

**THE WORKS OF
SHAKESPEARE. THE TWO
GENTLEMEN OF VERONA**

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The Works of Shakespeare. The Two Gentlemen of Verona by William Shakespeare & R. Warwick Bond

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WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE & R. WARWICK BOND

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EDITED BY

R. WARWICK BOND



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CONTENTS

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	ix
THE TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA	i
APPENDIX I.—ACCOUNT OF "JULIO UND HYPPOLITA," 1620 .	113
APPENDIX II.—PART OF A SCENE FROM ANTHONY MUNDAY'S "DOWNFALL OF ROBERT EARL OF HUN- TINGTON"	116

INTRODUCTION

The Two Gentlemen of Verona was first printed, so far *The Test.* as is known, in the Folio of 1623, where it stands second among the Comedies, being immediately preceded by *The Tempest* and followed by *The Merry Wives*. It is there divided into Acts and Scenes, and is one of the few plays to which a list of the *dramatis personæ* is appended. It marks no locality, general or particular. The text is unusually free from corruption; a circumstance from which Johnson argued that it was seldom played, but which Malone attributed, I think with more reason, to the simplicity of the style, the play being written so clearly as to escape emendation.

Following the First Folio wherever possible, I have accepted sixteen small corrections from the Second (of which all but III. i. 149, IV. iv. 79, V. iv. 67 are of easily corrigible misprints), besides seven inserted stage-directions for exit and many for entry, the First Folio contenting itself with the customary enumeration at the head of each scene of all the characters which are to appear in it. I have taken no corrections from the Third Folio (save comma, IV. i. 49), and but one from the Fourth (v. ii. 32). In the Second Folio I count sixty other changes from the First, most of them careless errors, though one or two are attempts at emendation. The Third reproduces all of these save three or four, and adds thirty-five more; while the Fourth further swells the number by about a dozen. I have chosen for record only a small proportion of these changes or corruptions, usually such as might have something to recommend them or may have led to more successful emendation by the editors. From the editors I have, of course, accepted many corrections. Rowe supplied the most necessary stage-directions;

Pope first marked localities; and Theobald and Capell ably revised and supplemented their work in these respects. Important emendations in text are those at I. i. 65; II. iii. 30, 56, iv. 116, 195; III. i. 283, 320, 357; IV. iii. 17, iv. 60; V. ii. 7, 13; of which four are from Theobald, two from Rowe, and one each from Pope, Hanmer, Singer, Collier, and the Cambridge editors. The importance of Grant White's correction of the locality of IV. i., and consequently of the other forest-scenes, though it was adopted by Dyce, has been overlooked by some more recent editors. Mantua and its neighbourhood have no business in our scenario. Its mention in the text, IV. iii. 23, V. ii. 46, though there is no sufficient reason why it should there be altered, is probably just as much an oversight as the retention by Shakespeare of "Verona" in III. i. 81 and V. iv. 126—is, in fact, a corollary of that, Mantua being the natural resort of an exile from Verona, as in Brooke's *Romeus and Juliet*.

The only change for which I am responsible is the shifting of a comma in IV. iv. 6, "say, 'precisely thus'" etc. In three other places I restore the Folio reading, altered by Theobald or the Cambridge editors, I. ii. 92, IV. i. 49, V. iv. 26; I have once or twice slightly altered the received metrical arrangement; I favour an anonymous proposal to insert "writ" in II. i. 121; and I propose in I. iii. 36 "make it known" for "make known," V. iv. 49 "Re-terred" for "Descended," V. iv. 141 "Plant" for "Plead."

I hope the Introduction and Notes, wherein each fresh editor must be infinitely indebted to innumerable predecessors, may yet contain something of novelty. I am pleased to be able to introduce to readers Dr. Batteson's ingenious argument in regard to the famous difficulty of Valentine's resignation of Silvia—see below, pp. xxxvi, xxxvii. To Mr. W. J. Craig, the general editor of this series, I am under special obligation for many suggestions, the fruit of a study longer, wider, and far more minute than my own.

Date.

There is no evidence sufficient to enable us to date the play precisely. It is mentioned in Meres' list of Shake-

speare's plays already known in 1598, and that is the earliest mention we have. Malone detected in the lines, "Some to the wars . . . discover islands far away" (I. iii. 8, 9), an allusion to the levying of soldiers and equipping of fleets to meet a projected Spanish invasion of 1595, and another allusion to Raleigh's expedition to discover Guiana in the same year, or to Sir Humphrey Gilbert's similar expedition in 1594; while he referred Speed's "walk alone, like one that had the pestilence" (II. i. 20), to the plague which carried off nearly 11,000 Londoners in 1593. Later he changed his date for the play to 1591; referring the allusions rather to Essex' expedition in aid of Henri IV. in that year, to voyages of discovery by Raleigh and others about the same time, and to the epidemic of 1583. Clearly in a time of frequent hostilities, much exploration, and not infrequent plague, these allusions can hardly be held to give us a definite year at all. Mr. Fleay, having in his *Manual*, p. 28, assigned the first two Acts to 1593 and the rest to 1595, considered in 1886 (*Chronicle Hist. of the Life of Shakespeare*, p. 188) that "the play was produced in 1591 with work by a second hand in it, which was cut out and replaced by Shakespeare's own in 1595," a conclusion repeated in his *Biog. Chronicle of the English Stage* (1891), ii. 176, 179, where he dates the Folio form of the play "c. 1595, altered from an earlier version," such earlier version, "in which Shakespeare was most likely a coadjutor," being probably acted by Lord Strange's men, c. 1591. To my mind, while I see no reason to raise the question of collaboration, there is much in this idea of the present as a revised form of the play;¹ and much, too, in Knight's argument that if Shakespeare had produced seventeen plays by 1598, many of these must have existed in some form

¹ Herr Sarrazin (*Shakespeare Jahrbuch*, 1896, xxxii. 163) sees in the vocabulary of the play ground for supposing that "this comedy, begun in the earliest period, had been continued or worked over later." On grounds of style, the use of euphuistic antithesis, the playing on words (II. iv. 154-157, vi. 17-22; III. i. 146, 171-174), and the repetition of words in inverted order (I. i. 34, "a folly bought with wit . . . a wit by folly vanquished"), he classes it with *Venus and Adonis*, *Lucrece*, the love- and friendship-Sonnets, *Love's Labour's Lost*, *Richard III.*, and *Romeo and Juliet*, as all composed 1592-1594, a fertility to be explained by the closing of the theatres in 1592 and 1593 (*ib.* pp. 149-154).