

**THE MERRY WIVES OF
WINDSOR: A COMEDY.
IN FIVE ACTS**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649353651

The Merry Wives of Windsor: A Comedy. In Five Acts by William Shakespeare

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WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

**THE MERRY WIVES OF
WINDSOR: A COMEDY.
IN FIVE ACTS**

SPENCER'S BOSTON THEATRE.....No. XXI.

THE

MERRY WIVES OF WINDSOR.

A Comedy.

IN FIVE ACTS.

BY WILLIAM SHAKSPEARE.

WITH EDITORIAL REMARKS, ORIGINAL CASTS, COSTUMES,

SCENE AND PROPERTY PLOTS,

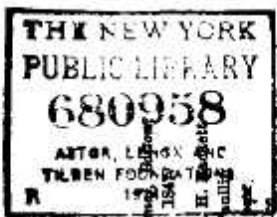
AND ALL THE STAGE BUSINESS.

BOSTON:

WILLIAM V. SPENCER,

123 Washington St. (corner of Water.)

1855.



CAST OF CHARACTERS.

	Drew Lane, 1838.	Tremont, Boston, 1838.	Puff, 1840.	Hancock St., Boston, 1848.	National Bazaar, 1857.
Sir JOHN FALSTAFF.....	Mr. S. Kimble	Mr. J. H. Hackett	Mr. J. H. Hackett	Mr. J. H. Hackett	Mr. J. H. Hackett
JURICE SHALLOW.....	" Carr	" P. C. Cunningham	" W. A. Chapman	" Sloos	" F. Halling
ABRAHAM SLENDER.....	" Oxberry	" G. P. Andrews	" J. Barnes	" W. H. Chippendale	" S. P. P.
FENTON.....	" Bernard	" S. Peterson	" S. Peacock	" H. Hunt	" H.
FORD.....	" Rao	" W. H. Smith	" Hild	" G. Vandenhoff	" J. B. Booth, Jr.
PAGE.....	" Pengough	" G. M. Mazy	" Gunn	" Ayling	" J. Munroe
Doctor Claus.....	" Wewig	" A. A. A. A.	" H. Plaidie	" W. Warton	" E. D. Johnson
HUGH EVANS.....	" Gattie	" J. Gilbert	" J. Fisher	" C. H. Saunders	" E. B. Williams
HOOT.....	" Willough	" W. Ayling	" Barry	" Adams	" Munroe
BARBOLFE.....	" Cooks	" S. S. S. S.	" Savadas		" J. H. King
PISTOL.....	" Corwell	" M. P. P. P.			" Sandford
NYM.....	" Evans	" C. C. C. C.			" Flood
SMIRK.....	" Minton	" P. P. P. P.			" Neer
ROBERT.....	Miss C. Carr	" J. J. J. J.			" G. Johnson
JOHN.....	Mr. Hughes	" J. H. King			" White
RONIE.....		" C. Montayer			" Taylor
					Miss J. Johnson
Mrs. FORD.....	Mr. Harlowe	Miss Rock	Mrs. Masler	Mrs. W. H. Crisp	Mrs. C. Pope
Mrs. PAGE.....	" Martyn	Mrs. W. H. Smith	Miss McBride	Miss Mary Taylor	Miss Anna Cruise
ANNE PAGE.....	" Robinson	Miss A. Fisher	Mrs. Wessley	" Phillips	Mrs. J. J. Prior
Miss QUICK.....	" Sparks	Mrs. Gilbert		Mrs. Mayreod	" J. Reid

	Federal Street, Boston, 1848.	National, Boston, 1848.	Barton's, New York, 1853.	Boston, 1854-1855.	Metropoitan, N. Y., 1855.
SER. JOSE FAIRBANK	Mr. J. H. Hackett	Mr. C. Deas	Mr. W. E. Barton	Mr. J. G. Gilbert	Mr. J. H. Hackett
JUDICE SHALLOW	" McFarland	" Byrne	" Fiske	" " J. H. Hackett	" Anderson
ABRAHAM SHREVE	" Spear	" Koach	" Holman	" Fiske	" Walcott
FRANK	Mrs. Hathaway	" Munroe	" J. Dyott	" Hancock	" Brown
FORD	Mc. H. A. Ferry	" J. E. Booth, Jr.	" C. Fisher	" G. Pauncefort	" Hield
PAGE	" W. G. Jones	" J. Munroe	" H. Placide	" J. E. Hows	" Levers
DOCTOR CARB	" I. B. Phillips	" S. D. Johnson	" T. B. Johnson	" S. D. Johnson	" Morris Bennett
HUGH WYAN	H. P. Phillips	" J. R. Vinostat	" L. Thompson	" G. W. Johnson	" Norton
HOSE	" J. R. Booth, Jr.	" J. H. King	" Norton	" Morris	" Herbert
BARDOLE	" Byrne	" J. H. King		" W. Lyster	" Friso
PISTOL	" Sprague	" Munroe		" Davenport	" Sloan
NYM	" Watkins	" Leonard		" Cornell	" Conway
SMITH	" J. Munroe	" Baker		" G. Johnson	" Maskell
ROBERT	" Nelson	Mrs. C. Ince		" Holmes	
ROBERT	" Smith	Mr. Taylor		" Goulden	
JOHN	" Hall	" Hall		" Brown	
BORE	" Miles	Mrs. Johnson		Mrs. Plunket	Miss Louise
Mrs. FORD	Mrs. Sprague	Mrs. C. Pope	Mrs. Dyott	Mrs. Barrow	Miss Gannon
Mrs. PAGE	" H. Cramer	" Tyrrel	" Sherrott	" W. H. Smith	Mrs. Sloan
ANNE PAGE	Miss L. Mace	" Fray	Miss Watson	Miss Emma Taylor	Miss E. Moran
Mrs. QUINCY	Mrs. J. Reid	" J. B. Vincent	" Hughes	Mrs. J. O. Gilbert	Mrs. Vernon

SCENERY.

ACT ONE.

- SCENE 1—Landscape View of Windsor Castle, 5 c.
Set Balustrade, cross stage, 4 c. Steps c.
Set Antique House, 2 E. N. H. door (large) practical backed by interior.
- SCENE 2—Plain Oak, 2 c.
- SCENE 3—Panel Chamber, 2 c. D. F. R. H. practical, backed by interior.

ACT TWO.

- SCENE 1—Same as scene 1st, act 1, 6 c.
- SCENE 2—Plain Oak, 2 c.
- SCENE 3—Wood, 4 c.

ACT THREE.

- SCENE 1—Wood Landscape, 5 c. Cut Wood, 2 c. centre. We brace and cleats behind for Slender to climb up to opening.
- SCENE 2—Landscape, or old street, 1 c.
- SCENE 3—Antique Oak Chamber, 3 c. Set door, 2 E. N. H. to open on stage. Set door, 1 E. L. H. A fire place in centre.
- SCENE 4—2 D. Oak, 1 c.
- SCENE 5—Plain Oak, 2 c.

ACT FOUR.

- SCENE 1—Same as 2d Scene, Act 3d, 3 c.
- SCENE 2—Antique House flats, 2 c. D. F. R. C. practical, backed by interior.

ACT FIVE.

- SCENE 1—Old Street, 1 c.
- SCENE 2—Wood, 2 c.
- SCENE 3—Moon light Wood, 6 c. Herne's Oak in c. Moon lighted.

PROPERTIES.

ACT ONE.

- SCENE 1 — Green cloth down. Crutch cane for Sir John. Salver with four wine glasses and wine ready in house, 3 x. x. for Anne Page. Large sword and belt for Bardolph. . Sword and belt for Nym. Sword and belt for Pistol. A pair of white gloves for Slender.
- SCENE 2 — Two blank letters (alike) for Sir John.
- SCENE 3 — Two Antique chairs on. Blank letter and long gold-headed cane for Dr. Caius. Small green casket ready, D. F. x. H. for Mrs. Quickly. Scarlet cloak and two rapiers ready, D. F. x. H. for Rugby.

ACT TWO.

- SCENE 1 — Two written letters for Mrs. Ford and Mrs. Page. Cane for Ford.
- SCENE 2 — Plain table. One oak chair and large arm-chair carried on from 2 x. x. and placed in centre, 1 c. Large purse of money for Ford. Salver covered with a white napkin, on it a tankard of ale, and a napkin folded up on it, ready, 1 H. L. for Bardolph. Purse for Falstaff.
- SCENE 3 — Scarlet cloak for Dr. Caius. Two rapiers for Rugby.

ACT THREE.

- SCENE 1 — Hymn book for Evans. Rapier and Evans' cloak for Simple. Rapier (for Dr. Caius) and scarlet cloak.
- SCENE 2 — Large buck basket with two handles to it containing a quantity of dirty linen ready, 2 x. L. H. Bunch of door keys and cane for Ford.
- SCENE 3 — Plain table in centre. On x. of table one oak chair. On L. of table a large arm-chair. Salver covered with a white napkin, on it a quart tankard containing a gill of ale, and a folded napkin ready, 1 H. L. H. for Bardolph.

ACT FOUR.

- SCENE 1 — Large buck basket discovered in centre, containing a quantity of dirty linen, a very large bundle tied up in a white sheet and white muslin on top. Cane for Ford. Antique table and two chairs on L. H. Table, looking-glass, two lighted candles, 3 x. H. H. and woman's dress complete with bonnet, etc., ready, 3 x. H. for Sir John.

ACT FIVE.

SCENE 2 — Eighteen white wands and eighteen white conical paper caps for Fairies.

SCENE 3 — Buck's head and large heavy chains for Sir John. Four lighted torches for servants.

C O S T U M E .

Sir John Falstaff. — Scarlet cloak, buff jacket and scarlet breeches, black velvet hat, and russet boots.

Shallow. — Brown old English dress, trimmed with orange.

Slender. — White old English dress, trimmed with crimson.

Fenton. — Green old English dress, trimmed with orange color.

Mr. Page. — Slate colored old English dress, trimmed with crimson.

Mr. Ford. — Drab colored old English dress, trimmed with green. Brown cloak for a disguise.

Sir H. Evans. — Black old English dress. Second dress (5th Act.) white robe with white conical paper cap.

Dr. Caius. — Black coat and breeches, brocaded waistcoat, red cloak and muff.

Bardolph. — Black old English dress, trimmed with scarlet.

Pistol. — Buff leather old English dress, trimmed with scarlet.

Simple. — Orange colored old English dress, trimmed with green.

Nym. — Drab colored old English dress, trimmed with green.

Robin. — Scarlet dress, round black hat edged with feathers. Dressed after the fashion of Falstaff.

Fairies. — (5th Act.) Long white robes with white conical paper caps.

Children — Six as Fairies.

Mrs. Ford. — Black velvet gown, ditto stomacher, laced with blue; blue satin petticoat, point apron; black velvet hat, trimmed with beads and blue satin ribbon.

Mrs. Page. — A dress like Mrs. Ford.

Anne Page. — Pink sarsnet petticoat, black velvet body with tabs trimmed with pink; black velvet hat, trimmed with beads and pink ribbon.

Mrs. Quickly. — Black silk gown, scarlet petticoat, point apron, and black hat, trimmed with scarlet.

REMARKS.

THIS delightful comedy is perfect, if the term perfection can be applied to any creation of human genius. Its general merit has been much undervalued by directing the attention solely to Falstaff, and then comparing him with the Falstaff of the two Henrys; between the two there can be no comparison, but the play is to be tried as a whole, not by the value of a single character; and still less by comparing that character to one of unrivalled excellence. In criticising this comedy we should consider Slender, Shallow, Caius, the Parson, and Dame Quickly; all of which characters are continued with unbroken consistency to the end. The plot too is no less admirable, though it is constructed on very different principles from those which govern the modern drama. Plot, with the poets of the old school, was subservient to character and passion; indeed it was nothing more than a vehicle for their exhibition; with us the fable is a primary object; we look for a multitude of events; expectation must be awakened by mystery and gratified by surprise; every incident must be touched with a rapid hand, and the whole in fact, must be a dramatized romance. That plays, so constructed, cannot last beyond the hour is sufficiently evident; when once seen their interest ceases, for that interest is in mystery or surprise, neither of which consist with a previous knowledge. This evil is in a great measure to be attributed to the superabundance of criticism, which is daily assailing authors; they are not left to their own discretion, but must subscribe to rules dictated by caprice and supported by ignorance. It is with poetry as with governments; in either case you may legislate too much; in either case a slavish obedience cramps genius, or it rebels, and is destroyed by the power that would fetter it. It was not so in Shakespeare's time; hundreds of Plays remain to us, which notwithstanding many scenes of high energy and high poetic feeling would not now be tolerated a single hour, and for no other reason than what in the jargon of modern criticism would be styled the weakness of their plots.

In Master Slender is an admirable example of what is so difficult to be defined, humor; when he would court Anne Page, and, in the lack of matter, takes occasion from the dogs barking, to inquire -- "Be these bears in the town?" every reader feels the humor. While wit seems to consist in the play of words, unequal comparisons, and quaint allusions, humor appears to be a part of character; and its comprehension therefore, is less likely to be confined to one time or one nation.

The line which divides Slender from his cousin, the Justice, is extremely fine, but it is kept inviolate with a skill that may be safely pronounced