as it is called in the *Stationers' Register*, was entered at Stationers' Hall on the 7th of September, 1598. Halliwell-Phillipps thinks that the sketch that concerns us, the "comparatiue discourse," was surely written in the summer of 1598, since it contains a notice of the book of satires by Marston which was registered on the 27th of the preceding May as *The Metamorphosis of Pigmaliions Image, and Satyres.*<sup>3</sup> We cannot be entirely certain about this, however. Meres was so exceptionally well acquainted with the literary productions of his day that he mentions certain works which were not printed until some years after the appearance of his own book, and some others which are not known to have been printed at all. Indeed, one of his references to Shakespeare is to those "sugred Sonnets among his priuate friends" that were not published until eleven years later—and are not explained yet.

The attention of scholars was first called to Meres's book by Thomas Tyrwhitt, in 1766.<sup>4</sup>

In the elaborate sentences in which Meres sets Elizabethan over against ancient writers, Shakespeare is mentioned by name nine times. Also, when Meres speaks of "these declining and corrupt times, when there is nothing but rogerie in villanous man,"<sup>5</sup> he is certainly quoting Falstaff's utterance: "There is nothing but rogerie to be found in villanous man" (*I Henry IV.*, II, iv, 187, 188). We shall look now at

<sup>1</sup> C. M. INGLEY, *Shakespeare Allusion-Books, Part I* (London, 1914), p. 151. The peculiar form of this title involves an allusion to a book entitled "Politephasia, Wits Common-Wealth," 1567, described by Ingley as "a compilation by John Bodesham." See Ingley's Introduction, pp. xxiii, xxiv.

<sup>2</sup> In ARBER, *Transcript of the Stationers' Register*, Vol. III, p. 125, the first word of the title is "Wytt"; but the incidents of the story in HALLIWELL-PHILLIPPS, *Outlines of the Life of Shakespeare*, 10th ed. (London, 1891), p. 148, shows the form here given.

<sup>3</sup> HALLIWELL-PHILLIPPS, *Outlines*, Vol. II, pp. 148, 149; ARBER, *Transcript of the Stationers' Register*, Vol. III, p. 114.

<sup>4</sup> *Observations and Conjectures upon Some Passages of Shakespeare* (Oxford, 1769), pp. 15, 16. The writer is indebted to Miss Louisa Frost, of the Boston Public Library, for a copy of the passage concerned.

<sup>5</sup> *Shakespeare Allusion-Books, Part I*, p. 153.

three of the passages which contain Shakespeare's name; the other six will be cited later.\*

As the soule of *Euphorbus* was thought to live in *Pythagoras*: so the sweete wittie soules of *Ovid* live in mellifluous & hony-tongued *Shakespeares*,<sup>7</sup> witness his *Venus* and *Adonis*, his *Lucrece*, his sugred Sonnets among his private friends, &c.

As *Plautus* and *Seneca* are accounted the best for Comedy and Tragedy among the Latines: so *Shakespeare* among the English is the most excellent in both kinds for the stage; for Comedy, witness his *Gentlemen of Verona*, his *Errors*, his *Lowe labours lost*, his *Lowe labours wonne*, his *Midsommers night dreame*, & his *Merchant of Venice*: for Tragedy his *Richard the 2.* *Richard the 3.* *Henry the 4.* *King John*, *Titus Andronicus* and his *Romeo* and *Juliet*.

As *Eptius Stolo* said, that the Muses would speake with *Plautus* tongue, if they would speak Latin: so I say that the Muses would speak with *Shakespeares* fine filed phrase, if they would speake English.

It seems to be clear that Meres classifies all the dramas of Shakespeare as either comedies or tragedies.<sup>8</sup> Undoubtedly, also, any play is to him a tragedy in which an important character dies. Thus it happens that two plays, the first and second parts of *Henry IV.*, which present at his best the greatest comic figure in all literature, Falstaff, are together referred to as a tragedy, "*Henry the 4.*"

What play did Meres refer to as "*Lowe labours wonne*"?

Of course, it is possible that this drama has been lost, though students of Shakespeare have not generally considered this a likely alternative.

If *Love's Labour's Won*<sup>9</sup> has not disappeared, the name must belong in some way to one of the plays now in our possession. The reference in Meres may represent one of two titles which were in use at the same time, and which were both applied to one of the plays that we now have, and to the form in which we have it. There are two dramas in the first folio edition of Shakespeare's plays to which double titles are given in the table of contents and in the page-headings: *Twelve Night, or, What you will*, and *Othello, the Moore of Venice*. The second of these is practically a double

\*The entire "comparative discourse," with several preceding pages, is printed in *Shakespeare Allusion-Books*, Part I, edited by C. M. Isaacs, published for the New Shakespeare Society (London, 1874), pp. 151-57. Adams prints the "comparative discourse" in full in his *English Garner*, Vol. II (Birmingham, 1879), pp. 94-106. HALLWELL-PHELPS prints all the passages in which Shakespeare is mentioned by name: *Outlines of the Life of Sh.*, 10th ed. (London, 1885), Vol. II, pp. 148-51. The text of Inglish has been carefully followed in this paper, except that only the modern forms of s, th, and w have been used.

<sup>7</sup>Professor J. M. Manly asks whether these words suggested to Shakespeare the following passage in *Twelfth Night*:

"Clown. What is the opinion of Pythagoras concerning wild fowl?"

"Malvolio. That the soul of our grandam might happily inhabit a bird."

"Clown. What thinkst thou of his opinion?"

"Malvolio. I think nobly of the soul, and no way approve his opinion."

"Clown. Fare thee well. Remain thou still in darkness: thou shalt hold the opinion of Pythagoras ere I will allow of thy wit, and fear to kill a woodcock, lest thou dost possess the soul of thy grandam. Fare thee well."—IV, ii, 54-65.

It seems probable that the words of Meres helped to suggest the passage in Shakespeare. Walker thought that the dramatist was here drawing directly from Ovid. See note in FURNESS's edition of *Twelfth Night*, Philadelphia, 1901.

<sup>8</sup>The Shakespeare First Folio gives the name "Histories" to the plays named after the English Kings subsequent to the Norman Conquest, and prints these by themselves. The English historical dramas of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries have recently been made the subject of a careful study by PROFESSOR F. R. SCHODDERS, *The English Chronicle Play*, New York, 1922.

<sup>9</sup>The question of the proper form and interpretation of the titles *Love's Labour's Lost* and *Love's Labour's Won* will be considered in full under the discussion of *Much Ado about Nothing*. See pp. 21-25 E.

title; the earliest known reference to the play (by Wurmsser von Vendenheym, in 1610) calls it "l'histoire du More de Venise."<sup>10</sup>

On the opening page of each of five historical plays in the Folio, an elongated title appears, though not in the table of contents or in the ordinary page-headings. These full designations are: *The First Part of Henry the Fourth, with the Life and Death of Henry Sirnamed Hot-spurre; The Second Part of Henry the Fourth, Containing his Death: and the Coronation of King Henry the Fifth; The second Part of Henry the Sixt, with the death of the Good Duke Humfrey; The third Part of Henry the Sixt, with the death of the Duke of Yorke; The Tragedy of Richard the Third: with the Landing of Earle Richmond, and the Battell at Bosworth Field.*<sup>11</sup> These long appellations may fairly be classed with double titles.

Another possibility is that some play of Shakespeare now in existence represents the revised form of the earlier play known as *Love's Labour's Won*. In this case the probability would be that the present name was given to the new form at the time of the revision. It is so probable as to be almost certain that the play which appears in the page-headings of the First Folio as *The second Part of Henry the Sixt* received this name when the play took its present shape. The former title, *The First part of the Contention betwixt the two famous Houses of Yorke and Lancaster*, etc., appears on the title-page of the older version, first printed in 1594, out of which with many alterations and additions the play in the Folio was made. The play sometimes given in the page-headings of the Folio as *The third Part of Henry the Sixt*, sometimes as *The third Part of King Henry the Sixt*, bears a similar relation to the supposedly older play *The true Tragedie of Richard Duke of Yorke*, etc., printed 1595. Whether in these two cases Shakespeare wrote any portion of the older plays is a question upon which scholars are not agreed. But this difference of opinion concerning the origin of two dramas in the Shakespearean canon is enough to suggest the possibility that some comedy of Shakespeare that we now have may have been known in an earlier version as *Love's Labour's Won*.

It is also possible that *Love's Labour's Won* received a new name without undergoing any change of form. If such were the case, we may presume that this new title commended itself as an improvement upon the old.

Mr. H. P. Stokes thinks the evidence conclusive that the following plays of Shakespeare, in addition to *Othello* and *Twelfth Night*, were each "(generally or occasionally) known by [two] different names:" "the *Merchant of Venice*, or the 'Jew of Venice'; *Merry Wives of Windsor*, or 'Sir John Falstaff'; *1 Henry IV.*, or 'Hot-spurr';<sup>12</sup> *Henry V.*, or 'Agincourt'; *2 and 3 Henry VI.*, or 'York and Lancaster,' &c.; *Henry VIII.*, or 'All is True'; *Much Ado, &c.*, or 'Benedick and Beatrice'; *Julius Caesar*, or 'Caesar's Tragedy.'<sup>13</sup>

These, then, would seem to be the possible explanations why no play has come

<sup>10</sup> *Shakespeare's Centurie of Prayse*, M ed. (London, 1876), p. 33.

<sup>11</sup> Compare the elongated title given above.

<sup>12</sup> The variations in the typography of these titles are not reproduced.

<sup>13</sup> *Chronological Order of Shakespeare's Plays* (London, 1876), p. 154, note.



down to us with the title *Love's Labour's Won*: first, the play so designated is no longer extant; second, it once bore a double title, and the name by which we now know it is only a portion of its former full appellation; third, the change of the name *Love's Labour's Won* to that which now designates some one of the comedies that we know was connected in some way with a revision of the play; fourth, the title was changed for some other reason, presumably to secure one that was more appropriate.

Let us assume that *Love's Labour's Won* has come down to us in some form; and let us bear in mind the fact that no positive evidence connects this title with any particular comedy of Shakespeare. What conditions, then, ought one of the comedies to satisfy, and what characteristics ought it to possess, if it is to establish as good a claim as possible, in the absence of definite external evidence, to be identified with Meres's "*Love labours wonne*"?

A first requirement seems to be that the comedy selected shall not appear by name in Meres's list. Strangely enough, two of the solutions that have been proposed identify *Love's Labour's Won* respectively with *Love's Labour's Lost* and *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*, though both of these plays are mentioned by Meres. There is an evident presumption against these views.

A second requirement is, of course, that no comedy can be considered to represent *Love's Labour's Won* unless it can be shown that the play either was, or at least may have been, in existence in some form as early as 1598. In the absence of definite external testimony, a great variety of evidence bearing upon the probable date of a particular play may need to be considered.

That the title *Love's Labour's Won* should aptly designate the course of the action in the play which we suppose to have been thus named, seems to be a third reasonable requirement. It is not entirely clear, however, that we have a right to expect that the name in question shall apply with peculiar fitness. The companion play, *Love's Labour's Lost*, is not very happily named. Tieck recognized this by giving to the German translation the title *Liebes Leid und Lust*. It may seem probable, just for this reason, that the other of the two parallel designations was peculiarly apt. But even if we were to accept this inconclusive argument as sound, we should not be greatly helped, since the phrase *Love's Labour's Won* is almost a formula for the action of a romantic comedy. We may almost exalt it to a class name, and speak of the love's-labour's-won comedies. Few good English comedies would fail to be included in this class. Says Furness:

Under *Love labours wonne*, I suppose he [Meres] may have had in mind any one of several Comedies, wherein the labours of love were successful, as they generally are in all Comedies.<sup>14</sup>

The similarity of the names *Love's Labour's Lost* and *Love's Labour's Won* leads us to expect parallelisms and correspondences between the plays themselves. Considerations of this nature may be of some service in testing the claim of any comedy to be accepted as having once borne the second of these designations. We

<sup>14</sup> Preface to Variorum edition of *Much Ado About Nothing* (Philadelphia, 1899), p. xiv.

should expect the two companion plays to be similar in style and versification. Especially should we expect them to agree in tone, in spirit and mental attitude, in the mood which produced them and the mood which they produce. About the same proportion of jest and earnest would probably appear in each.

Just how far the two plays may fairly be expected to correspond in structure it is hard to say. The dramatist is so dependent upon the nature of his material that a very high degree of structural agreement, or similarity, even between two companion pieces, is hardly to be looked for. Still, some correspondence of action to action, feature to feature, and character to character, would be probable. We may look upon agreement with *Love's Labour's Lost* in style and versification, agreement in tone, and correspondence in dramatic structure, as three more points to be considered in connection with any play that is proposed as a claimant for the title *Love's Labour's Won*.

It seems probable, also, that the play referred to by Meres, if compared with *Love's Labour's Lost*, would show many detailed similarities of thought and expression.

We have thus mentioned seven criteria, of various degrees of cogency, by which we may test the proposal to accept any particular comedy of Shakespeare as *Love's Labour's Won* under another name. To summarize these seven points in a few words, we may call them: absence from Meres's list, date, aptness of Meres's title, similarity to *Love's Labour's Lost* in style and versification, in tone, in structure, in details of thought and language. In treating each separate theory that we take up, it will usually be sufficient to refer to only those topics, or tests, among the seven just mentioned, under which definite evidence is presented.

The various theories which have been advanced concerning *Love's Labour's Won* will be considered in the following order:

- I. That *Love's Labour's Won* has been lost.
- II. That it is to be identified with *Love's Labour's Lost*.
- III. With *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*.
- IV. With *The Tempest*.
- V. With *All's Well That Ends Well*.
- VI. With *Much Ado About Nothing*.
- VII. With *The Taming of the Shrew*.

It will be useful to have before us also the chronological order in which these theories were made public. So far as the writer can determine, the above views were put forth in the following succession:<sup>14</sup>

1. *All's Well*; proposed by Farmer in 1787.
2. *The Tempest*; by Hunter, 1839.
3. *Love's Labour's Lost*; by a writer in *The Quarterly Review*, 1840.
4. That *Love's Labour's Won* has been lost; proposed by the same Quarterly Reviewer as an alternative solution, 1840.

<sup>14</sup> References will be given later under the separate theories.

5. *The Taming of the Shrew*; by Craik, 1857.
6. *Much Ado About Nothing*; by Brae, 1860.
7. *A Midsummer-Night's Dream*; by von Westenholz, 1902.

As might be expected in view of the variety of opinions just indicated, there have not been wanting those who have either suggested or affirmed that the question will never admit of any fairly decisive settlement unless new evidence bearing upon it shall come to light. This inability to form any decided opinion may perhaps be said to constitute an eighth answer to the problem; but it has seemed best not to classify and treat this together with the seven more positive theories. The statements of some who hold this opinion against opinions, or incline toward it, will be noted at the close of the paper.

#### I. THE VIEW THAT THE PLAY CALLED "LOVE'S LABOUR'S WON" HAS BEEN LOST

A writer in the *Quarterly Review* is the sole representative of the theory concerning *Love's Labour's Won* which is to be discussed in the next division of this paper. As an alternative to that theory, however, he considers the view that the play in question has been lost, to have much probability. In opposing Hunter's advocacy of *The Tempest* as the play sought for, he says:

Why should Mr. Hunter think it improbable that a play of Shakespeare's should be lost? Surely, in the troubled times of the fanatical and anti-theatrical generation which succeeded him, it was much more probable that, unless published immediately after his death, any work of our immortal dramatist's should be destroyed than preserved.<sup>15</sup>

Halliwell-Phillipps is strongly inclined to the view that our play has entirely disappeared. His words are:

Love Labours Won, a production which is nowhere else alluded to, is one of the numerous works of that time which have long since perished, unless its graceful appellation be the original or a secondary title of some other comedy.<sup>16</sup>

In his recent *Introduction to Shakespeare* Professor Dowden puts the matter thus:

The *Love's Labour's Won* which Meres names may be a lost play of Shakespeare, or possibly, as has been conjectured, *All's Well that Ends Well* in an earlier form may have borne this title.<sup>17</sup>

The fact that Fletcher's comedy *The Wild-Goose Chase* had been "long lost" when the folio edition of Beaumont and Fletcher appeared in 1647 might be thought to support the hypothesis now before us concerning *Love's Labour's Won*. But the publisher in his address to the readers lamented the absence of *The Wild-Goose Chase* as the only omission in his volume. Moreover, the play was soon recovered, and was published in 1652.

We should note, however, that there is no early mention of *All's Well that Ends Well*, or allusion to it;<sup>18</sup> also that the only supposed early reference to *Measure for Measure*

<sup>15</sup> *Quarterly Review*, Vol. LKV (1840), p. 431.

<sup>16</sup> *Outlines of the Life of Shakespeare*, 10th ed. (London, 1888), Vol. I, p. 172.

<sup>17</sup> London and New York, n. d., p. 30.—For the state-

ments in the next paragraph concerning *The Wild-Goose Chase*, see WARD, *A History of English Dramatic Literature*, Vol. II, 2d ed. (London, 1890), p. 707.

<sup>18</sup> HEMPHREY, *Stowley Sk.*, Vol. III, p. 111.